Introduction.

In the 100 years which have passed since Thomas Paine addressed this pamphlet to the Anglo-Saxons in British North America, the extension of the territory and population has been of the grandest description. The jurisdiction of the thirteen colonies was then everywhere circumscribed by the Indian lines, and the number of the population—when the United States first declared themselves a confederation—did not exceed three millions. To-day in 37 States and in 10 territories, with an area of 3,603,844 square miles, exclusive of the Indian territory, the American Republic has a population of more than 40,000,000.

When Paine penned the words now re-printed, the doctrine of independence was scarcely comprehended by any: George Washington was a Royalist by education and association, and even the most advanced disciples of Otis shrank from breaking with the Monarchy. Paine's "Common Sense" appealed, however, to the people, and their decision was swift, universal, and permanent. The 4th of July was the grand answer of the American people—an answer they have never had reason to regret.

The very month it was issued Washington regarded the situation as "truly alarming," and wrote that "the first burst of revolutionary zeal had passed away." Paine's pen revived the zeal, and achieved a victory which at that time Washington's sword was insufficient to conquer.

To-day Paine's "Common Sense" has a merit beyond its mere local significance, mighty as this was, and no apology is needed for its re-publication.

Author's Introduction.

Perhaps the sentiments contained in the following pages are not yet sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favour; a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defence of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.

As a long and violent abuse of power is generally the means of calling the right of it in question (and in matters to which might never have been thought of, had not the sufferers been aggravated into the inquiry), and as the King of England hath undertaken in his own right to support the Parliament in what he calls theirs, and as the good people of this country are grievously oppressed by the combination, they have an undoubted privilege to inquire into the pretensions of both, and equally to reject the usurpation of either.

In the following sheets the author hath studiously avoided everything which is personal among ourselves. Compliments as well as censure to individuals make no part thereof. The wise and the worthy need not the triumph of a pamphlet; and those whose sentiments are injudicious, or unfriendly, will cease of themselves, unless too much pains are bestowed upon their conversion.

The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances have, and will arise, which are not local, but universal, and through which the principle of all lovers of mankind are affected, and in the event of which their affections are interested. The laying a country desolate with fire and sword, declaring war against the natural rights of all mankind, and extirpating the defenders thereof from the face of the earth, is the concern of every man to whom nature hath given the power of feeling; of which class, regardless of party censure, is

The Author.

Philadelphia,

Feb. 14, 1776.
Common Sense.

Of the Origin and Design of Government in general, with concise Remarks on the English Constitution.

Some writers have so confounded Society with Government, as to leave little or no distinction between them: whereas they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively, by uniting our affections; the latter negatively, by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse; the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher.

Society, in every state, is a blessing; but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worse state, an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries by a government, which we might expect in a country without government, our calamity is heightened by reflecting, that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For, were the Impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which, in every other case, advises him out of two evils to choose the least. Wherefore, security being the true design and end of Government, it unanswerably follows, that whatever form thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us with the least expense and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others.

In order to gain a clear and just idea of the design and end of government, let us suppose a small number of persons settled in some sequestered part of the earth, unconnected with the rest; they will then represent the first peopling of any country, or of the world. In this state of natural liberty, society will be their first thought. A thousand motives will excite them thereto; the strength of one man is so unequal to his wants, and his mind so unfitted for perpetual solitude, that he is soon obliged to seek assistance and relief of another, who in his turn requires the same. Four or five united would be able to raise a tolerable dwelling in the midst of a wilderness; but one man might labour out the common period of his life without accomplishing anything; when he had felled his timber he could not remove it, nor erect it after it was removed; hunger in the meantime would urge him from his work, and every different want call him a different way. Disease, nay, even misfortune, would be death; for though neither might be mortal, yet either would disable him from living, and reduce him to a state in which he might be rather said to perish than to die.

Thus, necessity, like a gravitation power, would soon form our newly arrived emigrants into society, the reciprocal blessings of which would supersede and render the obligations of law and government unnecessary while they remained perfectly just to each other; but as nothing but heaven is impregnable to vice, it will unavoidably happen, that in proportion as they surmount the first difficulties of emigration, which bound them together in a common cause, they will begin to relax in their duty and attachment to each other; and this remissness will point out the necessity of establishing some form of government to supply the defect of moral virtue.

Some convenient tree will afford them a state-house, under the branches of which the whole colony may assemble to deliberate on public matters. It is more than probable that their first laws will have the title only of regulations, and be enforced by no other penalty than public disesteem. In this first parliament every man by natural right will have a seat.

But as the colony increases, the public concerns will increase likewise, and the distance at which the members may be separated will render it too inconvenient for all of them to meet on every occasion as at first, when their number was small, their habitations near, and the public concerns few and trifling. This will point out the convenience of their consenting to leave the legislative part to be managed by a select number chosen from the whole body, who are supposed to have the same concerns at stake which those have who appointed them, and who will act in the same manner as the whole body would act, were they present. If the colony continue increasing, it will become necessary to augment the number of the representatives; and that the interest of every part of the colony may be attended to, it will be found best to divide the whole into convenient parts, each part sending its proper number; and that the elected may never form to themselves an interest separate from the electors, prudence will point out the necessity of having elections often; because, as the elected must by that means return and mix again with the general body of the electors in a few months, their fidelity to the public will be secured by the prudent reflection of not making a rod for themselves. And as this frequent interchange will establish a common interest with every part of the community, they will mutually and naturally support each other: and on this (not the unmeaning name of king) depends the strength of government and the
happiness of the government.

Here, then, is the origin and rise of government; namely, a mode rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world; here too is the design and end of government, viz., freedom and security. And however our eyes may be dazzled with show, or our ears deceived by sound; however prejudice may warp our wills, or interest darken our understanding, the simple voice of nature and of reason will say it is right.

I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature, which no art can overturn, viz., that the more simple any thing is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier repaired when disordered: and with this maxim in view, I offer a few remarks on the so-much-boasted Constitution of England. That it was noble for the dark and slavish times in which it was erected, is granted. When the world was overrun with tyranny, the least remove there from was a glorious risk. But that it is imperfect, subject to convulsions, and incapable of producing what it seems to promise is easily demonstrated.

Absolute governments (though the disgrace of human nature) have this advantage with them, that they are simple; if the people suffer, they know the head from which their suffering springs, know likewise the remedy, and are not bewildered by a variety of causes and cures. But the constitution of England is so exceedingly complex, that the nation may suffer for years, together without being able to discover in which part the fault lies; some will say in one, and some in another, and every political physician will advise a different medicine.

I know it is difficult to get over local or long-standing prejudices; yet if we suffer ourselves to examine the component parts of the English Constitution, we shall find them to be the base remains of two ancient tyrannies, compounded with some new republican materials.

First.—The remains of monarchical tyranny in the person of the king.

Secondly.—The remains of aristocratical tyranny in the persona of the peers.

Thirdly.—The new republican materials in the persons of the commons, on whose virtue depends the freedom of England.

The two first being hereditary, are independent of the people, wherefore, in a constitutional sense they contribute nothing towards the freedom of the state.

To say that the Constitution of England is a union of three powers, reciprocally checking each other is farcical; either the words have no meaning, or they are fiat contradictions.

To say that the commons are a check upon the king, presupposes two things:—

First.—That the king is not to be trusted without being looked after, or, in other words, that a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of monarchy.

Secondly.—That the commons, by being appointed for that purpose, are either wiser or more worthy of confidence than the crown.

But as the same constitution which gives the commons power to check the king, by withholding supplies, gives afterwards the king a power to check the commons, by empowering him to reject their other bills, it again supposes that the king is wiser than those whom it has already supposed to be wiser than him. A mere absurdity.

There is something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of monarchy; it first excludes a man from the means of information, yet it empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgment is required. The state of a king shuts him from the world, yet the business of a king requires him to know it thoroughly; wherefore the different parts, by unnaturally opposing and destroying each other, prove the whole character to be absurd and useless.

Some writers have explained the English constitution thus: the king, they say, is one, the people another: the peers are a house in behalf of the king, the commons in behalf of the people; but this hath all the distinctions of an house divided against itself: and though the expressions be pleasantly arranged, yet when examined they appear idle and ambiguous; and it always happens, that the nicest construction that words are capable of, when applied to the description of something which either cannot exist or is too incomprehensible to be within the compass of description, will be words of sound only, and though they may amuse the ear, they cannot inform the mind; for this explanation includes a previous question, viz., "How came the king by a power which the people are afraid to trust, and always obliged to check?" Such a power could not be the gift of a wise people, neither can any power which needs checking be from God; yet the provision which the constitution makes supposes such a power to exist.

But the provision is unequal to the task: the means either cannot or will not accomplish the end, and the whole affair is a *felo de se*; for as the greater weight will always carry up the less, and as all the wheels of a machine are put in motion by one, it only remains to know which power in the constitution has the most weight; for that will govern; and though the others, or a part of them, may clog, or, as the phrase is, check the rapidity of its motion, yet so long as they cannot stop it, their endeavours will be ineffectual; the first moving power will at last have its way; and what it wants in speed, is supplied by time.

That the crown is this overbearing part of the English constitution needs not be mentioned, and that it
derives its whole consequence merely from being the giver of places and pensions is self-evident; wherefore, though we have been wise enough to shut and lock a door against absolute monarchy, we at the same time have been foolish enough to put the crown in possession of the key.

The prejudice of Englishmen in favour of their own government, by king, lords, and commons, arises as much or more from national pride than reason. Individuals are, undoubtedly, safer in England than in some other countries, but the will of the king is as much the law of the land in Britain as in France, with this difference, that instead of proceeding directly from his mouth, it is handed to the people under the formidable shape of an Act of Parliament. For the fate of Charles the First hath only made kings more subtle—not more just.

Wherefore, laying aside all national pride and prejudice in favour of modes and forms, the plain truth is, that it is wholly owing to the constitution of the people, and not to the constitution of the government, that the crown is not so oppressive in England as in Turkey.

An inquiry into the constitutional errors in the English form of government is at this time highly necessary: for as we are never in a proper condition of doing justice to others, while we continue under the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are we capable of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered with an obstinate prejudice. And as a man who is attached to a prostitute, is unfitted to choose or judge a wife, so any prepossession in favour of a rotten constitution of government, will disable us from discerning a good one.

Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession.

MANKIND being originally equal in the order of creation, the equality only could be destroyed by some subsequent circumstances; the distinctions of rich and poor may in a great measure be accounted for, and that without having recourse to the harsh and ill-sounding names of oppression and avarice. Oppression is often the consequence, but seldom the means, of riches; and though avarice will preserve a man from being necessitously poor, it generally makes him too timorous to be wealthy.

But there is another and greater distinction, for which no truly natural or religious reason can be assigned, and that is, the distinction of men into kings and subjects. Male and female are the distinctions of Nature; good and bad, the distinctions of Heaven; but how a race of men came into the world so exalted above the rest, and distinguished like some new species, is worth inquiring into, and whether they are the means of happiness or of misery to mankind.

In the early ages of the world, according to the Scripture Chronology, there were no kings; the consequence of which was, there were no wars. It is the pride of kings which throws mankind into confusion. Holland, without a king, hath enjoyed more peace for the last century than any of the monarchical governments in Europe. Antiquity favours the same remark; for the quiet and rural lives of the first patriarchs hath a happy something in them, which vanishes away when we come to the history of Jewish royalty.

Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The heathen paid divine honours to their deceased kings, and the Christian world hath improved on the plan, by doing the same to its living ones. How impious is the title of sacred majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendour is crumbling into dust!

As the exalting one man so greatly above the rest cannot be justified on the equal rights of nature, so neither can it be defended on the authority of Scripture; for the will of the Almighty, as declared by Gideon and the prophet Samuel, expressly disapproves of government by kings. All anti-monarchical parts of the Scripture have been very smoothly glossed over in monarchical governments; but they undoubtedly merit the attention of countries which have their governments yet to form. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," is the Scripture doctrine of courts, yet it is no support of monarchical government, for the Jews at that time were without a king, and in a state of vassalage to the Romans.

Near three thousand years passed away from the Mosaic account of the creation, till the Jews, under a national delusion, requested a king. Till then, their form of government (except in extraordinary cases, where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of republic, administered by a judge and the elders of the tribes. Kings they had none, and it was held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title but the Lord of Hosts. And when a man seriously reflects on the idolatrous homage which is paid to the persons of kings, he need not wonder that the Almighty, ever jealous of his honour, should disapprove of a form of government which so impiously invades the prerogative of Heaven.

Monarchy is ranked in Scripture as one of the sins of the Jews, for which a curse in reserve is denounced against them. The history of that transaction is worth attending to.

The children of Israel being oppressed by the Midianites, Gideon marched against them with a small army, and victory, through the Divine interposition, decided in his favour. The Jews, elate with success, and
attributing it to the generalship of Gideon, proposed making him a king, saying, "Rule thou over us, thou and thy son, and thy son's son." Here was a temptation in its fullest extent: not a kingdom only, but an hereditary one. But Gideon in the piety of his soul, replied, "I will not reign over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you." Words need not be more explicit. Gideon doth not decline the honour, but denieth their right to give it; neither doth he compliment them with invented declarations of his thanks, but in the positive style of a prophet charges them with disaffection to their proper sovereign, the King of Heaven.

About one hundred and thirty years after this, they fell again into the same error. The hankering which the Jews had for the idolatrous customs of the heathen, is something exceedingly unaccountable; but so it was, that laying hold of the misconduct of Samuel's two sons, who were entrusted with some secular concerns, they came in an abrupt and clamorous manner to Samuel, saying, "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." And here we cannot but observe that their motives were bad, viz., that they might be like unto other nations, i.e., the heathen; whereas their true glory laid in being as much unlike them as possible. "But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a King to judge us; and Samuel prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them out of Egypt, even unto this day; wherewith they have forsaken me and served other gods; so do they also unto thee. Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice, how be it protest solemnly unto them, and show the manner of a king that shall reign over them, (i.e., not of any particular king, but the general manner of the kings of the earth, whom Israel was so eagerly copying after. And notwithstanding the great difference of time, and distance, and manners, the character is still in fashion.) And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people, that asked of him a king. And he said, This shall be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots (this description agrees with the present mode of impressing men), and he will appoint them captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots: and he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers (this describes the expense and luxury as well as the oppression of kings), and he will take your fields and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants; and he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give them to his officers and his servants (by which we see that bribery, corruption and favouritism are the standing vices of kings); and he will take the tenth of your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work; and he will take the tenth of your sheep, and you shall be his servants; and ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

This accounts for the continuation of monarchy; neither do the characters of the few good kings who have lived since either sanctify the title or blot out the sinfulness of the origin; the high encomium given of David takes no notice of him officially as a king, but only as a man after God's own heart. "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, Nay, but we will have a King over us, that we may be like all the nations, and that our King may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." Samuel continued to reason with them, but to no purpose; he set before them their ingratitude, but all would not avail; and seeing them fully bent on their folly, he cried out, "I will call unto the Lord and he shall send thunder and rain (which then was a punishment, being in the time of wheat harvest), that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God that we die not, for we have added unto our sins this evil, to ask a king." These portions of Scripture are direct and positive. They admit of no equivocal construction. That the Almighty hath there entered his protest against monarchical government is true, or the Scripture is false. And a man hath good reason to believe that there is as much of kingcraft as priestcraft in withholding the Scripture from the public in Popish countries. For monarchy in every instance is the Popery of Government. To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of right, is an insult and imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equal, no one by birth could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others for ever; and though himself might deserve some decent degree of honours of his contemporaries, yet his descendents might be far too unworthy to inherit them. One of the strongest natural proofs of the folly of hereditary right in kings is, that nature disapproves it, otherwise she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an ass for a lion. Secondly, as no man at first could possess any other public honours than were bestowed upon them, so the givers of those honours could have no right to give away the right of posterity. And though they might say, "We
choose you for our head;" they could not, without manifest injustice to their children, say, "that your children, and your children's children shall reign over ours for ever," because such an unwise, unjust, unnatural compact might, perhaps, in the next succession, put them under the government of a rogue or a fool. Most wise men, in their private sentiments, have ever treated hereditary right with contempt; yet it is one of those evils which, when once established, is not easily removed; many submit from fear, others from superstition, and the most powerful part shares with the king the plunder of the rest.

This is supposing the present race of kings in the world to have had an honourable origin; whereas it is more than probable that, could we take off the dark covering of antiquity, and trace them to their first rise, we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang, whose savage manners, or pre-eminence in subtility, obtained him the title of chief among plunderers; and who, by increasing in power, and extending his depredations, overawed the quiet and defenceless to purchase their safety by frequent contributions. Yet his electors could have no idea of giving hereditary right to his descendants, because such a perpetual exclusion of themselves was incompatible with the free and unrestrained principles they professed to live by. Wherefore hereditary succession in the early ages of monarchy could not take place as a matter of claim, but as something casual or complimentary; but as few or no records were extant in those days, and traditionary history is stuffed with fables, it was very easy, after the lapse of a few generations, to trump up some superstitious tale, conveniently timed Mahomet-like, to cram hereditary right down the throats of the vulgar. Perhaps the disorders which threaten, or seemed to threaten, on the decease of a leader, and the choice of a new one (for elections among ruffians could not be very orderly) induced many at first to favour hereditary pretensions; by which means it happened, as it hath happened since, that what at first was submitted to as a convenience, was afterwards claimed as a right.

England, since the Conquest, hath known some few good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones, yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honourable one. A French bastard landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself King of England, against the consent of the natives, is, in plain terms, a very paltry, rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it. However, it is needless to spend much time in exposing the folly of hereditary right; if there are any so weak as to believe it, let them promiscuously worship the ass and the lion, and welcome; I shall neither copy their humility, nor disturb their devotion.

Yet I should be glad to ask, how they suppose kings came at first? The question admits but of three answers, viz., either by lot, by election, or by usurpation. If the first king was taken by lot, it establishes a precedent for the next, which excludes hereditary succession. Saul was by lot, yet the succession was not hereditary, neither does it appear from that transaction, there was any intention it ever should. If the first king of any country was by election, that likewise establishes a precedent for the next; for to say that the right of all future generations is taken away by the act of the first electors, in their choice, not only of a king but of a family of kings for ever, hath no parallel in or out of Scripture, but the doctrine of original sin, which supposes the free will of all men lost in Adam; and from such comparison (and it will admit of no other) hereditary succession can derive no glory. For as in Adam all sinned, and as in the first electors all men obeyed; so in the one all mankind are subjected to Satan, and in the other to Sovereignty: as our innocence was lost in the first, and our authority in the last; and as both disable us from re-assuming some further state and privilege, it unanswerably follows, that original sin and hereditary succession are parallels. Dishonourable rank! Inglorious connection! Yet the most subtle sophist cannot produce a juster simile.

As to usurpation, no man will be so hardy as to defend it; and that William the Conqueror was an usurper, is a fact not to be contradicted. The plain truth is, that the antiquity of English monarchy will not bear looking into.

But it is not so much the absurdity as the evil of hereditary succession which concerns mankind. Did it insure a race of good and wise men, it would have the seal of divine authority; but as it opens a door to the foolish, the wicked, and the improper, it hath in it the nature of oppression. Men, who looked upon themselves as born to reign, and on the others to obey, soon grow insolent; selected from the rest of mankind, their minds are easily poisoned by importance, and the world they act in differs so materially from the world at large, that they have but little opportunity of knowing its true interests, and when they succeed to the government, are frequently the most ignorant and unfit of any throughout the dominions.

Another evil which attends hereditary succession is, that the throne is liable to be possessed by a minor at any age; all which time the regency, acting under the cover of a king, has every opportunity and inducement to betray its trust. The same national misfortune happens when a king, worn out with age and infirmity, enters the last stage of human weakness. In both these cases, the public becomes a prey to every miscreant, who can tamper with the follies either of infancy or age.

The most plausible plea which hath ever been offered in favour of hereditary succession is, that it preserves a nation from civil wars; and were this true, it would be weighty; whereas, it is the most barefaced falsity ever
imposed upon mankind. The whole history of England disowns the fact. Thirty kings and two minors have reigned in that distracted kingdom since the Conquest, in which time there have been (including the Revolution) no less than eight civil wars and nineteen rebellions. Wherefore, instead of making for peace, it makes against it, and destroys the very foundation it seems to stand on.

The contest for monarchy and succession, between the houses of York and Lancaster, laid England in a scene of blood for many years. Twelve pitched battles, besides skirmishes and sieges, were fought between Henry and Edward. Twice was Henry prisoner to Edward, who in his turn was prisoner to Henry. And so uncertain is the fate of war, and temper of a nation, when nothing but personal matters are the ground of a quarrel, that Henry was taken in triumph from a prison to a palace, and Edward obliged to fly from a palace to a foreign land; yet, as sudden transitions of temper are seldom lasting, Henry in his turn was driven from the throne, and Edward recalled to succeed him; the Parliament always following the strongest side.

This contest began in the reign of Henry the Sixth, and was not entirely extinguished till Henry the Seventh: in whom the families were united; including a period of sixty-seven years, viz., from 1422 to 1489.

In short, monarchy and succession have laid, not this or that kingdom only, but the world in blood and ashes. It is a form of government which the word of God bears testimony against, and blood will attend it.

If we inquire into the business of a king, we shall find that in some countries they have none; and after sauntering away their lives without pleasure to themselves or advantage to the nation, withdraw from the scene, and leave their successors to tread the same idle ground. In the absolute monarchies the whole weight of business, civil and military, lies on the king; the children of Israel, in their request for a king, urged this plea, "that he may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." But in countries where he is neither a judge nor a general, a man would be puzzled to know what is his business.

The nearer any government approaches to a republic, the less business there is for a king. It is somewhat difficult to find a proper name for the government of England. Sir William Meredith calls it a republic; but in its present state it is unworthy of the name, because the corrupt influence of the Crown, by having all the places in its disposal, hath so effectually swallowed up the power and eaten out the virtue of the House of Commons (the republican part of the constitution), that the government of England is nearly as monarchical as that of France or Spain. Men fall out with names without understanding them: for it is the republican, and not the monarchical, part of the constitution of England which Englishmen glory in, viz., the liberty of choosing a House of Commons from out of their own body; and it is easy to see that when republican virtue fails, slavery ensues. Why is the constitution of England sickly, but because monarchy hath poisoned the republic, the Crown hath engrossed the Commons?

In England the king hath little more to do than to make war and give away places; which, in plain terms, is to impoverish the nation and set it together by the ears. A pretty business, indeed, for a man to be allowed eight hundred thousand sterling a-year for, and worshipped into the bargain! Of more worth is one honest man to society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived.

**Thoughts on the present State of American Affairs.**

In the following pages, I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put off the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs; but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms, as the last resource, decide the contest: and the appeal was the choice of a king, and the continent hath Accepted the challenge.

It hath been reported of the late Mr. Pelham, who, though an able minister, was not without his faults, that on his being Attacked in the House of Commons on the score that his measures were only of a temporary kind, replied, "They will last my time." Should a thought so fatal and unmanly possess the colonies in the present contest, the name of ancestors will be remembered by future generations with detestation.

The sun never shone on a cause of greater worth. It is not the affair of a city, a county, a province, or of a kingdom, but of a continent—of, at least, one-eighth part of the habitable globe. It is not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected, even to the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed-time of continental union, faith, and honour. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound will enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full-grown characters.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new era for politics is struck, a new method of thinking hath arisen. All plans, proposals, &c., prior to the nineteenth of April, *i.e.*, to the commencement of hostilities,
are like the almanacks of last year, which, though proper then, are superseded and useless now. Whatever was advanced by the advocates on either side of the question then terminated in one and the same point, viz., an union with Great Britain: the only difference between the parties was the method of affecting it, the one proposing force, the other friendship; but it hath so far happened that the first hath failed, and the second hath withdrawn her influence.

As much hath been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream, hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right that we should view the contrary side of the argument, and inquire into some of the many material injuries which these colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with, and dependent on, Great Britain. To examine that connection and dependence, on the principles of nature and common sense, to see what we have to trust to, if separated, and what we are to expect, if dependent.

I have heard it asserted by some that, as America had flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrive upon milk it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives are to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I Answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power anything to do with her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessities of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she has engrossed us is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own, is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz., the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas! we have been long led away by ancient prejudices, and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted of the protection of Great Britain, without considering that her motive was interest, not attachment; but she did not protect us from our enemies on our account, but from her enemies on her own account, from those who had no quarrel with us on any other account, and who will always be our enemies on the same account. Let Britain waive her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependence, and we should be at peace with France and Spain were they at peace with Britain. The miseries of Hanover, last war, ought to warn us against connections.

It has lately been asserted in Parliament that the colonies have no relation to each other but through the parent country, i.e., Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, and so on for the rest, are sister colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very roundabout way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enemyship, if I may so call it. France and Spain never were, nor perhaps never will be, our enemies as Americans, but as our being the subjects of Great Britain.

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war on their families; wherefore the assertion, if time, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase parent or mother country hath been jesuitically adopted by the king and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty in every part of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home pursues their descendants still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England), and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment.

It is pleasant to observe by what regular gradations we surmount the force of local prejudice, as we enlarge our acquaintance with the world. A man born in any town in England divided into parishes, will naturally associate with his fellow-parishioner, because their interests in many cases will be common, and distinguish him by the name of neighbour: if he meet him but a few miles from home, he salutes him by the name of townsman; if he travel out of the county, and meet him in any other, he forgets the minor divisions of street and town, and calls him countryman, i.e., countyman; but if in their foreign excursions they should associate in France, or in any other part of Europe, their local remembrance would be enlarged into that of Englishman. And by a just parity of reasoning, all Europeans meeting in America, or any other quarter of the globe, are countrymen; for England, Holland, Germany, or Sweden, when compared with the whole, stand in the same places on the larger scale, which the divisions of street, town, and county, do on the smaller ones: distinctions too limited for continental minds. Not one-third of the inhabitants, even of this province, are of English descent. Wherefore I reprobate the phrase of parent or mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow, and ungenerous.
But admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title: and to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly farcical. The first king of England of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain and the colonies; that in conjunction they might bid defiance to the world. But this is mere presumption: the fate of wars is uncertain: neither do the expression mean anything: for this continent never would suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support the British arms in either Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance? Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe; because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a free port. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation to show a single advantage this continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain; I repeat the challenge, not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where you will.

But the injuries and disadvantages we sustain by that connection are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instructs us to renounce the alliance, because, any submission to, or dependence on Great Britain, tends to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels, and set us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she can never do, while her dependence on Britain she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics.

Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, because of her connection with Great Britain. The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now, will be wishing for a separation then, because neutrality in that case would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Every thing that is right or natural pleads for a separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature, cries. It is time to part. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other was never the design of heaven. The time, likewise, at which the continent was discovered, adds to the weight of the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled increases the force of it. The Reformation was preceded by the discovery of America, as if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.

The authority of Great Britain over this continent is a form of government which, sooner or later, must have an end: and a serious mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward, under the painful and positive conviction, that what he calls "the present constitution" is merely temporary. As parent?, we can have no joy, knowing that this government is not sufficiently lasting to ensure anything which we may bequeath to posterity: and by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hands, and fix our station a few years farther into life; that eminence will present a prospect, which a few present fears and prejudices concealed from our sight.

Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offence, yet I am inclined to believe, that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation, may be included within the following descriptions: Interested men, who are not to be trusted; weak men, who cannot see; prejudiced men, who will not see; and a certain set of moderate men, who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent than all the other three.

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of sorrow; and the evil is not sufficiently brought to their doors to make them feel the precariousness with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us for a few moments to Boston; that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us for ever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust: the inhabitants of that unfortunate city, who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now, no other alternative than to stay and starve, or turn out to beg. Endangered by the fire of their friends, if they continue within the city, and plundered by the soldiery if they leave it. In their present condition they are prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief, they would be exposed to the fury of both armies.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offences of Britain, and still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, "Come, come, we shall be friends again, for all this." But examine the passions and feelings of mankind, bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can
hereafter love, honour, and faithfully serve the power which hath carried fire and sword into your land? If you
cannot do all these, then you are only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon posterity.
Your future connection with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honour, will be forced and unnatural, and
being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time fall into a relapse more wretched than
the first. But if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath
your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread
to live on? Have you lost a parent or child by their hands, and you yourself the ruined and wretched survivor? If
you have not, then are you a judge of those who have? But if you have, and still can shake hands with the
murderers, then you are unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover; and whatever may be your rank
or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant.

This is not inflaming or exaggerating matters, by trying them by those feelings and affections which nature
justifies, and without which we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the
felicities of it. I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal
and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object. It is not in the power of Britain, or
of Europe to conquer America, if she do not conquer herself by delay and timidity. The present winter is worth
an age, if rightly employed, but if neglected, the whole continent will partake of the misfortune: and there is no
punishment which that man will not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of
sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

It is repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things, to all examples of former ages, to suppose that
this continent can longer remain subject to any external power. The most sanguine in Britain does not think so.
The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time, compass a plan short of separation, which can
promise the continent a year’s security. Reconciliation is now a fallacious dream. Nature has deserted the
connection, and art cannot supply her place; for as Milton wisely expresses:

"Never can true reconciliation grow, where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain; and only
tended to convince us, that nothing flatters vanity, or confirms obstinacy in kings, more than repeated
petitioning—and nothing hath contributed more than that very measure to make the kings of Europe absolute;

witness Denmark and Sweden. Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God’s sake let us come to a final
separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting of throats, under the violated, unmeaning names of
parent and child.

To say they will never attempt it again is idle and visionary; we thought so at the repeal of the Stamp Act,
yet a year or two undeceived us: as well may we suppose that nations, which have been once defeated, will
never renew the quarrel.

As to government matters, it is not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice; the business of it will
soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so
distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always
running three or four thousand miles with a tale or petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which,
when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and
childishness—there was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their
care; but there is something very absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no
instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect
to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident they belong to different systems; England, to
Europe; America, to itself.

I am not induced by motives of pride, party, or resentment, to espouse the doctrine of separation and
independence. I am clearly, positively, and conscientiously persuaded, that it is the true interest of the continent
to be so: that everything short of that is merely patchwork, that it can afford no lasting felicity, that it is leaving
the sword to our children, and sinking back at a time, when a little more, a little farther, would have rendered
the continent the glory of the earth.

As Britain hath not manifested the least inclination towards a compromise, we may be assured that no
terms can be obtained worthy the acceptance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expense of blood and
treasure we have been already put to.

The object contended for ought always to bear some just proportion to the expense. The removal of North,
or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of
trade was an inconvenience which would have sufficiently balanced the repeal of all the acts complained of,
had such repeals been obtained: but if the whole continent must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, it
is scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly, do we pay for the
repeal of the Acts, if that is all we fight for: for in a just estimation, it is as great a folly to pay a Hunker Hill
price for law as for land. As I have always considered the independence of the continent as an event which sooner or later must arise, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event could not be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth while to have disputed a matter which time would have finally redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest; otherwise it is like wasting an estate on a suit of law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant, whose lease is just expiring. No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself before the fatal nineteenth

Lexington.

of April, 1775, but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England for ever, and disdained the wretch, that with the pretended title of Father of his People, can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent. And that for several reasons.

First. The powers of governing still remaining in the hands of the king, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of the continent. And as he hath shown himself such an inveterate enemy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper man to say to these colonies, "You shall make no laws but what I please"? And is there any inhabitant in America so ignorant as not to know, that according to what is called the present constitution, this continent can make no laws but what the king gives leave to; and is there any man so unwise as not to see (considering what has happened), he will suffer no law to be made here, but such as suits his purpose? We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by submitting to laws made in England. After matters are made up, as it is called, can there be any doubt but the whole power of the crown will be exerted to keep this continent as low and as humble as possible? Instead of going forward, we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarrelling or ridiculously petitioning. We are already greater than the king wishes us to be, and will he not endeavour to make us less? To bring the matter to one point; is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? Whoever says no to this question is an independent; for independency means no more than whether we shall make our own laws, or whether the king (the greatest enemy this continent hath or can have) shall tell us, "There shall be no laws but such as I like."

But the king, you will say, has a negative in England; the people there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order, there is something very ridiculous, that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened), shall say to seven millions of people, older and wiser than himself—I forbid this or that act of yours to be law. But in this place I decline this sort of reply, though I will never cease to expose the absurdity of it, and only answer that England, being the king's residence, and America not so, make quite another case. The king's negative here is ten times more dangerous and fatal than it can be in England; for there he will scarcely refuse his consent to a bill for putting England into as strong a state of defence as possible, and in America he would never suffer such a bill to be passed.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics. England consults the good of this country no farther than it answers her own purpose. Wherefore her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of ours in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interfere with it. A pretty state we should soon be in under such a second-hand Government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name; and in order to show that reconciliation now is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm, that it would be policy in the King at this time to repeal the Acts, for the sake of reinstating himself in the government of the provinces; in order that he may accomplish by craft and subtlety, in the long run, what he cannot do by force and violence in the short one. Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

Secondly. That as even the best terms which we can expect to obtain, can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things, in the interim, will be unsettled and unpromising. Emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and that is every day tottering on the brink of commotion and disturbance, and numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects, and quit the continent.

But the most powerful of all arguments is, that nothing but independence, i.e., a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent, and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable that it will be followed by a revolt somewhere or other; the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.

Thousands are already ruined by British barbarity! thousands more will probably suffer the same fate! Those men have other feelings than us, who have nothing suffered. All they now possess is liberty; what they before enjoyed is sacrificed to its service, and having nothing more to lose, they disdain submission. Besides, the general temper of the colonies towards a British government, will be like that of a youth who is nearly out
of his time; they will care very little about her. And a government which cannot preserve the peace is no
government at all, and in that case we pay our money for nothing; and pray what is it Britain can do, whose
power will be wholly on paper, should a civil tumult break out the very day after reconciliation? I have heard
some men say, many of whom, I believe, spoke without thinking, that they dreaded an independence, fearing it
would produce civil wars. It is but seldom that our first thoughts are truly correct, and that is the case here; for
there are ten times more to dread from a patched-up connection than from independence. I make the sufferers
case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed, and my
circumstances ruined, that, as a man sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or
consider myself bound thereby.

The colonies have manifested such a spirit of good order and obedience to continental government as is
sufficient to make every reasonable person easy and happy on that head. No man can assign the least pretence
for his fears on any other ground than such as are truly childish and ridiculous, viz., that one colony will be
striving for superiority over another.

Where there are no distinctions, there can be no superiority; perfect equality affords no temptation. The
republics of Europe are all, and we may say always, at peace. Holland and Switzerland are without wars,
foreign and domestic: monarchical governments, it is true, are never long at rest; the crown itself is a
temptation to enterprising ruffians at home; and that degree of pride and insolence, ever attendant on regal
authority, swells into a rupture with foreign powers, in instances where a republican government, by being
formed on more natural principles, would negotiate the mistake.

If there is any true cause of fear respecting independence, it is because no plan is yet laid down: men do
not see their way out. Wherefore, as an opening to that business, I offer the following hints; at the same time
modestly affirming, that I have no other opinion of them myself than that they may be the means of giving rise
to something better. Could the straggling thoughts of individuals be collected, they would frequently form
materials for wise and able men to improve into useful matter.

Let the assemblies be annual, with a president only. The representation more equal: their business wholly
domestic, and subject to the authority of a continental congress.

Let each colony be divided into six, eight, or ten convenient districts, each district to send a proper number
of delegates to congress, so that each colony send at least thirty. The whole number in congress will be at least
three hundred and ninety. Each congress to sit * * * * and to choose a president by the following method :
—When the delegates are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen colonies by lot; after which let the
whole congress choose, by ballot, a president from out of the delegates of that province. In the next congress,
let a colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that colony from which the president was taken in the
former congress, so proceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that
nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three-fifths of the congress to be called
a majority. He that will promote discord under a government so equally formed as this, would have joined
Lucifer in his revolt.

But as there is a peculiar delicacy, from whom and in what manner this business must first arise; and as it
seems most agreeable and consistent that it should come from some intermediate body between the governed
and the governors, that is between the congress and the people, let a continental conference be held, in the
following manner and for the following purpose :

A committee of twenty-six members of congress, viz., two for each county. Two members from each house
of assembly or provincial convention; and five representatives of the people at large, to be chosen in the capital
city or town of each province, for and in behalf of the whole province, by as many qualified voters as shall
think proper to attend from all parts of the province for that purpose; or, if more convenient, the representatives
may be chosen in two or three of the most populous parts thereof. In this conference thus assembled will be
united the two grand principles of business, knowledge and power. The members of congress, assemblies, or
conventions, by having had experience in national concerns, will be able and useful counsellors; and the whole,
empowered by the people, will have a truly legal authority.

The conferring members being met, let their business be to frame a continental charter, or charter of the
united colonies, answering to what is called the Magna Charta of England; fixing the number and manner of
choosing members of congress, members of assembly, with their date of sitting, and drawing the line of
business and jurisdiction between them; always remembering that our strength is continental, not provincial;
securing freedom and property to all men; and, above all things, the free exercise of religion, according to the
dictates of conscience; with such other matter as it is necessary for a charter to contain. Immediately after
which the said conference to dissolve, and the bodies which shall he chosen conformable to the said charter to
be the legislators and governors of this continent for the time being, whose peace and happiness may God
preserve! Amen.

Should any body of men be hereafter delegated for this or some similar purpose, I offer them the following
extract from that wise observer on governments, Dragonetti:—"The science," says he, "of the politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense."—Dragonetti, on "Virtue and Rewards."

But where, some say, is the king of America? I will tell you, friend, he reigns above, and does not make havoc of mankind, like the royal brute of Britain. Yet, that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honours, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth, placed on the divine law, the word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know that so far we approve of monarchy, that in America the law is king. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to be king, and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown, at the conclusion of the ceremony, be demolished and scattered among the people, whose right it is.

A government of our own is our natural right; and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced that it is infinitely wiser and safer to form a constitution of our own in such a cool, deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to 'trust such an interesting event to time and chance. If we omit it now, some Masaniello

Thomas Aniello, otherwise Masaniello, a fisherman of Naples, who, after spiriting up his countrymen in the public market-place against the oppression of the Spaniards, to whom the place was then subject, prompted them to revolt, and in the space of a day became king.

...may hereafter arise, who, laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and discontented, and, by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a deluge. Should the government of America return again to the hands of Britain, the tottering situation of things will be a temptation for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case, what relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done, and ourselves suffering, like the wretched Britains, under the oppression of the conqueror. Ye that oppose independence now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny.

There are thousands and tens of thousands who would think it glorious to expel from the continent that barbarous and hellish power which hath stirred up the Indians and negroes to destroy us; the cruelty hath a double guilt—it is dealing brutally by us and treacherously by them.

To talk of friendship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections, wounded through a thousand pores, instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out the little remains of kindred between us and them, and can there be any reason to hope that, as the relationship expires, the affection will increase; or that we shall agree better when we have ten times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever?

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can you give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can a lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress as the continent forgive the murderers of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes.

They are the guardians of his image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence, were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our temper sustains provoke us into justice.

O ye that love mankind; ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth; every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her, Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O receive the fugitive; and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

Of the present Ability of America, with some miscellaneous Reflections.

I have never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion that a separation between the two countries would take place one time or other. And there is no instance in which we have shown less judgment than in endeavouring to describe what we call the ripeness or fitness of the continent for independence.

As all men allow the measure, and vary only in their opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes, take a general survey of things, and endeavour, if possible, to find out the very time. But we need not go far, the inquiry ceases at once, for the time hath found us. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all
It is not in numbers, but in unity, that our great strength lies; yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world. The continent hath, at this time, the largest body of armed and disciplined men of any power under heaven, and is just arrived at that pitch of strength in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, can accomplish the matter; and either more or less than this might be fatal in its effects. Our land force is already sufficient, and as to naval affairs, we cannot be insensible that Britain would never suffer an American man-of-war to be built while the continent remained in her hands, wherefore we should be no forwarder a hundred years hence in that branch than we are now; but the truth is, we shall be less so, because the timber of the country is every day diminishing, and that which will remain at last will be far off and difficult to procure.

Were the continent crowded with inhabitants, her sufferings under the present circumstances would be intolerable. The more sea-port towns we had, the more should we have both to defend and to lose. Our present numbers are so happily proportioned to our wants, that no man need to be idle. The diminution of trade affords an army, and the necessities of an army create a new trade.

Debts we have none, and whatever we may contract on this account will serve as a glorious memento of our virtue. Can we but leave posterity with a settled form of government, an independent constitution of its own, the purchase at any price will be cheap. But to expend millions for the sake of getting a few vile acts repealed, and routing the present ministry only, is unworthy the charge, is using posterity with the utmost cruelty; because it is leaving them the great work to do, and a debt upon their backs from which they derive no advantage. Such a thought is unworthy a man of honour, and is the true characteristic of a narrow heart and a peddling politician.

The debt we may contract doth not deserve our regard, if the work be but accomplished. No nation ought to be without a debt; a national debt is a national bond, and when it bears no interest, is in no case a grievance. Britain is oppressed with a debt of upwards of one hundred and fifty millions sterling, for which she pays upwards of four millions interest. As a compensation for the debt, she has a large navy; America is without a debt and without a navy; yet, for the twentieth part of the English national debt, could have a navy as large again. The navy of England is not worth more at this time than three millions and a half sterling.

The charge of building a ship of each rate, and furnishing her with masts, yards, sails, and rigging, together with a proportion of eight months' boatswain's and carpenter's sea stores, as calculated by Mr. Burchett, Secretary to the Navy, is as follows:—

And from hence it is easy to sum up the value, or cost rather, of the whole British navy, which, in the year 1757, when it was at its greatest glory, consisted of the following ships and guns:—

No country on the globe is so happily situated, or so internally capable of raising a fleet, as America. Tar, timber, iron, and cordage are her natural produce. We need go abroad for nothing. Whereas the Dutch, who make large profits by hiring out their ships of war to the Spaniards and Portuguese, are obliged to import most of the materials they use. We ought to view the building a fleet as an article of commerce, it being the natural manufactory of this country. It is the best money we can lay out. A navy, when finished, is worth more than it cost; and is that nice point in national policy, in which commerce and protection are united. Let us build; if we want them not, we can sell; and by that means replace our paper currency with ready gold and silver.

In point of manning a fleet, people in general run into great errors; it is not necessary that one-fourth part should be sailors. The Terrible, privateer, Captain Death, stood the hottest engagement of any ship last war, yet had not twenty sailors on board, though her complement of men was upwards of two hundred. A few able and sociable sailors will soon instruct a sufficient number of active landsmen in the common work of a ship.

Wherefore, we never can be more capable to begin on maritime matters than now, while our timber is standing, our fisheries blocked up and our sailors and shipwrights out of employ. Men of war of seventy and eighty guns were built forty years ago in New England, and why not the same now? Ship building is America's greatest pride, and in which she will in time excel the whole world. The great empires of the east are mostly inland, and consequently excluded from the possibility of rivalling her. Africa is in a state of barbarism, and no power in Europe hath either such an extent of coast, or such an internal supply of materials. Where nature hath given the one, she has withheld the other: to America only hath she been liberal in both. The vast empire of Russia is almost shut out from the sea; wherefore, her boundless forests, her tar, iron, and cordage, are only articles of commerce.

In point of safety ought we to be without a fleet? We are not the little people now which we were sixty years ago; at that time we might have trusted our property in the street, or field rather, and slept securely without locks or bolts to our doors or windows. The case now is altered, and our methods of defence ought to improve with our increase of property. A common pirate, twelve months ago, might have come up the Delaware and laid the city of Philadelphia under instant contribution for what sum he please, and the same might have happened to other places. Nay any daring fellow, in a brig of fourteen or sixteen guns, might have
robbed the whole continent, and carried off half a million of money. These are circumstances which demand our attention, and point out the necessity of naval protection.

Some, perhaps, will say, that after we have made it up with Britain, she will protect us. Can we be so unwise as to mean that she shall keep a navy in our harbours for that purpose? Common sense will tell us, that the power which hath endeavoured to subdue us, is of all others the most improper to defend us. Conquest may be effected under the pretence of friendship: and ourselves, after a long and brave resistance, be at last cheated into slavery. And if her ships are not to be admitted into our harbours, I would ask, how is she to protect us? A navy three or four thousand miles off can be of little use, and on sudden emergencies, none at all. Wherefore, if we must hereafter protect ourselves, why not do it for ourselves? why do it for another?

The English list of ships of war is long and formidable, but not a tenth part of them are at any one time fit for service, numbers of them not in being, yet their names are pompously continued in the list, if only a plank be left of the ship: and not a fifth part of such as are fit for service can be spared on any one station at one time. The East and West Indies, Mediterranean, Africa, and other parts, over which Britain extends her claim, make large demands upon her navy. From a mixture of prejudice and inattention, we have contracted a false notion respecting the navy of England and have talked as if we should have the whole of it to encounter at once, and for that reason supposed, that we must have one as large; which not being instantly practicable, has been made use of by a set of disguised Tories to discourage our beginning thereon. Nothing can be farther from truth than this; for if America had only a twentieth part of the naval force of Britain, she would be by far an overmatch for her, because, as we neither have, nor claim any foreign dominion, our own force will be employed on our own coast, where we should, in the long run, have two to one the advantage of those who had three or four thousand miles to sail over before they could attack us, and the same distance to return in order to refit and recruit. And although Britain, by her fleet, hath a check over our trade to Europe, we have as large a one over her trade to the West Indies, which, by lying in the neighbourhood of the continent, is entirely at its mercy.

Some method might be fallen on to keep up a naval force in the time of peace, if we should not judge it necessary to support a constant navy. If premiums were to be given to merchants, to build and employ in their service ships mounted with twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty guns (the premiums to be in proportion to the loss of bulk to the merchants), fifty or sixty of those ships, with a few guardships on constant duty, would keep up a sufficient navy, and that without burdening ourselves with the evil so loudly complained of in England, of suffering their fleet, in time of peace, to lie rotting in the docks. To unite the sinews of commerce and defence is sound policy, for when our strength and our riches play into each other's hands we need fear no external enemy.

In almost every article of defence we abound. Hemp flourishes even to rankness, so that we need not want cordage. Our iron is superior to that of other countries. Our small arms equal to any in the world. Cannon we can cast at pleasure. Saltpetre and gunpowder we are every day producing. Our knowledge is hourly improving. Resolution is our inherent character, and courage hath never yet forsaken us. Wherefore, what is it we want? Why is it that we hesitate? From Britain we expect nothing but ruin. If she is once admitted to the government of America again, this continent will not be worth living in. Jealousies will be always arising; insurrections will be constantly happening; and who will go forth to quell them? Who will venture his life to reduce his own countrymen to a foreign obedience? The difference between Pennsylvania and Connecticut, respecting some unlocated lands, shows the insignificance of a British government, and fully proves that nothing but continental authority can regulate continental matters.

Another reason why the present time is preferable to all others is, that the fewer our numbers are, the more land there is yet unoccupied, which, instead of being lavished by the king on his worthless dependents, may be hereafter applied, not only to the discharge of the present debt, but to the constant support of government. No nation under heaven hath such an advantage as this.

The infant state of the colonies, as it is called, so far from being against, is an argument in favour of independence. We are sufficiently numerous, and were we more so, we might be less united. It is a matter worthy of observation that the more a country is peopled, the smaller their armies are. In military numbers the ancients far exceeded the moderns; and the reason is evident, for trade being the consequence of population, men become too much absorbed thereby to attend to anything else. Commerce diminishes the spirit both of patriotism and military defence; and history sufficiently informs us, that the bravest achievements were always accomplished in the nonage of a nation. With the increase of commerce, England hath lost its spirit. The city of London, notwithstanding its numbers, submits to continued insults with the patience of a coward. The more men have to lose, the less willing they are to venture. The rich are in general slaves to fear, and submit to courtly power with the trembling duplicity of a spaniel.

Youth is the seed-time of good habits, as well in nations as in individuals. It might be difficult, if not impossible, to form the continent into one government half a century hence. The vast variety of interests, occasioned by the increase of trade and population, would create confusion. Colony would be against colony.
Each being able, might scorn each other’s assistance; and while the proud and foolish gloried in their little distinctions, the wise would lament that the union had not been formed before. Wherefore, the present time is the true time for establishing it. The intimacy which is contracted in infancy, and the friendship which is formed in misfortune, are of all others the most lasting and honourable. Our present union is marked with both these characters; we are young, and we have been distressed; but our concord hath withstood our troubles, and fixes a memorable era for posterity to glory in.

The present time, likewise, is that peculiar time which never happens to a nation but once, viz., the time of forming itself into a government. Most nations have let slip the opportunity, and by that means have been compelled to receive laws from their conquerors, instead of making laws for themselves. First, they had a king, and then a form of government; whereas, the articles or charter of government should be formed first, and men delegated to execute them afterwards: but from the errors of other nations, let us learn wisdom, and lay hold of the present opportunity—to begin government at the right end.

When William the Conqueror subdued England, he gave them law at the point of the sword, and until we consent that the seat of government in America be legally and authoritatively occupied, we shall be in danger of having it filled by some fortunate ruffian, who may treat us in the same manner; and then, Where will be our freedom?—where our property?

As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of all governments to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which government hath to do therewith. Let a man throw aside that narrowness of soul, that selfishness of principle, which the niggards of all professions are so unwilling to part with, and he will be at once delivered of his fears on that head. Suspicion is the companion of mean souls, and the bane of all good society. For myself, I fully and conscientiously believe that it is the will of the Almighty that there should be a diversity of religious opinions among us; it affords a larger field for our Christian kindness. Were we all of one way of thinking, our religious dispositions would want matter for probation; and on this liberal principle, I look on the various denominations among us to be, like children of the same family, differing only in what is called their Christian names.

In page twenty-seven I threw out a few thoughts on the propriety of a continental charter (for I only presume to offer hints, not plans), and in this place I take the liberty of re-mentioning the subject by observing that a charter is to be understood as a bond of solemn obligation, which the whole enters into, to support the right of every separate part, whether of religion, personal freedom, or property. A firm bargain and a right reckoning make long friends.

In a former page I likewise mentioned the necessity of a large and equal representation, and there is no political matter which more deserves our attention. A small number of electors, or a small number of representatives, are equally dangerous: but if the number of the representatives be not only small, but unequal, the danger is increased. As an instance of this, I mention the following: When the Associates’ petition was before the House of Assembly of Pennsylvania, twenty-eight members only were present; all the Bucks county members, being eight, voted against it, and had seven of the Chester members done the same, this whole province had been governed by two counties only, and this danger it is always exposed to. The unwarrantable stretch, likewise, which that House made in their last sitting, to gain an undue authority over the delegates of that province, ought to warn the people at large how they trust power out of their own hands. A set of instructions for the delegates were put together, which in point of sense and business would have dishonoured a schoolboy; and after being approved by a few, a very few, without doors, were carried into the House, and there passed in behalf of the whole colony: whereas, did the whole colony know with what ill-will that House had entered on some necessary public measures, they would not hesitate a moment to think them unworthy of such a trust.

Immediate necessity makes many things convenient, which, if continued, would grow into oppressions. Experience and right are different things. When the calamities of America required a consultation, there was no method so ready, or at that time so proper, as to appoint persons from the several Houses of Assembly for that purpose; and the wisdom with which they have proceeded hath preserved this continent from ruin. But as it is more than probable that we shall ever be without a Congress, every well-wisher to good order must own that the mode for choosing members of that body deserves consideration. And I put it as a question to those who make a study of mankind, whether representation and election are not too great a power for one and the same body of men to possess? When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary.

It is from our enemies that we often gain excellent maxims, and are frequently surprised into reason by their mistakes. Mr. Cornwall, one of the Lords of the Treasury, treated the petition of the New York Assembly with contempt, because that House, he said, consisted but of twenty-six members, which trifling number, he argued, could not with decency be put for the whole. We thank him for his involuntary honesty.

Those who would fully understand of what great consequence a large and equal representation is to, a State,
should read Burgh's "Political Disquisitions."

To conclude: however strange it may appear to some, or however unwilling they may be to think so, matters not; but many strong and striking reasons may be given, to show that nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined declaration for independence. Some of which are:

First. It is the custom of nations, when any two are at war, for some other powers not engaged in the quarrel, to step in as mediators, and bring about the preliminaries of a peace: but while America calls herself the subject of Great Britain, no power, however well-disposed she may be, can offer her mediation. Wherefore, in our present state, we may quarrel on for ever.

Secondly. It is unreasonable to suppose that France or Spain will give us any kind of assistance, if we mean only to make use of that assistance for the purpose of repairing the breach, and strengthening the connection between Britain and America, because those powers would be sufferers by the consequences.

Thirdly. While we profess ourselves the subjects of Britain, we must, in the eyes of foreign nations, be considered as rebels. The precedent is somewhat dangerous to their peace, for men to be in arms under the name of subjects; we, on the spot, can solve the paradox; but to unite resistance and subjection requires an idea much too refined for common understandings.

Fourthly. Were a manifesto to be published, and dispatched to foreign Courts, setting forth the miseries we have endured, and the peacable methods we have ineffectually used for redress, declaring, at the same time, that not being able any longer to live happily or safely under the cruel disposition of the British Court, we had been driven to the necessity of breaking off all connection with her; at the same time assuring all such Courts of our peacable disposition towards them, and of our desire of entering into trade with them; such a memorial would produce more good effects to this continent than if a ship were freighted with petitions to Britain.

Under our present denomination of British subjects, we can neither be received nor heard abroad: the custom of all Courts is against us, and will be so until, by an independence, we take rank with other nations.

These proceedings may at first appear strange and difficult; but like other steps which we have already passed over, will in a little time become familiar and agreeable; and until an independence is declared, the continent will find itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of its necessity.

Appendix.

Since the publication of the first edition of this pamphlet, or rather on the same day on which it came out, the king's speech made its appearance in this city. Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of this production, it could not have brought it forth at a more seasonable juncture, or a more necessary time. The bloody-mindedness of the one shows the necessity of pursuing the doctrine of the other. Men read by way of revenge. And the speech, instead of terrifying, prepared a way for the manly principles of independence.

Ceremony, and even silence from whatever motive they may arise, have a hurtful tendency, when they give the least degree of countenance to base and wicked performances: wherefore, if this maxim be admitted, it naturally follows, that the king's speech, as being a piece of finished villany, deserved, and still deserves, a general execration both by the Congress and the People. Yet as the domestic tranquillity of a nation depends greatly on the chastity of what may properly be called national manners, it is often better to pass some things over in silent disdain, than to make use of such new methods of dislike as might introduce the least innovation on the guardian of our peace and safety. And, perhaps, it is chiefly owing to this prudent delicacy, that the king's speech hath not, before now, suffered a public execration. The speech, if it may be called one, is nothing but a wilful, audacious libel against the truth, the common good, and the existence of mankind; and is a formal and pompous method of offering up human sacrifices to the pride of tyrants. But this general massacre of mankind is one of the privileges, and the certain consequence of kings; for as Nature knows them not, they know not her: and although they are beings of our own creating, they know not us, and are become the gods of their creators. The speech hath one good quality, which is that it is not calculated to deceive: neither can we, even if we would, be deceived by it: brutality and tyranny appear on the face of it. It leaves us at no loss: and every line convinces, even in the moment of reading, that he who hunts the woods for prey, the naked and untutored Indian is less a savage than the king of Britain.

Sir John Dalrymple, the putative father of a whining, jesuitical piece, fallaciously called "The Address of the People of England to the Inhabitants of America," hath, perhaps, from a vain supposition that the people here were to be frightened at the pomp and description of a king, given (though very unwisely on his part) the real character of the present one. "But," says this writer, "if you are inclined to pay compliments to an administration which we do not complain of" (meaning the Marquis of Rockingham's at the repeal of the Stamp Act), "it is very unfair in you to withhold them from that prince by whose nod alone they were permitted to do
anything." This is Toryism with a witness! Here is idolatry even without a mask! and he who can calmly hear and digest such doctrine hath forfeited his claim to rationality—an apostate from the order of manhood—and ought to be considered as one who hath not only given up the proper dignity of man, but sunk himself beneath the rank of animals, and contemptibly crawls through the world like a worm.

It is now the interest of America to provide for herself. She hath already a large and young family, whom it is more her duty to take care of than to be granting away her property, to support a power who is become a reproach to the names of men and Christians. Ye, whose office it is to watch over the morals of a nation, of whatsoever sect or denomination ye are of, as well as ye who are more immediately the guardians of the public liberty, if ye wish to preserve your native country uncontaminated by European corruption, ye must in secret wish a separation. But leaving the moral part to private reflection, I shall chiefly confine my farther remarks to the following heads:—

First. That it is the interest of America to be separated from Britain.

Secondly. Which is the easiest and most practicable plan. Reconciliation or Independence? with some occasional remarks.

In support of the first, I could, if I judged it proper, produce the opinion of some of the ablest and most experienced men on this continent: and whose sentiments on that head are not yet publicly known. It is in reality a self-evident position: for no nation in a state of foreign dependence, limited in its commerce, and cramped and fettered in its legislative powers, can ever arrive at any material eminence. America doth not yet know what opulence is: and although the progress which she hath made stands unparalleled in the history of other nations, it is but childhood, compared with what she would be capable of arriving at, had she, as she ought to have, the legislative power in her own hands. England is, at this time, proudly coveting what would do her no good, were she to accomplish it: and the continent, hesitating on the matter, which will be her final ruin, if neglected. It is the commerce and not the conquest of America by which England is to be benefited: and that would in a great measure continue, were the countries as independent of each other as France and Spain; because, in many articles, neither can go to a better market. But it is the independence of this country of Britain or any other, which is now the main and only object worthy of contention; and which, like all other truths discovered by necessity, will appear clearer and stronger every day.

First. Because it will come to that one time or other.

Secondly. Because the longer it is delayed the harder it will be to accomplish.

I have frequently amused myself, both in public and private companies, with silently remarking the specious errors of those who spoke without reflecting. And among the many which I have heard, the following seems the most general, viz.: That had this rupture happened forty or fifty years hence, instead of now, the continent would have been more able to have shaken off the dependence. To which I reply, that our military ability, at this time, arises from the experience gained in the last war and which, in forty or fifty years' time, would have been totally extinct. The continent would not, by that time, have had a general, or even a military officer left; and we, or those who may succeed us, would have been as ignorant of martial matters as the ancient Indians. And this single position closely attended to, will unanswerably prove, that the present time is preferable to all others. The argument turns thus: At the conclusion of the last war we had experience, but wanted numbers, and forty or fifty years hence we shall have numbers without experience: wherefore, the proper point of time must be some particular point between the two extremes, in which a sufficiency of the former remains, and a proper increase of the latter is obtained: and that point of time is the present time.

The reader will pardon this digression, as it does not properly come under the head I first set out with, and to which I shall again return by the following position, viz.:—

Should affairs be patched up with Britain, and she to remain the governing and sovereign power of America (which, as matters are now circumstanced, is giving up the point entirely), we shall deprive ourselves of the very means of sinking the debt we have or may contract. The value of the back lands, which some of the provinces are clandestinely deprived of, by the unjust extension of the limits of Canada, valued at only five pounds sterling per hundred acres, amount to upwards of twenty-five millions Pennsylvania currency; and the quit rents at one penny sterling per acre, or two millions yearly.

It is by the sale of those lands that the debt may be sunk, without burden to any, and the quit-rent reserved thereon will always lessen, and in time will wholly support the yearly expense of government. It matters not how long the debt is in paying, so that the lands, when sold, be applied to the discharge of it: and for the execution of which, the Congress, for the time being will be the continental trustees.

I proceed now to the second head, viz., Which is the easiest and most practical plan, Reconciliation or Independence? with some occasional remarks.

He who takes nature for his guide is not easily beaten out of his argument, and on that ground I answer generally—that independence being a single simple line, contained within ourselves, and reconciliation, a matter exceedingly perplexed and complicated, and in which a treacherous, capricious court is to interfere,
The present state of America is truly alarming to every man who is capable of reflection. Without law, without government, without other mode of power than what is founded on, and granted by, courtesy; held together by an unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which is nevertheless subject to change, and which every secret enemy is endeavouring to dissolve. Our present condition is legislation without law, wisdom without a plan, a constitution without a name; and what is strangely astonishing, perfect independence contending for dependence. The instance is without a precedent; the case never existed before; and who can tell what may be the event? The property of no man is secure in the present unbraced system of things; the mind of the multitude is left at random: and seeing no fixed object before them, they pursue such as fancy or opinion starts. Nothing is criminal; there is no such thing as treason: wherefore every one thinks himself at liberty to act as he pleases. The Tories dared not to have assembled offensively, had they known that their lives, by that act, were forfeited to the laws of the state. A line of distinction should be drawn between English soldiers taken in battle, and inhabitants of America taken in arms. The first are prisoners, but the latter traitors. The one forfeits his liberty, the other his head.

Notwithstanding our wisdom, there is a visible feebleness in some of our proceedings which gives encouragement to dissensions. The continental belt is too loosely buckled; and if something be not done in time, it will be too late to do anything, and we shall fall into a state, in which neither reconciliation nor independence will be practicable. The Court and its worthless adherents are got at their old game of dividing the continent: and there are not wanting among us printers, who will be busy in spreading specious falsehoods. The artful and hypocritical letters which appeared, a few months ago, in two of the New York papers, and likewise in two others, are an evidence, that there are men who want either judgment or honesty.

It is easy getting into holes or corners, and talking of reconciliation: but do such men seriously consider, how difficult the task is, and how dangerous it may prove, should the continent divide thereon? Do they take within their view all the various orders of men, whose situations and circumstances, as well as their own, are to be considered therein? Do they put themselves in the place of the sufferer whose all is already gone, and of the soldier who hath quitted all for the defence of his country? If their ill-judged moderation be suited to their own private situations only, regardless of others, the event will convince them "that they are reckoning without their host."

Put us, say some, on the footing we were on in sixty-three. To which I answer, the request is not now in the power of Britain to comply with; neither will she propose it: but if it were, and even should be granted, I ask, as a reasonable question, by what means is such a corrupt and faithless Court to be kept to its engagements? Another Parliament, nay, even the present, may hereafter repeal the obligation, on the pretence of its being violently obtained, or unwisely granted: and in that case, where is our redress? No going to law with nations: cannon are the banisters of crowns: and the sword, not of justice, but of war, decides the suit. To be on the footing of sixty-three. It is not sufficient that the laws only be put on the same state, but that our circumstances, likewise, be put on the same state; our burnt and destroyed towns repaired or built up; our private losses made good, our public debts (contracted for defence) discharged; otherwise, we shall be millions worse than we were at that enviable period. Such a request, had it been complied with a year ago, would have won the heart and soul of the continent—but it is now too late, "the rubicon is passed."

Besides, the taking up arms merely to enforce the repeal of a pecuniary law, seems as unwarrantable by the divine law, and as repugnant to human feelings, as the taking up arms to enforce, obedience thereto. The object on either side does not justify the means; for the lives of men are too valuable to be cast away on such trifles. It is the violence which is done and threatened to our persons; the destruction of our property by an armed force; the invasion of our country by fire and sword, which conscientiously qualifies the use of arms; and the instant in which such a mode of defence became necessary, all subjection to Britain ought to have ceased; and the independence of America should have been considered as dating its era from, and published by the first musket that was first fired against her. This line is a line of consistency; neither drawn by caprice, nor extended by ambition; but produced by a chain of events, of which the colonies were not the authors.

I shall conclude these remarks with the following timely, and well-intended hints. We ought to reflect, that there are three different ways by which an independency can hereafter be effected: and that one of those three will one day or other be the fate of America; viz.: By the legal voice of the people in Congress, by a military power, or by a mob. It may not always happen that our soldiers are citizens, and the multitude a body of reasonable men: virtue, as I have already remarked, is not hereditary, neither is it perpetual. Should an independency be brought about by the first of those means, we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah till now. The birthday of a new world is at hand, and a race of men, perhaps as numerous as all Europe contains, are to receive their portion of freedom from the event of a few months. The reflection is awful—and
in this point of view, how trifling, how ridiculous, do the little paltry cavillings of a few weak or interested men appear, when weighed against the business of a world.

Should we neglect the present favourable and inviting period, and an independence be hereafter effected by any other means, we must charge the consequence to ourselves, or to those rather whose narrow and prejudiced souls are habitually opposing the measure, without either inquiring or reflecting. There are reasons to be given in support of independence, which men should rather privately think of, than be publicly told of. We ought not now to be debating whether we shall be independent or not, but anxious to accomplish it on a firm, secure, and honourable basis, and uneasy rather that it is not yet begun upon. Every day convinces us of its necessity. Even the Tories (if such beings yet remain among us) should, of all men, be the most solicitous to promote it; for, as the appointment of committees at first protected them from popular rage, so a wise and well-established form of government will be the only certain means of continuing it securely to them. Wherefore, if they have not virtue enough to be Whigs, they ought to have prudence enough to wish for independence.

In short, independence is the only bond that can tie and keep us together: we shall then see our object, and our ears will be legally shut against the schemes of an intriging, as well as a cruel enemy. We shall then, too, be on a proper footing to treat with Britain; for there is reason to conclude, that the pride of that court will be less hurt by treating with the American States for terms of peace, than with those whom she denominates "rebellious subjects," for terms of accommodation. It is our delaying it that encourages her to hope for conquest, and our backwardness tends only to prolong the war. As we have, without any good effect therefrom, withheld our trade to obtain a redress of our grievances, let us now try the alternative by independently redressing them ourselves, and then offering to open the trade. The mercantile and reasonable part in England will be still with us, because, peace with trade, is preferable to war without it; and if this offer be not accepted, other courts may be applied to.

On these grounds I rest the matter. And as no offer hath yet been made to refute the doctrine contained in the former editions of this pamphlet, it is a negative proof, that either the doctrine cannot be refuted, or, that the party in favour of it are too numerous to be opposed. Wherefore, instead of gazing at each other with suspicious or doubtful curiosity, let each of us hold out to his neighbour the hearty hand of friendship, and unite in drawing a line which, like an act of oblivion, shall bury in forget fulness every former dissension. Let the names of Whig and Tory be extinct; and let none other be heard among us, than those of a good citizen, an open and resolute friend, and a virtuous supporter of the rights of mankind, and of the free and independent States of America?

To the Representatives of the Religious Society of the People called Quakers, or to so many of them as were concerned in publishing a late Piece, intituled, "The Ancient Testimony and Principles of the People called. Quakers renewed, with respect to the King and Government, and touching the Commotions now prevailing in these and other parts of America, addressed to the People in England."

The writer of this is one of those few, who never dishonours religion, either by ridiculing or cavilling at any denomination whatsoever. To God, and not to man, are all men accountable on the score of religion. Wherefore this epistle is not so properly addressed to you, as a religious, but as a political body, dabbling in matters, which the professed quietude of your principles instruct you not to meddle with.

As you have, without a proper authority for so doing, put yourselves in the place of the whole body of the Quakers, so the writer of this, in order to be on equal rank with yourselves, is under the necessity of putting himself in the place of all those who approve the very writings and principles, against which your testimony is directed; and he hath chosen this singular situation in order that you might discover in him that presumption of character which you cannot sec in yourselves. For neither he nor you can have any claim or title to political representation.

When men have departed from the right way, it is no wonder that they stumble and fall. And it is evident from the manner in which ye have managed your testimony, that politics (as a religious body of men) is not your proper walk; however well adapted it might appear to you, it is, nevertheless, a jumble of good and bad put unwisely together, and the conclusion drawn therefrom, both unnatural and unjust.

The two first pages (and the whole doth not make four), we give you credit for, and expect the same civility from you because the love and desire of peace is not confined to Quakerism, it is the natural as well as the religious wish of all denominations of men. And on this ground, as men labouring to establish an independent constitution of our own, do we exceed all others in our hope, end, and aim. Our plan is peace for ever. We are tired of contention with Britain, and can see no real end to it but in final separation. We act consistently, because for the sake of introducing an endless and uninterrupted peace, do we bear the evils and burdens of the present day. We are endeavouring, and will steadily continue to endeavour, to separate and dissolve a connection, which hath already filled our land with blood; and which, while the name of it remains, will be the fatal cause of future mischiefs to both countries.

We fight neither for revenge nor conquest; neither from pride nor passion; we are not insulting the world
with our fleets and armies, nor ravaging the globe for plunder. Beneath the shade of our own vines are we attacked; in our own houses, and in our own land, is the violence committed against us. We view our enemies in the character of highwaymen and housebreakers; and having no defence for ourselves in the civil law, are obliged to punish them by the military one, and apply the sword in the very case where you have before now applied the halter. Perhaps we feel for the ruined and insulted sufferers in all and every part of the continent, with a degree of tenderness which hath not yet made its way into some of your bosoms. But be ye sure that ye mistake not the cause and ground of your testimony. Call not coldness of soul religion, nor put the bigot in the place of the Christian.

O ye partial ministers of your own acknowledged principles! if the bearing arms be sinful, the first going to war must be more so, by all the difference between wilful attack and unavoidable defence. Wherefore, if ye really preach from conscience, and mean not to make apolitical hobby-horse of your religion, convince the world thereof, by proclaiming your doctrine to our enemies, for they likewise bear arms. (Give us a proof of your sincerity by publishing it at St. James's, to the commanders-in-chief at Boston, to the admirals and captains who are piratically ravaging our coasts, and to all the murdering miscreants who are acting in authority under the tyrant whom ye profess to serve. Had ye the honest soul of Barclay,

"Thou hast tasted of prosperity and adversity! thou knowest what it is to be banished thy native country, to be overruled as well as to rule, and set upon the throne; and being oppressed, thou hast reason to know how hateful the oppressor is both to God and man. If after all these warnings and advertisements, thou dost not turn unto the Lord with all thy heart, but forget him who remembered thee in thy distress, and give up thyself to follow lust and vanity, surely great will be thy condemnation; against which snare, as well as the temptation of those who may or do feed thee, and prompt thee to evil, the most excellent and prevalent remedy will be to apply thyself to that light of Christ which shineth in thy conscience, and which neither can, nor will flatter thee, nor suffer thee to be at ease in thy sins."

BARCLAY'S ADDRESS TO CHARLES II. ye would preach repentance to your king; ye would tell the despot of his sins, and warn him of eternal ruin. Ye would not spend your partial invectives against the injured and the insulted only, but like faithful ministers, would cry aloud and spare none. Say not that ye are persecuted, neither endeavour to make us the authors of that reproach, which ye are bringing upon yourselves, for we testify unto all men that we do not complain against ye because ye are Quakers, but because ye pretend to be, and are not Quakers.

Alas! it seems by the particular tendency of some part of your testimony, and other parts of your conduct, as if all sin was reduced to, and comprehended in, the act of bearing arms, and that by the people only. Ye appear to us to have mistaken party for conscience; because the general tenour of your actions wants uniformity; and it is exceedingly difficult to us to give credit to many of your pretended scruples; because we see them made by the same men, who, in the very instant that they are exclaiming against the mammon of this world, are, nevertheless, hunting after it with a step as steady as time, and an appetite as keen as death.

The quotation which ye have made from Proverbs, in the third page of your testimony, that when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh "even his enemies to be at peace with him," is very unwisely chosen on your part, because it amounts to a proof that the tyrant whom ye are so desirous of supporting does not please the Lord, otherwise his reign would be in peace.

I now proceed to the latter part of your testimony, and that for which all the foregoing seems only an introduction, viz:—

"It hath ever been our judgment and principle, since we are called to profess the light of Christ Jesus manifested in our consciences unto this day, that the setting up and putting down kings and governments is God's peculiar prerogative for causes best known to himself; and that it is not our business to have any hand or contrivance therein; nor to be busy-bodies above our station, much less to plot and contrive the ruin, or overturn of any of them, but to pray for the king and safety of our nation and good of all men; that we might live a peaceable and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty, under the government which God is pleased to set over us. " If these are really your principles, why do ye not abide by them? Why do ye not leave that which ye call God's work to be managed by himself? These very principles instruct you to wait with patience and humility for the event of all public measures, and to receive that event as the divine will towards you. Wherefore, what occasion is there for your political testimony, if you fully believe what it contains? And, therefore, publishing it proves that you either do not believe what ye profess, or have not virtue enough to practise what ye believe.

The principles of Quakerism have a direct tendency to make a man the quiet and inoffensive subject of any and every government which is set over him. And as the setting up and putting down of kings and governments is God's peculiar prerogative, he most certainly will not be robbed thereof by us; wherefore the principle itself leads you to approve of everything which ever happened, or may happen to kings, as being his work. Oliver Cromwell thanks you. Charles, then, died, not by the hands of men; and should the present proud imitator of
him come to the same untimely end, the writers and publishers of the testimony are bound, by the doctrine it contains, to applaud the fact. Kings are not taken away by miracles, neither are changes in governments brought about by any other means than such as are common and human; and such as we are now using. Even the dispersion of the Jews, though foretold by our Saviour, was effected by arms. Wherefore, as ye refuse to be the means on one side, ye ought not to be meddlers on the other, but to wait the issue in silence; and unless ye can produce divine authority, to prove that the Almighty, who hath created and placed this new world at the greatest distance it could possibly stand, east and west, from every part of the old, doth, nevertheless, disapprove of its being independent of the corrupt and abandoned court of Britain; unless, I say, ye can show this, how can ye, on the ground of your principles, justify the exciting and stirring up the people "firmly to unite in the abhorrence of all such writings and measures as evidence a desire and design to break off the happy connection we have hitherto enjoyed with the kingdom of Great Britain, and our just and necessary subordination to the king, and those who are lawfully placed in authority under him." What a slap of the face is here! the men who, in the very paragraph before, have quietly and passively resigned up the ordering, altering, and disposal of kings and governments into the hands of God, are now recalling their principles, and putting in for a share of the business. Is it possible that the conclusion, which is here justly quoted, can any ways follow from the doctrine laid down? The inconsistency is too glaring not to be seen; the absurdity too great not to be laughed at; and such as could only have been made by those whose understandings were darkened by the narrow and crabbed spirit of a despairing political party; for ye are not to be considered as the whole body of the Quakers, but only as a factional or fractional part thereof.

Here ends the examination of your testimony (which I call upon no man to abhor, as ye have done, but only to read and judge of fairly), to which I subjoin the following remark: "That the setting up and putting down of kings." must certainly mean, the making him a king, who is yet not so, and the making him no king who is already one. And pray what hath this to do in the present case? We neither mean to set up nor to put down, neither to make nor to unmake, but to have nothing to do with them. Wherefore, your testimony, in whatever light it is viewed, serves only to dishonour your judgment, and for many other reasons had better have been left alone than published.

First. Because it tends to the decrease and reproach of all religion whatever, and is of the utmost danger to society, to make it a party in political disputes.

Secondly. Because it exhibits a body of men, numbers of whom disavow the publishing political testimonies, as being concerned therein and approvers thereof.

Thirdly. Because it hath a tendency to undo that continental harmony and friendship which yourselves, by your late liberal and charitable donations, have lent a hand to establish; and the preservation of which is of the utmost consequence to us all.

And here without anger or resentment I bid you farewell. Sincerely wishing that, as men and Christians, ye may always fully and uninterruptedly enjoy every civil and religious right; and be in your turn, the means of securing it to others: but that the example which ye have unwisely set, of mingling religion with politics, may be disavowed and reprobated by every inhabitant of America.

The Devil's Sword Blunted; Spiritualism
Examined and Condemned
Out of the Mouths of
Its Own Advocates.
By Matthew W. Green
Christian Minister.
Geo. T. Clarke, George Robertson, J. J. Moore, & Geo. Robertson. Dunedin and Oamaru, Melbourne and Adelaide, Sydney

Preface.

The chief portion of the matter contained in the following pages was presented in the form of four lectures, and delivered in the Garrison Hall, Dunedin, New Zealand, during the months of June and July of the present year. A desire was expressed by very many who heard them delivered that they should be printed, so that those not hearing the lectures might be warned by the facts presented, and thus be preserved from the pernicious and debasing principles of spiritism. As the lectures were delivered without notes, with the exception of references to the authorities to be cited, it was difficult to reproduce them as delivered; and further, the lecture-form not being deemed so suitable for publication and permanent circulation, it was decided to place the facts under their appropriate headings, along with additional testimonies, and present them to the public in the present form. It was under a sincere and overpowering conviction of the terrible evils likely to result from the spread of
spiritualistic teachings, and with an earnest desire to warn and preserve the unwary and unsuspecting, that the lectures were delivered; and it is with the same earnest desire that the present edition of this work is issued. The testimonies given might have been largely increased; but such was not deemed needful, as, if those presented are carefully considered, it will be seen that sufficient has been said to fully expose the true nature of this evil system, and to deter the wavering from entering upon a path that can only end in ruin. It is with the earnest prayer that it may be blessed of God, and may be the means of saving many from the ways of spiritual death, that it is now sent forth by

The Author.

DUNEDIN, July, 1879.

Contents.

Spiritualism Examined.

Introductory.

In considering the teachings and phenomena of modern spiritism, or Spiritualism, as it is misnamed, we are forcibly reminded of the words of the wise man of old, "That there is no new thing under the sun." A comparative study of modern spiritualism, with some portions of the ancient philosophies, will enable the thoughtful to see that spiritualism is but a modern presentation of a very old form of superstition, and that just as it failed in ancient times to raise and ennoble human character, so it is failing now, but is, on the contrary, tending to the destruction of all that is pure and noble in man.

Necromancy, which is defined as "Raising up the ghosts of deceased persons," and Necromancers, defined as "those who consult with the dead," "those who utter communications which they pretend to have received from the dead," and "who pretend to raise and consult persons who were dead," are the most correct terms by which to designate the system of spiritism and those who are advocates of its teachings. That it is possible to hold intercourse with spirits seems to be established by such clear evidence as to place it beyond the range of doubt. It was taught and practised in Egypt long before the birth of Moses, and from there travelled all over the East. It was universally practised among the ancient Canaanites; hence, when their land was given to the Jews, laws against such intercourse formed part of their code:—"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or charmer, or consulter with familiar spirits, or wizard, or necromancer, for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits .... I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people."—Deut. xviii. 10-13; Lev. xx. 6. Language such as this seems amply sufficient to establish the fact of the possibility of intercourse with such beings, and the displeasure from God which rests upon those who seek such communion.

It is urged by some that these prohibitions were given under the Old Testament dispensation, and, while binding upon those to whom given, are not binding now. It seems sufficient to reply that the whole spirit of Christianity is opposed to such intercourse, and is consequently in perfect harmony with the Old Testament teaching. The fact of Jesus casting out these spirit possessions wherever he came into contact with them, and not allowing them to testify in his favour, together with the utter silence of the Scriptures as to seeking such intercourse, and the soul ever being directed to God alone as the only fountain and source of light and guidance, prove conclusively that the New Testament teaching is opposed to these claims of modern spiritism.

The plea, that because intercourse with the spirits of deceased persons is possible, that therefore it must be in harmony with the will of God, is of too superficial a character to require more than a mere passing notice. What may be allowed by God cannot, on that account, be said to be sanctioned. Murder, lying, and many other
many years he has had a large sale for spirit-rapping magnets and batteries expressly made for concealment
Mr. Faulkner, philosophical instrument maker, No. 40, Endell Street, London. Mr. Faulkner writes that, for
little in this work:—A contribution to the literature of spiritualism is made this week in a published letter from
witnessed, and of which we have heard so much during the last few years. The following item may assist them a
be of interest:—

"Experience has taught me that sixty-five per cent, of the medical clairvoyants are arrant knaves, humbugs,
and catch-penny impostors; thirty per cent, are refined, sympathetic, nervo persons, who arrive at
approximately true diagnoses by sympathy; such are not clairvoyants, of course. And five per cent, of the whole
are really what they claim to be, in various degrees of perfection. . . I am personally acquainted with three
hundred and forty-one professed clairvoyants, and of these there are seven actual seers who will stand a
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In these pages, what is denominated the "physical phenomena" of spiritism will not be dealt with. The
impositions which are being constantly perpetrated by so-called spirit-mediums, the great frauds—such as the
"Katie King materializations," by the Holmes mediums, in New York, and which, when exposed, spread such
consternation among all ranks of spiritists—are so well known that it is not needful to give a lengthy notice of
them here. While, doubtless, some of the so-called phenomena may be, and doubtless are, the product of unseen
beings, the vast proportion may be set down as frauds, thus rendering the entire series of phenomena utterly
unreliable.

The following statements, the first of which is by A. J. Davis, one of the great leaders among spiritists, may
be taken as fairly showing how little reliance can be placed upon the physical phenomena, and as containing all
that need be here said upon the matter. On page 134 of "The Present Age" he says:—
"The spiritual manifestations will come to a crisis very soon, and be rejected in toto for their worthlessness
and transcendant absurdity, unless media and spiritists generally consent to conduct themselves more in
harmony with a comprehensive reason, and the principles of a universally applicable philosophy."

On page 197, speaking of the causes to which the phenomena may be attributed, he says:—
"Six per cent, is caused by voluntary deception; five per cent, is due to neurological causes; ten per cent, to
vital electricity; fifteen per cent, to nervo psychology; sixteen per cent, to cerebrosympathy; eight per cent, to clairvoyance; and forty per cent, to spirits."

Thus, even Mr. Davis, the most able and voluminous of the spiritist writers, admits that three-fifths of the
so-called phenomena is not due to spirits at all; that two-fifths only can be attributed to spirit agency. Dr.
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The following, taken from a late number of the New York Observer, as to "How to be a Spiritualist," will
be of interest:—
"Many persons are inquiring for some explanations of the wonderful spiritual phenomena which they have
witnessed, and of which we have heard so much during the last few years. The following item may assist them a
little in this work:—A contribution to the literature of spiritualism is made this week in a published letter from
Mr. Faulkner, philosophical instrument maker, No. 40, Endell Street, London. Mr. Faulkner writes that, for
many years he has had a large sale for spirit-rapping magnets and batteries expressly made for concealment
under the floor, in cupboards, under tables, and even for the interior of the centre support of large round tables and boxes; that he has supplied to the same parties quantities of prepared wire to be placed under the carpets and oilcloth, or under the wainscot and gilt beading around ceilings and rooms; in fact, for every conceivable place; that all these were obviously used for spirit-rapping, and the connection to each rapper and battery was to be made by means of a small button, like those used for telegraphic bell-ringing purposes, or by means of a brass-headed or other nail under carpets of particular patterns known to the Spiritualists. He describes these rappers as calculated to mislead the most wary, and adds that there are spirit-rapping magnets and batteries constructed expressly for the pocket, which will rap at any part of the room. He has also made drums and bells which will beat and ring at command; but these two latter are not so frequently used as the magnets are, because they are too easily detected.”—Ibid pp. 15, 16.

