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Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

Col. Ingersoll on Christianity

BY THE RT. HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M. P.

Some Remarks on his reply to Dr. Field.

As a listener from across the broad Atlantic to the clash of arms in the combat between Colonel Ingersoll and Dr. Field on the most momentous of all subjects, I have not the personal knowledge which assisted these doughty champions in making reciprocal acknowledgments, as broad as could be desired, with reference to personal character and motive. Such acknowledgments are of high value in keeping the issue clear, if not always of all adventitious, yet of all venomous matter. Destitute of the experience on which to found them as original testimonies, still, in attempting partially to criticise the remarkable Reply of Colonel Ingersoll, I can both accept in good faith what has been said by Dr. Field, and add that it seems to me consonant with the strain of the pages I have set before me. Having said this, I shall allow myself the utmost freedom in remarks, which will be addressed exclusively to the matter, not the man.

Let me begin by making several acknowledgments of another kind, but which I feel to be serious. The Christian Church has lived long enough in external triumph and prosperity to expose those of whom it is composed to all such perils of error and misfeasance, as triumph and prosperity bring with them. Belief in divine guidance is not of necessity belief that such guidance can never be frustrated by the laxity, the infirmity, the perversity of man, alike in the domain of action and in the domain of thought. Believers in the perpetuity of the life of the Church are not tied to believing in the perpetual health of the Church. Even the great Latin Communion, and that Communion even since the Council of the Vatican in 1870, theoretically admits, or does not exclude, the possibility of a wide range of local and partial error in opinion as well as conduct. Elsewhere the admission would be more unequivocal. Of such errors in tenet, or in temper and feeling more or less hardened into tenet, there has been a crop alike abundant and multifarious. Each Christian party is sufficiently apt to recognize this fact with regard to every other Christian party;

and the more impartial and reflective minds are aware that no party is exempt from mischiefs, which lie at the root of the human constitution in its warped, impaired, and dislocated condition. Naturally enough, these deformities help to indispose men towards belief; and when this indisposition has been developed into a system of negative warfare, all the faults of all the Christian bodies, and sub-divisions of bodies, are, as it was natural to expect they would be, carefully raked together, and become part and parcel of the indictment against the divine scheme of redemption. I notice these things in the mass, without particularity, which might be invidious, for two important purposes. First, that we all, who hold by the Gospel and the Christian Church, may learn humility and modesty, as well as charity and indulgence, in the treatment of opponents, from our consciousness that we all, alike by our exaggerations and our shortcomings in belief, no less than by faults of conduct, have contributed to bring about this condition of fashionable hostility to religious faith: and, secondly, that we may resolutely decline to be held bound to tenets, or to consequences of tenets, which represent not the great Christendom of the past and present, but only some hole and corner of its vast organization; and not the heavenly treasure, but the rust or the canker to which that treasure has been exposed through the incidents of its custody in earthen vessels.

I do not remember ever to have read a composition, in which the merely local coloring of particular, and even very limited sections of Christianity, was more systematically used as if it had been available and legitimate argument against the whole, than in the Reply before us. Colonel Ingersoll writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy, but also with an impetus which he seems unable to control. Denunciation, sarcasm, and invective, may in consequence be said to constitute the staple of his work; and, if argument or some favorable admission here and there peeps out for a moment, the writer soon leaves the dry and barren heights for his favorite and more luxurious galloping grounds beneath. Thus, when the Reply has consecrated a line (N. A. R., No. 372, p. 473) to the pleasing contemplation of his opponent as "manly, candid, and generous," it immediately devotes more than twelve to a declamatory denunciation of a practice (as if it were his) altogether contrary to generosity and to candor, and reproaches those who expect (*ibid.*) "to receive as alms an eternity of joy." I take this as a specimen of the mode of statement which permeates the whole Reply. It is not the statement of an untruth. The Christian receives as alms all whatsoever he receives at all. *Qui salvandos salvas gratis* is his song of thankful praise. But it is the statement of one-half of

a truth, which lives only in its entirety, and of which the Reply gives us only a mangled and bleeding *frustum*. For the gospel teaches that the faith which saves is a living and energizing faith, and that the most precious part of the alms which we receive lies in an ethical and spiritual process, which partly qualifies for, but also and emphatically composes, this conferred eternity of joy. Restore this ethical element to the doctrine from which the Reply has rudely displaced it, and the whole force of the assault is gone, for there is now a total absence of point in the accusation; it comes only to this, that "mercy and judgment are met together," and that "righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10).

Perhaps, as we proceed, there will be supplied ampler means of judging whether I am warranted in saying that the instance I have here given is a normal instance of a practice so largely followed as to divest the entire Reply of that calmness and sobriety of movement which are essential to the just exercise of the reasoning power in subject matter not only grave, but solemn. Pascal has supplied us, in the "Provincial Letters," with an unique example of easy, brilliant, and fascinating treatment of a theme both profound and complex. But where shall we find another Pascal? And, if we had found him, he would be entitled to point out to us that the famous work was not less close and logical than it was witty. In this case, all attempt at continuous argument appears to be deliberately abjured, not only as to pages, but, as may almost be said, even as to lines. The paper, noteworthy as it is, leaves on my mind the impression of a battle-field where every man strikes at every man, and all is noise, hurry, and confusion. Better, surely had it been, and worthier of the great weight and elevation of the subject, if the controversy had been waged after the pattern of those engagements where a chosen champion on either side, in a space carefully limited and reserved, does battle on behalf of each silent and expectant host. The promiscuous crowds represent all the lower elements which enter into human conflicts: the chosen champions, and the order of their proceeding, signify the dominion of reason over force, and its just place as the sovereign arbiter of the great questions that involve the main destiny of man.

I will give another instance of the tumultuous method in which the Reply conducts, not, indeed, its argument, but its case. Dr. Field had exhibited an example of what he thought superstition, and had drawn a distinction between superstition and religion. But to the author of the Reply all religion is superstition, and, accordingly, he writes as follows (p. 475):

"You are shocked at the Hindoo mother, when she gives her child to death at the supposed command of her God. What do you think of Abraham? of Jephthah? What is your opinion of Jehovah himself?"

Taking these three appeals in the reverse order to that in which they are written, I will briefly ask, as to the closing challenge, "What do you think of Jehovah himself?" whether this is the tone in which controversy ought to be carried on? Not only is the name of Jehovah encircled in the heart of every believer with the profoundest reverence and love, but the Christian religion teaches, through the Incarnation, a doctrine of personal union with God so lofty that it can only be approached in a deep, reverential calm. I do not deny that a person who deems a given religion to be wicked may be led onward by logical consistency to impugn in strong terms the character of the Author and Object of that religion. But he is surely bound by the laws of social morality and decency to consider well the terms and the manner of his indictment. If he founds it upon allegations of fact, these allegations should be carefully stated, so as to give his antagonists reasonable evidence that it is truth and not temper which wrings from him a sentence of condemnation, delivered in sobriety and sadness, and not without a due commiseration for those, whom he is attempting to undeceive, who think he is himself both deceived and a deceiver, but who surely are entitled, while this question is in process of decision, to require that He whom they adore should at least be treated with those decent reserves which are deemed essential when a human being, say a parent, wife, or sister, is in question. But here a contemptuous reference to Jehovah follows, not upon a careful investigation of the cases of Abraham and of Jephthah, but upon a mere summary citation of them to surrender themselves, so to speak, as culprits: that is to say, a summons to accept at once, on the authority of the Reply, the view which the writer is pleased to take of those cases. It is true that he assures us in another part of his paper that he has read the Scriptures with care; and I feel bound to accept this assurance, but at the same time to add that if it had not been given I should, for one, not have made the discovery, but might have supposed that the author had galloped, not through, but about, the sacred volume, as a man glances over the pages of an ordinary newspaper or novel.

Although there is no argument as to Abraham or Jephthah expressed upon the surface, we must assume that one is intended, and it seems to be of the following kind: "You are not entitled to

reprove the Hindoo mother who cast her child under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut, for you approve of the conduct of Jephthah, who (probably) sacrificed his daughter in fulfilment of a vow (Judges xi. 31) that he would make a burnt offering of whatsoever, on his safe return, he should meet coming forth from the doors of his dwelling." Now the whole force of this rejoinder depends upon our supposed obligation as believers to approve the conduct of Jephthah. It is, therefore, a very serious question whether we are or are not so obliged. But this question the Reply does not condescend either to argue, or even to state. It jumps to an extreme conclusion without the decency of an intermediate step. Are not such methods of proceeding more suited to placards at an election, than to disquisitions on these most solemn subjects?

I am aware of no reason why any believer in Christianity should not be free to canvass, regret, condemn the act of Jephthah. So far as the narration which details it is concerned, there is not a word of sanction given to it more than to the falsehood of Abraham in Egypt, or of Jacob and Rebecca in the matter of the hunting (Gen. xx. 1-18, and Gen. xxiii.); or to the dissembling of Saint Peter in the case of the Judaizing converts (Gal. ii. 11). I am aware of no color of approval given to it elsewhere. But possibly the author of the Reply may have thought he found such an approval in the famous eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle, handling his subject with a discernment and care very different from those of the Reply, writes thus (Heb. xi. 32):

"And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson, and of Jephthah: of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets."

Jephthah, then, is distinctly held up to us by a canonical writer as an object of praise. But of praise on what account? Why should the Reply assume that it is on account of the sacrifice of his child? The writer of the Reply has given us no reason, and no rag of a reason, in support of such a proposition. But this was the very thing he was bound by every consideration to prove, upon making his indictment against the Almighty. In my opinion, he could have one reason only for not giving a reason, and that was that no reason could be found.

The matter, however, is so full of interest, as illustrating both the method of the Reply and that of the Apostolic writer, that I shall enter farther into it, and draw attention to the very remarkable structure of this noble chapter, which is to Faith what the thirteenth of Cor. I. is to Charity. From the first to the thirty-

first verse, it commemorates the achievements of faith in ten persons: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses (in greater detail than any one else), and finally Rahab, in whom, I observe in passing, it will hardly be pretended that she appears in this list on account of the profession she had pursued. Then comes the rapid recital (v. 31), without any specification of particulars whatever, of these four names: Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah. Next follows a kind of recommencement, indicated by the word *also*; and the glorious acts and sufferings of the prophets are set forth largely, with a singular power and warmth, headed by the names of David and Samuel, the rest of the sacred band being mentioned only in the mass.

Now, it is surely very remarkable that, in the whole of this recital, the Apostle, whose "feet were shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," seems with a tender instinct to avoid anything like stress on the exploits of warriors. Of the twelve persons having a share in the detailed expositions, David is the only warrior, and his character as a man of war is eclipsed by his greater attributes as a prophet, or declarer of the Divine counsels. It is yet more noteworthy that Joshua, who had so fair a fame, but who was only a warrior, is never named in the chapter, and we are simply told that "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven times" (Hebrews xi. 30). But the series of four names, which are given without any specification of their title to appear in the list, are all names of distinguished warriors. They had all done great acts of faith and patriotism against the enemies of Israel,—Gideon against the Midianites, and Barak against the hosts of Syria, Samson against the Philistines, and Jephthah against the children of Ammon. Their title to appear in the list at all is in their acts of war, and the mode of their treatment as men of war is in striking accordance with the analogies of the chapter. All of them had committed errors. Gideon had again and again demanded a sign, and had made a golden ephod, "which thing became a snare unto Gideon and to his house" (Judges viii. 27). Barak had refused to go up against Jabin unless Deborah would join the venture (Judges v. 8). Samson had been in dalliance with Delilah. Last came Jephthah, who had, as we assume, sacrificed his daughter in fulfilment of a rash vow. No one supposes that any of the others are honored by mention in the chapter on account of his sin or error: why should that supposition be made in the case of Jephthah, at the cost of all the rules of orderly interpretation?

Having now answered the challenge as to Jephthah, I proceed to the case of Abraham. It would not be fair to shrink from touching it in its tenderest point. That point is nowhere expressly touched by the commendations bestowed upon Abraham in Scripture. I speak now of the special form, of the words that are employed. He is not commended because, being a father, he made all the preparations antecedent to plunging the knife into his son. He is commended (as I read the text) because, having received a glorious promise, a promise that his wife should be a mother of nations, and that kings should be born of her (Gen. xvii. 6), and that by his seed the blessings of redemption should be conveyed to man, and the fulfilment of this promise depending solely upon the life of Isaac, he was, nevertheless, willing that the chain of these promises should be broken by the extinction of that life, because his faith assured him that the Almighty would find the way to give effect to His own designs (Heb. xi. 17-19). The offering of Isaac is mentioned as a completed offering, and the intended blood shedding, of which I shall speak presently, is not here brought into view.

The facts, however, which we have before us, and which are treated in Scripture with caution, are grave and startling. A father is commanded to sacrifice his son. Before consummation, the sacrifice is interrupted. Yet the intention of obedience had been formed and certified by a series of acts. It may have been qualified by a reserve of hope that God would interpose before the final act, but of this we have no distinct statement, and it can only stand as an allowable conjecture. It may be conceded that the narrative does not supply us with a complete statement of particulars. That being so, it behoves us to tread cautiously in approaching it. Thus much, however, I think, may further be said: the command was addressed to Abraham under conditions essentially different from those which now determine for us the limits of moral obligation.

For the conditions, both socially and otherwise, were indeed very different. The estimate of human life at the time was different. The position of the father in the family was different: its members were regarded as in some sense his property. There is every reason to suppose that, around Abraham in "the land of Moriah," the practice of human sacrifice as an act of religion was in vigor. But we may look more deeply into the matter. According to the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve were placed under a law, not of consciously perceived right and wrong, but of simple obedience. The tree, of which alone they were forbidden to eat, was the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil. Duty lay for them in following the command of the Most High, before and until they, or their descendants, should become capable of appreciating it by an ethical standard. Their condition was greatly analogous to that of the infant, who has just reached the stage at which he can comprehend that he is ordered to do this or that, but not the nature of the thing so ordered. To the external standard of right and wrong, and to the obligation it entails *per se*, the child is introduced by a process gradually unfolded with the development of his nature, and the opening out of what we term a moral sense. If we pass at once from the epoch of Paradise to the period of the prophets, we perceive the important progress that has been made in the education of the race. The Almighty, in His mediate intercourse with Israel, deigns to appeal to an independently conceived criterion, as to an arbiter between His people and Himself. "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah i. 18). "Yet ye say the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal, are not your ways unequal?" (Ezekiel xvii. 25). Between these two epochs how wide a space of moral teaching has been traversed! But Abraham, so far as we may judge from the pages of Scripture, belongs essentially to the Adamic period, far more than to the prophetic. The notion of righteousness and sin was not indeed hidden from him: transgression itself had opened that chapter, and it was never to be closed; but as yet they lay wrapped up, so to speak, in Divine command and prohibition. And what God commanded, it was for Abraham to believe that He himself would adjust to the harmony of His own character.

The faith of Abraham, with respect to this supreme trial, appears to have been centred in this, that he would trust God to all extremities, and in despite of all appearances. The command received was obviously inconsistent with the promises which had preceded it. It was also inconsistent with the morality acknowledged in later times, and perhaps too definitely reflected in our minds, by an anachronism easy to conceive, on the day of Abraham. There can be little doubt, as between these two points of view, that the strain upon his faith was felt mainly, to say the least, in connection with the first mentioned. This faith is not wholly unlike the faith of Job; for Job believed, in despite of what was to the eye of flesh an unrighteous government of the world. If we may still trust the Authorized Version, his cry was, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job xiii. 15). This cry was, however, the expression of one who did not expect to be slain; and it may be that Abraham, when he said, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a

burnt offering," not only believed explicitly that God would do what was right, but, moreover, believed implicitly that a way of rescue would be found for his son. I do not say that this case is like the case of Jephthah, where the introduction of difficulty is only gratuitous. I confine myself to these propositions. Though the law of moral action is the same everywhere and always, it is variously applicable to the human being, as we know from experience, in the various stages of his development; and its first form is that of simple obedience to a superior whom there is every ground to trust. And further, if the few straggling rays of our knowledge in a case of this kind rather exhibit a darkness lying around us than dispel it, we do not even know all that was in the mind of Abraham, and are not in a condition to pronounce upon it, and cannot, without departure from sound reason, abandon that anchorage by which he probably held, that the law of Nature was safe in the hands of the Author of Nature, though the means of the reconciliation between the law and the appearances have not been fully placed within our reach.

But the Reply is not entitled to so wide an answer as that which I have given. In the parallel with the case of the Hindoo widow, it sins against first principles. An established and habitual practice of child-slaughter, in a country of an old and learned civilization, presents to us a case totally different from the issue of a command which was not designed to be obeyed, and which belongs to a period when the years of manhood were associated in great part with the character that appertains to childhood.

It will already have been seen that the method of this Reply is not to argue seriously from point to point, but to set out in masses, without the labor of proof, crowds of imputations, which may overwhelm an opponent like balls from a *mitrailleuse*. As the charges lightly run over in a line or two require pages for exhibition and confutation, an exhaustive answer to the Reply within the just limits of an article is on this account out of the question: and the only proper course left open seems to be to make a selection of what appears to be the favorite, or the most formidable and telling, assertions, and to deal with these in the serious way which the grave interests of the theme, not the manner of their presentation, may deserve.

It was an observation of Aristotle that weight attaches to the undemonstrated propositions of those who are able to speak in any given subject matter from experience. The Reply abounds in undemonstrated propositions. They appear, however, to be delivered

without any sense of a necessity that either experience or reasoning are required in order to give them a title to acceptance. Thus, for example, the system of Mr. Darwin is hurled against Christianity as a dart which cannot but be fatal (p. 475):

“His discoveries, carried to their legitimate conclusion, destroy the creeds and sacred scriptures of mankind.”

This wide-sweeping proposition is imposed upon us with no exposition of the how or the why; and the whole controversy of belief one might suppose is to be determined, as if from St. Petersburg, by a series of *ukases*. It is only advanced, indeed, to decorate the introduction of Darwin's name in support of the proposition, which I certainly should support and not contest, that error and honesty are compatible.

On what ground, then, and for what reason, is the system of Darwin fatal to scriptures and to creeds? I do not enter into the question whether it has passed from the stage of working hypothesis into that of demonstration, but I assume, for the purposes of the argument, all that, in this respect, the Reply can desire.

It is not possible to discover, from the random language of the Reply, whether the scheme of Darwin is to sweep away all theism, or is to be content with extinguishing revealed religion. If the latter is meant, I should reply that the moral history of man, in its principal stream, has been distinctly an evolution from the first until now: and that the succinct though grand account of the Creation in Genesis is singularly accordant with the same idea, but is wider than Darwinism, since it includes in the grand progression the inanimate world as well as the history of organisms. But, as this could not be shown without much detail, the Reply reduces me to the necessity of following its own unsatisfactory example in the bald form of an assertion, that there is no colorable ground for assuming evolution and revelation to be at variance with one another.

If, however, the meaning be that theism is swept away by Darwinism, I observe that, as before, we have only an unreasoned dogma or dictum to deal with, and, dealing perforce with the unknown, we are in danger of striking at a will of the wisp. Still, I venture on remarking that the doctrine of Evolution has acquired both praise and dispraise which it does not deserve. It is lauded in the skeptical camp because it is supposed to get rid of the shocking idea of what are termed sudden acts of creation; and it is as unjustly dispraised, on the opposing side, because it is thought to bridge over the gap between man and the inferior animals, and to

give emphasis to the relationship between them. But long before the day either of Mr. Darwin or his grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, this relationship had been stated, perhaps even more emphatically by one whom, were it not that I have small title to deal in undemonstrated assertion, I should venture to call the most cautious, the most robust, and the most comprehensive of our philosophers. Suppose, says Bishop Butler (*Analogy*, Part 2, Chap. 2), that it was implied in the natural immortality of brutes, that they must arrive at great attainments, and become (like us) rational and moral agents; even this would be no difficulty, since we know not what latent powers and capacities they may be endowed with. And if pride causes us to deem it an indignity that our race should have proceeded by propagation from an ascending scale of inferior organisms, why should it be a more repulsive idea to have sprung immediately from something less than man in brain and body, than to have been fashioned according to the expression in Genesis (Chap. II., v. 7) "out of the dust of the ground"? There are halls and galleries of introduction in a palace, but none in a cottage; and this arrival of the creative work at its climax through an ever aspiring preparatory series, rather than by transition at a step from the inanimate mould of earth, may tend rather to magnify than to lower the creation of man on its physical side. But if belief has (as commonly) been premature in its alarms, has non-belief been more reflective in its exulting anticipations, and its pæans on the assumed disappearance of what are strangely enough termed sudden acts of creation from the sphere of our study and contemplation?

One striking effect of the Darwinian theory of descent is, so far as I understand, to reduce the breadth of all intermediate distinctions in the scale of animated life. It does not bring all creatures into a single lineage, but all diversities are to be traced back, at some point in the scale and by stages indefinitely minute, to a common ancestry. All is done by steps, nothing by strides, leaps, or bounds; all from protoplasm up to Shakespeare, and, again, all from primal night and chaos up to protoplasm. I do not ask, and am incompetent to judge, whether this is among the things proven, but I take it so for the sake of the argument; and I ask, first, why and whereby does this doctrine eliminate the idea of creation? Does the new philosophy teach us that if the passage from pure reptile to pure bird is achieved by a spring (so to speak) over a chasm, this implies and requires creation; but if reptile passes into bird, and rudimental into finished bird, by a thousand slight and but just discernible modifications, each one of these is so small that they are not entitled to a name so lofty, may be set down to any cause

or no cause, as we please? I should have supposed it miserably unphilosophical to treat the distinction between creative and non-creative function as a simply quantitative distinction. As respects the subjective effect on the human mind, creation in small, when closely regarded, awakens reason to admiring wonder, not less than creation in great: and as regards that function itself, to me it appears no less than ridiculous to hold that the broadly outlined and large advances of so-called Mosaism are creation, but the refined and stealthy onward steps of Darwinism are only manufacture, and relegate the question of a cause into obscurity, insignificance, or oblivion.

But does not reason really require us to go farther, to turn the tables on the adversary, and to contend that evolution, by how much it binds more closely together the myriad ranks of the living, aye, and of all other orders, by so much the more consolidates, enlarges, and enhances the true argument of design, and the entire theistic position? If orders are not mutually related, it is easier to conceive of them as sent at haphazard into the world. We may, indeed, sufficiently draw an argument of design from each separate structure, but we have no further title to build upon the position which each of them holds as towards any other. But when the connection between these objects has been established, and so established that the points of transition are almost as indiscernible as the passage from day to night, then, indeed, each preceding stage is a prophesy of the following, each succeeding one is a memorial of the past, and, throughout the immeasurable series, every single member of it is a witness to all the rest. The Reply ought surely to dispose of these, and probably many more arguments in the case, before assuming so absolutely the rights of dictatorship, and laying it down that Darwinism, carried to its legitimate conclusion (and I have nowhere endeavored to cut short its career), destroys the creeds and scriptures of mankind. That I may be the more definite in my challenge, I would, with all respect, ask the author of the Reply to set about confuting the succinct and clear argument of his countryman, Mr. Fiske, who, in the earlier part of the small work, entitled "Man's Destiny" (Macmillan, Mondon, 1887) has given what seems to me an admissible and also striking interpretation of the leading Darwinian idea in its bearings on the theistic argument. To this very partial treatment of a great subject I must at present confine myself; and I proceed to another of the notions, as confident as they seem to be crude, which the Reply has drawn into its widecasting net (p. 475):

"Why should God demand a sacrifice from man? Why should the infinite ask anything from the finite? Should the sun beg of the glow-worm, and should the momentary spark excite the envy of the source of light?"

This is one of the cases in which happy or showy illustration is, in the Reply before me, set to carry with a rush the position which argument would have to approach more laboriously and more slowly. The case of the glow-worm with the sun cannot but move a reader's pity, it seems so very hard. But let us suppose for a moment that the glow-worm was so constituted, and so related to the sun that an interaction between them was a fundamental condition of its health and life; that the glow-worm must, by the law of its nature, like the moon, reflect upon the sun, according to its strength and measure, the light which it receives, and that only by a process involving that reflection its own store of vitality could be upheld? It will be said that this is a very large *petitio* to import into the glow-worm's case. Yes, but it is the very *petitio* which is absolutely requisite in order to make it parallel to the case of the Christian. The argument which the Reply has to destroy is and must be the Christian argument, and not some figure of straw, fabricated at will. It is needless, perhaps, but it is refreshing, to quote the noble Psalm (Ps. l. 10, 12, 14, 15), in which this assumption of the Reply is rebuked. "All the beasts of the forest are mine; and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills. . . . If I be hungry I will not tell thee; for the whole world is mine, and all that is therein. . . . Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most Highest, and call upon Me in the time of trouble; so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me." Let me try my hand at a counter-illustration. If the Infinite is to make no demand upon the finite, by parity of reasoning the great and strong should scarcely make them on the weak and small. Why then should the father make demands of love, obedience, and sacrifice, from his young child? Is there not some favor of the sun and glow-worm here? But every man does so make them, if he is a man of sense and feeling; and he makes them for the sake and in the interest of the son himself, whose nature, expanding in the warmth of affection and pious care, requires, by an inward law, to return as well as to receive. And so God asks of us, in order that what we give to Him may be far more our own than it ever was before the giving, or than it could have been unless first rendered up to Him, to become a part of what the gospel calls our treasure in heaven.

Although the Reply is not careful to supply us with *whys*, it does not hesitate to ask for them (p. 479):

“Why should an infinitely wise and powerful God destroy the good and preserve the vile? Why should He treat all alike here, and in another world make an infinite difference? Why should your God allow His worshippers, His adorers, to be destroyed by His enemies? Why should He allow the honest, the loving, the noble to perish at the stake?”

The upholders of belief or of revelation, from Claudian down to Cardinal Newman (see the very remarkable passage of the *Apologia pro vita sua*, pp. 376-78), cannot and do not, seek to deny that the methods of divine government, as they are exhibited by experience, present to us many and varied moral problems, insoluble by our understanding. Their existence may not, and should not, be dissembled. But neither should they be exaggerated. Now exaggeration by mere suggestion is the fault, the glaring fault, of these queries. One who has no knowledge of mundane affairs beyond the conception they insinuate would assume that, as a rule, evil has the upper hand in the management of the world. Is this the grave philosophical conclusion of a careful observer, or is it a crude, hasty, and careless overstatement?

It is not difficult to conceive how, in times of sadness and of storm, when the suffering soul can discern no light at any point of the horizon, place is found for such an idea of life. It is, of course, opposed to the Apostolic declaration that godliness hath the promise of the life that now is (1 Tim. iv. 8), but I am not to expect such a declaration to be accepted as current coin, even of the meanest value, by the author of the Reply. Yet I will offer two observations founded on experience in support of it, one taken from a limited, another from a larger and more open sphere. John Wesley, in the full prime of his mission, warned the converts whom he was making. It was among English laborers of a spiritual danger that lay far ahead. that, becoming godly, they would become careful, and, becoming careful, they would become wealthy. It was a just and sober forecast, and it represented with truth the general rule of life, although it be a rule perplexed with exceptions. But, if this be too narrow a sphere of observation, let us take a wider one, the widest of all. It is comprised in the brief statement that Christendom rules the world, and rules it, perhaps it should be added, by the possession of a vast surplus of material as well as moral force. Therefore the assertions carried by implication in the queries of the Reply, which are

general, are because general untrue, although they might have been true within those prudent limitations which the method of this Reply appears especially to eschew.

Taking, then, these challenges as they ought to have been given, I admit that great believers, who have been also great masters of wisdom and knowledge, are not able to explain the inequalities of adjustment between human beings and the conditions in which they have been set down to work out their destiny. The climax of these inequalities is perhaps to be found in the fact that, whereas rational belief, viewed at large, founds the Providential government of the world upon the hypothesis of free agency, there are so many cases in which the overbearing mastery of circumstance appears to reduce it to extinction or paralysis. Now, in one sense, without doubt, these difficulties are matter for our legitimate and necessary cognizance. It is a duty incumbent upon us respectively, according to our means and opportunities, to decide for ourselves, by the use of the faculty of reason given us, the great questions of natural and revealed religion. They are to be decided according to the evidence; and, if we cannot trim the evidence into a consistent whole, then according to the balance of the evidence. We are not entitled, either for or against belief, to set up in this province any rule of investigation, except such as common-sense teaches us to use in the ordinary conduct of life. As in ordinary conduct, so in considering the basis of belief, we are bound to look at the evidence as a whole. We have no right to demand demonstrative proofs, or the removal of all conflicting elements, either in the one sphere or in the other. What guides us sufficiently in matters of common practice has the very same authority to guide us in matters of speculation; more properly, perhaps, to be called the practice of the soul. If the evidence in the aggregate shows the being of a moral Governor of the world, with the same force as would suffice to establish an obligation to act in a matter of common conduct, we are bound in duty to accept it, and have no right to demand as a condition previous that all occasions of doubt or question be removed out of the way. Our demands of evidence must be limited by the general reason of the case. Does that general reason of the case make it probable that a finite being, with a finite place in a comprehensive scheme, devised and administered by a Being who is infinite, would be able either to embrace within his view, or rightly to appreciate, all the motives and the aims that may have been in mind of the Divine Disposer? On the contrary, a demand so

unreasonable deserves to be met with the scornful challenge of Dante (Paradise xix. 79):

Or tu chi sei, che vuoi sedere a scranna
Per giudicar da lungi mille miglia
Colla veduta corta d'una spanna?