Much more might be added, but the foregoing is sufficient to show that not the slightest reliance can be placed upon any of the so-called physical manifestations of spiritism.

**Spiritism: is Admitted by its Advocates to be Useless, Either as a Guide for Men, or the Revealer of New Truth.**

In a work entitled "The Spirits' Book," compiled by Mr. Allan Kardec of France, are communications purporting to come from spirits of the most exalted station, such as St. John the Apostle, "The Spirit of Truth," "Fénélon," "St. Augustine," and others. On page 205, in reply to the question as to why, when spirits are protecting persons, such protection is not apparent, the following answer is given by a spirit:—

"If you counted on their support you would not act of yourselves, and your spirit would not progress. In order to advance, each man needs to acquire experience, and often at his own expense. He needs to exercise his powers, otherwise he would be like a child, who is not allowed to walk alone."

It is here admitted that man needs to rely upon his own powers, and would not progress did he rely upon the aid of spirits. The above extract, while professing to come from a spirit, proves the utter uselessness of seeking spirit guidance and protection, as interfering with man's freedom or action. In a work by A. Putnam, "Flashes of Light from the Spirit Land," the following question and answer occurs on pp. 109, 200.

**Ques.** — "A spirit comes and tells me it is my duty to take a certain step . . . influencing for good or evil myself, my family, and my future prospects. There is nothing in the message itself that seems unreasonable. Would it be right to trust the spirit and follow its direction? To make the case clearer, suppose the spirit to say, 'you shall leave your present sphere of labour; the climate is prejudicial to your health, and by going to another place you will do a large amount of good.' Now, I am unable to say if the climate is injurious, or whether, by removing, I should do more good; but, if certain of these facts, I should, of course, at once follow the spirit's advice. What would be my duty under the circumstances?" **Ans.** — "From the experience I have gathered in such matters during my life as a disembodied spirit, I can give you only one answer. . . and that is, it would be absolutely wrong for you to be led in any direction by any spirit or spirits, however high, at the expense of the yielding up of your own reason. If you cannot see that it would be right for you to make any such move, it would be absolutely wrong to make it."

Here, then, is a spirit, not only admitting, but affirming, the uselessness of any spirit's guidance, however high that spirit may be. In the former quotation, the uselessness of seeking spirit protection was affirmed; and to make the proof of our proposition complete, it only requires now to show that spiritism is useless as the revealer of any new truth. In a work by Hudson Tuttle, "The Arcana of Spiritualism," a standard spiritualistic volume, occurs the following:—

"The opponents of spiritualism loudly demand, 'Has it presented a single new truth? Show it; show what it has accomplished.' As it would be impossible for it to do so, no such claim is made."

The admission is thus made that it would be impossible for spiritualism to reveal any new truth, and that, consequently, it puts forth no such claim.

As evidencing the utter folly of trusting to spirit communications and following their directions, the following are worthy of notice. Moses Hull, an editor, debater, and lecturer among the Spiritualists, in the August number of the Rostrum, for 1868 says:—

"We once risked almost our all upon circles. We have waded through mud and water, travelled through rain, snow, and cold, and sat for two hours at a time for spiritual manifestations—have hardly ever failed to get manifestations, ofter coining from spirits in than out of mortal I bodies. We have, however, at circles received many good tests of spirit existence and power. We have received very fine communications on such occasions, yet if our readers could imagine the great amount of chaff we have winnowed for the few grains of important truth acquired, they would hardly bestow the amount of labour and pains, for the benefit received . . . . We believe it (circle holding) is a positive injury to spirits. .... Hence they oftener than otherwise misrepresent themselves. . . . It is in many instances a positive injury to the medium. . . . In many instances, we
notice that the sitter, by excessive communications with spirits, gives up his manhood, and is thrown off his
balance. Look at our good old Bro. Marble, of 'Dungeon Rock' notoriety, digging and blasting in the granite
rock for ten long years, in obedience to spirit power. Had he trusted his own judgment, instead of following the
ipse dixit of disembodied wags, thousands of dollars in money and a ten years' 'chase' after an ignis fatuus,
might have been saved."—"Spiritualism Condemned," p. 8.

A case, very similar in some respects to the one above, occurred to an acquaintance of my own in the
Colony of Victoria, and which I obtained from his own lips:—

A mine, called the "Pygmalion," at Castlemaine, was owned by a company who had got into difficulties,
and my friend was applied to for money to extricate them from this difficulty caused through failure in
obtaining gold. To prevent the lease of the mine from being forfeited as an unused claim it was necessary to
have at least one man constantly at work. My friend had this man driving in a certain direction in the hope of
finding gold. A number of spiritists formed part of the company in the mine. As my friend did not wish to keep
the mine, and had bought it merely on account of a legal difficulty and to save himself from loss, he was in
negotiation with the company with a view to again handing it over to them, on the payment of his interest in it.
On a certain evening, he received a letter from his manager requesting his authority to stop the man from
working in the place where he then was, as he was approaching a reef of only two inches in thickness, and
without a single evidence of gold being in it. My friend did not know what to do. He judged that if the company,
who were negotiating for its repurchase, were aware of the information he had received, they would
immediately relinquish their intention and thus involve him in considerable loss, it happened that on the
evening of the receipt of this letter, a seance was being held by some members of the mining company. They
asked the communicating spirit to go down this mine and thoroughly inspect it and report. The spirit
professedly having done so, reported through the medium "that eight feet beyond where that man was driving
there was a large quantity of gold, which would pay them abundantly for all their trouble." They were in high
glee, and sent a messenger next morning, begging my friend to stop the man from working where he was; and
as this request coincided with the advice of the manager, the order was given with great readiness. The
company immediately concluded the repurchase of the mine, and set the miners to work. They drove the eight
feet, but no gold; they drove forty feet, still no gold, and though they continued for a long time their pursuit
after gold, up to the present time they have been unable to find it. By the means of the spirits my friend had a
narrow escape from heavy loss, and in telling me of the matter he very naively remarked, "I have no need to
speak badly of the spirits, for they did me a very good service."

Having then the admission, upon the authority of the great French Spiritualist, Allan Kardec, that it is
useless to seek spirit protection; also the authority of A. Putnam, a leading American Spiritualist, that spirit
guidance in earthly matters is useless, supported as it is by the examples given; and further, the concession of
Hudson Tuttle, who is one of the present great lights of American Spiritualism, that Spiritualism has revealed
no new truth in science or morals; our proposition seems clearly established "That Spiritism is admitted by its
advocates to be useless either as a guide for man or the revealer of new truth."

That the Spirits are Deceivers, their Communications Utterly Unreliable and Contradictory, and Tending Backwards to the
Heathenism of a By-Gone Age.

As showing the deceiving character of the spirits, the first witness called is Baron Swedenborg, who may
be regarded as the first and great leader of modern spirit communications. The following is his testimony:—

"When spirits begin to speak with man, he must beware that he believe nothing that they say: for nearly
everything that they say is fabricated by them, and they lie: for, if they are permitted to narrate anything, as to
what heaven is, and how things in the heavens are to be understood, they would tell so many lies that a man
would be astonished."—"Flashes of Light," p. 244.

A spirit calling himself John H. Fairchild, on p. 244 of "Flashes of Light," says:—

"To say that spirits return always telling what is absolutely true to all, would be uttering what is untrue.
But to say that they return always bearing falsehood, would be equally untrue. If death finds a man a liar, it
does not change him. He enters the spirit world the same liar. He carries with him all that belongs to his
spiritual nature. He leaves nothing behind."

It must be evident, therefore, that communications from such beings as these must be lying messages, and
utterly unworthy of credence. In "Arcana of Spiritualism," p. 309, Hudson Tuttle says:—

"The spirit world is the extension of earthly life. When spirits from such earthly conditions gain access to a
medium, they present their personality; and nothing less than intentional falsehood and deception, or error
through ignorance, can be expected."
In a work by H. J. Browne, "Holy Truth," pp. 101, 160, 331, he represents the spirits as saying:—

"As there are truthful men on this earth, and men who are untruthful, so there are in spirit life truthful and untruthful spirits—or lying spirits, as they are termed in the old book." "Spirits parted from the earth form are wise or foolish, truthful or untruthful, just the same as are spirits in the body, and vary in their opinions, especially in mundane matters, the same as they did when in the flesh." "If it (the spirit) is deceiving here, it is deceiving there (spirit land); if frivolous here, frivolous there."

From an evil tree good fruit cannot be expected? A. J. Davis, Mr. Woodman, Dr. Potter, and other leading Spiritualists affirm that as spirits increase in knowledge and virtue, they are correspondingly elevated in the heavens, and gradually find it more and more difficult to communicate with those on earth; that no spirit above the second sphere can possibly communicate, and thus it will be seen that, as all these lying, and frivolous, and otherwise debased spirits are in the sphere next our earth, and are the ones said to be most capable of, and most anxious to communicate, and as they are habitual liars, no dependence whatever could possibly be placed in the communications made.

The following testimonies from leading Spiritualists will illustrate the unreliability of so-called spirit communications. A. J. Davis says:—

"I am impressed to declare the fact that there is a certain class of unadvanced spirits who, under peculiar circumstances, will say precisely what the questioning minds of the circle may ardently, and therefore positively desire; and this is one reason why palpable contradictions are sometimes spelled out through the electrical vibrations."—"Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse," pp. 91, 92.

He further says:—

"Thus it has been shown that there are three active causes of contradictions in these spiritual communications, namely: 1st. The ignorance of many of the spirits concerning the science of producing vibrations. 2nd. Our frequent misapprehension of the precise thoughts the spirits design to convey through the sounds. 3rd. The presence of affectionate spirits who unconsciously glide into sympathy with the feelings and desires of the interrogator."—Ibid, p. 96.

Judge J. W. Edmonds, lately deceased, and up to his death one of the most prominent American Spiritualists, says:—

"There must of necessity be in the spirit-world those who are in every condition of development, and who occupy every imaginable position on the ascending plane of progression. . . . Of necessity, the communication from each of these must be affected, as all human intercourse is, by the peculiar characteristics of each individual."

After citing several causes of unreliability in the spirit communications, he says:—

"I do not mean here to say that I have enumerated all the impeaching evidence that may be found in this matter. I am, on the contrary, aware that I have not, nor can I well do so in the limits allotted to this paper. For, as no two mediums are alike in their manifestations, and there are now thousands of them; as no two communications through the same mediums are ever exactly alike, because ever liable to be affected by the existing conditions of both mind and body; as the spirits who commune are no two of them alike, and are now numbered by tens of thousands; and as the variety in the source, as well as in the instrumentality of the communications is as vast as that which is to be found in the human character everywhere, so there must of necessity be many other causes to warn the well regulated mind to beware of credulity and fanaticism, and to weigh all things carefully and well, before yielding belief."—"Spiritualism," vol. ii. pp. 43, 48.

Hudson Tuttle, whose work, from which I quote, is endorsed by all the American Spiritualists, says:—

A circle is formed. Its members are all of a strongly positive character. There are spirits who wish to communicate. The members of the circle are not unfolded, and hence a spirit of narrow development is attracted. The circle ask questions on various topics, and at length touch on doctrinal themes. If the circle be of Universalists, the spirit, will appear to be a Universalist, and will declare that there is no hell” or devil, and that God is a being of love and benevolence. If the circle be of Presbyterians, the spirit will appear to adopt that creed, and declare there is a hell, a triune God, etc. If the circle be of Atheists, and ask if there be a God, the spirit will answer in accordance with their minds. If of Unitarians, then God will be a unity, and the spirit will agree with the circle. And, let the circle be composed of what sect or society it may, the spirit will appear to be of corresponding belief”—"Arcana or Spiritualism," p. 311. Again—“A spirit, when controlling a medium, is governed by the same laws as the mortal magnetiser. It is for this reason that the resulting phenomena become difficult to distinguish, in partially developed mediums, from the magnetism of the circle, and that of the spirit attempting control. The utmost caution is requisite to prevent self deception. If the medium is in the peculiar susceptible condition usual to the early stage of development, he will simply reflect the mind of the circle, and what purports to be a spiritual communication, will be only an echo of their own minds." Ibid. 194.

Allan Kardec, a leader and writer among the French Spiritualists, says:—

"Spirits differing very widely from one another as regards their knowledge and morality, it is evident that
the same question may receive from them very different answers, according to the rank at which they have
arrived; exactly as would be the case if it were propounded alternately to a man of science, an ignoramus, and
a mischievous wag. . . . But it will be argued, how is it that spirits who are admittedly of superior degree, are
not all of the same opinion? We reply, in the first place, that there are, independently of the cause of diversity
just pointed out, other causes that may exercise an influence on the nature of the replies, irrespective of the
quality of the spirits themselves . . . . . . . Years of study are needed to make even a third-rate physician;
three-quarters of a life time to make a man of learning; and people fancy that a few hours will suffice to
acquire the science of the infinite. Let there be no mistake in regard to this matter. The subject of spiritism is

H. J. Browne, one of the leading Spiritualists of Victoria, cautions investigators not to be led astray by
communications from spirits upon worldly matters. He says:—

"Although they may in some instances give correct information, they are in most cases apt to be erroneous.
First, from our spirit guide's sympathy with our wishes; next, from passing through a mundane organisation, by
which the messages are tainted; the various influences of the circle sitting also affect; and, lastly, from the
spirits themselves not being infallible, and sometimes not in such a good position as regards knowledge as is
the investigator himself"—"Holy Truth, p. 100.

"Spirits who are best able to communicate thus (by physical manifestations) are little developed, unable to
give you true and reliable information, tricky frequently, and on a low plane of intelligence, even where graver
charges may not be brought against them"—Ibid. p. 139.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, the talented and eloquent writer and lecturer, who is well known for her
advocacy of spiritism both in England, America, and the colonies, says:—

"There are many causes in our midst, and all on the human side, why Spiritualism has been measurably a
failure. One of these is the imperfection of spirit communication. In the early days there were no attempts at
self-deception. There were no dark circles then; and all spiritualists were sceptics. Now a vast amount of
literature has been presented to us in the name of the spirit, and in the name of the spirit we have been asked to
accept many new and strange doctrines. Is it not then obvious that we should take some means of ascertaining
whether honoured names can be held responsible for these teachings which common sense tells us that they
would never countenance? Is it true that the mighty dead have indeed retrograded, and from the other world
come back to us with poor poetry, bad grammar, and false doctrines? We should be slow to accept these as
coming from their purported source."—Victorian Harbinger of Light, Oct. 1873, p. 509.

The foregoing quotations, which might be indefinitely multiplied, are amply sufficient to demonstrate the
utter unreliability of spiritism. A. J. Davis says that there are numbers of affectionate spirits who will affirm
whatever those in the circle may earnestly desire. Judge Edmonds states that as the spirits are in every
conceivable stage of development, no two of them being alike; and the causes of disarrangement in the
communications are so multitudinous, rendering them thus unreliable, it is necessary to be very guarded in
receiving any of these communications as true. Hudson Tuttle declares that, with many spirits, whatever the
views of the persons seeking intercourse may be, the spirits will support them in those views; hence, if the
persons composing the circle be Trinitarian or Unitarian, advocates of a limited or of a universal salvation,
whether they are Atheists or Theists, the spirits communicating will declare each and every conflicting view to
be right, and those opposed, to be wrong. Allan Kardec freely admits that the spirits differ widely from each
other in knowledge and morality, and that the spirits occupying the same plane of intelligence hold opposite
views and will consequently contradict each other; and he attempts to apologise for this by the statement that as
years of study are needed to make even a third-rate physician, and three-fourths of a lifetime to make a learned
man, it is only reasonable that an immense length of time should be required to harmonize and understand such
an infinite subject as spiritism. Comforting reflection! The system which was to solve all doubts, and give
certainty to every inquirer, is now admitted to require more than a lifetime to understand!! H. J. Browne, and
Mrs. E. H. Britten, both admit that the spirits are impostors; that when they pretend to give advice as to
mundane matters they are not to be believed, and when, in the names of Shakespeare, Byron, Brougham,
Parker, &c., &c., they give utterance to doggrel poetry and mutilated English, they are to be at once discarded
as impudent liars in assuming the names of these great men. Surely the request that we should leave the pure
stream of Christian truth, and resort to these things, can hardly be made in earnest? Nothing but a blind and
pervasive hatred of the pure and elevating teachings of Christ and his Apostles, could lead any to advise persons
to seek intercourse with these beings in the face of the damning evidence given above, and which might be
largely increased.

Its Contradictions.

The contradictions to be found in the communications of spirits and spiritist writers, are as numerous as the
evidences of their unreliability already noticed. In "Flashes from the Spirit-land," by A. Putnam, occurs the following, professedly coming from a spirit taking the name of Theodore Parker. To the question as to whether spiritual beings from our planet have the power to visit any of the other planets of our Solar System, and vice versa, the spirit answers—

"Yes; there are certain far reaching minds that could no more be content to exist with the simple amount of knowledge that could be gathered from one planet, than they could be content to exist, if it were possible, within the confines of a nutshell. They desire to know all that it is possible for them to know, and finding that they have unlimited freedom in the spirit world, they exercise it—they make use of it."

Compare this with the statement of a spirit called "Abdal Hada," on page 83 of the same work. The question presented is, "Have any of the inhabitants of any other planet ever visited this earth and made themselves known?" The answer of the spirit is—

"I think, if such a thing ever occurred, it certainly is something very rare. The inhabitants belonging to each separate planet, those who have passed beyond the material into the spiritual life, are, of necessity, more powerfully attracted to the planet of which they have been born than to any other. Indeed, it is almost impossible for the inhabitants of any other planet to visit the earth In Propria Persona or Vice Versa."

The contradiction between these two statements is very apparent. It may be further added, that A. J. Davis affirms that it is a common thing for spirits from Mars, Jupiter, and other planets, to come to our earth and communicate through human media. A second example of contradiction is the following. In A. J. Davis' work, the "Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse," he says:—

"The higher angels do not themselves come into immediate electrical relation with any terrestrial association of minds, but mediate, by and through representative spirits "—P. 101.

In regard to some who claim to have had communications from the Apostle Paul, A. J. D. denies, on pp. 85, 86, of the same book, that such was the case, and affirms that the Apostles do not come personally into relations with any earthly circle. Mr. Woodman, in his reply to Dwight, makes the same statement on page; also Dr. Potter, in his work, "Spiritualism as it Is," on page 16, affirms the same. The contradiction will be apparent from the following question and answer, taken from p. 169 of "Flashes of Light." The answer purports to be from a "Bishop Fenwick":—

**QUES.**—"Are we to suppose that media who claim to be under the direct influence of Jesus Christ and other ancient spirits are correct? Can those ancients come and influence the media of the present day?"

**ANS.**—"Yes; you are at liberty to suppose whatever you will. It is by no means an impossible thing for those ancient spirits to return, manifesting through modern media."

As further illustrating this contradiction I present the following, quoted from "Our Rest" of Dec., 1878, and which quotation, for daring impiety, is unparalleled:—

"We attended a seance this evening at Mr. Stewart's rooms in Pence Hall, and saw ten or twelve materialised spirit forms stand in the cabinet door—full-sized forms of men and women. After these appearances came forth the materialised form of Jesus, and stood at the door a short time, dressed in a white robe and having a crown of thorns upon his head. He advanced from the cabinet and took the hands of Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Cline before retiring. On Friday morning," says the writer, "we had a private seance, at which eight persons were present, including Dr. Pence. The medium entered the cabinet, and in about twenty minutes was entranced. After a little time, during which the spirit control talked as usual, the cabinet door reopened, and a majestic form appeared, which filled us with awe, for there stood in the door in majestic grandeur Jesus of Nazareth! the Lord of Glory! the King of Kings! the pure and holy Christ of God! He had come according to promise, and stood manifest before our eyes. He stood looking at us silently for several moments, and then said, 'You are faithful soldiers, and greater wonders than these shall you see.' These words he spake in a low voice, yet distinct enough for all to hear . . . . . He then beckoned each of us to Him, took us by the hand, blessed and kissed us before retiring to the cabinet. He had stood in the door and on the platform nearly half an hour. He had on a white robe, and a crown was upon his head, in the centre of which glistened a beautiful gem. A faint halo was visible, surrounding His sacred head. He left us awe stricken with His presence."

The horrid blasphemy, and sacrilegious impiety of the above, is only too apparent. The quotation illustrates the fact of the contradiction of spiritist teaching, and shows to what lengths of impiety the system leads. When lying spirits, whether embodied or disembodied, personate the "Lord of glory," it merits the severest denunciation of the Christian world.

A further proof of the contradictions of spiritism is found in connection with the ancient Pagan theory of the transmigration of souls. This theory finds a prominent place in much spiritist literature, and shows that the result of the adoption of spirit teaching is, to enshroud the mind in the dark and debasing superstitions of the ancient heathen world. The following quotations are from "The Spirits' Book," compiled by Allan Kardec, the French spiritualist, and purport to come from spirits bearing the names of Apostles and other illustrious personages. That the doctrine of transmigration or successive reincarnations is taught, is very apparent:—
"On quitting the body, the soul re-enters the world of spirits from which it came, and from which it will enter upon a new material existence, after a longer or shorter lapse of time." "Spirits having to pass through many incarnations, it follows that we have all had many existences, and that we shall have others, more or less perfect, either upon this earth or in other worlds."—Intro, p. 15. "Can spirits come to this world for the first time, after having been incarnated in other worlds? Yes; just as you may go into other ones"—p. 73. "Might a man belonging to a civilized race be reincarnated, as an expiation, in a savage race? Yes; but that would depend on the kind of expiation he had incurred. A master who had been cruel to his slaves might become a slave in his turn, and undergo the torments he had inflicted on others. He who has wielded authority may, in a new existence, be obliged to obey those who formerly bent to his will."—p. 127.

As illustrating the contradictions of this debasing system, I present the following from the Victorian "Harbinger of Light," for October 1873, p. 509. It is from a lecture delivered in Boston, United States, by Mrs. E. Hardinge Britten.

"One of the worst features with which spiritualism is charged is the darkly the baneful doctrine of reincarnation, as taught by Allan Kardec, of France. It is a direct contradiction of the surety given us at Rochester, that there is progress in the spirit-land. This wild, fantastic doctrine, which would break up kindred, ties and families, should be rejected. It belongs, as has been said, to the imperfect nature of spirit communication."

This is unmeasured condemnation of the view of Kardec's spirits, and not only illustrates the fact of the spirit contradictions, but also their utter unreliability. From the strong denunciation of this doctrine by Mrs. Britten as dark, baneful, wild, and fantastic, and the fact of her singling out Kardec as its advocate, it might be inferred that he was the only one in whose writings it is found. This, however, would not be a correct inference, as the following passages prove. They are taken from the American work, "Flashes of Light," by Putnam, and appeared originally in the "Banner of Light," the leading American spiritualist paper:

QUES.—"Does the controlling spirit mean that spirits, after being separated from their earthly tenement, will again occupy a human body, as they did before the dissolution?

ANS.—"That the spirit will return to earth again and become reincarnated in a human body there is much evidence. Indeed all that we have been able to gain is largely in its favour."—p. 71.

QUES.—"Some people believe in the transmigration of souls. . . . Does the soul enter other bodies sometimes better and sometimes worse than its own?

ANS.—"In one sense it does enter other bodies, and acts through other bodies than the human. . . . The ancients grappled with a very great truth in their theory of the transmigration of souls. They intuitively perceived the power of the soul over all matter, and perceiving its power, they very naturally were led to conclude that it would use the power, and therefore become incarnated in other forms than the human."—pp. 78, 79.

Here we have the horrid doctrine of the ancients, that a human spirit may be reincarnated in an animal—a dog, a cat, swine, etc. This statement as to the reincarnation in animals, is denied by Kardec, on pp. 15 and 16 of the introduction to his "The Spirits' Book;" and thus we have another evidence of contradiction and unreliability. Quoting again from Putnam's "Flashes of Light:"

QUES.—"Do you mean to say that these spirits that now occupy forms, may at some future stage of life come back, and take another?"

ANS.—"Judging from the experience of others, predicating our faith upon their experience, we are as sure of it as we are of our immortality."—p. 294. From the above it is clear that American, as well as French spirits, teach the "dark, baneful, wild, and fantastic" doctrine of reincarnation. The same doctrine is also taught by some spirits in England. In "Medium and Daybreak" for November 15th, 1872, p. 451. a spirit called "Dr. Forbes," says:

"Reincarnation, while it is a phenomenal fact, is an economical absurdity."

Another spirit on same page, says:

"The elevation of the spirit would have been better accomplished by its surrendering itself to the operation of the elevating forces of the spirit-spheres, and thus, reincarnation, while a phenomenal fact, is an economical absurdity."

It is thus admitted that reincarnation is a fact, but that it is an absurdity in nature, for which there is no adequate reason. On the same page as above, a Wm. R. Tomlinson, M.A., advocates reincarnation as a possible merciful alternative for debased and hopeless spirits. Further evidence of this doctrine being taught in England may be seen in the same paper for Nov. 22nd and 29th, pp. 463 and 472. The conclusion reasonably deducible from the foregoing quotations is, that the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is a prominent part of spiritist teaching, but is opposed by some, and especially by Mrs. E. H. Britten, as a dark, baneful, wild, and fantastic doctrine.

That the spirits are deceivers, their communications utterly unreliable and contradictory, and tending
backwards towards the heathenism of a bygone age, is fully sustained by the quotations given. As these statements are, without exception, from spiritist writers, the system is fully condemned out of the mouths of its own advocates.

The Impossibility of Identifying the Spirits: this Brightest Feature of Spiritism, is a Broken Reed to lean Upon, and Supplies no Comfort to the Friends of the Departed.

What may be regarded as the most attractive and seducing portion of the spiritist system is, its profession that we can have intercourse with the spirits of our departed friends. If it were not for this claim, its influence over the multitude would have been slight indeed. There is a comfort in the thought that we can hold intercourse with our departed dear ones, that so carries away the minds of many, that without carefully considering whether it is really true that the departed can come back and communicate with us or not; or that if they could, it would be wise and desirable both for their good and ours; that they readily catch at the thought, join themselves to spiritist circles, and are speedily and hopelessly engulfed. My object will now be to show that there is no possible means of knowing that our friends do communicate, and that if they could, such communications, upon the admissions of spiritist writers, would not be for our comfort. Many persons suppose that if the spirit, claiming to be that of their deceased friend, tells of things which are unknown to the medium, and were only known to the deceased person and themselves, that they have clear and indubitable evidence of identity. That such, however, is not the case, will appear from the following testimonies, and admissions, culled from the writings of Spiritualists. Mr. Joel Tiffany, a noted spiritualistic lecturer and debater, in his debate with President Mahan, says:

"Persons have supposed that when they get correct answers they get tests. But when we come to understand that the spirit can come into rapport with the mind in the circle, we then discover that he can perceive his thoughts, and get the answer as well as the question from his mind, and then being in communication with the medium can answer all his questions, and give him perfect answers, as to identity, at the same time that he is a far different spirit from what he purports to be."—P. 52.

It will be seen from the above that the spirits can read the enquirer's mind, and thus obtain the information required to prove identity. If a lying spirit can give the same evidence of identity that would be expected from the genuine spirit, by what possible means is detection effected, and how can any person know of a certainty that any communication is really from the spirit it purports to be? Dr. Hare, another leading American spiritist, in the New York Investigating Class, admits the danger of deception:

"There was a difficulty, undoubtedly, in knowing precisely how it is, even upon the testimony of spirits, because spirits there occupying different spheres and immensely differing in their degrees of development, accordingly give discrepant accounts of the matter. We must first identify the spirit and determine his trustworthiness before we could accredit his testimony. We must observe the same rules of evidence, apply the same tests, and have the same care in ascertaining their identity and veracity we do in like matters here"—"Nat. and Ten. of Modern Spiritism," p. 88.

How foolish to speak of applying the same tests to spirits that we do to persons here! If the spirits are not to be trusted, and possess the power of reading the mind, in what way can the tests be of service, seeing that even the giving of correct answers, etc., cannot be relied upon, as we have seen by the admission of Tiffany quoted above. In some of the quotations given under a previous heading, the reader will have seen that some persons claim to have received communications from Jesus, and to have seen him in a materialized form. The following, from Mr. Woodman, will show the unreliability of those statements, and will further illustrate the impossibility of identification:

"For our part, we do not believe that Jesus Christ has communicated through any medium directly during the present century, though we do not pretend to know. If he should come to communicate, how would he be known? No living person would know him by his form, his voice, or his writing. No person could be induced to recollect by the relation of unpublished facts in his life, or by any peculiar marks, or idiosyncracies of character, for all these are unknown. So far as we could see, there could be nothing to identify his person. If the communication should be in any respect impure or immoral in its tendency, it would stand self-condemned. If it should be found in perfect harmony with the divine law, stilt it might come from some other intervening spirit."—Reply to Dwight, page 65.

These remarks will apply to any other person as well as to Jesus. Suppose the spirit professed to be one that had lived during the present century, and with whose form, voice, writing, and character we were well acquainted, the certainty of identification would be no greater. In the Herald of Progress for Feb. 1862, in answer to a question concerning the appearance of spirits, A. J. Davis says,—
These appearances are intended merely as reminders and as tests of identity. All intelligent spirits are great artists. They can psychologise a medium to see them, and to describe them, in the style which would produce the greatest impression on the receiver... They can easily represent themselves as old or young, as in worldly dress or in flowing robes, as is best suited to accomplish the ends of the visitation. They substitute pantomime and appearance for oral explanations.”

On the identification of spirits, the writer of an editorial in the Spiritual Telegraph of July 11th, 1857, says:—

“From much experience and observation, however, we are satisfied that if, after having received in all good faith, such messages directly from the spirit friend whom it purports to be, we proceed to enquire of the theological or speculative philosophy, or even about such practical concerns of human life as may involve the ambition, conceits or prejudices of other spirits than the one with whom up to that moment we have been talking, then other spirits who may be more nearly related to, or who may have more perfect control over the mediums, will most probably assume instantly the name and position of our friend, pushing the latter aside, and he will set forth his own theories, fancies, and probably falsities, using the name of our friend, and all the confidence we may have gained in the latter’s identity, by way of enforcing what he would have us believe. And we receive the communication, perhaps with the utmost surprise that our friend, in passing into the spirit world, should have so soon changed his opinion on that particular subject.”

A. J. Davis, Dr. Potter, Dr. Randolph, Mr. Tiffany, and many others make statements similar to the above. The confessions made above, as to the failure of all “test” conditions, should shake the confidence of all truth seeking and impartial persons. The claims for the reliability of any tests of identity, are completely swept away. In “Flashes of Light,” by A. Putnam, is the following question and answer, on pages 197, 198. The spirit answering calls himself Theodore Parker:—

QUES.—“I wish to ask with reference to testing spirits that come to us. We have sometimes been very sadly misled. When a spirit purports to be present, how can we know to a certainty that it is the spirit it professes to be? We have frequently tested them by asking them if they were willing to say Amen to the Lord’s prayer. . . . Can you tell me of any test upon which we may always rely?

ANS.—“My dear, good friend, by no possibility can you, under present circumstances, ever be thoroughly sure of the identity of any returning spirit, because the returning spirit is out of your sight, beyond the realm and sphere of your natural senses, and these senses alone are the powers by which you can weigh and measure all things with which you come in contact. Now, I may tell you I am the spirit of such an individual who lived at such a time, and I may tell you what is absolutely true. You may believe it, but you cannot know it. . . . Now, I care not how many prayers you may repeat, or how many "Amens" the spirit may add thereto; it will not make the slightest difference with regard to testing the identity of the spirits.”

In the introduction to the “Spirits’ Book,” by Allan Kardec, the French spiritist, on p. 32, is the following:—

“Experience shows that spirits of the same degree, of the same character, and animated by the same sentiments, are united in groups and families; but the number of the spirits is incalculable, and we are so far from knowing them all that the names of the immense majority of them are necessarily unknown to us. A spirit of the same category as Fénélon may therefore come to us in his name, may even be sent by him as his
representative; in which case he would naturally announce himself as Fénélon, because he is his equivalent and able to supply his place, and because we need a name in order to fix our ideas in regard to him. And, after all, what does it matter whether a spirit be Fénélon or not, if all that he says is excellent, and such as Fénélon himself would be likely to say? For, in that case, he must be a spirit of superior advancement, and the name under which he presents himself is of no importance, being often only a means of fixing our ideas." "It is certain, however, that the assumption of false names by spirits may give rise to numerous mistakes, may be a source of error and deception, and is in fact one of the most serious difficulties of practical spiritism."

In "Holy Truth," by H. J. Browne, a spirit is represented as saying:—

"These undeveloped spirits can deceive you by personating other spirits and relating to you facts, which they do by coming in strong rapport with you in sympathy. They do not read your brain, as often supposed, but they catch as it were a thread of your thoughts, and can so bring circumstances up at times which you have entirely forgotten."—Page 155.

Judge Edmonds imposes upon himself by the following specious reasoning:—

"If the spirit that comes is one that I have never known, how can I be certain that it is him? But if he comes as one whom I have known intimately on earth, whoso form and features appear to me as of old, or are accurately described to me, who speaks of incidents known only to us, who displays his peculiarities of character, who gives correctly names, dates, ages, and places connected with his earth life, who evinces the emotions natural to him, and all this unknown to the instrument through whom it comes, how can the sane mind resist the conclusion that it is a departed friend who is thus communing with me?"—"Letters and Tracts," p. 188.

The Judge gives the most thorough refutation of his own reasoning that can possibly be conceived; and this, too, in the same pamphlet from which the above is quoted. On page 116 of "Letters and Tracts," he says:—

"One day while I was at Roxbury, there came to me, through Laura (his daughter) as the medium, the spirit of one with whom I had once been well acquainted, but from whom I had been separated for fifteen years. His was a very peculiar character—one unlike that of any other man whom I ever knew, and so strongly marked that it was not easy to mistake his identity.

"I had not seen him in several years; he was not at all in my mind at the time, and he was unknown to the medium. Yet he identified himself unmistakably, not only by his peculiar characteristics, but by referring to matters known only to him and me.

"I took it for granted he was dead, and was surprised afterwards to learn that he was not. He is yet living.

"I cannot on this occasion go into all the particulars of an interview which lasted more than an hour. I was certain there was no delusion about it, and as certain that it was just as much a spirit manifestation as any I ever witnessed or heard of."

Thus the Judge confutes himself. Similar cases to the one just cited from Judge Edmonds have been stated to me by the persons concerned in them. A lady in Castlemaine, Victoria, who with her husband had adopted spiritist views, but afterwards saw her error, stated to me that on one occasion her husband was possessed by a spirit claiming to be that of her deceased father, who resided in England and of whose death she had not previously heard. The identification given was of such a character as to fully convince her that it was really the spirit of her father that now communicated through her husband; and she wept tears of joy at this confirmation of her faith, and the privilege granted to her of holding intercourse with the spirit of her father. What, therefore, was her surprise when she continued to receive letters from her still living father mail after mail as the months passed round. At the time when this circumstance was related to me, a period of two years had elapsed and her father was still among the living. No wonder that her faith should be shaken in the reliability of spirit communications.

A near relative of my own had been separated from his wife for many years. A brother of this relative, being a believer in spirit intercourse, and having circles in his house, a spirit communicated professing to be the spirit of the deceased wife of my relative. Various tests were applied, form and features were accurately described, incidents spoken of which were known only to them and the supposed spirit; peculiarities of character were displayed, and names, dates, ages, and places connected with her earthly life were given correctly, and these things were all unknown to the medium through whom they were given. So clear was the evidence of identity, and so deep was the conviction produced, that the person, whose spirit it claimed to be, was really dead, that advice was given to the husband of the supposed deceased person which, had it been followed, would have led to inconvenient consequences. After a little time, and by instituting certain inquiries, the person was found to be living and in no apparent prospect of immediate death.

From the foregoing testimonies it must be evident, even to the dullest understanding, that no person can by any possibility know that they are in communication with their deceased friends, even when the evidence appears to be of the clearest kind. But another thought is worthy of being noticed here, and that is, that persons may be seeking intercourse with their deceased friends for years, and yet not be able to obtain the slightest
communication which even purports to come from them. A gentleman with whom I became acquainted in Melbourne, and who was an ardent believer in spiritism, admitted that for more than ten years he had been seeking for some communication from his deceased friends, but had not received any. Another person in the same city, a lady, lamented that she had been unable to obtain communications from her friends. She had, however, received communications from evil spirits, who had tried to incite her to certain wicked deeds and to make away with her life. A friend of mine in the city of Dunedin, having, in company with his wife, heard much of spirit intercourse, solemnly besought her upon her deathbed, that if there was any truth in the power of the human spirit to return to earth and appear to their friends, that she would return and appear to him. The promise was readily and solemnly given. After her decease, my friend spent hours, night after night, and for whole nights, waiting in his chamber and without light, yearning for some intimation from his departed wife. He walked alone through the solitary roads of the Town Belt at all hours of the night, seeking some sign or token from the departed one, but none ever came. A German friend informed me a few days ago, that in his earlier years, and while residing in Germany, where almost all are believers in ghosts, he found himself unable to credit the commonly received views on the matter. His aged grandmother, who was an undoubting believer in the fact of spirits revisiting the earth, being anxious to convince him of its truth, made a compact with him, that when she died, on the third day after her death, he was to take his flute at two in the afternoon, and play a certain tune under an oak tree which she pointed out to him, and she promised if it were possible that she would appear to him, he promising to be no longer incredulous if she appeared, but reserving his right to remain an unbeliever if she did not appear. Within three months she died, and on the third day and punctually at two o’clock, my friend seated himself beneath the oak tree, and commenced playing the tune selected. His playing continued until long past darkness, but the spirit of the deceased grandmother did not appear. The conclusion to which we are inevitably led by these testimonies is, that it is utterly impossible to identity any spirit, and that no person can possibly be certain that any communication they receive is from a departed friend.

But supposing it possible to identify the spirits of departed friends, no comfort could possibly result to the survivor. This may appear to be a startling statement, but it is capable of demonstration upon the admission of spiritist writers. One of the statements frequently made by spiritualistic writers is that there is no forgiveness for sin, and that every sin committed by an individual must be atoned for by that individual. A further view held is, that the progression of individuals in the spirit world is hindered, and prevented, by reason of injuries they may have received from individuals in the earth life; and that, until the injurer undoes the wrong, and places the injured one in the same position favourable to progression that he would have been in had the injury not been done, such individual must remain in a low and unprogressive state. For example, a young man is murdered. Had his life been spared, the theory of spiritists is that this young man might have made such progress in the earth life that, at his death, his spirit would have commenced its progress at a proportionately high altitude. Now, this is not unreasonable; but the view is carried further, and it is asserted that unless the murderer comes to that young man in the spirit world and undoes the wrong he did to him by the murder, and assists him to attain to the position (which, it is said, he only can do) to which he would have attained in the earth life had he been spared, this young man, who suffered injury by being murdered, is compelled to suffer injury in the spirit world also, by being unable to make progress upwards until assisted by his murderer; and as it may be hundreds, or even thousands, of years before his murderer becomes willing to help him to a condition of progression, the young man is doomed, for no fault of his own, to remain in the company of low and unprogressed spirits, suffering the agony of such association, until the spirit of his murderer has been, by some method unexplained, led to see the evil he has done him, and is willing to undo the evil. Such a view is most horrid and revolting, and could only be held by the existence of a just God, who will recompense the evil doer and remedy all the wrongs of earth life, being absolutely denied. But whence can the friends of a murdered, or otherwise injured man, obtain comfort from spiritism? Instead of giving comfort, it makes the survivor most wretched, under the conviction that the murdered or injured individual has been so affected in the spirit world by the injury received, that their condition must virtually be one of misery and woe, which may continue for thousands of years at the option of the wretch who committed the murder or other injury received. That this representation is not overdone, or unduly coloured, may be seen by the following, which I copy from the Victorian Harbinger of Light for February 1875, pages 774, 775. It purports to be part of the confession of a spirit called John King or Sir Henry de Morgan, a pirate who lived a few centuries ago. Speaking of the number of his victims, and the consequences, to him and to them, of his actions, he says:—

"Those victims numbered thousands. The orthodox world consign such persons as myself to a lake of fire and brimstone. I was in a hell inconceivably worse than this; the goadings of remorse that stung me as I looked upon one after another of these numerous, victims and experienced the agonies which They had suffered, multiplied tenfold, can never be conceived of. My prayer is that no other soul may go down to such a depth, and be compelled to travel up through such hells."

It will here be seen that those whom he had injured were in the same place and associations as himself; for
he speaks of looking "upon" them "one after another" Also, he speaks of "the agonies which they had suffered," as though the agonies in the spirit world had been suffered by them through the injury he had done to them. He continues:

"The necessity was laid upon me to go to each one of these my victims, and labor with them, and it often required a great effort on my part to get them to be willing for me to come to them. When I succeeded, I was compelled to do everything I could to help them, and make amends for the wrongs I had done. It seems easy enough to speak of these things now, but I recall the stern conflict of a proud nature before I could submit to do it; but I have done it all, and each one of these is now a helper to me or to others who need, their assistance . . . ."

"I have told you that I was irresistibly impelled to arrange and classify all my life actions. The effects of these were all stamped upon me, as they always are upon every one. The causes, however, I was compelled to search out and have them set before me in all their painful realities. I will only detain you to illustrate the practical workings of a few instances. First, that of the little boy already referred to—one of the companions of my early days"—a weak, little playmate, whom he had beaten and abused and robbed of some little things, as a pocket knife, cake, &c., and from whom he extorted a promise not to tell, under the threat that he would kill him. "I saw clearly now that my unjust and cruel treatment had shortened his days in earth life, and at times I was filled with an intense desire to go to him and ask his forgiveness. I had no difficulty in seeing him, but I could not get to him . . . . At length, after long suffering and waiting, the time came when we were permitted to meet . . . .I found that I had been the means of keeping him in a greater degree of ignorance, and that it was necessary that I should show to him what wrong I had done to him, and how I had kept him back in his career. This was a very difficult and embarrassing task for me to accomplish, for there was a strong disposition on my part to let him remain just as he was when I found that he did not blame me. For a long time I was engaged helping him onward in his life's journey . . . so that he might go forward as nearly in the line he would have walked if I had not crossed his path, as it was possible."

Another spirit, in Holy Truth, by H. J. Browne, speaks thus:—

"I would say to all earth children, be careful how you injure a brother or sister, for by so doing you will forge a chain that will bind you to them until you have made full restitution to them, and enabled them to stand where they would if you had not thus injured them.

"I was in a hell inconceivably worse than the orthodox lake of fire and brimstone. The goadings of remorse that stung me as I looked upon one after another of my numerous victims and experienced the agonies which they had suffered, multiplied ten-fold, can never be described."—pages 158, 159.

From the testimony of these two spirits, it is clearly part of the theory of spiritism that the injured person does not progress, but sustains the injury until the injurer comes and aids his victim to a higher position. Now, there would be no injustice in the injurer being compelled to undo his wrong; but if there be a just governor of the world, how can we reconcile that fact with this theory that the injured person is, even in the spirit world, to be at the mercy of the injurer, and cannot progress until he is disposed to aid him. This, surely, does not seem just. But the point we press is, that in this theory of spiritism there is no comfort to the friends of the departed Whence can comfort be derived by the friends of injured persons from the above view? Another matter to be noticed is that spiritists often ridicule the teaching of the Scriptures as to a hell, and affirm "there is no hell!" Now here are two spirits, and what is very remarkable, in identically the same language, representing the hell they had suffered as "inconceivably worse than the orthodox hell!" However bad the "orthodox hell" maybe, these spirits had found one "inconceivably worse!" How bad that must have been must be left to the reader to decide, as words would fail to represent it fairly. Those who can derive comfort from the above are certainly blessed with a degree of hopefulness not usually possessed by mortals.

I now present a few quotations from Judge Edmonds' second volume on spiritualism:—

"I next saw a tall, vicious looking woman of about fifty years of age. She was dressed in a spotted calico frock, very common and very dirty. Her hair was gray; her teeth were gone; her eyebrows were heavy, and under them glowed a snaky pair of eyes. She held by one hand a child four or five years old, who was: squalid and ragged, but who seemed to be of a simple, pleasant, and affectionate disposition. The old woman was dragging the child along roughly and healing it with a stick. Its legs, and arms, and breast were scarified."—page 186.

The reader will find it difficult to believe that the above is a scene which Judge Edmonds affirms he saw in the spirit world. Yet such is the fact. Apart from the representation of the whole matter, which is revolting, the reader is asked to notice that a child of four or five years old is there; that this child is described as "simple, pleasant, and affectionate," and yet Judge Edmonds has the effrontery to represent that child in a hell, where it is associated with a vile and cruel woman, and who is permitted to beat it with a stick until "its legs, and arms, and breast" are scarified. We hurl such representations back upon spiritists as infamous lies, and as libels upon the government of a just and holy God. Good heavens! a child in hell! and that child described as "simple,
It has been previously remarked that spiritism teaches that *there is no forgiveness of sins*, neither in this world, nor in that towards which all are tending. In a lecture, delivered in the Princess Theatre, Dunedin, on Sunday, June 1st, Mrs. E. Hardinge Britten announced with the utmost emphasis that forgiveness was an impossibility—that in reality "there is no such thing as forgiveness of sins." In the 2nd vol. of Judge Edmonds' work, entitled, "Spiritualism," this, from the language used, seems to be contradicted; as for example, on page 213, where it is said, "I told her (the spirit) that even for that there was forgiveness;" but that spiritists teach generally that there is no forgiveness, seems to be clear. The following, from, "Flashes of Light," by A. Putnam,
will put the matter in a fair light. It is in the form of question and answer, the spirit answering being represented as that of William E. Channing:

**QUEST.**—"I understand from the controlling spirit that there is no forgiveness for sin; that an inevitable penalty follows every transgression of any law of our being?"

**ANS.**—"Returning spirits always inform you—such as have been informed themselves upon this point—that there is no forgiveness of sins. Every sin begets its own judge, and the Judge begets the punishment therefor."—P. 91.

**QUEST.**—"I understand that the controlling spirit has stated that sometimes people can be cleansed from immoralities in a somewhat corresponding manner as diseases are cured. How can such things be without forgiveness?"

**ANS.**—"Forgiveness is a term which your correspondent seems to have defined according to his own understanding. To us, forgiveness is a something which avails without suffering . . . . You will learn, every one of you, sooner or later, that there is no forgiveness of sin, either in this world or the next. . . . . If you sin against the law of your own reason there is no forgiveness therefor till you have paid the uttermost farthing for your wrong doing."—Page 93.

Many other quotations might be given to the same effect, but the above are sufficient for our purpose, which is to present the fact that spiritism denies forgiveness, and then illustrate the legitimate results of such a theory. This theory of "no forgiveness" maybe regarded as a necessary and logical result of another part of the theory of spiritism, which will be treated of further on, viz., "There is no God"—that the only God there is, is "man," or a "vast ocean of magnetism," or "the principle which permeates all nature," and which is called the "soul" of the universe, or the "Father God," of which "nature" is the body or "mother God." If there be no intelligent, personal mind presiding over the affairs of the universe, but only blind force operating through inviolable laws, then we can understand how there can be no forgiveness, but this view will make the language which some spiritualists are so fond of using to be simply nonsense. If the only God be blind force, then how can such a power be addressed as "our kind, loving, merciful, and compassionate Father and God?" Such language necessarily requires that there should be a personal, conscious, and intelligent deity, who may be regarded as in some way susceptible to emotions of love, &c., analogous to those which human beings are affected by; but if God be but a "force," then such language is altogether out of place and is unmeaning. How can there be mercy, and yet no forgiveness? Surely words get strangely confused in the mouth of a spiritist! If, however, the deity be a personal, conscious, and all-pervading mind whose offspring we are, reasoning from the analogies of human life—and which is legitimate—just as the father forgives his child upon repentance and confession, so God, our great Father, may be expected to forgive His offspring. There is of course a disparity between the heavenly and the earthly parent. The earthly parent is himself frail and needs forgiveness, and that fact of need demands that he himself should forgive if he hope to be forgiven. The heavenly Father is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He is the infinitely holy and just God, and is the Governor of the universe. In pardoning sin it was needful that the requirements of justice should be met, and in the Gospel all this has been done. The only point sought to be made and enforced is, that if there be a God of mercy and love who governs, then forgiveness must not only be a possibility but an actual fact.

But we take the affirmation of spirits and spiritualists that there is no forgiveness of sin. Let us now look abroad at society as at present constituted. Is there one person who lives without sin? Is there one person who may not have injured others, either intentionally or unintentionally? The statement of the spirit above given was, that for every sin the utmost of the penalty, even to the "uttermost farthing," must be paid. Now, if there is no person who has not sinned, and if the penalty must be paid by each, and if that penalty begins, as is affirmed, immediately upon the spirit's entrance into spirit life, it follows as a logical necessity, from which there is no possible escape, that every conscious human being, on passing into the spirit-world, passes into a condition of misery and suffering; and that if they were able to come back and inform their friends of their state, if the account given were truthful, it would be of great anguish and suffering. Where, then, is the comfort which could arise to the friends of the departed from this system? And, it must be remembered, that in the supposition of character above given, we have taken the very best portion of society whose offences will, for the most part, have been of an unintentional kind.

But, now, take the class of society lower in the scale; consider their condition. Just conceive of the untruths told, the acts of theft and dishonesty in trade and otherwise, the unkind and hurtful things both said and done of individuals and character, the legalised frauds, butcheries—called wars, &c., the oppressions of tyrants, murders, seductions, &c., &c. On the principle of there being "no forgiveness," what must be the condition of the persons who have inflicted these wrongs? Who can describe the fearful, the excruciating agonies, and mental torments which, on the principle of spiritism, these persons must be undergoing? But, as we have shown above, it is not only the injurer who suffers, but his victim also, and that suffering and non-progression must continue until the injurer is so minded as to aid them to rise. It is, then, the fact, that on the principle of
spiritism, the unseen world must be one universal scene of suffering, mental and physical, from which there is no escape, and which is endured, in large part at least, by the injured as well as the injurer.

Whence, now, can any persons whose friends have died, derive comfort from spiritism? Instead of giving comfort it robs of all comfort, and brings certain misery instead. That the reader may see that this matter has been fairly presented, I now proceed to give a few quotations, indicating a condition in the spirit-world, such as might be legitimately expected to exist from the principles noted as being held by spiritists. The details I now present are so horrible, that I must crave the reader's indulgence for presenting them, being constrained to do so, simply that a fair conception of the rottenness of the claims of this system to impart comfort may be seen. In order to understand the quotations, it is necessary to remark that spiritists believe that spirits seek to do each other harm in the spirit-world, and exult in vileness and infamy such as they indulged in on earth. In Judge Edmonds' 2nd vol. on "Spiritualism," he declares that his body and spirit were separated, and that his spirit really visited the abodes of the departed. The following are a few specimens of the scenes enacted:

"In front of the houses I saw two men fighting. Out of its window a man was looking and laughing at the affray. It was a dirty-looking hovel, and all around it was foul, neglected, and in confusion. How cruel that fight was! They were a large and a small man who were engaged. The larger held the smaller one fast and beat him in the face with his fists, long after he ceased to resist. Some of the passers-by regarded the scene with indifference, while some enjoyed it, and applauded and encouraged the larger one to keep on."—Page 181.

Again he says—

"At the door of one of the hovels that stood a little back from the road, I saw a female who seemed to be about twenty-six years old. She was round and full in appearance—was a dark brunette with painted cheeks. Her whole appearance, garb, and manner were meretricious, and she had taken up her position there to entice some one to enter the dwelling.

"At length a man in passing turned aside, under the influence of passions which had marked his earthly career, and with her entered her house. I saw they were both influenced by the same passions, but were incapable of gratifying them. The woman became furious. She raved wildly, and in her insensate rage she dashed the things around her to pieces. The man enjoyed her anger, and she raged at him for laughing at her. She seized a chair and aimed a blow at him. He evaded it, and with his fist knocked her down. He struck her in the neck just below the chin, and when she fell, he gnashed his teeth in rage, and stamped with his foot on her breast. He kicked her in the side several times, and rushed from the house".—Ibid, page 182.

"After awhile she arose from the floor and seated herself on the side of a bed. As she sat moaning, she deeply felt her misery. What awful torment she suffered while thus alone she brooded o'er her wrongs! Worse by far she felt than the hell she had heard of while on earth, and she was persuaded there was no end to it. Ask her and she would say that hell was eternal."—Ibid. p. 183.

"Eternal!" Ah, yes! "Ask her, and she would say that hell was eternal." But spiritists profess to know better than the spirits, and affirm it is not eternal. Which is most capable of judging the reader must decide. Again he says—

"Soon I came to a small collection of people who were acting the scene of hanging a man on the gallows. There was the scaffold, which had fallen, and a man was hanging by the neck in the death struggle. His eyes protruded; his tongue was thrust out of his mouth, his face was flushed; he struggled and writhed, but he could not die. No welcome death could come to put an end to his misery. No voice of pity nor murmur of compassion arose to greet his ear, but only shouts and laughter, rendered louder and more furious, the more severely he struggled and suffered, and accompanied by the beating of a drum—for they had made quite a military parade of it—and the gallows was surrounded by many in grotesque military uniforms, and armed with sticks and broom-handles. . . . . .

"Next I saw a party who were burning a man at the stake. He was fastened to the stake by cords so tight that he could not move a limb, and thus they roasted him by a slow fire.

"Then I saw enacted a scene with which the history of the Inquisition has rendered us familiar. A man was undergoing the torture. There were only two or three persons around him, as if there was some exclusiveness in this enjoyment. His leg was in an iron ease, and wedges were driven in to crush the bone and flesh together. How well they did enjoy it! how expert they were! and how they gloated over his yells of agony! It was to them a repetition of an earthly pleasure."—Ibid, pages 185, 186.

All these scenes are represented as taking place in spirit-land! Here is another representation of a scene in that dark abode:—

"I now approached one of those black spots, and there, in a miserable hovel, was a human being. He was ghastly thin, haggard, almost a skeleton. He knew no means of escape from that dark habitation, where he was all alone. The most violent of human passions were raging in him, and he was ever walking back and forth, like a chained tiger chafing in his cage.

"If you could have seen the agony that was painted on his face, the despair and hatred that spoke in every
lineament, the desperate passion that swelled every muscle, and the horrible fear that stole over him of what further or worse might ensue from his daring defiance of his God, you would have shuddered and recoiled from the sight; and what aggravated all this suffering was his ignorance that there was any redemption for him, and the belief that it was forever!

Let us listen again to the representations of that place:—

"They have taken me to the darker spheres. There I see countless numbers of spirits, of various hues of blackness, amid that dark and murky atmosphere, so dark and thick that it would seem almost palpable to my senses.

"There is a restlessness about those inhabitants that is terrible to behold, for it speaks of the worm that never dies, it tells in language not to be mistaken, that its gnawings are incessant, that its torments never cease. That worm is memory, and with all who people that immense desert, it is ever busy in discharging its duty as a minister of the Most High God, ever active in the performance of its terrible task of retribution. Like a hissing serpent, it is ever following the heels of those whose past was evil.

"It needs the aid of no material flame to infuse suffering into the heart. It needs no chains of earthly iron to bind the fallen soul to the dark soil in which it grovels. It needs no galling fetters to have it iron enter that soul; but, alone, unconquerable, unceasing, ever active, from its blasting embrace there is no escape, from its devastating breath there is no refuge."—pp. 424, 425.

A spirit from that world gives a portion of his experience:—

"At fifty years of age I was launched into eternity, and the first that met my gaze were friends I had left on earth whom I had hoped never to meet again. I was taken with despair and remorse of conscience. I was amazed. I looked upon myself—enough! for the serpent was stinging me. I was clothed in the human form. What! was I not dead? Had not I gone? Was I in a frenzy? Was it imagination? I know not how long I thus mused, when I was conducted to the earth. I looked and saw a form clothed with rags and vermin. I looked and saw I was living, and seemed to have a body still, and in anguish I cried, 'Oh, is there no death or grave' I am, then, with my kind again; but I see no plain to retire to from all around me,' for I was surrounded by adders in human form, and oh, what a hell! Your imaginations could not picture such a hell."—p. 443.

The reader will see from the foregoing quotations that this matter has not been overdrawn: that it has simply been represented in the language suggested by spiritualist writers themselves. We are again led to ask, Where is the comfort which this system gives? We have seen that there can be no possible certainty as to the identification of spirits, even upon the admission of spiritist writers themselves: that spirits are deceivers and liars, and can, and do, personate the friends of the departed, and so read the mind, as to be able to give such resemblance to genuine identification, as to deceive even the most wary; and that even could friends be identified, the theory of "no forgiveness," taught by spirits and spiritists, is fraught with such terrible consequences, that even were identification possible and certain, must take away all comforting assurance, as the condition of the spirit must be one of unhappiness. We therefore pass this claim as unworthy of the slightest confidence.

Its Teachings are Absurd, Irrational, and Irreligious.

The evidence that might be presented under this head, is almost without limit. When reading it, the thoughtful mind is led to wonder how rational human beings can waste time in such puerilities. In a letter in Medium and Daybreak, Nov. 1872, p. 429, and signed by E. A. Salmon, the following occurs:—

"On Monday, the manifestations were, we are informed by the most credible eye and ear witnesses, exceedingly pleasing. Musical instruments were played as they were borne aloft in the air; persons in the circle had their faces touched, or their hair stroked, as if by invisible hands; and one gentleman's hair was drawn over his forehead. A voice was once or twice heard; and 'Good night.' We have done our best to convince you. God bless you all! John King."

From the same paper for December 6, 1872, the following specimen is called:—

"The embodiments were not this evening, I think, so perfect as 'Katey's' was on the former occasion. The light, it is true, was different; but this was an improvement: it was more vivid; but 'Katey' mère, as I first saw her, would have borne any amount of illumination. She, too, was paler, less life-like, vous verrez. As soon as this apparition had faded away, Peter's voice was heard:—'Is useful, I am. I come when 'Katey' is collecting the power, just to give you my psychic force. They didn't want me at first; ? John King' used to send me off; but it's useful now. I like to do some good, you know. Fitz-Gerald, how are ye? Flipper's rather hard for psychic force, ain't it? I used to take pence out of people's pockets, and other things. Want 'em over ere? Oh, dear no! Some on your side wanted 'em, though. I gave them the pence—dropped them at their feet; didn't they wonder! Mrs. Desmond, how are you? Lady Fitz, how are ye? Emily, how are ye? What's this I's got here? Fitz-Gerald, is it loaded?' (He had taken down a carbine that hung near the ceiling.) 'Cock it, and snap it? Of
course I can; I's clever enough for that. Don't break the circle, mind—fear I drop it. Now. Stand at ease! but
don't freeze, and don't sneeze! Don't be alarmed, I won't hurt you. Fitz-Gerald, what's this thing with a handle
to turn? Electrical! Well, I can't manage it.' (He had unscrewed the handle of the machine by turning it the
wrong way.) 'Shake hands? Of course I will, I's quite one of you now. I say, Fitz-Gerald, when people feels
hands like these' (gripping me firmly by both shoulders), 'they say it's the medium. You see, what are they to
think? I say it's psychic force! I's off now to the major's. Oh, yes, I'll come back.' A slight crash on the window
shutter, and 'Peter' was gone."

The following dialogue with the spirit of Theodore Parker is from "Flashes of Light," P.P. 274, 275 :—

**QUES.**—"Is it true that the superior races of humanity have developed from the gorilla tribe?"

**ANS.**—"It is true, an absolute fact, well attested in nature. We are apt to turn a cold shoulder on our
inferior relatives as we rise in the scale of human life. It is not at all unnatural thus to assume a superiority
which does not belong to us."

**QUES.**—"Will individuals of the gorilla tribe, now on the earth, develope in the spirit world?"

**ANS.**—"They will develope through natural and spiritual processes. Spirit and matter are inseparable.
Spirit always rises through matter, or develope, as you understand it, through matter, and at the same time
developes matter. Spirit is always dependent upon matter for expression, and the kind of expression depends
upon the kind of organic matter through which the spirit ex-presses. The gorilla, as such, cannot be the finely
developed Anglo-Saxon, yet the same spirit runs through both."

It is therefore a scientific fact, settled decisively by the spirit of Theodore Parker, that the gorilla is man's
ancestor, even though he is ashamed to own his kinsman! As it is affirmed that this is well-attested in nature, the
savans may regard this as an authoritative statement, and cease searching for further evidence.

The following choice piece is from the Spiritual Magazine, November 1877, page 515. The actors are Mr.
Samuel Guppy and Mr. Ira Davenport. The scene and event are thus described:—

"A smallish room, feather bed, with very high top to the head-stead, washstand, with under shelf one side, my
trunk open on a long stool in one corner, a table before the bright fire, with two wax candles burning, and the
tea on the table, and we on each side—you see it all.

"The ball or entertainment opened by a volume of 'Mary Jane' jumping from my trunk to the window seat; I
got up to pick it up, and while so doing, my dress coat and waistcoat came flying out of the trunk at me; I took
them up, remarking to my invisible friend that I did not ask him to unpack my trunk. I stowed all in the trunk,
shut it up, and resumed my chair at the table; but trunk and stool on which it was marched off themselves up
alongside the table. A second after, a nameless something, which was on the ledge under the wash-hand basin
and was not empty, was emptied on the floor and rolled under the bed. 'Arn't you ashamed of yourself,' said I,
'to make such a mess in a gentleman's room?' The reply that I, or rather we, got was that a tumbler, half full of
water, which was standing on the wash-hand stand, was (the water) pitched at us. 'Ira,' said I, 'we had better get
our tea over,' said I; 'else we shall get those things broken,' So we hurried, much as people do aboard ship in a storm,
and sent the things away. 'Now,' said I, 'for our cigar box,' and we put paper and pencil in it, and put it under the
table (two candles and bright fire), in an instant a crash came like a heavy sledge hammer—the cigar box was
smashed into little bits—at the same time a very loud rapping was heard. 'It wants to say something,' said Ira,
and he added, 'What is your name?' It spelt out, D-e-v-i-l. 'Nice company we are got into, Ira,' said I. 'What do you want?' said Ira. It spelt out, W-h-i-s-k-e-y. 'Do you mean to say,' said I, 'that if I order up a glass of whiskey
you will drink it?' 'Y-e-s.' I ordered up two glasses of whiskey with water. I tasted the one, and putting very little
water in the other I said, 'Shall we put it under the table?' 'N-o.' 'Shall Ira hold it?' 'Y-e-s.' With one hand on the

"Under its shade, nestling snugly beneath its wide-spread branches, was a log-hut, like those I have
seen among the back-woodsmen on our frontiers. The man who built it had chosen that spot and all its
saw-mills, cows, and buttermilk, but also carriages and horses, &c.

He now describes a farm with its crops, outhouses, etc., and says,—

"I had noticed as I passed that the out-houses which I saw were for the mules which were used on the farm, but thus far I had seen no animals nor man. But now I observed, beyond the orchard, a dense forest of enormous trees, and in it there was a waterfall and a saw-mill, and now I saw the man whose place I was on. He was at work at the saw-mill with four or five assistants. He was dressed in shirt and trowsers, and his sleeves were rolled up. He and his companions seemed very cheerful and happy at their work. It seemed as if they were toiling for the pleasure of it, and were evidently enjoying it. They were singing and laughing, telling stories and cracking jokes upon each other.

"The saw-mill was at work with four saws a going; but I did not see around it any of the litter which I have been accustomed to here: no loose piles of slab, no heaps of sawdust, no decaying logs, but everything was neat and orderly. The logs were piled up in heaps, and so arranged as to look very handsome. They were arranged in piles. I counted the base. It consisted of eight logs, then above that layer seven, and then six, and so on up to a point.

"All their rubbish and dirt, I observed, were carried off by a sewer dug under ground, and terminating at the precipice which I have already mentioned. By means of a waste-weir all the rubbish was carried off that way, and the water passed clear and pure down through the farm. When I approached, they were sawing a large log with the whole four saws. It was a singular kind of wood, something like the bird's-eye maple, but the spots were larger, and the wood susceptible of a higher polish.

"Each board, as it came from the saw, was finely polished and smooth, and I examined to see how that was done. The back of each saw was as thick as its front edge, and so constructed that, it smoothed off and polished, as it went along, the roughness which the teeth made."—pp. 138, 139.

Let the reader just ponder this description, and its gross absurdity will then fully appear. A dense forest in heaven, with men in shirts and trousers, sawing logs! Further on he says:—

"I inquired of the daughter if she had never been married? She answered she supposed I would call it marriage. There was one to whom she was much attached, and they loved each other's society, and they were a good deal together. He was now at work at the saw-mill. And she said he would come in from the saw-mill not at all tired with his work, and would kick up his heels and go to dancing. 'Yes,' added her mother, 'and you join him in doing so.' She showed me a guitar and a flute, and said they played and sang together. She said her father sang, but her mother never found time to sing.

"We turned to take our leave, for it was time for me to go. The matron invited me to call on her again, and she said, give me a drink of buttermilk."—pages 140-144.

"On the opposite side of the way, I observed what seemed to be a full-grown boy had caught a dog, had split open his tail and put a stick in it, merely to enjoy the sport of seeing his suffering. He then turned the dog loose, and stood enjoying the scene. The attention of the owner of the dog was drawn to his cries, and, discovering the cause, he beat the boy, who, being as cowardly as he was cruel, fled, but was pursued, and beaten and kicked far up the road."—page 182.

Such is at least a part of Judge Edmonds' heaven. Can the reader help smiling at the absurdity of the representation given; or wondering at the childish simplicity of a man like Judge Edmonds thus imposing upon himself and expecting the credence of others? From the following it will be seen that there are not only saw-mills, cows, and buttermilk, but also carriages and horses, &c.

"While I was looking at these things, a carriage and four horses drove up; they immediately attracted my attention, for one of my youthful follies had been a great penchant for driving tandem and four-in-hand; and she, whose childhood had been accustomed to the quiet, sober driving of her Quaker father, had soon learned to dash 'fast and furiously' through the country with me. It was a beautiful turn-out. The carriage was light and tasty, with a high seat for the driver, and one seat behind for two persons. It was painted yellow, and on its
panels was my seal! The harness was light and airy, and the horses were superb animals, of the true Arabian breed, with long, sleek bodies, clean limbs, and a springing motion to every step. They were well-groomed, high-spirited, and well broke, and of different colors, being matched rather for quality than looks."—"Spiritualism" vol. 2, page 163.

The following is a specimen of spirit satire, and is said to be the utterance of the spirit of Galen:—

"All rapping media have that extraordinary affection, known by the profession as cephalomatous—being, in common phraseology, an elastic obtuseness of the superior hemispheres of the cerebellous. Whenever such patients (vulgarly termed 'mediums') their manus (hands) or cerebellous functions and protuberances in corpus juxtaposition with a table or other substance, the movings occur as a matter of compulsory necessity, to wit: by an ejaculation of volatile invisible effervential gases (flatulentus cerebelli), generated by the decomposition of ascaris lumbricoides; which, being regular descendants of the gymnitus electricus, perambulate miscellaneously through the duodenum and the abdominal viscera generally. The vulgar theories and anti-professional hypotheses of spiritual spasmodic action of the muscular system, or of electrical aura, in spontaneous dislodgment and preternatural infiltration, we pronounce delusive, gentlemen, and unhesitatingly reject them, in toto, as unhealthy excretions and galvanic evolutions of diseased and contused cerebellous glands, called, by the uneducated, phrenological organs or faculties."

The following is part of a record of creation professedly given by an exalted spirit under the imposing head of "Disclosures from the interior":—

"1. In the beginning God, the life in God, the Lord in God, the Holy Procedure inhabited the dome, which, burning in magnificence primeval and revolving in prismatic and undulatory spiral, appeared, and was the pavilion of the Spirit: in glory inexhaustible and inconceivable, in movement spherical, unfolded in harmonious procedure disclosive.

"5. And God said, Let there be space! and the firmament was separated from the emanation, and the firmament, unmov'd, appeared, and the emanation unfolded within the procedure. And the firmament is manifest Infinitude, and the emanation separated is encompassed space.

"9. And God said, Let there be movement of moving Energy! and life descended, interanimate, comprehending Creation, and there was movement spherical from the heaven of disclosure.

"10. And God said, Let there be centre given! and from the Divine Procedure descended the arm of strength unto the right and the arm of strength unto the left; and from the arm of strength at the right proceeded vital electro-motion and communicated polarity; and from the arm of strength at the left proceeded re-attractive electro-magnetic force, and created the horizontal; and the horizontal became the axis, and the points thereof the poles.

"11. And God made two great lights to rule the Zodiac, and to be for creative disclosure, disclosive manifestation, manifest glory, glorious radiation, interpenetrative aggregation; and thence vortices, vorticle suns, suns of vortices, solariums, vorticle planetariums, planets, floral universes, universal paradises, paradisaical heavens, heavens of spiritual universes, celestial heavens, seraphic habitations, seraphimal universes, cities of heavenly seraphima, and final consociative universal intelligence in unity of innumerable individuality, in triunity of unfolding universes, adoring and ascending in beatification unto eternal life."—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism."—Pages 37, 38.

A more absurd effusion, or one more in contrast with the beautiful and unique record in Genesis, it would be difficult to conceive. Words are here strung together—without meaning or connection—in a manner unparalleled outside of spiritualism, and this is regarded as an improvement on the Biblical narrative.

Spiritualists sometimes offer prayer to some supposed deity. The following is a specimen from the Banner of Light, March 1, 1862:—

"O thou Prince of Darkness and King of Light, God and Devil, greater and lesser good, perfect and imperfect being! we ask and demand of thee that we may know thee, for to know thee is to know more of ourselves. And if to do this it be necessary to wander in hell, yea and amen, we will wander there with the spirits of darkness. The Church and the world tell us that the Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, but we know thee only as God's Vicegerent, to stand at His left hand, the regenerator of mankind, the means of bringing up all things, intellectually and morally, to perfection."

Many may regard this as a burlesque on spiritualism; but it must be remembered that it is a sober address to Satan, delivered in presence of a Boston audience, and is published by a leading spiritualist journal without one word of censure.

The irreligion of spiritism, and its intense opposition to Christianity, stands out prominently in all its literature. A. J. Davis, in his "Penetralia," lauds spiritualism to the skies, while declaring that Christianity has not only never suggested a single scientific fact, but has placed its entire weight against every new development, and has slandered and denounced as infidel those who have tried to correct abuses. The entire spirit of Mr. Davis' writing is one of the bitterest opposition to Christianity. In a work called "Holy Truth," by
H. J. Brown, it is said:—"In the whole heathen mythology there is not a grosser fable than the supposed birth of the Saviour of mankind. Par from Christ being God, he was not even a perfect man." p. 123. The same writer says:—"Better to believe in no God at all than in the God of so-called Christianity; such conceptions cramp our reason and our energies."—p. 124. On page 151 of the same work is the following:—"Jesus was a great reformer, beautiful in his day, but no more. You to-day are stronger in knowledge, greater in intellect, far more than Jesus taught in the time in which he lived; yes, and you require more." In "Arcana of Spiritualism," p. 400, the writer says:—"The doctrine of salvation through the blood of Christ is a sham, an imposition, a libel on reason and common sense;" and on page 425 the same writer declares that "Christianity is dying." Such are a sample of the statements which show the tendency of spiritism towards Christianity. It is a well-known fact that the adoption of spiritism inevitably leads, in the end, to the rejection of Christianity; and as, while destroying faith in Christ, it exalts human reason as the only God and Judge, and human conscience as supplying the only law, it proves itself to be utterly irreligious and opposed to the best interests of man.

It is Opposed to all Law; is Destructive of the Distinction Between Right and Wrong; and, as a Consequence, Destroys Moral Character.

This charge may seem severe; but the evidence to be presented will prove it to be just. Hudson Tuttle, in "Arcana of Spiritualism," says that spiritualism "can have no creed; every individual must be a law unto himself and draft his own creed, and grant to all others the same liberty." Every individual being the law to himself, sets man above all law, human and divine, and introduces the reign of anarchy. A writer in the "Healing of the Nations" says:—

"Thus thy body needs no laws, having been in its creation supplied with all that could be necessary for its government. Thy spirit is above all laws and above all essences which flow therein. God created thy spirit from within his own, and surely the Creator of law is above it; the Creator of essences must be above all essence created. And if thou hast what may be, or might be termed laws, they are always subservient unto thy spirit."—p. 163.

"Good men need no law, and laws will do bad or ignorant men no good."

"If a man be above the law, he should never be governed by it. If he be below, what good can dead, dry words do him."

"True knowledge removeth all laws from power by placing the spirit of man above it."—p. 164.

It is here clearly stated that man is above all law, and thus an opening is made for the most unbridled license. The statement that "good men need no laws" may be true enough in itself, and while laws may do bad or ignorant men no good, in the sense of implanting moral principle where it is absent, the law, and the power to make it respected, will prevent bad and ignorant men from doing that which would be to the injury of the good. Once recognise the right of men to do what seems good in their own eyes, and the very basis of civilised society is destroyed. In "Flashes of Light," page 151, a spirit, calling himself" Lorenzo Dow," says:—

"I believe that the judge of every intelligent being is within themselves, and I believe they are accountable only to that judge."

In answer to the question, "Is there any standard of right and wrong in the spirit-life?" a spirit, calling himself the Rev. Joseph Lowenthall, says:—

"No, none whatever, save those standards that are erected in every human soul. Each one has a standard for themselves, and no one can borrow of another."

"In "Holy Truth," by Browne, on page 129, a spirit says:—

"Our conscience is the only judge, and to it alone are we responsible; that moment that conscience pronounces sentence, the moment of judgment is passed."

In these quotations the statement is again boldly made, that the only judge to whom man is responsible is himself; that there is no standard of right or law, but that which man makes for himself; and that there is no day of judgment, at which time man will need to give account of his deeds. The full consequences of principles such as these are enough to appall the stoutest heart. A man who loves gold, the law to himself, and accountable to none higher than himself! then what is to hinder him from stealing, or murdering if needs be, to get gold, or from resorting to all kinds of business frauds, in order to gain his ends? If a man delights in blood, and has a fiendish pleasure in taking human life, what is there in such principles to restrain him from the most diabolical deeds, and like the Thugs of India, who have systematised murder and made it a part of their service to their goddess, hurrying hundreds of their fellows to premature deaths? There is no crime that is conceivable to the mind, however diabolical or dastardly it may be, but may be justified by such principles; and were they generally accepted, a scene would be re-enacted, before which the bloody deeds of the French Revolution
would pale their horrors. May God preserve the world from the spread of so great a pestilence.

That the reader may see that the foregoing are not isolated utterances, but are merely samples of hundreds of similar which might be quoted, I append a few more. From the American Banner of Light the following is taken:—

"Within the bosom of every man and woman there is a judgment seat, a Throne of God; and before that, and that alone, should men bow down and worship. By that alone they are to be guided. He is to be judged by himself as a spirit, he is to come before no other tribunal. If by the law of self he is condemned, he must suffer according to the condemnation; if acquitted by self, he is indeed acquitted."—Quoted from "Spiritualism Unveiled," p. 45.

In a book called "The Educator," of some 680 octavo pages, are communications coming professedly from spirits bearing the names of some of the most noted men who have lived on earth,—such as Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, Robert Rantoul, Aristotle, Luther, Socrates, Roger Williams, &c. One of these spirits says:—

"When man became a living soul he became a god. All living souls are gods. They die not. So, living soul, rejoice in thy wisdom ... be a king, a Jehovah. You are all gods every one of you. Look within yourself and behold yourself a god, responsible for every act. Head the inscription there, and thou shalt learn that thou art a god in thyself, and thine own judge."

In the Age of Freedom, a paper published by the spiritualists at Berlin Heights, Ohio, occurs the following:—

"What a horrible phantom, what a soul crushing superstition is this idea of an overruling, omnipresent, all-powerful God. . . . Belief in a God is degrading, whatever the character ascribed to him. Where is your God? I can stand up and look him in the face, and affirm that I have a right to 'life, and liberty, and happiness,' whether it is his pleasure that I shall enjoy them or not. It is perfectly plain, then, that his Godhead or my manhood must succumb! If I can beat him even at one point, he is no God. But, if I can make a case once, I can a thousand times, in the case of every single right; and if I maintain my manhood in spite of Him, so may every other human being, and so the God is nowhere—utterly routed."

A. J. Davis, in a work called "Truth versus Fiction," on pages 245, 246, utters the following in reference to the revolting murder of Dr. Parkman by Professor Webster:—

"Society held Prof. Webster responsible for his delinquency, or murderous deed. Is this exact justice? I hear a protesting voice,—'Prof. Webster should have more properly instituted a suit for individual damages against society. Because the crime in this case was the legitimate effect of a social relation between debtor and creditor; of which antagonistic relations the distinguished indivi- duals were the most unfortunate victims. The precise thought here intended can be much easier misunderstood than apprehended. It is quite a manifest departure from the popular definitions of justice; and like a traveller in a strange country, the reader may unintentionally wander astray. You exclaim, 'Oh! it is all a plea for vice—relieving the individual of moral responsibility, and encouraging transgression by charging all upon society!' Error could not be more remote from truth than this conclusion from the author's meaning. Every individual is surely doing a blamable wrong when he acts inconsistently with the indwelling law of right. But who shall say what that law is? Who shall sit in judgment against his brother?"

Thus, murder is here openly shielded on the ground that the murderer had acted in harmony with the indwelling law of right, set up by and for himself, and that no other person had a right to sit in judgment upon him. On the same principle, every crime is justifiable, whether fratricide, matricide, regicide, suicide, pillage, fraud, oppression, seduction, adultery, and the whole long and horrible list of crimes that have stained the history of the race in the past.

The following citations will show that spiritist teachings destroy all distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice, good and evil; that, in a word, they destroy the word "sin," and all distinction between human actions, regarding the most infamous of actions as not deserving of blame, and the most worthy deeds as undeserving of praise. A. J. Davis, on pages 88, 89, 91 of the "Phil, of Spirit. Intercourse," says:—

"As has been shown in other portions of this volume, there are no elements in the soul which can be proved to be intrinsically evil—no affections which entertain any real sympathy for unrighteous things! This position I know to be invulnerable. Hence all the evil and corruption in this world are referable to a misdirection and a wrong application of intrinsically good and divine elements or impulses which reside in the human spiritual constitution. I am consequently constrained to assert, that man is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is in man. Moreover, it is positively unrighteous to term misdirection "evil"—because, the latter word is immersed in unphilosophical and erroneous associations.

"Since it is incontestably demonstrated that there are no intrinsically evil or fiendish principles, passions, or impulses in man's interior nature, we are constrained to conclude that it is impossible that there should be evil spirits existing in any of the great realms of the spiritual universe."
"Thus, sentence might be added to sentence in amplifying the philosophy that all evil is but imperfection tending to its ultimate perfection."

Evil, is here, simply "misdirection;" "evil" or "fiendish" principles have no existence; evil is simply imperfection tending towards perfection. On pages 181, 182 of "Flashes of Light," the question is asked—"Is it ever right to exercise revenge?" and the spirit of Theodore Parker answers—

"Yes, it is right to those who exercise it, but to those who see the dark, deformed side of revenge, it is not right. It surely is not the better way. The soul that exercises revenge does so because it is ignorant of the better way always."

Thus, revenge is right, if the one taking it think it right Human ignorance, passion, or perversity is allowed to be its own law. In A. J. Davis' "Penetralia," there is a heavenly Council, and on page 251 is a resolution of this Council, thus:—

"Resolved—That 'evil,' so-called, is not a transgression of any law, either physical or moral; but that evil (and sin) arise from internal conditions and from external circumstances over which individuals have no absolute control."

Again—

"The spirit of condemnation—this practice of giving one man credit as 'good.' and denouncing another as 'evil'—condemning the 'warrior' and praising the 'peaceman'—condemning the soul of the 'Spanish Inquisitor,' and holding up the beautiful character of 'William Penn'—will vanish when men come to apprehend and comprehend that the human spirit is compelled to act out its character. It is beautiful to contemplate the character of the peaceful William Penn; but the innmost spirit of the Spanish Inquisitor is just as peace-loving and beautiful!"

What horrid doctrine is this? the wicked Neros and Caligulas are just as good and beautiful in character as our gracious and exemplary queen! The cruel and blood-thirsty inquisitor, who would stretch his hapless victim—be it hoary-headed grandsire, matronly woman, blooming maiden, strong man, or young boy or girl—upon the torturing rock, or roast them over a slow fire, or lead them to the *auto da fe*, is just as worthy of our esteem and love as Howard the philanthropist, whose heart bled for the prisoner, and who devoted his life to ameliorating his condition! According to this dictum, all national, municipal, and family government is a huge mistake and blunder; the incarceration of the prisoners in the gaols, a grave crime; correction by a parent of his child an unwarrantable and unjustifiable act. Verily the world has been in great error in making laws, and arrangements, such as now exist! But, we will pardon it, and will say—Go on old world; make and continue to observe your laws; for we would much rather submit to your great error, than be *cursed* by the spiritualists' right. Roll on, old world, and may thy law-abiders long remain as a mighty bulwark against the wicked devices of the lovers of the spirits that love "to peep and mutter." In a lecture on the "Philosophy of Reform" given in New York, Mr. Davis again says:

"Reformers need to understand that war is as natural to one stage of human development as peace is natural to another. My brother has the spirit of revenge. Shall I call him a demon? Is not his spirit natural to his condition? War is not evil or repulsive except to a man of peace. Who made the warrior? Who made the non-resistant? Polygamy is as natural to one stage of development as oranges are natural to the South. Shall I grow indignant, and because I am a monogamist, condemn my kinsman of yore? Who made him? Who made me? We both came up under the influence of social and political circumstances; and we both represent our conditions and our teachers. The doctrine of blame and praise is natural only to an unphilosophical condition of mind. The spirit of complaint—of attributing 'evil' to this and that plane of society—is natural; but is natural only to undeveloped minds. It is a profanation—a sort of atheism of which I would not be guilty. And all our religions, all our schemes of reformation, operating on this superficial plane, need the very elements which are necessary to reform."

Thus revenge, war, polygamy, and every violation of the principles of morality are not to be blamed. In the opinion of spiritists, it is impossible to do wrong. To call crime by its true name is a sort of "atheism," a "profanation" of which this great light of the spiritual philosophy will not be guilty.

A. P. Coombes, a spiritualist, in a tract entitled "Whatever is, is Right, Vindicated," says:—

"I will not contend about how Pope or anybody else viewed the axiom, or into what departments of God's universe they give it entrance; I believe that 'Whatever is, is Right,' in its fullest and broadest sense, covering every act in the past, present, or future."

In "Banner of Light" for November, 1861, the spirits are represented as saying:—

"We say, as we have said a thousand times before, there is no such thing as sin, no such thing as evil. . . . Now, then, if there is sin anywhere, God made that sin—he is the author of it. The foundation of your religion is fast fading away. Soon we shall find you shaking hands with these new things. This must be so. .... Jesus of Nazareth, if he were here to-day, would tell you as we tell you."

Another says—
"Spiritually and divinely considered, there is no sin. Full well we know the book you call the Bible teaches of sin; full well we know the whole Christian world recognises such a condition; but, to us, there is no sin."

The following is taken from Dr. Carpenter's work on Spiritualism, pages 33, 35:—

"At the Rhode Island State Spiritualists' Convention, held at Providence in 1866, Mr. Wheeler said—'Drunkenness is just as good as soberness; vice is just as good as virtue; the devil is the equal of God, and hell is just as sweet as Heaven. Hell itself, if you raise it high enough, becomes the golden floor of Heaven. As Spiritualists, we have not acknowledged that there is such a thing as moral obligation.'

"At the same Convention, Mr. Perry said—'As a Spiritualist, I have yet to learn that we hold anything as sacred.'

'The above extracts are quoted from 'C. Standard,' for October 20th, 1866, and speak for themselves. They were uttered by prominent Spiritualists, in a State Convention, and, so far as I know, have never been repudiated by any of the leading journalists or lecturers of the fraternity, though they have often been quoted by their opposers.

'As quoted by McDonald, Dr. Hare, a distinguished Spiritualist, says—'The prodigious diversity between virtue and vice is the consequence of contingencies which are no more under the control of the individual affected than the colour of his hair or the number of cubits in his stature.' Again, 'There is no evil that can be avoided.'

"The plain meaning of all this is, that the drunkard, prostitute, murderer, etc., is no more blamable for his crimes than for the colour of his hair. This sentiment accords with the following prayer, found in the 'Banner of Light' for December 3rd, 1862—'We thank thee for all conditions of men, for drunkards, for prostitutes, for the dissolve of every description.' In the same paper for Februarys, 1862, a writer says—'I cannot think that libertinism injures the immortal soul.' In the same paper, October 19, 1850, in a reported discussion in convention, Dr. Child says—'In Fenelon there is no merit; in Herod there is no demerit.' Mr; Newton, in the same discussion, endorses the above sentiment; so does Mr. Gardner; so does Mr. Wilson, of N.Y., in these words—'Moral distinction, I cannot recognise as an essential quality of the soul.' Miss Lizzie Doten endorsed the former speakers. In short, the above sentiment is in accordance with the general tenor of Spiritualists' arguments, and is the legitimate conclusion from their pantheistic premises.

"A. J. Davis, in 'Nat. Div. Rev.,' p. 392, says—'Man is not accountable, in the manner in which this supposition would imply, for the original or present imperfection; for these sprang necessarily from his uncultivated social and moral situation. Indeed it is only by the aid of these imperfections that man can properly know and appreciate purity and perfection.'

"The Healing of the Nations,' p. 169, says—'Unto God there is no error; all is comparative good.'

"A. J. Davis, 'at. Div. Rev.,' p. 521, says—'Sin, in the common acception of that term, does not really exist.'

"The 'Banner of Light,' for January 30, 1860, says—'There are greater uses in sin than in holiness.'

"The 'Banner of Light,' for September 19, 1869, says—'I do not believe in the possibility of loving our enemies. Again in the same issue—'This having the "blues" because you are not as good as somebody else, I don't believe in.'

"Same paper for September 26, 1867, says—'Do men ever deteriorate in the next world? I do not believe they ever do, neither here nor there. Then we are to infer that men may do whatever they please? Yes; I believe that all wrongs, all the lesser rights, will finally become the highest and best good. . . . Then no deed, no life that creates the deed, can be evil, except to the individual who judges both. . . . The soul loses nothing of its high estate, its pure life by descending into the valley.' (of sin.)

"The 'Present Age,' for October 10, 1868, says—'We soon learn that evil has only an indefinite signification.'

"Dr. Potter summarises numerous quotations from Spiritualists thus—'We are taught that those who act the worst will progress the fastest; that 'we must go through hell to reach Heaven;' that a certain drunken woman of ill fame, 'will become more, noble than she otherwise could,' that 'sin is a lesser degree of righteousness,' that 'there is no high, no low, no good or bad, that 'murder is right, lying is right, adultery is right,' that 'whatever is, is right,' that 'it is wrong to blame anybody, that 'none should be punished.'"

That these principles should utterly destroy all morality is only to be expected. If we sow to the wind, we must reap the whirlwind. We cannot sow darnel and expect to reap wheat. Neither can we expect moral and upright lives from sowing immoral principles. That intercourse with spirits will injure, is clear from the character of the spirits given in preceding pages. I add a few more testimonies. In "The Spirits' Book," by Kardec, in Intro, pages 16 and 19, is the following:—

"Spirits are incessantly in relation with men. The good try to lead us into the right road . . . the bad ones tempt us to evil; it is a pleasure for them to see us fall, and to make us like themselves."

"Why do inferior spirits take pleasure in inducing us to do wrong? From jealousy. Not having earned a
place among the good, their desire is to prevent, as far as in them lies, other spirits, as yet inexperienced, from attaining to the happiness from which they are excluded. They desire to make others suffer what they suffer themselves."—Ibid. 129, 130.

In "Flashes of Light," page 218:—

"Can spirits in the other world exercise their power to make people do wrong? They certainly can, and do exercise that power very largely."

"Many people erroneously imagine that directly the spirit departs from the body it leaves its old characteristics behind it, but it does not; it takes them with it. . . . Take, for illustration, a man who is going to be hanged for murder. Instantly the life or spirit is jerked out of him the world laughs, because they have sent him out of the world. Ay, fools! that spirit can back and be in their midst, and no one knows how many more he prompts to do the same deed."—"Holy Truth," pages 160, 161.

It must be patent to all, that a voluntary association with beings such as these, and the yielding oneself to their influence must destroy morality. That such is the result the following testimonies will amply prove.

Dr. Potter says:—

"I am told by prominent spiritualists, that the ablest and most influential spiritualist in Boston has long been the worst libertine in the whole city; that the most prominent and influential spiritualist in New York has been guilty of more cases of crim con. than any other man in the United States; that I am told in Detroit they have organised and put the most licentious man in their ranks into office. In Chicago, I am told, the most wealthy and influential spiritualist has a wife, lives with a mistress, and patronizes affinities. Of spiritual editors, no less than six are Free-lovers. Spiritualists tell me that a large house is kept in Boston by a prominent spiritualist, often honored with office, to accommodate affinity hunters. Mrs. Spence said in a public lecture in Worcester, that spirits compelled her to leave a husband with whom she was very happy. She said that nearly all mediums had like commands from spirits. An enthusiastic spiritualist who had long boarded speakers that came to Boston, told me that she never had a trance, speaker in her house that she thought capable of taking care of herself."

Dr. Randolph, who was for eight years a medium and a lecturer, gives his opinion of it in the following:—

"I enter the arena as the champion of common sense, against what in my soul I believe to be the most tremendous enemy of God, morals, and religion, that ever found foothold on the earth—the most seductive, hence the most dangerous, form of sensualism that ever cursed a nation, age, or people. I was a medium about eight years, during which time I made three thousand speeches, and travelled over several different countries, proclaiming the new gospel. I now regret that so much excellent breath was wasted, and that my health of mind and body was well-nigh ruined. I have only begun to regain both since I totally abandoned it, and to-day had rather see the cholera in my house than be a spiritual medium."

"A.J. Davis and his clique of Harmonialists say there are no evil spirits. I emphatically deny the statement. Fine of my friends destroyed themselves, and I attempted it, by direct spiritual influences. Every crime in the calendar has been committed by mortals moved by viewless beings. Adultery, fornication, suicides, desertions, unjust divorces, prostitution, abortion, insanity, are not evils, I suppose! I charge all these to this scientific spiritualism. It has also broken up families, squandered fortunes, tempted and destroyed the weak. It has banished peace from happy families, separated husbands and wives, and shattered the intellect of thousands."—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism," pages 77, 78.

J. F. Whitney, editor of the N. Y. "Pathfinder," gives his opinion. The following extracts show his opportunities and his ability to judge of its character and its tendency:—

"Now, after a long and constant watchfulness, seeing for months and for years its progress and its practical workings upon its devotees, its believers, and its mediums, we are compelled to speak our honest conviction, which is, that the manifestations coming through the acknowledged mediums, who are designated as rapping, tipping, writing, and entranced mediums, have a baneful influence upon believers, and create discord and confusion; that the generality of these teachings inculcate false ideas, approve of selfish, individual acts, and indorse theories and principles which, when carried out, debase and make men little better than the brute. These are among the fruits of Modern Spiritualism, and we do not hesitate to say that we believe if these manifestations are continued to be received, and to be as little understood as they are, and have been since they made their appearance at Rochester, and mortals are to be deceived by their false, fascinating, and snake-like charming powers which go with them, the day will come when the world will require the appearance of another Saviour to redeem the world from its departing from Christ's warnings."
"We desire to send forth our warning voice, and if our humble position as the head of a public journal, our known advocacy of Spiritualism, our experience, and the conspicuous part we have played among its believers, the honesty and the fearlessness with which we have defended the subject, will weigh anything in our favor, we desire that our opinions may be received, and those who are moving passively down the rushing rapids to destruction should pause ere it be too late, and save themselves from the blasted influence which those manifestations are causing."—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism," pages 78, 79.

Dr. Potter, whose words have been previously quoted, in his work, "Spiritualism as it is," gives a faithful picture of this terrible system. The writer being himself a spiritualist, and seeking to lead spiritualists into better practices and principles, his words are weighty. He says:—

"Fifteen years of critical study of spiritual literature, an extensive acquaintance with the leading spiritualists, and a patient, systematic, and thorough investigation of the manifestations, for many years, enable us to speak from actual knowledge, definitely and positively, of 'Spiritualism as it is.' Spiritual literature is full of the most insidious and seductive doctrines, calculated to undermine the very foundations of morality and virtue, and lead to the most unbridled licentiousness.

"We are told that 'we must have charity,' that it is wrong to blame any one, that we must not expose iniquity, as 'it will harden the guilty,' that 'none should be punished,' that 'man is a machine and not to blame for his conduct,' that 'there is no high, no low, no good, no bad,' that 'sin is a lesser degree of righteousness,' that 'nothing we can do can injure the soul or retard its progress,' that those who act the worst will progress the fastest,' that lying is right, slavery is right, murder is right, adultery is right,' that whatever is is right.

"Hardly can you find a spiritualist book, paper, lecture, or communication, that does not contain some of these pernicious doctrines; in disguise, if not openly. Hundreds of families have been broken up, and many affectionate wives deserted by 'affinity-seeking' husbands. Many once devoted wives have been seduced, and left their husbands and tender, helpless children, to follow some 'higher attraction.' Many well-disposed but simple-minded girls have been deluded by 'affinity' notions, and led off by 'affinity-hunters,' to be deserted in a few months, with blasted reputations, or led to deeds still more dark and criminal to hide their shame."—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism," pages 83, 84.

These testimonies truly stamp the system as one to be reprobated by all who have the welfare of their kind at heart. They might be largely increased, and the testimony comes from every quarter. Even Mrs. Hardinge-Britten admits that the "vicious, the licentious, and the unstable" use it to cover a multitude of sins, "and by its lack of creedal restraint find in it a fresh excuse for their licentious proclivities." The uniformity of the testimony, the fact that it all comes from those who have had years of experience in its terrible workings, and now speak from knowledge and experience, show how dangerous is the system, and how necessary that a warning voice should be raised, and the unwary and unsuspecting be saved. I cannot do better than close this chapter with the solemn words of Dr. Talmage in his sermon on "The Religion of Ghosts." He says:—

"I bring against this delusion a more fearful indictment: it ruins the soul immortal. First, it makes a man a quarter of an infidel; then it makes him half an infidel; then it makes him whole infidel. The whole system, as I conceive it, is founded on the insufficiency of the Word of God as a revelation. God says the Bible is enough for you to know about the future world. You say it is not enough, and there is where you and the Lord differ. You clear the table, you shove aside the Bible, you put your hand on the table and say:—'Now let spirits of the future world come and tell me something the Bible has not told me.' And although the Scriptures say: 'Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar,' you risk it, and say: 'Come back, spirit of my departed father; come back, spirit of my departed mother, of my companions, of my little child, and tell me some things I don't know about you and about the unseen world.' If God is ever slapped square in the face, it is when a spiritual medium puts down her hand on the table, invoking spirits departed to make a revelation. God has told you all you ought to know, and how dare you be prying into that which is none of your business? You cannot keep the Bible in one hand and Spiritualism in the other. One or the other will slip out of your grasp, depend upon it. Spiritualism is adverse to the Bible in the fact that it has, in these last days, called from the future world Christian men to testify against Christianity. Its mediums call back Lorenzo Dow, the celebrated evangelist, and Lorenzo Dow testifies that Christians are idolaters. Spiritualism calls back Tom Paine, and he testifies that he is stopping at the same house in heaven with John Bunyan. They call back John Wesley, and he testifies against the Christian religion which he all his life gloriously preached. Andrew Jackson Davis, the greatest of all the spiritualists, comes to the front and declares that the New Testament is but 'the dismal echo of a barbaric age,' and the Bible only 'one of the pen and ink relics of Christianity.' They attempt to substitute the writings of Swedenborg and Andrew Jackson Davis, and other religious balderdash, in the place of this old Bible. I have in my house a book which was used in this very city in the public service of spiritualists. It is well worn with much service. I open that book and it says:—'What is our baptism? Answer: Frequent ablutions of water. What is our inspiration? Plenty of fresh air and sunlight. What is our prayer? Abundant physical exercise. What is our love-feast? A clear conscience and sound sleep.' And I find from the same book that the
chief item in their public worship is gymnastic exercise, and that whenever they want to rouse up their souls to a very high pitch of devotion they sing page sixty-five:—"The night has gathered up her moonlit fringes;' or page sixteen:—"Come to the woods, heigho! You say you are not such a fool as that; but you will be if you keep on in the track you have started."—"Talmage's Sermons," pp. 238, 239.

The Dangers of Spirit-Mediumship: it Destroys Individuality and Power of Self-Control, and is an Incentive to Crime.

The dangers of spirit-mediumship are so many, and so great, that did persons properly understand and estimate them, few indeed would be found to lend themselves as the instruments of these evil and debased beings. It will always be the case that there will be persons who, notwithstanding the dangers and evils resulting from this intercourse, will yet be found indulging therein. There are many, however, who are entirely unsuspicious of these dangers, and who, if warned in time, and the nature of the evils clearly pointed out, may be saved ere they are fully drawn into the net. It is with the hope of influencing such, that these testimonies are presented. Would that the warning voice now raised, may be heard, and the unwary saved. Some may, perhaps, say that the danger is magnified, and that it is really not so great as described. If the reader is in such a frame of mind, let me earnestly plead for a careful consideration of the following testimonies, and to assure him, that they may not only be relied upon, but might be largely increased in number.

When these unseen beings obtain an entrance into the mind, if the person seeking the intercourse be of a moral character, whom open manifestations of immorality would repel, there is a great expression of a benevolent desire for their welfare; and a profession that they are performing the divine will in thus coming and seeking to benefit them. They also, by the expression of this same desire, seek to lead them to pledge themselves to seek intercourse with them at stated and regular periods; and under no pretence whatever, unless absolute inability from sickness, to stay away. So far do these spirits go in this, that they seek a written pledge to this effect. This statement is made upon the testimony of one from whom it was sought by the spirits, and who, on being led to see the evil of the system, informed the writer.

They seek, also, entire passivity on the part of those seeking intercourse with them. The mind must be passive, and the statements of the spirits are to be received in a reverent and believing state of mind; or, it is affirmed, the spirits will be unable to impart the benefit they desire.

The following is from Judge Edmonds' work on "Spiritualism:"—

"It is sometimes, when all the spirits are assembled here for the purpose of carrying out a certain plan, almost impossible to arrange the magnetic current so as to communicate freely, and it ought to be understood that when the higher spirits come to your circle, really to do good, the absence of any member positively interferes with the whole order of manifestation. Certainly, therefore, it is of importance that each member should be present, unless detained by sickness, and that no ordinary excuse should be given or received unless a high and noble duty prevents attendance."

"On Sunday last the teaching was entirely different from that intended; the higher spirits wished to communicate, but the medium was not in condition, and another spirit took possession. Another thing, when some of you have staid a certain time you are impatient to go, and it is the case, that when the full circulation of the magnetism is perfectly established that the higher teaching can be given—thus it may be in the latter part of the evening that the most important teachings can come."

"For all or for nothing; for everything or for naught, should be your motto. You cannot love God and the world, and in this cause you profess to love God and to carry out the truth as it is revealed by his instruments."—pp. 245-6-7-8.

Thus no ordinary excuse is to be received for absence from the circle; the plea for this is that the current is interfered with, and the spirits are not so well able to communicate; and the dictum is laid down "for all or for nothing in other words, either give yourselves up to us wholly in this respect, or decide to keep away from seeking intercourse with us. The latter is not only the prudent, but the only wise course. In the same work, on page 277, the spirits say—

"But woe to them who are instruments selected, if, indeed, they listen not to what we have said—who, in spite of all the means of progress, choose rather the evil than the good! Human mind never pictured to itself the degradation which will ensue here on earth, and the infinite misery hereafter." Ah! woe indeed! rather woe if they do listen. A threat of human degradation such as was never witnessed before is pronounced if they are not heeded. The entirety of the control they seek is here apparent. This is the continuous cry of the spirits—"be passive," "give your minds up entirely to us," "if you are not purely passive we cannot communicate, and thus you lose the benefit we seek to impart to you."

"In "Flashes from the Spirit-World," a question is asked as to some of the conditions necessary to be observed by those asking the spirit to control them. In answer to this, a spirit replies thus:—
"One of the conditions requisite is a passive state of mind on the part of the questioner. Be willing to receive whatever the spirit is able to give. . . . Again, it is necessary that you lay down all prejudice. Put your preconceived notions under your feet, and be willing to receive whatever is true for its own sake. Persons who seek to investigate this phenomenon should remember that it is the voice of God talking to his children. And remembering this, you will come in humility, asking the Great Father Spirit to bestow upon you what you most need."—P. 385.

Here, entire passivity is required; an emptying out of all previous ideas; a sitting in a teachable spirit at the feet of these spirits, and regarding their communications as the voice of God to His children. What subjection could be more entire? In "Philosophy of Spiritual Inter-course," A. J. Davis says:—

"Again and again we are told that perfect passiveness—a subjugation of our prejudices and anxious feelings—is necessary that we may obtain truthful and reliable communications; and, when these conditions are not fulfilled, a disappointed experience reminds us that we have violated and deranged the prescribed laws of these communications. In truth, when we are anxious or impatient, we become intellectually positive, and then we exhale a magnetic atmosphere, while we inhale the necessary electrical emanations which rapidly exhausts the presiding medium, and the communications are thereby deranged,—becoming, as many persons have frequently observed, contradictory and confused, and, perhaps, for the time being, altogether arrested."

The spirit of Thomas Paine says:—

"Such is the physical and mental condition of minds that we intend to make a great change in them before we write what will be necessary. The writing will not be the commencement of our work, but will follow other manifestations as soon as will be expedient. . . . The writing will be executed with great rapidity, when mediums shall become wholly passive"—"Pilgrimage of Thomas Paine," p. 250

It is thus seen that entire passivity—the giving up of individuality, is what these beings are seeking. Nothing can be of God which requires the giving up of our manhood; nothing can be good which requires the suspension of will and judgment, and makes of the man an automaton. God does not violate his own laws, nor will he destroy the sense of personal responsibility which he has given to man. If the influence to which we are asked to give ourselves up were a good one, the evil would be less; but it would still be an evil, if it took away our power of individual action. But when the influence may be, and certainly often is, an evil one, the danger and the wrong are seen to be immense. That the magnitude of the evil may be grasped, the following is presented as to the character of the beings at whose feet we are invited to sit, and to whose guidance we are asked to yield ourselves. A question is asked—

"Do the appetites, and passions, and propensities—in a word, the character, in earth life, of the individual, adhere to him when ushered into the spirit realm?"

The spirit of Thos. Paine replies—

"Precisely as death leaves you, so life in the spirit-world finds you. You are spiritually no different after death. You have only passed through a chemical change which has affected the body, and the spirit's relationship to the body, while the spirit itself remains precisely the same. The thief is still the thief, the liar is still the liar, the murderer is still the murderer, the drunkard is still the drunkard."—"Flashes of Light," pp. 109, 110.

In the same work the question is asked—

"Then spirits do, at times, assist in deception?"

And a spirit replies—

"Why should they not? There are spirits disembodied who are on the same plane with himself, and from them you should expect similar mental conditions. They would do what he would do. They stand no higher, no lower. They are ready to assist him in all that is possible."—p. 204.

Again—

"Is there as much evil existing in the spirit-world as there is here?"

"There is evil existing in the spirit, you may be sure of that. . . . For instance, the drunkard enters the spirit-world as a drunkard. Death does not change him, it only takes away his external shell. It leaves the man precisely the same; and so it is with regard to all the evils or mistakes of life."—Ibid. p. 231.

Now how can intercourse with such beings be for improvement? And it must be remembered, that it is just this class of spirits which are said to be most anxious to communicate through human bodies; that the more elevated a spirit becomes the more difficult it is for it to communicate. If what has been established, as to the character of the spirits, under a previous heading, is borne in mind, along with the citations just given, the conclusion will necessarily arise in the mind that intercourse with such beings must be evil in its results.

In "Flashes of Light," by A. Putnam, previously quoted from, is the following question and answer; the spirit answering takes the name of Theo. Parker:—

QUES.—"Why do mediums suffer so much in allowing spirits out of the form to manifest? In some cases they become Living martyrs."
of evil influences. The writer says:—

"A circle is formed of low and vile characters, who commence by swearing, and intend nothing but sport. As they do not desire purifying and elevating instruction, they repel the pure, and attract spirits like themselves, such as love to lie, to cheat, to steal, who disregard all right, who answer all questions by lies, except so far as they may secure to themselves the confidence of their questioners. Test questions they may answer correctly. Meantime, they will send those persons who repose confidence in what they say in a vain and wild chase after wealth. . . . There are also spirits who delight in torture. If these can find a medium suitable for their purpose, they will do with him as they choose, making him act and speak in a most reprehensible manner."—p. 312, 313.

Just imagine a dozen men of lying, thieving, and murderous proclivities, seeking intercourse with these beings, and being incited by them to similar deeds. Under the influence of these unseen prompters, they would regard themselves as justified in the perpetration of every imaginable diabolical deed; for, as we saw by a previous quotation, these spirits demand that their utterances should be regarded as the voice of God, of the "Great Father Spirit addressing his children." If, then, these men could obtain the idea, that in their wicked acts, they were acting under the sanction of the deity, to what horrible lengths might they not go? The Thugs of India, who made a trade of murder and robbery, and who believed, that the more persons they murdered and robbed, the more acceptable were they to their bloody deity, are the true counterparts of what such persons would be. And could we conceive of the bulk of mankind adopting these principles of spirit intercourse, and acting upon them, neither life nor property, neither virtue nor character, would be safe; earth would be a very pandemonium of evil, and the end of civilization would have dawned.

At page 195 of the same work, an explanation is given as to the liability of the mediums to become victims of evil influences. The writer says:—

ANS.—"All that which transcends the usual order of human life must of necessity produce suffering. Those persons who are called mediums, are possessed of an extremely sensitive organism. It must be so, because they are sensitive to things beyond human senses, and this exaltation of the nervous system produces, under the slightest inharmonious conditions, pain and distress."—p. 235.

The question, it may be observed, is represented as being put to the spirit at a spiritualistic seance, and therefore, may be safely regarded as a testimony from a spiritist of the fact, that in holding intercourse with spirits, the mediums suffer greatly; even to the extent of becoming "living martyrs." On page 291 of the same work, is the following question and answer:—

QUESTIONS:—"Do disembodied spirits ever cause mortals to commit suicide? Is the act justified under any circumstances?

ANS.—"Disembodied spirits do influence mortals in this direction, as in all others. Every act is justified by its parents—by those propelling powers that force it into objective life. This is no exception."

Thus, spirits do incite persons to commit suicide; and it is here stated that the parents of this crime—who are the spirits—justify it as they do every other to which they incite their willing victims. The writer was acquainted with a lady in Victoria, who had been brought, by her own act, under the influence of the spirits. She stated that she frequently heard a voice, as distinctly as though a person stood by and was addressing her, and this voice continually suggested that she should take away her life. I tried to persuade her that it was merely imagination, and that she was perhaps unwell, and thus her mind acted a little out of its usual manner; but she calmly assured me that there was no mistake, that she heard the voice as clearly and as distinctly as she did my own when I spoke to her; and from what I have subsequently learned of these phenomena, I now believe that she did hear this voice. Her friends were greatly concerned respecting her, as she made several attempts to take away her life, and they were compelled, even though with much reluctance, to place her several times in the Asylum for the insane, at Kew, near Melbourne. On the last occasion of being there, after being out for a little time, and her friends, hoping that she had successfully overcome her weakness, relaxing their watchfulness, she succeeded in putting a termination to her life by drowning. In the quotation given, it is stated by this writer, that spirits do incite to the commission of the crime of self-murder; and in the personal reminiscence just given, is an evidence of their having done so. Another instance of the same kind came under my notice, but thus far happily, without the fatal termination. A lady in the same city, who was a believer in this terrible superstition, anxious to obtain communications from departed friends, allowed herself to be developed as a medium. When questioned as to the matter, she made the melancholy confession to a friend, that although she earnestly sought communication from her departed dear ones, and from good spirits, the only spirits from whom she received communications were wicked ones, who tried to lead her to do most abominable things, and often told her to go and hang herself, or take away her life, by throwing herself into the river, as they wished her to join their company in the spirit-world. The result of these communications was, that they had produced a settled melancholy, which probably may have a similar fatal termination as in the previous case. Results such as these should certainly act as a warning.

The following quotation, from the "Arcana of Spiritualism," by Hudson Turtle, shows the consequences likely to accrue, in the event of the wicked and debased portion of society adopting this system:—

"A circle is formed of low and vile characters, who commence by swearing, and intend nothing but sport. As they do not desire purifying and elevating instruction, they repel the pure, and attract spirits like themselves, such as love to lie, to cheat, to steal, who disregard all right, who answer all questions by lies, except so far as they may secure to themselves the confidence of their questioners. Test questions they may answer correctly. Meantime, they will send those persons who repose confidence in what they say in a vain and wild chase after wealth. . . . There are also spirits who delight in torture. If these can find a medium suitable for their purpose, they will do with him as they choose, making him act and speak in a most reprehensible manner."—p. 312, 313.

"Great Father Spirit addressing his children." If, then, these men could obtain the idea, that in their wicked acts, they were acting under the sanction of the deity, to what horrible lengths might they not go? The Thugs of India, who made a trade of murder and robbery, and who believed, that the more persons they murdered and robbed, the more acceptable were they to their bloody deity, are the true counterparts of what such persons would be. And could we conceive of the bulk of mankind adopting these principles of spirit intercourse, and acting upon them, neither life nor property, neither virtue nor character, would be safe; earth would be a very pandemonium of evil, and the end of civilization would have dawned.
"The sensitive condition, the cause of mediumship and its necessary accompaniment, renders the medium easily affected by surrounding circumstances. Hence the waywardness of character they often exhibit, and for which they are unqualifiedly censured. The broadest charity should be bestowed, for the vital force of mediums is heavily drawn upon, and they are often left in a state so negative as to become the prey of untoward influences."

The following testimonies will amply illustrate the truthfulness of the above as to the liability of mediums to degenerate in character, until they have lost the special characteristics of honourable manhood. I first introduce Dr. B. F. Hatch, formerly husband of the trance-speaking medium, Mrs. Cora V. Hatch, but now Mrs. Daniels. The doctor travelled with his wife while she was giving her lectures, and had an intimate acquaintance with spiritualism. He says:—

"I have heard much of the improvement in individuals in consequence of a belief in spiritualism. With such I have had no acquaintance But I have known many whose integrity of character and uprightness of purpose, rendered them worthy examples of all around, but who, on becoming mediums, and giving up their individuality, also gave up every sense of honour and decency. A less degree of severity in this remark will apply to a large class of both mediums and believers. There are thousands of high-minded and intelligent spiritualists who will agree with me, that it is no slander in saying, that the inculcation of no doctrines in this country has ever shown such disastrous moral and social results as the spiritual theories."—"Spiritualism Unveiled," p. 27.

Dr. Randolph, who for eight years was a medium and lecturer, says:—

"As a trance-speaker. I became widely known; and now even, that during the entire eight years of my mediumship, I firmly believe that I had not the control of my own mind, as I now have, one twentieth of the time; and before man and high Heaven most solemnly declare, that I do not now believe that during the whole eight years. I was sane for thirty-six consecutive hours, in consequence of the trance and susceptibility thereto.

"For seven years I held daily intercourse with what purported to be my mother's spirit, I am now persuaded that it was nothing but an evil spirit, an infernal demon, who in that guise gained my soul's confidence, and led me to the brink of ruin. We read in Scripture of demoniac possession as well as of normal spirit action. Both facts exist provable to-day; I am positive the former does... . Five of my friends destroyed themselves, and I attempted it by direct spirit influences. Every crime in the calendar has been committed by mortals moved by viewless beings."—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism," p. 78.

The editor of the New York Pathfinder, J. F. Whitney, gives his opinion of the results of mediumship, thus:—

"Being, as we have, the gradual progress it makes with its believers, particularly its mediums, from lives of morality to those of sensuality and immorality, gradually and cautiously undermining the foundation of good principles, we look back with amazement to the radical change which a few months will bring about in individuals, for its tendency is to approve and endorse each individual act and character, however good or bad these acts may be."—Ibid. p. 79.

The French spiritualist, Allan Kardec, in his "Spirits' Book," answers the question, "Why does God permit spirits to incite us to evil?" The answer is carefully worded, but admits a possibility of results, which, when fairly looked at, are startling. His words are:—

"Imperfect spirits are used by Providence as instruments for trying men's faith and constancy in well doing. You, being a spirit, must advance in the knowledge of the infinite. . . . When you are acted upon by evil influences, it is because you attract evil spirits to you by your evil desires, for evil spirits always come to aid you, in doing the evil you desire to do; they can only help you to do wrong when you give way to evil desires. If you are inclined to murder you will have about you a swarm of spirits who will keep this inclination alive in you."

A swarm of evil spirits, attending a man who is fond of taking away human life, and keeping that inclination alive in him, can only produce the most fearful results. To encourage men of such tendencies to indulge in intercourse with these beings would be a crime. Judge Edmonds gives similar testimony to the above. In his book "Spiritualism," he says:—

"We are taught that there are spirits in the next state of existence whose propensities are evil. Not that they are a distinct race of beings, known in the old theology as Devils, and represented as a creation distinct from, and independent of, the human family, but men and women who have lived on earth, perverted and distorted morally, and have passed away from this primary existence with those perversions and distortions unchanged and aggravated by the desolation and misery, apparently to them without end and without hope, in which they find themselves existing. Selfish, intolerant, cruel, malicious, and delighting in human suffering upon earth, they continue the same, for a while at least, in their spirit home. And having, in common with others, the power of reaching mankind through this newly-developed instrumentality, they use it for the gratification of their predominant propensities, with even less regard than they had on earth for the suffering which they may inflict on others.
"It cannot be difficult to discover in such a state of things the material, not only for much positive mischief, but the cause of many of the cruelties and contradictions which so often disturb the superficial observer, and sometimes mislead the credulous and confiding.

"This influence displays itself in various forms, but scarcely ever without tending to impair confidence in the manifestations. Sometimes it is with a clearly marked purpose of evil, avowed with a hardihood which smacks of the vilest condition of mortal society. Sometimes its fell purposes are most adroitly veiled under the cover of good intentions. Sometimes it is restless and uneasy—to one thing constant never.' At other times it is calm, considerate, and persevering. Now it contents itself with finding amusement in the harmless perplexities to which it subjects us, and anon it is satisfied only when it can goad on its victim to crime, and rejoice in the agony it produces."—"Spiritualism," pp. 41, 42.

We are here told of spirits who are selfish, intolerant, cruel, and malicious, and who delight in human suffering; that they take pleasure in goading their victims on to crime and rejoice in the agony they thus cause. In the following quotation, which is taken from Dr. Gridley's work, we have an illustration of the work of the spirits. It is an account of an aged medium of sixty years living near the Doctor (in Southampton, Mass.) whose sufferings "in two months at the hands of evil spirits would fill a volume of 500 pages." Very little of this ever becomes known outside of the "circles." The following extract will give some idea of the case:—

"They forbade his eating, to the very point of starvation. He was a perfect skeleton; they compelled him to walk day and night, with intermissions, to be sure, as their avowed object was to torment him as much and as long as possible. They swore by everything sacred and profane that they would knock his damned brains out, always accompanying their threat with blows on the forehead or temples, like that of a mallet in the hands of a powerful man, with this difference, however, the latter would have made him unconscious, while in full consciousness he now endured the indescribable agony of those heavy and oft-repeated blows; they declared they would skin him alive; that he must go to New York and be dissected by inches,—all of which he fully believed. They declared they would bore holes in his brain, when he instantly felt the action suited to the word, as though a dozen augers were being turned at once into his very skull; this done, they would fill his brain with bugs and worms to eat it out, when their gnawing would instantly commence. . . . These spirits would pinch and pound him, twist him up and throw him down, yell and blaspheme, and use the most obscene language that mortal can conceive; they would declare that they were Christ in one breath and devils in the next; they would tie him head to foot for a long time together, in a most excruciating posture; declare they would wring his damned neck off because he doubted them or refused obedience."—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism," page 124.

The following is culled from a letter in "Medium and Daybreak," Nov. 15, 1878, and speaks for itself:—

"Sometime ago I received into my service a young person, who, knowing nothing whatever of spiritualism, shortly gave evidences of mediumship; it was, however, soon plain that the controlling influences were of a dark nature. It would fill the pages of your paper to relate all the strange details of this case; at & future day, for the instruction of others, I intend giving them to the public, at present I only wish to comfort the lady who applies to you in the case of the little boy who "falls down, becomes rigid," &c.

"All these features were present in the case of my domestic; she fell from the top of the stairs as many as four times a day, and generally remained stretched rigidly head downwards, half way between the top and the bottom. I find no one, not even a climbing boy, able for a moment to maintain the position in which I have found this girl lying on the stairs, many, many times. Sometimes, however, she would be thrown quite to the bottom; she was always found rigid. For weeks an effort was made to prevent her from taking any food. At every meal to which she sat down she was placed in a trance, almost death-like, sitting in her chair; in this position she would talk on being questioned, and evidences of strong clairvoyant power were given at these times. Sometimes on being thrown down, the writhing and struggling of the poor girl were pitiful, and her cries and groans have been heard by the neighbours "—page 726. On page 192 of Judge Edmonds' "Spiritualism," there is an account of a Mrs. F., a delicate lady medium, being possessed by an evil spirit. The following is a portion of the Judged statement respecting it:—

"It was evident that the influence was an unhappy one, and that self-control and self-consciousness had left her. It was some time before the spirit said much, but the gesticulation was violent. He frequently looked in my face with a concentrated expression of spite. His face was very much flushed. The eyes were open and protruded, and the cheeks swollen. Around the whole of the upper part of the neck, just below the chin and ears, was a white streak, as if there was no blood there, while below that the neck was so flushed that it was fairly purple.

"The right hand was doubled into a fist, and he over and over again raised it to strike me. It seemed to tremble with passion and was very rigid and hard. I said to him several times, 'Strike, if you want to.' His eyes were generally fixed rigidly at some object on the table, and when I would say this he would turn and look at me, as if to see with what emotions I said it. Several times he raised his fist, and, shaking it at me, said, "Do you
see that?" I said 'Yes,' but I was not uneasy at anything he could do, for God was over all, and in him I trusted."

On page 513 is an account of a similar spirit possessing Dr. Dexter. He says:—

"It was altogether a very extraordinary manifestation. It was conducted throughout with unusual and
indeed unknown violence. He took entire possession of the Doctor, not merely of his arm, as others did, and the
Doctor said he felt an almost uncontrollable inclination to strike me, and to commit acts of violence."

These cases might be largely added to; indeed, the instances of personal violence used by the spirits, and
the destruction of will power in their victims, are almost innumerable.

A Mr. D., an old resident of Dunedin, was taken possession of by a spirit professing to be that of his
grandfather, which so threw him about the room, and with such great violence, that the effects were felt for a
considerable period afterwards. The spirits appear to have taken full control of him, and threatened that if he
ever forsook spiritualism, they would either make him a raving maniac, or incite some one to take away his life.
On one occasion a spirit took possession of him and deprived him of power of speech, and compelled him to
stand at the door of his residence making horrid grimaces at the people as they were passing on their way from
the different places of worship. Two medical men were among the number who passed, and being struck with
the man's peculiar conduct, after satisfying themselves that he was not intoxicated, which was their first
impression, and judging from his continuing the grimaces when they addressed him, that he must be out of his
mind, they took charge of him and escorted him, until they could give him into the safe custody of a constable,
and he was subsequently committed to the lunatic asylum for safe keeping. My informant, who received the
account from the man's own lips, stated, that he averred he was not insane, that he understood all that was
going on, and fully realised the gravity of his position when the doctors took him in charge; but that the spirit
had taken away his power of speech, and compelled him to make the horrid grimaces which led to his being
placed in the asylum. The man subsequently left town for the country, and was found murdered, which his
friends supposed to have been the fulfilment of the threat made to him.

A Mr. Y., another resident of Dunedin, when at a seance, was taken possession of by a spirit, doubled up
like an india-rubber ball, and thrown with great violence about the room, displacing everything in the room,
and at last leaving him on the floor foaming at the mouth, and vomiting. A Mrs T. of South Dunedin, a
trance-medium, was, on one occasion, taken in a similar manner, and was so bruised by being violently thrown
about, that she had to remain in her chamber for several days. Violent convulsions and distortions are usual at
seances, persons beating themselves, or throwing themselves about in such a manner, as to lead those present
to suppose they were intending to destroy themselves.

A writer in the Spiritual Telegraph, No. 187, says:—"I have seen mediums rolling on the floor, uttering
grunts like swine, giving vent to the most hideous yells, and at times beating their bodies, and tearing their hair
like lunatics."

The Superintendent of the Indiana Lunatic Asylum, in 1853, said: "A new cause of insanity has been
developed. During the year, eighteen have been added to our number from the so-called spiritual rappings."

In the report of the Ohio Lunatic Asylum for 1853 is the following:—"Nothing is more worthy of notice
than the large and rapidly increasing number of cases caused by the popular delusion, 'spirit rappings.' Only
during the past few weeks, two melancholy cases of insanity from this cause have occurred in the vicinity of
Dunedin. Do such bitter waters flow from a sweet fountain? That these are the legitimate fruits of the system,
the foregoing testimonies conclusively prove.

A few weeks ago I was waited upon by a young gentleman occupying a position of responsibility and trust
in one of our mercantile offices, and with whom I had become acquainted on a return voyage from London to
Melbourne in the year 1877. He told me that he had been induced, from curiosity and sceptism as to the
phenomena of spiritualism, to join himself to a "circle," in which were several developed mediums. Being of a
highly sensitive temperament, although he was sceptical as to the interference of spirits in the matter, he was
soon brought under the influence. In a short time he found himself experiencing knocks while in the office
attending to his duties, and was so thrown about that he had often to retire to another room to hide the matter
from his fellow-clerks. While casting up his accounts, he was stopped, and compelled to write words and
sentences which appeared to be wholly unmeaning, so that he found himself unable to attend to his duties. After
this had gone on for some time, he became alarmed for himself, and saw that the consequences to him were
likely to be serious. His confidence in the goodness of the influence exerted over him was shaken, by finding
that the "spirits told such atrocious lies," and as he had had a Christian training, he knew such could not be
from God. The spirits sought to obtain from him a written promise that he would allow nothing of any ordinary
color to keep him away from the circle on the evening on which it regularly met. This request, and its being
repeatedly insisted upon, alarmed him. He concluded that, as he had found the spirits to be liars, as they were
destroying his power of individual action, compelling him to go to places, and do things, against his own will
and inclination; and as he saw that they now wished, by obtaining the written promise, to secure entire control
over him, that the influence must be a Satanic one, he was resolved, if possible, to rid himself from it. The night
themself to be self-acting, when in fact they are the merest shuttlecocks, banded about between the
semi-sense of volitional power into the minds of their intended victims; so that at last they come to believe
Randolph’s "Dealings with the Dead":—

brought.

influence, and has had to give up his situation and leave Dunedin, with the intention of returning to
and unholy, and against which God has pronounced his severe displeasure. The young man is still affected by
they, from the same feeling of curiosity, or other motive, should be led into an intercourse which is unlawful
undoubtedly, this case was so likewise. I believe it was; and I place it on record as a warning to others, lest
the preceding pages, would lead to the conclusion that if they were the result of spirit possession, then,

Early on the following morning he again called, and informed me that he felt better; but after sitting and
conversing for a little, he again asked me to pray with him, as he felt the influence again, coming on. We knelt,
and nothing occurred to disturb. In a few minutes he said, "I feel very peculiarly. The spirits seem to enter me
by the brain, and produce a terrible numbing feeling." After a pause he said, "Would you mind putting both
your hands upon my head and praying as you did before? I think if you were to do that I should get rid of the
influence." I did as requested; but as I prayed, his struggles were so great, and he was thrown so up and down
the floor—his arms and legs being thrown about with the greatest violence, that it was only with difficulty my
hands were kept upon his head. What struck me as most remarkable was, that when I used the name of Jesus,
and prayed that the young man might even just then be delivered from the evil influence, his struggles were
most fearful, his face being distorted, his arms and legs thrown about, his body twisted and raised from the
floor, and then thrown violently down. There was brought forcibly to my mind, by what I thus saw, the Scripture
account of demoniacal possessions, and especially the one case where a father brought his son, and where,
before coming out, the spirit tare him, and caused him to foam at the mouth, and left him as dead. I was
astounded, at what I saw, and full of pity for the young man, who appeared very unhappy. Having assisted him
to a seat, and after some little conversation, he again asked if I would pray, placing my hands on his head as
a warning to others, lest
the power of these unseen beings. He success-
fully resisted the prompting to attend the seance, and on the next
morning waited upon me and communicated the above facts.

After conversing with him for some time, I suggested that we should unite together in prayer. We knelt
down, and while praying, I was disturbed by hearing a struggle, and upon looking at the young man I saw him
raised from his knees, and his body twisted as though he was struggling with some one; and after about a
minute thus spent, he was thrown violently on the floor. I felt altogether perplexed. I asked myself what possible
object the young man could have in coming and imposing upon me. I saw that he was most serious and I
questioned him as to the apparent struggle and his fall, when he assured me that he was taken hold of by a
power he seemed unable to resist and thus thrown down. Had he been an entire stranger to me, I should have
given no credence to his words, but my acquaintance with him on our voyage having led me to form a high
estimate of his character and truthfulness, I could not thus dismiss the matter. After a little while, he begged
that I would pray with him again, and the same scene was enacted, and he was again thrown with even greater
violence upon the floor. I was altogether in a maze. I keenly questioned him as to the influence, with the same
result as before. In a little time, he again requested me to pray, and with increased violence he struggled, and
was thrown upon the floor. Having some engagements to attend to, and wishing for time to think over what had
occurred, I excused myself, and he returned to his home.

This is an unvarnished account of what actually occurred. I can offer no explanation of it, other than what
might be suggested to the reader by a perusal of it. I had never seen anything like it before, and I hope not to do
so again. The young man believed himself to be possessed by evil spirits; I can offer no other explanation. He
was in good bodily health, and was apparently as sane as he had ever been. Its harmony with the cases cited in
the preceding pages, would lead to the conclusion that if they were the result of spirit possession, then,
undoubtedly, this case was so likewise. I believe it was; and I place it on record as a warning to others, lest
they, from the same feeling of curiosity, or other motive, should be led into an intercourse which is unlawful
and unholy, and against which God has pronounced his severe displeasure. The young man is still affected by
the influence, and has had to give up his situation and leave Dunedin, with the intention of returning to
England, thus hoping to be entirely free from the evil influences under which he had allowed himself to be
brought.

As further testimony to the character and doings of these beings, the following is cited. It is from Dr.
Randolph’s "Dealings with the Dead":—

"Those ill-meaning ones who live just beyond the threshold, often obtain their ends by subtly infusing a
semi-sense of volitional power into the minds of their intended victims; so that at last they come to believe
themselves to be self-acting, when in fact they are the merest shuttlecocks, banded about between the
battledores of knavish devils on one side, and devilish knaves upon the other; and, between the two, the poor wretches are nearly heart-reft and destroyed."—pp. 108, 9.

I have before quoted from Hudson Tuttle, the author of the "Arcana of Spiritualism," and other spiritualistic works. He says:

"Reader, have you ever entered the respectable saloon? Have you ever watched the stupid stare of the inebriate when the eye grew less and less laustrous, slowly closing, the muscles relaxing, and the victim of appetite sinking over on the floor in beastly drunkenness? Oh, how dense the fumes of mingled tobacco and alcohol! Oh, what misery confined in those walls! If you have witnessed such scenes, then we need describe no further. If you have not, then you had not better hear the tale of woe. Imagine to yourselves a bar room with all its sots, and their number multiplied indefinitely, while conscience-seared and bloated fiends stand behind the bar, from whence they deal out death and damnation; and the picture is complete! One has just arrived from earth. He is yet uninstructed in the mysteries and miseries of those which, like hungry lions, await him. He died while intoxicated—was frozen while lying in the gutter, and consequently is attracted toward this society. He possessed a good intellect, but it was shattered beyond repair by his debauches.

"Ye ar' a fresh one, ain't ye?" coarsely queried a sot, just then particularly communicative.

"Why, yes, I have just died, as they call it, and 'tain't so bad a change after all; only I suppose there'll be dry times here for want of something stimulant.'

"Not so dry; lots of that all the time, and jolly times too.'

"Drink! can you drink, then?"

"Yes, we just can, and feel as nice as we please. But all can't, not unless they find one on earth just like 'em. You go to earth, and mix with your chums, and when you find one whose thoughts you can read, he's your man. Form a connection with him, and when he gets to feeling good, you'll feel so too.—There, do you understand me? I always tell all fresh ones the glorious news, for how they would suffer if it wasn't for this blessed thing.'

"I'll try it, no mistake.'

"Here's a covey,' spoke an ulcerous-looking being; 'he's of our stripe. Tim, did you hear what an infernal scrape I got into last night? No, you didn't. Well, I went to our friend Fred's; he didn't want to drink when I found him, his dimes looked so extremely large. Well, I destroyed that feeling, and made him think he was dry. He drank, and drank, more than I wanted him to, until I was so drunk that I could not break my connection with him, or control his mind. He undertook to go home; fell into the snow, and came near freezing to death. I suffered awfully, ten times as much as when I died.' . . Reader, we draw the curtain over scenes like these, such as are daily occurring in this society."—"Life in the Spheres," pp. 35, 37.

Thus the poor deluded mediums are made to believe they want to drink, and their natural aversion to crime and lewdness is destroyed by the beings whose presence and influence are courted by thousands. This is spiritualism! that grand panacea for all human ills; that universal reformer of all abuses; that pure and elevating system, which, it is said, will raise and ennoble the race! May God save the race from its fell and destroying power. It is in itself a moral ulcer, full of rottenness, disease, and death.

Dr. Randolph says again:

"The bodies and souls of mediums may be, and are attacked, the remnant of will destroyed, or lulled, the moral sense stupefied, and the entire being subjugated by spectral harpies, and human ghouls, who wander on either bank of existence."—"Dealings with the Dead," pp. 107-8.

Dr. Gridley, in his "Astounding Facts," represents himself as receiving from his spirit friend Bryant, the following revelation. The Joshua spoken of was a strong, but brutish man, whom he had known in life, but who was now in the spirit-land:

"On one occasion, while Joshua was possessing the medium, it appeared evident that the love of rum in the former was by no means impaired by his transfer to the world of spirits. To test this, I asked him if he would have a glass of brandy. The inviting, even bewitching manner with which he reached forth and waved his hand, his dimes looked so extremely large. Well, I destroyed that feeling, and made him think he was dry. He drank, and drank, more than I wanted him to, until I was so drunk that I could not break my connection with him, or control his mind. He undertook to go home; fell into the snow, and came near freezing to death. I suffered awfully, ten times as much as when I died.' . . Reader, we draw the curtain over scenes like these, such as are daily occurring in this society."—"Astounding Facts," pp. 26-27.
T. L. Harris, once a Swedenborgian minister, and afterwards one of the most eminent, popular, and learned advocates of spiritualism, gives his testimony upon this matter. In a sermon on "Spiritualism," delivered in London, in the year 1868, after speaking of the various views held and taught by spirits and spiritualists, and pointing out their contradictions and absurdities, he passes on to its social characteristics, and charges, that it tramples underfoot the most sacred obligations necessary to the well-being of society. He then further continues:

"Now, as a man of honour, I pledge myself, and stand committed to the assertion, that, through mediumistic channels, all these things are taught as emanating from the spirits; and worse is taught, if possible, to those who penetrate the inner circles of the gloomy mysteries, where the old magic is born again. If I strip the veil from this horror, I have a right, as a Christian teacher, to do so. I but reiterate matters which the best informed of spiritualists are as fully acquainted with, as that media speak or tables move."—"Spiritualism Self-Condemned," pp. 29, 30.

Again he says—

"Murder, adultery, suicide, and the most revolving blasphemies, may be traced directly to the communications and puttings forth of impure spirits, both in ancient and modern times."—Ibid. p. 32.

He further says:—

"So far as I am able to judge, the majority of such instances are traceable to the habit of attending seances. I earnestly call attention to this point. The man of iron nerves may say that he feels no change of state. He may laugh down the idea of peril. With him it is but a question of time. The vitriol that eats in a day through iron wire has but to continue the process to eat through the iron bar. It is slow, this poison, but sure. I lift the alarm cry of danger. It is not safe, unless there is a Divine use and value in the act, and so unless it is in the order of Providence, either to submit to a spirit's influence or to participate in circles of spirit manifestations.

"As with a voice from the secret chambers, where the fair, the young, the virtuous, the unsuspecting, from the mere habit of attending the seance, have felt the foul contact of the larvae from perdition, I cry to all, 'Shun the seance, where the unregenerate, or giddy, or worldly, or volatile or careless medium, officiates as the middle stander and opener of the door between the natural and unseen worlds. If you do not wish to become yourselves demoniacs, shun the place and shun the occasion.' To the pure, I can hint such reasons as, if uttered, would make every ear tingle. From what heathen spiritualism, before Christ, was, we may infer what modern spiritual intercourse, pursued in an irreverent or curious or worldly spirit, is likely to become."—Ibid, pages 32-3.

This testimony and warning, coming as it does from one who has had such opportunities of knowing what spiritism is, and who at the time he uttered these words was still a Spiritualist, is of great weight. It is not intended to be affirmed in these pages that all spiritualists are infidel and immoral persons. This could not be affirmed of any system, even the most immoral in the world. There are many most excellent persons who are Spiritualists, but they were good before they became acquainted with this system, and if they remain so, it is in spite of its natural and inevitable tendency. What we can affirm, without fear of successful contradiction, is, that the genius and character of Spiritualism have attracted to it a mass of low, immoral, debased, and irreligious persons, whom it fails to elevate, and to whom it gives a greater license to sin.

When the dangers of mediumship are fairly considered, in the light of the facts presented in the preceding pages, it becomes a matter of astonishment how any should be so infatuated as to seek to be developed as mediums. The facts given prove that, in mediumship, individuality—the power of individual and independent action—is relinquished, and a spirit other than the medium's own takes possession of him and does with him as he pleases. That spirit mediumship leads to the commission of crime cannot be denied by any who are at all acquainted with the nature and fruits of the system: it is the most prolific incentive to crime that the mind can conceive. If, then, these things are so,—and I hold they have been clearly proved,—then spiritism, as a practice, deserves to be reprobated by all; and the judgment of God pronounced on those seeking this intercourse is seen to be just.

**Spiritism is Atheistical and Destructive of Moral Responsibility.**

That the tendency, and practical outcome of spiritualism, is to lead its votaries to Atheism, no person who will read the spiritist literature of the day can for a moment doubt. The fruit which the system is bearing in this respect is already so abundant that it obtrudes itself upon the attention of the observant on every hand. It may be objected that all spiritists are not Atheists, nor are all spiritist books written in defence of such a position: and we readily admit this. It is, nevertheless, true, that the general tone of spirit communications and the literature published by spiritists, is really of the character named, and that there is generally that denial of man's responsibility which naturally arises from such a position. The quotations to be presented under this heading
will fully sustain this position, and were it not for limited space, the quotations given might be largely added to.

One of the most prominent lecturers and publishers among spiritualists, Mr. Joel Tiffany, gives his opinion upon this matter. Coming as it does from the spiritualist ranks, and being a statement of the observed tendency in those who have adopted this system, it is of great weight. He says:—

"In an article entitled "Spiritualism," published in the December number of the Monthly, among other faults and errors, I charged that its influence had tended to create a kind of moral and religious atheism—that these modern developments had not awakened religious aspirations in the minds of those who had been the subjects of them. To this charge many took exceptions as being too severe. I have carefully investigated its truth since that time, and find the charge to be just. My experience has been, go among spiritualists where you will, and, as a general thing, they have no faith in a living, conscious, intelligent Deity; possessed of love, volition, affection, &c., as an object of religious aspiration and worship. They feel no demand for worship themselves, and they denounce and ridicule its exercise in others. On an examination both of their theoretical and practical faith in God, you will find that it amounts to nothing but an indefinite and incoherent pantheism."

The writer of a leading article in Medium and Daybreak, for Nov. 15, 1872, published in England, presents the following question as having been asked of him:—

"How do you spiritualists explain yourselves as getting rid of theology when you retain the ideas of God and immortality?" to which he gives answer that "By 'God' we mean cause, and by 'immortality' we mean 'purpose.'" A little further on in the same article the writer says, the spiritualist, "being conscious of his ignorance, he patiently observes; and having gathered a few facts, reasons upon them and forms a basis entirely independent of the dogmatic conclusions of negationists on the one hand, or religionists on the other; forming by degrees, as the light shines upon him, relatively imperfect though they may be, definite ideas of Cause, Life, and Destiny—God, Man, and Immortality."

Thus, 'God' is simply 'cause,' 'man' is 'life,' and 'immortality' is 'destiny.' In the same paper, for August 30th, 1872, a spirit, speaking through a Mr. J. L. Morse, and stating the "religion of the spirits," says:—

"It rests on one fundamental conception and profound conviction, viz., that of the reality of God. Yet we would substitute the term Nature for God, inasmuch as the latter is popularly designative of the personal deities of creedal theologies. God is personal and therefore limited; Nature is impersonal and infinite. This fact then—the reality of Nature—is the foundation of our religion. It is the one grand fact that comprehends all others. It is The Cause, unbounded by space or time, existing everywhere—in the tiniest dewdrop and the largest sun."

In the "Educator," a book of 680 octavo pages, the communications in which are said to come from the spirits of some of the most noted personages who have ever lived—such as John Quincy Adams, Robert Rantoul, Noah Webster, Luther, Socrates, Aristotle, &c., the following are found:—

"God is man, and man is God. . . . Tell us of God. . . they might as well say, tell us of ourselves. The being called God exists, organically, in the form of the being called man." Another spirit says:—"Every one of you are Gods manifest in the flesh. The divine existence is one grand universal man. Man is God's embodiment—his highest, divinest, outer elaboration. God, then, is man, and man is God."—p. 526.

In the quotations from Medium and Daybreak, God was defined as "Cause," and "Nature;" but in those just given, God is defined to be "universal man." This certainly, utterly annihilates—in theory—a Deity; it saps at the very foundation of human and moral responsibility; because, if man is God and God is man, man is responsible only to himself—is in reality, irresponsible; hence, as already affirmed, spiritualism destroys the idea of a deity, and is, consequently, Atheism; and at the same time, and by the same process, overthrows all possibility of moral responsibility. The following, from another spirit, bears out this conclusion:—

"When man became a living soul, he became a God. All living souls are Gods. They die not. So, living soul, rejoice in thy wisdom. . . be a King, a God, a Jehovah. You are all Gods, every one of you. Look within yourself, and behold yourself a God, responsible for every act. Read the inscription there, and thou shalt learn that thou art a God in thyself; and Thine Own Judge."

A spirit taking the name of Wm. H. Miller, says:—

"God is a spirit; man is a spirit; then the two are one. All men who shall outlive all grossness—who shall have passed beyond all that is mundane and material—go to make up the Godhead, the superior portion of the intellectual world; and the many millions who inhabit the wisdom spheres, may be recognised as the one God." Another says:—"There is no God anywhere to forgive sin. There is no such thing as forgiveness of sin"—Quoted from "Spiritism Unveiled," pp. 49, 50.

The following has been quoted before, but as it bears so directly upon the present point, it is again given. It is quoted from the "Age of Freedom," published in Ohio:—

"What a horrible phantom, what a soul crushing superstition is this idea of an overruling, omnipresent, all powerful God. . . Belief in a God is degrading, whatever the character ascribed to him. Where is your God? I can stand up and look him in the face, and affirm, that I have a right to 'life, liberty, and happiness,' whether it
is his pleasure that I shall enjoy them or not. It is perfectly plain, then, that his Godhead, or my manhood must succumb! If I can beat him even at one point, he is no God. But, if I can 'make a case' once, I can a thousand times, in the case of every single right; and if I maintain my manhood in spite of him, so may every other human being; and so the God is Nowhere—is utterly routed."

The _Spiritual Telegraph_ gives a report of a "Spiritual Convention," held for the purpose of enquiring into "The Cause and Cure of Evil." Dr. R. T. Hallock, when speaking of the sentiments of another, is reported to have said:—

"Now we may cheerfully sympathise with his mirthful explosion of the popular Divinity; no merciful man will object even to his expunging from his vocabulary the three hateful little letters (G-o-d) which express it."—"Spiritualism Unveiled," p. 51.

Thus, their intense hatred of the idea of God, and moral responsibility, is turned upon the very letters which compose His name. A spirit calling himself Thomas Rice, when speaking of some friends, says:—

"I want to tell those friends that there is no God. I know there is no such gentleman."—Ibid.

In the "Spiritual Telegraph" for January 24, 1857, a spirit calling himself Orlando Jenks says:—

"If I was coming back to preach, I should say, 'Don't believe in God.' The idea of a God of illimitable capacity is so incomprehensible that, in our judgment, it borders on the absurd. God, in the abstract, is a nonentity, an ideality of man's brain."

These quotations all have the virtue of plainness; there can be no difficulty as to the meaning intended to be conveyed—God is but an ideality of the human brain. Surely this is atheism, pure and simple!

Another spirit, speaking in the "Educator," says:—

"We must regard him (God) as a central principle, but not as a being. ... A principle existing in matter, in all conditions, and in all relations, a part of everything. ... The Divine is, of necessity ... a vast ocean of magnetism."—page 526.

God is defined as "cause," then as "man." Here he is defined as a "principle," "an ocean of magnetism." I leave to the admirers of this so-called philosophy the task of harmonising these various definitions. That the definition of the Deity as an "Ocean of Magnetism" is held by more than the spirit above quoted may be gathered from the title of one of Mrs. Hardinge-Britten's lectures—"Magnetism, the Soul of the Universe." If "magnetism" is the "soul" of the universe, it is easy to be seen that the intention is to affirm that magnetism is the Deity of the universe; and thus the judgment of Mrs. Britten is accordant with that of this spirit—"That the Divine . . . is a vast ocean of magnetism." That the above is Mrs. Britten's teaching may easily be seen by consulting page 331 of her book, "American Modern Spiritualism." On the opposite page she has given a representation of the spheres, said to have been drawn by a spirit; and in describing them she makes use of the following among other statements:—

"The region called the Star of Light and Beauty is typically described as 'beneath the throne of God.' It signifies the vast celestial realms of unknown and perhaps illimitable extent, filled with the subtler fluid, 'the impenetrable,' the inconceivable, the source, fountain, and centre of all light, heat, life, force, gravitation and attraction; in a word, the central sun of being, the profound mystery, Which is Summed up in the Grand Solvent Name of God."

Thus, then, Mrs. Britten's Deity is a "SUBTLER FLUID"; we can easily understand how this can be expanded into "a vast ocean of magnetism," and thus, by one step, we reach an explanation of the meaning of the title of her lecture, which, with a slight legitimate change, would read, "MAGNETISM—A SUBTLE FLUID—THE DEITY OF THE UNIVERSE"!!

But that this denial of a Deity, personal and intelligent, is the prevailing characteristic of spiritism may be further illustrated. In the work by Putnam, compiled from the leading American spiritualistic paper, "The Banner of Light," are communications purporting to come from spirits bearing the most illustrious names, such as the following:—Rev. Hosea Ballou. Rabbi Joshua Beri, Rev. Dr. W. E. Channing, Cardinal Cheverus, Sir Humphrey Davy, Rev. Lorenzo Dow, Bishop Fenwick, Bishop Fitz-patrick, Prof. Robert Hare, Rabbi Joseph Lowenthal, Rev. Theodore Parker, &c., &c. A spirit, taking the name of Dr. Channing, says:—

"We do not believe in a God outside and apart from Nature. We believe in a God that is in humanity. We believe in a God that makes all things divine. We believe in a God that hallows the flowers as he hallows our souls."—p. 58. Again—"I have no belief in a personal God, except as I believe in God as being personified through every conceivable form. I believe God is a power permeating all mind and all matter, and for ever and for ever changing all according to his own divine life."—p. 112.

"Human laws pre-suppose the existence of a law maker, but it is not so with divine laws. To my mind, the law of life is the God of life. ... Wherever you see it, under whatever conditions it manifests, it is God. The law operating in soils, in minerals, in the atmosphere, in the water, in the skies, everywhere, is God. There is no power outside of this law that we can recognise as God."—page 145.

"What is God essentially? Everything. Essentially you are God, I am God—the flowers, the grass, the
pebbles, the stars, the moon, the sun, everything is God. ... I cannot understand God as existing outside of Nature."—pp. 160, 161. "Do you recognise him (God) as distinct and separate from human beings? No, certainly not. I recognise him as one with them."—p. 172. "I do not believe in a God apart from his works. Such a God would be so far beyond my comprehension that I could not worship him."—p. 189.

"I do not believe in a God apart from his works. I do not believe in a God outside of Nature; but I believe in one that is in and around us, and in all with which we come in contact. To me this is God. You may call it Jehovah, or Brahma, or by any name you please, but it is the great, living spirit that permeates all things and controls all."—p. 220.

"All spiritualists, I believe, consider God to be an infinite principle, pervading all forms, occupying all space. I believe this. I have seen nothing during my life in the spirit-world to cause me to believe otherwise. ... I can come to no other conclusion than that God is a principle pervading all forms, and occupying all space."—p. 256.

"Is there any self-conscious intelligence in the universe except the organised self-conscious intelligence of the human spirit? No, I know of none; consequently it is right for me to answer as I do"—p. 395.

In these quotations, which are culled out of one of the standard works of spiritualism, "Flashes from the Spirit-Land," we have pure pantheism—"Nature is the only God"—"God is a principle permeating all forms, and manifesting itself through them all." And what is pantheism, but atheism under another name? Atheism, is really, the denial of a personal, self-conscious, and intelligent, all-pervading spirit, by whom all things have been called into being. The spirits, whose words are quoted above, do deny this; hence, we say their doctrine is atheism. They utterly deny the existence of any personal, self-conscious being except man, and those intelligences whom they affirm were once in human form. Again, we see the position presented, that as there is no self-conscious deity but man, man is only accountable to himself; hence, spiritism is again, not only shown to be atheism, but that it does clearly nullify all moral responsibility to a superior power.

Another witness whom I now call to testify on this matter is Judge Edmonds, who, up to the period of his death, was one of the most prominent and laborious advocates of spiritism. In his book, "Spiritualism," a spirit is represented as communicating the following through Dr. Dexter:—

"We have taught you that God is a principle; that He (the principle!) has established laws for the government of his creatures; that man, under these laws, becomes either good or evil in this as well as the other world."—p. 275. Again:—"You have been taught that God is a principle—that He [the principle] is the source of all goodness, love, and truth, and that in Him [the principle] are the attributes which, properly directed by His [the principle's] wisdom, impel man to progress toward the goodness, and truth, and love which He [the principle] exhibits through His works."—p. 343.

I have inserted the word "principle" in brackets, so that the reader may see the utter absurdity of calling God "a principle," and then applying to Him language which can only apply to a self-existent, self-conscious, and all-pervading intelligence, who rules over all. The folly of those who deny the existence of an omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient being, seems to pass all bounds; inasmuch as it binds them to the fact of their own gross inconsistency in using language of a "principle," a "subtler fluid," or an "ocean of magnetism," which can only apply to a being such as the Bible represents to men.

A. J. Davis' writings contain many intimations of a similar character to those given above. On page 27 of "Penetralia," he speaks of "Father-God and Mother-Nature,"—the Father-God being defined as "all persons that were ever developed on any star in the firmament or on the earth beneath." On page 31, he says:—"Human souls are detached individualised personifications of the Deific Nature and Essence; and the imperfection or destruction of a single detachment would, like the loss of a wheel from a perfect watch, impair the goodness and derange the infinite precision of the universal mechanism." This is but a round about way of saying that God is "universal man," and that if one man could be lost, then the perfection of the divine existence would be impaired. What absurdity! What egotistical worship of self! Again:—

"Do you mean to teach that God is distinct from Nature? No; Mother-Nature is not essentially different from Father-God. . . . . There is not one thing which is body and another which is spirit; neither is there one thing which is Nature, and another which is God. . . . . . . . Nature is the Wife of the Divine Principle, and the Divine Principle is the Husband of Nature."—"Penetralia," pp. 254-255.

"There is nothing outside of, or superior to, that stupendous organisation of matter and mind which I am impressed to term Nature."—"Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse," p. 39.

The above are full and abundant, as showing that Spiritism is Atheistical, and destructive of moral responsibility. The following will more fully bring out the fact of the denial of moral responsibility. Moses Hull, a distinguished lecturer, writer, and editor, says:—

"While writing upon the subject of respectability and the approbation of the world, permit me to say I seek the approbation of no one in heaven or earth but Moses Hull. To myself I am responsible and must render an account; so I must be on the square with myself."—"Universe," of July 2, 1869.
In the "Spiritual Rostrum," Mr. Jamieson says:—
"After all, every man makes his own God and in his own image. God never made anybody. Brother Brown, obey the God within your own soul, and all will be well."—p. 144.

Henry C. Wright, in his book "Errors of the Bible," says:—
"Truly every man must give an account to God for all his deeds; but how? Solely by giving an account to his own nature—to himself."—p. 24.
"I have no God besides doing right. God attains to consciousness only in man."—"Banner of Light," Sept. 19, 1863.

"Heed not the teachers who tell thee to deny thyself. Thou art thy own law, thy own Bible, thy own model."—"Be Thyself," by Wm. Denton, p. 32.

How truly do these citations, coupled with those given under the head of "Spiritism destructive of all law, human and divine," show the repudiation of all responsibility to any higher power than man's own perverse heart. What a door of evil, and corruption, and crime, do these principles open for the wicked and lawless of earth! How fearful would be the condition of society were such principles to have full sway for only one brief year. How can men be so blind as not to see that, did their principles universally prevail, all honor would be banished from the world, all safety for society would be at an end, and man would become like the untamed beasts, continuously preying upon himself. The quotations given clearly establish our affirmation—that spiritism is atheistical and utterly destructive of the sense of moral responsibility.

It is the Enemy of Marriage; and of Social and Domestic Happiness.

A recent writer says:—
"There is no one particular wherein spiritualism is proving itself a curse to the age and to the race more than in this. 'Free-love' is a common phrase with a certain class of 'Reformers,' who wish to abolish not only the Bible, but all its institutions. Some spiritists deny being Free Lovers; but this denial cannot screen the system from the charge of upholding the abomination; for (1.) We have never known a Free Lover who was not a Spiritualist, and if Spiritualism and Free Lovism are not identical, they at least have a wonderful 'affinity' for each other! (2.) It is well known that a large proportion of spiritualists are Free Lovers, both theoretically and practically; and they go, not only unrebuked, but endorsed as spiritualist laborers in lecturing and writing. It avails nothing for an individual to deny the charge as applying to himself, as long as he associates and fraternizes with, and upholds, those who are openly committed to it. He gives it all the aid of his influence and association, which is sometimes much stronger than that of practice."—"Nature and tendency of Modern Spiritualism," p. 137.

The writer of the foregoing is an American; he has had abundant opportunities of seeing and learning of the effects of this terrible system in its social aspects. In England and her colonies, the true fruits of spiritism have not yet fully developed themselves. I freely confess that there are many advocates of spiritism who, I believe, would start back with horror at the bare idea that they would ever adopt the views now under consideration. They are like Hazael, who, when told by the weeping prophet of the horrible things he would do to the Israelites when he became king of Syria, said, "But what! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" and yet, when he became king, he did the very things which previously he considered would bring him to the very level of a dog. In like manner, judging by the voluminous testimony upon the matter as to the effects of this system upon its mediums, there is no person who indulges in this intercourse who is free from this terrible danger of retrogression. Dr. Talmage, living in the midst of its votaries and having abundant opportunity of seeing its terrible effects, says:—

"I indict spiritualism also, because it is a social and marital curse. The worst deeds of licentiousness, and the worst orgies of obscenity, have been enacted under its patronage. The story is too vile for me to tell. I will not pollute my tongue nor your ears with the recital. Sometimes the civil law has been evoked to stop the outrage. Families innumerable have been broken up by it. It has pushed off hundreds of voting women into a life of profitygy. It talks about 'elective affinities,' and 'affinital relation,' and 'spiritual matches,' and adopts the whole vocabulary of free-lovism. In one of its public journals, it declares 'marriage is the monster curse of civilization.' It is a source of debauchery and intemperance. If spiritualism could have its full swing it would turn this world into a pandemonium of carnality. It is an unclean, adulterous, damnable religion, and the sooner it drops into the hell from which it rose, the better both for earth and heaven. For the sake of man's honour and woman's purity I say let the last vestige of it perish for ever. I wish I could gather up all the raps it has ever heard from spirits blest or damned, and gather them all on its own head in one thundering rap of annihilation."—Sermon, "The Religion of Ghosts."

This language, though strong, is not one whit too forcible to describe the fruits of this system, where they
have had time to develop. As a system, I believe it to be begotten of hell; to be the devil's grand, and probably, final effort, to overturn the God-given, and purifying, but self-denying religion of Jesus. Spiritism deifies man, overturns human law as well as Divine, makes man his own sole judge in regard to the varied actions of his life, denying any accountability to any higher power, and thus opens the doors to the gratification of all the lower propensities of his nature. That what has been said is in harmony with the facts in the case, the following testimonies will fully prove. The following statement is from Dr. Potter, an earnest advocate of spiritism, but one who sought to correct its abuses, not seeing that they were its natural outgrowth. He says:—

"So strong has been the Free Love tendency, and so numerous and influential, media, speakers, and spiritualists, of Free Love proclivities and practice, that we do not know of a single spiritualist paper that has paid expenses, that has not had their assistance and promulgated their doctrines.

"One of the oldest if not the most influential paper has several noted Free Lovers and libertines as special and honoured correspondents.

"Parting husbands and wives is one of the notorious tendencies of spiritualism. The oldest and most influential teacher of spiritualism has had two wives, each of whom he encouraged to get divorced before he married them. When one of the most eloquent trance-speakers left her husband, he came out and stated that he knew sixty cases of media leaving companions. We heard one of the most popular imprestional speakers say to a large audience that she was compelled by spirits to seduce from a husband with whom she was living very happily. We lately heard a very intellectual, eloquent, and popular normal speaker say, in an eloquent address to a large convention of spiritualists, that 'he would to God that it had parted twenty where it had parted one.' In short, where-ever we go, we find this tendency in spiritualism."—"Spiritualism as it is," pp. 10, 11.

"After years of careful investigation, we are compelled, much against our inclinations, to admit that more than one half of our travelling media, speakers, and prominent spiritualists, are guilty of immoral and licentious practices that have justly provoked the abhorrence of all right thinking people."—Ibid. p. 20.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge-Britten, in a lecture delivered by her in Boston, in 1873, and reported in the Melbourne "Harbinger of Light," for October of that year, said:—

"I wish now to speak of that popular doctrine which is identifying itself with spiritualism over the length and breadth of the land, which proposes to reform all the evils of our social system by the abrogation of the marriage tie. It has been too publicly bruited, too universally admitted that the spiritualists are the only sect, and the only class of persons who largely and openly maintain this doctrine, for us to shrink or evade the responsibility of speaking of it. . . . I have nothing to say against those who say that the social evils can be eradicated by the abrogation of the marriage tie; but what I have asked of them, what I have pleaded for, and that for which I protested against them to high Heaven is, that they should not affirm that spiritualism, and their doctrine, are one and the same thing. . . . I cannot consent to have my holy religion identified with this wild and insane attempt at reform, which I consider to be the darkest blot that has ever rested upon the hemisphere of social life. I cannot; I will not."

This protest against the effort to destroy the marriage tie, does Mrs. Britten credit; but it is nevertheless a most damning admission against spiritualism. She calls this effort against marriage "the darkest blot that has ever rested upon the hemisphere of social life;" she admits that it is a "popular doctrine" among spiritualists, and that in America, it had identified itself with spiritualism "over the length and breadth of the land." But not only so; she affirms, what is doubtless true, "that the spiritualists are the only sect, and the only class of persons who largely and openly maintain this doctrine." If this statement had been made by an opponent of spiritualism, it would have been denounced as a gross misrepresentation, but as it comes from a talented and most indefatigable advocate of the cause, its absolute truth may be relied upon.

As agreeing with the above testimony of Mrs. Britten, I here present the following address from Wm. B. Potter, M.D., a medium, and an active, ardent spiritualist of nineteen years experience, and previously quoted from. It shows, in conjunction with the above testimony from Mrs. Britten, that though there are a few spiritualists who do not fully endorse the wickedness of the system so widely practised, yet they are powerless to influence the majority, and the leaders of the party.

"To the Spiritualists of America in National Convention Assembled, at Cleveland, Sept. 3 to 6th, 1867. Again we appeal to the orderly and virtuous portion of your body, in the name of God and humanity, those dear ones gone before, and the cause we do so dearly love, to do something to purify and elevate Spiritualism. How long, oh! how long will you allow hypocrites, libertines, and free-lovers to hold leading and honourable positions as mediums, speakers, writers, and officers, to the deadly injury and burning shame of pure and 'Orderly Spiritualism.' Why will you accord full fellowship and honourable position to notorious and persistent libertines? Will you quietly hold your peace, while artful free-lovers perambulate the country, using their own psychological powers and every possible device which their ingenuity, stimulated by hellish passions, and aided by 'low spirits,' can invent to break up families, seduce the young and innocent, and drag them down to the lowest forms of animalism? . . . While abortionists abound in your ranks; while virtuous women are
constantly liable to be insulted by spiritualists; while thousands of good mediums are ashamed to go to circles, meetings, and conventions; while multitudes of believers stand aloof, refusing to be identified with the folly and fraud, looseness and licentiousness, so common in spiritualism, can you, will you, dare you, in the sight of heaven, and in spite of the tears and sighs of deserted wives, seduced maidens, and worse than orphan children, keep silent and allow hypocritical imposters, libertines, and free-lovers to stifle all discussion of these monstrous evils; even refusing to have read in your conventions, or published in your papers, a proposition to dis-fellowship the persistently immoral and licentious?

"Are you cowards or hypocrites, that in spite of your constant boasting of free speech and a free press, canting, fair-spoken, but corrupt, and licentious spiritualists are allowed to rule your conventions and the spiritual press, so as to exclude every word in favor of a rule to disfellowship the persistently vicious; and this, too, when a large proportion, if not a majority of believers, are in favor of such a rule."—"Spiritualism Condemned," pp. 30, 31.

The Religio-Philosophical Journal for Feb. 20, 1869, says:—"IN LICENTIOUSNESS WE FIND AN OUTCROPPING OF THE GOD-ELEMENT IN MAN." Deity is thus changed into a libertine.

In "Holy Truth," by H. J. Browne, we have the following statements:—

"Untold numbers there are, victims of that ceremonial law designated marriage, which pompously unites man and wife 'until death doth part them,' who have lifted their voices against that principle which binds flesh to flesh, but which never could bind mind to mind, which never could cement soul to soul, which could never weld the chain of affinity and true love, whose links none can sever."—p. 171.

"Let us examine how we can alter this state of things, or, at any rate, our ideas of altering it. When once you have thoroughly realised a knowledge of the laws which govern your being, when you become capable of controlling those manifold passions which are too apt to agitate you—when these can be restrained by the inherent force of the mind—then they need no law, you need no ritual to bind two hearts in one, for an all powerful attraction will suffice to draw them together, and indelibly cement that union which harmony is destined to perpetuate beyond the shades of death."—p. 172.

"Can they not conceive a time arriving in the history of the world, when conjugal felicity will obtain thereon regardless of the futile trammels of a ceremonious ritual, without being bound by any fixed rules, other than those of affinity and love?"—pp. 173, 174.

"The sooner you cultivate and respect these laws of affinity and love, and repeal the absurd customs of your day, the better will it be for the world in which you are sojourning."—p. 175.

The writer, who sends forth these sentiments, I know personally, and believe him to be an upright and honorable man; but the principles here enunciated, and it is these we have just now to do with, would destroy the very foundations of social life and happiness. To repeal what are called our "absurd customs" as to marriage, and leave every one to do just as they pleased, being guided simply by what is here called "affinity and love," would be to reduce man to the level of the beast of the field; for if the language means anything at all, it means that when the "affinity and love" have passed away—in other words, when a greater attraction presents itself, there shall be perfect liberty to lay aside the first and follow the second, and so on ad libitum. That this is not an exaggeration the following quotation, from a paper called the Kingdom of Heaven, will clearly show. In the number for June, 1865, in a platform of principles adopted at Huntsville, Madison Co., Indiana, is a resolution which was passed, declaring it to be a fundamental principle that each man and woman had a perfect right to do just whatever they pleased, and were bound by no law but their own will. What the object of the resolution was, the following remark by the editor of the paper will show:—

"We are neither a Shaker nor a Mormon; nor are we to be bound by the popular marriage laws and customs of society as are now organised; but we would that man and woman should mate only by nature's law of attraction, with as little outward law and ceremony as the little birds in the groves.

The filthy and demoralising tendency of spirit teachings is here fully apparent. Human beings "should mate with as little law and ceremony as do the little birds in the groves!" The editor of the World's Crisis, copying this, makes the following very truthful comment:—

"Persons holding such principles are the ones who claim that a religion based on the Bible is 'demoralising,' This is very much like a drunkard and rum-seller, who should speak of the demoralising effects of temperance societies, because he had less company and patronage; or a seducer, who should call virtue demoralising because it deprived him of his victims."

In a work called "Light from the Spirit-World," p. 186, a writer, in speaking of marriages which are not "soul genial," says:—

"They are without the union which constitutes real marriage in the sight of God [let the reader remember that this 'God' is simply man], and the connections formed upon such conditions are no better than those by a more wretched name. ... It has no sanction in nature—its binding force is repudiated by the wisdom of eternity.

In his work, "Love and Marriage," p. 11, Moses Hull says:—Where the spirits are truly united there is mar-
riage—nowhere else." The probabilities in favour of obtaining this "union of spirits," "soul-union," &c., which alone is worthy of being designated by the term marriage, may be gathered from the following, which is from the pen of W. F. Jamieson, editor of the Spiritual Rostrum. In the October number of Vol. I., he says:—

"Moses Hull, in "A few thoughts on Love and Marriage," says:—There is a remedy against false marriage. Educate yourselves; know yourselves and what you want, then know the person you make your companion. 'Ah! there's the rub. Here is a case, a sample of many, a young man, full of promise, marries a blooming miss. She is all the world to him. They live twenty years together happily, each convinced that the other is the true soul-mate. They rear a family of noble sons and charming daughters. Suddenly there comes into view a mere cloud-speck athwart their matrimonial sky, in the form of some peculiarity of disposition, which had lain dormant all those years. The horizon is soon overcast, the light of love is shut out, the waters of hate and bitterness take the place of the sunshine of love; all is enveloped in darkness; and two once-loving souls, 'with but a single thought,' become estranged, separate, and nothing is left but the smouldering embers of a once happy marriage. This is not an overdrawn picture; it is taken from real life. Are there, then, no true soul-unions that shall survive the ravages of time and circumstances? We believe there are, but do not think that our author or any one else has discovered a rule, or a series of rules, by which man or woman can determine with mathematical certainty, what one among a hundred thousand million is the soul's true mate. Approximation to marriage does not constitute marriage."