Undoubtedly a great deal here depends upon the question whether, and in what degree, our knowledge is limited. And here the Reply seems to be by no means in accord with Newton and with Butler. By its contempt for authority, the Reply seems to cut off from us all knowledge that is not at first hand; but then also it seems to assume an original and first hand knowledge of all possible kinds of things. I will take an instance, all the easier to deal with because it is outside the immediate sphere of controversy. In one of those pieces of fine writing with which the Reply abounds, it is determined *obiter* by a backhanded stroke (N. A. R., p. 491) that Shakespeare is "by far the greatest of the human race." I do not feel entitled to assert that he is not; but how vast and complex a question is here determined for us in this airy manner! Has the writer of the Reply really weighed the force, and measured the sweep of his own words? Whether Shakespeare has or has not the primacy of genius over a very few other names which might be placed in competition with his, is a question which has not yet been determined by the general or deliberate judgment of lettered mankind. But behind it lies another question, inexpressibly difficult, except for the Reply, to solve. That question is, what is the relation of human genius to human greatness. Is genius the sole constitutive element of greatness, or with what other elements, and in what relations to them, is it combined? Is every man great in proportion to his genius? Was Goldsmith, or was Sheridan, or was Burns, or was Byron, or was Goethe, or was Napoleon, or was Alcibiades, no smaller, and was Johnson, or was Howard, or was Washington, or was Phocion or Leonidas no greater, than in proportion to his genius properly so called? How are we to find a common measure, again, for different kinds of greatness; how weigh, for example, Dante against Julius Cæsar? And I am speaking of greatness properly so called, not of goodness properly so called. We might seem to be dealing with a writer whose contempt for authority in general is fully balanced, perhaps outweighed, by his respect for one authority in particular.

The religions of the world, again, have in many cases given to many men material for life-long study. The study of the Christian Scriptures, to say nothing of Christian life and institutions, has

been to many and justly famous men a study "never ending, still beginning"; not, like the world of Alexander, too limited for the powerful faculty that ranged over it; but, on the contrary, opening height on height, and with deep answering to deep, and with increase of fruit ever prescribing increase of effort. But the Reply has sounded all these depths, has found them very shallow, and is quite able to point out (p. 490) the way in which the Saviour of the world might have been a much greater teacher than He actually was; had He said anything, for instance, of the family relation, had He spoken against slavery and tyranny, had He issued a sort of *code Napoleon* embracing education, progress, scientific truth, and international law. This observation on the family relation seems to me beyond even the usual measure of extravagance when we bear in mind that, according to the Christian scheme, the Lord of heaven and earth "was subject" (St. Luke ii. 51) to a human mother and a reputed human father, and that He taught (according to the widest and, I believe, the best opinion) the absolute indissolubility of marriage. I might cite many other instances in reply. But the broader and the true answer to the objection is, that the Gospel was promulgated to teach principles and not a code; that it included the foundation of a society in which those principles were to be conserved, developed, and applied; and that down to this day there is not a moral question of all those which the Reply does or does not enumerate, nor is there a question of duty arising in the course of life for any of us, that is not determinable in all its essentials by applying to it as a touchstone the principles declared in the Gospel. Is not, then, the *hiatus*, which the Reply has discovered in the teaching of our Lord, an imaginary *hiatus*? Nay, are the suggested improvements of that teaching really gross deteriorations? Where would have been the wisdom of delivering to an uninstructed population of a particular age a codified religion, which was to serve for all nations, all ages, all states of civilization? Why was not room to be left for the career of human thought in finding out, and in working out, the adaptation of Christianity to the ever varying movement of the world? And how is it that they who will not admit that a revelation is in place when it has in view the great and necessary work of conflict against sin, are so free in recommending enlargements of that Revelation for purposes, as to which no such necessity can be pleaded?

I have known a person who, after studying the old classical or Olympian religion for the third part of a century, at length began to hope that he had some partial comprehension of it, some inkling of what it meant. Woe is him that he was not conversant either

with the faculties or with the methods of the Reply, which apparently can dispose in half an hour of any problem, dogmatic, historical, or moral; and which accordingly takes occasion to assure us that Buddha was "in many respects the greatest religious teacher this world has ever known, the broadest, the most intellectual of them all" (p. 491). On this I shall only say that an attempt to bring Buddha and Buddhism into line together is far beyond my reach, but that every Christian, knowing in some degree what Christ is, and what he has done for the world, can only be the more thankful if Buddha, or Confucius, or any other teacher has in any point, and in any measure, come near to the outskirts of His ineffable greatness and glory.

It is my fault or my misfortune to remark, in this Reply, an inaccuracy of reference, which would of itself suffice to render it remarkable. Christ, we are told (pp. 492, 500), denounced the chosen people of God as "a generation of vipers." This phrase is applied by the Baptist to the crowd who came to seek baptism from him; but it is only applied by our Lord to Scribes or Pharisees (Luke iii. 7, Matthew xxiii. 33, and xii. 34), who are so commonly placed by Him in contrast with the people. The error is repeated in the mention of whited sepulchres. Take again the version of the story of Ananias and Sapphira. We are told (p. 494) that the Apostles conceived the idea "of having all things in common." In the narrative there is no statement, no suggestion of the kind; it is a pure interpolation (Acts iv. 32-7). Motives of a reasonable prudence are stated as matter of fact to have influenced the offending couple — another pure interpolation. After the catastrophe of Ananias "the Apostles sent for his wife" — a third interpolation. I refer only to these points as exhibitions of an habitual and dangerous inaccuracy, and without any attempt at present to discuss the case, in which the judgments of God are exhibited on their severer side, and in which I cannot, like the Reply, undertake summarily to determine for what causes the Almighty should or should not take life, or delegate the power to take it.

Again, we have (p. 486) these words given as a quotation from the Bible:

"They who believe and are baptized shall be saved, and they who believe not shall be damned; and these shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

The second clause thus reads as if applicable to the persons mentioned in the first; that is to say, to those who reject the tidings of the Gospel. But instead of it being a continuous passage, the

latter section is brought out of another gospel (St. Matthew's) and another connection; and it is really written, not of those who do not believe, but of those who refuse to perform offices of charity to their neighbour in his need. It would be wrong to call this intentional misrepresentation; but can it be called less than somewhat reckless negligence?

It is a more special misfortune to find a writer arguing on the same side with his critic, and yet for the critic not to be able to agree with him. But so it is with reference to the great subject of immortality, as treated in the Reply.

"The idea of immortality, that, like a sea, has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves, of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection; and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mist and clouds of doubt and darkness, as long as love kisses the lips of death" (p. 483).

Here we have a very interesting chapter of the history of human opinion disposed of in the usual summary way, by a statement which, as it appears to me is developed out of the writer's inner consciousness. If the belief in immortality is not connected with any revelation or religion, but is simply the expression of a subjective want, then plainly we may expect the expression of it to be strong and clear in proportion to the various degrees in which faculty is developed among the various races of mankind. But how does the matter stand historically? The Egyptians were not a people of high intellectual development, and yet their religious system was strictly associated with, I might rather say founded on, the belief in immortality. The ancient Greeks, on the other hand, were a race of astonishing, perhaps unrivalled, intellectual capacity. But not only did they, in prehistoric ages, derive their scheme of a future world from Egypt; we find also that, with the lapse of time and the advance of the Hellenic civilization, the constructive ideas of the system lost all life and definite outline, and the most powerful mind of the Greek philosophy, that of Aristotle, had no clear conception whatever of a personal existence in a future state.

The favorite doctrine of the Reply is the immunity of all error in belief from moral responsibility. At the first page (p. 473) this is stated with reserve as the "innocence of *honest* error." But why such a limitation? The Reply warms with its subject; it shows us that no error can be otherwise than honest, inasmuch as nothing which involves honesty, or its reverse, can, from the constitution

of our nature, enter into the formation of opinion. Here is the full blown exposition (p. 476):

"The brain thinks without asking our consent. We believe, or we disbelieve, without an effort of the will. Belief is a result. It is the effect of evidence upon the mind. The scales turn in spite of him who watches. *There is no opportunity of being honest, or dishonest, in the formation of an opinion.* The conclusion is entirely independent of desire."

The reasoning faculty is, therefore, wholly extrinsic to our moral nature, and no influence is or can be received or imparted between them. I know not whether the meaning is that all the faculties of our nature are like so many separate departments in one of the modern shops that supply all human wants; that will, memory, imagination, affection, passion, each has its own separate domain, and that they meet only for a comparison of results, just to tell one another what they have severally been doing. It is difficult to conceive, if this be so, wherein consists the personality, or individuality, or organic unity of man. It is not difficult to see that while the Reply aims at uplifting human nature, it in reality plunges us (p. 475) into the abyss of degradation by the destruction of moral freedom, responsibility, and unity. For we are justly told that "reason is the supreme and final test." Action may be merely instinctive and habitual, or it may be consciously founded on formulated thought; but, in the cases where it is instinctive and habitual, it passes over, so soon as it is challenged, into the other category, and finds a basis for itself in some form of opinion. But, says the Reply, we have no responsibility for our opinions: we cannot help forming them according to the evidence as it presents itself to us. Observe, the doctrine embraces every kind of opinion, and embraces all alike, opinion on subjects where we like or dislike, as well as upon subjects where we merely affirm or deny in some medium absolutely colourless. For, if a distinction be taken between the colourless and the coloured medium, between conclusions to which passion or propensity or imagination inclines us, and conclusions to which these have nothing to say, then the whole ground will be cut away from under the feet of the Reply, and it will have to build again *ab initio*. Let us try this by a test case. A father who has believed his son to have been through life upright, suddenly finds that charges are made from various quarters against his integrity. Or a friend, greatly dependent for the work of his life on the co-operation of another friend, is told that that comrade is counterworking and betraying him. I make no assumption now

as to the evidence or the result: but I ask which of them could approach the investigation without feeling a desire to be able to acquit? And what shall we say of the desire to condemn? Would Elizabeth have had no leaning towards finding Mary Stuart implicated in a conspiracy? Did English judges and juries approach with an unbiassed mind the trials for the Popish plot? Were the opinions formed by the English Parliament on the Treaty of Limerick formed without the intervention of the will? Did Napoleon judge according to the evidence when he acquitted himself in the matter of the Duc d'Enghien? Does the intellect sit in a solitary chamber, like Galileo in the palace of the Vatican, and pursue celestial observation all untouched, while the turmoil of earthly business is raging everywhere around? According to the Reply, it must be a mistake to suppose that there is anywhere in the world such a thing as bias, or prejudice, or prepossession: they are words without meaning in regard to our judgments, for, even if they could raise a clamor from without, the intellect sits within, in an atmosphere of serenity, and, like Justice, is deaf and blind, as well as calm.

In addition to all other faults, I hold that this philosophy, or phantasm of philosophy, is eminently retrogressive. Human nature, in its compound of flesh and spirit, becomes more complex with the progress of civilization; with the steady multiplication of wants, and of means for their supply. With complication, introspection has largely extended, and I believe that, as observation extends its field, so far from isolating the intelligence and making it autocratic it tends more and more to enhance and multiply the infinitely subtle, as well as the broader and more palpable modes, in which the interaction of the human faculties is carried on. Who among us has not had occasion to observe, in the course of his experience, how largely the intellectual power of a man is affected by the demands of life on his moral powers, and how they open and grow, or dry up and dwindle, according to the manner in which these demands are met.

Genius itself, however purely a conception of the intellect, is not exempt from the strong influences of joy and suffering, love and hatred, hope and fear, in the development of its powers. It may be that Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, basking upon the whole in the sunshine of life, drew little supplementary force from its trials and agitations. But the history of one not less wonderful than any of these, the career of Dante, tells a different tale; and one of the latest and most searching investigators of his history (Scartazzini, Dante Alighieri, *seine zeit, sein leben, und seine werke*, B. II.

Ch. 5, p. 119; also pp. 438, 9. Biel, 1869) tells, and shows us, how the experience of his life co-operated with his extraordinary natural gifts and capabilities to make him what he was. Under the three great heads of love, belief, and patriotism, his life was a continued course of ecstatic or agonizing trials. The strain of these trials was discipline; discipline was experience; and experience was elevation. No reader of his great work will, I believe, hold with the Reply that his thoughts, conclusions, judgments were simple results of an automatic process, in which the will and affections had no share, that reasoning operations are like the whirl of a clock running down, and we can no more arrest the process or alter the conclusion than the wheels can stop the movement or the noise.*

The doctrine taught in the Reply, that belief is, as a general, nay, universal, law, independent of the will, surely proves, when examined, to be a plausibility of the shallowest kind. Even in arithmetic, if a boy, through dislike of his employment, and consequent lack of attention, brings out a wrong result for his sum, it can hardly be said that his conclusion is absolutely and in all respects independent of his will. Moving onward, point by point, toward the centre of the argument, I will next take an illustration from mathematics. It has (I apprehend) been demonstrated that the relation of the diameter to the circumference of a circle is not susceptible of full numerical expression. Yet, from time to time, treatises are published which boldly announce that they set forth the quadrature of the circle. I do not deny that this may be purely intellectual error; but would it not, on the other hand, be hazardous to assert that no grain of egotism or ambition has ever entered into the composition of any one of such treatises? I have selected these instances as, perhaps, the most favorable that can be found to the doctrine of the Reply. But the truth is that, if we set aside matters of trivial import, the enormous majority of human judgments are those into which the biassing power of likes and dislikes

* I possess the confession of an illiterate criminal, made, I think, in 1834, under the following circumstances: The new poor law had just been passed in England, and it required persons needing relief to go into the workhouse as a condition of receiving it. In some parts of the country, this provision produced a profound popular panic. The man in question was destitute at the time. He was (I think) an old widower with four very young sons. He rose in the night and strangled them all, one after another, with a blue handkerchief, not from want of fatherly affection, but to keep them out of the workhouse. The confession of this peasant, simple in phrase, but intensely impassioned strongly reminds me of the Ugolino of Dante, and appears to make some approach to its sublimity. Such, in given circumstances, is the effect of moral agony on mental power.

more or less largely enters. I admit, indeed, that the illative faculty works under rules upon which choice and inclination ought to exercise no influence whatever. But even if it were granted that in fact the faculty of discourse is exempted from all such influences within its own province, yet we come no nearer to the mark, because that faculty has to work upon materials supplied to it by other faculties; it draws conclusions according to premises, and the question has to be determined whether our conceptions set forth in those premises are or are not influenced by moral causes. For, if they be so influenced, then in vain will be the proof that the understanding has dealt loyally and exactly with the materials it has to work upon; inasmuch as, although the intellectual process be normal in itself, the operation may have been tainted *ab initio* by colouring and distorting influences which have falsified the primary conceptions.