Thus, the chances of a true soul-marriage are as one in a hundred thousand millions, and without this there is no marriage! As spiritualists declare that, where there is no soul-marriage, no rites, ceremonies, or laws can be binding, the inference as to the condition of things sought to be established can easily be drawn.

Mr. T. L. Harris, an intelligent Swedenborgian minister, who became a spiritualist and lectured in London, said, as reported in the "London Advertiser":—

"The marriage vow imposes no obligations, in the view of Spiritualists. Husbands, who had for years been so devotedly attached to their wives that they have said that nothing in the world but death itself could part them, have abandoned their wives and formed criminal connections with other females, because the spirits have told them that there was a greater spiritual affinity between these husbands and certain other women than between them and their lawful wives. Wives, too, the most devoted and loving and true to their husbands that had ever contracted the marriage obligation had left their husbands and children and lived in open immorality with other men, because the spirits had told them that they ought to do so, on the ground of there being a greater spiritual sympathy between them and these men than between them and their husbands."—Quoted from "Spiritualism Unveiled," p. 30.

At a "Spiritualist Convention" in Rutland, Vermont held in June, 1858, the following resolution was presented and defended:—

"Resolved, That the only true and natural marriage is an exclusive conjugal love between one man and one woman, and the only true home is the isolated home based on this love."

Love is here represented as equivalent to marriage. When persons love each other they are married—"naturally married," and, as a matter of course, when they cease to love, the marriage relation ceases—they become at once divorced. As carrying out this idea, at a convention held in Ravenna, Ohio, July 4th and 5th, 1858, a Mrs. Lewis said:—

"To confine her love to one man was an abridgment of her rights. Although she had one husband in Cleveland, she considered herself married to the whole human race. All men were her husbands, and she had an nndying love for them. What business is it to the world whether one man is the father of my children, or ten are? I have a right to say who shall be the father of my offspring."

Of a similar character is the statement of Mrs. Julia Branch, of New York, as reported in the "Banner of Light." In defending the resolution previously quoted as proposed in the convention at Rutland, she used the following words:—

"I am aware that I have chosen almost a forbidden subject; forbidden from the fact that any one who can or dare look the marriage question in the face, candidly and openly denouncing the institution as the sole cause of woman's degradation and misery, are objects of suspicion, of scorn, and opprobrious epithets.

"The slavery and degradation of woman proceeds from the institution of marriage; by the marriage contract she loses the control of her name, her person, her property, her labor, her affection, her children, her freedom. Mrs. Gage, Mrs. Rose, and others, go back to the mother's influence. I go back further and say that it is the marriage institution that is at fault: it is the binding marriage ceremony which keeps woman degraded in mental blight—negro slavery. She must demand her freedom; her right to receive the equal wages of man in payment for her labor; her right to have children when she will and by whom."

In the "Universe" for July 3, 1869, Francis Barry says:—

"Twenty-three years ago, I pronounced popular marriage a system of legalized adultery and prostitution. Since then I have done what little I could to oppose and hold up to public contempt the corruption and tyranny
of the accursed system. And here and now, I pledge him (Kent) and all true lovers of freedom, that henceforth and till the heaven accursed, man-destroying, woman-torturing child-murdering system of marriage shall be consigned to its eternal grave, I will be in the thickest of the fight."

No ambiguous language this. War against marriage, eternal war, is declared! T. S. Harris says, in the "New York Tribune":—

"The marriage vow imposes no obligation in the view of the spiritualists. . . Many of them go so far as to claim this licentiousness for the spirit world." Again he says:—"Spirits declare there is no marriage as a natural law, but that polygamy or bigamy is as orderly as the monogamic tie. A new attraction becomes the lawful husband or the lawful wife."—"Spiritualism condemned," p. 29.

In his debate with Isaac Irrett, Joel Tiffany, on page 139, says:—

"Lusts, however, are desires after gratification; they have their origin in the spirit, and use the body as a means of gratification. Lust does not leave the spirit when the spirit leaves the body and goes into the spirit world. Has it left behind the character it had here? No, it takes it with it, and seeks as earnestly for its gratification. If there is any principle of philosophy by which it can make use of another's body for the purpose of securing its gratification, it will do so."

At a lecture delivered in Utica, New York, John M. Spear delivered himself of the following anathema:—

"Cursed be the marriage institution; cursed be the relation of husband and wife; cursed be all who would sustain legal marriage! What if there are a few hearts broken? They only go to build up a great principle, and all great truths have their martyrs."

Yes, what matters it to those lustful libertines that there are broken hearts, and ruined families, and rivers of burning tears, if these stand in the way of the gratification of the hellish passions of these vile reptiles!

In a small work on "Spiritualism Unveiled," by Miles Grant, is the following:—

"The Detroit Free Press gives an account of a young married lady of that city, who, through the influence of a female relative, acting under the inspiration of the 'harmonial philosophy,' was induced to abandon her husband and go with her to the free love community, Berlin Heights, Ohio. Her husband did not ascertain for several weeks whither she had fled. When he learned where she had gone, he was greatly distressed; but went at once for her and found her perfectly willing to go home. She had seen quite enough of free love."

"When there, she found the marvellous 'love cure' but another name for all that is degrading and loathsome to a virtuous and high-minded woman. Low-bred familiarities with vulgar, fanatical men; companionship with women who deemed themselves elevated above humanity in becoming the victims of their own and their companions' lusts; and a close familiarity with a brutish, criminal enjoyment, which was the highest sphere aimed at in this delectable community, were what she was obliged to submit to."

Mrs. Annie Hunter, whose husband founded the institution at Berlin Heights, writes from Jefferson, Ashtabula County, Ohio, June 5, 1858, as follows:—

"Mr. Editor,—I saw an article in the Ashtabula Telegraph, a few days since, taken from your paper, giving an account of the rescue of a young and lovely woman by her husband from the den of infamy at Berlin I do not know the name of this lady or her husband; but my earnest prayer to God is, that she may never be led into such a temptation again, or be brought to know the depths of sorrow and degradation which that same infamous creed has brought upon me Let her thank a kind Providence that she is restored to the arms of a loving and kind-hearted husband, and is not this moment, as I am, a deserted and heart-stricken wife and mother, dependent upon my daily labor for the pittance which supports my little ones, and keeps starvation from our door."

"My husband was the founder of the Berlin Free-love Institution He has been a believer in that free-love doctrine for about three years. A year ago, or more, he left home, ostensibly upon business; but he only roamed around in search of free-love companions; having found a small number of which, he took them to Berlin and founded the infamous den of lust which now exists there. He left me with three little children to provide for, and nothing to do it with but my hands. I have stood for four days in the week over the wash-tub, laboring until my strength has given way entirely, for the sake of a little money with which to feed my children."

A lecture was delivered in the Clinton Hall, New York, by Mrs. Cora Scott (late the wife of Dr. Hatch) under spirit influence. At the close of her lecture a discussion arose, and while an elderly man was speaking a young man interrupted him. The latter part of the scene was thus given in a Boston paper. The young man said:—

"I have come here to shame that old man. He is my father. He left his wife and children, and is now living with Cora Hatch, in East Broadway."

"A Voice.—Well, go home, and do not come here to settle your private troubles.'"

"Young Man.—You may think I am doing wrong; but if you knew all the facts of the case you would think I am doing right.'"

"Several Voices.—'Go on. Let us hear the story. Take the stand,' &c.
"Young Man.—'I have done everything to get that man to do right by his family, but I have not been able to do so. I am his son, and am here to shame him in public. His name is William McKinley, and he keeps a store at the corner of Chatham and Pearl streets. He has beaten my mother and treated her most shamefully, and he has abandoned her to live with Cora Hatch.'—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism," p. 142.

Such facts are not regarded as at all interfering with her position as an acceptable medium and trance-lecturer, and her "Angelical Ministrations," as they have been called, are just as acceptable as ever.

In a work by Dr. Gridley, called "Astounding Facts from the Spirit World," are some of the most "astounding," as well as the most disgusting statements upon this matter, and as to the habits of spirits, that it is possible to conceive. The recording of any of them in these pages would be to be guilty of pollution, as they are unfit to be read by the modest and virtuous.

In a book by Dr. A. B. Child, who is one of the most popular spiritualist authors, occurs the following:—

"The present laws of marriage, that now give birth to regrets and sorrows unnumbered, to prostitution, with its long train of curses and agonies, will be abandoned for a holier, purer, diviner revelation, that will ere long be given to the people."—"Christ and the People," p. 27.

"A religion more spiritual will be discovered and acknowledged. ... a religion without written laws, without commandments, without creeds—a religion too sacred to be spoken, too pure to be defiled, too generous to be judged, resting upon no uncer-tain outside standard of rectitude, upon no dogma of another, no purity of earthly, no glory of earthly perfection,—a religion that every soul possesses by natural endowment, not one more than another. ... This religion is simply desire. ... With every one, desire is spontaneous and sincere, pure and holy! no matter what the desire is, whether it be called good or bad, it is the natural, God-given religion of the soul."—Ibid. pp. 28, 29.

The moral and social anarchy which would ensue upon the general adoption of spiritualism as a religion and theory of life, may be judged of by the following, from the same work:—

"Ere long, man will come to see that all sin is for his spiritual good. ... To see that holiness lays up treasures on earth. ... Sin destroys earthly treasures, and causes them to be laid up in heaven."—pp. 32, 33. "There is no criminal act that is not an experience of usefulness. The tracks of vice and of crime are only the tracks of human progress. ... There has been no deed in the catalogue of crime, that has not been a valuable experience to the inner being of the man who committed it."—p. 137. "Man has yet to learn and yet to admit that all sins which are committed are innocent, for all are in the inevitable rulings of God."—Ibid. p. 175.


In a previous quotation, we have shown that among spiritualists no action is worthy of either praise or blame; that the worst acts of the Spanish Inquisitor were equally worthy of commendation as were those of Penn, or Howard, or any other of the benevolent or philanthropical of earth. A. J. Davis has been especially cited upon this point, and it was seen that he considered that to blame any one for any act, however reprehensible the act might be considered by men, was "a sort of Atheism" of which he declared he would not be guilty. John M. Spear, a noted medium, an inditer of many popular spirit books, and a practical spiritualist, became the father of an illegitimate child. In harmony with the above principles, he found abundance of defenders. A Mr. Stearling published two articles in the "Spiritual Telegraph," in his vindication, and that of his affinity, Miss H. The following is an extract from this defence:—

"Suppose, then, Miss H. has become a mother. Does that fact warrant you in calling Mr. Spear a libertine or a debauchee? May he not, after all, have acted in this affair in perfect consistency with all his past life, a pure, good man? Again, does this fact of Miss H.'s maternity necessarily imply wrong or corruption in the movement? She desired to be the mother of a child; but she was not willing to become a legal wife, in which relation she might be compelled not only to give birth to unwelcome children, but also to yield her body to the gratification of unhallowed passion. Now, sir, will you, believing this, condemn such conduct? I cannot, will not! I deem it a matter with her own soul, and the one she loved, and her God, with whom she is at peace. The smiles of heaven have been upon her; her religious nature has been greatly blessed; her spiritual vision has been unfolded, and her prospects of health and happiness, and especially of usefulness to her race, greatly augmented, and she feels to bless God that strength and courage have been given her to walk thus calmly, deliberately, and peacefully, in a path ignored by a corrupt and unappreciative world."

What fearful effrontery! What deification of sin! Prostitution made into a virtue, to be commended and imitated. Oh! shame, where is thy blush!

Miss H., however, speaks in her own defence, and loudly asserts her rights. She says:—

"I will exercise that dearest of all rights, the holiest and most sacred of all heaven's gifts—the right of maternity—in the way which to me seemeth right; and no man nor set of men, no church, no state, shall withhold from me the realization of that purest of all inspirations inherent in every true woman, the right to re-beget myself when, and by whom, and under such circumstances, as to me seem fit and best"
It is difficult to conceive language such as this emanating from a female. Yet such is the case. It shows to what lengths human infatuation and shamelessness may be carried. Miss H. simply acted in accordance with spirit teaching, and probably spirit prompting; but oh! what a horrid scene of carnality and prostitution would our world become were its inhabitants left wholly to the guidance of beings whose teachings produce fruits such as these. What strikes the mind with surprise in these effusions is the mingling together of a mock reverence for God with a total disregard for his authority. There is a claiming to do these things under His sanction, when their only sanction is that of their own hellish passions, and the suggestion of the dark fiends of the lowest abyss. As further showing the daring impiety of these persons, and how they will do the most wicked things and claim religious sanctions to their acts, the following may be given from Miles Grant's little work on Spiritualism. He says of his own experience:—

"We are personally acquainted with one who claims to be Christ's medium, and a medium for the higher order of spirits, as the Apostles and other holy men; and yet we heard a prominent spiritualist say, in Concert Hall, Philadelphia, during the National Convention of Spiritualists, held there in Oct. 1865, that this very medium was a 'vile wretch!' and that he held dark circles with persons in their nude state. This same medium has so abused two wives that they cannot live with him. He says he is to have seven wives. In connection with all this, we have rarely found a man who would talk purer morals than this person. After hearing him speak of Jesus and the "Christ principle," one might suppose him to be a true follower of our Saviour; but, when the test is applied, the whole is found to be only Satan's counterfeit. Instead of 'Christianism' being synonymous with 'Spiritualism,' as claimed by the spirits and spiritualists, they are as unlike in their moral influence as are Christ and Belial."—p. 40.

Satan is transformed as an angel of Light, and his ministers as the ministers of righteousness. Were it not for this pretense of purity, by which vast numbers are imposed upon, the horns, tail, and cloven foot of the reputed chief of the demons would be so apparent that none could possibly doubt the Satanic origin of this fearful system. I present one more extract before closing this chapter. It is from Moses Hull, formerly a Christian teacher, who loved and venerated the Bible, but who, having embraced spiritism, was landed in the abyss to which it leads all its devoted votaries. In a work entitled "A few Thoughts on Love and Marriage," and which work is highly commended by the "Banner of Light" as "a very worthy pamphlet," he says:—

"Now, with no other ken than that of human sagacity, we look, not a score of years into the future, and see a rebellion, a war, before which the commotion through which our nation has just passed sinks into insignificance. Not a war of flesh and blood. No; blood is not pure and precious enough to purchase the results of the coining war; an element as much purer than blood as spirit is finer than matter will be the price with which redemption from marital slavery will be bought. Think not, dear reader, that we are overdrawing the picture—it cannot be done. Whoever sees the opening of the twentieth century will say that the picture was not half drawn. It is said that 'Conceit is as good for a fool as an emetic! So it is for any one. Whether there are wrongs in the marriage relation or not, people are very generally getting the idea that it is so. The idea is proving contagious, and when the American mind gets started, who can tell where it will stop? Nothing short of a revolution—of anarchy—of an opposite extreme, even to the total annulling of the marital tie, will be the result. Then it will be that the Conservatives, on the one hand, and the Radicals on the other will become rational, and men and women will not dare to enter the marriage relation without first having investigated the 'Whys' and the 'Wherefores.' Then will all be prepared to use the language of Robert Burns:—

'The bridal tour is through the spheres,  
Eternity the honey-moon.'

"When we look at the commotion ahead merely as a revolution, we pray, 'O God, stay the elements;' but when we look at it as being the work of disintegration, the preparatory work for the soul union, the true marriage that shall follow, we say "Let the battle rage, and if necessary, put us in the front! The result will be cheap enough.""—"Nature and Tendency of Modern Spiritualism."

These are not the words of a lone fanatic merely, but are really the sentiments of large numbers who are prepared to engage in this battle against the usages of society. Marriage, and the marriage institution are, doubtless, abused, and especially so in America; and this, all must regret. Whoever were seeking to correct its abuses, might be encouraged and aided in so laudable a work; but it is not the reform of marriage, but its entire destruction, that spiritualism is seeking; its effort is to so utterly annihilate the marriage institution, that persons will be able to "mate with as little law and ceremony as do the little birds in the groves." Well may this be called a "rebellion tending to anarchy." When this condition of things arrives, our earth would be a very pandemonium, and unfit for the habitation, of moral beings.

How urgent it is to raise a warning voice against this system, which sets itself against the authority of God,
and his most sacred laws; enthroning the dwarfed, blinded, and passion-influenced reason of poor puny man in its stead, and setting itself against the most cherished associations of the race. How needful that parents should watch, lest these delusive, misleading, and satanic views, should gain, a hold upon the minds of their sons and daughters. Without law, society cannot be held together. This necessity for laws not only exists, but is increasing, from the restlessness and lawlessness of the vicious, who are incited on to "rebellion" and "anarchy" by the teachings we have given above, and the incitement of impure spirits. They are opening the flood-gates of iniquity; and when they are fully open, the full tide must sweep in and carry all before it. They are lighting a torch which must result in "conflagration," and when the flame is fully kindled, who knows where its termination will be? The longing of the Christian heart will be, that ere that terrible day arrives, the coming of the Lord Jesus may deliver his people from the fearful sufferings which must then ensue.

It is the Forerunner of Political Anarchy.

From the preceding it will be seen how fearful and complete must be the social anarchy resulting from the general acceptance of spiritualism. But the political consequences are not less serious. Judging by the literature of spiritualism, there is an effort likely soon to be made to control the governments of the world; and, if the signs existing among European nations are to be relied upon, it may be a legitimate inference to say that, from the harmony of spiritualist teachings as to political governments, with the Nihilism of Russia, the Socialism of Germany, and the Communism of France, there is evidence to believe that the same unseen and Satanic agency is at work among them all.

In "Flashes from the Spirit Land," on page 366, a spirit says:—

"Fortunately for the spirit, the law of mine and thine is not in existence in the spirit world. There is plenty for all there as there is here. Your false customs make it right for one person to have more than enough while his neighbor is starving. It is not so in the spirit world, but the blessings of the Infinite Spirit are free for all, and no one can claim more as their own than they can appropriate. There is no hoarding there; you can have all you need and no more."

The full force of this statement is only seen when it is remembered that the spirit world is the model upon which it is stated this present one should be formed. In Judge Edmonds' book on "Spiritualism," on pages 504 to 509, is a representation of the kind of government existing in the spirit world. On page 506 it is said:—

"With us, we require no judges to condemn, no chains to bind, no prisons to incarcerate the offender. The judge of the offence and the executioner of the law reside together in the heart of the convict, and instinctively perform their function. Every man is a law unto himself." On page 508 is the incitement given to copy this government of the spheres in the earth life:—"Now, child of earth! pause thus on the threshold of eternity and ask yourself if man on earth is not capable of making his mortal existence an epitome of that darkness on the one side or of that brightness on the other? . . . Tell me if wisdom shall thus speak from on high to mortal ears in vain?"

These principles are found in connection with much that might be endorsed by most persons, and it is this blending of what is true with the false, and thus imposing upon the unwary, that the chief danger in this matter lies. In the "Spiritual Age," edited by Mr. A. E. Newton, of Boston, there appeared a few years ago, an editorial article in which the following passage occurred:—

"There is a wide-spread and universal belief among all classes and all religious sects at the present day that some wonderful developments are soon to be manifested to the world, which shall materially revolutionise the existing phases of church, society, and state."

"We tell you, spiritualists, that upon the base of the doctrines there put forth (in spiritualism) you shall yet see reared the grandest political structures the world ever saw."

In an article headed "The Angel Movement," is the following announcement:—

"New phase in Spiritualism! Great national symbolic out wrought spiritual manifestations! All sects and denominations, creeds, parties, nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples, now existing on the face of the earth, to be dissolved and pass away, and a new, divine, governmental order to arise instead."

A writer on the "Mission of Spiritualism" says:—

"It remains for us to apply the principles of a rational spiritualism to the practical reformation of the world. . . . The race has been doomed to bear a thousand crosses to the mournful scene of its crucifixion. Spiritualism comes at last to deliver humanity from the bondage of this death. Let the quickened spiritual nature, freed from its long incarceration in the dungeons of ignorance, sensuality, superstition and crime, assume the government of the world, that we may be saved from the corruption of flesh and sense."

"Spiritualism comes to lay—broad and deep, on the eternal principles of Nature and the Soul—the foundations of new institutions, and to preside at the inauguration of the Divine Order, and the Celestial Life on earth."—"Spiritualism Unveiled," pp. 57, 58.
In "Penetralia," by A. J. Davis, is a representation of a Council held in the spheres, at which fourteen resolutions were passed. The second runs thus:

"Resolved,—That all true liberty and happiness are predicated upon the twofold principle of individual sovereignty, and collective reciprocity; therefore, that all religious systems and all forms of government, opposed to the practical enjoyment of such self-sovereignty as the basis, are essentially barbarous—and vitally antagonistic to the real needs of the man and woman of the nineteenth century."—p. 248.

Here, "self-sovereignty," that is, the right of everyone to do as he pleases, is said to be the essential feature in the government needed by the people of the present century; and that anything opposed to this is "barbarous and vitally antagonistic" to the needs of men. That there is a political object in view in the enunciation of these views, is very evident from a portion of the sixth resolution, which reads thus:

"The Harmonial Philosophy points the pathway to organic and constitutional freedom; and, therefore, that every harmonial philosopher should use his political influence to put in office, only such minds as will legislate according to Nature and Reason, and work for equal justice and universal liberty."—p. 248.

The thirteenth resolution of this Council, reads as follows:

"Resolved,—That the commercial and mercantile relations instituted among men, and perpetuated by the present social disorder, are those of extreme selfishness, leading directly and inevitably to indigenee, larceny, oppressive monopolies, war, slavery, disease, delusive doctrines, professional drones, and to the development of diversal unproductive classes, the effects of which cannot be removed and prevented by any change short of a harmonious dispensation—overthrowing, by its mighty power, all superstitions, liberating equally man's affections and his reason from the slavery of error and fear—harmonising the law of self-sovereignty with the parallel law of social reciprocity."—Ibid. pp. 251, 252.

In these statements there is the purest Communism, clothed in a mass of verbiage. "Self sovereignty" is the grandiloquent expression under which the right of the every man to do as he pleases, and help himself to the goods of others as he pleases, is expressed. On page 300, the language becomes bolder. He says:

"Let all men take courage. The long midnight age of despotic combinations is fast departing. But, like a mighty Saurian-lizard of primeval origin, it will struggle desperately before it dies. You will be summoned to the field of battle. The Individualism of man is to be resurrected. The few will profoundly respect and fight for it; while the many will side with institutionalism. But one man will put ten thousand such to flight; and the victory will be sure and speedy on the side of humanity."

A writer in the Spiritual Age says:

"We all believe that the real underlying ideas foreshadowed by what is popularly called 'Spiritualism,' look forward to the political, material regeneration of society, as well as to a spiritual revolution, and it is high time that some public, formal action, looking in this direction, were taken. . . . Let us assume a political attitude, and make the world feel that we are no longer to be trampled on with impunity."—"Spiritualism Unveiled," p. 58.

The same writer, in speaking of the new government, denominates it—

"A political institution, such as the world has never yet seen, and of which now it has not the remotest idea."—Ibid. p. 59.

Defining the purpose of spiritualism, a spirit says:

"The first great object is to convince sceptics of the immortality of the soul, disrobe death of its terrors, give to men a rational religion, and unite all men in one grand, sublime faith, in which angels, or spirits of the dead, hold intercourse with living men; thus raising the condition of the material world up to that of, and in harmony with, the spiritual.

"The design is, through this increase of knowledge and spiritual elevation, to crush, destroy, and break in pieces, all the existing forms of government on the face of the whole earth, . . . and in place of them build up one common form of government in all the earth . . . . In this form of government, which will be a Theocratic Democracy, every man will be his own ruler, and his natural demands his Highest Law."—Ibid. p. 59.

There can be no mistake as to the political intention expressed by this spirit. Every form of government on earth is to broken up, crushed and utterly destroyed, and a form of government set up in which "every man will be his own ruler, and his natural demands his highest law." That government will be characterised by the very quintessence of anarchy. Chaos—dark and dismal—will indeed have covered the civilisation of man, when that sad day arrives. And, yet, there are not wanting signs to show that a determined effort will be made to bring it on. In harmony with the above, the following from A. J. Davis is very much to the point. He says:

"There are already hundreds of thousands of churches dedicated to the gods; but there are not ten consecrated to mankind. Governments are made to defend the rich; and to subjugate the poor. . . . Institutions are made, by the strong, to maintain power. Individuals, therefore, have but one course to pursue—namely, to rebel against institutions, and take the penalties."—"Penetralia," p. 302.

He says again:

"The Conservative may cry aloud for the safety and sanctity of institutions. But heed him not! His voice
cometh not from the open field, not from the mountain's top. Far from it. On the contrary, his cries proceedeth from the wilderness of crime and marshes of despotism, which are tenfold more dangerous than the everglades of Florida. Hark ye! American Republicanism will be transformed into Tyranny, unless individual man declareth himself independent of all political and ecclesiastical institutions."—"Penetralia," p. 303.

"The only certain plan whereby to prevent the establishment of political and ecclesiastical despotism is this, a universal education of our people to revere and practise the principles of absolute individual liberty. All faith in a miraculous, arbitrary, despotic Revelation Must be Carefully Removed, and placed upon Father-God and Mother-Nature. The inner Light, the religion of Justice in the soul of each, must become the rule of faith and practice. American Theology . . . would then die—never to breathe again, never to know a resurrection."—Ibid. pp. 306, 307.

Thus, another object is to remove every vestige of the Bible Revelation. How foolish of lovers of the Bible, in their simplicity and ignorance, to co-operate with these despicable sectaries in trampling under foot the precious record of the Divine Will! When will Christians awake to the great fact that Spiritualism and Roman Catholicism are united in banishing the Bible from the schools; that they are pursuing the same path to attain to dissimilar ends.

Let us hear A. J. Davis again. He says:—

"The first government was Anarchy. . . . The last will be even so. . . . The Individualism of mankind will at last stand out even more absolutely against Institutions than at the first."—"Penetralia," p. 313.

"Progressives as we are, we declare ourselves openly in favour of no government. The people are governed too much. They will rebel. They will gradually become ungovernable. They will demand at each other's hands absolute, supreme, individual sovereignty.

"I am well aware that, to a timid Conservative, and to those who breathe in the atmosphere of Institutionalism, all this bears the impress of original anarchy. They fear that confusion will be worse confounded. Such minds would urge me to beware of extreme radicalism. They would preach against Individualism as tyrants protest against Republicanism. But I tell you that Individualism will eventually develop out of Democracy—just as Republicanism was developed out of Monarchy—naturally, as blooming summer comes out of rigid winter."—Ibid. p. 315.

A convention of spiritualists was held in Boston, on March 10th, 1857, one object of which, as expressed in their call for the conference, was "To consider the wisdom of taking incipient steps towards forming a new confederation, wherein distinctions of clime, of colour, and of sex will be no bar to equality." The account of a similar convention, held in New York, is given in the "Spiritual Telegraph" of June 20, 1857. The report of this convention says their "object is to overturn the inharmonies and evils of the present condition, and in their place to establish a new social order on the earth." This "new social order" is more fully set forth in the "Telegraph" of June 13th, 1857, under the head of "Practical Spiritualism, its Purposes and Plans." The writer says:—

"For the last four years, a movement has been going forward, comparatively unobserved by the public at large, whose central purpose is no less than the entire regeneration . . . . of the whole human race . . . . It is hardly to be supposed that an enterprise so startling to the world as the last eight years have proved the spiritual movement to be, would have for its grand end anything like the presentation of mere phenomenal exhibitions, &c. . . . All these, indeed, and more in the same line, have been and still are very useful, and are not in the least to be undervalued; but if the movement itself rested in them as an end, it would seem that the end itself was quite unworthy of such a grand commencement, such a wide-spread interest, and such hopes and aspirations as have already been created.

"The great purpose of the spirit-world, then, is of a much broader nature, and a more thoroughly practical spirit . . . . It aims, in short at the establishment of a new social order on the earth, through whose mediatorial harmony alone the divine truth and its good can descend only upon and into a waiting and responsive race . . . .

"It also the purpose of spiritualism to so educate a class of persons in certain practical functions, that they shall become pivots of groups in the coming new social order . . . . About two hundred and fifty persons have already been selected. . . . These persons are scattered all over the United States and the provinces.

"Another purpose of the movement is the establishment of a New System of Government. It is a combination of the two elements of MONARCHY AND REPUBLICANISM, making, therefore (partly because of the combination, and partly for other reasons), a new idea in government. It has already matured its plans to quite an extent."—"Spiritualism Unveiled," pp. 59, 60.

The plans of this new government are said to be matured to quite an extent; two hundred and fifty persons have been already selected by the spirits as leaders in the movement, who are to act as commanding officers in an army; and when the time for action comes, they are to direct the movement in their respective divisions, in harmony with the general plan.

In a work called the "Educator," and previously quoted from, certain questions are given by the spirits to be
put to every man who is selected to be a "pivot man." If there is the slightest hesitancy or reserve in answering these questions, the candidate is at once to be rejected. The third of these questions is as follows:—

"Do you love these fundamental principles ... more than all things else? Are you willing to announce your allegiance to these fundamental principles, even though it may separate you from church, from State, from home, from land, from children, from the companion of your bosom? If the person questioned hesitates, then he is unfit for the struggle; he ought not to be engaged; for when the storm comes ... this man will be missing."—Pp. 412-8.

"When .... the people are ripe for action, let the decisive blow be struck . . . . The next political revolution will be the grandest the world has ever witnessed."—Pp. 334-5.

The foregoing is startling, and needs no comment to make it plain. A solemn oath is exacted by the spirits binding the leaders in this new Political Movement. Rome never required more entire submission than these spirits demand to their will. The spirits say:—

"The hour is at hand when the revolution must come. . . It will be a fearful crisis—an hour when the passions of men will be excited to an extent seldom, if ever known before. This Association proposes to place in the hands of its general agent a series of instructions which will be of the greatest use in that hour of peril."—"Educator," p. 403.

"Prominent persons will be placed at the helm of the new ship of State, whose motto shall be ETERNAL PRINCIPLES, NOT PARTIES."

The principles upon which this new government is to be established are thus stated in the "Educator":—

1. Man is immortal. 2. It requires two persons, male and female, to constitute a whole man. 3. Each man, and each woman, if you please, has a perfect right, under all circumstances, in all conditions, and in whatever locations, to do as he or she pleases. 4. Government is but a temporary arrangement, to be outgrown with the greatest possible speed. 5. The highest possible government is interior, and may at all times, in all places, and under all possible circumstances, be safely obeyed. 6. God ... is man and man is God No clearer idea of the divine existence can possibly be communicated to the mind, than in the statement that He is one grand universal man."

These things are inculcated, not at once, and to every beginner; but as soon as persons are considered sufficiently far advanced, then these principles and purposes are made known. The right to do as everyone pleases, at all times, and places, and under every imaginable possible circumstance! These are the convenient, and yet most terribly inconvenient, principles on which the new condition is to be founded. A moment's thought must reveal the terrible confusion of such a government, if such a term can be used respecting it.

Dr. A. B. Child, when speaking at a picnic at Abington, Mass., as reported in the Banner of Light, for August 5, 1865, said:—

"The time is speedily coming when every one who has opposed, scorned, reviled, and persecuted spiritual communion, will be brought to the altar of sacrifice; will suffer sorrow, regret, affliction. ... It will be a bitter cup, but a necessary remedy for the sickly morals and religions of men. It is in the power of the spiritual world to make any poor man rich in one day—to make any rich man poor in one day—to make any poor man rich in one day—to make any rich man poor in one day—to make woe in the human heart, or joy and gladness there. ... Imminent and immediate dangers to earthly prosperity hang over all opposition to spiritual communion. Mark well, and you will soon see that the destruction of property, of health, even of physical life, will follow close upon the heels and overtake all the obstinate, persistent warriors against sin and the devil—all the military of the church militant—all who revile and scoff and say all manner of things falsely against spiritualism—against sins, sects, creeds, beliefs not their own. Disasters on sea and land, fires, failures, accidents, diseases and early deaths, will fall thick, and fast, and heavy, to harrow the peace and happiness of every bosom that is persistently turned with opposition and bitterness against this holy influx, that comes down from heaven to earth, to tell us of the uses of sin and sorrow; to tell us of the realities of the world from whence man gets all his blessings; to tell him of the world whence he came, and whither he is going. . . .

"Ay, more than blessed are ye, for a new era is beginning; a new religion is coming; a new day of morals is dawning; a new road for human progress is making; it is the road that the toiling hands of spiritualism have graded, over lowlands and through highlands, over the swamps of humility, and the mountains of pride. It is a straight road, it is a level road; it is a grand highway for all humanity; it is onward for ever. Then take courage, and be comforted; be not weary, for the work of spiritualism is the work of well doing. Relax no effort—seek to change no purpose in this great design, for it must make a revolution in the morals and religions of men, that shall be a signal epoch in the history of the world's future, for the world's happiness.

Sufficient has now been presented to reveal the real nature, plans, and purposes, of this system. It stands condemned out of the mouths of its own advocates, as the enemy of all that is pure and good in morals, as the advocate of impurity and licentiousness, as the destroyer of the sacred obligations of marriage, and as the forerunner of political convulsions which must bring great suffering upon the world. Because of all these things
it is deserving of the severest reprobation of all who love God and their fellow men.

Let me conclude these pages with a word of warning to Christians—words, not my own, but quoted because of their fitness. "Do not trouble yourselves with the vagaries and wonders of this destructive system. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose, by letting it alone; and everything to lose and nothing to gain, by meddling with its forbidden fruit. For, according to spiritualism, a man's faith has nothing to do with his preparation for another life. You may as well, therefore, believe Christ, as to believe any one else. Everything depends, according to their worthiest oracles, on righteousness and purity in preparing for the most exalted destiny. The true Christian, therefore, is prepared for their highest spheres, and has nothing to gain by any change of doctrine or of masters, even if spiritualism should prove true. But if spiritualism prove false, and the Gospel true, he loses all by renouncing the latter for the former. So that the Christian gain is all gain and no loss: the spiritualistic side all loss and no gain! Only the highest folly, therefore, can prompt an abandonment of the Gospel for this perilous 'doctrine of demons,' be it true or false. We are safe with Jesus—we can be safe nowhere else. The questions of salvation, duty, and destiny, are very plainly stated in the Bible. Many curious speculative questions, such as delight the fanciful, and restless, and prurient curiosity of would-be philosophers, find no answer there, because they have no solid worth, or because our minds, as now constituted, cannot successfully grasp them. 'Secret things belong unto the Lord.' We had better respect the reticence of the Scriptures on these awful themes; and addressing ourselves to the study of the Gospel, and the lessons of duty which he that runs may read, walk in the Spirit's illuminations, which, like a lamp, 'shine in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts.'"

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Public Opinion

ENDORSES the action of the Early Closing Association in its steady persistency of the Saturday Six O'Clock movement, finding that it is not only practicable but advantageous, monetarily, morally, and socially.

Shopkeepers of all classes acknowledge a gradually diminishing Saturday night trade, and look for the continued influence of the general public (who are really the masters of the movement) to release them from this uncalled-for extension of business hours.

Assistants in every branch of trade urge upon the reader to make all purchases early in the week, or certainly before six o'clock on Saturdays; they claim the right to make this reasonable request, seeing that when hard pressed for a reason there are none but that will admit that it is merely custom and not necessity that causes late shopping.

Individual Action Imperative!

A. TURNER & CO., GROCERS, &c., OLD POST-OFFICE STORE, CORNER OF Albany and King Streets, Dunedin. DISPENSARY, BOTANIC DANDELION TRADE MARK JAMES NEIL, HERBALIST., Wholesale and Retail Dealer in Botanic, Homeopathic, and Patent Medicines, Druggists' Sundries, Pure Chemicals, &c.; Grower, Preserver, Manufacturer, and Importer of Herbal Medicines, Extracts, Oils, Tinctures, Botanic and Medical Appliances. Teeth carefully Extracted, Stopped and Cleaned. Sole manufacturer of the celebrated Dandelion Coffee and Pill, which are now highly prized by hundreds as the best remedy for Indigestion and its train of symptoms; the Botanic Cough Syrup and Composition Powders, Balm of Gilead, &c. 96, GEORGE STREET, DUNEDIN.

In the Crucible: Being a Lecture

Mrs. Hardinge-Britten
Delivered by M. W. Green,
Christian Minister, Author of "the Devil's Sword Blunted," &C.,
In the Garrison Hall, Dunedin; on Wednesday, Evening, July 9th; 1879,
In Reply to
"Spiritualism Vindicated, and Clerical Slanders Refuted."
George T. Clarke Dunedin and Oamaru George Street 1879

"Spiritualism Vindicated."

In the Garrison Hall, Dunedin, on July 9th, Mr. M. W. Green delivered a lecture in reply to that given in the same place on the previous evening by Mrs. Hardinge-Britten, in criticism of his course of four lectures under the title of "Spiritualism Unveiled," and published under the title of "The Devil's Sword Blunted." The attendance was unusually large, every part of the large hall being crowded.

There are two or three pages inserted into the body of the book, naturally forming part of the lecture, but which were unavoidably omitted from the oral lecture, owing to length of time occupied with the other
portions.—M. W. G.

The Rev. Mr. CRUMP having engaged in prayer, the Rev. L. MOORE, who occupied the chair, in introducing Mr. Green, spoke as follows: Ladies and Gentlemen—Before the proceedings are commenced, Mr. Green has requested me to say that opportunity will be given, at the end of his lecture, for any person who desires to do so, to put questions, which he will answer to the best of his ability. I need not do more than mention the name of Mr. Green to secure for him a hearty welcome from those here present. (Applause.)

MR. GREEN, who on coming forward, was received with much applause, spoke as follows: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—Before commencing the lecture of this evening, I wish to make one communication in refer- ence to the publication of the four lectures that have been delivered by me. I may say that they are at present in the Press, and will be issued during next week. They will not be published in the form of lectures, but as an ordinary pamphlet, with the various citations grouped under their appropriate headings. The lecture of this evening cannot be added to them, but will be published as a separate pamphlet, and in order to ensure accuracy, I have secured the services of a competent short-hand reporter, from whose notes the present lecture will be printed.

Before proceeding to review the lecture Mrs. Britten delivered in this Hall last evening, I wish to make reference to a remark made by her Chairman, Mr. R. Stout, to the effect that Mr. Green and Mrs. Britten were both Spiritualists, only that whilst Mr. Green believed in the ability of evil spirits to communicate, Mrs. Britten believed in the communications of bad, good, and indifferent spirits. That statement on the part of the Chairman was not at all a correct one, and only shows how unadvisable it is for any person to profess to give the opinions of others, unless he has had an opportunity of hearing them. (Applause.) Those who attended my first lecture in this hall will remember that I stated distinctly that I believed in angel-ministry. Now, the difference between Mrs Britten and myself on this point is this: that I believe the angels of God are aiding God's people, without either sitting in dark circles, or sending their communications through mediums. It is evil spirits alone who are attracted by darkness. (Applause.) I would wish, like the faithful Apostle, to warn everyone against what he terms "the unfruitful works of darkness." (Applause.) May I kindly ask you to restrain your applause as much as possible, because I have much to say to you, and do not wish to detain you longer than I can help. Last night I was guilty of something for which I should like to offer a kind of apology. As I sat listening to Mrs. Britten, I could not help frequently smiling, and I have since thought that possibly I had violated gentlemanly courtesy in so doing. But I must confess that I was amused and astonished at the course pursued by the lady. I was amused that she should have thought that her lecture was a reply to the four lectures I had delivered; I was impressed with the self-satisfaction that she manifested with herself—with the exceeding ability she displayed in the art of self-advertising—and with the enormous amount of egotism indicated in sounding her own trumpet to such an extraordinary degree—(Applause)—that I must confess I could not help smiling.

In replying to the statements of Mrs. Britten, I wish to speak in kindness, but at the same time I must speak with all faithfulness, and consequently my task this evening is a delicate one. I would first remind you of the statement of Mrs. Britten that Mr. Green was never likely to be heard of outside of this little city. Now, that is very likely. Two suns of such magnitude as the lady in question could not exist in the heavens together—one must pale before the other; and certainly it would hardly do to have two such in this little city. I am content to continue to shine as far as I am able, whether the city be small or great; and if I am faithful here, I know One who has said that I shall be accounted worthy of much honour in the time to come. (Loud cheers.) I think Mrs. Britten's language in regard to this matter was anything but creditable to her. She seemed to consider it to be an impertinence on my part to have exposed the true nature of Spiritualism. My only reply to that is, I have an anxious desire wherever I see dangers such as those contained in Spiritualism, to raise my voice in warning; and it will not matter whether Mrs. Britten denounce it as an impertinence, and as indicating great imprudence on my part, or whether, as towards the close of her lecture, she pretends to commend the boldness and fearlessness of my course, my duty will remain the same. I am under a solemn obligation to point out what would be the terrible results, both to individuals and to society generally, which must inevitably accrue from a wide-spread adoption of the principles she advocates. The lady further stated, that she would have declined argument with such a gentleman, only that his handbill made it needful to notice his sophistries. I can readily believe that Mrs. Britten would have been only too pleased to have been able to decline argument, because from her contact with myself she has evidently found certain elements which have disturbed her temper. She has never yet come into contact with me, either here or in Victoria, without using language which certainly I should not like to use respecting her. In her advertisements, and in her lecture, she says that "Mr. Green has grossly slandered the Spiritists of Dunedin, whom he has nicknamed—persons who are so worthy that they have risen to the first rank in the city." I would say first of all in regard to those "worthy persons" who have risen to the "first rank" in the city, that they are not Spiritualists; that of the number who surround Mrs. Britten, not one-third at the outside are Spiritualists. The chairman of last night repudiates the term being applied to himself. He is no Spiritualist, and declares that he has seen nothing calculated to make him believe in spirit.
intercourse. Mrs. Britten, in assuming that all those who attend her meetings are Spiritualists, is making a very great mistake.

Then, Mrs. Britten charges me with having made "slanderous charges" against the Spiritualists; with having told "deliberate untruths;" and with having "violated" the ninth commandment. A gentleman who is a stranger to me said to me to-day, "Really, Mr. Green, I believe Mrs. Britten is actionable for language such as that." And I think probably if I were as litigious as that lady has given evidence that she is, I might threaten that if she did not take back these statements I might do something very severe. However, I will make no such threat. She may continue piling up epithets to any length she pleases, I will not threaten her with law, or anything of that kind. But, in reply to her charge, I wish to point out to you this—Mrs. Britten is opposed to myself. It is always possible that an opponent may fail to understand the mind of the individual to whom he is opposed. In this world there are many ways of being misunderstood, and the person who makes a statement that appears to us to be incorrect may make it believing it to be true; to charge a person with a deliberate falsehood, is certainly a very grave matter. Now, supposing an enemy to make such a charge, it may possibly arise from some misunderstanding. I am sure I should be able to bear such a statement coming from opponents with composure; but I should feel very much concerned if it came from friends, because my friends are more likely to know my character, and to understand my mind and habits, than my enemies are. Now, let me say, that I am not going to charge Mrs. Britten with deliberate falsification. I should be sorry to make such a charge against any person, even my greatest enemy; but I shall produce evidence that not Mrs. Britten's enemies, but her friends, charge her with deliberate lying (cheers)—with deliberate falsification. I have here in my hand the Melbourne Harbinger of Light for the month of May of the present year. In this paper is an account of a very pretty quarrel which Mrs. Britten had with the Melbourne Spiritualists. The correspondence which passed between them is here recorded, and in this paper there is a report of a meeting of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists which was presided over by Mr. Deakin, and taking part in which were Mr. Stowe, Mr. H. J. Browne, and others, all prominent persons in Melbourne. Mr. Deakin is a lawyer, and is at present a member of the Victorian Parliament; Mr. H. J. Browne is a man of independent means, and Mr. Stowe is a chemist. These gentlemen acted as the committee for Mr. Walker during our debate there, and for several weeks, during the progress of that debate, I came into contact with these gentlemen. I know them to have been ardent admirers of Mrs. Britten, upholding her with their presence and means, and doing everything they could to sustain her. My intercourse with these gentlemen led me to the conviction that, although large numbers of the Spiritualists were persons of no character, there were amongst them some most excellent people. I am glad to be able to say that by personal contact with Spiritists I am convinced that there are truthful men amongst them, and, moreover, that there are not more honorable men amongst the entire body of Spiritualists than those three whom I have named. At this meeting the secretary read the correspondence which had passed between him, and Dr. and Mrs. Britten, since the last general meeting. Some portions of the letters provoked expressions of indignation from the audience. In the next paragraph there is this resolution, moved by Mr. Lang and seconded by Mr. Fisher, and carried with only two dissentients:—"That this meeting, having considered the correspondence between Dr. and Mrs. Britten and the committee of the Association, is satisfied that Dr. and Mrs. Britten have not behaved with courtesy, kindness, or good taste in their transactions with the committee." In this meeting, which the report says was composed of ninety persons, only one person was found to say a word in defence of Mrs. Britten's conduct, and that one is well-known in Melbourne to be a man of most unworthy character. Mind, I do not hold Mrs. Britten responsible for that—not at all—but I say that this man, who is there mentioned, as defending the lady is known to be a man of bad reputation, and was expelled from the Wesleyan body for very grave sin. Yet in that body of Spiritualists that man was the only defender Mrs. Britten had on that occasion. (Cheers.) As showing the unanimity of these gentlemen in their judgment on Mrs. Britten, I may state that it is confirmed by a resolution which was moved by Mr. H. J. Browne:—"That this Association unanimously condemns the action of Mrs. Britten in the indiscriminate and unjustifiable remarks made by her at her last public lecture here, and considers the enmity shown by her to this Association, merely because it refused to be dictated to by her, and withdrew its support from her during her last lectures, totally opposed to that spirit of charity which characterizes the true Spiritualist." I have no hesitation myself in quite believing, from the lady's manner last night, that she has a very austere and autocratic spirit, and that she would want to have her own way. (Laughter.) I don't think there can be any doubt about that. I should mention in fairness that this resolution was not carried, because Mr. Browne added remarks which by mistake were supposed to be included in the resolution, and which the meeting thought it would be better not to include, as they had no desire to injure Spiritualism while condemning her. In his remarks, Mr. Browne charges Mrs. Britten with stating what she knew to be untrue at the time she made the statement. On page 159 of the same paper Mr. A. Van Alkemade says:—"As regards the division in our ranks, Mrs. Britten utters that which she knows to be false . . . . Dr. Britten let no opportunity pass by to plead his cause, based on private letters from Messrs. Terry and Deakin (which letters however, were only alluded to as testifying Dr. and Mrs. Britten's course of action) when politely
called upon for copies of these so compromising letters (with the consent of the parties interested), Dr. and Mrs. Britten, for reasons of their own, judged it better to take no notice of this just request." And in the latter part of this letter the writer says: "I have no wish to enlarge on this subject, my sole object being to enter my individual protest against Mrs. Britten's untruthful statements, which are as uncharitable and spiteful as they are unjustifiable."

Of course I cannot endorse these remarks, because I know nothing of the matter. But here, mark you, is the fact, that Mrs. Britten's own friends—those who were at first captivated with her charms as a lady lecturer—have so turned round upon her now that they charge her with deliberate falsification. On the first; page of this paper the editor himself, Mr. W. H. Terry, speaks to the same effect. Of the excessive egotism of the lady we had evidence last evening, and we have another specimen here. Mr. Terry says: "We are but an 'humble' soldier in the ranks of which she calls herself a 'noble' one." Do you not think, friends, it would have been much better if Mrs. Britten had allowed them to call her "a noble" champion, and not to call herself one? (Cheers.) Mr. Terry says: "We cannot but deplore the evident animus shown by Mrs. Britten against a body of ladies and gentlemen who have worked earnestly, disinterestedly, and hitherto harmoniously, for the advancement of Spiritualism. It is a painful task for us to condemn the utterances of one for whom, as a public speaker and teacher of the truths of Spiritualism, we have the highest respect, but if either from personal or external inspiration her lips speak falsehood, it is incumbent upon us to do our part in correcting it . . . . . It is with this view alone we have written."

Here is one speaking with an entire knowledge of the matter, and he points out what, in his judgment, he considers the "untruthful statements" the lady has made. I will pass this by now, merely adding this, that when a person's opponents call him untruthful, there is room for supposing that there may be a misunderstanding, and that whilst even his friends may say that he is untruthful, it is not always true, yet there is a far greater appearance of truth in the charge than when it comes from one's enemies. It certainly ill becomes a lady, whose own friends charge her with deliberate falsification in saying what she knew to be false, to make charges of that kind against an individual against whom it is utterly impossible to prove them. (Cheers.)

Mrs. Britten says that I have nick-named the Spiritualists, "Spiritists." I am tempted to ask if I may not, in all fairness, use of her the language she applied to me—that she must have been saying what she knew not to be the fact, or that she shows herself to be ignorant of the matter in question—because if she will take Allan Kardec's book to which she has referred, she will find that he does not take the name of Spiritist exclusively, but that the two terms are used by him interchangeably. I could give you page after page wherein that appears: on pages four and five of his introduction in particular; and there is the clearest evidence in other instances. "Spiritism" is the more correct term to apply to a system that affirms that disembodied spirits come back and have intercourse with human beings here. Why should they take what is more especially a Bible term and apply it to this debasing system, and thus rob us of a purely Biblical word?

You are aware that Mrs. Britten said that "Mr. Green slandered in generalities merely; that he has not dared to breathe it openly by giving special cases." You remember how, on last night, she again asked me to give special cases. She may possibly in the first instance have been under a misapprehension when she urged me to give special cases. Had she been at either of my lectures, or had she been correctly informed of what I said, she would have known that I had avoided personalities, and had simply given general statements culled from Spiritist writers, in order to present a fair representation of the system out of the mouths of its own advocates, and I stated that I considered it was neither right nor gentlemanly on my part to give personal cases—sufficiently personal to injure anyone in his worldly circumstances. (Applause.) Therefore, it was because of this, and because I wished to keep out of my lectures everything which might be regarded as offensive or personal that I did not give any such special cases. Now, let me ask why Mrs. Britten should so strongly urge me to give special cases? I may tell you—while I do not wish to be uncharitable—that I fear the lady had an ulterior design. She is of a litigious disposition. Whilst I was residing in Melbourne, I took the liberty of criticising the report of one of her lectures which appeared in the Melbourne Age. I pointed out that her statements with regard to Christianity—its effects and what it is intended to accomplish—were altogether wide of the truth. Our correspondence appeared to have ended, when a Mr. Oliver took up the matter, and became Mrs. Britten's champion. The lecture which I criticised, was one that she professed was purely improvised; that it was an inspirational lecture upon a theme selected by the audience. In his letter, Mr. Oliver admitted that he was the writer of the subject of the lecture. In my reply I said that Mr. Oliver's admission would give countenance to the impression, which some persons had taken, that all these subjects of lectures and questions, which were presented to Mrs. Britten, were presented by her friends." That was all that I said. Should any doubt my statement, their doubts may be removed by consulting the files of the Melbourne Age of June, 1878, where what I am now about to read will also be found. I would observe that I spoke of it as an "impression." Certainly that is a very mild charge. Now see what Mrs. Britten said in the very next issue of the Age, the 27th of June, 1878: "In your issue of this morning, Mr. Green says: His (Mr. Oliver's) admission
that he was the writer of Mrs. Britten's subject, will confirm the impression which some have taken that all the subjects suggested and questions offered are emanations from Mrs. Britten's friends. This is only an insinuation, it is true, but it is one which, if repeated, will oblige me to make Mr. Green prove, or retract, his words, in Public Prosecution, and teach him how well it becomes a Christian minister to slander his neighbours, and promulgate deliberate falsehoods." With the recollection of this, I say that there was the conviction in my mind, when Mrs. Britten was so persistently urging me to give special cases, that she was seeking to lay a trap for me. I know quite well what is the law of the land, and as a Christian I hold that I am bound to be a law-abider. Even although I am able to make statement after statement, if the law says: "If you say anything that may injure a man's position—no matter how true it is—it is libel, and you are punishable," as a Christian I am bound to submit to that law. Nothing but an imperative sense of duty to God would justify any Christian in violating any law of the government under which he lives. It was because I am a law-abider, and because I saw the trap laid for what was supposed to be an unsuspecting victim, that I declined to fall into it. (Laughter and applause.)

Mrs. Britten said that her task was not a very pleasant one. I can very well believe it. I am certain of this; it is quite a new role from that which she has been in the habit of undertaking. Christians have been far too quiet (applause), as Mrs. Britten seemed to realise when she said that the ministers had not taken notice of this matter. It is something new to have the war carried right into her own camp. Would to God the ministers did it oftener. (Loud cheers.) But passing by these personal matters, I may say that of her lecture the only portion, so far as I am able to judge, that could possibly be called argument, was that when she endeavoured to destroy the reliability of the authorities I had cited during my lectures. She, by the fact that she did not attempt to refute any of the testimonies presented, admitted that I had dealt fairly with these testimonies. Her only effort was to prove that those persons whose authority I had cited were not persons representing Spiritualism. In connection with this matter, I wish to remark that the course which I have pursued in taking my arguments from the Spiritualists themselves, has attained the object with which I began these lectures, which was simply from Spiritist writings themselves to enable the public of Dunedin to understand what this system is. Now I shall take her criticism upon these authorities, and if I do not show that her remarks in reference to them are utterly unreliable, I shall willingly consent to be adjudged to have failed in this lecture.

First, with regard to Judge Edmonds, from whose volumes I have quoted in my previous lectures, she affirmed with great emphasis and positiveness, that Judge Edmonds regretted that he had published them; and that he had recanted his statements that they were actually spirit revelations. Now, I dare not say that the lady has told "deliberate untruths," but I will say that that statement itself is positively untrue. (Some expressions of disapproval from the body of the hall.) I will also say that there is reason to believe that she stated what she knew to be untrue. (More dissent.) I see that my arguments are telling; our friends cannot bear to hear them. (Loud cheers.) My lecture will be published, and if I have made any statements which can be rebutted, the public of Dunedin will be able to judge me. Now, with regard to that recantation of Judge Edmonds, I challenge Mrs. Britten to produce it. (Cheers.) I repeat, that I challenge her to produce it. In this work, which has been published since his death—a later edition of his letters and tracts, published by J. Burns—at page 163 there is this statement by the Judge himself in reference to the spirit revelations. He says:—"Next I beheld spirit scenes, which I was told were the actual living realities of the spirit world; scenes in which individuals and members were moving, acting, thinking, as we do in this life, and conveying to me a vivid idea of life in the next stage of existence. During all these steps of progress, I could converse with the spirits whom I saw, as easily as I could talk with any living mortal, and I held discussions and arguments with them as I have with mortals." In addition to this, in the preface to this work, written after his death, but in the same year—1874—there is such a declaration as warrants me in affirming that that book goes forth declaring that Judge Edmonds's first, as well as his second volume, has never been recanted by him. (Cheers.) Not only so, but I may mention that in the Medium and Daybreak, which I have here, and which I would read had I time to do so, there are long statements in numbers of that paper for this present year, month after month, exactly similar to those in Judge Edmonds's volumes, coming from a spirit named Herbert, who is said to have made periodical visits to the lower world. His descriptions exactly tally with those of Judge Edmonds; but whether they are borrowed from him or not I cannot say. But I have to bring this matter even a little closer home to Mrs. Britten. She delivered in Melbourne, in the month of June of last year, a lecture in reply to the strictures of the Melbourne Daily Telegraph. She entitled that lecture, "Spiritualism : Is it a savage superstition." Now, let us see how she has advanced in her statement of last night from that made by her in that lecture. She says: The visions of Judge Edmonds, like those of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, and other famous vision-seers of olden time, may or may not be purely allegorical, or absolutely real. "p. 22. It "may or may not" be so; thus, for at least four years after Judge Edmonds's death, she was ignorant of any recantation. Then, further on, she says: "As we don't believe Ezekiel's 'wheels' and 'living creatures,' Daniel's 'man of metals and clay,' or John's 'Apocalyptic serpents, scarlet women, black and white horses,' &c., &c., have any actual existence in heaven, so it is quite..."
possible . . . Judge Edmonds's wanderings in the spheres may be representations of just such scenes as we behold nightly in our dreams." It is still "may be," you see. Then, further down the page, she says:—"Making all allowance, then, for the possibility that the visions of Judge Edmonds may have been allegorical representations of the spirit world only, our next question is—What do the returning spirits of humanity tell us of the soul's condition hereafter." For "the possibility," mark you. Now, I think taking the statements of this lecture altogether, that I am justified in inferring, that last year, when she delivered this lecture in Bourke street, Melbourne, she knew that Judge Edmonds had not made any such recantation; and that therefore, there is reason to believe that last night she made a statement for which she knew she had not any foundation in fact. (Cheers.) So much, then, for Judge Edmonds.

I now pass on to Allan Kardec. She said that though Kardec taught the theory of re-incarnation, few persons—that is few Spiritualists—believed in that theory. Let me ask you this question: Suppose that there are very few who believe in Kardec's theory—suppose I say it were so—yet you are told that Allan Kardec's spirits are the most august you can imagine: John the Evangelist, St. Augustine, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louis, Socrates, Plato, Fénelon, Franklin, Swedenborg, and the Spirit of Truth—surely the Spirit of Truth cannot lie. (Much laughter.) Therefore, if re-incarnation be taught by them, it is just as likely to be true as anything taught by spirits through any other person. Now, in his work, Kardec only professes to give the statements of the spirits; and these spirits, with one consent, declare that re-incarnation is a fact. I would ask you: Is not the testimony of the spirits who communicate this fact, quite as worthy of receiving credence as that spirit, which Mrs. Britten says revealed to her her ten commandments. (Laughter.) What makes that spirit more credible than those august spirits, who take the names I have just mentioned? Let me say, further, that Mrs. Britten suppressed part of the truth. I showed in my lectures that not alone in France, where this doctrine of Kardec was principally taught, but in America and in England these things were also held. If I had time I could give you many quotations to show this, culled from "Flashes of Light from the Spirit-Land," which contains communications given through the mediumship of Mrs. Conant, whose name is of equal power and eminence among the Spiritualists of America as is that of Mrs. Britten. On page 71 of "Flashes of Light" this answer is given by the spirits in regard to the question of re-incarnation:—"That the spirit will return to earth again and become re-incarnated in a human body there is much evidence; indeed, all that we have been able to gain is largely in its favour." Then again, on pages 78 and 79, in reply to another question, they return this answer:—"In one sense it (the spirit) does enter other bodies and acts through other bodies than the human . . . . The ancients grappled with a very great truth in their theory of the transmigration of souls. They intuitively perceived the power of the soul over all matter, and perceiving its power, they very naturally were led to conclude that it would use the power, and therefore become incarnated in other forms than the human." Another spirit, on page 294 of the same work, says:—"Judging from the experience of others, predetermining our faith upon their experience, we are as sure of it (re-incarnation) as we are of our immortality." So that you see the American spirits, as well as these spirits which Kardec mentions, declare that they were as certain of this re-incarnation as of their own immortality. Then in the Medium and Daybreak of November 15, 1872, the spirit of a Dr. Forbes, speaking through a lady medium, says:—"Re-incarnation, while a phenomenal fact, is an economical absurdity." Another spirit, speaking in the same paper, says:—"The elevation of the spirit would have been better accomplished by its surrendering itself to the operation of the elevating forces of the spirit spheres, ana thus re-incarnation, while a phenomenal fact, is an economical absurdity." Thus much for Allan Kardec. You will see that both the American and the English spirits agree with him; and that they are spirits who take very eminent names. I wish now to ask you this question: If Mrs. Britten tells us that her ten commandments and ten laws of right are given through the spirits of any other person. Now, in his work, Kardec only professes to give the statements of the spirits; and these spirits, with one consent, declare that re-incarnation is a fact. I would ask you: Is not the testimony of the spirits who communicate this fact, quite as worthy of receiving credence as that spirit, which Mrs. Britten says revealed to her her ten commandments. (Laughter.) What makes that spirit more credible than those august spirits, who take the names I have just mentioned? Let me say, further, that Mrs. Britten suppressed part of the truth. I showed in my lectures that not alone in France, where this doctrine of Kardec was principally taught, but in America and in England these things were also held. 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(Cheers.)

Passing by Kardec and coming now to A. J. Davis; when I heard Mrs. Britten say that the latter was not a Spiritualist, I was simply astounded at the lady's boldness in making such an affirmation. If any disinterested person will only read two of his smaller works, the "Penetralia," and "The Philosophy of Spirit Intercourse," and rises from their perusal with the impression that Davis denounces Spiritualism, or that he says he is not a Spiritualist, or that he does not claim to be a Spiritualist, or that he does not agree with the generality of Spiritualists, then I will consent to forfeit my reputation for accuracy as a speaker. (Cheers.) "With regard to this matter, the only possible colour for this affirmation of Mrs. Britten is this: that following out logically the statements of immense numbers of spirits, he denies that there is any such thing as evil in the world, calling sin simply misdirection, or undeveloped good, and as a consequence of this view, he denies the existence of evil spirits, affirming that it is possible to harmonise all their apparently conflicting and contradictory teachings. His system to harmonise these he calls the "Harmonial Philosophy." He believes in the power of the spirits to communicate, and seeks for their communications as earnestly as Mrs. Britten; how then can it be said of him that he is not a Spiritualist? One thing is very clear: that the four points which Mrs. Britten says make a man a
Spiritualist take in not only A. J. Davis, but an immense number of others. If they do not, I have not yet seen wherein he differs from them. (Applause.) Now last year, when I was debating with Mr. Walker, in Melbourne, he claimed that he himself was not debating, but a spirit through him; and this spirit debating through him claimed A. J. Davis as one of the most prominent leaders in the Spiritualistic ranks. (Cheers.) Not only so, but in the number of the Harbinger of Light for May of the present year, is a letter from Mr. Tyerman—a gentleman who was formerly a minister of the United Methodist Free Church at Christchurch, in this Colony—then went to Melbourne and there labored first as a Congregationalist minister, and afterwards as a Church of England lay-reader, and subsequently adopting the principles of Spiritualism. Having made the tour of America and England, in a letter dated March 30th, 1879, in speaking of the persons he had met with, he says:—"In New York I had a pleasant interview with Andrew Jackson Davis, Professor S.B. Brittan, Professor Buchanan, and other distinguished Spiritualists." Would you not understand by that statement that A. J. Davis was regarded as a "distinguished Spiritualist?" But I have even more conclusive testimony than this. In the Medium and Daybreak for May 3rd, 1878, there is an article entitled "Spiritual Organisation," and under the special heading of "Organisation of Spiritualists," we have this:—"Where can there be found a more perfect organisation than that which enabled Andrew Jackson Davis to give to the world his library of Spiritual Philosophy to which all the committees, conventions, and parties, with their artificial efforts have never been able to add a single idea?" Now, mark that, neither Mrs. Britten nor all the leaders in the ranks of the Spiritualists have been able to add a single idea to the library of "Spiritual Philosophy" that has emanated from the brain of A. J. Davis. And this is a leading spiritualistic paper in England that makes this affirmation, and yet Mrs. Britten in the face of this declares that A. J. Davis is not a Spiritualist! Hear how the writer in this paper further speaks of Mr. Davis:—"That most marked of all organizations in connection with our cause, consisted of the organic structure of A. J. Davis, aided in its functions by the surroundings given off by two or three select friends," Thus, the most marked organization connected with "our cause" is that of A. J. Davis. Now, what cause is hero meant? Certainly that of Spiritualism with which this writer so emphatically identifies Mr. Davis. This article goes on further in its eulogy, but I have not time to read it. That Mr. Davis is a representative man among Spiritualists is clear from this statement—that there is not one, of all the Spiritualists besides, who has been able to add one idea to his teachings of the "Spiritual Philosophy." In the estimation of this writer, there can be no danger of A. J. Davis losing his laurels; but in the face of the evidence presented, what can be thought of the statement of Mrs. Britten that Davis is not a Spiritualist?

I next pass on to consider "Flashes of Light," which I have quoted from. Mrs. Britten casts a slur on that work also. I should remark that the "Flashes of Light" is a re-publication from the Banner of Light, one of the leading publications of the Spiritualists in America. I may tell you also that these communications come through a Mrs. Conant; that it was by the direct requirement of the spirits that this book was issued; and that its compiler, Allan Putnam was specially selected by the spirits for the purpose of sending this book out into the world. Now, if the spirits selected Mrs. Britten to give those ten commandments and ten laws of right, might not the spirits have equally well selected A. Putnam to be the one to select from The Banner of Light these quotations, and to send them forth to the world? Yet she endeavours to cast a slur on them. Now, I have acted rather a strange part in those lectures. I have actually been using books that I have borrowed from the Spiritualists themselves (laughter)—books that have been kindly loaned to me by them—thus turning their own artillery upon themselves, and preventing the statement that these works are obsolete and of no authority. I told the gentleman from whom I borrowed the books for what purpose I required them, and they were most cheerfully lent. Now, these works form part of the current and standard literature of Spiritism of the present day, and I am astonished that Mrs. Britten should attempt to ignore them as though of no weight. From the manner in which Mrs. Britten puts herself forward—a manner which I cannot help thinking ill becomes a lady—one would suppose that she considers herself the highest and the only embodiment of spiritualistic literature and teaching. But I pass this by.

We come now to J. M. Spear, author of "The Educator," and Moses Hull. "John M. Spear," she says, "was a Universalist minister, whose tendencies, even while a minister, were towards Freelo; that he was rebuked by his people, and afterwards became a Spiritualist; but that he found no sympathy with his views, and was denounced by Mr. Partridge in the Spiritual Telegraphy With regard to this man I may say now, what I said last night, that the fact of his being a Freelo—taking for the moment Mrs. Britten's statement to be true of his being rebuked and rejected by his congregation, and of his finding an affinity to his own views amongst the Spiritualists—speak against rather than for Spiritism. I wish to say hero that I am not prepared to accept the statement of Mrs. Britten as to J. M. Spear, that he was a Freelo and had been rebuked by his congregation at the time he joined the Spiritualistic ranks. I cannot believe without evidence, and I ask Mrs Britten for evidence of the truth of her statement as to Spear. In my lecture, I gave evidence for every statement I made. My experience is, that Christians are not the credulous persons that Freethinkers and Spiritualists so often represent them; that the credulity is really on the opposite side. For my own part, I cannot believe without evidence, and
I ask the lady for the proof of this statement she has made. Mrs. Britten indulges far too much in generalities. She seems utterly unable to give the page, number, or year of the paper that would establish her position. But she says that this man was denounced in the *Spiritual Telegraph*. I will give you a specimen of the denunciation that this man received in this paper, which was so highly eulogised. Let me ask your indulgence while I read this extract. This man, while occupying a most prominent position among Spiritualists was guilty of a great moral wrong, and became the father of an illegitimate child. A few persons denounced his conduct, and were thus guilty of what A. J. Davis calls "moral atheism," of which he was determined not to be guilty. But while a few denounced the conduct of this man, he found many defenders, among whom was a Mr. Stearling, who wrote two articles to the highly eulogised *Spiritual Telegraph* in his defence, and in one of which the following choice writing occurs:—"Suppose, then, Miss H. has become a mother. Does that fact warrant you in calling Mr. Spear a libertine or debauchee? May he not, after all, have acted in this affair in perfect consistency with all his past life, a pure, good man? Again, does this fact of Miss H.'s maternity necessarily imply wrong or corruption in the movement? She desired to be the mother of a child, but she was not willing to become a legal wife, in which relation she might be compelled, not only to give birth to unwelcome children, but also to yield her body to the gratification of unhallowed passion. Now, sir, will you, believing this, condemn such conduct. I cannot, will not! I deem it a matter with her own soul, and the one she loved, and her God, with whom she is at peace. *The smiles of Heaven have been upon her*; her religious nature has been greatly blessed; her spiritual vision has been unfolded; and her prospects of health and happiness, and especially of usefulness to her race, greatly augmented, and she feels to bless God that strength and courage have been given her to walk thus calmly, deliberately, and peacefully, in a path ignored by a corrupt and inappreciative world." That is the kind of denunciation that J. M. Spear received in the *Spiritual Telegraph*, which Mrs. Britten so eulogised last night. And as to Miss H., listen to her bold and impudent effrontery, as she speaks for herself, in the same paper:—"I will exercise that dearest of all rights, the holiest and most sacred of all Heaven's gifts—the right of maternity—in the way which to me seemeth right; and no men or set of men, no church, no state, shall with old me from the realisation of that purest of all inspirations inherent in every true woman, the right to re-beget myself when, and by whom, and under such circumstances, as to me seems fit and best." Ladies and gentlemen, kindly pardon my reading to you such disgusting matter as that. I do so under protest, and in order that you may judge of the reliance to be placed upon the statement as to Spear being denounced.

I now come to Moses Hull. Mrs. Britten affirmed that he was another minister, was a freeloaver, and was universally denounced when he became a Spiritualist. Now, I have simply to affirm to-night, that Mrs. Britten, in stating what she did, made a statement which, with the utmost stretch of charity I can possibly use, I must say she could not but have known was incorrect—the statement is utterly devoid of truth, for he never was denounced when he became a Spiritualist.

Dr. Britten: He was denounced.

Mr. Green: Will Dr. Britten tell me when? (Interruption.) Pray be calm, friends. The interruption does not disturb me, because I have a full reply on this point. I am not speaking of what I do not know. (Loud cheers.) I again ask when Moses Hull was denounced? (Interruption.) Ladies and gentlemen, a great deal has yet to be said; therefore do not let your attention be taken away from the subject. You well remember that when Mrs. Britten made that statement last night, I asked her for the paper in which Moses Hull was denounced. She replied: "The Religio-Philosophical Journal." I then asked: "What number and what year?" She replied: "I don't know." You also heard her chairman—Mr. Stout, say: "I can give you the papers—The Religio-Philosophical Journal—in which Moses Hull was denounced." I knew that the chairman was stating what was really—well I will put it very mildly, and say that I believe he placed himself in a false position. (Cheers.) Mrs. Britten affirmed that when Moses Hull came to be a Spiritualist, he was denounced. Mr. Stout knew that he had seen denunciations of Moses Hull some two or three years ago; and therefore it was that he said "I have the papers." Now I knew very well that they could not prove that Moses Hull had been denounced when he joined the Spiritualists, because he was a good man at that time. I have here on this table the testimony of one who knew him well—that he was a good man. From fifteen to twenty years he has been a Spiritualist; and was a Freeloaver more than ten years ago, but you cannot find any denunciation of him prior to five or six years ago. Then the Woodhull Scandal, with which he was so greatly concerned, came out, and the Spiritualists, because of the blackness of the thing, were compelled to denounce him as a matter of policy. That was when he was denounced, and I say that Spiritualism has made Moses Hull a Freeloaver and a villain. (Loud cheers.) I may tell you that I went to Mr. Stout's early this morning, because I believe in looking into matters fully, and Mr. Stout had to admit that he I had not the papers. (Loud cheers.) He said that he thought Mr. Logan could show them to me, and he gave me a letter to Mr. Logan. I asked Mr. Logan for them, but he could not put his fingers on them, but he promised to let me have them if he could. I received this evening a letter from Mr. Stout, containing a number of references to the papers, but not the papers themselves. Nor have I yet received those papers in which Moses Hull is said to have been denounced. In this note, Sir. Stout makes the admission, that...
this denunciation took place in 1873, and as this was quite ten years after Hull became a Spiritist, Mr. Stout withdraws from a false position, into which he had rushed with a want of caution not usually characteristic of his profession. Thus, away to the winds, or like the morning mists before the rising sun, go all the statements about Moses Hull having been denounced. (Cheers.) Let me give you a statement of his character by one who knew him well. When persons leave one society of religionists to unite with another it is too often the case that disparaging remarks are made as to the character or ability of the person leaving. When the opposite is the case, it may be regarded as an evidence of a conscientious regard for truth, and as being a high testimony to the character of the person commended. Elder W. H. Waggoner, who was a minister of the same church with which Hull was formerly connected, thus speaks of him:—"There is one name we must mention in this connection, and we do it with especial regret. It is that of Moses Hull. Having associated with him on fraternal terms, having loved him as a brother, and esteemed him as a Christian, we can but lament the course he has pursued and the position he occupies. Eccentric and impulsive, he needs the restraining influences of Christianity to be useful to society. We have intimately known him when he believed the Bible, and loved and defended its truths; then he highly honored and appreciated the institution of marriage. But he embraced Spiritualism, and where is he now? Let his own words answer." Then follows a quotation from his book. This is the testimony of one who intimately knew Moses Hull. In the face of what I have said, and of this testimony, I have again to ask for the production on the part of Mrs. Britten of the evidence against Moses Hull. (Cheers.)

Then there is the testimony of Dr. A. B. Child, whom she represented as a "kind, good-natured optimist," but whom she described as of no weight as a representative Spiritualist. It is a singular thing that Mrs. Britten should have so well learned the art of the lawyer: "If you have no case, of course abuse the opposite side." If you can only pull to pieces a man's character, or show that he is of no weight, you have done all that you need to invalidate his testimony. Individually I know nothing of A. B. Child, and many other writers upon Spiritualism. If Mrs. Britten pulls her own people to pieces, it is not for me to bolster them up. I have here a quotation in reference to Dr Child, and a commendation of a work he had recently published, and which I will now read to you. It is from a paper by Moses Hull, the Monthly Clarion, of which he was editor in 1866, when he was a very "light" amongst the Spiritualists, and, so far from being denounced, was highly honoured, and accepted universally amongst them as a talented lecturer and debater. In speaking of Dr. Child's work, "Christ and the People," he says:—"Everybody knows that Dr. Child never speaks without saying something worth hearing. In this book he has thrown out some of his best thoughts." In the Banner of Light—one of the most important Spiritist papers in the United States—there is an advertisement, in which the editor gives his opinion of this work of Dr. Child's, in which not only Freeloove-ism, but many other enormities are inculcated. The commendation runs thus:—"This book should find its way to every family... Its liberality reaches the very shores of infinity. It is born of Spiritualism, and reaches for the manhood of Christ. It is the most fearless presentation of the folly of the present moral and religious systems of the land of any book yet written. It is free from fault-finding; but its truthful descriptions of self-conceived goodness everywhere, in morals and religion, are withering. Through sacrifice and sin it shows the open gate of heaven for every human being." Now it would be difficult to conceive of higher eulogy than this. This book is said to be free from fault-finding, but for what could fault be found, seeing that every person has liberty to do [unclear: just] what seems right in his own eyes? But I would ask what weight can be placed upon Mrs. Britten's depreciation of Dr. Child, when not only the Monthly Clarion, but the Banner of Light—the leading Spiritist newspaper of America—speak of him and his book in such eulogistic language? Surely, under such sponsorship, his teachings are as truly representative of Spiritualism as those of Mrs. Britten. (Cheers.) Let us hear a little of Spiritualistic teaching as found in this highly-commended book. On page 27 he says:—"The present laws of marriage, that now give birth to regrets and sorrows unnumbered, to prostitution, with its long train of curses and agonies, will be abandoned for a holier, purer, diviner revelation, that will ere long be given to the people." Thus marriage is to be laid aside, its necessary restraints are to be broken down, and something which is here called "holier and purer," but which is really license, is to take its place. On pages 28 and 29 Dr. Child says:—"A religion more spiritual will be discovered and acknowledged... a religion without written laws, without commandments, without creeds"—thus leaving every man to make his own law, and without any restraint, save that which the strong arm of the law affords, to do just what may be pleasing in his own sight. Is this not the very essence of lawlessness. (Cheers.) But he proceeds:—"A religion too sacred to be spoken, too pure to be defiled, too generous to be judged, resting upon an uncertain outside standard of rectitude, upon no dogma of another, no purity of earthly life, no glory of earthly perfection—a religion that every soul possesses by natural endowment—not one more than another. This religion is simply desire." Now, what kind of religion must that be that is "too sacred to be spoken, too pure to be defiled, and too generous to be judged?" Must it not be a religion the very mention of which would pollute the soul? How can it be "too pure to be defiled," unless it is so impure in its nature that impurity can sink no lower? Too sacred to be spoken! Is anything too sacred to be spoken that is of a pure kind? Is not the full meaning of such language clearly apparent? The religion of desire
is the doing of that which our own heart prompts, no matter how evil in itself. The religion of desire may well be described in the language I have quoted, for were it "spoken," its language would fill the world with foulness and pollute the very air. (Cheers.) Such is a part of the language of Dr. Child, and he as fairly represents the true nature of Spiritism as does Mrs. Britten.

I have taken all those authors that Mrs. Britten examined. Seven of those I quoted from she has examined, but the others she has passed by. I have shown you what weight there is to be placed upon her statements. And in so doing, and in establishing the credibility of my authorities, I have really overturned all her arguments. There is not another particle of argument in her lecture on which she can stand, because having proved the reliability of my authorities; seeing that she did not call in question the statements that I had quoted from them, my position is thus so much more firmly established as to be absolutely invulnerable against all the assaults that she or her friends may make against it.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Britten, "did Mr. Green not quote from Adin Ballou, Lizzie Doten, the pure and noble-minded William and Mary Howitt," &c., &c., &c. I may remark that Adin Ballou is one of the most excellent of the Spiritualists; one of those men who would no more go the lengths that Mrs. Britten does, than be guilty of grave crime, and because of this he is not held in high estimation by many Spiritists. In one of the works I have on this table, Warren Chase, one of the most smooth and insinuating advocates of Spiritism, speaks of him in sneering and scornful language. He says:—"He goes as far as the creed he has set up will allow, but dare not step one point over. He is not like a convict, with ball and chain, but like a martyr, tied to a stake, from which he cannot escape." "Life Line, p. 217." While he has no good word for the conscientious Ballou, Chase speaks in the most glowing terms of the adulterer J. M. Spear, whom he represents as "highly eccentric, and devotedly honest and philanthropic of all mediums," speaks of being greatly pleased with, and strongly attracted to him, and as receiving through him certain highly prized communications. In the estimation of the great bulk of American Spiritualists, Warren Chase, John M. Spear, and men of this class, are far more highly thought of than such as Ballou, who, while believing in Spirit Communion, will not countenance the excesses to which many of them go. Ballou, therefore, as a representative of what Spiritism really is, does not rank so high as many of those from whom I have quoted. In regard to Lizzie Doten I may say that she is another very characteristic representative of Spiritualism. I have here an invocation which she uttered before a Boston audience prior to one of her so-called inspirational addresses, and which is reported in the Banner of Light of December 21, 1861. She uttered it in the Lyceum Hall, Boston, on December 8, 1861. You will remember that Mrs. Britten stated last evening that the Spiritualists, prior to their addresses, invoked the Deity in as pious and reverent language as any ministers did. Now, I would ask, What kind of Deity do they invoke? Possibly they may invoke a Deity if the Devil be one. Now this Lizzie Doten, whom Mrs. Britten has cited, invokes the Devil! I will read to you her invocation; and mark you, it is no caricature. It was uttered as a solemn invocation, prior to her address in the Lyceum Hall:—"O Lucifer, thou son of the morning, who fell from thy high estate, and whom mortals are prone to call the embodiment of evil, we lift our voices unto thee! We know that thou canst not harm us unless by the will of the Almighty, of whom thou art a part and portion, and in whose economy thou playest thy part, and we cannot presume to sit in judgment over Deity! From the depths of thine infamy streams forth the divine truth! Why should we turn from thee? Does not the same inspiration rule us all? Is one, in God's sight, better than another?" You will perceive that she does not claim to be better than the Devil, (Roars of Laughter.) Friends, when I think of the folly of these persons, I cannot help smiling myself, though from my heart I pity them. But you will please to remember, to borrow Mrs. Britten's own phrase, that "they are not my words, but those of Lizzie Doten." (More laughter.) She continues, "We know thou art yet to come up and stand before the throne of the Ancient of Days, hand in hand with thee! As thou hast been the star of the morning, thou wilt become again an angel of light. O Satan, we will subdue thee by our love, and thou wilt kneel humbly with us at the throne of God!" So much for this lady to whom Mrs. Britten has referred us.

Now with regard to William and Mary Howitt. Let me tell you that William Howitt is a believer, not in Mrs. Britten, but in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the divine Son of God; and is a believer in His atonement for man's sins. In the Christian World newspaper of last year was a letter in which William Howitt denounces the great majority of the Spiritualists of England, because of their outrage upon Christianity, and their general infidel tendencies; and severed his connection entirely with that class of Spiritualists who take up the same position as Mrs. Britten. Do you suppose that William Howitt, who, with his wife, is called by Mrs. Britten "the noble and pure minded," think as does Mrs. Britten? Nothing of the kind. He was as much opposed to Mrs. Britten as I am, and would have denounced her as strongly. (Cheers.) Not only so, but in the Medium and Daybreak for May 7, 1878, is a long letter, which I am sorry I have not time to read to you, wherein he has rebutted the statements of certain Spiritualists who said that he had not protested against these matters at the time when they were first apparent, and he again declares his entire severance from that class.
Now, let me say that I quoted from no less than 34 authors during my four lectures, and Mrs. Britten has only noticed seven of them; so that there remains the balance of that number—27—which she has not touched. Is not 34 a fair number of authors to quote in four lectures? (Applause.) You will find them all given in the published report of the lectures, and I may remark that it is not a long string of names repeated simply to catch the ear, but from whom substantial citations were given. In addition to those she has named, I quoted from, Joel Tiffany, J. L. Morse, Dr. Gridley, Dr. Potter, Dr. Hare, Dr. Randolph, Dr. Hatch, Hudson Tuttle, T. L. Harris, Dr. R. J. Halleck, H. J. Browne, Mr. Woodman, A. P. Coombes, Wheeler, Perry, McDonald, J. H. Whitney of the New York Pathfinder, Medium and Daybreak, Spiritual Magazine, Religio-Philosophical Journal, Herald of Progress, Harbinger of Light, Healing of the Nations, Age of Freedom, Kingdom of Heaven, Banner of Light, Spiritual Telegraph, &c., and from Mrs. Britten herself. But of all these she takes not the slightest notice, but cries out, "Why did Mr. Green not quote from me." (Laughter.) "Why did he not quote my 'Facts and Frauds.'" (More laughter.) If she had made me a present of her work, I would gladly have done so, and thus have shown more fully how her admissions often damage her cause. (Laughter.) But let me just say this to the lady's friends, that I do not think that Spiritualists generally will justify Mrs. Britten in her assumption of being the very embodiment of all Spiritualistic excellence and teaching in her own person. I was very sorry to see the egotism she manifested in sounding her own praises so loudly in her lecture. Persons listening to her would imagine that she considered the whole Spiritualistic fabric rested upon her shoulders, and that she was its high priestess. Her statement as to her ten commandments and her laws of right having been translated into so many languages, and framed and hung up in the chambers of so many great personages, was especially distressing, and showed that she ignored the wise saying, "Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth." Whatever other graces may adorn the lady's character, that of humility is most evidently absent. (Cheers.)

Let me now notice the lady's review of my lectures, although, having replied to her criticisms upon the authors I have cited, this might be regarded as a work of supererogation.

In reference to my statement that "Spiritism is unworthy of confidence," and that it is impossible to identify the spirits, Mrs. Britten says that the very existence of Spiritualism gives a blank denial to my statement, and that millions have identified the spirits to their own satisfaction. In reply to this, I have but to refer her to an authority whom she most highly eulogised last evening, and who declares that it is impossible to identify the spirits. Mr. Partridge, in the Spiritual Telegraph of June 11, 1857, says "that spirits unquestionably can, and often do personate other spirits, and that, too, often with such perfection as, for the time being, To Defy Every effort to detect the deception."

The full quotation may be seen in "The Devil's Sword Blunted," pages 24 and 25.

In the paragraph from which these sentences are taken he so fully admits the impossibility of satisfactorily identifying the spirits that he gravely advises that identification should never be sought, and that the inquirer should be content with the assurance that it is really a spirit that is communicating. The discrepancy between Mrs. Britten and this editor I must leave for them to settle. I have only further to say, that even supposing spirits could be identified, where is the comfort derivable from that fact, seeing that, as I so conclusively showed in my lectures, upon Mrs. Britten's principle that "there is no forgiveness," and "no escape from the penalty of sin, either here or hereafter except by personal atonement," every human being, upon their entrance into the spirit-world, must pass through a period of intense and agonising suffering, as an atonement for wrong-doing here. Mrs. Britten candidly admitted last evening that many of the spirits were deceivers, thus granting my position; for if many of the spirits are deceivers, seeing that this class is the one most anxious to, and most capable of communicating, and bearing in mind the impossibility of identification, the worthlessness and unreliability of Spiritism is at once demonstrated.

In regard to my second lecture, in which I affirmed that Spiritism is opposed to all law, and is destructive of the distinction between right and wrong, and consequently of morality also, Mrs. Britten asked—what all these laws are? and she proceeded to enunciate four points of agreement which she affirmed constituted a Spiritualist. But what are these four points? Simply four bare walls which would admit within their circumference characters of every imaginable kind. But. Mrs. Britten again makes a fatal admission when she says that Spiritism "has no creed, no rules, no authoritative teaching "; for if there are no rules, and no authority, then what is this but that every one is left to do just what seems good in their own eyes, and when a principle of this kind is enunciated, thoughtful persons well know what will be the result. By its denial of a superior being to whom man is responsible, and its affirmation that man is alone his only law and judge, Spiritism does emphatically place itself against all law, both human and divine; and by its denial of the existence of sin, and calling it simply "misdirection" and "undeveloped good," it does unquestionably, as I have most fully shown in the lectures, destroy all distinction between right and wrong.

My statements as to the danger of spirit mediumship in my third lecture appear to have greatly excited Mrs. Britten, and in disproof of my statements, she not only affirms that the opposite is the case, but cites herself as a living proof of her assertion, and also adduces cases where persons have been cured of blindness and other
ailments by direct spirit agency. I can only reply to this, that as there are many Spiritists in Dunedin who
profess to be in communication with spirits, some of whom claim to be "spirit doctors," that it is a pity they are
not sufficiently benevolent to relieve some at least of the many cases of blindness and other infirmities that are
so abundant around us. If these spirits claim the power, but have it not, they are impostors; and if they possess it
and do not exercise it, they are lacking in that benevolent desire for the welfare of man which they so loudly
claim; and in either case are utterly unworthy of notice. As to the dangers of mediumship, I may mention, in
addition to the numerous instances cited in my lectures, that on pages 454, and 455 of Mrs. Britten's work,
"American and Modern Spiritualism," is a most fearful representation of the horrors and dangers to which
voluntary mediums are subject. The medium is there represented as passing through most fearful agonies, and
to have been besmeared with clots and patches of fresh blood. In Dr. Eugene Crowell's work on "Modern
Spiritualism," is a case on pages 331, and 333, in which a medium, by direct spirit incitation was led to take an
axe, and chop off the head of an inoffensive man while sleeping, against whom he had not the slightest
ill-feeling; and on page 334, the Doctor cites a case from a work of Mrs. Britten's in which she speaks of a
young girl who was incited to commit the most horrible wickedness by direct spirit influence. As to Mrs.
Britten's statement that mediumship does not injure, and her request that I would give twenty special cases in
which injury has resulted, I would refer the meeting to the cases given by me in the lectures; and also to the
statements made by Dr. Potter, Dr. Randolph, Hudson Tuttle, J. F. Whitney, and others—all of whom were
Spiritualists—and who affirm that not twenty cases merely could be cited, but hundreds upon hundreds. I
myself have personally known a number of cases in which these results have been present.

In reviewing my fourth lecture, Mrs. Britten charges me with misrepresenting the paragraph I quoted from
her book, and with gravely misunderstanding the title of her lecture. I have not time now to defend my
quotation, and to show that I have not really misrepresented her, but leave those wishing to further look into the
matter to do so. They will find the quotation on page 331 of "Modern American Spiritualism." Supposing,
however, that Mrs. Britten had been misunderstood in this, there still remain the numerous quotations given,
and which clearly establish the charge that Spiritism is atheistical. Those quotations were given from Spiritists
of the greatest eminence, whose words Mrs. Britten has not attempted to question. Hudson Tuttle stands in the
front rank of Spiritists, and as the quotations have been given from him and others, the charge cannot be
overturned until Spiritism repudiates the whole of its literature. Of the same character is her review of my
statement that "Spiritism is the enemy of marriage, and the forerunner of social and political anarchy." The
remark that "Probably to Mr. Green's views the present marriage relations are all perfect," is no answer to the
numerous quotations which I gave showing that Spiritism is the deadly foe of marriage, and would introduce
social and political anarchy. As this matter was fully demonstrated in my lectures, I shall not here enlarge upon
it further than to say, that Mrs. Britten's own words are the strongest condemnation upon the matter; for she has
opened declared, that not only was opposition to the marriage institution, and the advocacy of Freelove-ism
associated with Spiritism over the length and breadth of the United States, but that the Spiritualists were the
only sect and the only people who openly taught this abomination of Freelove. While Mrs. Britten's own
admission remains, further proof of the truthfulness of my charge is not required In my published lectures,
however, further evidence is given in abundance.

I wish now to notice a few points which Mrs. Britten mentioned towards the close of her lecture last night.
She spoke of the number of Christians confined in prison, and of there being so few mediums there; that there
was only 1 per cent, of mediums to about 80 per cent, of Christians. It is possible she may be under a wrong
impression in regard to who are Christians, and may imagine that all those not calling themselves infidels are
Christians. Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." The only Christian kingdom in existence is the one
composed of all those who thoroughly believe in and love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are seeking to do His will.
I say that those, and those only, are Christians in the Scriptural sense, and that the title of every other person to
the name is altogether an untrue claim. (Cheers.) No matter though Mrs. Britten calls these persons in the gaols
by the name of Christians, their title is not that which the Scriptures approve, nor their morality that which they
inculcate. With regard to the morality of Spiritualism, if time were not so far advanced I would read you a
number of statements from Spiritist writers showing clearly the character of the system, from a moral point of
view; but you will find sufficient of them quoted in the published lectures. There is a vast difference between
Spiritualism and Christianity in this matter of morality. Suppose every Chris- tian were vile and wrong in his
conduct, his only standard—the Bible—condemns him in the most unmeasured terms, and gives not the
slightest countenance to his conduct. It is not according to the professions he may make, but according to his
conduct, that the Lord Jesus Christ is his guide and leader. For every crime which so-called Christians may
commit, I will show the strongest condemnation in the Bible; but for every crime in the calendar, and for every
deed of infamy which a Spiritualist may commit, I will find sanction after sanction from the spirits and from
Spiritist writers. I repeat, that whilst Christians are condemned for their wrong-doing in the strongest possible
terms, Spiritualists are upheld in theirs; it being declared that they alone are the proper judges of the
righteousness of their conduct, and that no one, other than themselves, has the slightest right to judge them, or to say that they have done wrong.

Mrs. Britten said that Christianity has burned alive, slain, and tortured large numbers of its own ranks for questioning the teachings of its priests. I emphatically deny that Christianity has done this, although I am compelled painfully to confess that some taking its name have done it. For three centuries, Christianity won many bloodless victories, save that which was shed by its martyrs in attestation of their faith in Christ. (Applause.) Luring those three hundred years the triumphs of Christianity were greater than at any other time, so that the Pagan temples were closed, the priests left unemployed, and the sacrifices remained in the markets unsold. But when Constantine, seeing the large numbers of the most respectable of his subjects who were Christians, and in order to secure their co-operation, pretended to become a convert to Christianity by a miracle, then external Christianity lost its beauty in its marriage with the State, and from that day to the present, the history of the scarlet lady mentioned in the Revelations has been identified with corruption, and with the persecution of some of the holiest and purest who have ever trodden the earth. (Applause.) To charge this upon Christianity, however, would be to be guilty of a grave error.

Then, further, Mrs. Britten affirmed, that the golden rule of Christianity is acknowledged by many a profound scholar to be a plagiarism from the sacred writings of the Hindoos, and Chinese. I am not a profound scholar, therefore my statement is not of much weight; but I would venture to ask Mrs. Britten,—just as I previously asked her through the public press to give the name of the author upon whose evidence she affirmed that the facts of the Gospel history had been found in rock inscriptions which were known to have existed 2,000 years before the Jesus of the Gospel was born, but which evidence she never gave—will she give me the evidence that the Hindoo and Chinese philosophers did not get their half truths from this very book? for I admit that there are half truths in these ancient writings, but the whole truth is only to be found in the Scriptures. Had there been time, I would like to have presented evidence from Josephus in his argument against Appion, which would clearly show that Pythagoras, Aristotle, Plato, and others, were all well acquainted with the Jews and their sacred writings, and that they admit that they were greatly indebted for much valuable knowledge to them. Aristotle himself freely admits, that he was far more indebted for knowledge to a Jewish instructor, than the Jew was indebted to him, so that much of that which is accredited to heathen sages may really have a Biblical source. I cheerfully admit, that in some of the early writings there are approaches to the pure moral teaching of the Scriptures; because, the nearer you go to original sources, the more pure is the stream of teaching found to be. If, for example, the Hindoo Vedas are taken, among much that is very simple and childish, you find in them teachings greatly in harmony with scriptural sentiments, and indications of a consciousness of sin and need of pardon, such as are to be found in the Bible itself. This statement, that the golden rule of Christianity as plagiarised from the Hindoo and Chinese writings, and others of similar character, need to be received with great caution, because mere statements are of no weight, and there is far too great a fondness on the part of the opponents of the Bible to indulge in vague generalities. I had a special instance of this only recently, during my residence in Melbourne. A number of Spiritualistic and Freethought tracts were distributed about the door of the place of worship where I was labouring, in which tracts it was asserted that the Gospel narrative of the life of Christ was a plagiarism of the life of the Hindoo deity, Krishna, who, it was affirmed, among other coincidences with the Gospel narrative, had been crucified between two thieves. The statements of these tracts startled me greatly because they were given forth with such positiveness, and there was such an air of truth about them, seeing that the Bhagavad Gita, which contains the Hindoo history of Krishna's life, was given as the authority for these statements. I spent many hours in the Melbourne Public Library looking through the Hindoo literature, and found that there was no real foundation for the statement made, and that instead of Krishna being crucified, he was shot by a hunter in the heel in mistake for a gazelle. (Loud laughter.) So it is in regard to many of the statements found in infidel writers; when they come to be examined they are found to have no basis in fact.

With Mrs. Britten's remarks as to the book on the Confessional, and which was endorsed by seven hundred ministers of the Church of England, I am not in the slightest degree concerned, and would join Mrs. Britten in the strongest condemnation of the work, as would also multitudes of Christians. Such things are condemned by Christianity in a far stronger manner than Mrs. Britten's words would condemn them, and they belong, not to the religion of Jesus, but to Papal Rome. I take my stand simply upon the Word of God, without any creeds or additions made by men. However excellent a creed may be, whether it be the Westminster, the Augsburg, or any other, it is an unnecessary thing, and too often proves an obstacle in the way of the advancement of truth. Not until Christians throw aside their creeds utterly, and stand by the Bible alone, without any of the additions of men, shall we have that power in the defence of truth, which truly belongs to Christianity. And if the prevailing unbelief, and the consequent need of true union in order to the defence of the truth, should lead to this closer clinging to the simple and pure records of the religion of Jesus, then will a great service have been rendered to the whole Christian world by what at first seemed to be only a calamity.
As my previous lectures will be obtainable in pamphlet form, and contain so much corroborative evidence of the statements I have made, and as the time is so far advanced, I think it will be wise of me not to trespass further on your attention now, except to notice one thing. You heard Mrs. Britten say last night that there could be "no forgiveness," and that every person must render 'personal atonement' for all sins committed. Now, atonement to whom? Is it to the person to whom the wrong has been done? And, further, what is the nature of this atonement, and what is its object? Mrs. Britten's theory is, that if a man has been murdered he is prevented, because of that fact, from progressing as he otherwise would have done, until the murderer comes and helps him on. Because a man suffers an injury in this life, he has to suffer hereafter; or, at least, to wait on the will of the wretch who injured him for his sufferings to cease! Now, is there comfort in this view? And then, further, every person must pay the full penalty of their wrongdoings and sins committed, or there can be no forgiveness, neither here nor hereafter. Now, what comfort is to be derived from this view, unless we are in the same desirable position that Mrs. Britten represents herself as being in when she says that she will not be hypocrite enough to call herself "a miserable sinner," nor "allow any other person to do so." (Laughter.) However, as we have seen, some other person does call her "a miserable sinner." (Cheers.) The Melbourne Spiritualists charge her with deliberate falsification. Who is to be the judge? Mrs. Britten or they? If she is a "miserable sinner," must she make atonement to them? What is to be her condition in the spirit world? One of misery, because, in her own language, she must make personal atonement for the wrong she has done? But the question remains—who is to judge? I can see that there is a very difficult point here. The Melbourne Spiritualists say she committed a wrong; she says she did not. Who is to be the umpire? I would like that delicate problem solved. (Cheers.)

There is another matter which I ought not to pass by. Her theory is that if a man has been a liar, a thief, and everything that is bad, say for twenty years, and suppose that he has done persons injury in this world during those twenty years, in the spirit world he will have to make atonement to all those persons for the wrongs done to them, because, you see, right living afterwards will not remedy the wrongs themselves without atonement being made; and the consequence is, that by this theory, all such persons must look forward to years and years of absolute misery. Now, Mrs Britten professes to have a great deal of love for these poor creatures, for she says: "We believe they will progress, and get through it all." But it seems to me that it is very poor comfort to persons to know that there may be 500, or 1,000, or 10,000 years of misery for them before they may get out of it. I confess that I could not derive much comfort from it. I am also at a loss to understand where this "kind, merciful, tender, and loving parent" is, if he can provide no means whereby the wrongs of men may be put right, and the innocent victims of those wrongs prevented from suffering their consequences for years and years in the spirit world. I cannot conceive of the existence of a just God, if those who have been injured in this world by others are compelled to suffer a continuance of injury in the next world, merely because of the injurer's unwillingness to remedy the evil, and to render the help necessary in order to their deliverance.

But let us compare the comfort which Christianity provides, with the so-called comfort of the Spiritualistic theory, and further notice Mrs. Britten's sarcastical remarks as to the murderer being forgiven if he will only believe. Suppose I take the case of a man who has lived for fifty years, and a life of sin during nearly the whole of that time. He has been a liar, a thief, a swearer, and so on. Now, if at fifty years of age, I can convince him, by representing to him the loving character of God as shown in the Gospels, that God has been loving him all his life, and is anxious to save him from the consequences of his own wrong-doing; if I tell him that God is infinitely just and pure and compassionate; and I can convince him that whilst he has been acting wickedly in sinning against God, God has been loving him with a perfect love; if, I say, I can produce in his mind, by this representation of the love of God as shown in the gospel, the conviction that sin is hateful, injurious in its consequences, both now and hereafter, that it is an abomination in the sight of God, and that he—the sinner—justly deserved all the punishment that he might receive because of his sins—if I can make that man resolve that he will sin no more—and I lead this man—who has been so bad a man in the past—to become a penitent and humble-minded man, earnestly desirous of doing right, would it not be in harmony with what we as parents would do in regard to our children, and be in accordance with what we would suppose God would do to His creatures, were He to say, "Though you have sinned in the past very grievously, yet I do not reproach you, go and sin no more, and I will banish the recollection of your sin from my mind, and I will freely pardon you." Would not that be much more like the character of a God of Love, and more in accordance with our truest conceptions of the fitness of things, and infinitely better than this theory of the Spiritualists, of no forgiveness? Whilst I do not believe that, in the murderer professing to believe in Christ, there is always evidence of real change, because death-bed repentances are very often found to be unreliable in the event of recovery. Yet, still—when there is a thorough change of heart, an utter forsaking of sin, without which there can be no salvation—if the murderer, at the last moment, can be brought into a right feeling and to see his true position, and thus have a new direction given to his moral faculties, and be turned into a path of moral and spiritual progress: is there any injustice, anything contrary to the truest love, or out of harmony with the character of the
Deity in that man being forgiven and saved? Let me appeal to you who are parents. Suppose a son of yours goes into a course of wrong-doing, and leaves the parental home; would you not do everything in your power to bring him back to the paths of virtue? And if he comes back and says, "Mother or Father, I am truly sorry for what I have done in the past; I know I have been ungrateful, and have not acted as a son, but forgive me and I will try by my life to show how truly sorry I am;" would you not fall on his neck and and say : "My son, name it no more; it is all past, and I shall not think of it again; it shall be as though it had never been?" Would you not actually give to that so increased evidences of your love in order to let him see how thoroughly you had forgiven him and cast from your memory all recollection of his wrong-doing? I know that you would do so. And that is what God is now willing to do in the case of every repentant sinner. Will any man stand up and say that to act thus is to be guilty of "violation of justice?" Would it not be in harmony with the truest love, and our highest conception of the Deity, and be adapted to the deepest needs of the human heart? This is the true Christian philosophy. The more I understand of Christianity the more I am ravished with its beauty. I am carried away with the conception of the infinite wisdom, the grandeur, the sublimity, and yet the surpassing simplicity of the scheme. God could not pardon sin without satisfaction being rendered to His broken laws. As our Creator and common Parent He loved us and sought our salvation, but as the moral Governor of the Universe, it was needful that he should vindicate his laws by the punishment of the wrong-doers. As one man could not die for his brother, because all lives were forfeited on account of personal sin, and as God loved us with an intense love, and desired our salvation, therefore, to harmonize the requirements of Justice, Mercy, and Love, God Himself, in the person of Christ—the God-Man—bore the chastisement due on account of sin, so that God might be manifestly just and yet the justifier of those who believe in Jesus.

There are a number of other questions I should like to have touched upon, but these I must now leave. I think I have presented sufficient to-night to show that Christians have nothing of which to be ashamed in this matter. I would say to those who profess the name of Christ—Be bold; do not be afraid of making an open profession of your faith in Christ. Let no scoffs and sneers ever make you ashamed of owning Jesus as your Saviour. In this matter, we have nothing to gain but everything to lose by relinquishing Christ. Whether Spiritism be true or not, we are safe while we cling to Christ; while, should it prove to be a device of Satan—as I am persuaded it is—sad indeed will be the condition of those who have been resting upon so broken a reed. Individually, I claim no special right to speak upon this matter, but as a servant of the Lord Jesus I dared not keep silence, I must speak. I feel in my heart such a conviction of the fearful dangers of Spiritualism that out of the abundance of my heart I must speak. (Cheers.) I dare not be silent. Although men may sneer—although Mrs. Britten may sneer, as she did very freely last evening, almost to perfection (laughter)—I say that I cannot refrain from speaking. (Applause.) If, for his advocacy of truth, and his denunciation of error and sin, our Master was called Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and everything that was vile, we who profess to be his servants must be prepared to bear a portion of that reproach which was heaped in such abundance upon him. As watchmen upon the towers of Zion, our Master calls upon us to sound the clarion notes of danger as we see it drawing so near. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the very patient hearing you have given to me. Though charged by Mrs. Britten with various misdemeanours, I am conscious of having spoken that only which I believe in my heart to be true. (Cheers.) If I have not given abundant proof of the truth of my assertions in reference to Spiritism, you are capable of judging for yourselves, and to you, therefore, I leave the judgment in this case, with the fullest confidence that your judgment will be in accordance with truth. (Prolonged applause.)

**THE CHAIRMAN:**

I have now to intimate that Mr. Green will answer any questions, but they must be relevant and within reason.

**Dr. BRITTEN:**

I wish to ask Mr. Green a question. Will he take the *Harbinger of Light* in his hand, and state to this audience whether he knows anything of the question referred to in that paper, and in which he charges Mrs. Britten with untruth?

**Mr. GREEN:**

Friends, you will remember that I prefaced my remarks by saying, that if a person's enemies said he was untruthful, there might possibly be a misunderstanding, but if one's friends said he was so, whilst there still might be a misunderstanding, the likelihood of it was less than in the previous case. Now, I said that Mrs. Britten, who is an opponent, had charged me with deliberate untruths, but I showed from this paper that her friends, and not her enemies, had charged her with deliberate untruths. (Cheers.) I did not charge her with that. Far be it from me to so charge anyone. I have merely said that certain statements she made are not true. I would not say that she has told deliberate untruths, though I cannot see how she could be ignorant that her statements were not true, but there I leave the matter. I do not know the merits of that controversy in Melbourne. She may be as free from blame in the matter as an angel, for anything that I know personally. I only adduce it to show how very unwise it is for her to charge me with deliberate lying, and which charge it is impossible for her to
prove, when her own friends have charged her with the same thing.

Dr. Britten:

You have made statements so bold, and have read letters calculated to injure Mrs. Britten's character and her pursuit; do you not think that you are bound to show that there is some foundation for your assertions, and to give this audience an opportunity of judging? (To the audience) He has had ample opportunity of doing so by the Age he has referred to.

Mr. Green:

This paper is one——

Dr. Britten:

What is it?

Mr. Green:

It is the Harbinger of Light. Have you not seen it?

Dr. Britten:

I have.

Mr. Green:

Then you know its contents. (Loud cheers.) Just let me say in connection with this matter, that I have nothing to do with the merits of the case.

Dr. Britten (excitedly):

Then you have no right to use it.

Mr. Green:

I am sorry that Dr. Britten cannot see that what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose. (Laughter and cheers.) Mrs. Britten has charged me with deliberate untruth——

Dr. Britten:

No, she does not.

Mr. Green:

In her letter in the Daily Times, in her hand-bills, and in her lecture last evening, she charged me with telling deliberate falsehoods.

Dr. Britten:

What she charged you with was that you had denounced people in Dunedin as Spiritualists. If I am not (Interruption)——

Mr. Green:

Is Dr. Britten prepared to affirm, on his honour as a man, that his good-wife did not affirm that I told deliberate falsehoods? (Loud cheers.) A copy of the Daily Times of last Friday (July 11) will settle the matter.

Dr. Britten:

You have got hold of a wrong charge. (Interruption.)

Mr. Green:

She says that I have told deliberate falsehoods, Dr. Britten; these are her own words.

Dr. Britten:

If Mrs. Britten said so—if there is a charge of deliberate falsehood brought forward (Interruption)——

Mr. Green:

I leave Mrs. Britten's friends to charge her. It is not my business to do so. Ladies and gentlemen, is it not a fair position that I have taken up in this matter? (Cries of "yes" and "no," and loud cheers.) I say that I am not untruthful. (Prolonged cheering.) I have tried to give you proof of every proposition I have presented. I do not wish to be uncharitable to the lady. I would not charge her with untruth; but I do say this—and the matter, to use a mild phrase, presses heavily on her—it is her friends, those who know her, who charge her with deliberate falsehood. (Loud cheers.)

[A number of other questions were presented by other gentlemen, but as they were not relevant to the subject of the lecture, they are not inserted.]

The Chairman:

I have to ask you, friends, to award with acclamation a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Green for his lecture to-night. (Prolonged applause.)

Mr. Green:

Ladies and gentlemen, I have to thank you sincerely for your kind appreciation of my feeble effort to expose error and advocate the truth. (Applause)

The meeting then terminated.

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Contradictions of the Bible,

AN OUTLINE OF TWO LECTURES ON THE BIBLE, DELIVERED IN THE QUEEN'S THEATRE, SYDNEY, ON OCTOBER 17 AND 31, 1875.

By J. Tyerman.

Reprinted from the "Stockwhip."

Price, Three-Pence.

Preface.

I HAVE received many inquiries from persons in Sydney, Melbourne, and other parts, as to whether I purposed publishing the course of lectures—some twelve or thirteen—that I am delivering at short intervals, on the Bible. I am thankful for the interest thus manifested in the subject dealt with, and have replied, that I trust I shall be able to comply with such a general wish after a while. In the meantime, I have thought it well to issue this little Tract, in the hope that it may do some good, in opening the eyes of the people to see one of the greatest and most mischievous delusions that ever misled mankind—namely, that the book called the Bible is the inspired and infallible word of God. It is not against the Bible as a book that I am contending, but against what I regard as erroneous views of its origin, character, and authority, which have so long been palmed upon the world as Divine truths.

When I state that the two lectures on the Contradictions of the Bible occupied over an hour each in delivery, it will be seen that the following reports only give an outline of what I said on the subject; but condensed, and imperfect, as the sketches are, I trust they will be the means of convincing some of the Bibliolaters of our time, that the book they prize so highly is one of the most contradictory, and consequently unreliable, productions in the English language. I have only produced a few of the many irreconcilable discrepancies that mar the harmony of the Bible; and yet quite sufficient to satisfy any impartial reader that, apart from the number of other objections that can be urged against it, this one feature completely destroys its claim to be acknowledged as a Divine and unerring guide for mankind.

I appeal to our Spiritualistic and Freethought friends in these colonies help to give this little Tract as wide a circulation as possible, especially among professing Christians. When such sham defenders of the popular faith as the Revs. Dr. Barry and James Greenwood, yield so much, on behalf of the Bible, that Freethinkers of different schools have so long been fighting for, and yet pretend to believe that Christianity remains unaffected by their admissions, and refuse to credit our side with the concessions they are compelled to make, it surely becomes all true Liberais to bestir themselves to expose the sophistical and dishonest course of such men; and to show that if the inspiration, and consequent Divine authority, of some parts of the Scriptures is given up, the whole system of orthodoxy is virtually surrendered; seeing that no tribunal is acknowledged that can determine which parts of those records are of God, and which are of man. It is a melancholy prostitution of talent and of the ministerial office, to try to lull the people into the delusion that the superstructure of Christianity is perfectly safe, while you make admissions which tend as directly to sap its very foundations as the efforts of avowed opponents. And yet, inconsistent and reprehensible as such conduct is, it shows how difficult it has become to defend the orthodox views of the Bible against the assaults of modern criticism; and strengthens our belief that the time will come when that book will be compelled to take its place on the plane of purely human productions, and when the doctrines and institutions that rest on the assumption of its Divine authority, will be swept away. And with these will pass away that unctuous cant, pharisaical exclusiveness, and sectarian intolerance, of which the popular belief in the Bible is such prolific source. Let all our friends do their best to bring about that desired result.

In closing these remarks, I would direct the reader's attention to a common orthodox trick which I exposed in the second of the following lectures. I refer to the practice of charging most of those who reject the Bible, with doing so in order to get rid of its moral restraints, and thus exciting an unjust prejudice against them. Of the four lecturers who have lately appeared in the Masonic Hall, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, three of them—the Revs. Dr. Barry, W. Curnow, and J. Greenwood—indulged in that dignified game of clerical dirt throwing. The honourable exception was the Rev. Principal Kinross. My remarks on that contemptible dodge were made before the first lecture on the other side was given, and the conduct of
those three Rev. gentlemen proves that they were much needed.

J. Tyerman.

147 Woolloomooloo-street, Woolloomooloo,
Sydney,

November 27, 1875.

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Contradictions of the Bible.

MR. TYERMAN delivered the fifth of his course of lectures on the question, "Is the Bible the Word of God?" in the Queen's Theatre, on Sunday, Oct. 17. There was a very large attendance. He wished, before entering on the subject announced, to make a remark or two on the conduct of two or three persons in the dress circle—apparently professing Christians—on the occasion of his last lecture on the Bible, to which his attention had been called. They annoyed those around them who wished to attend to the whole lecture, by such expressions as that he (Mr. Tyerman) "ought to be kicked out of the place," "horsewhipped," and "burnt." He was not surprised at such an evidence of orthodox piety, but he decidedly took exception to the manner and place of its manifestation. Any one who chose, as he did, to reject the creeds of Christendom, to expose the hollowness of most of the religion of modern society, and to inculcate unpopular truths, must expect to have his character assailed, his motives impugned, and, if circumstances allowed, his liberty, if not is life, endangered. Kicking, horsewhipping, and burning were formerly favourite pursuits of believers in the Bible; and, no doubt, many modern Christians deeply regretted the loss of those good old times, and often sighed for their return. They proved their divine charity by harshly condemning all who could not pronounce their Shibboleth, and illustrated the noble precept of their Master to love their enemies, by cordially hating him and others who dared to think for themselves. Now, if the religion of those persons had not taught them good manners, and made them gentlemen, education and social intercourse ought to have done so. When he attended an orthodox church, he invariably heard a great deal from the pulpit that he could not accept as truth, but he did not distract the attention of the faithful by interjecting unseemly remarks. He then only mentally condemned what appeared to him as error, and afterwards took what course he deemed necessary for its refutation. And, in deference to those who had come to hear what he had to say against the Bible, he requested those who could not hear their views questioned, without interruption, to leave the theatre. The Church was their proper place.

In his last lecture he had proved that the Bible taught the most false and blasphemous views of God, and hence could not be his word. On the present occasion he would show that it gave glaringly contradictory descriptions of God, and therefore could not have been inspired by infallible wisdom. He would not attempt to make good his position by mere dogmatic assertions, still less by drawing upon his imagination for his facts and arguments; but would simply rely upon the clear and pointed statements of the book itself. If it could be proved that the Bible contradicted itself, its authority would be destroyed. A single positive contradiction would be fatal to the orthodox doctrine of its infallibility. But he would show that it literally abounded in contradictions. He was quite aware of the stereotyped answer of Christians, that its alleged contradictions, were only apparent, and not real; but in the application of that principle to certain passages they furnished another example of that reprehensible, shuffling, and arbitrary twisting of words to support a foregone conclusion, which he had so often condemned. Take the case of the numbering of Israel, mentioned in the last lecture. One passage, 2 Samuel, xxiv., 1, distinctly stated that it was the "Lord" who moved David to number them, while another passage, I Chron., xxii., 1, as distinctly stated that "Satan" caused him to do it. Could there be a more clear and positive contradiction than that? Who could make it to be only apparent, and not real, without being guilty of unworthy quibbling, and a gross abuse of terms? If a modern historian asserted in one part of his work that a certain man performed a given act; and in another part that a totally different person did it, he would not be able to clear himself from the charge of error by maintaining that the contradiction was only apparent, and not real. Nor could the credibility of the Bible be vindicated by such an elastic and questionable principle of interpretation. In support of the proposition laid down as to the contradictory character of Scripture teaching about God, it was shown that in such passages as Gen xvii., 1, and Matt., xix., 26, he was declared to be "Almighty" and that "all things were possible" with him; but in Judges, i., 19. it was stated that he could not drive out the inhabitants of a certain valley "because they had chariots of iron." Hence words declared his omnipotence, while events proved his impotence. And so it had often been since. Christian armies, in their
work of pious butchery, believed that their God was all-powerful, and could easily scatter their foes; but it was generally found that if he had anything to do with those wholesale murders, he gave the victory to the largest, best equipped, and most skilfully officered armies. In Acts, i., 24, and Psalm cxxxix, 1-4, he was said to be omniscient; but in Gen., xxii., 12, Deut., viii., 2, and Deut., xiii., 3, it was clearly implied that he was ignorant as to whether his people loved and feared him; and it was said that he adopted certain means to test the point, just as man did to solve so doubtful matter. The experiment elicited the desired information, and he declared—"Now I know that thou fearest God." In Job, xxxiv., 21, Psalm cxxxix., 7-10, and Prov., xv., 3, he was credited with omnipresence; but in Gen., xi., 5, and Gen., xviii., 21, it was taught that he was a limited and local being, whose residence was above the clouds. A report had reached him that in the first case some people were building a tower whose summit would reach heaven, and in the other that a certain city was so wicked as to be ripe for destruction. He did not know whether the report was true or false; and hence, in the last case, he said—"I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto me; and if not I will know." But what need had a God, said to be everywhere present, to come down from heaven to satisfy himself by a special local inspection, whether certain reported things on earth were true? If the text did not mean what it said, who had sufficient authority to decide what it did mean? If these terms were not to bear their ordinary interpretation, seeing that no qualifying clause was inserted, there was surely no occasion to use them in a misleading sense, in accommodation to human weakness, as was often alleged. If the Bible was God's word, and he had taken human weakness and ignorance into account in inditing it, as Christians believed, was not that an additional reason why he should have guided mankind by the most unequivocal statements, instead of tantalising them by using language that was capable of such various and conflicting constructions?

Again, Numbers xxiii. 19, Mal. iii. 6, and James i. 17, ascribed immutability to God; while Genesis vi. 6, Exodus xxxii. 14, and Jonah iii. 10, contradicted that by stating that he repeatedly changed his purposes. If one passage declared that God was not "the son of man that he should repent," and another passage asserted that "God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them," and if that was not admitted to be a positive contradiction, he would ask in the name of common sense, what did language mean? God was said to have created man, and yet. When the creature did not turn out according to the Creator's expectations, it is said that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on earth, and it grieved him at his heart." But if he was omniscient, as supposed, he must have foreseen that his creature would go astray; why, therefore, repent and grieve over it? Would is not have been more God-like to have prevented the cause of his repenance and sorrow, rather than have to remove it by destroying all the inhabitants of the earth, save eight persons? Those passages, then, impugned the omniscience and omnipotence, as well as the immutability of God. In Isaiah xl. 28, it was taught that God "fainteth not, neither is weary;" but Exodus xxxii. 17, stated that he "rested" after his week's work of creation, and "was refreshed" by his rest, just as man was by his Sunday rest after his six day's labour. Exodus xxxiii. 20, and John i. 18, taught that God was Divisible to human sight; and yet Genesis xxxii. 20, Exodus xxiv. 9-11, and Exodus xxxiii. 11, as positively stated that he had been seen by man. Could anything be plainer than the words—"No man hath seen God at any time?" And yet Jacob affirmed—"For I have sent God face to face." That was another instance of its beautiful agreement with itself throughout, which was said to be such a distinguishing glory of the Bible. It was a curious logic that proved that an object both had and had not been seen; but then the logic of theology rose triumphantly above the ordinary laws of reasoning. In 1 Tim., vi., 16, it was stated that God dwelt in light; but in 1 Kings, viii., 12, Psalm xviii., 11, and Psalm xcvi., 2, it was said that he dwelt in "darkness." Of course, on the principle that there was no difference between light and darkness, that day and night meant the same thing, there was noncontradiction in these passages. Again, in James, i., 13, it was declared that the Lord never "tempted any man;" but Genesis, xxii., 1, flatly contradicted that by stating that God did tempt Abraham. It might be accepted as a general rule of conduct with the God of the Bible, that if he declared he would not do a certain thing, he would sooner or later do that very thing. Further, in Deut. xxxii., 4, and Heb. vi., 18, it was asserted that he was "a God of truth" and that "it was impossible for God to lie;" but in 1 Kings, xxii., 23, and Ezek., xiv., 9, they were told that he had "put a lying spirit into the mouth" of certain prophets, and had deceived them. Was not deception lying? and was not lying by proxy as bad as lying in person? In the next place, such passages as Deut., xxxii., 4, and Rom., ii., 11, attributed justice and impartiality to God; but Ex., xx., 5, and Rom., ix., 11-13. represented him as one of the most unjust and partial beings imaginable. His "justice" was shewn by punishing innocent children, even to the fourth generation, for the misconduct of their fathers; not by the operation of natural laws and causes, but by arbitrary and direct inflictions. His "no respect for persons" was illustrated by his making a distinction between two children before they had done any good or evil, and by "hating" the one, and "loving" the other, when they arrived at maturity. And what made his conduct the more reprehensible, was the fact that he loved the worst man, Jacob, and hated the best, Esau. Language was inadequate to express his (the lecturer's) abhorrence of Jacob's meanness in taking advantage of his brother's hunger to get possession of his birthright. Again, such passages as James, v., 11., and 1 John, iv., 16, exhibited God as a Being full of love, mercy, and goodness;" but Deut., vii.,
whether they were true? Had they been, or could they be, fairly met? Some few might have been removed or
new. The most important question, however, was not whether the objections to the Scriptures were new, but
that every generation produced hosts of fresh believers in the Bible, and to them even the old objections were
most fatal evidences against the Bible were solely the result of modern criticism. But it must be remembered
to use many weapons pretty much alike in their battles with a popular and powerful foe; though some of the
inferences, and their application of principles. All the sceptics, from Spinoza to Bradlaugh, were inevitably led
differ but little from some of their predecessors, except in their mode of treating the subject their deduction of
those who traversed the same field of controversy must necessarily use many of the same materials, and might
alarmed for its safety. No doubt many of those objections had been raised in former times. The principal
Bible was not in danger, that it had survived even fiercer attacks in the past than those of the present, he was not
such dust-throwing. His minister was supposed to know all about such things; and as he assured him that he
generations, and triumphantly answered thousands of times. The simple-minded believer was satisfied with
the objections of modern Infidelity to the Bible—that they had all been urged, by unbelievers of former
times, when speaking of their opponents. One common trick was to assert that there was nothing new in
lying, and precised a spaces of uninternational deception in connection with religious and theological matters.
denominational interests and other circumstances on some persons that they got into a habit of unconscious
given set of dogmas, of viewing an object firm a single and narrow point of view, of individual and
untruthful, but he believed that some were. Such was the effect of a certain kind of training, of believing a
mischievous prejudice against Freethinkers. He did not say that all who did this were deliberately dishonest and
attacks of Freethought for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of their hearers, and rousing an unjust and
on certain unworthy tricks which many orthodox teachers resorted to in their defence of the Bible against the
scientific, political, or Social question. But while that might be admitted on behalf of a good many of the
criticism and interpretation as were applied to other books the Bible was found to be hopelessly at variance
by the same rules of reconciliation of those opposing passages. Such glaring contradictions as the Bible abounded in would for ever destroy the credibility of any other book; and no one would attempt to preserve its credibility by adopting such methods of reconciling its positive discrepancies as were applied to the Bible. Tried by the same rules of
more definite and clear than that of the passages he had quoted. No one could deny that they contradicted each
other in the most positive and persistent manner, unless he were either pitiably imbecile, wilfully dishonest, or
lamentably perverted and warped by the influence of a false theology. He repeated once more, that he had
nothing to do with the far-fetched and arbitrary interpretations of Christians, by which it was sought to force a
reconciliation of those opposing passages. Such glaring contradictions as the Bible abounded in would for ever
unclear: mpled them; and would give a number on other subjects quite as plain and startling, in another lecture. He had furnished chapter and verse for all he had said. Language could not well be
more definite and clear than that of the passages he had quoted. No one could deny that they contradicted each
or in Prov. xvi., 4, it was declared that he had made "even the wicked for the day of evil." When a person said
himself on very many points, and therefore could not be the word of an omniscient and infallible God.

More Contradictions.

Mr. Tyerman delivered the sixth of his course of lectures on the Bible, in the Queen's Theatre, on Sunday
evening 31 [unclear: ult] to a large and appreciative audience. In the early part of his lecture, he animadverted
on certain unworthy tricks which many orthodox teachers resorted to in their defence of the Bible against the
attacks of Freethought for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of their hearers, and rousing an unjust and
misperception, which they would not fail to detect and reprobate if practised by others in dealing with any
scientific, political, or Social question. But while that might be admitted on behalf of a good many of the
orthodox, he had every reason to believe that some of them were knowingly and deliberately unjust and
misleading, when speaking of their opponents. One common trick was to assert that there was nothing new in
the objections of modern Infidelity to the Bible—that they had all been urged, by unbelievers of former
generations, and triumphantly answered thousands of times. The simple-minded believer was satisfied with
such dust-throwing. His minister was supposed to know all about such things; and as he assured him that he
Bible was not in danger, that it had survived even fiercer attacks in the past than those of the present, he was not
alarmed for its safety. No doubt many of those objections had been raised in former times. The principal
contradictions, and other questionable features of the Bible, were patent to any careful reader of the book; and
those who traversed the same field of controversy must necessarily use many of the same materials, and might
differ but little from some of their predecessors, except in their mode of treating the subject their deduction of
inferences, and their application of principles. All the sceptics, from Spinoza to Bradlaugh, were inevitably led
to use many weapons pretty much alike in their battles with a popular and powerful foe; though some of the
most fatal evidences against the Bible were solely the result of modern criticism. But it must be remembered
that every generation produced hosts of fresh believers in the Bible, and to them even the old objections were
new. The most important question, however, was not whether the objections to the Scriptures were new, but
whether they were true? Had they been, or could they be, fairly met? Some few might have been removed or
weakened, but he maintained that all the principal ones, whether drawn from the contents of the Bible, or furnished by science, had not been, and could not be, successfully answered. Besides, the taunt of want of freshness and originality in the weapons used by modern scepticism, and its modes of attack, came with bad grace from the Christian side. What new truths or original arguments had they advanced? Orthodox teachers had gone on from generation to generation repeating substantially the same things—grinding out the same doleful gospel tunes, with only the variation of an odd note now and then. They had kept on talking about the same original fall, which had never taken place; lamenting the same scepticism, which they were powerless to crush; pointing out the same internal evidences in support of the Bible, which many honest truthseekers utterly failed to discover; insisting on the same external proofs, which needed proving themselves; indulging in the same sickening scenes of blood, with which most right-minded persons were becoming disgusted; expatiating on the same stereotyped moral influences, which were chiefly conspicuous for their absence; exhibiting the same satanic scarecrow, which children were frightened with and sensible people laughed at; and threatening the same blazing hell to intimidate the unbelieving, and promising the same psalm-singing heaven to encourage the drooping spirits of the faithful. He did not blame them for their monotonous repetition of the same things. They only had a limited sphere to move in. They were bound to one book as an authority, and could not preach a sermon without basing it upon, and supporting it by, that book. But seeing that they kept harping on the same strings from year to year, they should be the last to twit the other side with repeating the objections and arguments of former times. Another reprehensible trick was to assert that those who denied the divine authority of the Bible, did so that they might get rid of its moral restraints, and be able to indulge in all manner of sin without compunction of conscience. “Behold those Infidels!” exclaimed many religious teachers.—“They have rejected the laws of God, and would trample upon the laws of man if they could. Having no belief in future punishment, they give full play to their evil passions. They are dangerous members of the community. If their principles prevailed, they would stamp out liberty, morality, and religion; and would turn our Christian society into a state of hopeless chaos and reeking corruption. And their abominations are the natural fruit of their Infidelity; therefore touch not the loathsome thing.” Of course the trick answered its purpose with many who were still in theological leading strings. They shuddered at the very mention of Infidelity, were prejudiced against unbelievers, pressed their Bible more closely to their hearts, and stood firmly within the pale of the Church, where they were told they were safe. But he had no hesitation in characterising that trick as one of the most gratuitous and foul of the many slanders which the orthodox were guilty of. A belief of the Bible was no more a necessary preventive of immorality, than a disbelief of it was a necessary incentive to it. The obligations of morality did not rest on the authority of any book or Church, but were planted by God in the natural constitution of things. He did not say there were no bad men in the Liberal ranks; but he did affirm that there was nothing in their principles to make them bad, but everything that was necessary to make them good. Nay, he went further and maintained that, judging the tree by its fruit, what was called Infidelity would compare most favourably with Christianity, in its moral influence on its professors. He had found the average Freethinker every whit as truthful, honest, and moral, as the average Christian, and a deal more charitable and humane. A number of believers in the Bible—some of them pillars of the Church, who gave liberally (of other people’s money) for its support—had figured conspicuously in the insolvent and other courts since he came to Sydney; how many avowed Spiritualists and Freethinkers had appeared there during that period? It was surely time that Christians, and especially the clergy, ceased from resorting to such petty-fogging tricks and vile slanders in dealing with their opponents, whose disbelief of the Bible was at least as honest and well-grounded as their belief in it, and whose general conduct was quite as honourable as their own, though not gilded with the same professions of sanctity.

Having made these remarks, which circumstances called for, he would proceed to point out other contradictions in the Bible. Of course, Christians denied that any real discrepancies existed; and as for the apparent ones, they could easily be reconciled. The stump orators of Hyde Park could quickly remove all the difficulties he had raised, or might raise, and could make the profoundest mysteries of the Bible as Clear as mud. Those learned and eloquent illuminators of little mobs Could prove, by the soundest logic, that black was white that green was blue, and that yellow was no colour at all. Even greater men than they attempted to do that, when treating of the contradictions and absurd- ities of the Bible. No doubt many of the opposing statements of the Bible could be harmonised, by the forcing principle of interpretation; but what would be the result? The attempt to straighten a piece of crooked iron often broke it; and to harmonise the Bible by forcing un-warrantable constructions on difficult passages, was to destroy its boasted inspiration; for that which could only be made believable by such means was manifestly the production of finite and erring man. A few of the authorities on the orthodox side, however, were honest enough to admit that some of those contradictions were absolutely irreconcilable. Mr. Tyerman here read an extract from the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, the learned commentator, in which he admitted that "to attempt to reconcile them in every part is lost labour." But he was surprised that the Doctor did not see that to claim infallible inspiration for the original writers of the Bible, and
deny it to copiers, translators, and interpreters. The idea of an infallible revelation, left to be transmitted through fallible and corrupt channels, was an absurdity. If the original books were infallible, there could be no guarantee that the different copies were infallible, nor that any given interpretation was correct. The Catholic Church, with all its errors and abominations, took up the most intelligible and logical position on that point. Given an infallible book, and an infallible custodian and interpreter, was an absolute necessity; or the so-called infallible authority would be made by different parties to teach the most contradictory things: a the Bible was made to do by the various Protestant sects. The following were among the Biblical contradictions that Mr. Tyerman pointed out and commented upon. When Israel and Judah were numbered, in obedience either to a Divine or Satanic command, he did not know which, for one passage stated the former and another the latter, it was found, according to 1 Chronicles, xxi., 5, that "they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew the sword; and Judah was four hundred three score and ten thousand men that drew sword;" but 2 Samuel, xxiv., 9, stated that "there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men." That made a difference of three hundred thousand in Israel, and thirty thousand in Judah—total, three hundred and thirty thousand. Could anyone make those figures square? The price which David gave to Oman, king of the Jebusites, for a threshing floor, was stated differently in the two accounts. 1 Chron., xxi., 25, said the price was "six hundred shekels of gold," while 2 Samuel, xxiv., 24, said it was only "fifty shekels of silver." The latter price was only about a hundred and twentieth part of the value of the former, and was silver instead of gold. Was that, or was it not, a real contradiction? He had nothing to do at present with the purposes for which David wanted the threshing floor, or he would point out that building an altar, and offering sacrifice, "that the plague might be stayed," was about as sensible as modern Christians relying on prayer to check the ravages of cholera, instead of attending to sanitary regulations and the laws of physical health. That truthful book also contradicted itself in reporting the number of "horsemen" that David took from Hadadezer, king of Zobab. In 2 Samuel, viii., 4, "seven hundred" were said to have been captured; but 1 Chron., xviii., 4, made it only "seven thousand"—a difference of six thousand three hundred. A Christian might not think much of a little discrepancy like that; but he would find it have considerable weight if he fancied he only owed seven hundred pounds, and found out that it was seven thousand; or was expecting a legacy of the latter amount, and it turned out to be only the former. 2 Kings, xxiv., 8, made "Jehoiachin" to be "eighteen years old when he began to reign;" but 2 Chron., xxxvi., 9, made him only "eighty years old" when he ascended the throne—a difference of ten years. That was only a slight error, some would say; but an infallible record would contain no errors, large or small. A single error, however small, destroyed the claim of infallibility. In 2 Chron., xxii., 2, "Ahaziah" was said to be "forty and two years old" when he began to reign; but 2 Kings, vii., 26—written under the same unerring inspiration—declared that he was only "two and twenty" when he donned the purple; which made him twenty years younger than the other passage did. 2 Chron., xxi., 20, stated that "Jehoram" was "thirty and two years old" when he began to reign, and that "he reigned in Jerusalem eight years;" which would make him forty years old at the time of his death. He was immediately succeeded to the throne by his son, Ahaziah, who, in 2 Chron., xxii., 2, just quoted, was said to be "forty and two years old when he began to reign;" which actually made the son two years older than his father! Christians often praised the Bible as a wonderful book; and truly it was a wonderful book to accomplish such a feat as that. Such were only a few of the contradictions found in the Old Testament. The number could have been much increased, but he must pass on to the New Testament.

It was exceedingly fortunate for the interests of truth that they had a good many of what professing to be independent accounts of the same things in the Bible, for that enabled them to check one narrative by another. And as those supposed independent and infallible reports so frequently flatly contradicted each other, it might reasonably be inferred that those accounts which there were no duplicates of, and hence no means of checking, were equally unreliable. Matthew ii., 14, 15, stated that the parents of Jesus took him into Egypt, to remain there till the death of Herod; while Luke ii., 22, 39, recorded that they took him "to their own city Nazareth which was about as correct as to say that a man had gone to Brisbane, who had gone to Melbourne. John x., 30, and Philippians ii., 6, taught that Christ was one with and equal to God; but John, xiv. 28, and Matthew, xxiv. 36, assigned him a subordinate position, and denied him omniscience, which was one of the attributes of Deity. Matthew, xxviii. 18, and John, iii. 35, credited Christ with almighty power; whereas Matthew, xiii. 58, and Mark, vi. 5, proved that he did not possess it, and that the unbelief of the people baffled his purposes. Matthew, xxviii. 44, and Mark, xv. 32, related that both the thieves who were crucified with Jesus reviled him on the cross; while Luke, xxiii. 39, 40, said that only one of them did that, and was rebuked by the other for so-doing. Which statement were they to believe? They could not both be correct. The Gospels also contradicted each other in speaking of the women who first visited Christ's sepulchre. John, xx. 1, said that only one went; Matthew, xxviii. 1, said that two went; and Mark, xvi 1, said that three went. Did the Holy Ghost inspire those three different statements? Mark, xvi. 5, said that one angel was seen in the sepulchre; but John, xx. 11, 12, said
that two were seen. In relating Paul's conversion, Acts ix. 7, declared that those who were with him heard the supernatural voice that spoke to him; while Acts xxii. 9, as positively affirmed that "they heard not the voice"—another beautiful instance of unbroken harmony. Romans iii. 20, iv. 4; and Ephesians ii. 8, 9, taught that man was justified by faith and not by works; but James, ii. 21, 24, contradicted his brother Paul, and inculcated the more rational doctrine that man can be justified by works. John, x. 28, taught the final perseverance of the Saints; but Hebrews vi. 4-6, as distinctly taught that it was possible for them not only to fall from grace, but to everlastingly perish. 1 Corinthians, xv. 52, declared that "the dead shall be raised" at some future time; while Job, vii., 9, positively asserted that those who "go down to the grave shall come up no more."  

Was Job or Paul inspired? or had an omniscient Deity, who inspired both, forgotten what he had made one say when he moved the other to write? Psalm, civ., 5, and Ecclesiastes, i., 4, assured us that the earth would abide for ever; but 2 Peter, iii., 10, and Revelation, xx., 11, dispelled the pleasing belief by predicting its utter annihilation. Those were a few of the contradictions in which a so-called infallible book abounded. He would ask the Christians before him to say candidly whether they could still maintain, in the face of those glaring discrepancies, that the Bible was in every respect a trustworthy guide? Could they harmonise those differences by any fair means? He wanted no shuffling evasion, no arbitrary twisting and stretching: no perhaps this or probably that; no human improvement upon a supposed Divine and perfect work. If they could not reconcile those contradictions in a clear and satisfactory manner, as he was convinced they could not, let them abandon at once and forever the groundless belief respecting the character and claims of the Bible, by which they had so long been misled. He knew they would have a hard mental struggle to conquer religious habits, to eradicate early impressions, and to bring their minds to believe that what had given them so much comfort, and upon which they had built so many cherished hopes, was only a mixture of truth and error, of good and evil; and was no more the word of God than thousands of other books. But let them be honest to themselves, to their highest sense of truth and right, and fear not the consequences. The object to be obtained was well worth the effort required. The overthrow, in their minds, of the orthodox belief in the Bible would, involve the ruin of many other equally false and pernicious doctrines; and they would be able to hail with joy the New Dispensation that had dawned upon the world, and to accept truth wherever it might be found, and whithersoever it might lead.

Printed by G. E. Hooke, 426 George Street, Sydney.

Works by the Same Author.

1.—A Guide to Spiritualism. Price 3s., by post, 3s. 4d.  
A Guide to Spiritualism is the title of a very candid, forcible, and, as we think, exhaustive book, by J. Tyerman . . . . . . . . . . . . . . its ground is well taken, and its reasoning straight forward and irresistible.—The Banner of Light, Boston.

This is a valuable work, designed more especially for inquirers, or those just commencing to investigate the claims of the [unclear: Haromial] Philosophy . . . . . . . . . . . . . . It will certainly exercise a commanding influence . . . . . . . . Mr. Tyerman is also the author of several spicy and able pamphlets.—The Religio-Philosophical Journal, Chicago.
Mr. J. Tyerman on the Platform.

(From the Medium and Daybreak, February 21, 1879.)

The audience which greeted Mr. Tyerman on Sunday evening at Doughty Hall was largely composed of experienced sitters in the spirit-circle, mediums in various degrees of development, some of them valuable and respected workers, and altogether of that self-sacrificing section of the spiritual army which is found in the front when duty calls or love impels. Some had come great distances, notwithstanding the rainy and cold state of the weather. It was a meeting representing spiritual gifts, earnestness, and purity of spiritual motive. Worldly show, personal pride and ambition, could not be observed; and yet wealth and position were not absent. The heavy downfall of rain just as it was time to start out for the meeting deterred many from attending, and as well-known friends entered the hall, dripping with wet, the effect was not exhilarating, except to those who could see beneath the surface. The meeting, was, nevertheless, a good one, both as regards numbers and quality.

As the platform party entered and took their places there was no vulgar curiosity manifested, no irreverent applause, nor irritating hand-clapping. A spectator, knowing no better, would have voted it a dull meeting—no enthusiasm; a cold reception. But these people did not attend to be amused or take part in a pageant: they had met for spiritual exercises and instruction, and with decorous behaviour they awaited the proceedings of the evening.

Mr. Tyerman's portrait will be given in this journal, so we need not remark upon his personal appearance. His manner on the platform is earnest, natural, and unaffected, conveying to the audience the idea of strength—irresistible fortitude: My position is grounded on truth and reason, and I am prepared to defend it. The discourse was full of matter, but so well arranged and clearly stated that there was no confusion or weariness in the mind of the hearer. Mr. Tyerman's voice is a remarkable feature in his personal merits. The first experience of it is sympathetic and adaptive. Each mind realises that he speaks to it personally. As he warms with his theme it becomes exceedingly powerful, but never harsh or distressing. Mr. Tyerman could have been well heard in a hall ten times as large, and yet those within three yards of him experienced no inconvenience from the loudness of his tones, which are ringing and musical, as if a chord were sounded, and not a single note.

The subject was strictly intellectual and argumentative, one of those lectures which are said to "read well," but tedious to listen to. In the hands of most speakers it would have been wearisome and less interesting, for it is not the subject that enrths an audience so much as the manner in which it is presented. Mr. Tyerman has a powerful mesmeric influence, and would carry along with him an audience with any subject, however abstruse. He succeeded effectually on Sunday evening. He had scarcely uttered a few sentences till a subdued murmur of satisfaction, and rumble as of muffled thunder, arose from the audience, and this appreciative accompaniment followed the lecture throughout, at times with great force, but reverently expressed, like devout responses to the voice of truth. Some-times audible words of approbation came from an enthusiastic listener here and there, but nothing was done calculated to detract from the sacred function of spiritual teacher, but on the contrary, the well-bred and mannerly conduct of the listeners deepened the effect of the speaker's work.

Nine o'clock had arrived before it was felt that the service had well begun: watches were pulled out, and astonishment was expressed by many that they had listened to a discourse of nearly a hundred minutes in length. But the friends were in no hurry to leave the hall: they gathered around their visitor eagerly, and it was evident that these were not cold, indifferent people. Their ardour, modestly—shall we call it spiritually?—expressed, had been demonstrated all the evening; but now that the spiritual work was over, they
began the social duties with avidity. There we observed friends that Mr. Tyerman had known in Australia, and they had travelled many miles to be present. Friends, old and new, occupied the time for the great part of another hour, and showed that Mr. Tyerman's first discourse in London was a genuine victory.

As Mr. Burns stated at the close, it is to be regretted that Mr. Tyerman cannot remain with us for a season. He is just the kind of teacher wanted. He knows how to teach. He has command of himself, command of his subject, command of the audience. He is the kind of man to go forth into the wilderness of ignorance and superstition, and "prepare the way of the Lord," as they had it in the olden time. He is fearless, halting at no obstacle, yet not rudely assaulting fellow-travellers to the Temple of Truth. His manner and influence give a feeling of security and confidence in what he teaches. That this is truth, and that is error, is made clear and comprehensible, and the mind is aided in deciding as to what is true and what is false in the subject being discussed.

Mr. Tyerman places Spiritualism on an independent footing, sustained by facts and enforced by reason. He does not bolster up his position by the citation of pious sentences which have no connection with the merits of the case. He throws his hearers upon themselves, and if they are destitute of mental resources to sustain them, he gives them a supply, sets them on their feet, and shows them how to go forth in the discovery of Truth. His work is remarkably educational and developing; for he sends forth his intellectual disquisitions clothed in a mediumistic aura which unfolds the spiritual sphere of the hearer, while at the same time it enlightens his mind.

We see in Mr. Tyerman spiritual soil, the depths of which have not yet been probed. Beneath the rationalistic stratum there is a valuable intuitional layer, only traces of which have as yet been seen on the service. He will yet become much more inspirational and did active; if by this we express the statement that, regarding the work of to-day as more particularly exoteric, his path in the future will lead him to esoteric truths, and the hidden chamber of spiritual mysteries. His present tour is one of development, and it will not be his last. For some time, however, it appears to us that he will continue to fight with the crude obstacles that exist in the public mind to the acceptance of spiritual truth, and when he has the way cleared and becomes more fully developed, then will come to him in full measure that truth itself which will be sown by him in soil prepared by his own hand, under the superintendence of the husbandmen in the spiritual realm.

**Spiritualism as a Destructive and Constructive System.**

**A Lecture Delivered in Doughty Hall, London, on Sunday Evening, February 16, 1879,**

*By John Tyerman, of Australia.*

Mr. J. Burns conducted the meeting, and introduced Mr. Tyerman to the audience by stating the pleasure he experienced in taking part in an event to which he had looked forward for many years. His eye had been on Mr. Tyerman during his whole career as an Apostle of Spiritualism and Pioneer of reform: and though his admiration of him had been great, now that he had made their distinguished visitor's personal acquaintance, he was glad to find that the reality exceeded his highest anticipations. That meeting was not a reception or welcome to Mr. Tyerman, it was an ordinary spiritual service. On Thursday evening all the congregations in London—of which there were several meeting at the same hour, and so all could not be at Doughty Hall—could take part in welcoming Mr. Tyerman and rendering the occasion worthy of the object in view.

**Lecture.**

I am much obliged to Mr. Burns for the kindly way in which he has spoken of me, and only regret that I have not done more for the Cause of Spiritualism, which is the Cause of Humanity, to justify the commendatory terms in which he has introduced me to your notice. It is a source of pleasure to me that my first lecture on this subject in England is to be given in this hall, which has been so long associated with the public advocacy of the Movement, and whose platform has been graced by some of its noblest champions. I am a stranger among you; and yet, having read so much of Doughty Hall, I felt before I came here as though I was returning to a dear old home, and to greet familiar faces. I left my native country some fifteen years ago, to preach, in a foreign land, what is really the gospel of salvation to a few, and of damnation to the many; I return
to it for a short period to teach a gospel of salvation for all men in very deed, and not in words only; for Spiritualism assures us of the ultimate reformation and happiness of the whole human family, in whatever part of the universe they may be found. And I trust that my humble labours during my short stay in England, whether in this hall or elsewhere, will do some little towards correcting the erroneous notions that prevail concerning Spiritualism, removing the unwarranted prejudes that are arrayed against it, promoting a spirit of honest inquiry into its claims, and advancing its manifold interests, with which I believe is bound up the highest well-being of universal man, both in this world and the next.

I became a Spiritualist from intellectual necessity, but would remain one from deliberate choice, if I had any option in the case. Having resolved to investigate its claims before openly attacking it in the pulpit, I found the evidence in its favour was such, that I had no choice in the matter, but was compelled by the laws of my mental constitution, to accept it as a truth, in spite of all my prejudices and prepossessions against it. My early education, religious convictions, professional reputation, and worldly interests combined to place me in an antagonistic attitude towards it, but the irresistible logic of facts conquered me; and now, having become pretty intimately acquainted with it, I remain on its side a willing and happy captive, if I may so express myself.

Probably no public movement ever had to encounter fiercer or more persistent opposition than Spiritualism. Ignorance and prejudice have arrayed forces against it that would have crushed it years ago, if it had not stood on the rock of positive fact, and possessed the vitality of undying truth. Foul-mouthed calumny as tried to tarnish its fair name; unscrupulous malignity has assailed it with whatever weapon it could lay its cruel hands upon; self-sufficient science has stigmatised its phenomena as either frauds or delusions, or a mixture of both, because they clashed with its preconceived views of the laws and possibilities of nature; while sectarian Christianity has denounced its teachings as audaciously blasphemous, opposed to the holy Bible, subversive of the principles of true religion, and a prolific source of insanity, immorality, and other evils, because it challenged its boasted pretensions, and rebuked its arrogant spirit. But these objections and assaults have failed to dim its celestial glories, and arrest its onward march towards universal conquest. Notwithstanding all that has been done to paralyse its energies, and sweep it from the world, it still lives and flourishes, and can exult in brighter prospects to-day than at any previous period of its eventful history.

Among the objections most frequently urged against Spiritualism is, that it is essentially and almost exclusively a destructive system. It is to this single objection that I wish to direct and confine your attention to-day, leaving others undiscussed for want of time. Nor can I notice all the departments in which it is said to operate destructively and threaten disastrous results; but shall limit my remarks to the domain of religion, as this will afford scope enough for one lecture.

Spiritualism, say some of our Christian opponents, is only another name for ruthless, wholesale destruction in the sphere of religion. It would pull down and trample under foot all that is true, and good, and sacred, and supply nothing but error and evil in their place. Like a whirlwind, it would tear up by the roots the stately trees of righteousness, and leave nothing behind for protection and shade. Like a tornado, it would sweep over the fair fields of piety, and lay them waste for ever. Like an earthquake, it would overthrow the earthly Zion, and inaugurate a reign of desolation, silence, and death, where the activities of life are now manifest, the songs of praise are heard, and the beauties of holiness are everywhere beheld. We have a spacious and magnificent Temple of religion. It was built by the hand of God, and is illuminated with celestial light. It has braved the storms of persecution, and defied the ravages of time for nearly two thousand years. In it our fathers worshipped, and round it the most hallowed associations cluster. Spiritualism would overthrow this temple, and make it a shapeless mass of ruins. We have a grand Spiritual banquet. Its tables are richly spread with substantial meats and choice delicacies, adapted to the varied tastes and requirements of immortal souls. It is the bountiful gift of the King of kings, and is open to all men without money or price. Spiritualism would overturn these tables, destroy these provisions, and leave us in & state of destitution and famine. We have a fine old Gospel ship. She is well officered and manned. Christ, the Captain of our salvation, has command of her. She has carried millions of precious souls to the port of glory, and will land us safely on those blest shores ere long. Spiritualism would murder her captain, put her crew in irons, smash her compass, tear up her charts, and leave her the sport of pitiless storms, till she is dashed to pieces on sunken rocks, or swallowed up by the yawning waves.

Such in substance is the objection often raised against Spiritualism. But it is not singular in having to meet this kind of difficulty. A similar one has been preferred against almost all new and progressive movements, by persons who were of a conservative turn of mind, and interested in the preservation of the existing state of things. It was urged against Christianity itself in its early days, alike by Jewish and Pagan authorities. When Jesus dared to think for himself, and struck out a line of teaching and acting peculiar to his own rare genius, though he said he "came not to destroy," yet the more discerning among the Jewish Rabbis detected the elements of revolution in his teachings, and saw that his system foreboded the destruction of much they held dear; and therefore they hugged Moses and the prophets closer to their hearts than ever, sworn by Jerusalem as
the city of God, and cried out against the noble Nazarene, "Away with him, crucify him!" When the apostles, fired with an enthusiastic love for their Master, went forth to preach the new gospel, they broke in upon the dull monotony of religious routine, and wrought up the people to a high state of excitement. They were accused of turning the world upside down. The worshippers of idols scented destruction in the wake of those irrepressible advocates of revolutionary doctrines. Their craft was in danger, images became more precious than ever, and far and wide echoed the boast, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The same objection was raised against Protestantism at the time of the Reformation. Priestcraft had long held undisputed sway in Europe, and rioted in untold evils. The dominant Church was full of idolatry and corruption. The people could purchase forgiveness for all past sins, and immunity from the consequences of those that might yet be committed, at certain rates, as they would buy any other marketable commodity. A band of heroic souls raised their voices against those evils, and determined to bring about a much-needed Reformation. But of course they had to pay the price usually exacted from reformers by the stern hand of Fate. Slander and persecution were heaped upon them, and they were credited with the most diabolical designs. Luther was denounced as an arch-iconoclast. Their so-called Reformation threatened the destruction of holy mother Church, and must be resisted at all hazards, and by any means it could command. An insolent and corrupt priesthood perceived that its authority and emoluments were alike imperilled, and wreaked its vengeance upon them by every method in its power. The Reformation must be stamped out, or it would play terrible havoc with the doctrines and customs of the only true church of God. And now Spiritualism has burst upon the world, and disturbed its self-sufficient assurance. It is not orthodox either in a religious or scientific sense. It differs more from Christianity than the latter did from Judaism; it contemplates a more radical and sweeping reformation than that of Luther and Calvin, Knox and Cranmer; and of course the old objections are revived and hurled against it with a vigour worthy of a better cause. Our social, religious, and scientific authorities were not consulted, and their permission asked for Spiritualism to come into existence. It was not born in Jerusalem; Mrs. Grundy was not in attendance to receive the little stranger; the Pope of Rome was not asked to stand godfather to it; the clergy were not requested to take part in the imposing ceremony of its public baptism; Professor Tyndall and Dr. Carpenter were not specially invited to witness the interesting performance; special reporters were not told off to chronicle the whole affair in the columns of leading daily papers—it was honoured with none of these things as a passport to popular recognition and applause. It was born in an obscure village, cradled in poverty, brought up under trials and hardships, began early in its career to manifest heterodox sentiments, and resolved to depend upon its own native powers, and the friendly aid of father Time to make its way in the world. And those acquainted with its history are aware of the hard struggle it has had from its first appearance in public, of the persecution that has attended it at every stop, and of the opposition that still confronts it at almost every turn. It has won its way, however, most admirably, and achieved wonderful success in spite of every difficulty; and yet the old objection, which has done duty in so many cases—that it is a destructive thing—is flung at it as though it were sufficient to demolish its pretensions for ever. But in having to meet this objection, we have seen that it is in excellent company.

I frankly admit that there is some truth in this objection. I never try to propitiate enraged Orthodoxy, nor obtain the favour of its devotees, by representing our Movement as being milder and more harmless in its tendency—in relation to sectarian Christianity—than it really is; and have no sympathy with the policy of those timid, half-and-half sort of brethren, who are attempting the impossible task of harmonising two utterly antagonistic systems. It is best to state candidly what the New Dispensation is in its essential facts and principles, and what it will inevitably effect, if its pretensions are well-founded, rather than mislead by exhibiting it in false colours. Spiritualism is destructive; but in what sense and to what extent? It is not wholly, rashly, and wantonly so, as its opponents allege. It is destructive only in the sense in which Christianity and the Protestant Reformation are admitted by their respective advocates to have been. It destroys certain things naturally and inevitably, just as light does darkness when it is poured in upon it, as health does disease when it enters the afflicted body, as prosperity does adversity when it establishes its beneficent reign. It contemplates the complete overthrow and destruction of some things in the domain of religion, and the transformation of others. It has a constructive as well as a destructive mission; and in all cases it aims at supplying a more rational and beneficial system than the one it seeks to remove, and thus gives a satisfactory answer to the question so often tauntingly asked, "What would Spiritualism give us in place of the things it would rob us of?"

Having made these general remarks, let us now consider a few subjects in particular on which Spiritualism operates in its twofold character of a constructive and constructive system.

I. First, concerning God: his character, his relation to man, and his government of the world. The belief in God is the foundation of all religion. That belief, in some form or other, prevails so extensively that it may be regarded as universal. But how man came by it originally, whether it was an innate part of his mental constitution, or was apprehended by his intuitive faculties, or deduced by his reason from the phenomena of nature, or impressed upon his mind by inspiration, cannot be positively determined. What is God? What do we really know of the Infinite and Eternal One? Very little—so little, indeed, that he may, with more reason and
truth than many allow, be termed "the Unknowable." And yet from the way in which Christians in general, and
the clergy in particular, talk of God, one might suppose they had seen him repeatedly, had been admitted to
familiar intercourse with him, and had accurately measured him, sounded the depths of his understanding, and
ascertained to a nicety his desires and purposes in reference to the human family, and the universe at large.
They might know the Divine mind as well as it knows itself, and a trifle better perhaps, so familiarly and
flippantly do they prate about the Lord willing this, forbidding that, and loving or hating something else. But if
they would analyse the matter critically and impartially, they would be amazed to find how little real
knowledge they possess on this subject, and how much mere assumption they indulge in; and would, perhaps,
moderate that dogmatic assurance with which they are accustomed to speak of God. In my orthodox days I
thought I knew considerable of God, and spoke of him, I suppose, after the manner of those who believe they
enjoy a special revelation from himself, of his character and will concerning man; but the older I grow, and the
more I study this profound question, the deeper my conviction becomes, that the views I then entertained were
erroneous. The glimpses of knowledge I have obtained on this subject are just sufficient to enable me to realise
a sense of my ignorance. The limited field I have explored serves but to impress me with the boundless region
that stretches away beyond the range of my finite vision.

But though we are not warranted in speaking very positively as to what God is, I think we may safely point
out several things that he is not. Christians are in the habit of looking down upon the so-called heathen as
idolaters, and of branding their objects of worship as false Gods; yet I venture to say their own Gods—for in
reality there are several acknowledged in Christendom, though it is pretended there is only one—are as much
myths as those they contemptuously discard. All the Gods of Christians and Pagans alike are merely human
inventions—being made by, and in the image of, man, and bearing all the characteristics—good, bad, and
indifferent, of their respective manufacturers. The human mind may be compared to a mould; and the God-idea,
so universally diffused, has been run into certain of those moulds, and Gods have been turned out and set up as
objects of adoration, bearing the distinct impress of the moulds in which they were cast. In other words, a few
master minds, religiously disposed, have, at various periods and in different countries, thought out the idea of a
God as fully as they were capable of doing; have given shape and complexion to their conceptions; invested
them with their own intellectual, moral, and spiritual attributes, considerably magnified; enthroned them in the
clouds as Gods, and called upon their fellow-men to fall down and worship them, if they wished for happiness
in this world and the next.

Leaving Pagandom aside, we will confines our attention to Christendom for a moment. Christendom
professes to believe in but one God, and claims that he is the creator of all things. I am utterly unable, however,
to accept this view. We are told that the God of the Bible is the God of Christendom. But in point of fact there
are at least two Gods set forth in the Bible, differing widely from each other in all their distinguishing
characteristics; and in neither being can I recognize the God of nature. The God-idea has evidently been run
into, and taken the form and features of, two mental moulds, of different size and shape. In other words, there
are two leading and dominant conceptions of God bodied forth in the Bible, one in the Old Testament and the
other in the new; and these conceptions are so unlike each other in some respects, that they may be regarded as
two Gods.

The God of the Old Testament appears to have been manufactured by Moses, possibly assisted by invisible
spirits. Some of the prophets and other writers added a few touches here and there, and gave a more finished
and attractive appearance to the picture, but in all his essential features he was the creation of one master mind.
And that God is by no means an infinite and all-perfect being. He is decidedly anthropomorphic, and does not
even represent the highest type of humanity. His conduct was often such as would have disgraced an average
man. I am aware that infinite perfections are attributed to him in the Bible, and claimed for him by Christians in
words, but what of that, if he is also credited with deeds which prove the reverse of this? Theoretically, he is
said to be infinite and perfect; practically, he is exhibited as finite and imperfect. This position is susceptible of
easy and conclusive demonstration to all impartial judges, by a simple reference to a few well-known facts.

He blundered, for example, in his creation and treatment of the first human pair, in a manner that no one
worthy of the name of God would have done. He is said to have created them perfect; yet so imperfect were
those perfect creatures that they fell a prey to the first temptation that crossed their path. He is credited with
infinite wisdom; yet that all-wise God acted so unwisely as to subject Adam and Eve to a strain which he is
supposed to have known they could not stand, but would break down under. And when they did fall, as he
clearly foresaw they would do when he made them, his treatment of them was such as gravely reflects on his
justice and benevolence. Instead of showing them that consideration and mercy which a worthy human father
would manifest towards his children, especially for their first offence, he inflicted terrible curses upon them,
banished them from their Eden home, and even involved their unborn posterity in fearful consequences, for
which they were not in the remotest degree responsible. And then, this God's first attempt at peopling the world
with intelligent beings turned out as unfortunate and disastrous as his first effort at man-making. The
experiment extended over some fifteen hundred years—a period long enough, surely, for a fair trial—and it proved so complete a failure, he was so dis-appointed with the results—though, if omniscient, he must have foreseen them—that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." And just as a bungling mechanic will destroy a piece of his workmanship that does not answer his expectations, and the sight of which annoys him, so this grieved and repentant God, who is said to be unchangeable, determined to obliterate the living proofs of his failure, by sweeping the human family from the face of the earth with a flood. He preserved eight persons, however, to try a second experiment with, intending, no doubt, to profit by the mistakes of the first. But if we may believe the statements of his own word, and the declarations of his representatives in the churches, as to the condition of the world since the flood, the second experiment has proved as complete a failure as the first; and in another fit of repentance and grief he will probably once more try to get rid of the constant reminders of his non-success, by again involving the world in universal destruction. Indeed, certain prophecies ascribed to him clearly foreshadow such a calamity, which implies a consciousness when he entered upon it, that the second experiment would fail as signally as the first. But the world is to be destroyed by a deluge of fire next time, instead of water, and thus the fact of the second failure will, if possible, still more distinctly emphasised. If that threatened catastrophe should come to pass, probably a remnant of the race would again be saved, with which to try a third experiment; but, judging from the sad failure of the first and second trials, I, for one, should not be very sanguine about the success of the third attempt.

Again, the God of Moses is declared in words to be omnipotent, yet he was admittedly often frustrated by his feeble creatures in the attempted execution of his purposes; omniscient, yet he was ignorant of some things and had to employ such means to obtain information as we have to resort to; omnipresent yet he had to visit certain places to satisfy himself as to the accuracy of strange reports which had reached his ears; infinitely merciful, yet he frequently repented and altered his intentions and methods of dealing with given people; infinitely merciful, yet he commanded the perpetration of some cruelties, and connived at others of the most atrocious kind; and perfectly impartial, yet he singled out a people as special favourites who had no extraordinary merits to justify that preference, lavished his choicest blessings upon them, and treated the rest of the race with indifference and neglect, though they were equally his children, and as much entitled to his fatherly attentions as the Jews. He also frankly confessed to being a jealous God; and on my theory of his being but the God of a particular people, we can understand his jealously of the Gods of other nations, who were competing for the suffrages of the whole human family; but had he been the God of the universe, as Christians suppose he was, he would have had no rival to fear. He avowed himself a God of war, and assisted, without apparent compunction of conscience or distress of feeling, in the wholesale butchery of his own creatures; some of whom were innocent, helpless children, and others whose greatest crime was a conscientious adherence to the religion in which they had been trained from infancy. He manifested a remarkable weakness for sacrificial offerings, and the smell of pungent incense tickled his olfactory nerves with an exceedingly grateful sensation. He uttered threatenings which he never executed, and made promises which he did not fulfil, either because he forgot them, or changed his mind, or lacked the requisite power, and hence was not the true God. He hardened people's hearts, in consequence of which they pursued a certain course; and then punished them for doing the very thing which his influence upon them caused them to do. He ordered the numbering of his people; and rewarded obedience to his command by slaying seventy thousand persons, who were in no way responsible for what had been done. He sometimes lost his temper, flew into a towering passion, and threatened terrible things in his wrath; but Moses understood how to manage his God; he brought certain human considerations to bear upon him, soothed his ruffled feelings by skilful appeals to the weak side of his nature, and dissuaded him from his cruel designs, just as a self-possessed man often does with his excited and angry neighbour.

But enough on this point. I have said sufficient—and chapter and verse can be given for each statement made—to prove my position, that the God of the Old Testament is only a huge and imperfect man, notwithstanding that infinite attributes and divine perfections are ascribed to him in words. He is merely a monarch on a large scale; his throne is in the skies encircled with resplendent glories; a brilliant array of celestial intelligences form his court; while angelic messengers await his pleasure in trembling awe, and execute his commands with unswerving fidelity. His word is law; he rules with a rod of iron. He stamps his foot and his kingdom trembles; he shakes his head, and terror seizes the heart of his subjects. The elements are under his control; the warming sunshine and fertilising shower being the manifestations of his goodwill, and the thunder's peal and lightning's flash the expressions of his indignation. Famine and pestilence are his direct agents, with which he punishes his people generally; while sickness, adversity, bereavement, and death are the rods with which he chastises them individually. And as a king he exacts sycophantic homage, and delights in fulsome adulation, in the name of praise, after the manner of vain and imperious earthly rulers. Moses having lived so long in the court of Pharaoh, no doubt became imbued with those regal notions while there, and afterwards transferred them to the ideal Deity he made and set up for the Israelites to worship.
The God of the New Testament appears to have been created by Jesus, and differs as much from the God of the Old Testament as Jesus did from Moses. Spirituality and benevolence were the distinguishing traits in the character of Jesus, and, of course, he naturally transferred them to, and made them the leading features of, the God-idea, to which he gave expression and form. His God cares not for the pomp and pageantry, the dignity and splendour of royalty, in which the God of Moses revels; nor is he partial to gorgeous ceremonials in religion, nor mere external forms of worship. He is a loving father rather than an imperious king. The paternal character is well developed. His smiling and benevolent countenance is in striking contrast to the stern, grim, often frowning looks of the God just mentioned; and he is more concerned for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his people, than for their temporal prosperity. And yet, superior as the God of Jesus is to that of Moses in some respects, he is not absolutely perfect in character and conduct, though theoretical perfection is attributed to him. Jesus never rose to such lofty and rational conceptions of Deity as some other minds have reached. Want of time prevents me from adducing as many facts and arguments in proof of this as could be wished. It must suffice for the present to point out that though his God is animated by broader and deeper sympathies than the Old Testament Divinity possessed, yet he is not thoroughly cosmopolitan in the proper sense of the term. His sympathies are not bounded by Judea, still they do not embrace universal man, irrespective of creed or country. He makes certain blessings depend upon arbitrary religious conditions, with which it is intellectually and morally impossible for many to comply. Nor can he be approached by man directly. He is represented as requiring a mediator between himself and his creatures; and without sufficient warrant, Jesus exalted himself to that position, declaring that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man can come to the Father but by him. And worst of all, Jesus makes his God endorse that most horrible and blasphemous of all doctrines, the doctrine of eternal punishment. No God is perfect, nor fit for man to worship, who could consign a single soul, much less the majority of mankind, to eternal torment. Still, the God of Jesus is, upon the whole, a nobler and better being than the one exhibited in the Jewish Scriptures; and such as he is, he dominates the New Testament, though slightly disfigured by some of the apostles, notably, by Peter and Paul. These apostles had smaller souls, and entertained lower and narrower ideas of God than their Master. The germ of priestcraft is clearly discernible in their epistles,—that germ, which, in after years, was developed into such gigantic and hideous proportions; and which, in its full-blown character, exercised such a perverting influence in every department of religious thought. But I cannot enlarge upon this point.