Let me now take an illustration from the extreme opposite quarter to that which I first drew upon. The system called Thug-gism, represented in the practice of the Thugs, taught that the act, which we describe as murder, was innocent. Was this an honest error? Was it due, in its authors as well as in those who blindly followed them, to an automatic process of thought, in which the will was not consulted, and which accordingly could entail no responsibility? If it was, then it is plain that the whole foundations, not of belief, but of social morality, are broken up. If it was not, then the sweeping doctrine of the present writer on the necessary blamelessness of erroneous conclusions tumbles to the ground like a house of cards at the breath of the child who built it.

In truth, the pages of the Reply, and the Letter which has more recently followed it,* themselves demonstrate that what the writer has asserted wholesale he overthrows and denies in detail. "You will admit," says the Reply (p. 477), "that he who now persecutes for opinion's sake is infamous." But why? Suppose he thinks that by persecution he can bring a man from soul-destroying falsehood to soul-saving truth, this opinion may reflect on his intellectual debility: but that is his misfortune, not his fault. His brain has thought without asking his consent; he has believed or disbelieved without an effort of the will (p. 476). Yet the very writer, who has thus established his title to think, is the first to hurl at him an anathema for thinking. And again, in the Letter to Dr. Field (N.

* NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW for January, 1888. "Another Letter to Dr. Field."

A. R., vol. 146, p. 33), "the dogma of eternal pain" is described as "that infamy of infamies." I am not about to discuss the subject of future retribution. If I were, it would be my first duty to show that this writer has not adequately considered either the scope of his own arguments (which in no way solve the difficulties he presents) or the meaning of his words; and my second would be to recommend his perusal of what Bishop Butler has suggested on this head. But I am at present on ground altogether different. I am trying another issue. This author says we believe or disbelieve without the action of the will, and, consequently, belief or disbelief is not the proper subject of praise or blame. And yet, according to the very same authority, the dogma of eternal pain is what?—not "an error of errors," but an "infamy of infamies:" and though to hold a negative may not be a subject of moral reproach, yet to hold the affirmative may. Truly it may be asked, is not this a fountain which sends forth at once sweet waters and bitter?

Once more. I will pass away from tender ground, and will endeavour to lodge a broader appeal to the enlightened judgment of the author. Says Odysseus in the Iliad (B. II.) οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη; and a large part of the world, stretching this sentiment beyond its original meaning, have held that the root of civil power is not in the community, but in its head. In opposition to this doctrine, the American written Constitution, and the entire American tradition, teach the right of a nation to self-government. And these propositions, which have divided and still divide the world, open up respectively into vast systems of irreconcilable ideas and laws, practices and habits of mind. Will any rational man, above all will any American, contend that these conflicting systems have been adopted, upheld, and enforced on one side and the other, in the daylight of pure reasoning only, and that moral, or immoral, causes have nothing to do with their adoption? That the intellect has worked impartially, like a steam-engine, and that selfishness, love of fame, love of money, love of power, envy, wrath, and malice, or again bias, in its least noxious form, have never had anything to do with generating the opposing movements, or the frightful collisions in which they have resulted? If we say that they have not, we contradict the universal judgment of mankind. If we say they have, then mental processes are not automatic, but may be influenced by the will and by the passions, affections, habits, fancies, that sway the will; and this writer will not have advanced a step towards proving the universal innocence of error, until he has shown that propositions of religion are essentially unlike almost all other propositions, and that no man ever has been, or from the

nature of the case can be, affected in their acceptance or rejection by moral causes.*

To sum up. There are many passages in these noteworthy papers, which, taken by themselves, are calculated to command warm sympathy. Towards the close of his final, or latest letter, the writer expresses himself as follows (N. A. R., vol. 146, p. 46):

“Neither in the interest of truth, nor for the benefit of man, is it necessary to assert what we do not know. No cause is great enough to demand a sacrifice of candor. The mysteries of life and death, of good and evil, have never yet been solved.”

How good, how wise are these words! But coming at the close of the controversy, have they not some of the ineffectual features of a death-bed repentance? They can hardly be said to represent in all points the rules under which the pages preceding them have been composed; or he, who so justly says that we ought not to assert what we do not know, could hardly have laid down the law as we find it a few pages earlier (*ibid*, p. 40) when it is pronounced that “an infinite God has no excuse for leaving his children in doubt and darkness.” Candor and upright intention are indeed everywhere manifest amidst the flashing coruscations which really compose the staple of the articles. Candor and upright intention also impose upon a commentator the duty of formulating his animadversions. I sum them up under two heads. Whereas we are placed in an atmosphere of mystery, relieved only by a little sphere of light round each of us, like a clearing in an American forest (which this writer has so well described), and rarely can see farther than is necessary for the direction of our own conduct from day to day, we find here, assumed by a particular person, the character of an universal judge without appeal. And whereas the highest self-restraint is necessary in these dark but, therefore, all the more exciting inquiries, in order to maintain the ever quivering balance of our faculties, this writer chooses to ride an unbroken horse, and to throw the reins upon his neck. I have endeavoured to give a sample of the results.

W. E. GLADSTONE.

* The chief part of these observations were written before I had received the January number of the *REVIEW*, with Col. Ingersoll's additional letter to Dr. Field. Much of this letter is especially pointed at Dr. Field, who can defend himself, and at Calvin, whose ideas I certainly cannot undertake to defend all along the line. I do not see that the Letter adds to those, the most salient, points of the earlier article which I have endeavored to select for animadversion.

Col. Ingersoll to Mr. Gladstone.

TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M. P.

MY DEAR SIR:—At the threshold of this reply, it gives me pleasure to say that for your intellect and character I have the greatest respect; and let me say further, that I shall consider your arguments, assertions, and inferences entirely apart from your personality—apart from the exalted position that you occupy in the estimation of the civilized world. I gladly acknowledge the inestimable services that you have rendered, not only to England, but to mankind. Most men are chilled and narrowed by the snows of age; their thoughts are darkened by the approach of night. But you, for many years, have hastened toward the light, and your mind has been “an autumn that grew the more by reaping.”

Under no circumstances could I feel justified in taking advantage of the admissions that you have made as to the “errors” the “misfeasance,” the “infirmities and the perversity” of the Christian church.

It is perfectly apparent that churches, being only aggregations of people, contain the prejudice, the ignorance, the vices and the virtues of ordinary human beings. The perfect cannot be made out of the imperfect.

A man is not necessarily a great mathematician because he admits the correctness of the multiplication table. The best creed may be believed by the worst of the human race. Neither the crimes nor the virtues of the church tend to prove or disprove the supernatural origin of religion. The massacre of St. Bartholomew tends no more to establish the inspiration of the scriptures than the bombardment of Alexandria.

But there is one thing that cannot be admitted, and that is your statement that the constitution of man is in a “warped, impaired, and dislocated condition,” and that “these deformities indispose men to belief.” Let us examine this.

We say that a thing is “warped” that was once nearer level, flat, or straight; that it is “impaired” when it was once nearer perfect, and that it is “dislocated” when once it was united. Con-



Col. R. G. Ingersoll.

sequently, you have said that at some time the human constitution was unwarped, unimpaired, and with each part working in harmony with all. You seem to believe in the degeneracy of man, and that our unfortunate race, starting at perfection, has travelled downward through all the wasted years.

It is hardly possible that our ancestors were perfect. If history proves anything, it establishes the fact that civilization was not first, and savagery afterwards. Certainly the tendency of man is not now toward barbarism. There must have been a time when language was unknown, when lips had never formed a word. That which man knows, man must have learned. The victories of our race have been slowly and painfully won. It is a long distance from the gibberish of the savage to the sonnets of Shakespeare—a long and weary road from the pipe of Pan to the great orchestra voiced with every tone from the glad warble of a mated bird to the hoarse thunder of the sea. The road is long that lies between the discordant cries uttered by the barbarian over the gashed body of his foe and the marvelous music of Wagner and Beethoven. It is hardly possible to conceive of the years that lie between the caves in which crouched our naked ancestors crunching the bones of wild beasts, and the home of a civilized man with its comforts, its articles of luxury and use,—with its works of art, with its enriched and illuminated walls. Think of the billowed years that must have rolled between these shores. Think of the vast distance that man has slowly groped from the dark dens and lairs of ignorance and fear to the intellectual conquests of our day.

Is it true that these deformities, these “warped, impaired, and dislocated constitutions indispose men to belief?” Can we in this way account for the doubts entertained by the intellectual leaders of mankind?

It will not do, in this age and time, to account for unbelief in this deformed and dislocated way. The exact opposite must be true. Ignorance and credulity sustain the relation of cause and effect. Ignorance is satisfied with assertion, with appearance. As man rises in the scale of intelligence he demands evidence. He begins to look back of appearance. He asks the priest for reasons. The most ignorant part of Christendom is the most orthodox.

You have simply repeated a favorite assertion of the clergy, to the effect that man rejects the gospel because he is naturally depraved and hard of heart—because, owing to the sin of Adam and Eve, he has fallen from the perfection and purity of paradise

to that "impaired" condition in which he is satisfied with the filthy rags of reason, observation and experience.

The truth is, that what you call unbelief is only a higher and holier faith. Millions of men reject Christianity because of its cruelty. The Bible was never rejected by the cruel. It has been upheld by countless tyrants—by the dealers in human flesh—by the destroyers of nations—by the enemies of intelligence—by the stealers of babes and the whippers of women.

It is also true that it has been held as sacred by the good, the self-denying, the virtuous and the loving, who clung to the sacred volume on account of the good it contains and in spite of all its cruelties and crimes.

You are mistaken when you say that all "the faults of all the Christian bodies and subdivisions of bodies have been carefully raked together" in my Reply to Dr. Field, "and made part and parcel of the indictment against the divine scheme of salvation."

No thoughtful man pretends that any fault of any Christian body can be used as an argument against what you call the "divine scheme of redemption."

I find in your Remarks the frequent charge that I am guilty of making assertions and leaving them to stand without the assistance of argument or fact, and it may be proper, at this particular point, to inquire how you know that there is "a divine scheme of redemption."

My objections to this "divine scheme of redemption" are: *first*, that there is not the slightest evidence that it is divine; *second*, that it is not in any sense a "scheme," human or divine; and *third*, that it cannot, by any possibility, result in the redemption of a human being.

It cannot be divine, because it has no foundation in the nature of things, and is not in accordance with reason. It is based on the idea that right and wrong are the expression of an arbitrary will, and not words applied to, and descriptive of, acts in the light of consequences. It rests upon the absurdity called "pardon," upon the assumption that when a crime has been committed justice will be satisfied with the punishment of the innocent. One person may suffer, or reap a benefit, in consequence of the act of another, but no man can be justly punished for the crime, or justly rewarded for the virtues, of another. A "scheme" that punishes an innocent man for the vices of another can hardly be called divine. Can a murderer find justification in the agonies of his victim? There is

no vicarious vice; there is no vicarious virtue. For me it is hard to understand how a just and loving being can charge one of his children with the vices, or credit him with the virtues, of another.

And why should we call anything a "divine scheme" that has been a failure from the "fall of man" until the present moment? What race, what nation has been redeemed through the instrumentality of this "divine scheme?" Have not the subjects of redemption been for the most part the enemies of civilization? Has not almost every valuable book since the invention of printing been denounced by the believers in the "divine scheme?" Intelligence, the development of the mind, the discoveries of science, the inventions of genius, the cultivation of the imagination through art and music, and the practice of virtue will redeem the human race. These are the saviours of mankind.

You admit that the "Christian churches have, by their exaggerations and shortcomings, and by their faults of conduct, contributed to bring about a condition of hostility to religious faith."

If one wishes to know the worst that man has done, all that power guided by cruelty can do, all the excuses that can be framed for the commission of every crime, the infinite difference that can exist between that which is professed and that which is practiced, the marvelous malignity of meekness, the arrogance of humility and the savagery of what is known as "universal love," let him read the history of the Christian church.

Yet, I not only admit that millions of Christians have been honest in the expression of their opinions, but that they have been among the best and noblest of our race.

And it is further admitted that a creed should be examined apart from the conduct of those who have assented to its truth. The church should be judged as a whole, and its faults should be accounted for either by the weakness of human nature, or by reason of some defect or vice in the religion taught,—or by both.

Is there anything in the Christian religion—anything in what you are pleased to call the "Sacred Scriptures," tending to cause the crimes and atrocities that have been committed by the Church?

It seems to be natural for a man to defend himself and the ones he loves. The father slays the man who would kill his child—he defends the body. The Christian father burns the heretic—he defends the soul.

If "orthodox Christianity" be true, an infidel has not the right to live. Every book in which the Bible is attacked should be

burned with its author. Why hesitate to burn a man whose constitution is "warped, impaired and dislocated," for a few moments, when hundreds of others will be saved from eternal flames?

In Christianity you will find the cause of persecution. The idea that belief is essential to salvation—this ignorant and merciless dogma—accounts for the atrocities of the church. This absurd declaration built the dungeons, used the instruments of torture, erected the scaffolds and lighted the fagots of a thousand years.

What, I pray you, is the "heavenly treasure" in the keeping of your church? Is it a belief in an infinite God? That was believed thousands of years before the serpent tempted Eve. Is it a belief in the immortality of the soul? That is far older. Is it that man should treat his neighbor as himself? That is more ancient. What is the treasure in the keeping of the church? Let me tell you. It is this: That there is but one true religion—Christianity,—and that all others are false; that the prophets, and Christs, and priests of all others have been and are impostors, or the victims of insanity; that the Bible is the one inspired book—the one authentic record of the words of God; that all men are naturally depraved and deserve to be punished with unspeakable torments forever; that there is only one path that leads to heaven, while countless highways lead to hell; that there is only one name under heaven by which a human being can be saved; that we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: that this life, with its few and fleeting years, fixes the fate of man; that the few will be saved and the many forever lost. This is the "heavenly treasure" within the keeping of your church.

And this "treasure" has been guarded by the cherubim of persecution, whose flaming swords were wet for many centuries with the best and bravest blood. It has been guarded by cunning, by hypocrisy, by mendacity, by honesty, by calumniating the generous, by maligning the good, by thumb screws and racks, by charity and love, by robbery and assassination, by poison and fire, by the virtues of the ignorant and the vices of the learned, by the violence of mobs and the whirlwinds of war, by every hope and every fear, by every cruelty and every crime, and by all there is of the wild beast in the heart of man.