There are several other Gods worshipped in Christendom to-day as distinctly ideal creations as the Deities of the Old and New Testaments are. I can only refer to three of these at present. We have first the God of Popery, who was manufactured in the main soon after Apostolic times. He is a piece of ecclesiastical handicraft; but it is difficult to determine which priestly pretender contributed most towards the work. A good many foreign materials entered into his composition. He is to a considerable extent Pagan in his origin and character. There is little that is worthy or attractive about him. He is a mighty potentate, ruling with despotic power, fond of external pomp and ceremonial display, and as jealous of other Gods as the God of Moses was. But his long reign has not been a beneficent one. Before his authority was challenged and his power circumscribed—while he held undisputed sway in Christendom, his priesthood was steeped in corruption, his people were the slaves of debasing superstitions, and ignorance, vice, and misery rioted throughout his vast dominions required a visible representative on earth, and invested him with plenary and infallible authority. How the Popes of Rome, who have successively occupied that representative position, have used the authority he clothed them with, let history witness. Intolerance and cruelty are conspicuous features in his character; and he has sanctioned more religious persecutions, and instigated more unjustifiable wars, all for his own glory, than even the sanguinary Deity who was worshipped so long in Judea. But his power was broken at the Reformation. He still, however, possesses more influence than any of the rival Gods of Christendom, and his people—the Catholics—are trying hard to restore it to him in all its ancient plenitude and splendour; but they will fail, for he is not in keeping with the civilisation, enlightenment, and toleration of the nineteenth century.

Then we have the God of Calvinism, another fictitious monstrosity, believed in and worshipped by a considerable number of Christians. It is an insult to common sense to attempt to identify this being with the God of the universe—the loving Father of all men. He was evolved from the gloomy depths of John Calvin's mind, and bears the unmistakable impress of his maker's image. He is nearly all head, and has scarcely any heart; and hence he is capable of the most cold-blooded atrocities, which is attempted to be justified by a subtle process of intellectual ratiocination and theological hair-splitting. For instance, he is said to have elected a small minority of the human family to everlasting blessedness before they were born, and without any regard to their individual moral worth, and to have condemned all the rest to eternal misery, also prior to their birth, and irrespective of their personal demerits. He thus virtually denies man free agency, and makes him the sport of irresistible fate; and yet he treats him practically as though he were possessed of full moral responsibility, and does good or evil of his own free will. And when unbiased reason questions the justice of his decrees, and enlightened benevolence protests against the cruelty of his conduct, those questions and protests are charged
upon man's corrupt nature, or traced to that convenient scapegoat—the devil. Calvin having formed certain
definite conceptions of God, in harmony with the dominant qualities of his own peculiar intellectual and moral
constitution, that most convenient and pliable of all books, the Bible, as a matter of course fully sanctioned
them. Many a battle have the worshippers of this God fought in defence of Predestination and Reprobation,
Irresistible Grace, Final Perseverance, and kindred doctrines; and some of them have gone so far as to vindicate
their belief that their God has cast children a span long into hell. This God, however, is fast losing his hold of
the more intelligent and humane part of his followers. The most repulsive features in his character are scarcely
ever exhibited now, except by some antiquated Presbyterian minister, who ought to be pensioned off into quiet
obscurity. There seems to be a sort of tacit desire in quarters where he ruled so long, to retire him from the
government of the Church, and let him gradually sink into oblivion, without having to confess that an ignoble
myth of man's invention has been worshipped instead of the true God.

And lastly we have the God of Arminianism, who is a much better being than the God of Calvinism, and yet
as purely a myth of human creation. Arminius was a very different man from Calvin, he had more natural
justice and benevolence in his composition, and did not make himself so completely the slave of metaphysical
subtleties and theological speculations as the Geneva Reformer, He interpreted the God-idea through nobler
faculties, and entertained more just and rational conceptions of what a Deity ought to be; and therefore he
turned out a more worthy and love-able object of adoration than that of Calvin. He made his God bestow free
agency on man, and provide a scheme of salvation for the whole world, thus giving all men a chance of getting
to heaven. That was a step in the right direction; and yet his God is chargeable with many grave faults. Not to
mention other things, he is guilty of the gross injustice of holding us under condemnation for what a couple of
persons, of very doubtful historic reality, did some six thousand years ago. And the salvation he has provided,
though nominally for all men, is really only for a few. He has not yet offered it to the majority of mankind; and
many of those to whom it has been presented cannot honestly accept it, because of the conditions on. Which it
depends, the chief being faith in Christ as an incarnate Deity, and reliance upon his death as an atonement for
sin. Nor has he made man so free as is pretended; because he has let a semi-omnipotent devil loose upon him,
who dogs his footsteps continually, and frequently leads him into sin, against the dictates of his judgment and
conscience. And still more, he, like all the other Gods I have noticed, has prepared a hell of unspeakable and
eternal woe, into which he will cast all those who will not do his bidding, and sing his praises, in preference to
those of rival Gods. And hence, the God of Arminianism, whatever excellences he may possess over certain of
those spoken of, is disfigured by some of their worst defects, and must be dismissed as far from a perfect ideal
God.

These, then, are some of the Gods believed in and worshipped in Christendom to-day; and how widely they
differ from each other! Yet Christians profess to acknowledge but one God, and claim that he is the Supreme
Being, the Creator and Preserver of all things. Nothing could be further from the truth than this. When the
subject is impartially examined, it is found that, to all practical intents and purposes, they worship several
purely ideal Gods, conceived and set up for the true God by certain dominant religious minds in bygone ages.
All those Gods are made in the image of man, and reflect his likeness back upon himself. And they all possess
some good qualities, of course, and are credited with a number of praiseworthy deeds; but taking them
altogether, they are essentially imperfect, and some of them, as often exhibited, are positively revoltive to
contemplate. The wonder is that so many people have believed in them so long, and believe in them still; yet
early education is the chief cause of this. But their days are numbered. They are doomed to perish like the idols
of heathen lands, and the religions of which they are the central figures will collapse like the exploded fictions
of ancient mythologies. And well will it be for the world when that day comes to pass, and a worthier
God—even if still an ideal one—authorising a better religion, is presented for the people to worship.

A new God is now being created in Christendom, better adapted to the comprehensive and progressive
requirements of the nineteenth century than those ancient Deities are. Of course Christians generally will deny
this, and feel shocked at the idea of such a thing; but the process is silently and surely going on,
notwithstanding their incredulity, and prejudice against such an innovation. That is to say, a new and better
interpretation is being given to the God-idea; more just and noble conceptions of what a being worthy of man's
adoration ought to be are being developed; and when these views have assumed a more definite and solidified
form, if I may so speak, they will practically amount to a new God, who will gradually supplant those myths
now believed in. Some of the brightest pulpit luminaries of the day appear to have become ashamed of the
Gods of the past, and well they may be. They still talk, however, of the God of Moses and the God of Jesus; but
they either ignore or explain away such objectionable features in their character and manifestations of their
disposition, as I have pointed out, and only dwell upon their brightest qualities and noblest conduct. They are
transferring the best parts of the Gods of the Bible, and of old theological systems, to the new ideal they are
working out, and leaving all the rest behind, as they are perfectly justified in doing. Whether they are doing this
consciously or unconsciously is immaterial; that they are doing it is beyond controversy. And the God they are
thus evoking will present a marked contrast to those now worshipped. He will be made to sanction the facts of
science, however fatally they may clash with existing beliefs; he will govern his inanimate works and
intelligent creatures alike by immutable laws, and those capricious freaks, called special providences, will
disappear; he will attach more importance to correct living than to right believing, to principle than to
profession; he will tolerate conscientious differences of opinion on religious subjects, because they are
inevitable as man is constituted; he will encourage the study of the ever-open volume of Nature, as being a
much better exponent of infinite wisdom, justice, power, and goodness, than any ancient book written by mortal
hands can be; he will countenance all really liberal and progressive movements, no matter where, nor by whom
they may originate; he will set his face sternly against religious persecutions, and put a stop to national wars, by
insisting upon a practical proof of what has long been held in theory—that all men are brothers; he will be a
republican in politics, and sanction the future establishment of one grand government of the world, in the
place of the imperial and monarchical systems which now oppress the people; he will manifest a magnanimous spirit
towards his enemies, if it should be considered that he has any; and he will make provision for and resolve upon
securing the final salvation of all men, either in this world or the next. Such is a brief and imperfect indication
of the kind of God who, as it appears to me, is being developed by some of the master minds in the religious
world around us: and it will be well when he becomes the dominant God in all the churches; for he will
exercise a much more ennobling and beneficial influence upon his worshippers than the rival Divinities who
now divide the attention of the orthodox religious world. Our Christian friends will not transfer their allegiance
from their present idols to a new and better God all at once. They will be weaned from them gradually and
almost imperceptibly, as the grandeur of the new Divinity strikes their eyes, and his sweeter and purer influence
steals over their hearts. And by-and-by, when the transference has been completed, and they realise the full
magnitude and meaning of the change they have thus almost unconsciously made, they will be amazed that they
so long adored such imperfect and unworthy objects of worship, as are the present Gods of Christendom. This
future God of Christendom will not, I think, be the product of any particular person now known to the world.
There does not appear to be anyone at present in the churches who towers so far above his brethren, and so
completely dominates them, as to be able to turn out an ideal Deity which all the rest would worship. There is
no Moses, Jesus, Constantine, Calvin, nor Arminius in this age. He will therefore be the embodiment of the
collective wisdom, justice, benevolence, and spirituality of the best minds in orthodoxy.

Having said this much on these false Gods, I need hardly tell you that Spiritualism, as I understand it, is
utterly opposed to them, and contemplates their complete destruction. In this unpleasant but necessary work it
is being largely assisted by Science and Rationalism. Science is examining the physical universe, and has
hitherto failed to find the slightest traces of such beings; while Rationalism is unmaking them at the bar of
Common Sense. But Spiritualism is doing most to discredit them; because it has explored the other world, where
they are supposed to have their throne and capital, and to appear visibly before the faithful in all their dazzling
glory: but it has not discovered any of them there, and has ascertained that their real dwelling-place is in the
creeds and imaginations of their respective devotees on earth. Our spirit-friends—many of whom died in the
full belief in one or other of these Gods, and expected on entering the next world to be admitted to his
immediate and visible presence—have assured us again and again that no such God as they worshipped here is
known there. And, on this point at least, they are much better authorities than Moses or Jesus, Arminius or
Calvin, or even a so-called infallible Pope—persons whose views of God originated on this side of the grave,
and were influenced and coloured by personal idiosyncrasies and theological peculiarities, which millions
have mistaken for direct revelations of the Supreme Being.

But though Spiritualism operates destructively in this region of false Gods, it has a grand constructive
mission to perform in the world. It would not tear up and trample under foot the belief in a God, as Materialism
would do, and leave humanity without a Supreme Object, in which it can implicitly trust, and round which it
can entwine its tenderest and holiest affections. It sweeps away the erroneous views of Deity which have so
long and widely prevailed, in order that more just, rational, and elevating conceptions of him may be
entertained. It dethrones those magnified men, called Gods, who have usurped a position to which they were
not entitled, and for ages have distracted the attention of mankind by their conflicting claims; and thus prepares
the way for the Infinite Father to take his legitimate place in the thoughts, affections, and devotional sentiments
of his children—the whole human family. It directs our attention from arbitrary Creeds and contradictory
Bibles—the productions of fallible men—to the Great Book of Nature, whose every page is full of divine
wisdom and resplendent with heavenly light. It draws us away from Pagan temples and Christian churches,
which are the work of men's hands, and are alike dedicated to the worship of mythological Divinities; and it
conducts us into the magnificent Cathedral of the Universe, planned and erected by the Divine Architect,
where we can reverently worship the Spirit, in spirit and in truth, silently commune with the Soul of Nature,
and gratefully drink in those celestial and enriching influences, which flow through a thousand avenues from
the inexhaustible Fountain of truth and purity, wisdom and love!
And yet Spiritualism does not dogmatise on this subject of the existence, character, and works of God, as sectarian Christianity does. It does not pretend to know all about him, and to possess a complete and infallible revelation of his will and purposes, within the covers of some particular book. As to the essence of his being, the mode of his existence, the manner in which he connects himself with and operates upon his material works, the channels through which he communicates with and influences his intelligent creatures, and a thousand other things on which we may be curious, it leaves each man free to form his own opinions, by the exercise of his own reason and intuition, aided by science, the light of nature, and anything else that is available for the purpose. It only insists upon his dealing with this subject in the spirit of a sincere and progressive truth-seeker, making due allowance for the diversities in mental organisation, educational advantages, and external circumstances that exist, and manifesting a spirit of broad toleration and genuine goodwill, towards those who conscientiously differ in their opinions on this subject from himself. And therefore I am not justified in attempting to force my views of God on anyone else, and threatening him with damnation, if he does not accept them; nor do I recognise the right of any man, or body of men, to try to force his or their views upon me, and threaten me with perdition if I reject them. We only know God as he reveals himself in his material works, and in the minds and consciences of his intelligent creatures. No being on earth ever saw his face, or heard his voice; and departed spirits teach us that they are no more in his immediate presence in the next world than we are in this, and that there, as here, they only know him as he unfolds himself through those channels just indicated. I behold almighty power, infinite wisdom, immutable justice, and unbounded benevolence displayed in the universe of which I am a part; and the totality of the forces, principles, and perfections thus manifested, I adore as the Supreme Being, the Source of all life, intelligence, purity, and happiness. But alas, the positive knowledge we posess of him is so limited, that we ought to speak, on this subject with the utmost diffidence. To know the Infinite thoroughly we must become Gods ourselves; whereas, at best, we are, in relation to this vast question, but children spelling out the first syllables of a difficult language, blundering over the elementary principles of a complicated system. And as children in the great school of Nature, we should try to learn something on this subject every day. My desire is to do so, and therefore, if you ask me what my views of God may be next Sunday, I tell you candidly I do not know. If I pledged my word that they would be in all respects the same as they are to-day, I should prove myself to be a non-progressive, self-sufficient egotist. The man who boasts, as many Christians do, of never changing in his notions of God, proclaims himself a stationary bigot; and but little mental penetration is necessary to discern the germs of intolerance and persecution, even beneath the most plausible professions of religious liberality. Profounder thought, and more extended research on the subject, will necessarily enlarge my conceptions of the Infinite Spirit; and may induce a considerable modification of some of my present views respecting his character, principles of action, methods of government, relation to his creatures, or other matter; and it would be quite consistent with my profession, as a Progressionist, to admit such a change. It fresh light should break in upon me from any part of the universe, I am ready to receive it. I hold no final and formulated views on the question, in the shape of a fixed creed, which would intercept its welcome rays. But I trust that whatever change I may make on any aspect of this fathomless theme, will be in the direction of more pure, rational, and exalted conceptions of our Heavenly Father. I have no desire to attain the position which so many of our Christian friends seem to contentedly occupy, where I could desire to do so, and therefore, if you ask me what my views of God may be next Sunday, I tell you candidly I do not know. If I pledged my word that they would be in all respects the same as they are to-day, I should prove myself to be a non-progressive, self-sufficient egotist. The man who boasts, as many Christians do, of never changing in his notions of God, proclaims himself a stationary bigot; and but little mental penetration is necessary to discern the germs of intolerance and persecution, even beneath the most plausible professions of religious liberality. Profounder thought, and more extended research on the subject, will necessarily enlarge my conceptions of the Infinite Spirit; and may induce a considerable modification of some of my present views respecting his character, principles of action, methods of government, relation to his creatures, or other matter; and it would be quite consistent with my profession, as a Progressionist, to admit such a change. It fresh light should break in upon me from any part of the universe, I am ready to receive it. I hold no final and formulated views on the question, in the shape of a fixed creed, which would intercept its welcome rays. But I trust that whatever change I may make on any aspect of this fathomless theme, will be in the direction of more pure, rational, and exalted conceptions of our Heavenly Father. I have no desire to attain the position which so many of our Christian friends seem to contentedly occupy, where I could be guilty of blaspheming the Most High by ascribing principles and conduct to him which I, as an imperfect man, should be ashamed of; and then attempting to excuse them on the plea of inscrutable justice and impenetrable mystery!

II. In the second place, let us consider Spiritualism in its destructive and constructive bearing upon the subject of Religion—its nature, foundation, proofs, and claims. I have detained you so long on the first division of my lecture, that I shall have to dispose of this and the remaining branches of it in very few remarks, fewer than the importance of the topics to be noticed justly merits. There are several religions known among men, but I can only deal at present with the one known as the Christian religion. This religion is assumed to be of supernatural origin; its foundation is the Bible, the supposed infallible word of God; its evidences are alleged miracles, said to have been performed many hundred years ago; and its claims upon the acceptance of all men are declared to be such, as they can only reject at the peril of their souls' eternal welfare. And, accordingly, there are a large number of persons and agencies employed to disseminate this religion amongst the people, under the belief that they have received a Divine call to the work, and are doing God, as well as man, a special service thereby. The methods which some of the professional vendors of this article employ to spread it, are more calculated to disgust and repel sensible people, than to interest and attract them. They seem to be more concerned for the salvation of others than for their own, indulging the comfortable assurance, no doubt, that they are all right; and with officious obtrusiveness and offensive pertinacity, they bore people on certain occasions with such questions as, "Have you got religion? have you been born again? have you found Jesus? have you made your peace with God? have you obtained a title to heaven? are you prepared to meet your Maker? and will you not flee from the wrath to come?" And snubbing reason, as a carnal and dangerous thing,
whose guidance must not be trusted, they stir up the emotional nature of a given class, play upon their hopes and fears by a variety of motives, and finally get them "converted"—possessed of religion! Moody and Sankey did an immense business in this line some time ago, and a good many imitators of them are now in the field.

But the views underlying this kind of religion are as false as they are injurious. The idea of Jesus being a lost article, that may be found amid the excitement of a sensational prayer-meeting, is absurd. The necessity for a new heart, so much insisted upon, is not very complimentary to the supposed Maker of the old one. The quarrel between God and man, implied in the alleged reconciliation, is a purely imaginary event. It takes two persons to make a quarrel, and though any of the paltry Gods worshipped by the Christian idolaters around us might descend to that kind of thing, I am quite sure the Supreme Being would not do so. As to recovering a title to heaven—that is to happiness beyond the grave—it was not forfeited, as the fable of the Fall teaches; but is the natural and inalienable birthright of all men, as the children of the Universal Father. There is no future wrath to flee from, in the form of the now pent-up fury of a malevolent tyrant, like the orthodox Deity, which he will one day pour out, without measure or mercy, on the defenceless heads of his enemies. The only punishment there is beyond the grave is that which flows as a natural and necessary consequence from the transgression of God's immutable laws; and the only way to escape that punishment is by present obedience to those righteous laws. And with regard to preparing to meet God, we in reality meet him every day in his works; and shall never see him in a more direct and visible form than we do now. Any being whom we could meet, into whose visible presence we could go, would only be a huge creature, and not the Infinite Creator. The religion itself, so often urged upon our acceptance, comes not from heaven, as is believed; it is an artificial product of the present world. The whole process of getting it is explicable on natural principles; there is nothing supernatural about it. So-called conversions are simply psychological phenomena—the inevitable effects of natural causes, brought about in harmony with natural laws. God has nothing more to do with them directly than the man in the moon. If our Christian friends will give me the necessary conditions, in the shape of suitable subjects, and certain well-known accessories, I will undertake to turn out converts to order by the dozen; and as genuine specimens as ever Moody and Sankey produced. And yet I would not introduce the Holy Ghost on the scene, nor exhibit the ghastly spectacle of Calvary, nor stir up the quenchless fires of the bottomless pit, nor shake that old bogie, the devil, in the peoples' faces: the whole thing would be done by natural means, and under the operation of natural laws. Even if I admitted spirit-agency in the production of the desired results, it would still be a natural process, and not a supernatural thing brought about by the direct interposition of God.

There is another kind of religion in vogue, of a more sober and dignified nature than that just mentioned. It flows chiefly through sacramental channels, and manifests itself largely in ceremonial observances. And being mainly an external affair, it satisfies the requirements of many who seldom look beneath the surface, or try to penetrate to the hidden meaning of things. It, too, is of mundane origin and character; but I cannot notice it further.

Spiritualism, like many other progressive movements, is opposed to much that passes in the name of religion, and seeks to remove it, as an impediment to man's proper culture and development. It unfolds such different views of God and man, their connection with each other, and man's relation to the future, from those which popular Christianity teaches, that religion assumes a new and nobler aspect, as seen in its heavenly light. True religion, as taught by Spiritualism, consists in living in harmony with the laws of our own being, and of external nature, which are the laws of God. That man is the most completely and genuinely religious whose whole complex nature—physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual—is most thoroughly harmonised, and moves in sweetest accord with the universe around him. But, oh how much is comprehended in this brief definition of religion! It would take a whole lecture to give anything like an adequate idea of its meaning. Amongst other things it obviously implies a knowledge of, and obedience to, the laws of our physical constitutions, upon which good health so largely depends; the harmonious cultivation of all our intellectual faculties; the faithful development of our moral and spiritual sentiments; and the proper regulation and control of our animal instincts. It also implies a knowledge of the laws of external nature, and a constant endeavour to fulfil their just requirements. But, of course, the outward expression of this religion will depend largely upon individual organisation, educational proclivities, domestic and social influences, and other accidental circumstances. In some cases it will manifest itself in public acts of worship; in others it will take the form of private meditation and self-communion; while in a third class it will combine both methods. And in all cases it will show a proper regard for the rights and interests of others; and endeavour to promote the elevation and happiness of mankind, without regard to creedal distinctions and national limitations.

And this is the religion, the attainment and exemplification of which we should all aim at. It requires no Bible to vouch for its divine origin, no miracles to authenticate its claims, no priesthood to expound its mysteries, and no eternal penalties to enforce its obligations. It rests upon a natural, and therefore indestructible, foundation; it shines by the light of its own intrinsic excellences; and its credentials are its beautiful adaptation,
to the varying constitutions and requirements of men, and the harmonious and happy lives it produces. It is not a sectional thing, intended for a favoured few; but is the natural heritage of universal man. It cannot be covered by theological definitions, nor confined within ecclesiastical bounds; but is as available for the despised heathen, as the haughty and self-righteous European. It was not introduced into the world by any particular person, at some given historic epoch; it came upon the earth with the first rude man that roamed over its wild wastes, and will continue till the last man quits this worn-out planet, even though Christianity and all other man-made religions should perish ages before. And this is the best religion in life, for it tends to make our earthly existence a beautifully harmonious thing; the best religion in death, because instead of regarding that event as a curse, as other religions do, it accepts it as blessing—a divinely-ordained passage from a lower to a higher sphere of life; and the best religion beyond the grave, inasmuch as it aims at sending the spirit into the next world as fully developed in all its faculties as the imperfections and difficulties of the present state will allow, and thus giving it the advantage of a good start in the unending career which there opens up before it. In a word, it is God's religion,—the religion of nature,—a part of the very constitution of things; and like its Divine Author, it is unchangeable and eternal!

From these remarks it will be seen that a person may have been what is theologically called "converted," and possess a good deal of sectarian "piety" he may have accepted long creeds in unquestioning faith, and swallowed whole Bibles, without discriminating as to their contents; and he may faithfully discharge certain outward duties which ecclesiasticism in some form or other has prescribed, and look upon those outside of his own narrow circle as living under God's curse, and going down the broad way to endless destruction,—and yet he may be, to a large extent, an irreligious man. He may be living in violation of some of the laws of his own being, or of external nature; and his piety will not avert their penalties. Even his trusted Saviour cannot deliver him from the consequences of his transgression of natural laws—whether ignorantly or wilfully done, matters not. He has to make the only atonement which God in nature accepts—that of personal suffering, as many of our Christian friends know to their sorrow. And on the other hand, a man may be outside the pale of all the churches, and make no outward profession of religion; nay, he may even be an Infidel if you will, and yet, if he fulfils the conditions I have pointed out, he is, in the broadest, purest, and best sense of the word, a truly religious man, basking in the smile of God's countenance, and travelling in the high way to everlasting bliss. Not that the Christian is necessarily a bad man, nor that the Infidel is necessarily a good one. I only point out what may be, and, as a matter of fact, is in many cases, to show how little creeds and outward professions have to do in determining whether a man is possessed of the natural and therefore the only true religion I have spoken of. Christians, in their pharisaical self-sufficiency and exclusiveness, have too long pretended to hold a monopoly of true religion, and taught that he only is a child of God, and sure of heaven, who pronounces their shibboleth and supports their system. This position is as false as it is unjust to a large and increasing number of men entirely outside, the pale of orthodoxy, who are at least the peers of their Christian neighbours in intelligence, culture, moral excellence, spiritual development, and everything that constitutes real worth. And I for one intend to do what little I can to expose this falsity and injustice, and to show our Christian friends that a man may repudiate the whole scheme of so-called revealed religion as being unproved and unproveable—a mere string of bold assumptions, irrational in some of its parts, and impossible in others, and, as a whole, derogatory to the Divine character; and yet he may be a truly religious man in the sight of God, and enjoy an indisputable title to a home of light and felicity beyond the grave. The rational and philosophical views of the subject, thus briefly and imperfectly indicated, make true religion independent of the accidents of creed and country; and it is these just and reasonable views which Spiritualism, as it presents itself to my mind, seeks to establish in the place of those prevalent false notions of religion, and the more than questionable systems they have given rise to, which it is destined to destroy.

III. In the third place, let us glance for a moment at the destructive and constructive influence of Spiritualism on the subject of Inspiration, its source, character, and extent. This is closely allied to the questions just disposed of. The general Christian belief on this matter is, that inspiration is a special supernatural gift, vouchsafed by the direct agency of God; that it was confined to the writers of the Old and New Testaments; that it guaranteed those writers against error in what they committed to writing: and that, therefore, the Scriptures are throughout the divine and infallible word of God. The Bible is thus placed in an exceptional position, and invested with an authority which is accorded to no other book. There is a kind of inspiration of genius allowed, which expresses itself in art, music, poetry, and other forms; but it is written down as inferior and fallible: while that of the Bible is extolled as inspiration par excellence! Now, there is scarcely any disputed theological question on which Spiritualism challenges sectarian Christianity with more confidence, or respecting which it demolishes its pretensions more completely, than this question of inspiration; for it not only has reason and science on its side, but present, living facts. I regret that my time is so nearly done that I cannot do justice to this branch of my lecture; but I would just remark that, while Spiritualism fully recognises the actuality of inspiration from another world, it teaches—
First, that it is produced by finite intelligences, and does not flow directly from a Divine Personality, called the Holy Ghost. The belief that God directly inspired men arose from those erroneous anthropomorphic conceptions of the Divine Being already exposed. When the doctrine of the absolute infinitude of Diety is intelligently apprehended, the idea of being brought into direct contact with him at once vanishes. But I do not wish by these remarks to impeach the honesty of those writers of the Bible who believed they drew their inspiration direct from God. When we remember the ignorance and superstition which then prevailed, we can easily understand how the influence and voice, and perhaps personal appearance, of some finite being were mistaken for God. If God inspires man on earth, it is only mediatly through his works, and especially through those brighter intelligences who occupy those higher spheres beyond. Spirits can and do come into contact with mortals, illuminate and impress their minds, and communicate definite knowledge through their organisms.

Secondly, inspiration is a perfectly natural thing. Theologians have long taught that it was not only a direct gift of God to a chosen few, but was communicated in a supernatural manner, and practically amounted to a miracle. And the further it could be removed from the domain of natural cause and effect, the more mysterious and incomprehensible it could be made to appear, and the better it served the purposes of priestcraft, which sought to establish and keep up an impassable barrier between that favoured minority and the mass of mankind. But Spiritualism has swept this theological assumption away, by proving that inspiration is a natural phenomenon, and as much dependent on laws and conditions as any event that occurs around us. This is the uniform teaching of the wisest and purest spirits, and is in perfect harmony with the conclusion of enlightened and unbiased reason in this world. It depends largely upon, and is affected by, natural organisation, temperament, state of bodily frame, mind, external surroundings, and atmospheric conditions; and also upon things in the other world, of which we are not personally cognisant. Much light has been thrown upon this abstruse question within the last few years, both by departed spirits and students of psychological science on earth; and although the complete modus operandi is not yet understood, sufficient is known to justify the position taken as to its naturalness, and to warrant the belief that as the laws governing it, and the conditions which affect it, become more fully mastered—as they will be ere long—it will become a much more general thing than it ever has been. Being an orderly influx from the higher spheres of life and knowledge, and implying the action of disembodied upon embodied minds, in accordance with immutable law, it will in due time give up its remaining secrets to the demands of science; and eventually the philosophy of inspiration will take its place among the established philosophies of the world.

Thirdly, inspiration is a universal fact. This follows as a necessary consequence from the position I have taken as to its perfect naturalness. If it were an exceptional and miraculous thing, it might be confined to some particular place and people; but if it be a natural process, however extraordinary it may be, no such limitations can be justly assigned to it. Given the same necessities and conditions, and, under the operation of universal and immutable laws, the same psychological phenomena may be expected in one part of the world as in another. Christians generally claim that inspiration was confined to Palestine, and to those few of its inhabitants who wrote the several books composing the Bible; but they cannot prove this claim, nor give any valid reason in its support. Even if it were a special supernatural gift, I should ask, with due deference to those ancient worthies, Who were Moses and the Prophets, Jesus and the Apostles, that it should be bestowed on them exclusively? Were there not others as deserving of it, and as much entitled to it on every conceivable ground, as they were? But being a natural thing, it was not in their power to keep it within their own small circle and enjoy a monopoly of it, if they had wished to do so. In point of fact, however, they did not pretend that it was limited to themselves. Nor would the churches have made such an unwarranted claim on their behalf if the exigencies of a false theology had not demanded it. The assumption, for it is nothing more, that the Bible is the only divinely inspired book in the world, involves the denial of inspiration to all other books, both ancient and modern; and the orthodox are constantly extolling their Scriptures at the expense of the sacred books of other religions. But if inspiration be a natural fact, as I have shown it is, that false theological assumption is exploded, and we are justified in believing in the universality of this precious blessing. It illumined many minds ages before the first verse in the Bible was written, and was enjoyed by a number of Pagan contemporaries of the writers of that book. Instead of being confined to the so-called Holy Land, it was diffused through countries far away, and among peoples whom the inhabitants of Judea knew not. It enriches the pages of Heathen Bibles, as well as those of the Old and New Testaments; and even shines forth in and beautifies the secular as well as religious literature of the different nations of the world. It may be likened to a supernal fountain, at whose free streams Egyptian and Chaldean, Indian and Persian, Greek and Roman, drank as copiously as Jew and Christian; or to a grand spiritual sun, whose cheering rays have penetrated every region on earth, and touched with more or less vivifying, enlightening, and expanding effect, the mind of universal man.

Fourthly, inspiration is a perpetual blessing. This also follows as a logical conclusion from the premises I have taken as to its naturalness. Under the same laws and conditions, what occurs in one age is possible in
another. If certain persons in ancient times could place themselves en rapport with the invisible world, and receive inspiration from superior intelligences, why might not others in later days establish a similar connection and obtain a like Divine influx? And yet sectarian Christianity seeks to limit inspiration to a certain time as well as to a given country. It would not only confine it to Palestine, but would close up its avenues for ever when the New Testament was finished. This is obviously done to meet the requirements of the false theological assumption just referred to, as to the exclusive character of Biblical inspiration. But there is nothing in the Bible itself to warrant this attempted limitation. Not a single passage can be quoted from its pages to prove that its writers regarded inspiration as a gift confined to themselves, and to be withdrawn when their particular work was done; and orthodoxy has no right to credit them with an exclusive power which they did not claim for themselves. Even if they had advanced such a claim, it would have taken much stronger evidence to prove it than the ablest theologians have ever adduced; indeed, it could not be proved, but would be susceptible of conclusive disproof. As they have not, however, made any such pretensions on their own behalf, it is only the gratuitous assumption which orthodoxy has put forth on their account which needs exposing. There is nothing in reason or analogy to justify the attempted limitation of this, or any other spiritual gift, to the writers of the Bible; and if it be a thing that occurs in harmony with the natural constitution of things, it would be simply impossible to circumscribe it within the covers of any particular book, however much of it such book might contain.

The lire of inspiration has not been quenched during the last eighteen hundred years. It may have gone down low at times; but it has often been fanned by the breath of heaven, has blazed up for a while, and sent out its light and warmth far and wide. Thousands of persons have spoken and written under inspiration since the Apostolic band passed on to another sphere. Poets, orators, artists, musicians, statesmen,philosophers, divines, and others, in different ages, have caught the hallowed flame, and left the fruits of spiritual illumination behind them. No Prophet or Apostle of ancient days ever revelled more completely in inspiration, if I may be permitted to so express myself, than William Shakespeare, and many others I could mention. The pages of that illumined writer glow with wisdom and instruction; and, without wishing to disparage the Bible, I cannot but express the belief that if a tithe of the talent, learning, time, and money, had been expended in bringing out the truths and extolling the beauties of his works which have been bestowed upon that venerable book, it would have stood much below Shakespeare's works in popular estimation to-day. But though inspiration has been more or less enjoyed in every age subsequent to the completion of the New Testament, yet since the dawn of Modern Spiritualism it has been more general and marked than at any previous period. History, when impartially read, abundantly proves the perpetuity of the gift; but the present day has witnessed fuller and grander manifestations of it than were ever experienced in the past. The times which loomed up before the vision of ancient seers, when a glorious influx of light and power from the spiritual realms would be experienced, have come to pass; and by the facts which are now being evolved in so many parts of the world, the theological assumption that would seal up the fountain of inspiration after the last writer of the Bible drank at it, is completely and for ever swept away. The brilliant poems, and masterly addresses, not to mention other things, which are often given impromptu, under the inspiration of the spirit-world, by persons who in their normal condition could produce nothing approaching to them, prove the continuity and present existence of this illuminating, energising, and expanding influence; and kindle the expectation of still more marvellous and beneficial exhibitions of it as time rolls on.

Fifthly, inspiration is, nevertheless, a fallible thing. While Spiritualism demonstrates its actuality, naturalness, universality, and perpetuity, it also proves its liability to error. This follows necessarily from the fact that it flows from finite and fallible sources, and through more or less imperfect channels. The orthodox, holding the narrow view already disposed of, that inspiration is a direct act of God upon the mind, claim that it preserved the subjects of it from error; and regarding the Bible as thus directly inspired, they teach that it is an infallible book, and the only in-fallible one we have. But even if the authors of the Bible did write under the direct inspiration of God, which I deny, it would not necessarily follow that that book, as we possess it, is infallible, unless it could be proved that it has come to us through infallible channels, which cannot be done. The source of inspiration might be infallible, but the products of it would be liable to be considerably coloured, and even corrupted, if transmitted to us through fallible and imperfect instrumentalities. The Catholics appear to me to be the most logical and consistent of any section of Christians on this point. They not only claim that the Bible is the infallibly inspired Word of God, but also that this position necessitates an infallible custodian and interpreter of that word, as a guarantee of its perpetual purity. If you grant their premisses, on which Protestants agree with them, as to the infallibility of the Bible, their conclusion that an infallible interpreter is necessary, is logically irresistible. The Protestant position, that the Scriptures themselves are infallibly inspired, but that they are to be left to fallible men to interpret, is untenable and absurd; for those fallible interpreters will be liable to differ so much among themselves as to its meaning, as to practically destroy its assumed infallibility; and as a matter of fact, this is just what is done by the different and conflicting Protestant sects. This so-called infallible
authority is made to teach certain views to one sect, in harmony with its peculiarities as a sect, and to another
party it teaches directly opposite views. On some disputed questions it thus gives at least half-a-dozen decisions
differing widely from each other, only one of which can be correct; and hence, what becomes of its boasted
infallibility?

But leaving those controversial points on which Catholics and Protestants differ, they agree in regarding the
Bible itself as infallibly inspired by God; and the exceptional authority they claim for it rests on that
assumption. If that book be the only inspired and infallible revelation of Infinite Wisdom on earth, of course it
possesses an authority which no other book can justly pretend to equal. But if the Spiritualistic position I have
taken be sound, that all inspiration comes from finite, and therefore necessarily fallible beings, the alleged
infallibility of the Bible becomes un-tenable. We can admit the inspiration of many parts of it without being
compelled to accept those parts as necessarily infallible because inspired; and we thereby get rid of many of
these difficulties which so much embarrass the believers in the infallible inspiration of the entire book. Of
course this view robs us of the charm of having at least one infallible book; but if that charm is only an illusion,
it had better be dispelled. That charm must often be rudely shaken, even in the minds of the most orthodox, by
the terrible shifts which have to be resorted to, to keep up the popular belief in the infallibility of the Bible.
Infallible inspiration is claimed for that Book, in order to support the doctrine of its divine origin and character,
and the absolute truth of all its teachings. Nothing less, say theologians, than in-fallible inspiration could
guarantee immunity from error on the part of its several writers; but this assumed immunity from error is the
very thing which has not been secured by the inspiration claimed for those writers. While admitting the
inspiration of many parts of the Bible, and holding it, for various reasons, in high estimation, I venture to say
there is no standard work in the English tongue that is fuller of errors and contradictions than this so-called
infallible record; which could be proved from its own pages, if the nature and design of my lecture required it.
The violation of generally-recognised canons of criticism and interpretation, the disregard of the laws of logic,
the unwarranted assumptions, the transparent disingenuousness, and the contemptible shuffling, which the
orthodox frequently indulge in, in order to support the dogma of its infallibility, form one of the most
melancholy and humiliating religious spectacles that can be conceived of. The spiritualistic view of inspiration,
which, while fully admitting its actuality, at the same time recognises its fallibility, would make such shocking
spectacles impossible.

In dismissing this fifth point—the fallibility of inspiration—I would just remark that I trust the Spiritualists
as a body will ever give due prominence to this fact, while contending for the reality of modern as well as
ancient inspiration. When we contemplate the mischief that has been done by the unwarranted belief in the
infallible inspiration, and consequent divine authority of the Bible; how it has enslaved the reason, tyrannised
over the conscience, and perverted the moral sentiments of men; how it has trampled liberty underfoot, tried to
 crush new truths that clashed with its pretensions, and obstructed most of the progressive movements that have
been started; and what terrible and unrelenting persecutions it has given rise to—we must be very careful that
a similar evil does not crop up under the New Dispensation. We must not overthrow one religio-intellectual
despotism, and establish another on its ruins; not dethrone ancient prophets and apostles, and exalt modem
mediums to the vacated seats; not turn a deaf ear to "Thus saith the Lord," and listen with unquestioning
credulity to "Thus saith a Spirit." I am not a medium, and do not profess to speak under inspiration; but if I did,
I should not ask you to accept what invisible intelligences might give through my organism as being necessarily
infallible. Our individual reason must be fully, fearlessly, but impartially exercised upon all that comes from the
other world, whatever vehicle it may reach us through. We must act upon the ancient and wise advice, to try the
spirits; to prove all things, and hold fast only that which appears to us the true and good.

These, then, are some of the teachings of Spiritualism on the important subject of inspiration. You will
perceive that, while it destroys many popular and mischievous errors respecting this question, it constructs a
rational theory of it, which it supports with facts and arguments that cannot be successfully disputed; and it thus
places it on a sure and permanent foundation.

IV. Man: his origin, nature, capabilities, and duties, is a fourth subject on which Spiritualism operates in
its twofold character, of a destructive and constructive system. But as my time is gone, I can only remark, as to
his origin, that it rejects the Biblical account of his creation by a direct and special act of God, some six
thousand years ago, and coincides with the teachings of science as to his gradual evolution and development
from lower forms of animated beings. As to his nature, he is not a fallen and totally depraved being as the Bible
and Orthodoxy have so long and falsely taught. These authorities shamefully misrepresent and slander
humanity. But do our Christian friends really believe this doctrine respecting man? I doubt it very much. Some
of them have openly repudiated it, and others must have serious misgivings about it even after they have been
regenerated—made new creatures, as they term it—what dark and disgusting pictures some of them draw of
themselves, especially in prayer. Are they as vile and bad as they try to make themselves? They would not like
to be thought and told so by anyone else, for they would scarcely be fit for decent people to associate with.
Their confessions are mostly cant. The whole thing is largely a hypocritical farce, acted, let us hope, without being conscious that it is so. It is thought the correct thing to inform the Lord some twice or thrice a day what guilty, miserable wretches they are, as though he does not know it, if it be a fact, or delights to hear the unsavoury tale repeated at intervals of a few hours the year round. But our good friends do not really mean half of what they say, and it is time this habit of unjustly criminating themselves and vilifying their fellow-creatures should be abandoned. Man is imperfect. Many persons are in a very crude, undeveloped state as yet, and do much that is bad; but the worst have divinity within them, which is an element that guarantees their gradual elevation and ultimate purity and happiness.

Touching man's capabilities, orthodoxy teaches that he cannot savagely repent and believe of himself, but must have divine aid for the purpose. This is another false theological doctrine that has been, and still is, fraught with evil consequences. Many do not feel that the necessary power has been vouchsafed to them yet, and they continue in an unrepentant, sinful state, practically irresponsible for so doing, according to the views they hold. It is true that many men are utterly unable to believe much that orthodoxy places before them as truth, even with the spiritual aid they possess; but their intellectual inability to accept impossibilities, and their consequent unbelief, is not a sin in the sight of God, though it may be in the eyes of the churches. All men are able, without supernatural help, to believe at least as much truth as they can appropriate to their individual improvement, and embody in their every-day life. With regard to man's duties, sectarian Christianity prescribes many that thousands of the best men and women of the world cannot perform. They cannot see that it is their duty to accept a string of incomprehensible dogmas as revealed truths, and walk in a certain narrow way to heaven; but they do believe it is their duty to serve God by obeying the laws he has established, and doing all they can to benefit their fellow-creatures. These are mere hints at the system of teaching concerning man, which Spiritualism seeks to construct, in the place of erroneous ones, which it is doing its best to destroy.

V. The means and conditions of man's salvation is a fifth vital question on which Spiritualism inculcates revolutionary views. I am sorry that I have not time to enlarge upon this point. It has been in a measure anticipated by the principles advocated in another part of the lecture. "What must I do to be saved?" is the great and all-important question which orthodoxy would have man ask; and of course it gives him a ready and supposed satisfactory answer—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The scheme of salvation, as taught by most of the churches, is, that man is naturally in an utterly fallen condition; that he is totally unable to raise and save himself; that God in his mercy has given Christ to die, to purchase his salvation; that he must repent, and believe in Christ as an atoning Saviour, and henceforth walk in the way that he is supposed to have marked out as the only sure road to heaven; and that if he does not thus believe in and follow Christ, he will without doubt perish eternally. But the reason and conscience of many of the world's brightest ornaments have compelled them to reject that scheme, as being alike unworthy of God and man—of God to offer and of man to accept; and Spiritualism, fortified by the present views of many who died in full reliance upon that scheme, emphatically endorses this conclusion. It teaches that the doctrine of vicarious atonement is as demoralising as it is unjust; that it is absolutely impossible for man to transfer either his guilt or its consequences to an innocent substitute, however willing anyone might be to take his place; that sin cannot be forgiven, in the theological sense of the term, but each man must bear in his own person the fruits of his wrongdoing, personal suffering being the only atonement which Eternal Justice will accept; and that, therefore, man must be his own saviour—must work out his own salvation, aided by such means as may be available for the purpose.

"And would your Spiritualism rob me of my precious Saviour, and leave me without hope and comfort?" some timid, weak-kneed Christian will no doubt ask. I generally find that the Bible and Christ are what most Christians cling to the longest and most tenaciously. Some of them would have no particular objection to getting rid of the devil, and giving up the belief in eternal punishment, and a few other troublesome doctrines, if good reason for so doing could be shown; but as for rejecting the holy Bible and their dear Redeemer, that, they say, is out of the question. These were the last things parted with—that is, the popular religious views of them—by some of us who have been constrained to surrender the whole orthodox system, and therefore we can pity and sympathise with our Christian friends. They are like cripples, and must be treated accordingly. It would be cruel to knock the crutches from yonder poor man, and leave him sprawling on the dirty ground. His limbs must be strengthened, and by-and-by he will be able to throw them away himself, and right glad will he be when that day comes to pass. Our good friends in the churches, who manifest such painful symptoms of excitement and alarm at the mention of Spiritualism, are moral cripples. They cannot stand alone, or walk through life without some artificial external supports. They are hobbling along as best they can on crutches, the Bible under one arm and Jesus under the other serving that purpose; and I would not take those crutches rudely from them all at once. I would rather try to impart moral strength to them; develop within them the principle of self-reliance; give them sounder and better views of God, themselves, the future, and many other things, than they now entertain; and gradually bring them up to such an improved condition of soul, that they would, of their
own accord, dispense with those artificial helps, and move on erect and strong in the strength of divine truth and eternal goodness. I would, therefore, not leave them without hope and consolation, as they fear; but would place their hopes on a safer foundation, and open up new and inexhaustible springs of comfort.

And surely, Spiritualism, in thus teaching man to be his own saviour, instead of relying on a good man who was crucified eighteen hundred years ago; and win for himself a place beyond the grave worth having, instead of being behelden to unmerited kindness for it, is likely to produce much better results, in the abandonment of evil habits and principles, and the development and cultivation of man's better nature, than the present false systems of religion have ever borne. I do not want to be carried into heaven in somebody's arms, as though I were a helpless baby; nor sneak in behind someone's back, as though I were a trembling coward. I wish to enter openly, on my own feet, and through my own merits, or not at all; not boldly, in a spirit of pride and arrogance, but humbly, in the conscious strength of the divine manhood God has given me. Nor do I want any glittering crown, or golden palm, or spotless robe, as an underserved gift. I desire nothing there that I do not fairly win by honest labour or honourable conflict here; and I am quite sure that any God worth thinking about would rather that I should deserve a good place in the next world, than that he should have to assign me one as an act of grace. Man, be thine own saviour; use well the talents, time, and opportunities thou hast, and thou wilt need no one else to save thee!

VI. The future destiny of the human race, is the sixth and last subject that I have time to refer to at present. Upon this point also I need hardly say that Spiritualism operates both destructively and constructively. There is nothing that it comes into more direct and fatal collision with orthodoxy upon than its teachings respecting the future state—the destiny of man beyond the grave. It not only disposes of its mighty devil, as a mere myth; but it sweeps away its heaven and its hell, as purely imaginary regions. There is nothing corresponding to them in the universe. Our spirit-friends, who speak from personal knowledge of the next world, assure us that no such unnatural places can be found. But though Spiritualism destroys the popular religious notions about the future state, and man's condition therein, it builds up a much more reasonable and attractive system of teaching on the subject; and it has an immense advantage over orthodoxy on this point in being able to support its positions by the positive testimony of the living inhabitants of that better country. I have not time left to go into this branch of my subject as I could wish; but I would just say that if you will carefully examine the matter, you will find that Spiritualism first of all demonstrates by present facts the reality of a future state of conscious, intelligent, immortal existence for the human family, instead of asking you to believe in it on the strength of certain ancient records; secondly, it proves its nearness to the present world, and the practicability of intercommunion between this state of being and that; thirdly, it teaches that it is perfectly natural, the homes and scenery being as real and tangible to spirits as the objects around us are to us; fourthly, that man's happiness or misery on entering that world depends entirely upon his principles and conduct while here, and not upon his religious creed or profession; fifthly, that punishment, where there is any, is in all cases corrective and reformatory in its object, and therefore of limited duration; sixthly, that spirits are grouped and associated together by certain inherent principles and acquired tastes and habits, rather than by external circumstances, such as frequently bind people together here; seventhly, that true happiness consists in the proper exercise of all the powers of the soul, and the wise and useful employment of time, rather than in rest or idle inactivity; eighthly, that those who have the capacity and desire to do good to their fellow-beings, whether in the spirit-world or on earth, have ample opportunities for doing so, and in trying to benefit others they promote their own spiritual unfoldment and happiness; ninthly, that abundant scope will be found for the unending cultivation of man's intellectual faculties, and the perpetual accumulation of truth and knowledge; and tenthly, that under the universal and eternal law of progressive development all men, even the lowest and vilest, will eventually attain to moral purity and blessedness.

This, the initiated will perceive, is but the faintest outline of the future state which Spiritualism unfolds; and yet how glorious and soul-inspiring it is! How vastly superior in every sense, to the fictitious realms in which man has too long believed; whose grotesqueness and absurdity on the one hand are only equalled by their barbarous and revolting character on the other! And how much more pleasure there is in contemplating that future, and in looking forward to the time of our landing upon its sun-lit shores, than the vanished region with which many of us were formerly contented! And as we bask in the light which Spiritualism has thrown upon this ever-interesting subject, and gather in the knowledge of our eternal homes which it so liberally supplies us with, gratitude to God and the spirit-world ought to kindle our souls, and songs of praise and thanksgiving inspire our tongues. Behold, my afflicted brother, that beautiful world which will soon open its golden portals to receive thee! Even now thy spirit-friends are waiting to give thee a hearty welcome. Look up, my bereaved sister; the loved ones thou art weeping for are standing there, desiring to tell thee of the home they have entered! Be comforted one and all with the certain knowledge, not the mere hope or belief, that an eternal world awaits you; and that your departed friends who have passed into it, can return and commune with you while you are still in the mortal form. And may you and I so live in view of that world, that when we enter upon it, it
may be with joy and confidence, and not with shrinking, sadness, and pain!

There are many more important subjects on which I should like to have pointed out the destructive and constructive bearing of Spiritualism, but want of time forbids. I have shown that it demolishes a number of false Gods, but only that the Supreme Being may be more truly worshipped; that it explodes many of the erroneous notions of religion that prevail, but only that the genuine thing may be more fully enjoyed and practised; that it sweeps away the popular theological views on inspiration, but only that the actuality of the gift may be established, and its real merits determined; that it rejects the estimate of man's character and capabilities that has so long been accepted, but only that a more correct and worthy one may take its place; that it deprives the people of an unreal and impossible saviour in whom they mistakenly trust, but only that they may be thrown back upon other means which will effectually ensure their complete salvation; and that it obliterates the mythical future state on which too many have centred their thoughts and affections, but only that a real world of inexhaustible resources and unspeakable grandeur may burst upon their vision. And I now leave the matter to your judgment for decision, only asking that you will impartially weigh what I have advanced, and not allow prejudice or any other unworthy motive to bias your mind, and influence the final conclusion you will reach.

To Investigators.

THAT all may be placed in a position to investigate the Spiritual phenomena, and judge for themselves, the following information is appended. All Spiritualists were once investigators, and the same path which has led them to knowledge and conviction is open to all who choose to walk therein.


ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS.—The phenomena cannot be successfully elicited in very warm, sultry weather, in extreme cold, when thunder and lightning and magnetic disturbances prevail, when the atmosphere is very moist, or when there is much rain, or storms of wind. A warm, dry atmosphere is best, as it presents the mean between all extremes, and agrees with the harmonious state of man's organism which is proper for the manifestation of spiritual phenomena. A subdued light or darkness increases the power and facilitates control.

LOCAL CONDITIONS.—The room in which a circle is held for development or investigation should be set apart for that purpose. It should be comfortably warmed and ventilated, but draughts or currents of air should be avoided. Those persons composing the circle should meet in the room about an hour before the experiments commence; the same sitters should attend each time, and occupy the same places. This maintains the peculiar magnetic conditions necessary to the production of the phenomena. A developing circle exhausts power, or uses it up.

PHYSIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS.—The phenomena are produced by a vital force emanating from the sitters, which the spirits use as a connecting link between themselves and objects. Certain temperaments give off this power; others emit an opposite influence, if the circle is composed of persons with suitable temperaments, manifestations will take place readily; if the contrary be the case, much perseverance will be necessary to produce results. If both kinds of temperament are present, they require to be arranged so as to produce harmony in the psychical atmosphere evolved from them. The physical manifestations especially depend upon temperament. If a circle does not succeed, changes should be made in the sitters till the proper conditions are supplied.

MENTAL CONDITIONS.—All forms of mental excitement are detrimental to success. Those with strong and opposite opinions should not sit together; opinionated, dogmatic, and positive people are better out of the circle and room. Parties between whom there are feelings of envy, hate, contempt, or other inharmonious sentiment should not sit at the same circle. The vicious and crude should be excluded from all such experiments. The minds of the sitters should be in a passive rather than an active state, possessed by the love of truth and of mankind. One harmonious and fully-developed individual is invaluable in the formation of a circle.

THE CIRCLE should consist of from three to ten persons of both sexes, and sit round an oval, oblong, or square table. Cane-bottomed chairs or those with wooden seats are preferable to stuffed chairs. Mediums and sensitives should never sit on stuffed chairs, cushions, or sofas used by other persons, as the influences which accumulate in the cushions often affect the mediums unpleasantly. The active and quiet, the fair and dark, the ruddy and pale, male and female, should be seated alternately. If there is a medium present, he or she should occupy the end of the table with the back to the north. A mellow mediumistic person should be placed on each side of the medium, and those most positive should be at the opposite corners. No person should be placed behind the medium. A circle may represent a horseshoe magnet, with the medium placed between the poles.

CONDUCT AT THE CIRCLE.—The sitters should place their hands on the table, and endeavour to make each
other feel easy and comfortable. Agreeable conversation, singing, reading, or invocation may be engaged in—anything that will tend to harmonise the minds of those present, and unite them in one purpose, is in order. By engaging in such exercises the circle may be made very profitable apart from the manifestations. Sitters should not desire anything in particular, but unite in being pleased to receive that which is best for all. The director of the circle should sit opposite the medium, and put all questions to the spirit, and keep order. A recorder should take notes of the conditions and proceedings. Manifestations may take place in a few minutes, or the circle may sit many times before any result occurs. Under these circumstances it is well to change the positions of the sitters, or introduce new elements, till success is achieved. When the table begins to tilt, or when naps occur, do not be too impatient to get answers to questions. When the table can answer questions by giving three tips or raps for "Yes," and one for "No," it may assist in placing the sitters properly. The spirits or intelligences which produce the phenomena should be treated with the same courtesy and consideration as you would desire for yourselves if you were introduced into the company of strangers for their personal benefit. At the same time, the sitters should not on any account allow their judgment to be warped or their good sense imposed upon by spirits, whatever their professions may be. Reason with them kindly, firmly, and considerately.

INTERCOURSE WITH SPIRITS is carried on by various means. The simplest is three tips of the table or raps for "Yes," and one for "No." By this means the spirits can answer in the affirmative or negative. By calling over the alphabet the spirits will rap at the proper letters to constitute a message. Sometimes the hand of a sitter is shaken, then a pencil should be placed in the hand, when the spirits may write by it automatically. Other sitters may become entranced, and the spirits use the vocal organs of such mediums to speak. The spirits sometimes impress mediums, while others are clairvoyant, and see the spirits, and messages from them written in luminous letters in the atmosphere. Sometimes the table and other objects are lifted, moved from place to place, and even through closed doors. Patiently and kindly seek for tests of identity from loved ones in the spirit-world, and exercise caution respecting spirits who make extravagant pretensions of any kind.

BEFORE proceeding with their investigations, inquirers into Spiritualism should correspond with Mr. Burns, Proprietor of the Spiritual Institution, 15, Southampton Row, London, W.C., who will gladly forward a packet of publications and useful information gratis. Stamps should in all cases be enclosed for return postage. Deputations of mediums or lecturers may be arranged for to visit any locality where public meetings or seances can be instituted.

A Spiritualist Give's his Views on Religion.

I believe in Rational Christianity, pure and simple, or Christian morality, as was taught by Christ; in contradistinction to the adulterated clerical Christianity now so prevalent, and which has almost elbowed the Christianity of Christ out of the world, whereby superstition and foolish rites and ceremonies are substituted in the room of pure morality, true virtue, and genuine religion.

I believe the Christianity of Christ to be "Peace on Earth, good-will to man," the love of God and our neighbour, universal charity and benevolence, and the golden rule of "doing to others as we would have them to do unto us," and not in the incomprehensible creeds and unintelligible dogmas of popular theology.

I believe in a God of perfect justice, who rewards the good in exact proportion to their merits, and proportionately punishes the wicked; such punishments being corrective and purifying: "whatsoever a man sows so shall he reap."

That the favour of God and happiness are to be procured by repentance and amendment, by personal not by vicarious agency.

That well-matured reason and conscience are the best guides to be depended on, and, if we neglect or renounce their directions and admonitions, we lay ourselves open to all manner of delusion and priestcraft, hateful to God and destructive to mankind.

That instead of stereotyped creeds, blind zeal, and religions persecution for "righteousness sake," we should promote love, peace, temperance, gratitude, charity, and universal benevolence; so as to reduce religion to that plain, simple system of aiming to attain that abstract perfection as taught by Christ who said "Be ye perfect."

The principles to promote these are few and easy:—

- There is a God, an Almighty Creator, to Whom all existence belongs and is subject, and Who ought to be worshipped by all mankind.
- That, by His immutable laws, the good are rewarded and the wicked punished here and hereafter.
- That repentance and reformation are required to obtain the one and escape the other.
- That true religion is that which was stated by Christ, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."
To love God is to love all "Good," as truth, justice, charity, and every good work; to love truth is to love the "God of Truth," &c.

I do not believe in the orthodox views of the atonement, that Christ came to reconcile God to us, but rather that he came to reconcile us to God.

I do not believe in the necessity of his having to be crucified, and to take upon himself the sins of all before man could be saved; if such were the case, how infinitely grateful we ought to be to those orthodox Jews who cruelly put him to death in order that we might be saved.

Neither do I believe in the orthodoxy of the present day, which says, "there are three Gods all equal," and yet so unequal that one God is ever interceding and endeavouring to appease the wrath of another God! If so, one must be in the wrong!

I believe in the absolute perfection of a Divine Creator, and who does not thus require to be changed in order that endless punishment may be averted for temporary sins. I believe that God is love, and that His "mercy," and not his chastisement, "endureth for ever."

I do not believe in "original sin," and that man was pre-ordained to be its victim; nor in the destruction of unbaptised infants as the Roman and Anglican priests tell us. I prefer Christ's doctrine; he says, "Of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

I do not believe in that best friend of priestcraft—a personal devil, and who is said to be more mighty than the Almighty in obtaining the greatest number of immortal souls, thus having power to thwart God's providence,—nor in a material hell-fire, which is ever consuming those souls.

I do not believe "in three Gods, yet one God," which the Church of England says we must believe or, "without doubt, perish everlasting." Its creeds are to me downright blasphemy.

I do not believe the Bible was "divinely inspired" from beginning to end, and was all written by the "finger of God."

I believe that the Bible was made for man, not man for the Bible, that it is an historical, moral, and spiritual teacher, not altogether correct, but containing many truths and many errors; a compilation of different works by different authors, written at different periods, and by the most learned and wise men of their day; but that neither they nor their works are infallible, as the sciences of geology and astronomy, and even their own contradictions, prove.

That men in after ages collected and bound together such of these books as they thought proper, and called them the Bible, and that these self-same human beings, at the Council of Nice, &c., rejected such other books as they thought of less worthy note; that these men were also as learned and wise as the times would permit, but not infallible, and possibly not altogether without prejudice or partiality.

I believe real Christianity to be absolute religion, which thinks and works; goodness towards men, and piety towards God; undogmatic, unsectarian, liberal, broad, and free, preached with faith, and applied to life, being good, and doing good.

There is but one real religion, which we need only open our eyes to see, and which requires neither creeds nor catechisms to discern; only live it in love to God and man, and we are blessed by Him who liveth for ever in spite of all that priests and their dupes may say to the contrary; for, thank God, they are not to be our judges, otherwise few would escape.

CAN BE OBTAINED OF MR. J. WILLIAMS, AT HIS Spiritual and free Thought Book Depot, BENSON'S ARCADE, SANDHURST. PRICE SIXPENCE A DOZEN COPIES.

Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion.

Among the works read in the course of this year (1822) which contributed materially to my development, I ought to mention a book (written on the foundation of some of Bentham's manuscripts, and published under the pseudonym of Philip Beauchamp), entitled 'Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind.'

"This was an examination not of the truth, but of the usefulness of religious belief in the most general sense, apart from the peculiarities of any special Revelation; which, of all the parts of the discussion concerning religion, is the most important in this age, in which real belief in any religious doctrine is feeble and precarious, but the opinion of its necessity for moral and social purposes almost universal; and when those who reject revelation very generally take refuge in an optimistic Deism, a worship of the order of Nature and the supposed course of Providence, at least as full of contradictions and perverting to the moral sentiments as any of the forms of Christianity, if only it is as completely realized. Yet, very little, with any claim to a philosophical character, has been written by sceptics against the usefulness of this form of belief.

"The volume bearing the name of Philip Beauchamp had this for its special object. Having been shown to my father in manuscript, it was put into my hands by him, and I made a marginal analysis of it as I had done of the 'Elements of Political Economy.' Next to the 'Traité de Législation,' it was one of the books which by the searching character of its analysis produced the greatest effect upon me. On reading it lately after an interval of
many years, I find it to have some of the defects as well as the merits of the Benthamite modes of thought, and to contain, as I now think, many weak arguments, but with a great overbalance of sound ones, and much good material for a more completely philosophic and conclusive treatment of the subject."—JOHN STUART MILL'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, page 69.

"This essential portion of the inquiry into the temporal usefulness of religion is the subject of the present Essay. It is a part which has been little treated of by sceptical writers. The only direct discussion of it with which I am acquainted is in a short treatise, understood to have been partly compiled from manuscripts of Mr. Bentham, and abounding in just and profound views; but which, as it appears to me, presses many parts of the argument too hard."—J. S. MILL'S ESSAY ON THE UTILITY OF RELIGION, page 76.

"Although not generally known, it is, we believe, a fact that the late Mr. Grote was the author of a treatise on Natural Religion, published under an assumed name so far back as the year 1822. The full title of this work is 'Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion, &c., &c., by Philip Beauchamp.'—THE ATHENÆUM, May 31, 1873.

Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind.
By Philip Beauchamp.
A New Edition.
Edward Truelove London 256, High Holborn. 1875

Preface.

The following pages present a temperate, and I hope a satisfactory, examination of the temporal good or evil produced by Natural Religion. The topic is of unspeakable importance, and has by no means met with the attention which it deserves. It has indeed scarcely ever been separately considered, and those who have controverted the truth of religion have suffered themselves with but little opposition to be decried as inflicting the deepest injury upon humanity—as corrupting the most effectual source both of rectitude and of consolation—and as robbing mankind of doctrines, which, supposing they were false, ought nevertheless to have been invented and inculcated. Such has been the current opinion on the subject: and it need not be remarked how strong must have been the inclination of an audience so prepossessed, to support that which they regarded as the firmest tie and protection of society.

It is therefore essentially requisite, before the question as to the truth of religion can be brought to a fair and unbiased decision, to estimate correctly the advantages or disadvantages which result from its adoption. If the estimate of these advantages drawn up by its advocates be really well-founded, we may safely pronounce that no anti-religious writer could possibly make a convert, even though he were armed with demonstration as rigorous as that of Euclid.

Should the following reasonings be deemed conclusive, a clear idea may be formed of the temporal gain or loss accruing from the agency of Natural Religion. Whether the doctrines which this term involves be true or false, is a point on which I do not intend to touch: nor is the question of any import, so far as regards the present discussion. Though these doctrines were false, yet many religionists allege that it would be salutary to deceive mankind into a belief of their truth: And conversely, others might with equal right maintain, that although they were true, it might perhaps still be pernicious, so far as regards the present life, to receive them as true.

Under the term Natural Religion, I include all religious belief not specially determined and settled by some revelation (or reputed revelation) from the Being to whom the belief relates. The good or bad temporal tendency of any particular alleged revelation, can of course only be ascertained by an inspection of the books in which it is contained, and must therefore form a separate inquiry. To any such inquiry however, the present discussion is an essential preliminary. For if it be discovered that Religion, unassisted by revelation, is the foe and not the benefactor of mankind, we can then ascertain whether the good effects engrafted upon her by any alleged revelation, are sufficient to neutralize the bitterness of her natural fruits. Nor is it possible to measure the benefit or injury derived from Revealed Religion, without first determining the effects of Religion herself without any revelation.

Divines have on many occasions admitted and enlarged upon the defects and bad tendency of Natural Religion. Hence, they infer, the necessity of a revelation. Whoever contends that a revelation was a present highly necessary, and a most signal instance of the benevolence of God, must also contend that the pre-existing religion was, to say the least, productive of a very slender portion of good. And if our present inquiry should demonstrate that Natural Religion has produced a large balance of temporal evil above temporal good, this will evince still more forcibly the necessity of a revelation such as to purge and counteract its bad effects.

To obviate all misconceptions, I wish to declare beforehand, that whenever the general term religion is used in the following treatise I mean it to denote mere Natural Religion, apart from revelation. If I do not constantly
annex the qualifying epithet natural, it is from a wish to avoid needless repetition of that which may be indicated once for all in the beginning. In the same manner I wish it to be understood, that whenever the terms, sacerdotal class, or any synonymous phrases, are employed, it is only the ministers of Natural Religion who are designated.

December, 1822.

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Chapter I.

Preliminary Statements and Definition.

On the truth of religion much has been urged; on its usefulness and beneficial tendency, comparatively little—little, at least, which can be termed argumentative or convincing. But assumption is shorter than proof, and the advocates of religion, though scarcely deigning to bestow any inquiry or analysis upon the subject, have not failed to ascribe to it results of supreme excellence and happiness. It has been affirmed to be the leading bond of union between the different members of society—to be the most powerful curb on the immoral and unsocial passions of individuals—to form the consolation and support of misfortunes and declining life—in short, it has been described as the most efficient prop both of inward happiness and of virtuous practice in this world. Whether these sublime pretensions are well founded or not, the following inquiry is destined to ascertain.

The warmest partisan of natural religion cannot deny, that by the influence of it (occasionally at least) bad effects have been produced; nor can any one on the other hand venture to deny, that it has on other occasions brought about good effects. The question therefore is, throughout, only as to the comparative magnitude, number, and proportion of each.

One course has indeed been adopted, by means of which religion has been, in appearance, extricated from all imputation, of having ever given birth to ill effects in any shape. So far as the results occasioned by it have been considered as good, the producing cause has been termed religion: so far as these results have been regarded as bad, this name has been discarded and the word superstition has been substituted. Or these injurious effects have avowedly been thrown aside under the pretence, that they are abuses of religion; that the abuse of a thing cannot be urged against its use, since the most beneficent preparations may be erroneously or criminally applied. By these false methods of reasoning the subject has been inconceivably overclouded, and it is therefore essentially necessary to expose and guard against such fallacies in the outset. From the former of these two sources all deception will be obviated by an accurate definition of the term religion; by strictly confining it to one meaning, and invariably introducing it whenever that meaning is implied. Against the latter principle, by which what are called the abuses of a thing are discarded from the estimate of its real importance and value, we declare open war. By the use of a thing, is meant the good which it produces; by the abuse, the evil which it occasions. To pronounce upon the merits of the thing under discussion, previously erasing from the reckoning all the evil which it occasions, is most preposterous and unwarrantable. Were this mode of summing up receipts and eluding all deductions of outgoings, admissible, every institution which had ever produced any good effects
at all, must be applauded as meritorious and useful, although its pernicious effects, which had been thrust out of
the account, might form a decided and overwhelming balance on the other side.

By the term religion is meant the belief in the existence of an almighty Being, by whom pains and
pleasures will be dispensed to mankind, during an infinite and future state of existence. And religion is called
natural, when there exists no written and acknowledged declaration, from which an acquaintance with the will
and attributes of this almighty Being may be gathered.

My object is therefore to ascertain, whether the belief of posthumous pains and pleasures, then to be
administered by an omnipotent Being, is useful to mankind—that is, productive of happiness or misery in the
present life.

I say, in the present life, for the distinction is exceedingly important to notice. Compared with an
interminable futurity, the present life taken in its utmost duration, is but as a point, less than a drop of water to
the ocean. Although, therefore, it should be demonstrated, that religion, considered with reference to the present
life, is not beneficial but pernicious—not augmentative but destructive of human happiness—there might still
remain ample motive to the observance of its precepts, in the mind of a true believer.

Chapter II.

The Expectations of posthumous Pain and Pleasure, which Natural Religion holds out, considered simply
and in themselves.

The pains and pleasures, which are believed to await us in a posthumous existence, may be anticipated
either as conditional, and dependent upon the present behaviour of the believer, or as unconditional
dispensations, which no conduct on his part can either amend or aggravate. Though perhaps it is impossible to
produce any case in which the belief has actually assumed this latter shape, yet it will be expedient to survey it
in this most general and indeterminate form, before we introduce the particular circumstances which have
usually accompanied the reception of it. A few considerations will suffice to ascertain, whether expectations of
posthumous pains and pleasures, considered in themselves and without any reference to the direction which they
may give to human conduct, are of a nature to occasion happiness or misery to the believer.

Nothing can be more undeniable, than that a posthumous existence, if sincerely anticipated, is most likely
to appear replete with impending pain and misery. The demonstration is brief and decisive.

A posthumous state of existence is necessarily unknown and impervious to human vision. We cannot see
the ground which is before us. We possess not the slightest means of knowing whether it resembles that which
we have already trodden. The scene before us is wrapped in impenetrable darkness. In this state of obscurity
and ignorance, the imagination usurps the privilege of filling up the void, and what are the scenes which she
portrays? They are similar to those with which the mind is overrun during a state of earthly darkness—the
product of unmixed timidity and depression; fear is the never-failing companion and offspring of ignorance,
and the circumstances of human life infallibly give birth to such a communion. For the painful sensations are
the most obtrusive and constant assailants which lie in ambush round our path. The first years of our life are
spent in suffering under their sting, before we acquire the means of warding them off. The sole acquisition
applicable to this purpose is knowledge—knowledge of the precise manner and occasion in which we are
threatened, and of the antidote which may obviate it. Still however the painful sensations are continually on the
watch to take advantage of every unguarded moment; nor is there a single hour of our life in which the lessons
of experience are not indispensably necessary for our protection against them.

Since then it is only to knowledge that we owe our respite from perpetual suffering; wherever our
knowledge fails us and we are reduced to a state of unprotected helplessness, all our sense of security, all
anticipations of future ease, must vanish along with it. Ignorance must generate incessant alarm and uneasiness.
The regular economy of the universe, by which nature is subjected to general laws, and the past becomes the
interpreter of the future, is often adduced as a reason for extolling the beneficence of the Deity; and a reliance
on the stability of events, as well as in the efficacy of the provision we have made against the future, is justly
regarded as the most indispensable ingredient in human happiness. Had we no longer any confident expectation
that to-morrow would resemble yesterday—were we altogether without any rule for predicting what would
occur to us after this night, how shocking would be our alarm and depression? The unknown future, which was
about to succeed, would be pregnant to our affrighted imaginations with calamity from which we knew not how
to shelter ourselves. Infants are timorous to a proverb, and perhaps there is scarcely any man, possessed of
vision, whom darkness does not impress with some degree of apprehension and uneasiness. Yet if a man
fancies himself unsheltered, when only the visible prognostics of impending evil are effaced, while all his other
means of foresight and defence remain inviolate, how much keener will be the sense of his unprotected
condition, when all means of predicting or averting future calamity are removed beyond his reach? If, in the one
case, his alarmed fancy peoples the darkness with unreal enemies, and that too in defiance of the opposing assurances of reason, what an array of suffering will it conjure up in the other, where the ignorance and helplessness, upon which the alarm is founded, is so infinitely magnified, and where reason cannot oppose the smallest tittle of evidence?

I have thus endeavoured to show that from the unintermitting peril to which human life is exposed, and the perpetual necessity of knowledge to protect ourselves against it, mankind must infallibly conceive an unknown future as fraught with misery and torment. But this is not the only reason which may be assigned for such a tendency. Pain is a far stronger, more pungent, and more distinct sensation than pleasure; it is more-various in its shapes, more definite and impressive upon the memory, and lays hold of the imagination with greater mastery and permanence. Pain, therefore, is far more likely to obtrude itself upon the conceptions, where there exists no positive evidence to circumscribe their range, than pleasure. Throughout the catalogue of human suspicions, there exists not a case in which our ignorance is so profound as about the manner of a post-humous existence; and since no reason can be given for preferring one mode of conceiving it to another, the strongest sensations of the past will be perfectly sure to break in, and to appropriate the empty canvas. Pain will dictate our anticipation, and a posthumous life will be apprehended as replete with the most terrible concomitants which such a counsellor can suggest.

Besides, pain alone, and want or uneasiness, which is a species of pain, are the standing provisions of nature. Even the mode of appeasing those wants, is the discovery of human skill; what is called pleasure is a secondary formation, something superadded to the satisfaction of our wants by a farther reach of artifice; and only enjoyable when that satisfaction is perfect for the present, as well as prompt and certain for the future. Want and pain, therefore, are natural; satisfaction and pleasure, artificial and invented: and the former will on this ground also be more likely to present itself as the characteristic of an unknown state, than the latter.

The preceding arguments seem to evince most satisfactorily, that a posthumous existence, if really anticipated, is far more likely to be conceived as a state of suffering, than of enjoyment. Such anticipation, therefore, considered in itself, and without any reference to the direction which it gives to human conduct, will assuredly occasion more misery than happiness to those who entertain it.

Though believers in a posthumous existence seldom in fact anticipate its joys or torments as unconditionally awaiting them, and altogether independent of their present conduct, yet it is important to examine the effects and tendency of the belief, when thus entertained. We frequently hear the hope of immortality magnified as one of the loftiest privileges and blessings of human nature, without which man would be left in a state of mournful and comfortless destitution. To all these vague declamations, by which it is attempted to interest the partiality of mankind in favour of the belief in question, the foregoing arguments furnish a reply; they demonstrate that such anticipations, so far from conferring happiness on mankind, are certain to fasten in preference upon prospects of torments, and to occasion a large overplus of apprehension and uneasiness—at least until some revelation intervenes to settle and define them, and to terminate that ignorance which casts so terrific a character over the expected scenes.

He who imagines himself completely mortal, suffers no apprehension or misery, in this life, from the prospect of death, except that which the pains attending it, and the loss of present enjoyments, unavoidably hold out. A posthumous existence, if anticipated as blissful, would doubtless greatly alleviate the disquietude which the prospect of death occasions. It cannot be denied that such a persuasion would prove the source of genuine happiness to the believer. But the fact is, that a posthumous existence is not, by the majority of believers, anticipated as thus blissful, but as replete with terrors. The principles of human nature, to which reference has been made in the foregoing arguments, completely warrant this conclusion, supposing no revelation at hand to instil and guarantee more consoling hopes. It is obvious therefore, that natural religion, alone and unassisted, will to the majority of its believers materially aggravate the disquietude occasioned by the prospect of death. Instead of soothing apprehensions which cannot be wholly dispelled, it would superadd fresh grounds of uneasiness, wrapped up in an uncertainty which only renders them more painful and depressing.

Having thus ascertained, that posthumous anticipations, considered in themselves and in their capacity of feelings, occasion more unhappiness than benefit to the believer, I shall now examine them under that point of view in which they are commonly regarded as most beneficial and valuable.

Chapter III.

The Expectations of posthumous Pain and Pleasure, which Natural Religion holds out, considered as conditional, and as exercising Influence upon human Conduct.

IT is in this mode that such expectations are commonly regarded as most beneficial to mankind. The anticipation of posthumous pleasure and pain, conditional upon the actions of the believer, is affirmed to
imprint upon individual conduct a bias favourable to the public happiness. I shall now proceed to investigate
the validity of this plea, which has hitherto been seldom challenged.

If natural religion contributes to human happiness, by means of the influence which it exercises on the
conduct of men, such a result can be brought about only in one of these ways: Either it must provide a directive
rule, communicating the knowledge of the right path—or it must furnish a sanction or inducement for the
observance of some directive rule, supposed to be known from other sources. Unless it thus either admonishes
or impels, it cannot possibly affect in any way the course of human nature.

Section I.—Natural Religion Furnishes no Directive Rule
Whatever.

It is obvious at first sight, that natural religion communicates to mankind no rule of guidance. This is the
leading defect which revelation is stated to supply, by providing an authentic enumeration of those acts to
which future pains and pleasures are annexed. Independent of revelation, it cannot be pretended that there exists
any standard to which the believer in a posthumous existence can apply for relief and admonition. The whole
prospect is wrapt in impenetrable gloom, nor is there a streak of light to distinguish the one true path of future
happiness from the infinite possibilities of error with which it is surrounded.

Nor is the absence of any authoritative collection of rules, by which the believer might adjust his steps in
all circumstances, however difficult, the only defect to be remarked. Experience imparts no information upon
the subject. That watchful scout, who on all other occasions spies out the snares and terrors of the march, and
points out the path of comparative safety, here altogether deserts us. We search in vain for any witness who
may enlighten this deplorable ignorance. The distribution of these pains and pleasures is completely unseen, nor
does either the gainer or loser ever return to testify the mode of dispensing them. We cannot therefore pretend
even to conjecture whether there is any general rule observed in awarding them; or if there be a rule, what are
its dictates. It is impossible to divine what behaviour is visited with severity, what conduct leads to pleasurable
results, during a state in which there is not a glimmering of light to guide us.

The natural religionist therefore is not only destitute of any previous official warning, by a compliance with
which he may ensure safety or favour: he has not even the means of consulting those decisions according to
which the pleasures and pains are actually awarded to actions already committed. Not only is there no statute
law extant, distinguishing, with that strict precision which should characterize the legislator as he ought to be,
the path of happiness from that of misery: even the imperfect light of common law is here extinguished—even
that record of decisions is forbidden from whence we might at least borrow some shadowy and occasional
surmises, and learn to steer clear of the more excruciating lots of pain. The darkness is desperate and
unfathomable; and as truth and rectitude can be but a single track amidst an infinity of divergent errors, the
chances in favour of a wrong line of conduct are perfectly incalculable. Yet a false step, if once committed, is
altogether without hope or remedy. For when the posthumous sufferings are inflicted, the hour of application
and profit is irrevocably past, and the sufferer enjoys not even the melancholy consolation which he might
derive from the hope of preventing any future repetition of the same torture.

It seems, therefore, almost unaccountable, that natural religion, how rich soever its promises, how terrible
soever its threats, should exercise the least influence upon human conduct, since the conditions of its awards are
altogether veiled from our sight. Why does the prospect of other pains affect our conduct? Because experience
teaches us the actions to which they are specially attached. Until we acquire this knowledge, our behaviour
cannot possibly be actuated by the anticipations which they create. How then can natural religion, shrouded as
it is in such matchless obscurity, prove an exception to these infallible principles, and impel mankind without
specifying a single benefit derivable from one course of action rather than another?

Since however it unquestionably does exercise some influence upon human conduct, this must be effected
by providing inducements for some extraneous directive rule. I shall proceed to examine the nature of the
precepts which it thus adopts and enforces, since there are none peculiarly suggested by itself.

Section II.—Natural Religion Indirectly Suggests, and Applies
Her Inducements to the Observance of, a Rule of Action Very
Pernicious to the Temporal Interests of Mankind.

In inquiring what extraneous rules of conduct are likely to promise either posthumous pleasure, or security
from posthumous pain, we are unable to perceive, at first, how the believer should be led to any preference or
conclusion upon the subject. So completely are we destitute of evidence, that it seems presumptuous to select
any one mode of conduct, or to exclude any other. Experience alone can announce to us what behaviour is
attended with enjoyment or discomfort during this life; it is this guide alone who informs us that the taste of fruit will procure pleasure, or that contact with the fire will occasion pain, and if the trial had never been made, we should to this day have remained ignorant even of these trite and familiar facts. We could not have affirmed or denied anything about them. Suppose a species of fruit perfectly new to be discovered. If any one, before either he himself or some one else has tasted it, confidently pronounces that it is sweet and well flavoured, an assertion so premature and uncerified could be treated only with contempt. We should term it folly and presumption thus to prophesy the pleasure or pain consequent in this life upon any particular conduct, prior to any experimental test. Whence comes it then, that the same certificate, which is allowed to be our only safeguard here against the dreams and chimeras of fancy, should be dismissed as superfluous and unnecessary in our anticipations of posthumous pain and pleasure? If a man ignorant of medicine is unable to point out a course of life which shall, if pursued in England, preserve him from liability to the yellow fever when he goes to Jamaica, how much more boldness is required to prescribe a preparatory course against consequences still farther removed from the possibility of conjecture?

Rash, however, as such anticipations may seem to be, they have almost universally obtained reception, under some form or other. And it is highly important to trace the leading assumptions which have governed the prophecies of men on the subject of posthumous pain and pleasure—to detect those universal principles which never fail to stand out amidst an infinite variety of subordinate accompaniments.

Natural religion merely implants in a man the expectation of a posthumous existence, involving awards of enjoyment and suffering apportioned by an invisible Being. This we suppose it to assure and certify; beyond this, all is dark and undiscovered. But on a subject so dim and yet so terrible, the obtrusive conjectures of fancy will not be silenced, and she will proceed to particularize, and interpolate without delay. The character of the invisible Being in whose hands these fearful dispensations are lodged, will present the most plausible theme for her speculations. If his temper, and the actions with which he is pleased or displeased, can be once discovered, an apparent clue to the secret sentences of futurity will be obtained. He will gratify those whose conduct he likes; injure those whose behaviour is disagreeable to him. But what modes of conduct will he be supposed to approve or disapprove?

Before we proceed to unfold the principles which govern our suppositions regarding his temper, it may be important to point out, in a few words, the insufficient basis upon which all anticipations of future enjoyment or suffering are built, independent of revelation. The pains and pleasures of a posthumous life are under the dispensation of the invisible Being. But so also are the pains and pleasures of this life. You do not found any expectations regarding the latter upon any assumed disposition of their invisible Dispenser. You do not pacify your ignorance of those causes which may create a tendency to the yellow fever, by conjecturing that certain actions are displeasing to his feelings. Predictions founded upon such wretched surmise would indicate the meanest imbecility. Why then should such evidence be considered as sanctioning anticipations of posthumous awards, when the commonest experience will not allow it to be employed to interpret the dispensations of the very same Being in the present life? In estimating the chances of life and death, of health and disease, no insurer ever inquires whether the actions of the applicant have been agreeable or disagreeable to the Deity. And the reasoning, upon which the trial by ordeal rests, is regarded with unqualified contempt, implying, as it does, that this Being approves or detests modes of action, and that he will manifest these feelings by dispensations in this life, of favour or severity. Yet this is merely a consistent application of the very same shift, for superseding the necessity of experience, on which the posthumous prophecies of natural religion are founded.

In this life, however, it may be urged, there are laws of nature which the Deity cannot or will not interrupt. But why should there not also be posthumous laws of nature, discoverable only by experience of them, and inviolable to the same extent? The presumption unquestionably is, that there are such posthumous laws, and that we can no more predict, from a reference to the attributes of the Deity, the modes of acquiring pleasure and avoiding pain in a posthumous life, than we can in this.

Amidst the dimness and distance of futurity, however, reason is altogether struck blind, and we do not scruple to indulge in these baseless anticipations. The assumed character of the invisible Dispenser is the only ground on which fancy can construct her scale of posthumous promotion and disgrace. And thus the rule of action, to which natural religion will affix her inducements of future vengeance and remuneration, will be framed entirely upon the conceptions entertained regarding his character.

We thus find ourselves somewhat nearer to the object of the present inquiry, whether natural religion conduces to the happiness or misery of mankind during the present life. It appears that natural religion does not itself originate any rule of action whatever, and that the rule which it is supposed to second and enforce depends only upon conceptions of the temper of the Deity. If he is conceived to be perfectly beneficent—having no personal affections of his own, or none but such as are coincident with the happiness of mankind—patronising those actions alone which are useful, and exactly in the degree in which they are useful—detesting in a similar manner and proportion those which are hurtful—then the actions agreeable to him will be beneficial to
mankind, and inducements to the performance of them will promote the happiness of mankind. If, on the other hand, he is depicted as unbeneftic—as having personal affections seldom coincident with human happiness, frequently injurious to it, and almost always frivolous and exactive—favouring actions which are not useful at all, or not in the degree in which they are useful—disapproving with the same caprice and without any reference to utility—then the course of action by which his favour is to be sought, will be more or less injurious to mankind, and inducements to pursue it will in the present life tend to the production of unhappiness.

From this alternative there can be no escape. According to the temper of the Being whom we seek to please, will be the mode of conduct proper for conciliating his favour. To serve the devil is universally considered as implying the most abhorrent and detestable behaviour.

If we consult the language in which mankind speak of the Deity, we shall be led to imagine that he is in their conception a being of perfect and unsullied beneficence, uniting in himself all that is glorious and all that is amiable. Such is the tendency and amount of the words which they employ. Strange, however, as the inconsistency may appear, it will not be difficult to demonstrate, that mere natural religion invariably leads its votaries to ascribe to their Deity a character of caprice and tyranny, while they apply to him, at the same moment, all those epithets of eulogy and reverence which their language comprises. This discrepancy between the actual and the pretended conception is an infallible result of the circumstances, and agreeable to the principles of human nature.

1. What are the fundamental data, as communicated by natural religion, respecting the Deity, from which his temper and inclinations are to be inferred? A power to which we can assign no limits—an agency which we are unable to comprehend or frustrate—such are the original attributes from which the disposition of the possessor is to be gathered.

Now the feeling which excessive power occasions in those who dwell under its sway, is extreme and unmixed fear. This is its appropriate and never-failing effect, and he who could preserve an undisturbed aspect in the face of a power against which he knew of no protection, and which might destroy him in an instant, would justly be extolled as a man of heroic firmness. But what is the temper of mind which fear presupposes in the object which excites it? A disposition to do harm. Now a disposition to do harm, conjoined to the power of effecting it at pleasure, constitutes the very essence of tyranny. Examine the fictitious narratives respecting men of extraordinary strength. You will find a Giant or a Cyclops uniformly portrayed as cruel in the extreme, and delighted with the scent of human blood. Such are the dispositions which the human fancy naturally imagines as guiding the employment of irresistible might. Our terrors (as Father Malebranche remarks) justify them-selves, by suggesting appropriate persuasions of impending evil, and compel us to regard the possessor of unlimited powers as a tyrant.

The second characteristic of the Deity is an unknown and incomprehensible agency. Now an incomprehensible mode of behaviour, not reducible to any known principles, is in human affairs termed caprice, when confined to the trifling occurrences of life; insanity, when it extends to important occasions. The capricious or the insane are those whose proceedings we cannot reconcile with the acknowledged laws of human conduct—those whose conduct defies our utmost sagacity of prediction. They are incomprehensible agents endowed with limited power. The epithets capricious, insane, incomprehensible, are perfectly convertible and synonymous.

Let experience now teach us the feelings with which mankind usually regard the mad, the wayward, and the unfathomable course of proceeding among themselves. They laugh at the caprices of a child; they tremble at the incoherent speech and gestures of a madman. Every one shrinks with dismay from the presence of the latter; the laws instantly enclose his body, and thrust upon it the invincible manacles of matter, since no known apprehension will act as a sufficient coercive upon his mind. Caprice and insanity, when accompanied even with the limited strength of a man, excite in us the keenest alarm, which is only heightened by the indefinite shape of the coming evil.

But let us suppose this object of our terror to be still farther strengthened. What if we arm the incomprehensible man with a naked sword! What if we figure him, like the insane Orlando of Ariosto, roaming about with an invulnerable hide, and limbs insensible to the chain! What if, still farther, he be intrusted with the government of millions, seconded by irresistible legions who stand ready at his beck! Can the utmost stretch of fancy produce any picture so appalling, as that of a mad, capricious, and incomprehensible Being exalted to this overwhelming sway? Yet this terrific representation involves nothing beyond surpassing might, wielded by one whose agency is unfathomable. And these are the two attributes, the alliance of which, in a measure still more fearful and unlimited, constitutes the Deity, as portrayed by natural religion.

So complete is this identity between incomprehensible conduct and madness, that amongst early nations, the madman is supposed to be under the immediate inspiration and control of the Deity, whose agency is always believed to commence where coherent and rational behaviour terminates.

But the Deity (it will be urged) treats us with favour and kindness, and this may suffice to remove our
apprehensions of him. I reply, that the most valuable gift could never efface them, while the proceedings of the
donor continued to be entirely inconsistent and unintelligible. It is the very essence of caprice and madness, that
present behaviour constitutes no security whatever for the future. Our disquietude for the future must therefore
remain as oppressive as before, and can never be relieved by these occasional gusts of transient good-humour.
As few men hope, and almost every one fears, in cases where no assured calculation can be framed, it is
obvious that this irregular favouritism would still leave us in all the restlessness of suspense and uncertainty.

The actual conception, therefore, which mankind will form of the Deity, from the consideration of those
original data which unassisted natural religion promulgates concerning him, seems now to be sufficiently
determined. He will not be conceived as designing constant and unmixed evil, for otherwise his power would
carry it into effect; nor, for the same reason, as meditating universal and unceasing good. While there exists
good in the universe, such a power cannot be wielded by perfect malevolence; while there exists evil, it cannot
be directed by consummate benevolence.

Plato tells us that the Deity is perfectly and systematically well intentioned, but that he was prevented from
realizing these designs, by the inherent badness and intractable qualities of matter. This supposition does indeed
vindicate the intentions of the Supreme Being, but only by grievously insulting his power and limiting his
omnipotence. According to this theory, the Deity becomes a perfectly comprehensible person; and the attribute
of incomprehensibility being taken away, all the preceding reasonings which are founded on it fall to the
ground. But at the same time that he becomes perfectly comprehensible, he becomes a thorough dead letter with
regard to all human desires and expectations. For by the supposition his power only extends to the production
of the already existing amount of good. He can produce no more good—that is, he can be of no farther use to
any one, and therefore it is vain to trouble ourselves about him.

But what evidence is there for this doctrine of Plato? Not the shadow of an argument can be produced in its
favour, and where nothing is set up as a defence, one cannot tell where to aim an attack. The only mode of
assailing it is by constructing a similar phantom on one's own side, in order to expose the absurdity of the first
by its resemblance to the second. Conformably to this rule, I affirm that the Deity is perfectly and
systematically malevolent, and that he was only prevented from realizing these designs by the inherent
goodness and incorruptible excellence of matter.” I admit that there is not the smallest evidence for this, but it is
just as well supported, and just as probable as the preceding theory of Plato.

Besides, either of these two suppositions would destroy the attribute of incomprehensibility and would
substitute in their stead a consecutive and intelligible system of action. The Deity therefore will be conceived as
fluctuating between the two; sometimes producing evil, sometimes good, but infinitely more as an object of
terror than of hope. His changeful and intractable qualities will be supposed more frequently
pernicious than beneficial to mankind, and the portrait of a capricious tyrant will thus be completed.

2. Unamiable, however, and appalling as this conception may actually be, it is equally undeniable that no
language, except that of the most devoted reverence and eulogy, will ever be employed in describing or
addressing the Deity. To demonstrate this, it will be necessary to revert to the origin of praise and blame.

Praise is the expression of goodwill and satisfaction towards the person who has occasioned us a certain
pleasure. It intimates a readiness on our part to manifest this goodwill by some farther repayment. It supposes
the performance of a service which we have neither the right to expect nor the means of exacting. We bestow it
in order to evince to the performer of the service and to the public in general, that we are not insensible to the
favour received, and that we are disposed to view all who thus benefit us with peculiar complacency. Our praise
therefore is destined to operate as a stimulus to the repetition of that behaviour by which we profit.

Blame, on the contrary, is the signal of dissatisfaction and wrath against the person who has caused us pain.
It implies a disposition which would be gratified by inflicting injury upon him. It proclaims to him, and to every
one else, our sense of the hurt, and the perils prepared for all who treat us in a similar manner. And we design,
by means of it, to frighten and deter every one from conduct noxious to our welfare.

Such is the origin and such the intention of the language of encomium and dispraise. Each is a species of
sanction, vested in the hands of every individual, and employed by him for his own benefit; the former
remuneratory, and destined to encourage the manifestation of kindness towards him; the latter punitory, and
intended to prevent injurious treatment.

Having thus unfolded the nature of praise and censure, it will not be difficult to explain the laws which
govern their application; and to separate the circumstances in which a man will praise, from those in which he
will blame.

Our employment of the punitory sanction, or of blame, is in exact proportion to our power; our employment
of the remuneratory sanction, or of praise, is in a similar manner proportional to our weakness.

The man of extraordinary power, who possesses unlimited disposal of the instruments of terror, has not the
slightest motive to praise. His blame, the herald and precursor of impending torture, is abundantly sufficient to
ensure conformity to his will. The remuneratory sanction is in its nature comparatively feeble and uncertain; the
punitive, when applied in sufficient magnitude, is altogether infallible and omnipotent. He who possesses an adequate command of the latter, will never condescend to make use of the former. He will regard himself as strictly entitled to the most unqualified subservience on the part of those whom he might in an instant plunge into excruciating torments. If he partially waives the exercise of this prerogative, he will consider it as an undeserved extension of mercy.

On the other hand, the man without strength or influence, who cannot hurt us even if he wished it, is cut off from the employment of the punitive sanction. His blame is an impotent murmur, threatening no future calamity, and therefore listened to with indifference. It would, under these circumstances, revolt and irritate us, or else provoke our derision. In either case, it would only render us less disposed to conform to his will, and policy therefore will induce him to repress it altogether. His sole method of influencing our behaviour is by a prodigal employment of the remuneratory sanction—by repaying the slightest favour with unbounded expressions of gratitude—by lavishing upon us such loud and devoted eulogy, as may impress us with his readiness to consecrate to our benefit all the energies of a human being, if we condescend to repeat our kindness. Such are the methods by which he endeavours to magnify and exaggerate the slender bounty which fortune permits him to apply in encouragement of the favours of mankind.

The most copious experience may be adduced in support of these principles. Does the planter, whom the law arms with unlimited power, bestow any eulogy upon his slave, in return for the complete monopoly of his whole life and services? He considers himself as entitled to demand all this, since he possesses the means of extorting its fulfilment. Let us trace the descending scale of power, and mark how the approach of weakness gradually unsheaths the remuneratory sanction. Were his free labourer (particularly in those lands where labour is scarce and highly paid) to work in his employment with an energy and devotion at all comparable to that which he exacts from his slave, the planter would be prompt in applying the stimulus and encouragement of eulogy. A slighter service, on the part of a friend of equal rank, will draw from him encomiums on the kind and generous temper by which he has benefited. But the merest civility, even a peculiar look or word, bestowed by the king or a superior, is sufficient to impress upon him the deepest esteem and reverence. He loudly extols the gracious deportment of a person upon whom he had no claim, and from whom he could have entertained no expectations.

If any one makes me a present of a considerable sum I magnify his bounty to the skies; I recommend him to the public by all the epithets significant of kindly and beneficent feelings, and thus display the conspicuous return which I am ready to make for such treatment. But let the government grant me a claim upon his estate, however unjustly, and the premium of praise is no longer necessary when I am thus master of the engine of exaction. I no longer therefore bestow upon him by whose labour I profit, those laudatory terms which promise good will on my part. "Is it not enough for him (said Charles I. when the death of Lord Northampton was commended to his sympathy)—Is it not enough that he has died for his king?" So thoroughly is the standing kindness. Such are the methods by which he endeavours to magnify and exaggerate the slender bounty which fortune permits him to apply in encouragement of the favours of mankind.

In proportion as we raise the inferior into equality, his blame becomes more efficacious, and is proclaimed oftener and more freely. Advance him still higher, and his propensity to find fault will be still farther extended, until at last it becomes so excitable and eruptive, as to disregard altogether the feelings of others, and to visit with merciless severity the most trivial defect of conformity to his wishes.

From this examination we may extract some important principles, which will materially elucidate the object of the present inquiry. It appears, first, that the employment of praise or blame bears an exact ratio to the comparative weakness or strength of the critic. Weakness determines praise, strength blame; and the force of either sentiment is measured by the extent of the determining quality. The greater the disparity of power, the more severe is the blame heaped upon the inferior, the more excessive the praise lavished upon the superior. Secondly, the employment of praise and blame is in an inverse ratio to each other. He who praises the most,
blames the least; he who blames the most, scarcely praises at all. The man to whom the utmost praise is addressed, seldom hears any blame—and vice versa. Thirdly, the application of praise and blame bears an inverse ratio to the services performed. The greater the service rendered, the more is the performer of it blamed; the less is he praised. There is no human being from whom the planter derives so much benefit as from his slave; there is none upon whom he expends so little eulogy, or pours so much reproach. On the contrary, it is towards him who has the largest power of inflicting evil upon us, and who confers on us the most insignificant favours, that our encomiums are the warmest, our censure the most gentle and sparing. A mere intermission of the whip, or perhaps an occasional holiday, will draw forth abundant expression of praise on the part of the slave. How gracious and beneficent is a sovereign styled, by him upon whom he has bestowed a single look of favour! The vehemence of our praise is thus not measured by the extent of the kindness bestowed, but by the superiority of the donor to the receiver, and implies only the dependence and disparity of the latter.

If the foregoing account of praise and blame be correct, it presents an entire solution of the apparent discrepancy which suggested itself at the commencement of the inquiry. It explains how the Deity, although actually conceived (from the mere data of natural religion) as a capricious despot, is yet never described or addressed without the largest and most prodigal encomiums. For where is the case in which so tremendous an exaltation of the agent above the subject can be pointed out? Where is the comparative weakness of the latter so deplorably manifest? The power of which we speak is unlimited, and therefore, with respect to it, we are altogether prostrate and abject. It is, under such circumstances, the natural course, that we should abstain from all disparaging and provoking epithets, and repress every whisper which might indicate a tone of disaffection towards the Omnipotent. "Personne n’aime à prendre une peine inutile, même un enfant," observes Rousseau; and to proclaim an impotent hatred, besides being unmeaning and irrational, might prove positively noxious, by alienating any inclination to benefit us on the part of the Supreme. However painful may be the treatment which we experience at his hands, we must cautiously refrain from pronouncing our genuine sentiments of the injury, inasmuch as such a freedom might prolong or aggravate, but could never extenuate, our sufferings.

The same weakness will give birth to an extravagant and unsparing use of the remuneratory sanction. We know well how little our epithets really signify or promise, since the Deity stands in no need of our good offices; and therefore we endeavour to bestow force upon this host of unmeaning effusions by multiplying its numbers, and by piling up superlative upon superlative. We magnify the smallest crumb into a splendid benefaction, which merits on our part a return of endless devotion to his service. By thus testifying our own ready subservience—by applying to him terms significant of qualities morally good and beneficial to mankind, and thereby intimating that every one else owes to him a similar gratitude—we hope to constitute something like a motive for repeating the favour. This varied and exuberant flattery is the only mode of soothing the irritability of an earthly despot, and therefore we naturally apply it to one of still more surpassing might.

Suppose that any tyrant could establish so complete a system of espionage, as to be informed of every word which any of his subjects might utter. It is obvious that all criticisms upon him would be laudatory in the extreme, for they would be all pronounced as it were in the presence of the tyrant, and there we know that no one dares to express even dissent of opinion. The unlimited agency of the Deity is equivalent to this universal espionage. He is conceived as the unseen witness of everything which passes our lips—and thereby intimating that every one else owes to him a similar gratitude—we hope to constitute something like a motive for repeating the favour. This varied and exuberant flattery is the only mode of soothing the irritability of an earthly despot, and therefore we naturally apply it to one of still more surpassing might. It has been necessary to pursue the inquiry into the character of the Deity, as portrayed by natural religion, to a length which may possibly seem tedious. But as the rule of conduct, to which natural religion applies her inducements, depends altogether on the conceptions framed of the invisible governor of a posthumous existence—it is of the highest moment to lay bare the actual conceptions of him, in order to ascertain whether a behaviour adjusted according to them will be beneficial or injurious to mankind.

Since the dispositions of the Deity are, in this unenlightened condition, supposed to be thus capricious and incomprehensible, it may seem extraordinary that mankind should have attempted to assign to them a definite boundary, by marking out any line of conduct as agreeable or disagreeable to him. But the fact is, that the terms incomprehensible and unlimited are merely negative, and therefore have no positive meaning whatever: Their actual import is, that the Deity is a being of whom we know less, and who has more power, than any other. We conceive him as differing only in degree from other possessors of power, and we therefore assimilate him the most closely to those earthly sovereigns in whom the most irresistible might resides.
We are thus furnished with a clue to the actions which unassisted natural religion will represent as agreeable and odious to the Deity. Experience announces to us what practices will recommend us to the favour of terrestrial potentates, and what will provoke their enmity. From this analogy (the nearest we can attain upon the subject) will be copied the various modes of behaviour which the Deity is imagined to favour or abominate. To pursue the former course and avoid the latter, will be the directive rule to which the inducements of natural religion affix themselves. This directive rule will indeed ramify into many accidental shapes, among different nations; but its general tenour and spirit will, throughout, be governed by the analogy just mentioned, since that is our nearest resource and substitute in the total silence of experience.

The central passion in the mind of a despot is an insatiate love of dominion, and thirst for its increase. All his approbation and disapprobation, all his acts of reward and punishment, are wholly dictated by this master-principle. I state this in a broad and unqualified manner; but I feel warranted by the ampest evidence, and by the concurrent testimony of political writers, almost all of whom stigmatize in the harshest language the unbridled government of a single man.

Pursuing this clue, it will not be difficult to distinguish those characters which he will mark out as estimable or hateful. The foremost in his estimation will be that man who most essentially contributes to the maintenance of his power: the greatest object of his hatred will be he who most eminently threatens its annihilation. Next in the catalogue of merit will be inserted the person who can impress upon his mind, in the most vivid and forcible manner, the delicious conviction of his supremacy—who can rekindle this association continually, and strike out new modes of application to prevent it from subsiding into indifference. Next in the list of demerit will appear the name of him, whose conduct tends to invalidate this consciousness of overwhelming might—whose open defiance or tardy conformity generates mistrust and apprehension—I or who, at least, can contemplate with an unfrightened and uninfluenced eye the whole apparatus of majesty. Such will be the most eminent subjects, both of favour and disgrace, on the part of the despot.

In all cases where the gratification of his love of power is allied with the happiness of his subjects, qualities conducive to that happiness will recommend themselves to his patronage. But it is a melancholy truth, that this coincidence seldom, we might say never, occurs. He who is thus absorbed in love of dominion, cannot avoid loving the correlative and inseparable event—the debasement of those over whom he rules; in order that his own supremacy may I become more pointed and prominent. Of course he also has an interest in multiplying their privations, which are the symptoms and measure of that debasement. Besides, his leading aim is to diffuse among his subjects the keenest impressions of his own power. This is, in other words, to plant in their bosoms an incessant feeling of helplessness, insecurity and fear; and were this aim realized, everything which deserves the name of happiness must, throughout their lives, be altogether overshadowed and stifled.

Doubtless there will be occasions on which the view of prosperity will gratify him. Such will be the case when it is strongly associated with the exercise of his own creative fiat—and when its dependence upon and derivation from himself, is so glaring as to blazon forth conspicuously the majesty of the donor. In order thus to affect the public mind, his benefits must be rare in their occurrence, bestowed only on a few, and concentrated into striking and ostentatious masses. All the prosperity, therefore, in which he will take an interest will be that of a few favourites; his own work achieved by the easy process of donation. This munificence of temper, however, is not only not coincident with the happiness of the community, but is altogether hostile to it. The former, because the real welfare of the many is to be secured not by occasional fits of kindness, but by the slow and unobtrusive effect of systematic regulations, built upon this study of human nature, discoverable only by patient thought, and requiring perpetual watchfulness in their application: The latter, because these donatives are at the bottom mere acts of spoliation, snatching away the labours of the many for the benefit of a favoured few.

It thus plainly appears that the despot can never derive any pleasure from the genuine well being of the community, though he may at times gratify himself by exalting individuals to sudden pre-eminence over the rest. Consequently the qualities conducive to the happiness of the community will not meet with the smallest encouragement from him. They will even be discouraged, indirectly at least, by the preference shown to other qualities not contributory to this end. But the personal affections of the despot have been shown to lead, in almost all cases, to the injury of the people. And therefore those mental habits, which tend to gratify these affections, will be honoured with his unqualified approval; those which tend to frustrate them, will incur his detestation. In the former catalogue will be comprised all the qualities which lessen and depress human happiness; in the latter, all which foster and improve it.

Such is the scale according to which the praise and censure, the rewards and punishments, of the earthly potentate, will be dispensed. By this model, the nearest which experience presents, the conceptions of mankind must be guided, in conjecturing the character and inclinations of the Deity.

The first place in the esteem of the Deity will, in pursuance of this analogy, be allotted to those who disseminate his influence among men—who are most effectually employed in rendering his name dreaded and
reverenced, and enforcing the necessity of perpetual subjection to him. Priests, therefore, whose lives are
devoted to this object, will be regarded as the most favoured class.

The largest measure of his hate will in like manner be supposed to devolve on those who attempt to efface
these apprehensions, and to render mankind independent of him, by removing the motives for their subjection.
The most decisive way of effecting this is by presuming to call in question his existence—an affront of peculiar
poignancy, to which the material despot is not exposed. Atheists, therefore, will be the persons whom he is
imagined to view with the most signal abomination.

Immediately beneath the priests will be placed those who manifest the deepest and most permanent sense of
his agency and power—in words, by the unceasing use of hyperbole, to extol the Deity and depress
themselves—in action, by abstaining on his account from agreeable occupations, and performing ceremonies
which can be ascribed to no other motive than the desire of pleasing him. Works, which can be ascribed to this
motive alone, must from their very nature produce no good at all, or at least very little: for were they thus
beneficial, they would be recompensed with the esteem and gratitude of mankind, and the performer of them
might be suspected of having originally aimed at this independent advantage. Whereas he who whips himself
every night, or prefaces every mouthful with a devotional formula, can hardly be supposed to have
contemplated the smallest temporal profit, or to have had any other end in view, than that of pleasing the Deity.
Such actions will be thought to convey to him the liveliest testimony of his own unparalleled influence, and
the performers of them will be placed second in the scale of merit.

Next to Atheists, his highest displeasure will be conceived to attach to those who either avowedly brave his
power, or tacitly slight and disregard it—those who indulge in language of irreverent censure, or withhold the daily
offering of their homage and prostration—who dwell careless of his supremacy, and decline altogether the
endurance of privations from which no known benefit, either to themselves or others, can arise. Such persons
assume an independence which silently implies that the arm of the Deity is shortened and cannot reach them;
and they will, therefore, be considered as the next objects of his indignation.

These then are the qualities, which the natural religionist, guided by the experience of temporal potentates,
will imagine the Deity to favour or dislike. To this extraneous directive rule, therefore, the inducements of
natural religion, and the expectations of a posthumous life, will apply themselves. Nor can we doubt, for an
instant, that such a rule is highly detrimental to human happiness in this life.

It cannot be otherwise, so long as nothing more is known of the Deity except that he possesses a
superhuman power, and that we cannot understand his course of action. It is the essence of power to exact
obedience; and obedience involves privation and suffering on the part of the inferior. The Deity having power
over all mankind, exacts an obedience co-extensive with his power; therefore all mankind must obey him, or, in
other words, immolate to his supremacy a certain portion of their happiness. He loves human obedience; that is,
he is delighted with human privations and pain, for these are the test and measure of obedience. He is pleased,
when his power is felt and acknowledged: That is, he delights to behold a sense of abasement, helplessness, and
terror, prevalent among mankind. If, under the earthly despot, rewards and punishments are undeniably
distributed in a manner injurious to human happiness—under the God of unassisted natural religion, whose
attributes must be borrowed from the despot, the case must be similar. There is indeed this difference which
deserves to be remarked, that those deductions from human happiness which the temporal potentate requires,
are altogether unproductive and final: While those exacted by the Deity, though embracing the very same
period, are in comparison transient and preparatory, entitling the contracting party to the amplest posthumous
reimbursement. In the former case, the expenditure of suffering is a dead loss; in the latter, it is a judicious
surrender of present, in expectation of future, advantages.

But it may be urged in opposition, that the Deity is like a beneficent judge, and not like a despot—that he
fetters individual taste no farther than is necessary for the happiness of the whole. Revelation may doubtless
thus characterize him; but natural religion can never portray him under this amiable aspect. His power is
irresistible, and therefore all limitations of it must be voluntary and self-imposed. How then can we venture to
assume, that he will exact from individuals no more self-denial than is requisite for the benefit of the whole,
unless it shall please him specially to communicate to us his recognition of such a boundary? We cannot
possibly know what boundary he will select, until he informs us. Prior to revelation, therefore, the Deity can be
conceived as nothing else but a despot—that is, the possessor of unrestricted sway. To compare him with a
beneficent judge, is an analogy wholly fallacious and inadmissible. Why is the judge beneficent? Because his
power is derivative, dependent and responsible. Why does he impose upon individuals no farther sacrifices than
are necessary to ensure the well being of the society? Because all the compulsory force which he can employ is
borrowed from the society, who will not permit it to be used for other purposes. Suppose these circumstances
altered, and that the judge possesses himself of independent unresponsible power: The result is, that he
becomes a despot, and ceases altogether to be beneficent. It is only when thus strengthened and unshackled that
he becomes a proper object of comparison with the Deity—and then, instead of a judge, he degenerates
invariably into an oppressor and a tyrant.

Amongst other expressions of reverence towards the Deity, doubtless the appellation of a judge, one of the most adorable functions which can grace humanity, will not be omitted. But we have already shown that the language of praise is not on this occasion to be considered as indicating the existence of truly valuable qualities in the object. Because that immensity of power, which is the distinguishing attribute of the Deity, distorts the epithets of eulogy, and terrifies us into an offer of them, by way of propitiation, whether deserved or not by any preceding service.

It seems clear then from the foregoing inquiry, that the posthumous hopes and fears held out by natural religion, must produce the effect of encouraging actions useless and pernicious to mankind, and agreeable to the invisible Dispenser, so far as his attributes are discoverable by unaided natural religion—and our conceptions of his character, are the only evidence on which we can even build a conjecture as to the conduct which may entail upon us posthumous happiness or misery. Whatever offers an encouragement to useless or pernicious conduct, operates indirectly to discourage that which is beneficial and virtuous. In addition, therefore, to the positive evil which these inducements force into existence of themselves, they are detrimental in another way, by stifling the growth of genuine excellence, and diverting the recompence which should be exclusively reserved for it.

Chapter IV.

Farther Considerations on the temporal Usefulness of that Rule of Action, which the Inducements of Natural Religion enforce.

THOUGH the preceding argument, drawn from the character which unassisted reason cannot fail to ascribe to the Deity, seems amply sufficient to evince that the expected distribution of his favour and enmity is not such as to stimulate useful, and to discountenance pernicious conduct (regarding merely the present life); yet I shall subjoin a few considerations in addition, which may tend to corroborate and enforce my principles.

1. Suppose that by any peculiar perversion of reason, all belief in a God or in a future state should die away among the votaries of some Pagan system. Is it not perfectly unquestionable, that all which had been before conceived as the injunctions of natural religion, would at once be neglected and forgotten? We need not take any trouble to demonstrate this, partly because it is so obvious a consequence, partly because it is always implied in the outcry raised against atheistical writings.

But the sources of pleasure and of pain, in this community, would still remain unaltered with regard to the present life, even in the state of impiety into which they had just plunged. What had been useful or pernicious to them before, would still continue to be so. They would have precisely the same motive to encourage the former and to repress the latter. Can any reason be given why their rewards and punishments should be insufficient to effect this end? There will still, therefore, remain in the bosom of each individual, ample motive to behaviour beneficial to the society—ample motive against conduct injurious to it.

To select a particular example. He who was, before the influx of disbelief, a skilful and diligent tradesman or physician, will he on a sudden become imprudent or remiss? Will he become indifferent to the acquisition of emolument and importance? It will not surely be contended, that any such alteration of character or conduct is to be anticipated. Apply a similar supposition to the same man in other capacities—as a father, a husband, a trustee, or any other function in which the happiness of some among his fellows depends upon his conduct. In neither of these cases will there be any motive for him to deviate from his former behaviour, supposing that to have been valuable and virtuous. But all the transactions, in which a man's conduct affects his fellow-creatures, may be comprised under some relation of this sort—and in none of these situations will he have any motive to exchange a beneficial for a noxious course of action. Consequently the expiration of religious belief will leave perfectly sufficient motive for the maintenance of conduct really useful to mankind.

If the practices enjoined by natural religion would expire without its support, this must be because there is no motive left to perform them. But to say that there is no such motive, proves that the practices produce no temporal benefit whatever: E converso, therefore, he who would maintain that pious works are temporally beneficial, must also affirm, that there would be motive enough to perform them, supposing our earthly existence to terminate in annihilation. But no one ever thinks of asserting this: On the contrary, the vital necessity of implicit belief, as an incentive, is loudly proclaimed, and the certain extinction of all religious performances, if unbelief should become general, is announced and deplored. It is altogether inconsistent and contradictory, therefore, to maintain, that there is any temporal benefit annexed to these practices—since this, if true, must constitute a motive common both to believers and unbelievers.

2. If natural religion consisted in the practice of actions beneficial to mankind in the present life, the actions enjoined by it would be the same all over the earth. The sources of human pleasure and pain are similar everywhere, and therefore the modes of multiplying both one and the other will be similar throughout. Take, for
example, any particular branch of behaviour which is justly extolled as highly conducive to human happiness: You will find justice, veracity, or prudence, precisely the same in their nature, although practised with very different degrees of strictness, both in the East, and in the West. If therefore piety consisted of a collection of qualities calculated to produce temporal benefit, you would discover the same identity between Pagan and Christian piety, as there is between Pagan and Christian justice or veracity.

But the very reverse is most notoriously the fact. The injunctions and the practices of one religion are altogether different from those of every other. Believers in any one of them will view the rest with abhorrence. A Christian who visits a country where his religion has never been heard of, will doubtless expect to meet with just or veracious men, varying in frequency according to circumstances: but he will never once dream of discovering any Christians there. Christianity therefore does not consist in the manifestation of qualities which confer temporal benefit on mankind, since these are capable of universal growth in every climate.

A mere inquiry into the meaning of words will suffice to corroborate this. When we describe an individual as belonging to any particular religion, the epithet implies that he entertains a certain set of persuasions, attested either by his own confession, or by a conformity, besides, to a peculiar class of ceremonial practices which characterize the system. But by merely indicating the religion to which he adheres, no information has been conveyed as to his moral qualities, or whether his conduct is beneficial or noxious to his fellows. It may be either one or the other, whatever be the religion he adopts or believes in. In order to state with which class it ought to be ranked, we must employ a very different language. We must describe him as a good Pagan or a bad Pagan—a just or an unjust Mussulman—veracious or a liar.

Consequently an adherence to the injunctions of religion is something entirely different from an habitual performance of beneficial actions. For the latter are everywhere uniform and identical, while the mandates of religion are infinitely various: And farther, in mentioning the system of religion to which any individual belongs, we do not at all state whether his conduct is beneficent or pernicious—therefore an adherence to the system is perfectly consistent either with friendship or enmity to mankind.

3. If the injunctions of piety inculcated performance or abstinence merely according as the action specified was beneficial or injurious in the present life, religion would be precisely coincident with human laws. For these latter are destined only to ensure the same end, employing temporal instead of posthumous sanctions. Religion would command and forbid the very same actions as the legislator, merely reinforcing his uncertain punishments with something more exquisite and more inevitable at the close of life. But it would give no new direction, of its own and for itself, to human conduct; It would originate no peculiar duties or crimes, but would appear simply as an auxiliary, to second and confirm that bias which the legislator would have attempted to imprint without it.

Such would have been the case had the mandates of natural religion a tendency to produce temporal happiness. How widely different is the state of the fact! Throughout the globe, under every various system, we observe the most innocuous of human pleasures criminated and interdicted by piety; pleasures such as the worst of human legislators never forbad, and never could discover any pretence for forbidding. We observe a peculiar path of merit and demerit traced out exclusively by religion—embracing numerous actions which the law has left unnoticed, and which we may therefore infer, are not recognized as deserving either reward or punishment with reference to the present life. It is altogether impossible, therefore, that the mandates of natural religion can be directed to the promotion of temporal happiness, since they diverge so strikingly from the decrees of the legislators. Whatever other end they have in view, it cannot be the same as his.

Indeed in modern times an express discussion has arisen, whether the civil magistrate can with propriety interfere at all in matters of religion. Among the more enlightened thinkers, the doctrine of toleration, or that of leaving every man to recommend himself to God by the methods which he himself prefers, so long as he abstains from injuring others, seems to be fully recognized. Scarcely any one now is found to vindicate the exaction of a forced uniformity of worship. But the very existence of the dispute decisively implies, that religion is not naturally coincident, in her injunctions, with laws—that no pious ritual is of a character, tending in itself to promote the happiness of society. The intolerant party attempted to enforce the propriety of giving to law an express extension over an apparently independent province; their opponents endeavoured to maintain this province still untouched and unregulated. If these acts could have been shown to be productive of temporal benefit or evil, this would have been the point on which the question would have been determined, as it is with regard to other cases of human conduct. No one would have contested the necessity, in the present times at least, of interdicting any acts of worship which might consist in wounding or plundering a neighbour. But the actual point in dispute was, whether out of a number of different rituals, perfectly on a level regarding temporal profit or injury, any particular one should be singly permitted and all the rest forbidden. The argument on one side was, that the Deity preferred the species of worship which they were advocating; the other side protested against this doctrine, as an unwarranted assumption of infallibility.

It is not my purpose to enter farther into this question, and I have only adduced it in order to evince, that the
mandates of religion are altogether separate in their nature and application from those of law, and therefore
cannot possibly be similar in the end which they are destined to ensure—and also that this separation is
virtually implied in both sides of the dispute on freedom of worship.

4. We uniformly find religious injunctions divided into two branches, the first embracing our duty to God,
the second our duty to man. However beneficial may be the tendency of this latter section, it is quite impossible
that the former can produce any temporal happiness. For it is, by the very definition, a rule restrictive of our
conduct on those occasions when the interests of other men are not at all concerned. On these occasions the
legislator would have left us unfettered, since every man naturally selects that path which is most conducive to
his temporal felicity. If any other course is thrust upon him without, it must infallibly be a sacrifice of
earthly happiness.

That branch therefore, at least, of religious injunctions, which is termed *our duty to God*, must be regarded
as detrimental to human felicity in this life. It is a deduction from the pleasures of the individual, without at all
benefiting the species. It must be considered, so far as the present life is concerned, as a tax paid for the salutary
direction which the branch termed *our duty to man* is said to imprint upon human conduct, and for the special
and unequalled efficacy, with which these sanctions are alleged to operate. Supposing also the operation of this
latter branch to be noxious instead of salutary, the payment of the tax will constitute so much additional evil.

Chapter V.

*Of the Efficiency of the Inducements held out by Natural Religion. How far super-human Expectations can
be regarded as likely to prove influential, where no human Inducements would be influential.*

There is some difficulty in estimating exactly the extent of influence which the super-human inducements,
held out by natural religion, actually exercise over mankind. They appear always intermixed and confounded
among that crowd of motives, which in every society submitted to our experience, impel human conduct in
various directions. For the solution of the present inquiry, however, it is indispensably requisite to detach from
this confused assemblage the inducements of natural religion, and to measure the force of the impulse which
they communicate.

There are two modes of determining this point. 1. By analysing the nature and properties of these
super-human inducements, and comparing them with those human motives which commonly actuate our
conduct. We shall thus discover how far those elements, which constitute and measure the force and efficiency
of all human expectations, are to be found in the super-human. 2. By examining those cases where accident
places them in a state of single and unassisted agency, and thus fortifying the preceding analysis with the direct
certificate of experience, so far as that is attainable.

Before, however, we embark in this investigation, it will be important to examine in what degree the
super-human expectations, supposing their influence purely beneficial, can be considered as indispensable
instruments in the production of happiness in this life; or in other words, what is the number and importance of
those cases, in which human inducements would be inapplicable and inoperative, and in which posthumous
expectations would effectually supply the defect.

It will be easy to see that such cases are comparatively neither numerous nor important. For wherever the
legislator can distinguish what actions it is desirable either to encourage or to prevent, he can always annex to
them a measure of temporal reward or punishment commensurate to the purpose. It is only necessary that he
should be able to distinguish and define such actions. To affirm therefore the necessity of a recurrence to
super-human agency for the repression of any definable mode of conduct, is merely to say that human laws are
defective and require amendment. If this be true, let them be amended, and there will remain no ground for the
complaint.

The gradations (you urge) by which guilt passes into innocence are often so nice as to be undiscoverable by
the human eye, and to require the searching gaze of Omnipotence to detect their real point of separation. But if
this be the case, how is it possible for the agent himself to know when he is acting well, and when he is verging
towards evil? The two are undistinguishable to all men besides; why should they be otherwise to him? He
knows his own intention, indeed, perfectly: It is to perform a certain action, of which no one can tell whether
the tendency is beneficial or injurious. He himself cannot tell either; it is possible that he may suspect the action
to be mischievous, and still intend to commit it. But he may be in error on this point, even after the most
accurate consideration, and where the distinction between good and evil is so completely unassignable, the
chances of error are as great as those of truth. Expectation of punishment, in case of wrong decision, could only
render him more attentive in weighing the consequences, and even after this, it appears, he would be just as
likely to decide wrong as right. Consequently the expectation of punishment produces no benefit whatever.
Besides, if he can judge correctly, the foundations of such a judgment may be comprehended, and the offence
defined, by the legislator. In all cases therefore in which guilt cannot be defined, and thence, no punishment awarded by the legislator, the apprehension of punishment from any foreign source is un-productive of any advantage.

But there are cases in which an individual may commit an act expressly forbidden by the law, relying on the impossibility or difficulty of detection. Doubtless there are such: And it is impossible to deny that on those occasions the apprehension of a posthumous verdict, from which there was no escape, might possibly supply an unavoidable defect in the reach of human laws. Secret crimes, however, are the only cases in which the super-human inducements can be pretended to effect an end to which human motives would be inadequate. In all other occasions, the inefficacy of human laws is merely a reproach to the legislator, who neglects to remedy a known defect. And even in the case of hidden delinquency, how frequently is the escape of the criminal owing to mistakes perfectly corrigeable, such as an unskilful police, exclusion of evidence, barbarity in the punishment awarded, and other circumstances which tend to unnerve the arm of the law! Supposing these imperfections to be removed,—suppose the penal code to be comprehensive and methodical, and its execution cheap, speedy, and vigilant, it would scarcely be practicable for the criminal to escape detection, when it was known that the crime had been committed.

It is only, therefore, when a crime is known, and the criminal undiscoverable, that super-human inducements can be vindicated as indispensably necessary for the maintenance of good conduct. And as these cases must, under a well-contrived system, be uncommonly rare, the necessity and importance of such inducements must be restricted within very narrow limits.

This is a point of some consequence. For if it should appear that these posthumous expectations are on many occasions of injurious tendency, the immediate inquiry must be, what exclusive benefit this mode of operating upon human conduct presents, in preference to any other. In reply to which, we have just demonstrated, that those cases in which beneficial influence is derivable solely from this source and not from any other, are few and inconsiderable. The extent of evil in this life would therefore be trifling, were super-human inducements entirely effaced from the human bosom, and earthly institutions ameliorated according to the progress of philosophy. The pernicious tendency, which the former manifest on many occasions, will thus be compensated only by a very slender portion of essential and exclusive benefit.

These considerations also evince, that if it were practicable to supply the defect of human restrictions by recourse to a foreign world, we should be anxious to import active and faithful informers—to purchase such a revelation as would render our inferences of criminality more easy, precise, and extensive, in order that guilt might never escape our detection. We should not desire to introduce instruments for multiplying and protracting human torture. With these we are abundantly provided, if it were prudent or desirable to employ them. No earthly legislator, therefore, would attempt, if in his power, to perfect the efficacy of temporal enactments in the mode by which it is pretended that posthumous expectations accomplish this beneficial end.

Chapter VI.

Efficiency of super-human Inducements to produce temporal. Evil. Their Inefficiency to produce temporal Good.

Since it has been shown in a former chapter that the directive rule, to which the inducements of natural religion attach themselves, will infallibly be detrimental to human happiness, it follows of course that these inducements, if they produce any effect at all, must be efficient to a mischievous purpose. I now propose to investigate the extent of influence which they exercise over mankind, as well as the manner of their operation.

All inducements are expectations either of pleasure or pain. The force with which all expectations act upon the human bosom varies according as they differ in, 1. Intensity,—2. Duration,—3. Certainty,—4. Propinquity. These are the four elements of value which constitute and measure the comparative strength of all human motives.

Take for example an expected pleasure. What are the motives which govern a man in the investment of money? He prefers that mode in which the profits are largest, most certain, and quickest. Present to him a speculation of greater hazard or in which he must be kept longer out of his money; the value of such an expectation is less, and he will not embrace it unless allured by a larger profit. Deficiency in certainty and propinquity will thus be compensated by an increase of intensity and duration.

To appreciate, therefore, the sway which posthumous expectations exercise over the behaviour of mankind, we must examine to what degree they comprise these elements of value.

First, they are to the highest degree deficient in propinquity. Every one conceives them as extremely remote; and in the greatest number of instances, such remoteness is conformable to experience, as insurance calculations testify.
Secondly, they are also defective in certainty. Posthumous pleasures and pains are reserved to be awarded in the lump, after a series of years. The only possible mode of distributing them, at such a period must be by reviewing the whole life of the individual—by computing his meritorious and culpable acts and striking a balance between them. It is impossible to conceive an expectation more deplorably uncertain, than that which such a scale of award must generate. In order to strip it of this character of doubt, the individual should have kept an exact journal of his debtor and creditor account with regard to post-obituarly dispensations. Whoever does or ever did this? Yet if it is not done, so universal is self-deceit, that every man will unquestionably over-estimate his own extent of observance. His impression will thus be, that he has a balance in hand, and that the performance of any particular forbidden act will but slightly lessen the ample remainder which awaits him. But suppose it otherwise—let him imagine that the balance is against him. There still remains the chance of future amendment and compensation, by which it may be rendered favourable, and this prospect is incalculably more liable to exaggeration than the estimate which he forms of his past conduct.

The prodigious excess to which mankind heap up splendid purposes for the coming year, is matter of notoriety and even of ridicule. A slight accession of punishment incurred by what the individual may be about to do at the moment, will be lost in the contemplation of the mass of subsequent reward. Posthumous expectations must, therefore, under every supposition, be pre-eminently defective in the element of certainty.

To make up for this want of certainty and propinquity, the pleasures and pains anticipated in a future life are (it will be urged) intense and durable to the utmost extent. Imagination, no doubt (our sole guide under unassisted natural religion), may magnify and protract them beyond all limit, since there is no direct testimony which can check her career. But it should be remarked that this excessive intensity and permanence can never be otherwise than purely imaginary, nor can the most appalling descriptions of fancy ever impart to them that steady and equable impressiveness which characterizes a real scene subjected to the senses. As all our ideas of pleasure and pain are borrowed from experience, the most vivid anticipations we can frame cannot possibly surpass the liveliest sensation. Magnify the intensity as you will, this must be its ultimate boundary. But you never can stretch it even so high as this point: For to do this would be to exalt the conceptions of fancy to a level with real and actual experience, so that the former shall affect the mind as vividly as the latter—which is the sole characteristic of insanity, and the single warrant for depriving the unhappy madman of his liberty.

If, indeed, the expectations actually created in the mind corresponded in appalling effect to the descriptions of the fancy—and if the defects of certainty and propinquity could be so far counteracted as to leave these expectations in full possession of the mind—the result must be, absolute privation of reason, and an entire sacrifice of all sublunar enjoyment. The path of life must lie as it were on the brink of a terrific precipice, where it would be impossible to preserve a sound and distinct vision, and where the imminent and inextricable peril of our situation would altogether absorb the mind, so as to leave us no opportunity for building up any associations of comfort or delight. A man who is to have an operation performed in a short space of time, cannot dismiss it from his thoughts for an instant; how much less, if he sees, or believes that he sees, a gigantic hand, armed with instruments of exquisite torture, and menacing his defenceless frame?

Such must be the result, if these anticipations did really affect the mind in a degree proportional to their imagined intensity. They cannot be conceived as tolerably near and certain, without driving the believer mad, and without rendering it a far more desirable lot for him to have had no life at all, than the two lives taken together. Looking therefore to the happiness of the present life alone, it appears to be merely saved from complete annihilation, by that diminished influence of the posthumous prospects which distance and uncertainty cannot fail to occasion. It is their inefficiency, and not their efficiency, which constitutes the safeguard of human comfort.

But what is the real value of this residuary influence? To determine this question, we must consult the analogy of human conduct and observe the effect of large expectations, when remote and uncertain, as compared with others of small amount, but close at hand and specific.

How painful are the apprehensions which the approach of death creates! To preserve the mind from being altogether overpowered by them, and to maintain a cool deportment at such an instant, is supposed to be an effort of more than human firmness. Thus terrible and overwhelming is the prospect when merely approximated to the eye. Strip it of its propinquity, and all its effect upon the mind imme-diately vanishes. Its real terrors, its ultimate certainty, remain unimpaired; but delay the moment, for a few years at farthest, and the whole scene is immediately dismissed from the thoughts. So confident and neglectful do we become upon the subject, that it requires more than ordinary fore-thought to make those provisions which a due regard to the happiness of our survivors would enjoin.

This is an illustration of peculiar value, because it is a case in which mere remoteness practically annuls the most dreadful of all expectations, without insinuating even the most transient suspicion of ultimate escape. But if distance alone will produce so striking a deduction, how much will its negative effect be heightened, when coupled with uncertainty as to the eventual fulfilment? It seems apparent that these two negative circumstances,
taken together, must altogether prevent the most painful anticipations from ever affecting the mind, unless under very peculiar circumstances, which we shall presently notice.

This important principle, that a small amount of pain, if quick and certain in its application, provides a more effectual restraint than the most painful death, when delay and the chance of complete escape is interposed—seems to be pretty generally recognized at the present day. Instruments of torture have consequently become obsolete; and most of the alterations of the legislator have been designed to cure the lame foot, and to accelerate the pace of justice. In this, indeed, his aim has been not merely to prevent in the most complete manner the commission of crime, but also to prevent it at the expense of the smallest possible aggregate of suffering. For to denounce penalties of shocking severity, but tardy and uncertain in their execution, would be to create the greatest sum of artificial pain, with the least possible preventive effect. This would be entirely at variance with the genuine spirit of legislation, whose end is the extension of human happiness by the eradicating of noxious acts. This, however, cannot be the purpose of the God of natural religion; who is uniformly conceived (as I have before remarked) to delight in human misery, and who is therefore supposed, with perfect consistency, to inflict pain where the pain itself cannot produce a particle of benefit, and where the anticipation of it can have no effect whatever in repressing vicious conduct.

Analogy therefore seems to testify most indisputably, that sufferings so remote and so uncertain as those of a posthumous life, whatever may be their fancied intensity, can scarcely affect the mind at all, in its natural state. Such anticipations can only obtain possession of it when introduced by other analogous ideas, which have previously perverted the usual current of thought, and rendered it fit for their reception. Under such circumstances, these new allies cannot fail to aggravate most powerfully that tone of sentiment to which they owe their origin. Their distance and uncertainty will be forgotten, and they will be conceived as imminent and inevitable; while the impression of their intensity will be more vehement than ever. Such will be the case in the peculiar state of mind to which we here allude; but taking mankind as they usually think and judge, it is altogether contrary to experience that posthumous expectations should ever be otherwise than nugatory.

Now if, according to the general tenor of thought, they become thus dormant and inoperative, they cannot possibly be employed as restraints upon crime. For when crime is committed, the mind is under the sway of a present and actuating temptation. It is not only exempt from all such associations as might contribute to kindle up the thoughts of posthumous terrors; but it is under the strong grasp and impulse of a contrary passion, which fills it with ideas of a totally opposite character. So completely indeed does the temptation absorb the whole soul, that it is difficult in many cases to counteract it by the most immediate and unequivocal prospect of impending evil. But unless the punishment denounced obtrudes itself upon the delinquent with a force sufficiently pressing and inflexible to overbear the sophistry of temptation, we may be assured that he will be insensible to the threats and will commit the crime. How much more then, where the apprehended evil is so remote and uncertain, and the value of the expectation so fluctuating and occasional, as to require a peculiarly favourable tone of thought before the mind can be induced to harbour it? We are surely authorized in deeming an expectation so constituted altogether useless as a motive to resist any strong desire.

But what is that preliminary state of mind into which posthumous apprehensions find so easy an admittance? It is that in which congenial feelings have been predominant—a state of timidity and depression, when gloomy associations overspread the whole man, and cast horror and wretchedness round his future prospects. In this condition, the fountains of all painful thought are opened, and posthumous terrors present an inexhaustible fund of kindred matter. Their distance and their uncertainty are of no consequence, for the prospects. In this condition, the fountains of all painful thought are opened, and posthumous terrors present an inexhaustible fund of kindred matter. Their distance and their uncertainty are of no consequence, for the mensuration of the mental eye is at such a period confounded, and it distinguishes not the scene before it. Their indeterminate character renders them only the more appropriate, for the imagination demands but a plausible pretence and outline, to conjure up the ampest detail of terrific particulars. In sickness and in nervous despondency, associations of this kind make their most disastrous inroads, and contribute most actively to plunge the mind into that state of unassuageable terror, which borders so closely on insanity, and frequently terminates in it. And in the hour of death, when these apprehensions seem on the brink of reality, they obtrude themselves in thick and appalling clouds, and aggravate that prostration both of bodily and mental faculties, which marks the close of existence.

Such is the force, and such the mode of operation, belonging to these superhuman expectations, when acting singly. And it appears from hence most undeniably, that they are almost wholly inefficient on every occasion when it might have been possible for them to enlarge the sum of temporal happiness—and efficient only in cases where they swell the amount of temporal misery.

For the only benefit which they are calculated to accomplish would be the repression of crimes. To this purpose it has been shown that they are wholly inadequate; for during the influence of temptation, the only season in which a man commits crime, they find no place in the mind, and therefore can interpose no barrier. On the other hand, they act with the highest effect at a period when they cannot by possibility produce any temporal benefit—that is, at the close of life: and the extent of their influence is always in an inverse ratio to the
demand for it. The greater the previous despondency, the wider the space which they occupy, and the more powerfully do they contribute to heighten those morbid associations which the overmastered reason is unable to dispel.

Chapter VII.

Analysis of the Source from whence the real Efficiency of superhuman Enjoyments is almost wholly derived.

Since the inducements which we have been discussing are altogether impotent as a barrier to temptation, and influential only in peculiar states of mind, how happens it (we may be asked) that their dominion in human affairs should be apparently so extensive? The cause of this seeming contrariety, which merely arises from a misconception regarding the actual motives of mankind, I shall now endeavour to unfold.

It has already been shown that the God of natural religion is uniformly conceived as delighting in the contemplation of his own superiority and in the receipt of human obedience—that is, in the debasement, the privations, and the misery of mankind. Now each man has a strong temptation to elude any payment, in his own person, of these unpleasant burthens; but he has no temptation whatever to avert from others the necessity of paying them. On the contrary, a powerful interest inclines him to exert himself in strictly exacting from every other man the requisite quota. For the Deity, pleased with human obedience, will of course be pleased with those faithful allies who aid him in obtaining it, and will in consideration of this assistance be more indulgent towards themselves. Each man, therefore, anxious for the lighter and more profitable service, will take part with God, and will volunteer his efforts to enforce upon all other men that line of conduct most agreeable to the divine Being. This spontaneous zeal in extorting payment from his brother debtors will dispose the creditor to remit or to alleviate his own debt.

But each individual will also be perfectly conscious that these temptations are equally active in the bosom of his neighbours. They also are upon the watch to recommend themselves to God by avenging his insulted name, and obviating any interruptions to the leisure and satisfaction of Omnipotence. They readily bring forward their terrestrial reinforcements—abuse, hatred, and injury, against any individual who forsakes his allegiance to the unseen sovereign—eulogy and veneration towards him who renders it with more than ordinary strictness. Each man is thus placed under the surveillance of the rest. A strong public antipathy is pointed against impious conduct; the decided approbation of the popular voice is secured in favour of religious acts. The praise or blame of his earthly companions, will thus become the real actuating motive to religious observances on the part of each individual. By an opposite conduct it is not merely the divine denunciations that he provokes, but also the hostility of innumerable crusaders, who long to expiate their own debts by implacable warfare against the recusant.

But although thus in fact determined to a pious behaviour by the esteem and censure of his fellows, he will have the highest interest in disguising this actual motive, and in pretending to be influenced only by genuine veneration for the being whom he worships. A religions act, if performed from any other than a religious feeling, loses its character of exclusive reference to the Deity, and of course ceases to be agreeable to him. But if God is no longer satisfied with this semi-voluntary performance of the service required, neither will the neighbourhood, who take up arms in God's favour, be satisfied with it. No individual, therefore, will be able to steer clear of the public enmity, unless he not only renders these pious acts of homage, but also succeeds in convincing others that he is actuated in rendering them entirely by the fear of God. The popular sanction, therefore, not only enforces the delivery of the homage; It also compels the deliverer to carry all the marks of being influenced solely by religious inducements, and to pretend that he would act precisely in the same manner, whatever might be the sentiments of his neighbours.

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The same pretence too will be encouraged by other considerations. When a man is once compelled by some extraneous motive to go through the service, it will be his interest to claim all that merit in the eyes of God which a spontaneous performance of it would have insured. He will, therefore, assume all the exterior mien of a voluntary subjection to the invisible Being, and will endeavour to deceive himself into a belief that this is his genuine motive. In this self-imposition he will most commonly succeed, and his account of his own conduct, originally insincere, will in time be converted into unconscious and unintentional error.

We can now interpret this seeming contrariety between the natural impotence and the alleged apparent
dominion, of religious inducements. For the real fact is, that they enlist in their service the irresistible arm of public opinion—and that too in a manner which secures to themselves all the credit of swaying mankind, while the actually determining motive is by general consent suppressed and kept out of view.

Religion is thus enabled to apply, for the encouragement and discouragement of those acts which fall within her sphere, the very same engines as morality. Moral conduct springs from the mutual wants and interests of mankind. It is each man's interest that his neighbour should be virtuous; hence each man knows, that the public opinion will approve his conduct, if virtuous—reprobate it, if vicious. Religious acts, indeed, no man has any motive to approve from any benefit conferred by the actual performance of them; or, to disapprove the opposite behaviour from any injury referable to it. But every man has something to gain by being active in enforcing upon others the performance of these acts—inasmuch as this is a co-operation with the views of God, which may have the effect of partially discharging, or at least of lightening, his own obligations. The same encouragements and prohibition, therefore, which mankind apply to virtue and to vice, they will be led to annex, though from a totally opposite motive, to pious or impious behaviour.

When the public opinion has once occasioned, as it cannot fail to do, a tolerably extensive diffusion of religious practices throughout the community, the censures directed against any small remainder of nonconformists will be embittered by the concurrent action of envy. I feel myself constrained to be rigidly exact in the renewal of my pious offerings: Shall my neighbour, who eludes all share in the burthen and will not deduct a moment from his favourite pursuits for similar purposes, be treated with the same courtesy and respect as myself, who expend so much self-denial in order to ensure it? Is not the labourer worthy of his hire? Being myself a scrupulous renderer of these services, it becomes my interest, even with my fellow-countrymen, to swell the merit of performing them, and the criminality of neglect, to the highest possible pitch, in order to create a proportionate distribution of their esteem. The more deeply I can impress this conviction upon mankind, the greater will be their veneration for me. All these principles conspire to sharpen my acrimony against my nonconforming neighbour, and render me doubly dissatisfied with that state of respite and impunity in which Omnipotence still permits him to live. In this condition of mind, nothing can be more gratifying than the self-assumed task of executing the divine wrath upon his predestined head.

Chapter VIII.

Proof of the Inefficiency of super-human Inducements, when unassisted by, or at variance with, public Opinion.

By the preceding analysis I have attempted to show, that the apparent influence of posthumous expectations is at the bottom nothing more than a disguised and peculiar agency of public opinion; and also to trace the process by which these expectations naturally and infallibly give birth to such an inflexion of the popular voice. I now propose to confirm this explanation still farther, by citing a few most convincing examples of the complete disregard with which posthumous anticipations are treated, when the voice of the public either opposes, or ceases to enforce, their influence.

For this purpose it will be absolutely necessary to allege instances from revealed religion, because it is only by means of revelation that a written, unvarying collection of precepts has become promulgated, completely independent of any variations which may take place in the national feeling. In natural religion it is impossible to discover what is the course of action enjoined, except by consulting the reigning tone of practice and sentiment; and, therefore, the two must necessarily appear harmonious and coincident, since we can only infer the former from the latter. Revelation alone communicates a known and authoritative code, with which the actual conduct of believers may be compared, and the points of conformity or separation ascertained.

1. The first practice which may be cited, as manifesting the impotence of religious precepts, when opposed to public opinion, is that of duelling. Nothing can be more notoriously contrary to the divine law; which acts too on this occasion with every possible advantage, except the alliance of the popular voice. For the practice which religion here interdicts is attended with pain and hazard to the person committing it, and often with the most ruinous consequences to his surviving relatives. If ever super-human inducements could ensure obedience when opposed to the popular sanction, it would be in a case where all other motives conspire to aid them.

If posthumous enjoyments were the actual reward aimed at, and the real motive for religious conduct, this concurrence of other inducements would swell their influence and render them preponderant. But the truth is, that they are not the actual reward sought by the religionist. What he desires is, to prove to the satisfaction of other men that they are so—to acquire in their eyes the credit of unbounded attachment to the Deity. No man will give him credit for any such attachment, simply because he declines a duel. He knows that the world will ascribe his refusal to coward-ice—and thus the concurrence of motives abates and enfeebles, instead of confirming, the efficacy of the religious precept. He will be more ready to inflict upon himself severe bodily
sufferings, in compliance with the divine code, than to follow its precepts where mankind will give him no credit for the sincerity of his obedience. Whether, however, the justice of this solution be admitted or denied, the instance of duelling must in either case demonstrate the inefficiency of religious inducements, when opposed to public opinion.

2. *Fornication* is an act directly forbidden by the super-human code—but not forbidden by the popular voice. The latter, however, does not in this case imperatively demand the infringement of the prohibitory precept, as it did in the case of the duel; but merely leaves the divine admonition to operate unsupported. To what extent it operates thus single-handed, the state of all great cities notoriously attests.

3. *Simony*, again, is forbidden in the religious code with equal strictness, and practised with equal frequency.

4. But perhaps the case in which the impotence of posthumous apprehensions is most glaring and manifest, is that of *perjury*. The person who takes an oath solemnly calls down upon himself the largest measure of divine vengeance, if he commits a particular act. In this imprecation it is implied, that he firmly anticipates the infliction of these penalties, if he becomes guilty of this self-condemned behaviour. Yet this expectation, which he thus attests and promulgates, of posthumous inflictions, has not, when stripped of the consentient impulse of public opinion, the slenderest hold upon his actions. It cannot make him forego any temptation, however small; as an appeal to unexceptionable facts will evince.

Every young man, who is entered at the University of Oxford, is obliged to take an oath, that he will observe the statutes of the University—a collection of rules for his conduct while he is a student, framed many years ago by Archbishop Laud. On this oath, after it has been once taken, not a thought is bestowed, even by the most scrupulous religionist. Its precepts are altogether unheeded and forgotten—infringed of course on every occasion when the observance of them is at all inconvenient. The conduct of all the swearers is precisely the same as it would have been had the oath never been taken. All the posthumous vengeance which they have imprecated upon themselves—all the superhuman inflictions which they firmly anticipate—suffice not to produce the most trivial alteration of behaviour. Yet an adherence to some at least among the injunctions thus solemnly sealed, would entail scarcely any inconvenience at all. Slight, however, as this inconvenience is, the fear of post-obituary penalties is still slighter, and, therefore, even the easy means of averting them are altogether neglected.

The regulations prescribed by the oath, it will be said, are useless, and, therefore, there is no necessity for observing them. This may be very true, and may afford an unanswerable reason for discontinuing the form altogether: but it offers not the shadow of a plea for neglecting its dictates, when you have once gone through the ceremonial. By virtue of the oath you have imposed upon yourself a special obligation to the performance of certain acts; you bind yourself by your apprehension of posthumous visitations in case of failure, and in order to obviate all reluctance on the part of the Almighty, you state your own fervent desire to be so treated. Whatever obligatory force was comprised in the formula, can never be impaired by your discovery that the act enjoined will produce no beneficial consequence.

The uselessness of these regulations is, indeed, the real cause why the oath to fulfil them remains universally unobserved. But why? Because the popular voice has no longer any interest in enforcing them. But the strength of the posthumous fears remains unaltered—and the result attests most strikingly their debility and nothingness.

As another confirmation of this doctrine, let us remark the conduct of Jurors, when they administer a law which popular opinion, as well as they themselves, condemn as sanguinary and impolitic. How undisguised is the manner in which they infringe their oaths in order to elude the necessity of passing a capital sentence! In defiance of the most irresistible testimony, they find a man guilty of stealing under the value of forty shillings, and thus con- sign him to the milder and more appropriate punishment. Whence comes it that the force of the oath is of no avail to convict the most irresistible testimony, and thus constrain the juror to pronounce in an unanswerable manner to his conscience? It is because the popular voice has ceased to uphold it. Public opinion gave, and public opinion has taken away; and all the sway, which superhuman expectations possess over human behaviour, is surreptitiously procured, from their coincidence with this omnipotent sanction.

Though it is popular opinion, or the desire of temporal esteem, which forms the actuating stimulus to religious observances, yet there are unquestionably instances in which such works have been faithfully performed without any prospect of consequent credit—nay, perhaps, in spite of bitter and predominant enmity. This is perfectly conformable to the general analogy of nature. For when the associations of credit have once linked themselves with any course of behaviour, by conversation with a peculiar class, by strong personal affection, or any other cause—when the feeling of self-respect has become attached to that course—an individual will not unfrequently persevere in it, though the harvest which he reaps may not actually gratify and realize the association. What is the motive which impels the friends of mankind to exert themselves in reforming a bad government? It springs unquestionably from the desire of esteem; first the desire of obtaining
it, then that of deserving it, whether it is actually attainable or not. A similar anxiety, for veneration and influence over the sentiments of others, possesses the religionist, even when he both anticipates and encounters unqualified obloquy; and the fury of proselytism, which is inseparable from his tone of feeling, attests this beyond all dispute. Even the solitary penance of the monk springs from the very same principle; for the association of credit, when once deeply implanted, will govern human conduct, though there should be no prospect of realizing the hope which originally engendered it.

In addition to this it should be remarked, that no one can question the powerful influence exercised by superhuman inducements, in some peculiar cases. They sometimes produce insanity. But these are exceptions to their usual impotence, and cannot be admitted as evidence against the general conclusion which we have just established.

As it has been demonstrated that all the efficacy of posthumous inducements is in reality referable to their alliance with public opinion—we at once discover the weakness of that plea by which these inducements were asserted to affect secret crimes, uncognizable by human laws. He who entertains confident hopes of perpetrating a misdeed without detection, will of course pay no regard to the popular voice. Nor will the fear of future pains, stripped of that auxiliary which alone renders it formidable, counteract a temptation to delinquency, when we see that it cannot prevail upon an Oxford student to undergo the smallest inconvenience. That the conduct of the former is guilty and injurious—the neglect of the latter, innocent—is a distinction which does not in the least vitiate the analogy. They are both under the special and solitary restraint, whatever be its power, which superhuman terrors impose. The one therefore may serve as an unexceptionable measure of the other. Nay, if anything, these fears ought to be more potent and effective in the case of the Oxford student, than in that of the secret criminal—inasmuch as the former has himself solicited and sanctioned their infliction, and has originated his own claim for their fulfilment.

But if posthumous apprehensions are inapplicable for the coercion of secret crime, it cannot be pretended that they are ever necessary—for human enactments will embrace all open and definable delinquency. To say that earthly laws do not actually perform this, is merely to affirm, that governments are defective and ought to be reformed.

Recapitulation.

The foregoing search into the nature and action of those posthumous expectations which unassisted natural religion furnishes, has evinced, I trust conclusively: 1. That in the absence of any authorized directive rule, the class of actions which our best founded inference would suggest as entitling the performer to post-obituary reward, is one not merely useless, but strikingly detrimental, to mankind in the present life; while the class conceived as meriting future punishment, is one always innocuous, often beneficial, to our fellow creatures on earth. 2. That from the character and properties of posthumous inducements, they infallibly become impotent for the purpose of resisting any temptation whatever, and efficient only in the production of needless and unprofitable misery. 3. That the influence exercised by these inducements is, in most cases, really derived from the popular sanction, which they are enabled to bias and enlist in their favour.

If these conclusions are correct, I think it cannot be denied, that the influence possessed by natural religion over human conduct is, with reference to the present life, injurious to an extent incalculably greater than it is beneficial. For if it ever does produce benefit, this must be owing to casual and peculiar associations in the minds of some few believers, who form an exception to the larger body. It is by no means my design to question the existence of some persons thus happily born or endowed. But it would be most unsafe and perilous to build our general doctrine on a few such instances of rare merit. We can only determine the general operation of these inducements, or the effect which they produce on the greatest number of minds, by analyzing their nature and properties, and by contemplating the result which these properties bring about in other known cases. This is what has been here attempted, and the inquiry has demonstrated that the agency of superhuman motives must in the larger aggregate of instances, produce effects decidedly pernicious to earthly happiness.

Having thus ascertained that the general influence of unaided natural religion is mischievous, with reference to the present life, I shall now proceed to expose the mischief more in detail,—to particularize and classify its various forms.

Part II.

Catalogue of the Various Modes in Which
Natural Religion is Mischievous.

In enumerating the various modes in which posthumous expectations, when unaided by revelation, are productive of injury, it will be expedient to classify them under two heads:

- Mischiefs accruing to an individual, separately considered.
- Mischiefs not merely self-affecting, but contagious—diffusing themselves more or less widely throughout the society.

Chapter I.

Of the Mischiefs accruing to the Individual.

Mischief I.—Inflicting Unprofitable Suffering.

There is an interminable variety in the particularities which characterize natural religion, amongst different nations of the globe. But its genuine spirit and tone is throughout the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The same motive pervades all its votaries, whether in Hindostan or Mexico; and though it may impel them with greater strength and sovereignty in one climate or age, than in another, yet there is not the smallest difficulty in tracing its identity everywhere.

You wish to give proof of your attachment to the Deity, in the eyes and for the conviction of your fellow-men? There is but one species of testimony which will satisfy their minds. You must impose upon yourself pain for his sake; and in order to silence all suspicion as to the nature of the motive, the pain must be such as not to present the remotest prospect of any independent reward. I have already attempted to show, that this condition effectually excludes, and renders improper for the purpose, all suffering endured for the benefit of mankind. Mankind will measure your devotion to God by the amount and intensity of the pain which you thus gratuitously inflict upon yourself. Accordingly we see, that wherever the religious principle has been most predominant, and the counteracting hand of reason the most feeble, the mass of torture thus voluntarily imposed has been the most deplorable, revolting, and unprofitable.

Almost all the modes of pain, both physical and mental, seem to have been selected at different places and periods, for the purpose of demonstrating the magnitude and sincerity of the extra-human affections.

Mischief II.—Imposing Useless Privations.

It is by the endurance of voluntary pain that a man can most invincibly attest his devotion to the Deity. But there seems to have been a gradual declension of genuine and fervid piety in many countries, or at least its intensity has frequently fallen short of this first-rate excellence. In this state of comparative relaxation, it suffices only to enforce upon its votaries the greater or less immolation of earthly pleasures, without being strong enough to produce gratuitous self-torture. Public opinion, less impassioned and less excitable on behalf of the Deity, will not reimburse the sufferer for the endurance of stripes and mutilation. The motive to the latter being thus withdrawn, he contents himself with colder and more moderate testimonies of devotion. He claims the public esteem for a voluntary resignation of all his earthly pleasures for the sake of God. To impress this conviction in the minds of his neighbours, it is necessary that his self-denial should be above all imputation of temporal recompense—and, therefore, that it should be productive of little or no benefit to any beside the Deity.

Of all the sources of pleasure, physical and mental, few can be named which have not thus become, in a greater or less degree, objects of renunciation and abhorrence. The following acts of self-denial have all, on different occasions been placed in the catalogue of religious practices:—

- Fasting.
- Celibacy.
- Abstinence from repose.
- Abstinence from cleanliness, personal decoration, and innocent comforts.
- Abstinence from social enjoyments and mirth.
- Abstinence from remedies to disease.
- Gratuitous surrender of property, time, and labour.
- Surrender of dignity and honours.

It is unnecessary to remark that none of these privations inflict that acute and immediate agony, which results from the tortures before enumerated. Some of them, perhaps, may upon the long run occasion a larger
aggregate of suffering, from their constant pressure and irritation. But I think it most important to notice, that out of the whole diminution of human happiness, which natural religion originates, these intense self-inflictions constitute a portion almost infinitely small, when compared with that spreading system of privation and self-denial, which lays whole societies under contribution. Like a vicious government, the amount of its noxious effects ought to be estimated by the standing sacrifices which it extorts from the million, and which, though not strikingly oppressive in any individual case, swell into an unfathomable mass when multiplied into the countless host upon whom they are levied—not from the comparatively rare occurrences of concentrated horror and atrocity.

For public opinion, which merely encourages and provokes, by excessive admiration, the voluntary tortures of the enthusiast, acts as a compulsory force in extorting self-denial and asceticism. How it originally comes to demand and enforce these sacrifices, how each individual finds himself interested in exacting them from others, and thence obliged to pay them himself—I have attempted to elucidate in the foregoing part. The reason why the privations are thus required by the popular voice, while the self-inflictions are left optional, is because the earliest and most natural mode which occurs for conciliating the unseen misanthrope, is to consign to his use some gratifying and valuable possession. A man despoils himself of some piece of property, and bestows it to satisfy the wants of his Deity: The Ostiak, according to Pallas, takes a quantity of meat and places it between the lips of his idol—other nations present drink to the gods by throwing it out of the cup upon the ground; that is, by rendering it useless to any human being. It is these donatives, or acts of privation, which are originally conceived as recommending the performer to divine favour. Sacrifices of other sorts are subsequently super-added—and abstinences from certain enjoyments, on the plea of consecrating them to the Deity. Hence the public opinion is at the outset warmly enlisted in exacting self-denying performances for his benefit—a tone of thought industriously cherished by his ministers, as I shall hereafter explain.

Self-imposed torture seems to be a subsequent refinement, devised by poor men who had no property to make donations, and whose time cannot be spared from the task of providing subsistence. In order to gain a living, as well as to make good his claim to the public admiration, the naked enthusiast must give manifestations of internal feeling which may strike the beholder with awe. But utter destitution admits of no farther self-denial, and can elevate itself above others only by insensibility to pain, which appears to place it beyond the reach of human menaces. Hence the incredible sufferings which have been voluntarily endured by monks and fakirs, and the prodigious veneration which, among ignorant nations, they have seldom failed to inspire—a veneration which has doubtless on some occasions caused them to be practised even by the rich.

These considerations will serve to explain how the popular opinion has come to compel imperiously a certain measure of self-denial and privation, while it abandons self-inflicted penance to the kindlings of spontaneous enthusiasm.

**Mischief III.—Impressing Undefined Terrors.**

In treating generally of the efficacy of these posthumous anticipations in the character of sanctions, I have already indicated the mode in which they kindle up, on certain occasions, the most terrific feelings of which the human bosom is susceptible. Their operation is indeed most afflicting, in this point of view; it is always most cruelly preponderant upon those unhappy subjects whose title to exemption is the greatest—upon those who are already broken down by sickness and despondency—upon those whose only point of distinction from their neighbours is the actual calamity under which they suffer. This unfortunate casualty shatters the nervous system, enfeebles the judgment, and lays open the victim to the incursions of imaginary terrors, the extent and reality of which he cannot measure. The force, which religion thus casts into the already over-poised scale of misery, may be best appreciated by stating, that it frequently drives the sufferer into insanity. It augments also most fatally the horrors which usually environ the prospect of death.

But I need not again repeat what has been before urged, that these anticipations redouble their severity precisely at the time when no benefit can possibly result from it. They slumber during the period of health and comfort: they await the appearance of sorrow and disaster before they can obtain a congenial atmosphere. The mass of suffering which they thus occasion to almost every one, at different times of life, must be very considerable. There is no one who has not been occasionally assailed by illness, and by the despondency which generally attends it, and few, therefore, into whose mind posthumous fears do not at times find admission, with more or less effect. We are warranted then in assuming the aggregate of misery introduced by them in this shape, as highly important in amount. That almost all persons, in whom religion is deeply and fervently implanted, are much harassed by these distressing apprehensions, may be asserted with confidence. But it is seldom that we can obtain a testimony at once so striking and authentic, of their power and extent, as the following account of the Spanish monasteries—written by a philosophical Spanish clergyman, and contained in a most eloquent and interesting work entitled, "Don Leucadio Doblado's Letters from Spain"—(London, 1822).
"The common source of suffering [says this author, p. 252] among the Catholic recluses, proceeds from a certain degree of religious melancholy, which, combined with such complaints as originate in perpetual confinement, affect more or less the greater number. The mental disease to which I allude, is commonly known by the name of Escrupulos, and might be called religious anxiety. It is the natural state of a mind, perpetually dwelling on hopes connected with an invisible world, and anxiously practising means to avoid an unhappy lot in it, which keep the apprehended danger for ever present to the imagination. Consecration for life at the altar promises, it is true, increased happiness in the world to come; but the numerous and difficult duties attached to the religious profession, multiply the hazards of eternal misery with the chances of failure in their performance, and while the plain Christian's offences against the moral law are often considered as mere frailties, those of the professed votary seldom escape the aggravation of sacrilege. The odious diligence of the Catholic moralist has raked together an endless catalogue of sins, by thought, word, and deed, to every one of which the punishment of eternal flames has been assigned. This list, alike horrible and disgusting, haunts the imagination of the unfortunate devotee, till reduced to a state of perpetual anxiety, she can neither think, speak, nor act, without discovering in every vital motion a sin which invalidates all her past sacrifices, and dooms her painful efforts after Christian perfection to end in everlasting misery. Absolution, which adds boldness to the resolute and profligate, becomes a fresh source of disquietude to a timid and sickly mind. Doubts innumerable disturb the unhappy sufferer, not, however, as to the power of the priest in granting pardon, but respecting her own fulfilment of the conditions, without which to receive pardon is sacrilege. These agonizing fears, cherished and fed by the small circle of objects to which a nun is confined, are generally incurable, and usually terminate in an untimely death or insanity."

Mischief IV.—Taxing Pleasure, by the Infusion of Preliminary Scruples, and Subsequent Remorse.

Among the mischievous effects of religion in the present life, it is necessary to advert to those cases where the innocuous pleasure, which it proscribes, is still, in defiance of the mandate, enjoyed. In these circumstances its effect is not so great as absolutely to discard the pleasure, but only to damp and darken it; partly by introducing a previous doubt or opposition of motives; partly by obtruding, when the vehemence of the conquering passions has subsided, a mixture of shame and regret oftentimes in supportably bitter. Though religion thus does not entirely preclude our enjoyment, yet she compels us to purchase it by unhappiness both antecedent and consequent.

Chapter II.

Of the Mischiefs which Natural Religion occasions, not only to the Believer himself, but also to others through his means.

Mischief I.—Creating Factitious Antipathy.

The preparation in the human bosom for antipathy towards other men is, under all circumstances, most unhappily copious and active. The boundless range of human desires, and the very limited number of objects adapted to satisfy them, unavoidably leads a man to consider those with whom he is obliged to share such objects, as inconvenient rivals who narrow his own extent of enjoyment. Besides, human beings are the most powerful instruments of production, and therefore every one becomes anxious to employ the services of his fellows in multiplying his own comforts. Hence the intense and universal thirst for power; the equally prevalent hatred of subjection. Each man therefore meets with an obstinate resistance to his own will, and is obliged to make an equally constant opposition to that of others, and this naturally engenders antipathy towards the beings who thus baffle and contravene his wishes.

Religion becomes a powerful coadjutor to these predisposing causes. Almost all her influence, as we have before explained, is derived from the system of rivalry and mutual compulsion which she introduces among mankind—each man recommending himself to the divine favour, by extorting from others the sacrifice of their inclinations on behalf of God. Hence arises an immense extension of the principle of antipathy; a number of factitious instances are created and subjected to its control, where it had before no application; and every fresh case of collision swells and aggravates the ill-will which sprang from the previous sources.

Those artificial antipathies, which are the peculiar growth and fruit of religion, assume a variety of shapes, and ramify widely throughout the field of human actions. The principal circumstances on which they fasten are reducible to these three:—
• Unbelief in the existence of the Deity.
• Non-observance of his will.
• Mal-observance of his will.

1. Of all human antipathies, that which the believer in a God bears to the unbeliever is the fullest, the most unqualified, and the most universal. All considerations and feelings conspire to aggravate it; scarcely a thought suggests itself in mitigation of an offence so heinous. First, the mere circumstance of dissent, involving a tacit imputation of error and incapacity, and evincing that our persuasive power is not rated so highly by others as it is by ourselves, invariably begets dislike towards our antagonist. By attempting to demonstrate that we are in error, he robs us in part of our influence and credit with mankind, from which we should have reaped many advantages had our doctrines remained unchallenged. Secondly, the feeling of hostility which the believer entertains towards the unbeliever, on the score of dissent, is incalculably more acute than that which the latter generally imbibes against him. For an excessive and inconsiderate credulity is indicative of a far weaker cast of mind than over-caution and incredulity. The former lays its possessor open to unceasing miscalculation and deception: the latter is on numerous occasions an entire preservative—scarcely ever a cause of suffering or of loss. Hence to him who takes the negative side of a question, the believer in the affirmative is more the object of contempt than of hatred, being regarded as simple, uninquiring, and easily duped or misled. Ridicule is the weapon which the unbeliever is most disposed to employ. On the other hand, the believer knows perfectly the light of inferiority in which his antagonist views him: and to be considered by others as silly and contemptible, occasions the most poignant and intolerable vexation, since the diffusion of this sentiment would altogether bereave us of the attention and favour of mankind, which is never conferred on those who are too feeble to deserve or repay it. Now the unbeliever is of course interested, like every other man, in spreading his own opinions, and will attempt this wherever it is practicable. We need not wonder therefore, that the believer manifests the bitterest aversion towards one who is endeavouring to impress mankind with the meanest estimate of his judgment and penetration.

All the strong passions of humanity are thus let loose against the unbeliever, and coincide perfectly with our anxiety to vindicate the divine majesty, by protecting it from neglect or insult on the part of any one else. The antipathy therefore is in this case swelled to the utmost pitch of intensity, nor is there a single consideration which can tend to repress or mitigate it. It dictates and furnishes a pretence for the gratification of an existing wish: it requires no troublesome subjugation of propensities, no surrender of actual enjoyments. It does not pledge the believer to any painful observances, in order to ensure consistency between his sentiments and his conduct. He who neglects altogether the more costly modes of purchasing posthumous promotion, will be so much the more interested in magnifying the importance of belief and the heinousness of its opposite—because it is the only payment which he finds leisure to render. He must therefore represent it as so genuine and fervent, as to compensate the omission of other less easy services. But while he remains thus inactive, the only symptom by which the intensity of his belief can be appreciated, is the strength of his hostility towards the sceptic. Sentiments and acts of antipathy are thus the only proofs of allegiance which he can adduce, to place him on a level with the more scrupulous adherent. The hatred of the latter is of course ensured towards a disbelief, which would fain reduce his pious sacrifices to the level of ridiculous self-denial.

By all these conspiring motives the antipathy against atheists is engendered and provoked. Its diffusion too is most universal; for it is the single feeling in which the votaries of all systems of natural religion coincide, and direct their enmity to one common subject.

2. The antipathy against non-observance is inferior, both in extent and in vehemence, to that against unbelief. There is not the same array of feeling to stimulate it. First, the dissent is by no means so wide and radical as in the former case—indeed in many instances the difference of conduct may involve scarcely any variance of opinion at all, but is referable to the superior presence and urgency of human motives, which govern the actions of the believer, in defiance of his entire conviction that he is thereby forfeiting his chance of posthumous happiness. There is too, a greater hope of procuring conformity from the non-observant believer, than of planting the root of persuasion in the atheist. The former recognizes the same sovereignty and is enlisted in the same ranks: It seems only requisite to sound the word of command more loudly and impressively in his ears, in order to enforce the course of action which such an acknowledgement appears to entail. And the active religionist possesses ample means of thus disturbing and awakening a mind which suffers his fundamental principles to pass unquestioned. Whereas the atheist is deaf to these sonorous and impassioned appeals; and must be won by the cool and measured advances of reason. Secondly, the observant believer does not feel himself to be an object of contempt with the non-observant. The latter is even interested in admiring and eulogizing acts of devotion which he will not imitate, since by this encouragement to the worship of others, he lightens the criminality of his own neglect.