With great propriety it may be asked: In the keeping of which church is this "heavenly treasure?" Did the Catholics have it, and was it taken by Luther? Did Henry the VIII. seize it, and is it now in the keeping of the Church of England? Which of the warring sects in America has this treasure; or have we, in

this country, only the "rust and canker?" Is it in an Episcopal Church, that refuses to associate with a coloured man for whom Christ died, and who is good enough for the society of the angelic host?

But wherever this "heavenly treasure" has been, about it have always hovered the Stympthalian birds of superstition, thrusting their brazen beaks and claws deep into the flesh of honest men.

You were pleased to point out as the particular line justifying your assertion "that denunciation, sarcasm, and invective constitute the staple of my work," that line in which I speak of those who expect to receive as alms an eternity of joy, and add: "I take this as a specimen of the mode of statement which permeates the whole."

Dr. Field commenced his Open Letter by saying: "I am glad that I know you, *even though some of my brethren look upon you as a monster, because of your unbelief.*"

In reply I simply said: "The statement in your Letter that some of your brethren look upon me as a monster on account of my unbelief tends to show that those who love God are not always the friends of their fellow men. Is it not strange that people who admit that they ought to be eternally damned—that they are by nature depraved—that there can be no soundness of health in them, can be so arrogantly egotistic as to look upon others as monsters? And yet some of your brethren who regard unbelievers as infamous, rely for salvation entirely on the goodness of another, and expect to receive as alms an eternity of joy." Is there any denunciation, sarcasm, or invective in this?

Why should one who admits that he is himself totally depraved call any other man, by way of reproach, a monster? Possibly, he might be justified in addressing him as a fellow-monster.

I am not satisfied with your statement that "the Christian receives as alms all whatsoever he receives at all." Is it true that man deserves only punishment? Does the man who makes the world better, who works and battles for the right, and dies for the good of his fellow men, deserve nothing but pain and anguish? Is happiness a gift or a consequence? Is heaven only a well-conducted poorhouse? Are the angels in their highest estate nothing but happy paupers? Must all the redeemed feel that they are in heaven simply because there was a miscarriage of justice? Will the lost be the only ones who will know that the right thing has been done, and will they alone appreciate the "ethical elements of religion?"

Will they repeat the words that you have quoted: "Mercy and judgment are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other"? or will those words be spoken by the redeemed as they joyously contemplate the writhings of the lost?

No one will dispute "that in the discussion of important questions calmness and sobriety are essential." But solemnity need not be carried to the verge of mental paralysis. In the search for truth,—that everything in nature seems to hide,—man needs the assistance of all his faculties. All the senses should be awake. Humor should carry a torch, Wit should give its sudden light, Candor should hold the scales, Reason, the final arbiter, should put his royal stamp on every fact, and Memory, with a miser's care, should keep and guard the mental gold.

The church has always despised the man of humor, hated laughter and encouraged the lethargy of solemnity. It is not willing that the mind should subject its creed to every test of truth. It wishes to overawe. It does not say, "He that hath a mind to think let him think"; but, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." The church has always abhorred wit,—that is to say, it does not enjoy being struck by the lightning of the soul. The foundation of wit is logic, and it has always been the enemy of the supernatural, the solemn and absurd.

You express great regret that no one at the present day is able to write like Pascal. You admire his wit and tenderness, and the unique, brilliant, and fascinating manner in which he treated the profoundest and most complex themes. Sharing in your admiration and regret, I call your attention to what might be called one of his religious generalizations. "Disease is the natural state of a Christian." Certainly it cannot be said that I have ever mingled the profound and complex in a more fascinating manner.

Another instance is given of the "tumultuous method in which I conduct, not, indeed, my argument, but my case."

Dr. Field had drawn a distinction between superstition and religion, to which I replied: "You are shocked at the Hindoo mother when she gives her child to death at the supposed command of her God. What do you think of Abraham, of Jephthah? What is your opinion of Jehovah himself?"

These simple questions seem to have excited you to an unusual degree, and you ask in words of some severity: "Whether this is the tone in which controversies ought to be carried on?" And you say that—"not only is the name of Jehovah encircled in the heart

of every believer with the profoundest reverence and love, but that the Christian religion teaches, through the incarnation, a personal relation with God so lofty that it can only be approached in a deep, reverential calm." You admit that "a person who deems a given religion to be wicked, may be led onward by logical consistency to impugn in strong terms the character of the author and object of that religion," but you insist that such person is "bound by the laws of social morality and decency to consider well the terms and meaning of his indictment."

Was there any lack of "reverential calm" in my question? I gave no opinion, drew no indictment, but simply asked for the opinion of another. Was that a violation of the "laws of social morality and decency?"

It is not necessary for me to discuss this question with you. It has been settled by Jehovah himself. You probably remember the account given in the eighteenth chapter of I. Kings, of a contest between the prophets of Baal and the prophets of Jehovah. There were four hundred and fifty prophets of the false God, who endeavoured to induce their deity to consume with fire from heaven the sacrifice upon his altar. According to the account, they were greatly in earnest. They certainly appeared to have some hope of success, but the fire did not descend.

"And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said 'Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked.'"

Do you consider that the proper way to attack the God of another? Did ~~not~~ Elijah know that the name of Baal "was encircled in the heart of every believer with the profoundest reverence and love?" Did he "violate the laws of social morality and decency?"

But Jehovah and Elijah did not stop at this point. They were not satisfied with mocking the prophets of Baal, but they brought them down to the brook Kishon—four hundred and fifty of them—and there they murdered every one.

Does it appear to you that on that occasion, on the banks of the brook Kishon—"Mercy and judgment met together, and that righteousness and peace kissed each other?"

The question arises: Has every one who reads the Old Testament the right to express his thought as to the character of Jehovah? You will admit that as he reads his mind will receive some impression, and that when he finishes the "inspired volume" he will have

some opinion as to the character of Jehovah. Has he the right to express that opinion? Is the Bible a revelation from God to man? Is it a revelation to the man who reads it, or to the man who does not read it? If to the man who reads it, has he the right to give to others the revelation that God has given to him? If he comes to the conclusion at which you have arrived,—that Jehovah is God,—has he the right to express that opinion?

If he concludes, as I have done, that Jehovah is a myth, must he refrain from giving his honest thought? Christians do not hesitate to give their opinion of heretics, philosophers and infidels. They are not restrained by the "laws of social morality and decency." They have persecuted to the extent of their power, and their Jehovah pronounced upon unbelievers every curse capable of being expressed in the Hebrew dialect. At this moment, thousands of missionaries are attacking the gods of the heathen world, and heaping contempt on the religion of others.

But as you have seen proper to defend Jehovah, let us for a moment examine this deity of the ancient Jews.

There are several tests of character. It may be that all the virtues can be expressed in the word "kindness," and that nearly all the vices are gathered together in the word "cruelty."

Laughter is a test of character. When we know what a man laughs at, we know what he really is. Does he laugh at misfortune, at poverty, at honesty in rags, at industry without food, at the agonies of his fellow men? Does he laugh when he sees the convict clothed in the garments of shame—at the criminal on the scaffold? Does he rub his hands with glee over the embers of an enemy's home? Think of a man capable of laughing while looking at Marguerite in the prison cell with her dead babe by her side. What must be the real character of a God who laughs at the calamities of his children, mocks at their fears, their desolation, their distress and anguish? Would an infinitely loving God hold his ignorant children in derision? Would he pity, or mock? Save, or destroy? Educate, or exterminate? Would he lead them with gentle hands towards the light, or lie in wait for them like a wild beast? Think of the echoes of Jehovah's laughter in the rayless caverns of the eternal prison. Can a good man mock at the children of deformity? Will he deride the misshapen? Your Jehovah deformed some of his own children, and then held them up to scorn and hatred. These divine mistakes—these blunders of the infinite—were not allowed to enter the temple erected in honor

of him who had dishonored them. Does a kind father mock his deformed child? What would you think of a mother who would deride and taunt her mishapen babe?

There is another test. How does a man use power? Is he gentle, or cruel? Does he defend the weak, succor the oppressed, or trample on the fallen?

If you will read again the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, you will find how Jehovah, the compassionate, whose name is enshrined in so many hearts, threatened to use his power.

"The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting and mildew. And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust." . . . "And thy carcass shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the earth." . . . "The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness. And thou shalt eat of the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and thy daughters. The tender and delicate women among you, . . . her eye shall be evil . . . toward her young one and toward her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them."

Should it be found that these curses were in fact uttered by the God of hell, and that the translators had made a mistake in attributing them to Jehovah, could you say that the sentiments expressed are inconsistent with the supposed character of the Infinite Fiend?

A nation is judged by its laws—by the punishment it inflicts. The nation that punishes ordinary offences with death is regarded as barbarous, and the nation that tortures before it kills is denounced as savage.

What can you say of the government of Jehovah, in which death was the penalty for hundreds of offences?—death for the expression of an honest thought—death for touching with a good intention a sacred ark—death for making hair oil—for eating shew bread—for imitating incense and perfumery?

In the history of the world a more cruel code cannot be found. Crimes seem to have been invented to gratify a fiendish desire to shed the blood of men.

There is another test: How does a man treat the animals in his power—his faithful horse—his patient ox—his loving dog?

How did Jehovah treat the animals in Egypt? Would a loving God, with fierce hail from heaven, bruise and kill the innocent cattle for the crimes of their owners? Would he torment, torture and destroy them for the sins of men?

Jehovah was a God of blood. His altar was adorned with the horns of a beast. He established a religion in which every temple was a slaughter house, and every priest a butcher—a religion that demanded the death of the first-born, and delighted in the destruction of life.

There is still another test: The civilized man gives to others the rights that he claims for himself. He believes in the liberty of thought and expression, and abhors persecution for conscience sake.

Did Jehovah believe in the innocence of thought and the liberty of expression? Kindness is found with true greatness. Tyranny lodges only in the breast of the small, the narrow, the shriveled and the selfish. Did Jehovah teach and practice generosity? Was he a believer in religious liberty? If he was and is, in fact, God, he must have known, even four thousand years ago, that worship must be free, and he who is forced upon his knees cannot, by any possibility, have the spirit of prayer.

Let me call your attention to a few passages in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy:

“If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, . . . thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eyes pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill him: thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die.”

Is it possible for you to find in the literature of this world more awful passages than these? Did ever savagery, with strange and uncouth marks, with awkward forms of beast and bird, pollute the dripping walls of caves with such commands? Are these the words of infinite mercy? When they were uttered, did “righteousness and peace kiss each other?” How can any loving man, or woman “encircle the name of Jehovah”—author of these words—“with profoundest reverence and love?” Do I rebel because my “constitution is warped, impaired and dislocated?” Is it because of “total depravity” that I denounce the brutality of Jehovah? If my heart were only good—if I loved my neighbor as myself—would I then see infinite mercy in these hideous words? Do I lack “reverential calm?”

These frightful passages, like coiled adders, were in the hearts of Jehovah’s chosen people when they crucified “the Sinless Man.”

Jehovah did not tell the husband to reason with his wife. She was to be answered only with death. She was to be bruised and

mangled to a bleeding, shapeless mass of quivering flesh, for having breathed an honest thought.

If there is anything of importance in this world, it is the family, the home, the marriage of true souls, the equality of husband and wife—the true republicanism of the heart—the real democracy of the fireside.

Let us read the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of Genesis :

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrows and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children : and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”

Never will I worship any being who added to the sorrows and agonies of maternity. Never will I bow to any God who introduced slavery into every home—who made the wife a slave and the husband a tyrant.

The Old Testament shows that Jehovah, like his creators, held women in contempt. They were regarded as property : “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife,—nor his ox.”

Why should a pure woman worship a God who upheld polygamy ? Let us finish this subject : The institution of slavery involves all crimes. Jehovah was a believer in slavery. This is enough. Why should any civilized man worship him ? Why should his name “be encircled with love and tenderness in any human heart ?”

He believed that man could become the property of man—that it was right for his chosen people to deal in human flesh—to buy and sell mothers and babes. He taught that the captives were the property of the captors, and directed his chosen people to kill, to enslave, or to pollute.

In the presence of these commandments, what becomes of the fine saying, “Love thy neighbor as thyself ?” What shall we say of a God who established slavery, and then had the effrontery to say, “Thou shalt not steal ?”

It may be insisted that Jehovah is the Father of all—and that he has “made of one blood all the nations of the earth.” How, then, can we account for the wars of extermination ? Does not the commandment “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” apply to nations precisely the same as to individuals ? Nations, like individuals, become great by the practice of virtue. How did Jehovah command his people to treat their neighbors ?

He commanded his generals to destroy all, men, women and babes : “Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.”

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

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

"I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust."

"The sword without and terror within shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of gray hairs."

Is it possible that these words fell from the lips of the Most Merciful?

You may reply that the inhabitants of Canaan were unfit to live—that they were ignorant and cruel. Why did not Jehovah, the "Father of all" give them the Ten Commandments? Why did he leave them without a Bible, without prophets and priests? Why did he shower all the blessings of revelation on one poor and wretched tribe, and leave the great world in ignorance and crime—and why did he order his favorite children to murder those whom he had neglected?

By the question I asked of Dr. Field, the intention was to show that Jephthah, when he sacrificed his daughter to Jehovah, was as much the slave of superstition as is the Hindoo mother when she throws her babe into the yellow waves of the Ganges.

It seems that this savage Jephthah was in direct communication with Jehovah at Mizpeh, and that he made a vow unto the Lord and said:

"If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

In the first place, it is perfectly clear that the sacrifice intended was a human sacrifice, from the words: "that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me." Some human being—wife, daughter, friend, was expected to come. According to the account, his daughter—his only daughter—his only child—came first.

If Jephthah was in communication with God, why did God allow this man to make this vow; and why did he allow the daughter that he loved to be first, and why did he keep silent and allow the vow to be kept, while flames devoured the daughter's flesh?

St. Paul is not authority. He praises Samuel, the man who hewed Agag in pieces: David, who compelled hundreds to pass under the saws and harrows of death, and many others who shed the blood of the innocent and helpless. Paul is an unsafe guide.

He who commends the brutalities of the past, sows the seeds of future crimes.

If "believers are not obliged to approve of the conduct of Jephthah," are they free to condemn the conduct of Jehovah? If you will read the account, you will see that the "spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah" when he made the cruel vow. If Paul did not commend Jephthah for keeping this vow, what was the act that excited his admiration? Was it because Jephthah slew on the banks of the Jordan "forty and two thousand" of the sons of Ephraim?

In regard to Abraham, the argument is precisely the same, except that Jehovah is said to have interfered, and allowed an animal to be slain instead.

One of the answers given by you is that "it may be allowed that the narrative is not within our comprehension;" and for that reason you say that "it behooves us to tread cautiously in approaching it." Why cautiously?

These stories of Abraham and Jephthah have cost many an innocent life. Only a few years ago, here in my country, a man by the name of Freeman, believing that God demanded at least the show of obedience—believing what he had read in the Old Testament that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission," and so believing, touched with insanity, sacrificed his little girl—plunged into her innocent breast the dagger, believing it to be God's will, and thinking that if it were not God's will, his hand would be stayed.

I know of nothing more pathetic than the story of this crime told by this man.

Nothing can be more monstrous than the conception of a God who demands sacrifice—of a God who would ask of a father that he murdered his son—of a father that he would burn his daughter. It is far beyond my comprehension how any man ever could have believed such an infinite, such a cruel absurdity.

At the command of the real God—if there be one—I would not sacrifice my child, I would not murder my wife. But as long as there are people in the world whose minds are so that they can believe the stories of Abraham and Jephthah, just so long there will be men who will take the lives of the ones they love best.

You have taken the position that the conditions are different; and you say that: "According to the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve were placed under a law, not of consciously perceived right and

wrong, but of simple obedience. The tree of which alone they were forbidden to eat was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; duty lay for them in following the command of the Most High, before and until they became capable of appreciating it by an ethical standard. Their knowledge was but that of an infant who had just reached the stage at which he can comprehend that he is ordered to do this or that, but not the nature of the thing so ordered."

If Adam and Eve could not "consciously perceive right and wrong," how is it possible for you to say that "duty lay for them in following the command of the Most High?" How can a person "incapable of perceiving right and wrong" have an idea of duty? You are driven to say that Adam and Eve had no moral sense. How, under such circumstances, could they have the sense of guilt, or of obligation? And why should such persons be punished? And why should the whole human race become tainted by the offence of those who had no moral sense?

Do you intend to be understood as saying that Jehovah allowed his children to enslave each other because "duty lay for them in following the command of the Most High?" Was it for this reason that he caused them to exterminate each other? Do you account for the severity of his punishments by the fact that the poor creatures punished were not aware of the enormity of the offences they had committed? What shall we say of a God who has one of his children stoned to death for picking up sticks on Sunday, and allows another to enslave his fellow man? Have you discovered any theory that will account for both of these facts?

Another word as to Abraham:—You defend his willingness to kill his son because "the estimate of human life at the time was different"—because "the position of the father in the family was different; its members were regarded as in some sense his property;" and because "there is every reason to suppose that around Abraham in the 'land of Moriah' the practice of human sacrifice as an act of religion was in full vigor."

Let us examine these three excuses: Was Jehovah justified in putting a low estimate on human life? Was he in earnest when he said "that whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed?" Did he pander to the barbarian view of the worthlessness of life? If the estimate of human life was low, what was the sacrifice worth?

Was the son the property of the father? Did Jehovah uphold this savage view? Had the father the right to sell or kill his child?

Do you defend Jehovah and Abraham because the ignorant wretches in the "land of Moriah," knowing nothing of the true God, cut the throats of their babes "as an act of religion?"

Was Jehovah led away by the example of the Gods of Moriah? Do you not see that your excuses are simply the suggestions of other crimes?

You see clearly that the Hindoo mother, when she throws her babe into the Ganges at the command of her God, "sins against first principles;" but you excuse Abraham because he lived in the childhood of the race. Can Jehovah be excused because of his youth? Not satisfied with your explanation, your defences and excuses, you take the ground that when Abraham said: "My son, God will provide a lamb for a burnt offering," he may have "believed implicitly that a way of rescue would be found for his son." In other words, that Abraham did not believe that he would be required to shed the blood of Isaac. So that, after all, the faith of Abraham consisted in "believing implicitly" that Jehovah was not in earnest.

You have discovered a way by which, as you think, the neck of orthodoxy can escape the noose of Darwin, and in that connection you use this remarkable language:

"I should reply that the moral history of man, in its principal stream, has been distinctly an evolution from the first until now."

It is hard to see how this statement agrees with the one in the beginning of your Remarks, in which you speak of the human constitution in its "warped, impaired and dislocated" condition. When you wrote that line, you were certainly a theologian—a believer in the Episcopal creed—and your mind, by mere force of habit, was at that moment contemplating man as he is supposed to have been created—perfect in every part. At that time you were endeavoring to account for the unbelief now in the world, and you did this by stating that the human constitution is "warped, impaired and dislocated;" but the moment you are brought face to face with the great truths uttered by Darwin, you admit "that the moral history of man has been distinctly an evolution from the first until now." Is not this a fountain that brings forth sweet and bitter waters?

I insist, that the discoveries of Darwin do away absolutely with the inspiration of the Scriptures—with the account of creation in Genesis, and demonstrate, not simply the falsity, not simply the wickedness, but the foolishness of the "sacred volume."

There is nothing in Darwin to show that all has been evolved from "primal night and from chaos." There is no evidence of

"primal night." There is no proof of universal chaos. Did your Jehovah spend an eternity in "primal night," with no companion but chaos?

It makes no difference how long a lower form may require to reach a higher. It makes no difference whether forms can be simply modified or absolutely changed. These facts have not the slightest tendency to throw the slightest light on the beginning or on the destiny of things.

I most cheerfully admit that gods have the right to create swiftly or slowly. The reptile may become a bird in one day, or in a thousand billion years—this fact has nothing to do with the existence or non-existence of the first cause, but it has something to do with the truth of the Bible, and with the existence of a personal God of infinite power and wisdom.

Does not a gradual improvement in the thing created show a corresponding improvement in the creator? The church demonstrated the falsity and folly of Darwin's theories by showing that they contradicted the Mosaic account of creation, and now the theories of Darwin having been fairly established, the church says that the Mosaic account is true, because it is in harmony with Darwin. Now, if it should turn out that Darwin was mistaken, what then?

To me, it is somewhat difficult to understand the mental processes of one who really feels that "the gap between man and the inferior animals or their relationship was stated, perhaps, even more emphatically by Bishop Butler than by Darwin."

Butler answered deists, who objected to the cruelties of the Bible, and yet lauded the God of Nature by showing that the God of Nature is as cruel as the God of the Bible. That is to say, he succeeded in showing that both Gods are bad. He had no possible conception of the splendid generalizations of Darwin—the great truths that have revolutionized the thought of the world.

But there was one question asked by Bishop Butler that throws a flame of light upon the probable origin of most, if not all, religions: "Why might not whole communities and public bodies be seized with fits of insanity as well as individuals?"

If you are convinced that Moses and Darwin are in exact accord, will you be good enough to tell who, in your judgment, were the parents of Adam and Eve? Do you find in Darwin any theory that satisfactorily accounts for the "inspired fact" that a Rib, commencing with Monogonic Propagation—falling into halves by a

contraction in the middle—reaching, after many ages of Evolution, the Amphigonic stage, and then, by the Survival of the Fittest, assisted by Natural Selection, moulded and modified by Environment, became at last the mother of the human race?

Here is a world in which there are countless varieties of life—these varieties in all probability related to each other—all living upon each other—everything devouring something, and in its turn devoured by something else—everywhere claw and beak, hoof and tooth,—everything seeking the life of something else—every drop of water a battle field, every atom being for some wild beast a jungle—every place a golgotha—and such a world is declared to be the work of the infinitely wise and compassionate.

According to your idea, Jehovah prepared a home for his children—first a garden in which they should be tempted and from which they should be driven; then a world filled with briers and thorns and wild and poisonous beasts—a world in which the air should be filled with the enemies of human life—a world in which disease should be contagious, and in which it was impossible to tell, except by actual experiment, the poisonous from the nutritious. And these children were allowed to live in dens and holes and fight their way amongst monstrous serpents and crouching beasts—were allowed to live in ignorance and fear—to have false ideas of this good and loving God—ideas so false that they made of him a fiend—ideas so false that they sacrificed their wives and babes to appease the imaginary wrath of this monster. And this God gave to different nations different ideas of himself, knowing that in consequence of that these nations would meet upon countless fields of battle and drain each other's veins.

Would it not have been better had the world been so that parents would transmit only their virtues—only their perfections, physical and mental,—allowing their diseases and their vices to perish with them?

In my reply to Dr. Field I had asked: Why should God demand a sacrifice from man? Why should the infinite ask anything from the finite? Should the sun beg from the glow-worm, and should the momentary spark excite the envy of the source of light?

Upon which you remark, "that if the infinite is to make no demand upon the finite, by parity of reasoning, the great and strong should scarcely make them on the weak and small."

Can this be called reasoning? Why should the infinite demand a sacrifice from man? In the first place, the infinite is

conditionless—the infinite cannot want—the infinite has. A conditioned being may want; but the gratification of a want involves a change of condition. If God be conditionless he can have no wants—consequently, no human being can gratify the infinite.

But you insist that “if the infinite is to make no demands upon the finite, by parity of reasoning the great and strong should scarcely make them on the weak and small.”

The great have wants. The strong are often in need, in peril, and the great and strong often need the services of the small and weak. It was the mouse that freed the lion. England is a great and powerful nation—yet she may need the assistance of the weakest of her citizens. The world is filled with illustrations.

The lack of logic is in this: The infinite cannot want anything; the strong and the great may, and as a fact always do. The great and the strong cannot help the infinite—they can help the small and the weak, and the small and the weak can often help the great and strong.

You ask: “Why then should the father make demands of love, obedience and sacrifice from his young child?”

No sensible father ever demanded love from his child. Every civilized father knows that love rises like the perfume from a flower. You cannot command it by simply authority. It cannot obey. A father demands obedience from a child for the good of the child and for the good of himself. But suppose the father to be infinite—why should the child sacrifice anything for him?

But it may be that you answer all these questions, all these difficulties, by admitting, as you have in your Remarks, “that these problems are insoluble by our understanding.”

Why, then, do you accept them? Why do you defend that which you cannot understand? Why does your reason volunteer as a soldier under the flag of the incomprehensible?

I asked of Dr. Field, and I ask again, this question: Why should an infinitely wise and powerful God destroy the good and preserve the vile?

What do I mean by this question? Simply this: The earthquake, the lightning, the pestilence, are no respecters of persons. The vile are not always destroyed, the good are not always saved. I asked: Why should God treat all alike in this world, and in another make an infinite difference? This I suppose, is “insoluble to our understanding.”

Why should Jehovah allow his worshipers, his adorers, to be destroyed by his enemies? Can you by any possibility answer this question?

You may account for all these inconsistencies, these cruel contradictions, as John Wesley accounted for earthquakes when he insisted that they were produced by the wickedness of men, and that the only way to prevent them was for everybody to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And you may have some way of showing that Mr. Wesley's idea is entirely consistent with the theories of Mr. Darwin.

You seem to think that as long as there is more goodness than evil in the world—as long as there is more joy than sadness—we are compelled to infer that the author of the world is infinitely good, powerful, and wise, and that as long as a majority are out of gutters and prisons, the "divinity scheme" is a success.

According to this system of logic, if there were a few more unfortunates—if there was just a little more evil than good—then we would be driven to acknowledge that the world was created by an infinitely malevolent being.

As a matter of fact, the history of the world has been such that not only your theologians but your apostles, and not only your apostles but your prophets, and not only your prophets but your Jehovah, have all been forced to account for the evil, the injustice and the suffering, by the wickedness of man, the natural depravity of the human heart and the wiles and machinations of a malevolent being second only in power to Jehovah himself.

Again and again you have called me to account for "mere suggestions and assertions without proof"; and yet your remarks are filled with assertions and mere suggestions without proof.

You admit that "great believers are not able to explain the inequalities of adjustment between human beings and the conditions in which they have been set down to work out their destiny."

How do you know "that they have been set down to work out their destiny"? If that was, and is, the purpose, then the being who settled the "destiny," and the means by which it was to be "worked out," is responsible for all that happens.

And is this the end of your argument, "That you are not able to explain the inequalities of adjustment between human beings"? Is the solution of this problem beyond your power? Does the bible shed no light? Is the Christian in the presence of this question as dumb as the agnostic? When the injustice of this world

is so flagrant that you cannot harmonize that awful fact with the wisdom and goodness of an infinite God, do you not see that you have surrendered, or at least that you have raised a flag of truce beneath which your adversary accepts as final your statement that you do not know and that your imagination is not sufficient to frame an excuse for God?

It gave me great pleasure to find that at last even you have been driven to say that: "it is a duty incumbent upon us respectively according to our means and opportunities, to decide by the use of the faculty of reason given us, the great question of natural and revealed religion."

You admit "that I am to decide for myself, by the use of my reason," whether the bible is the word of God or not—whether there is any revealed religion—and whether there be or be not an infinite being who created and governs this world.

You also admit that we are to decide these questions according to the balance of the evidence.

Is this in accordance with the doctrine of Jehovah? Did Jehovah say to the husband that if his wife became convinced, according to her means and her opportunities, and decided according to her reason, that it was better to worship some other God than Jehovah, then that he was to say to her: "You are entitled to decide according to the balance of the evidence as it seems to you"?

Have you abandoned Jehovah? Is man more just than he? Have you appealed from him to the standard of reason? Is it possible that the leader of the English Liberals is nearer civilized than Jehovah?

Do you know that in this sentence you demonstrate the existence of a dawn in your mind? This sentence makes it certain that in the East of the midnight of Episcopal superstition there is the herald of the coming day. And if this sentence shows a dawn, what shall I say of the next:

"We are not entitled, either for or against belief, to set up in this province any rule of investigation except such as common sense teaches us to use in the ordinary conduct of life"?

This certainly is a morning star. Let me take this statement, let me hold it as a torch, and by its light I beg of you to read the bible once again.

Is it in accordance with reason that an infinitely good and loving God would drown a world that he had taken no means to civilize—to whom he had given no bible, no gospel,—taught no

scientific fact and in which the seeds of art had not been sown; that he would create a world that ought to be drowned? That a being of infinite wisdom would create a rival, knowing that the rival would fill perdition with countless souls destined to suffer eternal pain? Is it according to common sense than an infinitely good God would order some of his children to kill others? That he would command soldiers to rip open with the sword of war the bodies of women—wreaking vengeance on babes unborn? Is it according to reason that a good, loving, compassionate, and just God would establish slavery among men, and that a pure God would uphold polygamy? Is it according to common sense that he who wished to make men merciful and loving would demand the sacrifice of animals, so that his altar would be wet with the blood of oxen, sheep and doves? Is it according to reason that a good God would inflict tortures upon his ignorant children—that he would torture animals to death—and is it in accordance with common sense and reason that this God would create countless billions of people knowing that they would be eternally damned?

What is common sense? Is it the result of observation, reason and experience, or is it the child of credulity?

There is this curious fact: The far past and the far future seem to belong to the miraculous and the monstrous. The present, as a rule, is the realm of common sense. If you say to a man: "Eighteen hundred years ago the dead were raised," he will reply: "Yes, I know that." And if you say: "A hundred thousand years from now all the dead will be raised," he will probably reply: "I presume so." But if you tell him: "I saw a dead man raised to-day," he will ask, "From what madhouse have you escaped?"

The moment we decide "according to reason," "according to the balance of evidence," we are charged with "having violated the laws of social morality and decency," and the defender of the miraculous and the incomprehensible takes another position.

The theologian has a city of refuge to which he flies—an old breastwork behind which he kneels—a rifle pit into which he crawls. You have described this city, this breastwork, this rifle-pit and also the leaf under which the ostrich of theology thrusts its head. Let me quote:

"Our demands for evidence must be limited by the general reason of the case. Does that general reason of the case make it probable that a finite being, with a finite place in a comprehensive scheme devised and administered by a being who is infinite,

would be able even to embrace within his view, or rightly to appreciate all the motives or aims that there may have been in the mind of the divine disposer?"

And this is what you call "deciding by the use of the faculty of reason," "according to the evidence," or at least "according to the balance of evidence." This is a conclusion reached by a "rule of investigation such as common sense teaches us to use in the ordinary conduct of life." Will you have the kindness to explain what it is to act contrary to evidence, or contrary to common sense? Can you imagine a superstition so gross that it cannot be defended by that argument?

Nothing, it seems to me, could have been easier than for Jehovah to have reasonably explained his scheme. You may answer that the human intellect is not sufficient to understand the explanation. Why then do not theologians stop explaining? Why do they feel it incumbent upon them to explain that which they admit God would have explained had the human mind been capable of understanding it?

How much better would it have been if Jehovah had said a few things on these subjects. It always seemed wonderful to me that he spent several days and nights on Mount Sinai explaining to Moses how he could detect the presence of leprosy, without once thinking to give him a prescription for its cure.

There were thousands and thousands of opportunities for this God to withdraw from these questions the shadow and the cloud. When Jehovah out of the whirlwind asked questions of Job, how much better it would have been if Job had asked and Jehovah had answered.

You say that we should be governed by evidence and by common sense. Then you tell us that the questions are beyond the reach of reason and with which common sense has nothing to do. If we then ask for an explanation, you reply in the scornful challenge of Dante.

You seem to imagine that everyman who gives an opinion, takes his solemn oath that the opinion is the absolute end of all investigation on that subject.

In my opinion, Shakespeare was, intellectually, the greatest of the human race, and my intention was simply to express that view. It never occurred to me that anyone would suppose that I thought Shakespeare a greater actor than Garrick, a more wonderful composer than Wagner, a better violinist than Remenyi, or a heavier

man than Daniel Lambert. It is to be regretted that you were misled by my words and really supposed that I intended to say that Shakespeare was a greater general than Cæsar. But, after all, your criticism has no possible bearing upon the point at issue. Is it an effort to avoid that which cannot be met? The real question is this: If we cannot account for Christ without a miracle, how can we account for Shakespeare? Dr. Field took the ground that Christ himself was a miracle; that it was impossible to account for such a being in any natural way; and, guided by common sense, guided by the rule of investigation such as common sense teaches, I called attention to Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, and Shakespeare.

In another place in your Remarks, when my statement about Shakespeare was not in your mind, you say: "All is done by steps—nothing by strides, leaps or bounds—all from protoplasm up to Shakespeare." Why did you end the series with Shakespeare? Did you intend to say Dante, or Bishop Butler?

It is curious to see how much ingenuity a great man exercises when guided by what he calls "the rule of investigation as suggested by common sense." I pointed out some things that Christ did not teach—among others, that he said nothing with regard to the family relation, nothing against slavery, nothing about education, nothing as to the rights and duties of nations, nothing as to any scientific truth. And this is answered by saying that "I am quite able to point out the way in which the Saviour of the world might have been much greater as a teacher than he actually was."

Is this an answer, or is it simply taking refuge behind a name? Would it not have been better if Christ had told his disciples that they must not persecute; that they had no right to destroy their fellow men; that they must not put heretics in dungeons, or destroy them with flames; that they must not invent and use instruments of torture; that they must not appeal to brutality, nor endeavour to sow with bloody hands the seeds of peace? Would it not have been far better had he said: "I come not to bring a sword, but peace"? Would not this have saved countless cruelties and countless lives?

You seem to think that you have fully answered my objection when you say that Christ taught the absolute indissolubility of marriage.

Why should a husband and wife be compelled to live with each other after love is dead? Why should the wife still be bound in indissoluble chains to a husband who is cruel, infamous, and false? Why should her life be destroyed because of his? Why should

she be chained to a criminal and an outcast? Nothing can be more unphilosophic than this. Why fill the world with the children of indifference and hatred?

The marriage contract is the most important, the most sacred, that human beings can make. It will be sacredly kept by good men and by good women. But if a loving woman—tender, noble, and true—makes this contract with a man whom she believed to be worthy of all respect and love, and who is found to be a cruel, worthless wretch, why should her life be lost?

Do you not know that the indissolubility of the marriage contract leads to its violation, forms an excuse for immorality, eats out the very heart of truth, and gives to vice that which alone belongs to love?

But in order that you may know why the objection was raised, I call your attention to the fact that Christ offered a reward, not only in this world but in another, to any husband who would desert his wife. And do you know that this hideous offer caused millions to desert their wives and children?

Theologians have the habit of using names instead of arguments—of appealing to some man, great in some direction, to establish their creed; but we all know that no man is great enough to be an authority, except in that particular domain in which he won his eminence; and we all know that great men are not great in all directions. Bacon died a believer in the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Tycho Brahe kept an imbecile in his service, putting down with great care the words that fell from the hanging lip of idiocy, and then endeavoured to put them together in a way to form prophecies. Sir Matthew Hale believed in witchcraft not only, but in its lowest and most vulgar forms; and some of the greatest men of antiquity examined the entrails of birds to find the secrets of the future.

It has always seemed to me that reasons are better than names.

After taking the ground that Christ could not have been a greater teacher than he actually was, you ask: "Where would have been the wisdom of delivering to an uninstructed population of a particular age a codified religion which was to serve for all nations, all ages, all states of civilization?"

Does not this question admit that the teachings of Christ will not serve for all nations, all ages and all states of civilization?

But let me ask: "If it was necessary for Christ "to deliver to an uninstructed population of a particular age a certain religion

suited only for that particular age," why should a civilized and scientific age eighteen hundred years afterwards be absolutely bound by that religion? Do you not see that your position cannot be defended, and that you have provided no way for retreat? If the religion of Christ was for that age, is it for this? Are you willing to admit that the Ten Commandments are not for all time? If, then, four thousand years before Christ, commandments were given not simply for "an uninstructed population of a particular age, but for all time," can you give a reason why the religion of Christ should not have been of the same character?

In the first place you say that God has revealed himself to the world—that he has revealed a religion; and in the next place, that "he has not revealed a perfect religion, for the reason that no room would be left for the career of human thought."

Why did not God reveal this imperfect religion to all people instead of to a small and insignificant tribe, a tribe without commerce and without influence among the nations of the world? Why did he hide this imperfect light under a bushel? If the light was necessary for one, was it not necessary for all? And why did he drown a world to whom he had not even given that light?

According to your reasoning, would there not have been left greater room for the career of human thought, had no revelation been made?

You say that "you have known a person who after studying the old classical or Olympian religion for a third part of a century, at length began to hope that he had some partial comprehension of it—some inkling of what is meant." You say this for the purpose of showing how impossible it is to understand the bible. If it is so difficult why do you call it a revelation? And yet, according to your creed, the man who does not understand the revelation and believe it, or who does not believe it, whether he understands it or not, is to reap the harvest of everlasting pain. Ought not the revelation to be revealed?

In order to escape from the fact that Christ denounced the chosen people of God as "a generation of vipers" and as "whited sepulchres," you take the ground that the scribes and pharisees were not the chosen people. Of what blood were they? It will not do to say that they were not the people. Can you deny that Christ addressed the chosen people when he said: "Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee"?

You have called me to an account for what I said in regard to Ananias and Sapphira. *First*, I am charged with having said that the apostles conceived the idea of having all things in common, and you denounce this as an interpolation; *second*, "that motives of prudence are stated as a matter of fact to have influenced the offending couple"—and this is charged as an interpolation; and, *third*, that I stated that the apostles sent for the wife of Ananias—and this is characterized as a pure invention.

To me it seems reasonable to suppose that the idea of having all things in common was conceived by those who had nothing, or had the least, and not by those who had plenty. In the last verses of the fourth chapter of the Acts, you will find this:

"Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessed of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation), a Levite and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

Now, it occurred to me that the idea was in all probability suggested by the men at whose feet the property was laid. It never entered my mind that the idea originated with those who had land for sale. There may be a different standard by which human nature is measured in your country, than in mine; but if the thing had happened in the United States, I feel absolutely positive that it would have been at the suggestion of the apostles.

"Ananias, with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet."

In my Letter to Dr. Field I stated—not at the time pretending to quote from the New Testament—that Ananias and Sapphira, after talking the matter over, not being entirely satisfied with the collaterals, probably concluded to keep a little—just enough to keep them from starvation if the good and pious bankers should abscond. It never occurred to me that any man would imagine that this was a quotation, and I feel like asking your pardon for having led you into this error. We are informed in the bible that "they kept back a part of the price." It occurred to me, "judging by the rule of investigation according to common-sense," that there was a reason for this, and I could think of no reason except that they did not care to trust the

apostles with all, and that they kept back just a little, thinking it might be useful if the rest should be lost.

According to the account, after Peter had made a few remarks to Ananias,

"Ananias fell down and gave up the ghost; . . . and the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in."

Whereupon Peter said :

" ' Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much ? ' And she said, ' Yea, for so much.' Then Peter said unto her, ' How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the spirit of the Lord ? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.' Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost ; and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband."

The only objection found to this is, that I inferred that the apostles had sent for her. Sending for her was not the offence. The failure to tell her what had happened to her husband was the offence—keeping his fate a secret from her in order that she might be caught in the same net that had been set for her husband by Jehovah. This was the offence. This was the mean and cruel thing to which I objected. Have you answered that ?

Of course, I feel sure that the thing never occurred—the probability being that Ananias and Sapphira never lived and never died. It is probably a story invented by the early church to make the collection of subscriptions somewhat easier.

And yet, we find a man in the nineteenth century, foremost of his fellow citizens in the affairs of a great nation, upholding this barbaric view of God.

Let me beg of you to use your reason "according to the rule suggested by common sense." Let us do what little we can to rescue the reputation, even of a Jewish myth, from the calumnies of Ignorance and Fear.

So, again, I am charged with having given certain words as a quotation from the bible in which two passages are combined—"They who believe and are baptised shall be saved, and they who believe not shall be damned. And these shall go away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

They were given as two passages. No one for a moment supposed that they would be read together as one, and no one imagined that any one in answering the argument would be led to believe

that they were intended as one. Neither was there in this the slightest negligence, as I was answering a man who is perfectly familiar with the Bible. The objection was too small to make. It is hardly large enough to answer—and had it not been made by you it would not have been answered.

You are not satisfied with what I have said upon the subject of immortality. What I said was this: The idea of immortality, that like a sea has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death.

You answer this by saying that "the Egyptians were believers in immortality, but were not a people of high intellectual development."

How such a statement tends to answer what I have said, is beyond my powers of discernment. Is there the slightest connection between my statement and your objection?

You make still another answer, and say that "the ancient Greeks were a race of perhaps unparalleled intellectual capacity, and that notwithstanding that, the most powerful mind of the Greek philosophy, that of Aristotle, had no clear conception of a personal existence in a future state." May I be allowed to ask this simple question: Who has?

Are you urging an objection to the dogma of immortality, when you say that a race of unparalleled intellectual capacity had no confidence in it? Is that a doctrine believed only by people who lack intellectual capacity? I stated that the idea of immortality was born of love. You reply, "The Egyptians believed it, but they were not intellectual." Is not this a *non sequitur*? The question is: Were they a loving people?

Does history show that there is a moral governor of the world? What witnesses shall we call? The billions of slaves who were paid with blows?—the countless mothers whose babes were sold? Have we time to examine the Waldenses, the Covenanters of Scotland, the Catholics of Ireland, the victims of St. Bartholomew, of the Spanish Inquisition, all those who have died in flames? Shall we hear the story of Bruno? Shall we ask Servetus? Shall we ask the millions slaughtered by Christian swords in America—all the victims of ambition, of perjury, of ignorance, of superstition and revenge, of storm and earthquake, of famine, flood and fire?

Can all the agonies and crimes, can all the inequalities of the world be answered by reading the "noble Psalm" in which are found the words: "Call upon me in the day of trouble, so I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me?" Do you prove the truth of these fine words, this honey of Trebizond, by the victims of religious persecution? Shall we hear the sighs and sobs of Siberia?

Another thing. Why should you, from the page of Greek history, with the sponge of your judgment, wipe out all names but one, and tell us that the most powerful mind of the Greek philosophy was that of Aristotle? How did you ascertain this fact? Is it not fair to suppose that you merely intended to say that, according to your view, Aristotle had the most powerful mind among all the philosophers of Greece? I should not call attention to this, except for your criticism on a like remark of mine as to the intellectual superiority of Shakespeare. But if you knew the trouble I have had in finding out your meaning, from your words, you would pardon me for calling attention to a single line from Aristotle: "Clearness is the virtue of style."

To me, Epicurus seems far greater than Aristotle. He had clearer vision. His cheek was closer to the breast of nature, and he planted his philosophy nearer to the bed-rock of fact. He was practical enough to know that virtue is the means, and happiness the end: that the highest philosophy is the art of living. He was wise enough to say that nothing is of the slightest value to man that does not increase or preserve his well-being, and he was great enough to know, and courageous enough to declare, that all the gods and ghosts were monstrous phantoms born of ignorance and fear.

I still insist that human affection is the foundation of the idea of immortality; that love was the first to speak that word, no matter whether they who spoke it were savage or civilized, Egyptian or Greek. But if we are immortal—if there be another world—why was it not clearly set forth in the Old Testament? Certainly, the authors of that book had an opportunity to learn it from the Egyptians. Why was it not revealed by Jehovah? Why did he waste his time in giving orders for the consecration of priests—in saying that they must have sheep's blood put on their right ears, and on their right thumbs, and on their right big toes? Could a God with any sense of humour give such directions, or watch, without huge laughter, the performance of such a ceremony? In order to see the beauty, the depth and tenderness of such a consecration, is it essential to be in a state of "reverential calm?"

Is it not strange that Christ did not tell of another world distinctly, clearly, without parable, and without the mist of metaphor?

The fact is that the Hindoos, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans taught the immortality of the soul, not as a glittering guess—a possible perhaps—but as a clear and demonstrated truth for many centuries before the birth of Christ.

If the Old Testament proves anything, it is that death ends all. And the New Testament, by basing immortality on the resurrection of the body, but “keeps the word of promise to our ear and breaks it to our hope.”

In my Reply to Dr. Field, I said: “The truth is, that no one can justly be held responsible for his thoughts. The brain thinks without asking our consent; we believe, or disbelieve, without an effort of the will. Belief is a result. It is the effect of evidence upon the mind. The scales turn in spite of him who watches. There is no opportunity of being honest or dishonest in the formation of an opinion. The conclusion is entirely independent of desire. We must believe, or we must doubt, in spite of what we wish.”

Does the brain think without our consent? Can we control our thought? Can we tell what we are going to think to-morrow?

Can we stop thinking?

Is belief the result of that which to us is evidence, or is it a product of the will? Can the scales in which reason weighs evidence be turned by the will? Why, then, should evidence be weighed? If it all depends on the will, what is evidence? Is there any opportunity of being dishonest in the formation of an opinion? Must not the man who forms the opinion know what it is? He cannot knowingly cheat himself. He cannot be deceived with dice that he loads. He cannot play unfairly at solitaire without knowing that he has lost the game. He cannot knowingly weigh with false scales and believe in the correctness of the result.

You have not even attempted to answer my arguments upon these points, but you have unconsciously avoided them. You did not attack the citadel. In military parlance, you proceeded to “shell the woods.” The noise is precisely the same as though every shot had been directed against the enemy’s position, but the result is not. You do not seem willing to implicitly trust the correctness of your aim. You prefer to place the target after the shot.

The question is whether the will knowingly can change evidence, and whether there is any opportunity of being dishonest.

in the formation of an opinion. You have changed the issue. You have erased the word formation and interpolated the word expression.

Let us suppose that a man has given an opinion, knowing that it is not based on any fact. Can you say that he has given his opinion? The moment a prejudice is known to be a prejudice, it disappears. Ignorance is the soil in which prejudice must grow. Touched by a ray of light, it dies. The judgment of man may be warped by prejudice and passion, but it cannot be consciously warped. It is impossible for any man to be influenced by a known prejudice, because a known prejudice cannot exist.

I am not contending that all opinions have been honestly expressed. What I contend is, that when a dishonest opinion has been expressed, it is not the opinion that was formed.

The cases suggested by you are not in point. Fathers are honestly swayed, if really swayed, by love; and queens and judges have pretended to be swayed by the highest motives, by the clearest evidence, in order that they might kill rivals, reap rewards, and gratify revenge. But what has all this to do with the fact that he who watches the scales in which evidence is weighed knows the actual result?

Let us examine your case: If a father is *consciously* swayed by his love for his son, and for that reason says that his son is innocent, then he has not expressed his opinion. If he is unconsciously swayed and says that his son is innocent, then he has expressed his opinion. In both instances, his opinion was independent of his will; but in the first instance, he did not express his opinion. You will certainly see this distinction between the formation and the expression of an opinion.

The same argument applies to the man who consciously has a desire to condemn. Such a *conscious* desire cannot affect the testimony—cannot affect the opinion. Queen Elizabeth undoubtedly desired the death of Mary Stuart, but this conscious desire could not have been the foundation on which rested Elizabeth's opinion as to the guilt or innocence of her rival. It is barely possible that Elizabeth did not express her real opinion. Do you believe that the English judges, in the matter of the Popish Plot, gave judgment in accordance with their opinions? Are you satisfied that Napoleon expressed his real opinion when he justified himself for the assassination of the Duc d'Enghien?

If you answer these questions in the affirmative, you admit that I am right. If you answer in the negative, you admit that you are wrong. The moment you admit that the opinion formed cannot be

changed by expressing a pretended opinion, your argument is turned against yourself.

It is admitted that prejudice strengthens, weakens and colors evidence ; but prejudice is honest. And when one acts knowingly against the evidence, that is not by reason of prejudice.

According to my views of propriety, it would be unbecoming for me to say that your argument on these questions is "a piece of plausible shallowness." Such language might be regarded as lacking "reverential calm," and I therefore refrain from even characterizing it as plausible.

Is it not perfectly apparent that you have changed the issue, and that instead of showing that opinions are creatures of the will, you have discussed the quality of actions ? What have corrupt and cruel judgments pronounced by corrupt and cruel judges to do with their real opinions ? When a judge forms one opinion and renders another he is called corrupt. The corruption does not consist in forming his opinion, but in rendering one that he did not form. Does a dishonest creditor, who incorrectly adds a number of items, making the aggregate too large, necessarily change his opinion as to the relations of numbers ? When an error is known, it is not a mistake ; but a conclusion reached by a mistake, or by a prejudice, or by both, is a necessary conclusion. He who pretends to come to a conclusion by a mistake which he knows is not a mistake, knows that he has not expressed his real opinion.

Can anything be more illogical than the assertion that because a boy reaches, through negligence in adding figures, a wrong result, that he is accountable for his opinion of the result ? If he knew he was negligent what must his opinion of the result have been ?

So with the man who boldly announces that he has discovered the numerical expression of the relation sustained by the diameter to the circumference of a circle. If he is honest in the announcement, then the announcement was caused not by his will but by his ignorance. His will cannot make the announcement true, and he could not by any possibility have supposed that his will could affect the correctness of his announcement. The will of one who thinks that he has invented or discovered what is called perpetual motion, is not at fault. The man, if honest, has been misled ; if not honest, he endeavours to mislead others. There is prejudice, and prejudice does raise a clamour, and the intellect is affected and the judgment is darkened and the opinion is deformed ; but the prejudice is real and the clamour is sincere and the judgment is upright and the opinion is honest.

The intellect is not always supreme. It is surrounded by clouds. It sometimes sits in darkness. It is often misled---sometimes, in superstitious fear, it abdicates. It is not always a white light. The passions and prejudices are prismatic---they colour thoughts. Desires betray the judgment and cunningly mislead the will.

You seem to think that the fact of responsibility is in danger unless it rests upon the will, and this will you regard as something without a cause, springing into being in some mysterious way without father or mother, without seed or soil, or rain or light. You must admit that man is a conditioned being---that he has wants, objects, ends, and aims, and that these are gratified and attained only by the use of means. Do not these wants and these objects have something to do with the will, and does not the intellect have something to do with the means? Is not the will a product? Independently of conditions, can it exist? Is it not necessarily produced? Behind every wish and thought, every dream and fancy, every fear and hope, are there not countless causes? Man feels shame. What does this prove? He pities himself. What does this demonstrate?

The dark continent of motive and desire has never been explored. In the brain, that wondrous world with one inhabitant, there are recesses dim and dark, treacherous sands and dangerous shores, where seeming sirens tempt and fade; streams that rise in unknown lands from hidden springs, strange seas with ebb and flow of tides, resistless billows urged by storms of flame, profound and awful depths hidden by mist of dreams, obscure and phan om realms where vague and fearful things are half revealed, jungles where passion's tigers crouch, and skies of cloud and blue where fancies fly with painted wings that dazzle and mislead; and the poor sovereign of this pictured world is led by old desires and ancient hates, and stained by crimes of many vanished years, and pushed by hands that long ago were dust, until he feels like some bewildered slave that Mockery has throned and crowned.

No one pretends that the mind of man is perfect---that it is not affected by desires, colored by hopes, weakened by fears, deformed by ignorance and distorted by superstition. But all this has nothing to do with the innocence of opinion.

It may be that the Thugs were taught that murder is innocent; but did the teachers believe what they taught? Did the pupils believe the teachers? Did not Jehovah teach that the act that we describe as murder was a duty? Were not his teachings practiced by Moses and Joshua and Jephthah and Samuel and David?

Were they honest? But what has all this to do with the point at issue?

Society has the right to protect itself, even from honest murderers and conscientious thieves. The belief of the criminal does not disarm society; it protects itself from him as from a poisonous serpent, or from a beast that lives on human flesh. We are under no obligation to stand still and allow ourselves to be murdered by one who honestly thinks that it is his duty to take our lives. And yet, according to your argument, we have no right to defend ourselves from honest Thugs. Was Saul of Tarsus a Thug when he persecuted Christians "even unto strange cities"? Is the Thug of India more ferocious than Torquemada, the Thug of Spain?

If belief depends upon the will, can all men have correct opinions who will to have them? Acts are good, or bad, according to their consequences, and not according to the intentions of the actors. Honest opinions may be wrong, and opinions dishonestly expressed may be right.

Do you mean to say that because passion and prejudice, the reckless "pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores of will and judgment," sway the mind, that the opinions which you have expressed in your Remarks to me are not your opinions? Certainly you will admit that in all probability you have prejudices and passions, and if so, can the opinions that you have expressed, according to your argument, be honest? My lack of confidence in your argument gives me perfect confidence in your candor. You may remember the philosopher who retained his reputation for veracity, in spite of the fact that he kept saying: "There is no truth in man."

Are only those opinions honest that are formed without any interference of passion, affection, habit or fancy? What would the opinion of a man without passions, affection or fancies be worth? The alchemist gave up his search for an universal solvent upon being asked in what kind of vessel he expected to keep it when found.

It may be admitted that Biel "shows us how the life of Dante co-operated with his extraordinary natural gifts and capabilities to make him what he was," but does this tend to show that Dante changed his opinions by an act of his will, or that he reached honest opinions by knowingly using false weights and measures?

You must admit that the opinions, habits and religions of men depend, at least in some degree, on race, occupation, training and capacity. Is not every thoughtful man compelled to agree with

Edgar Fawcett, in whose brain are united the beauty of the poet and the subtlety of the logician,

“ Who sees how vice her venom wreaks
On the frail babe before it speaks,
And how heredity enslaves
With ghostly hands that reach from graves ” ?

Why do you hold the intellect criminally responsible for opinions, when you admit that it is controlled by the will ? And why do you hold the will responsible, when you insist that it is swayed by the passions and affections ? But all this has nothing to do with the fact that every opinion has been honestly formed whether honestly expressed or not.

No one pretends that all governments have been honestly formed and honestly administered. All vices, and some virtues, are represented in most nations. In my opinion a republic is better than a monarchy. The legally expressed will of the people is the only rightful sovereign. This sovereignty, however, does not embrace the realm of thought or opinion. In that world each human being is a sovereign,—throned and crowned : One is a majority. The good citizens of that realm give to others all rights that they claim for themselves, and those who appeal to force are the only traitors.

The existence of theological despotisms, of God-anointed kings, does not tend to prove that a known prejudice can determine the weight of evidence. When men were so ignorant as to suppose that God would destroy them unless they burned heretics, they lighted the fagots in self-defence.

Feeling as I do that man is not responsible for his opinions, I characterized persecution for opinion's sake as infamous. So, it is perfectly clear to me, that it would be the infamy of infamies for an infinite being to create vast numbers of men knowing that they would suffer eternal pain. If an infinite God creates a man on purpose to damn him, or creates him knowing that he will be damned, is not the crime the same ? We make mistakes and failures because we are finite ; but can you conceive of any excuse for an infinite being who creates failures ? If you had the power to change, by a wish, a statue into a human being, and you knew that this being would die without a “ change of heart ” and suffer endless pain, what would you do ?

Can you think of any excuse for an earthly father, who, having wealth, learning and leisure, leaves his own children in ignorance and darkness ? Do you believe that a God of infinite wis-

dom, justice and love called countless generations of men into being, knowing that they would be used as fuel for the eternal fire?

Many will regret that you did not give your views upon the main questions—the principal issues—involved, instead of calling attention, for the most part, to the unimportant. If men were discussing the causes and results of the Franco-Prussian war, it would hardly be worth while for a third person to interrupt the argument for the purpose of calling attention to a misspelled word in the terms of surrender.

If we admit that a man is responsible for his opinions and his thoughts, and that his will is perfectly free, still these admissions do not even tend to prove the inspiration of the bible, or the “divine scheme of redemption.”

In my judgment, the days of the supernatural are numbered. The dogma of inspiration must be abandoned. As man advances,—as his intellect enlarges, as his knowledge increases, as his ideals become nobler, the bibles and creeds will lose their authority, the miraculous will be classed with the impossible, and the idea of special providence will be discarded. Thousands of religions have perished, innumerable gods have died, and why should the religion of our time be exempt from the common fate?

Creeds cannot remain permanent in a world in which knowledge increases. Science and superstition cannot peaceably occupy the same brain. This is an age of investigation, of discovery and thought. Science destroys the dogmas that mislead the mind and waste the energies of man. It points out the ends that can be accomplished; takes into consideration the limits of our faculties; fixes our attention on the affairs of this world, and erects beacons of warning on the dangerous shores. It seeks to ascertain the conditions of health, to the end that life may be enriched and lengthened, and it reads with a smile this passage:

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.”

Science is the enemy of fear and credulity. It invites investigation, challenges the reason, stimulates inquiry, and welcomes the unbeliever. It seeks to give food and shelter, and raiment, education and liberty to the human race. It welcomes every fact and every truth. It has furnished a foundation for morals, a philosophy for the guidance of man. From all books it selects the good, and from all theories the true. It seeks to

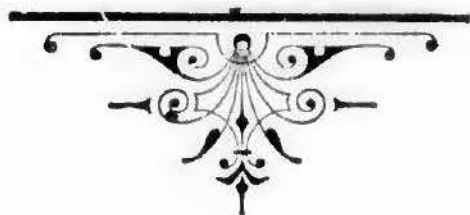
civilize the human race by the cultivation of the intellect and heart. It refines through art, music and the drama, giving voice and expression to every noble thought. The mysterious does not excite the feeling of worship, but the ambition to understand. It does not pray, it works. It does not answer inquiry with the malicious cry of "blasphemy." Its feelings are not hurt by contradiction, neither does it ask to be protected by law from the laughter of heretics. It has taught man that he cannot walk beyond the horizon, that the questions of origin and destiny cannot be answered, that an infinite personality cannot be comprehended by a finite being, and the truth of any system of religion based on the supernatural cannot by any possibility be established, such a religion not being within the domain of evidence. And, above all, it teaches that all our duties are here, that all our obligations are to sentient beings; that intelligence, guided by kindness, is the highest possible wisdom; and that "man believes not what he would, but what he can."

And, after all, it may be that, "to ride an unbroken horse with the reins thrown upon his neck," as you charge me with doing, gives a greater variety of sensations, a keener delight, and a better prospect of winning the race than to sit solemnly astride of a dead one, in "a deep reverential calm," with the bridle firmly in your hand.

Again assuring you of my profound respect, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL



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