For these and other reasons, the antipathy which religion generates against non-observance, is far from being so virulent as that against unbelief. Indeed, unbelief necessarily implies entire non-observance, with
scarcely any prospect of future amendment. While almost every believer is occasionally and to some extent obedient in practice, or at least recognizes the propriety of being so at a subsequent period.

Notwithstanding, however, this comparative deduction, there still remains a very strong enmity towards non-observance, whether in the way of neglect or of trespass. Ascetics, reposing their title to the esteem of mankind on a voluntary abnegation of particular enjoyments, naturally endeavour to fasten obloquy on all who indulge in them; Of course the ascetics hate him whom their interest leads them thus to injure. Besides, there exists in their minds, (though on most occasions perhaps unknown to themselves) a secret apprehension that their uncomplying neighbour may at last prove correct in his calculation, and that all their own self-denial may be thrown away. Yet it is a risk which they themselves do not choose to brave; and they, therefore, would fain deter any one else from undertaking it. Both vexation and envy thus impel them to enforce this prohibition in the most effectual manner—that is by forestalling the post-obituary sentence, and encompassing the path of self-indulgence with all the evils which earthly abuse and hostility can devise. Their own mistrust of the result is evinced by their reluctance to allow to the sinner the unmolested profit or loss of his own temerity.

3. The third species of antipathy which remains to be noticed, is that upon the score of mal-observance—a feeling more virulent than the second species, though less so than the first. In proportion to the stress we lay upon our mode of serving and obeying the Deity, will be the abhorrence with which we regard any rival system of worship. The ritual enjoined by the latter appears in our eyes a perversion of holy ordinances and institutions—frequently indeed we view it as the most flagrant impiety. We have ourselves always been taught to venerate a certain class of practices, as strictly agreeable to the Deity: But here is another nation who lay claim to his favour by very opposite performances, and mere natural religion unhappily furnishes us with no rational ground for preferring our own. Thus deficient in reasons, we naturally endeavour to deter people from demanding any, or even from whispering doubts: which might call for a solution. Dogmatical assumption of our own tenets; the bitterest invective against all who question them; these are the expedients which have been universally employed for this purpose. The first secures to the doctrine the only support which circumstances admit, that is our own authority, derived from the credit we have acquired in other cases for judgment and penetration: The second terrifies the hearer from manifesting any difficulty of assent, by which he might himself incur the suspicion of partiality towards the enemies of our worship.

It thus appears that to him who entertains a strong conviction, for which he has little or no arguments to offer, an intense antipathy not only clings as the natural concomitant of dissent, but is even necessary as a weapon to intimidate unsatisfied hearers, and to stifle an inquiry which it would be difficult to ward off in any other manner. Unprepared for parley, he quickly resorts to that heavy artillery on which alone his reliance can be placed. Besides, the want of solid proof generates, in this case also, the same mistrust and apprehension of error as we have remarked in the former—and hence an equal aversion and hostility towards all men, who by adopting a different course of worship, excite these doubts in his mind.

The Pagan, who has from his earliest youth regarded his own ritual as exclusively conformable to the divine will, is disposed to imagine that the Hindoo, or any other nation whose religious practices are widely different, must be a candidate for the favour of some unseen Being distinct from the one whom he himself recognise. Natural religion cannot demonstrate to him that there is no more than one God; and it would be presumptuous in him to assume it without proof. It is natural, therefore, that he should regard the foreign votary as the servant of a different God. But to see his own Deity not only neglected, but forsaken in behalf of another, is exasperating in the extreme; since it sets a limit to the influence of the former, and brings forward a rival sovereignty, from which a different distribution of favour and displeasure is to be expected. To attest, therefore, the rectitude of his own choice, and the superior might of his own Deity, he musters under the divine banners all the temporal force which he himself can command, for the purpose of crushing the rival worshippers, and terminating the influence of the unseen Being on whom they rely.

Mal-observance, like unbelief, includes non-observance; For the votary of a different system of religion will of course altogether neglect the ceremonies which I consider as the peculiar privilege of mine. But besides this, he braves my opinions, and heaps all the terms of moral reprobation on those practices which have always appeared to me the holiest and most essential: And there is scarcely any prospect of future amendment. While almost every believer is occasionally and to some extent obedient in practice, or at least recognizes the propriety of being so at a subsequent period. If we merely contemplate the fierce and merciless persecutions whose enormity has obtruded them upon the view of the historian, the misery thus introduced will appear sufficiently atrocious and revolting. But it is not by these extreme barbarities that the largest aggregate of suffering is occasioned. Very shocking instances of cruelty must be comparatively rare, from the desperation and inextinguishable thirst of vengeance which they are sure to provoke; and they are rather to be viewed as
indicating the pitch of fury to which the antipathy will occasionally stimulate mankind, than as aiding our measurement of its evil effects. These are to be estimated by computing the degree to which it is current and universal—the average force with which it acts at all times upon the bulk of the community. The very same principle, which at times breaks out into such ferocious excesses, is eternally at work, provoking innumerable manifestations of lesser hostility and ill-will—and these acts, although less injurious when individually considered, yet abundantly compensate this defect by their ceaseless recurrence and ubiquity.

It is not easy to estimate the total sum of evil introduced by this means—but when we contemplate the universal prevalence of religious hatred, and its daily and hourly interference with the line of human conduct—creating factitious motives for inflicting mutual evil, or withholding assistance—we shall be authorised in placing to its account no inconsiderable portion of the misery which pervades human society. The notorious and extensive influence of this antipathy is nowhere more forcibly marked than in the arguments concerning toleration. It is only within the last century, or a little before, that philosophy has ventured to broach the doctrine of toleration—that is, to recommend the propriety of tolerating, or enduring, the existence of persons entertaining different religious sentiments. Previous to this the understood principle, as well as practice, appears to have been, that no one could be expected to endure persons dissenting from him on religious subjects. Intolerance was then the universally acknowledged credential of sincerity, and, indeed, still remains so, wherever the preponderance of any one pious fraternity is so complete, as to render this non-endurance of dissenters at all practicable. It is chiefly the growing equilibrium between different sects which has engendered this mutual suspension of arms, and mitigated the fury of religious antipathy.

Mischief II.—Perverting the Popular Opinion—Corrupting Moral Sentiment—Sanctifying Antipathy—Producing Aversion to Improvement.

To ensure on the part of every individual a preference of actions favourable to the happiness of the community, it is essentially requisite that that community should themselves be able to recognise what is conducive to their happiness—that they should manifest a judgment sufficiently precise and untainted to separate virtue from vice. The reason why the popular sanction is generally mentioned as an encouragement to good and a restraint upon bad conduct, is, because the major part of the society are supposed in most cases to know what benefits and what injures them—and that they are disposed to love and recompense the former behaviour, to hate and punish the latter. Now the efficacy of the public hate, considered as a restraint upon misdeeds, depends upon its being constantly and exclusively allied with the real injury of the public—upon its being uniformly called forth whenever their happiness is endangered, and never upon any mistaken or imaginary alarms. Whatever, therefore, tends to make men hate that which does not actually hurt them, contributes to distort or disarm public opinion, in its capacity of a restraint upon injurious acts—for the public sentiment is only the love or hatred of all or most of the individuals in the society.

Now religion has been shown to create a number of factitious antipathies—that is, to make men hate a number of practices which they would not have hated had their views been confined simply to the present life. But if men would not naturally have hated these practices, this is a proof that they are not actually hurtful. Religion, therefore, attaches the hatred of mankind to actions not really injurious to them, and thus seduces it from its only legitimate and valuable function, that of deterring individuals from injurious conduct.

By this distortion from its true purpose, the efficacy of the popular censure is also weakened on those occasions when it is most beneficially and indispensably called for, as a guardian of human happiness. It is dissipated over an unnecessary extent of defensible ground, and thus becomes less efficient at every particular point; and it is deprived of that unity of design, and that reference to a distinct and assignable end, which marks all provisions exclusively destined for securing the public happiness. The different actions, to which the public odium is attached, appear entirely unconnected and heterogeneous in their tendencies, and its application is thus involved in darkness and confusion.

Besides, hatred from one man towards another, is a feeling decidedly noxious, and no friend of humanity could suffer a single drop of it to exist, were it not required to prevent a greater evil—to obviate a still larger destruction of happiness. Unless sanctified by this warrant, the affection of hatred becomes nothing better than unredeemed malignity. It is by exciting and keeping alive this malignity, that religion enforces her causeless prohibitions; and, therefore her influence is injurious, not only by obstructing an innocuous gratification, but by all the malice and animosity which she plants in the human bosom in order to effect her purpose. A pernicious restriction is thus completed by still more pernicious means.

Though this is the most mischievous species of corruption with which the popular opinion can be infected, it is not, however, the only one. Its encouragements, as well as its restraints, may be seduced and misapplied.
To promote, its true aim, the public favour and esteem ought to be as inseparably and exclusively annexed to beneficial practices, as its hatred to acts of a contrary tendency. But religion never fails to conciliate a very material share of credit for practices, which, however meritorious with reference to a posthumous state, cannot be affirmed to produce any temporal advantage, and therefore would never have been esteemed had our views been confined to the present life. She thus draws off a portion of the popular favour, from its legitimate task of encouraging acts conducive to human felicity: She cheats the public into the offer of a reward for conduct always useless, sometimes injurious—and embezzles part of the fund consecrated to the national service, for bribery on the personal behalf of the monarch.

The science of morality has become so doubtful and embarrassed, so destitute of all centre and foundation, as to be totally confounded and intersected with all number of innocent enjoyments, like the eating of pork—or any acts however extensively useful, like loans of money upon interest. And it may heap profuse veneration on monastic stripes and self-denial, or ratify the cruelty which persecution inflicts upon the unhappy dissenter.

But the public never praise an action without thinking it to deserve praise, nor blame one without believing it to deserve blame. This misdirection, therefore, of praise and blame naturally and necessarily introduces a false apprehension of what is praiseworthy and blame-worthy. The practices thus erroneously imagined to merit their esteem become enrolled in the catalogue of virtues—those falsely conceived to merit their censure are represented as vices. Thus the terms of moral approbation and blame are deceitfully transferred to actions which a regard to the public happiness would not legitimate, and the science of morality is cast into utter darkness and embarrassment, by the removal of that light which an unity of standard could alone have imparted.

This misapplication of terms is farther confirmed by the language used in addressing or characterizing the Deity. We have already shown that the Almighty, though always actually conceived by natural religion as a capricious despot, is yet never described except in epithets of the most superlative and unmixed praise. The practices, which he is supposed to approve or delight in, will of course be characterized in language the same as that which is applied to himself. What he loves, will be laudable or virtuous—what he dislikes, blame able or vicious. To sacrifice the life of a human being becomes thus entitled to the name of a good action, when enjoined (or supposed to be enjoined) by the Being whom every one calls all-beneficent and perfect. It matters not what the action is—so it be agreeable to the just and good Creator, it must itself be necessarily just and good.

By these two concurrent causes, the science of morality has been enveloped in a cloud of perplexity and confusion. Philosophers profess, by means of this science, to interpret and to reconcile the various applications of approving and disapproving terms. But the practices on which the same epithet of approbation is bestowed, appear so incurably opposite, that it has been found impossible to reduce them to one common principle, or to discover any constituent quality which universally attracts either praise or blame. The intellect has been completely bewildered and baffled in all attempts to explain the foundation of morality, or to find any unerring finger-post amidst a variety of diverging paths.

Hence the same misdirection of eulogy and censure, by which mankind have been deluded into favouring those who did them harm, and persecuting their benefactors, has given birth besides to another unhappy effect. The science of morality has become so doubtful and embarrassed, so destitute of all centre and foundation, as to lose all authority, and to be incapable either of rectifying current mistakes, or guarding against future ones. By the depravation of this all-important science, therefore, these misdirections not only secure themselves from all trial or scrutiny, but also ensure a similar success and immunity to any future prejudices. For the moralist, comparing the various actions to which praise or blame is awarded, and finding not the smallest analogy either in their nature or tendency, some being beneficial, others hurtful, others indifferent—is unable to range them under any common exponent, and accordingly sets them down in a catalogue one after another, as distinct and heterogeneous dictates of a certain blind and unaccountable impulse, which he terms a moral instinct or conscience. In cases where all men agree in approving or disapproving the same practice, he appeals to this universal consent as an invincible testimony to the justice of the feeling, and extols the uniformity of nature's voice: in cases where they differ, he compliments the particular sect or public, for whom he writes, as having singly adhered to the path of right and the dictates of nature, and bastardizes the rest of mankind as an outcast and misguided race.

The science of morality having been thus degraded into a mere catalogue of the reigning sentiments, without any trial or warrant, not only do the prejudices of to-day meet with adoption and licence, but a sanctuary is also provided for those of to-morrow. Morality cannot, in this state, either instruct or amend mankind, nor is it capable of progress or improvement, because the standard, by which alone its advance can be measured, has been cast away. To this stagnant and useless condition it has been reduced by the excessive misapplications of praise and blame, which religion has to so large an extent occasioned, though other causes
have doubtless contributed to the same end.

We should not omit to remark, that as all means of distinguishing right from wrong disapprobation is obliterated, every one naturally endeavours to license and sanctify his own private antipathies, by placing them to the account of religion. By an artful transfer of terms, he attempts to slip his personal dislike into the moral code, and to found thereon the character of being zealously concerned for the honour of God and the interests of virtue. If he can succeed in procuring a few allies, his antipathy becomes gradually diffused and legalized, and is worshipped as a dictate of the moral sense. But in order to obtain these partisans, he is compelled to offer some service in return; and for this purpose he naturally stands forth as the champion of their antipathies, in the same manner as they second his. By this compromise, therefore, the whole band are leagued to endorse and accredit each other's enmities, and to vilify the actions which they dislike, as infringements of religion and of the law of nature. 'The less hurtful the action—the less real necessity can be alleged for the dislike—the more loudly will they be obliged to appeal to religion and the moral instinct, as their only chance of shelter from the charge of absurd peculiarity. Those antipathies, therefore, which are the least defensible on the score of public utility, are the most commonly put forward to be stamped and sanctified by religion, and to pass current under the denomination of laws of nature.

One consequence and manifestation of this principle is so important as to deserve particular notice. An aversion towards improvement is its decided effect—and where such a feeling previously existed, it is both aggravated in force, and hardened against all question and scrutiny.

The sequences and concatenation of phenomena, as presented to our senses, and subsequently compared and classified, form what is called the course of nature, supposed to be established by the Deity. All fresh facts, all acquisition and application of knowledge, introduce a change in these sequences, and therefore break in upon the laws of nature.

Now the laws of nature, conceived as they are to be the arrangements of the Deity, acquire a character of supreme holiness, and to infringe them is supposed to be an impious defeat and counteraction of the divine will. The same being, indeed, who originally set them on foot, may suspend or over-rule them, if he will; but any interference for this purpose, on the part of man, is presumptuous and unwarrantable in the highest degree. To counteract the course of nature, and to oppose a bar to the designs of the Deity, are in fact synonymous phrases, and therefore all alterations in the course of nature are so many obstacles, daringly presented by feeble man against the designs of his creator.

Agreeably to this, the epithet unnatural indicates perhaps the most severe, aggravated, and relentless odium ever harboured in the human bosom. It is perfectly self-justifying, nor does the accused dare to call for any proof or testimony in support of the charge: it is also quite irresistible, and no plea can be heard in mitigation of its effect.

Now all successive discoveries and their application to fact, constitute so many alterations of the laws of nature. But no discovery is ever applied except for the purpose of augmenting human comfort—for there is no other motive to employ it. Consequently all augmentation of human happiness, by an improved knowledge of facts, is unnatural, or contrary to the laws of nature: that is, it is an impious counteraction of the designs of God. It naturally therefore becomes the object of the bitterest religious antipathy, and all practical improvement is thus pre-extinguished and stifled in the birth, by the sweeping epithet of unnatural.

It is vain to urge, that the fact falsifies these conclusions—that the promotion of human comfort, by means of an augmented knowledge of the passing phenomena, is never proscribed and regarded as opposite to the divine will, except in a few particular cases; while in the greater number of instances no one ever introduces the supposition. It is sufficient for my purpose to show that this effect is produced in a certain number of cases; more in sonic climates and ages, fewer in others—that practices conducive to human happiness have been branded and repelled simply on the ground of being unnatural. For this is satisfactory evidence that natural religion has a tendency to engender an hostility to improvement; and that if the tendency does not manifest and realize itself in every particular instance, this is because other causes operate in counteraction of it.

The increase of light and wisdom throughout Europe has, indeed, happily tended to dispel this error, and to restrict the application of such an interdict against improvement to a comparatively small number of cases, wherein either peculiar prejudices, or injury to some powerful sinister interest, act with more than usual effect upon the antipathies of mankind. But still the interdict exists; and it is only the dissentient voice of public opinion which suspends its execution. For whenever sentence is passed against any particular mode of amelioration, it is always by virtue of the standing enactment against all—that is by accusations of contrariety to the laws of nature and the designs of the Deity; which would, if pursued consistently, prohibit all improvement whatever. And the only scheme for parrying such an accusation is borrowed from this inconsistency, and general non-execution of the enactment: "You do not object to an alteration of the laws of nature for purposes of human happiness, in such and such cases—Why awaken your sleeping restriction here, and attach so much criminality to this particular plan, simply on the score of being unnatural or an innovation.
upon the laws of Nature?"

There has been a period when religion was arrayed to silence the discoveries of Galileo, and to prohibit physical and medicinal improvements, such as the emetic. If such sentences are no longer hazarded now, it is not from any change in the spirit and tendency of the law, but from its progressive weakness and loss of dominion, the natural result of the diffusion of knowledge.

**Mischief III.—Disqualifying the Intellectual Faculties for Purposes Useful in This Life.**

There are several modes in which religion tends to unfit the mental faculties for the promotion of the mere temporal happiness of mankind. Considered with reference to a posthumous existence, indeed, which divines justly regard as far more important than the present, her influence may be highly beneficial in qualifying us for the lot there to be awarded. But these magnificent promises cannot be realized without a transient loss on this preparatory state—and amongst all the modes in which this loss is incurred, few are more serious than the disqualification of our intellects.

**Section I.—Disjoining Belief from Experience.**

It has been remarked in the early part of this volume, that the primary and unsolicited provision of nature consists for the most part of pains and wants—that the means of soothing the one and satisfying the other, were the gradual and toilsome discovery of man, even now far from being perfected—that consequently all pleasure, and exemption from suffering, was the fruit of knowledge. If a man does not know the way to avoid or to remedy an impending pain, he will be compelled to suffer it: if he does not know the way to procure any particular pleasure, the pleasure will not seek him of its own accord, and he will, therefore, be obliged to forego it.

But all our knowledge with regard to pleasure and pain is derived from experience. To know the way of procuring the former and escaping the latter, some one must have made trial. Knowledge can only be instrumental for these purposes, when it is the statement and summary of the trials which have thus been made.

Now knowledge consists in the belief of certain facts: all useful knowledge, therefore (that is, all which can be instrumental in multiplying the enjoyments and diminishing the sufferings of this life), consists in believing facts conformable to experience—in believing the modes of producing pleasure and avoiding pain to be, in each particular case, such as actual trial indicates. It is on the conformity of belief with experience, therefore, that the attainment of pleasure and the prevention of misery, in every case without exception, is founded.

Such is the inestimable value, indeed, the essential and overwhelming necessity, of belief conformable to experience. Belief unconformable to experience is not applicable, in any degree, to the removal of unhappiness, or the production of enjoyment; and consequently is altogether useless. The whole utility of belief, therefore, consists in this conformity.

To maintain and extend the alliance between belief and experience will thus appear to be incalculably the most important object of human endeavour. Whatever promotes such an attempt, must be considered as a most valuable instrument for the augmentation of happiness; since this is the only means by which it can be augmented. And conversely, whatever tends to disjoin belief from experience, must be regarded as crippling, to a greater or less extent, the sole engine by which our preservation even from incessant suffering is ensured, and tending to disqualify our mental faculties for purposes of temporal happiness.

Such is the injurious effect (with reference to the present life) of disjoining the two—or of making us believe anything uncertified by experience. Whoever acts upon such an uncertified persuasion, or induces any one else to act upon it, can never attain any benefit by it, and may occasion very serious evil. Indeed all human errors are only so many manifestations of this unsanctioned belief.

As all real facts, or instances of belief thus certified, mutually hang together and tend to support each other, so that he who acquires any one is thereby assisted and placed in a better condition for the acquisition of more—in the same manner all errors, or uncertificated persuasions, though heterogeneous and discordant one with another, yet conspire all to one common end, that of deranging the conformity of belief to experience. Each separate instance of this want of conformity engenders others, and renders the mind less likely to keep close to a conformable belief upon other occasions. Every particular instance, therefore, besides the miscalculations to which it may directly and of itself give birth, is injurious by the general habit of derangement which it creates in the mental system—by preparing the intellect to be at other periods the recipient of useless or uncertified belief. You cannot impress upon the mind one such persuasion, without rendering it liable to the incursions of others to any extent.

He, for example, who reposes faith in the accounts of Lilliput and Brobdignag, must have a mind so
constituted, as to believe on many other occasions without the warrant of experience. We should mark our
sense of this by attaching less credit to his opinions, and describing him under appro- priate epithets of
inferiority. We should readily admit that such a peculiarity of mind comparatively incapacitated him from
directing either his own conduct or ours to any salutary purpose. If this disposition to uncertified belief spreads
still farther in his mind, and manifests itself in a considerable number of cases, we then term it insanity. His
belief then becomes not only useless for our guidance, but imminently dangerous and threatening to our
security. Accordingly we do not permit it to direct even his own actions, but immediately subject his body to a
foreign superintendence.

Such are the unhappy consequences produced by a deviation of belief from experience. This disjunction,
when frequent and embracing subjects of importance, constitutes insanity, and renders an individual utterly
incapable of providing for his own happiness, as well as a destructive foe to that of his fellow-creatures: When
rare and confined to trifling subjects, it causes a proportionally slighter depravation of his mental faculties, but
never fails to impair in a greater or less degree, his competency of judging for the welfare of himself and of
others. It is most important to keep in mind, that madness with all its dreadful consequences is only a total
divorce of belief from experience—that all intellectual weakness is the fruit of this divorce to a lesser
extent—and that every separate instance in which such a disjunction is effected, by whatever cause it may be,
lays the mind open to the attacks of other disjoining causes; thus creating a disease which is sure to spread.

Having thus exposed the enormous evils which result from the disjunction of belief from experience, I
proceed to show the modes in which natural religion inevitably causes such a disjunction.

1. The fundamental tenet of natural religion is, the persuasion that there exists a Being, unseen, unheard,
untouched, untasted, and unsmelt—his place of residence unknown—his shape and dimensions unknown—his
original beginning undiscovered. This is what the negative terms invisible, omnipresent, infinite, and eternal,
imply.

Now the very description of this Being obviously shows, that no one can ever have had any experience of
his existence. To have experience of anything external to ourselves, supposes certain concomitant
circumstances—the exercise of one of our senses—a definite time and place of existence—a particular size and
figure. Without these concomitants, experience cannot take place, and the sublime conception of infinite
attributes at once negatives them all. You cannot state that God is in a particular place, because that would
imply that he was not in any other place—since the only intent of particularization is to exclude everything
except that which is specified. Our persuasion, therefore, of God cannot be founded upon experience.

The very basis, therefore, of natural religion, is an article of extra-experimental belief, or of belief
altogether unconformable to experience. It has a tendency, thus in the very outset, to introduce that mental
depredation which we have demonstrated to be the inevitable result of this species of belief. I do not here intend
to assert that the doctrine in question is untrue, but merely to point out the peculiarity of the evidence on which
it rests—that it is a persuasion uncertified by experience, and, therefore, vitiating the intellect so far as regards
mere temporal interests. Whether true or untrue, in either case, the very nature of the belief occasions it to
produce the same disqualifying effect upon the mental faculties.

2. Our belief with regard to the original creative power of God, and the design with which it was exerted, is
alike uncertified by experience. No man has ever had experience of the commencement of things: and, therefore,
whatever account we admit as to their origin, our belief must be extra-experimental. If the interests of
the present life require that our persuasion should never deviate from experience, they also require that we
should not attempt to account for the original commencement of things—because it is obvious that experience
must be entirely silent upon that subject.

The belief in design, as dictating the exertion of this creative power, is alike extra-experimental. Experience
exhibits to us design only in man and animals; and in them its effects are confined to the displacement of
matter, and the admotion or amotion of its particles to and from each other. This is all which experience shows
us to be produced by design; and we cannot believe that it produces any other effects, without falling into the
disease of extra-experimental persuasion.

Besides, to say that the human body, or the universe, was brought into the order which we now see, by
design—this supposes a previous state in which the parts of the human body were lying about in a heap—fibres
in one place, brain in another, membranes and muscles in a third—without the least tendency to combine
together and form a whole. Design presupposes the existence of substances endowed with certain properties, and
can only be pretended to account for their transition, from one relative situation called confusion, to another
called order. But has anyone ever had experience of this preliminary chaos?

Again, an omnipotent will is something which is by its very nature placed beyond the reach of experience.
Were we permitted indeed to introduce the supposition of omnipotence, this would materially facilitate the
explanation of all other difficult points, as well as that of the original of things. Anything will solve the
difficulty, provided you are allowed to render it omnipotent. Instead of supposing a will which can perform
Everything, you may suppose fire or water which can perform everything, and all results are equally well explained. Why was Epicurus forced into such absurdities in attempting to explain all phenomena by the doctrine of atoms, or Thales by that of water? From the difficulty of reconciling these phenomena with atoms or water of limited power and properties. Had they dared to discard openly these limitations, the difficulty of the task would have vanished. When the fairy with her all-powerful wand has once been introduced, it is as easy to explain the sudden rise of a palace as of a cottage.

These considerations, we think, clearly demonstrate that all belief in design, as having been originally instrumental in forming the world, is completely extra-experimental.

3. Nor less so is the belief that the Deity will in a posthumous existence distribute to us certain pleasures and pains. It is plain that whatever be the evidence on which this persuasion is built, experience teaches us nothing about it.

4. Another case of extra-experimental conviction implanted by religion is, the belief of God's agency in the present life. As it is in this case that the mischiefs flowing from such uncertified belief assume the most determinate and palpable shape, we shall examine it at greater length than the rest.

You believe that the Deity interferes occasionally to modify the train of events in the present life. Your belief is avowedly unconformable to experience, for the very essence of the divine interposition is to be extrinsic and irreconcilable to the course of nature. But mark the farther consequences: You dethrone and cancel the authority of experience in every instance whatever; and you thus place yourself out of condition to prove any one fact, or to disprove any other.

What steps do you take to prove that a man has committed murder? You produce a witness who saw him level his pistol at the head of the deceased, heard the report, and beheld the man drop. But this testimony drives all its persuasive force from the warrant and countersign of experience. Without this it is perfectly useless. Unless I know by previous experience that eye-witnesses most commonly speak the truth—that a pistol ball takes the direction in which it is levelled and not the opposite—I should never be convinced, by the attestation of these particular facts, of that ulterior circumstance which you wish me to infer. To complete the proof, two things are requisite; the previous lessons of experience, and the applicability of these lessons to the present case. But no such application can take place unless the course of nature remains the same as it was before. A gratuitous assumption must therefore be made, that the course of nature continues inviolate and uniform. But to assume this in every particular case, is to assume the universal inviolability of the laws of nature.

Whoever therefore believes these laws to be violable at the will of an incomprehensible Being, completely debars himself from the application of all previous experience to the existing fact. If they are violable at all, why may they not have been violated in the case before us? No imaginable reason can be assigned for this—because in order to constitute a reason—in order to make a complete proof—you must presuppose that uniformity of the course of nature which your reason is intended to vindicate. Whether you assume her laws to be violable or inviolable, you must adhere to the same assumption throughout. If you say that they are inviolable, you cannot maintain them to be infringed in any particular case—if you hold that they are violable, you cannot assume them to be permanent and uniform in any one case.

If therefore you believe the agency of an incomprehensible Being in the affairs of this life, your belief is such as would, were it pursued consistently, exclude you from all application of past experience to the future—and therefore incapacitate you from contriving any defence against coming pains, or any modes of procuring pleasures.

Again, this belief also precludes you from applying the process of refutation, and thus from detecting any falsehood whatever. For no assertion can ever be refuted except by offering proof of some other assertion, and then appealing to experience for a certificate of the incompatibility of the two. A man clears himself from an alleged crime by proving an alibi. The whole virtue of this defence rests upon the presumption, that experience attests the impossibility of performing a certain act at more than a certain distance. If it is suggested that the laws of nature are violable—if it is questioned whether the previous lessons of experience are applicable to this particular case—then, inasmuch as no evidence of their applicability can be adduced, the process of disproof is at once nullified. The inviolability of the course of nature must be gratuitously assumed as the root from which all incompatibility between any two assertions, and therefore all proof of the falsehood of either, is derived.

Hence the belief of an unseen agent, infringing at pleasure the laws of nature, appears to be pregnant with the most destructive consequences. It discredits and renders inadmissible the lessons of experience: It vitiates irrecoverably the processes both of proof and refutation, thereby making truth incapable of being established, and falsehood incapable of being detected: It withdraws from us the power of distinguishing the true methods of procuring enjoyment or avoiding pain, from the false ones; and plunges us into the naked, inexperienced and helpless condition of a new-born child—thereby qualifying us indeed for the kingdom of heaven, but leaving us wholly defenceless against the wants and sufferings of earth.

I do not indeed affirm that this extra-experimental belief has actually produced—what if adhered to with
consistency, it ought to produce—an entire mistrust of all experience. The necessity for a general reliance on
the stability of nature has been too powerful to be resisted—and therefore mankind have shuffled off the
dangerous consequences by their usual resort of incompleteness—sometimes assuming the lessons of experience
as supreme and incontestable, sometimes disregarding them as arbitrary and variable at the will of an
incomprehensible Being. But though this extra-experimental belief has been thus only partially entertained and
confined to a corner of the mind, its pernicious effects have still been very great—and I shall proceed to specify
an instance of the manner in which it tends to disable the intellect, and to expunge all the criteria of truth and
falsehood.

It is not many years since witchcraft was recognized and prohibited as an actual offence, and persons tried
and condemned for committing it. To attempt a defence against such an accusation was obviously
impracticable. The essence of the crime consisted in an alliance with demons, who could at pleasure interrupt
the course of nature; and therefore it availed nothing though the defendant could prove an unexceptionable
alibi. He might, by the assistance of his hyperphysical ally, have ridden a hundred miles through the air in as
many seconds. Nor was it possible to determine what facts were or were not inconsistent with commission of
the crime; or consequently, to adduce anything like exculpatory testimony. The defendant was thus laid
completely at the mercy of the favour or aversion of judges unguided by any rational inference, as may be seen
by consulting any of the old trials for this imaginary offence.

All the unhappy victims who have been condemned for witchcraft may be considered as one instance of the
wretched effects of extra-experimental belief; as sacrifices occasioned by that thorough depravation of the
intellect, and erasure of the distinction between truth and falsehood, which it is the nature of this belief to effect
whenever it reigns within the mind. The number of men thus condemned publicly has been far from
inconsiderable—not to mention those who have undergone private persecution and suspicion from their
neighbourhood; a body probably more numerous, though less exposed to notice.

As this persuasion utterly disqualifies mankind for the task of filtering truth from falsehood, so the
multitude of fictitious tales for which it has obtained credence and currency in the world, exceeds all
computation. To him who believes in the intervention of incomprehensible and unlimited Beings, no story can
appear incredible. The most astonishing narratives are exempted from cross-examination, and readily digested
under the title of miracles or prodigies. Of these miracles, every nation on the face of the earth has on record,
and believes thousands. And as each nation disbelieves all except its own, each, though it believes a great
many, yet disbelieves more. The most enthusiastic believer in miracles, therefore, cannot deny that an
enormous excess of false ones have obtained credence amongst the larger portion of mankind. The root of all
these fictions, by which the human intellect has thus been cheated and overrun, is the
extra-experimental belief of the earthly interference of God; and the immense evil arising from such a deception is another of its
pernicious results.

Nor should we omit, in reckoning up these results, the universal prevalence of the expectations arising out
of this belief in particular interpositions of the Deity. Entertaining this conviction, a man is of course led to
frame some conjecture on what occasions the unseen Being will be likely to interpose. He naturally selects
those, on which his anticipations are most at fault, and when he is most ignorant what real event is to be
expected. In this state the experimental belief ceases to suggest any predictions, and the extra-experimental
of course steps into the vacant chair and assumes the rod of prophecy. Hence, instead of adopting the most skilful
expedients which a comparison of the known phenomena would suggest, his behaviour will be determined
either by some accidental and incomprehensible peculiarity of circumstance, or by certain deceitful and
irrelevant conceptions of the divine attributes.

It would be both useless and impracticable to enumerate all those trifling casualties which have, in one
place or another, been regarded as manifestations of God's interference. The flight of birds—the neighing of a
horse—the drawing of lots—and a thousand other such inconsequential incidents have been consulted as
instructors and guides to human short-sightedness, and as interpreters of the divine decrees. To disregard one of
them was considered as an act of impiety, and contempt of a special warning. The phenomena thus selected
have been infinitely various—the doctrine and principle exactly similar throughout.

To illustrate the depravation of judgment produced by these expectations of divine interference, it is
important to remark their effect when recognized and acted upon in the system of judicature—a province
wherein, as it demands the most complete preparation and use of the faculties, all mistaken principles are the
most prominently displayed.

The trial by ordeal has been most universally approved and established, in the infancy at least of all
societies, from Hindostan to America. Unable to discover satisfactory criteria of guilt and innocence, by a just
comparison of conflicting testimony, mankind have endeavoured to extricate themselves from the uneasy
feelings of doubt, by a blind reliance on the extra-experimental belief. In confidence that the point would be
decided for them, they have abandoned the task of determining it for themselves, and have been contented with
executing what they regarded as the divine verdict. Now certainly if the Deity is ever in any case believed to
interpose, this is the occasion of all others when his interposition would be most naturally and most rationally
anticipated, supposing him truly benevolent. Were a chief—justice animated by genuine benevolence, his
feelings would not permit him to remain inactive, when his efforts might extricate the innocent from impending
punishment, or expose the shifts of the guilty.

But though this is by far the most defensible case in which divine interpositions have ever been looked for,
we hear it unanimously treated, by writers of the present day, as a symptom of the most pitiable imbecility—as
utterly incompetent to elicit the truth—and as the most cruel distortion of penal judicature. The miserable
effects which a belief in the temporal agency of God has produced, in this case alone without mentioning
others, are incalculable. Reflect on the number of persons whom the issue of the ordeal has consigned to
unmerited torture, or protected from an appropriate penalty—on the bar thus opposed to all improvement in the
judicial process—on the extension of this method of lottery to all other matters of doubt, which its reception in
the sacred field of judicature would countenance: Consider too that these evils still infest perhaps the larger
portion of the globe, and all the uninstructed nations who inhabit it. This immense mass of misfortune flows
from one particular application—and that too the most rationally deduced from the current hypothesis—of the
belief in the temporal interference of the Deity.

The example which has been just cited is of great value, because we there behold the belief in superhuman
agency applied to a distinct and particular case, and thence producing consequences which it is impossible to
shuffle over or evade. These consequences are universally admitted to be most pernicious, in the instance of
ordeal—and similar effects cannot fail to result, whenever the same belief is elsewhere entertained and applied
to action. He who feels confidence that the Deity will decide for him a particular point, or realize any other
object of his wishes, will of course take no pains to form his own opinion, or to attain the object by his own
efforts. Reliance on foreign aid, if perfect and full, supersedes the necessity of self-exertion altogether—and if
the person thus relying puts himself to any trouble whatever, it is only because his confidence is not perfect. A
man sits still while his servant is bringing up breakfast, because he feels quite confident that his desires will be
attained without any trouble of his own. The belief therefore in super-human interference cannot fail, when
firmly and thoroughly entertained, to produce an entire abandonment of the means suggested by experience for
human enjoyment. If the Almighty declares against us, our efforts are fruitless—if in our favour, they are
unnecessary: In neither case therefore have we any motive to make efforts.

Expectation of effects on the ground of the divine attributes must thus, so far as it is really genuine and
operative, extinguish all forecast, and cut all the sinews of human exertion. It must produce this effect whenever
it produces any at all; and if such a result is not actually brought about, it is only because the nullity of the
expectation has been in part exposed, and its influence proportionally weakened.

Any doctrine may be stated as having a tendency to introduce those consequences which are consistently
and legitimately deducible from it—and while the doctrine is maintained in any one instance, there is always a
chance that it will be extended to every other. He who looks for superhuman aid in one instance, is at least
liable to do so in another. On this ground it is important to notice the mischievous tendency of these
expectations, in a case where it would not be easy to trace home to them any palpable and specific evil
consequences, such as those of the ordeal.

Expectations from the divine attribute of pliability have been and still continue universal. At least this is the
foundation of the frequent prayers which are put up to Heaven for different species of relief—built, not upon
the benevolence of God, for then his assistance would be extended alike to all the needy, whether silent or
clamorous; but upon his yielding and accessible temper, which though indifferent if not addressed, becomes the
warm and compliant partizan of every petitioner.

Now these expectations, supposing them well-founded and firmly entertained, cannot fail to introduce
complete inactivity among the human race. Why should a man employ the slow and toilsome methods to which
experience chains him down, when the pleasure which he seeks may be purchased by a simple act of prayer?
Why should he plough, and sow, and walk his annual round of anxiety, when by the mere expression of a
request, an omnipotent ally may be induced to place the mature produce instantly within his grasp? No, it is
replied—God will not assist him unless he employs all his own exertions: He will not favour the lazy. In this
defence however it is implied, either that the individual is not to rely upon God at all, in which case there is no
motive to offer up the prayer—or that he is to feel a reliance, and yet act as if he felt none whatever. It is
implied, therefore, that the conduct of the individual is to be exactly the same as if he did not anticipate any
superhuman interference. By this defence, you do indeed exculpate the belief in supernatural agency from the
charge of producing pernicious effects—because you reduce it to a mere non-entity, and make it produce no
effects at all.

If therefore the request is offered up with any hope of being realized, it infallibly proves pernicious, by
relaxing the efforts of the petitioner to provide for himself. Should he believe that God will, when he himself
has done his utmost, make up the deficiency and crown his views with success; the effect will be to make him undertake any enterprises whatever, without regarding the inadequacy of his means. Provided he employs actively all the resources in his power, he becomes entitled to have the balance made up from the divine treasury. "God never sends a child" (says the proverb) "but He sends food for it to eat." What is the natural inference from this doctrine, except that a man may securely marry without any earthly means of providing for his family, inasmuch as God will be sure to send him some?

What preserves the evil effects of this right of petitioning, which man is asserted to possess over the Deity, from the notoriety and exposure to which the consequences of the ordeal have been subjected—is, the very obscure and indistinct class of human wishes to which its exercise has gradually been restricted. Earthly discoveries and preparations are more commonly preferred for the satisfaction of our usual wants; nor are men so well contented with the provision which their heavenly Father has made for them, as to resign entirely all thought for the morrow. Some persons pray for their daily bread, it is true, and some do not; but every one without exception either works for it himself, or secures the services of some of his fellow-men. He who would wish to acquire a fortune or to learn a language, and contented himself with praying that God would transfer stock to him, or pour down the gift of tongues, would be derided as insane. If you ask a man whether he would rely upon petitions to Heaven for the accomplishment of any definite earthly wish, the incongruity of the means to the end appears then so glaring, that he thinks you are ridiculing him, although the language employed may be the gravest and most decorous. He will pray either for objects which he is sure to obtain with or without prayer, such as his daily bread—or for objects which he cannot tell whether he obtains or not, such as that the kingdom of God may come, that His will may be done in earth as it is in heaven, &c., or for vague and indeterminate gifts, the fulfilment of which is not to be referred to any distinct time, such as health, longevity, good desires, &c. It is only by its results being thus kept in the dark, that the inefficiency of prayer is protected from exposure.

I have thus analyzed the several species of extra-experimental belief which religion begets in the mind, consisting in the persuasion of the existence, creative function, and agency both here and in a future life, of a supernatural Being. I have endeavoured to demonstrate from the very nature of this belief, that it cannot fail to disqualify the intellect for the pursuit of temporal happiness, more or less in proportion to the extent in which it is entertained. For as all our pleasure and all our exemption from want and pain, is the result of human provision—as these provisions are only so many applications of acquired knowledge, that is, of belief conformable to experience—it follows, that the whole fabric of human happiness depends upon the intimate and inviolable union between belief and experience. Whatever has the effect of disjoining the two, is decidedly of a nature to undermine and explode all the apparatus essential to human enjoyment—and if this result is not actually produced, it is only because the train laid is not sufficiently extensive, and is confined to the outworks instead of reaching the heart of the fortress. So far as any result at all brought about, it is an advance towards the accomplishment of this work of destruction. And as every separate case, in which extra-experimental belief finds reception in the mind, paves the way for others, any one disjunction of belief from experience has a tendency to produce their entire and universal discordance.

Mischief IV.—Suborning Unwarranted Belief.

Akin to the foregoing mischief, though not precisely identical, is the distorting influence which religion exercises, by numbering belief in the catalogue of duties and merits—disbelief in that of crimes and offences. It has been already explained how, in the divine classification of human actions, disbelief is characterized as the most heinous of all trespasses, and belief as very meritorious, though not to a corresponding extent. The severest penalties are supposed and proclaimed to await the former; very considerable rewards to follow the latter.

So far as these threats and premiums are operative at all, the effect must be, to make a man believe that which he would not naturally have believed, and disbelieve that which he would not naturally have disbelieved. But in the natural state of things, a man assents to that which he thinks is supported by the best evidence—dissents from what appears to be refuted by the best evidence. Under such circumstances, there is nothing to guide his choice except the evidence. By holding out rewards to the former, and punishments to the latter, you introduce a lateral and extraneous force, which either wholly shuts out, or partially disturbs, the influence of the respective proofs. So far, therefore, as the reward is at all effective, it entices him to believe upon inadequate proof—so far as the punishment acts, it deters him from disbelieving upon adequate disproof.

Consult the analogy of common life. Is not the offer of a bribe to the judge universally reprobated, as disposing him to wrong and unauthorized decision? Is not a threatening letter to jurors recognized as tending to the same end? You might indeed allege, that the judge was honest, and the jurors intrepid; and, therefore, that bribe and threat were both ineffectual. But it would be impossible to controvert the pernicious tendency of these
methods, supposing them to have any influence at all upon the verdict.

The religious premium offered for faith, tends in like manner to corrupt the judgment of an individual, and
to foist in, by means of his hopes and partiality, a belief which unbiased reason would not have tolerated. The
penalties denounced against unbelief co-operate most powerfully, by enlisting his fears in behalf of the same
self-deceit or hypocrisy.

There are, indeed, limits to the influence of rewards and punishments in thus engendering factitious belief.
No man can, while this book is in his hand, make himself believe that it is not there. But though he cannot thus
drive off sensation at pleasure; yet in matters where the truth does not obtrude itself so immediately, but must
be gathered from various and wide-spread fragments of evidence, he can withdraw his thoughts from some, and
fasten them upon others, almost to an unlimited extent. Hope and fear, constitute a motive for this undue
preference; and his mind gravitates almost unconsciously towards the gainful side, as it shrinks from the terrors
of the opposite prospect. He dwells on the positive proof of the promising doctrine, and sends his invention out
in quest of additional reasons: while the negative is never permitted to occupy his attention for an instant. No
wonder that the former, by thus exclusively absorbing the mind, assume a disproportionate value and
magnitude, and appear irresistible, merely because nothing of an opposite tendency is allowed to join issue with
them.

Such are the unjust and distorted movements of the intellect, which an interest in the result generally
produces; and which the rewards and punishments respectively attached to belief or disbelief, must of course
contribute to produce also.

This sort of reward, indeed, operates as a direct bounty upon credulity— that is, upon belief unsupported by
sufficient and self-convincing evidence. The weaker the evidence, the greater is the merit in believing. This
follows irresistibly. For if it is necessary to encourage belief by an artificial bounty, it would be useless to apply
this stimulus to any doctrine which would of itself command the assent of mankind. The bounty must go where
it is most needed; that is, to the support of doctrines which have little or no support of their own—and the
largest slice of it to those which require the greatest encouragement, and would stand the least chance of being
credited without it. Hence the less reason there is for receiving the doctrine, the larger share of merit will be
awarded to the believer; and the tendency of the religious premium is thus to give birth to the most sweeping
and indiscriminate credulity.

When assent or dissent has thus become a question of profit and loss, and not of reason, the believer is
interested in bringing into contempt the guide whom he has deserted. He accordingly speaks in the most
derogatory terms of the fallibility and weakness of human reason, and of her incapacity to grasp any very lofty
or comprehensive subject. It thus becomes a positive merit to decide contrary to reason, rather than with her.

But, with regard to provision of pleasure, and escape of pain in the present life, reason is admitted to be our
only safe director. Whatever, therefore, throws discredit upon her, or makes mankind neglect or mistrust her
decisions, places the mind in a state less likely to discern and follow the true path of human happiness. The
rewards and punishments, which religion affixes respectively to belief and unbelief, have the most direct
tendency to this state of blindness and confusion. They cannot fail to engender a habit of credulity; as well as a
reluctance to examine, and an inability to poise, conflicting testimony. Of all mental qualities, this credulity is
the weakest and most fatal, rendering a man an easy prey to deceit and error, and thereby exposing him to
incessant disappointment and loss.

Suppose government were to offer large rewards to all who believed in witches, or in the personality and
marvellous feats of Hercules or Jack the Giant-killer—and to threaten proportionate punishments to all
disbelievers. No one would question that these offers and threats, if they were at all effective, would contribute
to produce a general perversion of intellect—and that they would mislead men's judgments in numerous other
cases besides that one to which they immediately applied. Error, when once implanted, uniformly and
inevitably propagates its species.

Precisely the same in all cases, is the effect of erecting belief into an act of merit, and rendering unbelief
punishable. You either produce no result at all; or you bribe and suborn a man into believing what he would not
otherwise have believed—that is, what appears to him inadequately authenticated.

**Mischief V.—Depraving The Temper.**

That natural religion depraves the temper, and renders it infinitely less efficacious to the production of
general happiness, has been shown in the preceding Sections; inasmuch as it has been proved to engender
virulent antipathies among mankind, or direct inclinations to harm each other. I propose to exhibit under the
present head a farther deterioration of temper, referable to the same source; which does not announce itself in
such palpable and violent injuries as the direct antipathy occasions, though its effects in corrupting the
intercourse of life are most real and serious.
It may be asserted as a broad and general truth, that whatever curtails the personal comfort and happiness of any individual, disqualifies him to an equal extent from imparting happiness to his fellow-creatures; and not only thus much, but even disposes him to reduce, if possible, their quota of enjoyment to a level with his own. All the privations and misery, therefore, which religion inflicts upon an individual, extend through him to all those with whom he is placed in contact, and form a deduction from their happiness no less real and positive. Every particular species of private mischief enumerated in the preceding chapter, is the parent of a train of misfortunes among the small fraternity with which he is connected, by the unsocial and malevolent tone of mind which it inevitably generates in him.

There is also another mode in which religion still more effectually depraves the temper. The fitful and intermittent character of its inducements, incapable of keeping a steady purchase upon the mind, and daily overborne by urgent physical wants—the endless and almost impracticable compliances exacted in its code—the misty attributes of its legislator, who treats every attempt to inquire into his proceedings as the most unpardonable of insults—all these render it quite impossible for a religionist to preserve anything like a satisfactory accordance between his belief and his practice. Hence a perpetual uneasiness and dissatisfaction with himself—a sense of infirmity of purpose and dereliction of principle—which is thoroughly fatal to all calmness or complacency of mind. Privations or torture might by habit become tolerable and even indifferent; but this feeling of inferiority and degradation is continually renovated, and never ceases to vex the resolving and re-resolving sinner. And a mind thus at variance with itself can never be at peace with anybody else, or feel sufficient leisure to sympathize with the emotions of others. It shelters its own vacillation under the plea of the general debasement and original wickedness of the whole human race: and this plea must assuredly weaken, if it does not entirely root out, all sympathy for such degenerate beings.

Dissatisfied with his own conduct, it is hardly possible that a man can be satisfied with that of others. We are told indeed that this consciousness of imperfection in ourselves ought to engender humility, and indulgence towards the defects of our brethren. But rarely indeed does it produce any such effect as this. Its general tendency is to sharpen the edge of envy—to make us more acute in hunting out and magnifying the faults of others, inasmuch as nearly the sole comfort remaining to us, is the view of others equally distant from the same goal.

When we consider how infinitely the happiness of every family and society depends upon the steadiness and equability of disposition in each member, whereby all the rest are enabled to ascertain and avoid whatever might offend him—and upon the sympathy which each man manifests for the feelings of the remainder—the mischief above explained must be estimated very high in amount. There can be no equability of temper, where there is an unceasing conflict of principle and practice—of resolution and failure: and where the mind is darkened over by a sense of self-abasement and guilt. There can be no sympathy either for the enjoyments or the sufferings of others, where the thoughts of an individual are absorbed in averting posthumous torments or in entitling himself to a posthumous happiness—and where this object, important as it is, is involved in such obscurity, as to leave him in a state of perpetual anxiety and apprehension.

It is useless to affirm, that Religion does not in fact produce this unhappy result. If it does not, this is only because its motives cannot from their distance and uncertainty be made to act steadily and consistently upon the mind. So far as they do act, they tend to this result—and under peculiar circumstances, where the influence of the human motives is weakened or nearly removed, go far to accomplish it completely. Such is the case in monasteries, as may be seen by consulting the account of Don Leucadio Doblado, cited above.

Mischief VI.—Creating a Particular Class of Persons Incurably Opposed to the Interests of Humanity.

I have endeavoured in the preceding pages to point out all the different modes in which natural religion acts injuriously upon the temporal happiness of society. One species of injury yet remains to be indicated, and that too of incalculable effect and permanence—partly as it is productive of distinct mischief, independently and on its own account—partly as it subsidizes a standing army for the perpetuation of all the rest.

Those who believe in the existence and earthly agency of a superhuman being, view all facts which they are unable to interpret, as special interventions of the celestial hand. Incomprehensible phenomena are ascribed naturally to the incomprehensible person above. They call forth of course the deepest horror and astonishment, as being sudden eruptions of the super-aerial volcano, and reminding the spectator of its unsubdued and inexhaustible terrors. When any such events take place, therefore, his mind is extremely embarrassed and unhinged, and in the highest degree unfit for measuring the correctness of any inferences which immediate fear may suggest.

Now incomprehensible phenomena occur very frequently in the persons of different men—that is, certain men are often seen to act in a manner which the spectator is unable to reconcile with the general principles of
human action, so far as they are known to him. Incomprehensible men and incomprehensible modes of
behaviour, when they do thus happen, are of course subject to the same construction as other unintelligible
events, and are supposed to indicate a signal interference of the Deity. When therefore the actions of any man
differ strikingly from the ordinary march of human conduct, we naturally imagine him to be under the peculiar
impulse and guidance of the divine finger.

Of incomprehensible behaviour the two extremes, though of diametrically opposite kinds, are superior
wisdom, and extravagant folly. A loftier and better cultivated intelligence attains his ends by means which we
cannot fathom—overleaps difficulties which seem to us insurmountable—foresees consequences which we had
ever dreamt of. His system of action is to us altogether perplexing and inexplicable. There are others again
who seem insensible to the ordinary motives of man—whose thoughts, words, and deeds are alike incoherent
and inconsequential—whose incapacity disqualifies them for the commonest offices of life. Such is the other
species of incomprehensible man, whom we generally term an idiot or a madman, according to circumstances.
Both the extremes of intelligence and folly thus exhibit phenomena which we are unable to account for, and are
each therefore referred to the immediate influence and inspiration of God.

In a former part of this volume, I have assimilated the God of natural religion, on the ground of his attribute
of incomprehensibility, to a madman. But as this property is here asserted to belong to the superior intelligence
also, it may be asked why I did not compare the divine Being to him, instead of choosing a simile apparently so
inappropriate. In reply to this, I must introduce a concise but satisfactory distinction.

The madman is one, incomprehensible both in the ends which he seeks and in the means which he takes to
attain them—one whose desires and schemes are alike inconsistent and unfathomable. The superior genius is
one, whose ends we can understand and assign perfectly, but whose means for attaining them are
inexplicable—insuch as his fertility of invention, and originality of thought, have enabled him to combine
his operations in a manner never previously witnessed.

Now both the ends which the Deity proposes, and the means by which he pursues them, are alike above the
comprehension of our finite intellects. And this suffices to vindicate the propriety of my original comparison.

Amongst early societies, where a very limited number of phenomena have yet been treasured up for
comparison, and where the established general principles are built upon so narrow an induction, events are
perpetually occurring which seem at variance with them. The sum of principles thus established, is called the
course of nature, and the exceptions to them, or supernatural inroads, are extremely frequent. Accordingly, men
of unaccountable powers and behaviour are easy to be found, where the standard of comparison is so
imperfectly known; and the belief in particular persons, as inspired by God, is proportionately prevalent in an
early stage of society.

Conformably to the foregoing doctrine, we find that rude nations generally consider madmen and idiots as
persons under the impulse of unseen spirits, and view them with peculiar awe and reverence. This, however,
though a remarkable fact, and signally illustrative of the principle, yet leads to no important consequences, and
may be dismissed without farther comment. But the belief of a divine inspiration and concomitancy in persons
of superior intelligence, is productive of great and lasting changes in the structure of the social union: and it is
most instructive as well as curious to trace the gradual progress of these alterations. A madman is unable to take
advantage of any prejudice existing in his favour among mankind, or to push such a feeling into its most
profitable result. It terminates, therefore, in those spontaneous effusions of reverence, which do not extend their
effects beyond the actual moment and individual.

In order to lead to any lasting consequence, it is necessary that the performer of incomprehensible acts
should possess sufficient acuteness to take advantage of the inference which mankind are disposed to draw
from them. He need not indeed be a first-rate intellect—but he must be some degrees above a madman or an
idiot.

The inferences which an unenlightened mind is in this case inclined to adopt, are indeed most extensive and
important. A man is seen, or believed, to produce some given effect, by means which the spectators did not
before know to be adequate to that effect: astonished at such an unforeseen result, they think they cannot too
highly magnify the extent of his power. It has already surpassed their anticipations very much—therefore there is
no knowing by how much more it may surpass them—no possibility of conceiving its limits. He is therefore
invested for the time with omnipotence, by the supposed momentary descent and co-operation of the unseen
Being above. But if the Almighty has condescended to pay such pointed attention to any individual, this must
be owing to some very peculiar intimacy between them. The individual must possess extraordinary means of
recommend ing himself to the favour of God, in order to attract the distinction of a supernatural visit, and to be
honoured with the temporary loan of a fraction of omnipotence. He must stand high in the estimation of the
Deity, and must therefore be well acquainted with his disposition, and with the modes of con-ciliating or
provoking him.

Such are the long train of inferences which the performance of an unaccountable act suggests to the
alarmed beholders. It is important to remark the gigantic strides by which the mind is hurried on it knows not where, beyond all power of stoppage or limit, the moment it quits the guidance of observation, and is induced to harbour extra-experimental belief. A man is seen to do an incomprehensible deed: the utmost consequence which experience would extract from this, would be, that under circumstances not very dissimilar, the same man could repeat the deed. If a king is seen to remove one man's scrofula by the touch, experience might warrant us in conjecturing that he might cure the same disease in another; but it would be as ridiculous to infer from this single fact, that he possessed the power of performing any other feats, as it would be to conclude that, because mercury quickened the action of the liver, you might rely upon it for the alleviation of the gout. Such, I say, would be the conclusion of a rational observer. But the mind, when once disengaged from observation, and initiated into extra-experimental belief, rolls about without measure in her newly-acquired phrenzy, and glances in a moment from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth. To him that hath, more shall be given: pursuant to this maxim, we ascribe to the man who astonishes us by one incomprehensible feat, the ability of astonishing us still more by a great many others. Nay, the power, which we are led to conceive as exerted, seems too vast to be ascribed to him alone. We, therefore, introduce an omnipotent accomplice into the scene, and regard the feat as indicating the intervention of a hand sufficiently mighty to work any imaginable marvel. Such is the prompt and forcible transit whereby the extra-experimental believer is hurried on to swell the power which he beholds into a greater, and that still farther into the greatest—until at last an act of legerdemain is magnified into an exhibition of omnipotence.

But however unwarranted the inferences thus stated may appear, their effect is not the less important. The wonder-worker gains credit for possessing an extent of power to which we can assign no limits; we view him as a privileged being, possessed of a general power of attorney from the Almighty to interpret his feelings, to promulgate his will, and to draw for supernatural recompense and punishments at pleasure. In virtue of this extensive deputation, the principal becomes responsible for everything which his emissary says and does, and is supposed to resign the whole management of earthly affairs in favour of the latter.

A wonder-worker thus, by merely producing an adequate measure of astonishment in the bosoms of mankind, is immediately exalted into a station of supreme necessity and importance. All knowledge of the divine will, all assistance from the divine power, can only be attained through his mediation. The patronage thus ascribed to him is enormous, and is, like all other patronage, readily convertible into every other sort of emolument or desirable object. Every one who seeks the divine favour, will not fail to propitiate the minister by whom his petition must be countersigned—whose blessing or curse determines his future treatment at the hands of the Deity. Knowledge of the divine intentions is another perennial source of influence and lucre to the wonder-worker. Hence he is supposed to foreknow the phenomena of nature, and the ignorant, when in doubt, regulate their behaviour by the results which he prognosticates. His patent too of interpreting the divine decrees, to which no competitor has any access, virtually empowers him to manufacture a decalogue on his own account, and to enforce its mandates by all the terrors of spiritual police and penalties.

Powers of such tremendous magnitude appear amply sufficient to enslave and lay prostrate the whole community. And this they infallibibly would do, were the extra-experimental belief steady, equable, and consistent with itself, always applying similar principles on similar occasions; and if it were never over-borne by the more immediate motives and acquisitions of earth. The urgent necessity of providing for temporal exigencies, which are too pressing to await the result of an application to heaven, impels the minds of men in another direction, and models their associations more and more according to the dictates of experience. Having acquired, by their own exertions, the means of satisfying their wants, they have not so great an occasion for aerial aid, and all successive accumulations of knowledge tend to weaken the influence of the divine deputy over them.

My present purpose, however, is to investigate not so much the extent of this influence, as the direction in which it operates. We design to show, that the performer of prodiges (or this class, if there be more than one) when elevated to the post of interpreter and administrator of the divine will, and exercising an influence built upon these privileges—becomes animated with an interest incurably and in every point hostile to human happiness: That their sway can only be matured and perfected by the entire abasement and dismantling of the human faculties; and that therefore all their energies must be devoted to the accomplishment of this destructive work, by the best means which opportunity presents.

1. They have the strongest interest in the depravation of the human intellect. For the demand for their services as agents for the temporal aid of the Deity, altogether depends upon human ignorance and incapacity, and is exactly proportional to it. Why does a man apply for the divine assistance? Because he does not know how to accomplish his ends without it, or how to procure the requisite ap-paratus for the purpose. If he knew any physical means of attaining it, he would unquestionably prefer them. Every extension therefore of physical methods in the gratification of our wishes, displaces and throws out of employment by so much the labour of the aerial functionaries. No one prays for the removal of a disease by supernatural aid, when he once knows an
appropriate surgical remedy. He therefore who lives by the commission which he charges on the disposal of the former, has a manifest interest in checking the advance and introduction of the latter.

Besides, the accumulation of experimental knowledge excludes the supernatural man from another of his most lucrative employments—that of predicting future events. Those who are the most ignorant of physical connections, and therefore the least qualified to form a judgment as to any particular result, are of course the most frequent in their applications for extra-physical guidance, and the most likely to follow it. This is their sole mode of procuring the most indispensable of all acquisitions. Upon them too it is the most easy to palm a vague and oracular response or decree as to the future, capable of applying to almost any result; and they are the most easily imposed upon by shifts and pretences which veil the incapacity of the respondent. When mankind advance a little in knowledge, and become inquisitive, the task of the soothsayer becomes more and more difficult; whereas ignorance and credulity are duped without any great pains. The supernatural agent therefore has a deadly interest against the advance of knowledge, not only as it introduces a better machinery for obtaining acquaintance with the future, and thereby throws him out of employment as a prophet—but also as it enables mankind to detect the hollow, fictitious, and illusory nature of his own predicting establishment.

2. As he is interested in impeding the progress of knowledge, so he is not the less interested in propagating and cherishing extra-experimental belief. Ignorance is his negative ally, cutting off mankind from any other means of satisfying their wants except those which he alone can furnish: Extra-experimental belief is the substratum on which all his influence is built. It is this which furnishes to mankind all their evidence of the being, a power and agency of his invisible principal, and also of the posthumous scenes in preparation for us, where these are to be exhibited on a superior and perfect scale. It is this too which supplies mankind with the credentials of his own missions, and makes them impute to him at once, and without cavilling, all that long stretch of aerial dignity and prerogative, the actual proof of which it would have been difficult for him to have gone through. Both the hopes and fears, therefore, which call for his interference, and the selection of him as the person to remove them, rest upon the maintenance of extra-experimental persuasion in the human breast. Were belief closely and inseparably knit with experience, he would never obtain credit for the power of doing anything else than what mankind really saw him do. His interest accordingly prompts him to disjoin the two—to disjoin them on every occasion in his power, if he would ensure their disjunction for his own particular case.

Any one therefore whose power and credit with mankind, rests upon the imputation of supernatural ambassadorship, must be impelled by the most irresistible motives to disunite belief from experience in the bosoms of mankind, as much as he possibly can.

3. Take the same person again, in his capacity of licensed interpreter of the divine will and decrees. What edicts will he be likely to promulgate, as emanating from this consecrated source?

The only circumstance which makes the power of the law-interpreter inferior to that of the legislator, is the accessibility of the text which he professes to explain. Where this is open to the whole public as well as to him, his explanation may be controverted, and recourse will then be had to the production of the original. But if either there exist no original at all, or the interpreter possesses the exclusive custody of it, his power is completely equivalent to that of a legislator.

Now in one of these two alternatives stand the divine decrees. Either there never were any original decrees at all—or if there were, they have been deposited in a spot unknown to any one except the authorized interpreters. And therefore the latter become in fact legislators, issuing whatever edicts they choose in the name and on the behalf of their invisible master—and enforcing them ad libitum by any imaginable measure of punishment or reward, drawn from his inexhaustible magazines.

Now what principle will govern the enactments of an interpreter, or licensed class of interpreters, when thus exercising an unfettered power of legislation? The general principles of human nature suffer us not to hesitate a moment in answering this question. It will be a regard to their own separate interest. Like all other monopolists who possess the exclusive privilege of rendering any particular service, like all other possessors of power independent of, and irresponsible to, the community—they will pursue the natural path of self-preference, and will apply their functions to purposes of aggrandizement and exaction.

Now this separate interest is irreconcileably at variance with that of society. If any man, or any separate class, are permitted to legislate for their own benefit, they are in effect despots; while the rest of the community are degraded to the level of slaves, and will be treated as such by the legislative system so constructed. Conformably to this system the precepts delivered by the supernatural delegate as enacted by his invisible master, will be such as to subjugate the minds of the community, in the highest practicable degree, to himself and to his brethren, and to appropriate for the benefit of the class as much wealth and power as circumstances will permit. This is a mere statement of the dictates of self-preference.

4. To effect this purpose, he will find it essentially necessary to describe the Deity as capricious, irritable, and vindictive, to the highest extent—as regarding with gloom and jealousy the enjoyments of the human
worn, and taking delight in his privations or sufferings—pliable indeed without measure, and yielding up
instantaneously all his previous sentiments, when technically and professionally solicited—but requiring the
perpetual application of emollients to soothe his wrathful propensities. The more implicitly mankind believe in
these appalling attributes, the more essential is he who can stand in the gap and avert the threatened
pestilence—the more necessary is it to insure his activity by seeing and ennobling him. On whatever occasions
he can, in the capacity of interpreter to the divine will, persuade them that they are exposed to supernatural
wrath—in all such junctures, he will obtain a fee, as mediator or intercessor, for procuring a reprieve.

The more therefore he can multiply the number of offences against God, the greater does his profit
become—because on every such act of guilt, the sinner will find it answer to forestall the execution of the
sentence by effecting an amicable compromise with the vicegerent of the Almighty. For rendering so important
a service, the latter may make his own terms.

But in order to multiply offences, the most efficacious method is to prohibit those acts which there is the
most frequent and powerful temptation to commit. Now the temptation to perform any act is of course
proportional to the magnitude of the pleasurable, and the smallness of the painful, consequences by which it is
attended. Those deeds, therefore, which are the most delightful, and the most innoxious, will meet with the
severest prohibitions in the religious code, and be represented as the most deeply offensive to the divine
majesty. Because such deeds will be most frequently repeated and will accordingly create the amallest demand
for the expiatory formula.

Such therefore will be the code constructed by the supernatural delegate in the name of his unearthly
sovereign—including the most rigorous denunciations against human pleasure, and interdicting it the more
severely in proportion as it is delicious and harmless. He will enjoin the most gratuitous and unrequited
privations, and self-imposed sufferings, as the sole method of conciliating the divine mercy,—inasmuch as the
neglect of these mandates must be the most common, and all such remissness will incur a penalty which the
transgressor must be compelled to redeem.

5. All the purchase which the interpreter of the divine will has upon the human mind, depends upon the
extent of its superhuman apprehensions. It is therefore his decided interest that the dread of these unseen
visitations should haunt the bosoms of mankind, like a heavy and perpetual incubus, day and night—that they
should live under a constant sense of the suspended arm of God—and thus in a state of such conscious
insecurity and helplessness, that all possibility of earthly comfort should be altogether blighted and cast out.
The more firmly these undefined terrors can be planted in a man's associations, the more urgent is his need of a
mediator with the aerial kingdom to which his apprehensions refer, and the more enormous the sacrifices which
he will make in order to purchase such intercession.

6. Again, it will be the decided interest of the inspired legislator, to clothe all his enactments in the most
imposing epithets of moral approbation—to describe the Being, by whom he is commissioned, in terms which
imply the holiest and most beneficent character, though the proceedings and the system which he attributes to
him indicate the very opposite temper—and to make mankind believe that every act of this Being is, and must
be, just. By thus perverting their moral sentiments, he tightens and perpetuates the pressure of superhuman
apprehensions. There will be less tendency to murmur and revolt at these threats, when men are persuaded that
they have justly incurred the anger of an all-beneficent Being.

By this analysis, I think, it appears most demonstratively, that all those whose influence rests on an imputed
connection with the Divine Being, cannot fail to be animated by an interest incurably opposed to all human
happiness: that the inevitable aim of such persons must be to extend and render irremediable those evils which
natural religion would originate without them, viz., ignorance, extra-experimental belief, appalling conceptions
of the Deity, intense dread of his visitations, and a perversion of the terms of praise and censure in his behalf.
To this identity of result I have traced them both, although by different and perfectly unconnected roads.

Natural religion is thus provided with an array of human force and fraud for the purpose of enforcing her
mandates, and realizing her mischievous tendencies. A standing army of ministers is organized in her cause,
formed either of men who are themselves believed to be specially gifted from the sky, or of others who pretend
not to any immediate inspiration in their own persons, but merely act as the sub-delegates of some
heaven-commissioned envoy of aforetime. The interest of both these sorts of persons is precisely identical, nor
is it of the smallest importance whether the patent is worked by the original pretender, or by any one else into
whose hands it may have subsequently fallen. In either case its fruits are equally deleterious.

In either case, the same conspirators league themselves for the same purposes—that of promulgating and
explaining the will of their incomprehensible master, and subjugating to his thraldom the knowledge and the
hopes of mankind. And the accession of strength, which religion derives from this special confederation in her
favour, is incalculable. They supply many defects, in her means of conquest and influence, which must
otherwise have rendered her dominion comparatively narrow.

First, one grand deficiency in unofficered religion, is the absence of any directive rule. Mankind, from their
conceptions of the character of the Deity, will doubtless conjecture what sort of conduct will be agreeable to him, and will also fix upon some particular actions belonging to that course as more agreeable than others. But this unguided and promiscuous selection is not likely to be either uniform, earnest, or circumstantial.

When a body of authorized agents is framed, through whom the designs and temper of the Deity can be learnt, this defect is completely supplied. The ceremonial pleasing to him is then officially declared: the acts offensive to him are enumerated and defined, and their greater or less enormity graduated. Doubt and controversy are precluded, or at least exceedingly narrowed, by an appeal to the recognized organ of infallibility. And thus the superhuman terrors are concentrated and particularized, whereby they are brought to act in the most cogent and effective manner which the nature of the case admits.

2. In analyzing the efficiency of the religious sanctions, we have already seen that their remoteness and uncertainty will not allow of their producing a steady, equable and unvarying impression upon the mind—although at peculiar moments these apprehensions become supreme and overwhelming, even to insanity. For motives thus subject to fluctuation, the constant presence of a standing brotherhood is peculiarly requisite, in order to watch those periods when the mind is most vulnerable to their influence—to multiply and perpetuate, if possible, these temporary liabilities, and to secure the production of some permanent result during the continuance of the fit. The ministers of natural religion, by bringing their most efficient batteries to bear upon the mind at these intervals, frequently succeed in extending the duration of the supernatural fears, and subjugating the whole man for life.

Sickness—mental affliction—approaching death—childhood—all these are periods when the intellect is depressed and feeble, and when the associations are peculiarly liable to the inroads of every species of fear—they are the times therefore when the officer of the invisible world exercises the most uncontrolled despotism over the soul, and bends it whither he will. Were it not for his dexterity in contriving to render the bias permanent, the sick or the despondent would probably relapse, in no long period, into their habitual state, of comparative insensibility to supernatural terrors.

With regard to the dying man, indeed, no ulterior views can be entertained; but the immediate effect of the presence and ascendency of a religious minister, on the occasion, is most important. Without his aid, posthumous apprehensions would indeed embitter the hour of death, but this would be productive of no subsequent evil. The minister not only aggravates these terrors to an infinitely higher pitch, but offers to the distracted patient a definite and easy mode by which he may in part alleviate them, and lessen the impending risk. He must make some atonement or satisfaction to God, in return for the offensive acts with which his life has abounded, by transferring a part or the whole of that property which he is at all events about to leave behind. But as he cannot have access in person to the offended principal, this property must be handed over in trust to his accredited agent or minister, for the inaccessible party. By such testamentary donation the sins of the past are in part redeemed.

The religious fears attending upon the hour of death are thus converted into powerful engines for enriching the sacerdotal class, who contrive to extract this lasting profit from an affection of mind which would otherwise have caused nothing beyond momentary pain. The act of mortmain attests the height to which these death-bed commutations have actually been carried: nor is it extravagant to assert, that had there been no change of the public sentiment and no interposition of the legislature, nearly all the land of England would have become the property of the Church.

3. It should by no means be forgotten, that the inefficiency, and the alternation from general indifference to occasional fever, which I have shown to belong to the religious sanction, constitute the leading source of importance and emolument to the priesthood. Suppose mankind to be perfectly acquainted with all the modifications of the Divine temper, and strictly observant of his commands, the functions of this class would of course become extinct. There would be no necessity for their services either as interpreters, mediators, or intercessors.

It is their decisive interest to multiply offences, as preparations for the lucrative season of repentance, during which their sway is at its zenith, and their most advantageous contracts realized. For each crime a pardon must be obtained through the intercession and agency of the authorized mediator. He must therefore be propitiated by payment both in money and honour, and the profits of the sacerdotal body bear an accurate ratio to the number of offences committed, and of pardons implored.

Thus the nature of the religious sanction, though very ill adapted for the purpose of actually terminating the practices it forbids, is yet calculated in the most precise manner to exalt and enrich the officers busied in enforcing it. This is the end, at which, supposing them like other men, they will be constantly aiming, and they have enjoyed facilities in the attainment of it rarely possessed by mere inter-mediate agents.

For, first, they have found posthumous terror, from its instability and occasional fierceness, an exquisite preparative of the mind for their dominion. And, secondly, they have united two functions which have placed this feeling entirely under their direction—they are, ex-officio, both framers of the divine law and vendors of
the divine pardons for infringements of it. They have named the acts which required forgiveness as well as the price at which forgiveness should be purchased. Suppose only the periodical spring-tides of superhuman fear to reach a certain height, and this machinery for subjugation becomes perfect and irresistible.

If in earthly matters, these two functions were united—if the same person were to become framer of the law, and agent for the sale of licences to elude it—it is manifest, that he would make terrestrial laws inconceivably burdensome and exactive, so that there should be no possibility of observing them. The interest of the sacerdotal class has been completely similar, leading them to require, in the name of the Deity, obedience where obedience is impracticable, and then making men pay for the deficiency. Accordingly they inform us that he is a Being of such an exquisite and irritable temperament—so nicely susceptible, and so vehemently impatient of everything which is not exactly like himself, that we cannot escape his displeasure, except by undergoing a thorough repair and regeneration upon the celestial model. If but the most transient wish for anything unlike to God, or unholy, shoots across the mind, it constitutes criminality and is deeply abhorrent to the divine perfection. To such a state of entire conformity no human being ever yet attained—and thus, by the invention of an impracticable code, mankind are placed in a constant necessity of discharging expiatory fees, and purchasing licences of evasion.

In this respect, the sacerdotal interest is directly at variance, not only with that of the human race, but also with that of the divine Being. He sincerely desires, without doubt, that his edicts should be strictly obeyed, and, therefore, would be willing to facilitate their execution, so far as is consistent with his own sensitive and exquisite purity. But the middlemen who pretend to serve him have unfortunately an interest in their non-performance, and therefore throw every possible obstacle in the way of obedience.

4. In a former part of this work, I endeavoured to show, that the real actuating force which gave birth to religious deeds, though so masked as not to be discernible on a superficial view was public opinion. There cannot be a more effectual spur to this popular sentiment than the formation of a body whose peculiar interest lies in watching its various turns, in kindling it anew, and dexterously diversifying its applications. For this task they possess numerous advantages. The necessity of recurring to their services on many occasions ensures to them a large measure of respect, as well as of wealth, and this re-acts upon the function which they exercise. They labour sedulously to inculcate the deepest reverence in speaking of religious matters, as well as extreme backwardness and timidity of soul in subjecting them to the examination of reason. They diffuse widely among the community those pious misap- plications of moral epithets, which are inseparably annexed to the natural belief in an omnipotent Being, availing themselves of this confusion of language to stigmatize as iniquitous everything which counteracts their own views, and to extol as virtuous that which favours them.

By thus whipping up and propagating the religious antipathies of mankind, they generally succeed in organizing that tone of public opinion which is most conducive to their interest: that is, a sentiment which rigorously enforces a certain measure of religious observance—while it also recognizes in words, as incumbent and necessary duties of piety, a number of other acts which no one ever performs, and which mankind will allow you to leave undone, provided you do not question the propriety of doing them. A variance is thus introduced between the religious feelings and the reigning practice, and whenever any accident preternaturally kindles the former, such a laxity of conduct will of course appear pregnant with guilt. Hence that ebb and flow of mind, and those periodical spasms of repentant alarm, which can only be charmed away by purchasing comfort at the hands of the spiritual exorcist. And thus the constitution of the public sentiment becomes a preparation and medium for the effectual dominion of this class.

5. The fundamental principle, upon which all the superhuman machinery rests its hold, has been shown to consist in extra-experimental belief. Now in diffusing and strengthening this species of persuasion, the sacerdotal body form most essential auxiliaries. They are the legitimate and acknowledged interpreters of all incomprehensible events, and any inference which they extract from thence is universally adopted. This bestows upon them an unlimited licence of coining and circulating as much extra-experimental matter as they choose, and of distorting the physical links among phenomena by smuggling in an appeal to the divine intentions. By their constant and well-paid activity, also, every casual coincidence is magnified into a prodigy—every prediction accidentally verified, into a proof of their free-right of admission behind the unexpanded scenes of futurity. Besides they are continually at hand to spread abroad those myriads of fictions, which the extra-experimental belief has been shown to engender. Menda- city itself becomes consecrated, when employed in behalf of religion; and the infinity of pious frauds, which may be cited from the pages of history, sufficiently attest the zeal and effect with which the sacerdotal class has laboured in the diffusion of this unreal currency.

From this successive accumulation of particular instances, a large aggregate of extra-experimental matter is at last amassed, which lays claim to the title and honours of a separate science. The stories upon which it is founded are so thickly and authoritatively spread abroad—apparently so unconnected one with the other, and relying upon numerous separate attestations, that it seems impossible to discredit the whole, and difficult to
know where to draw the line. To fulfill so nice a task, writers arise who compare the different stories together, arrange them into a systematic order, extract meanings and inferences from these collations, and reject those particulars which cannot be reconciled with the theories thus elicited. This extra-experimental belief, when sufficiently augmented in volume, becomes possessed of a distinct station among the sciences, and reflects upon its practitioners and professors all that credit which is annexed to superiority in any other department. Realities become divided into two separate classes: First, the world of experience, embracing all which we see, feel, hear, taste, or smell, and the various connections among them. Secondly, the world of which we have no experience, consisting of what are called immaterial entities, or of those things which we neither see, nor feel, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell; but which, nevertheless, we are supposed to know without any experience at all. The latter science is always the colleague and correlative of the former—frequently, indeed, it is more highly esteemed and more assiduously cultivated.

I have endeavoured to trace some of those modes, in which the brotherhood hired and equipped by natural religion have contrived to promote, in so high a degree, the success of the cause inscribed on their banners—and in so much higher a degree, to aggrandize and enrich themselves. My sketch, indeed, has been exceedingly superficial and incomplete; because the facilities which such a standing corps possesses for compassing its ends, are both innumerable and indescribable. We ought not, however, to forget, that a wealthy and powerful body of this kind not only acts with its own force, but also with that of all who have anything to hope, or to fear, from it. To become a member of the body constitutes a valuable object of ambition, and all, who have any chance of attaining such a post, will of course conspire vehemently in its support. Besides, there arises a long train of connections and dependants, who diffuse themselves everywhere through the community, and contribute most materially to spread and enhance the influence of the class.

In addition to these, however, they have yet another ally, more powerful and efficient than all the rest,—the earthly chief, or governing power of the state. He, as well as they, has an interest incurably at variance with that of the community, and all sinister interests have a natural tendency to combine together and to co-operate, inasmuch as the object of each is thereby most completely and most easily secured. But between the particular interest of a governing aristocracy and a sacerdotal class, there seems a very peculiar affinity and coincidence—each wielding the precise engine which the other wants.

The aristocracy, for instance, possess the disposal of a mass of physical force sufficient to crush any partial resistance, and demand only to be secured against any very general or simultaneous opposition on the part of the community. To make this sure, they are obliged to maintain a strong purchase upon the public mind, and to chain it down to the level of submission—to plant within it feelings which may neutralize all hatred of slavery, and facilitate the business of spoliation. For this purpose the sacerdotal class is most precisely and most happily cut out. By their influence over the moral sentiments, they place implicit submission among the first of all human duties. They infuse the deepest reverence for temporal power, by considering the existing authorities as established and consecrated by the immaterial Autocrat above, and as identified with his divine majesty. The duty of mankind towards the earthly government becomes thus the same as duty to God—that is, an unvarying "prostration both of the understanding and will." Besides this direct debasement of the moral faculties for the purpose of assuring non-resistance, the supernatural terrors, and the extra-experimental belief, which the priesthood are so industrious in diffusing, all tend to the very same result. They produce that mistrust, alarm, and insecurity, which disposes a man to bless himself in any little fragment of present enjoyment, while it stifles all aspirations for future improvement and even all ideas of its practicability.

Such is the tacit and surreptitious, though incessant and effectual, operation on the public sentiment, by which the priesthood keep down all disposition on the part of mankind to oppose the inroads of their governors. Their influence is perhaps greater when they preach thus on behalf of the government, than on their own. Because in the former case, the interest which they have in the doctrine is not so obvious, and they appear like impartial counsellors, inculcating a behaviour of which they themselves are first to set the example.

The earthly ruler, on the other hand, amply repays the co-operation which he has thus derived. The mental (or psychological) machinery of the priesthood is very excellent; but they are unhappily deficient in physical force. Hence the protection of the earthly potentate is of most essential utility to a class so defectively provided in this main point. The coercion which he supplies is all sanctified by the holy name of religion, in defence of which it is resorted to; and he is extolled, while thus engaged, as the disinterested servant of the invisible Being. He is therefore permitted to employ, in behalf of religion, an extent and disposition of force which would have
provoked indignation and revolt, on any other account.

The utmost extent of physical force, which circumstances will permit, is in this manner put forward, to
smother any symptom of impiety, or even of dissent from the sacerdotal dogmas. Irreligion and heresy become
crimes of the deepest dye, and the class are thus secured, in their task of working on the public mind, from all
competition or contest. Under the protection of such powerful artillery, this corps of sappers and miners carries
on a tranquil, but effectual, progress in the trenches.

Nor is it merely a negative aid which the earthly governor extends to them. He extorts from the people, in
their favour, a large compulsory tribute, in order to maintain them in affluence and in worldly credit; thus
securing to them an additional purchase upon the public sentiment, and confirming his own safety from
resistance. Under no other pretence could he induce the people to pay taxes, specially for the purpose of
quartering throughout the country a standing army of advocates to check and counteract all opinions
unfavourable to himself. They may be brought to this sacrifice in behalf of a sacerdotal class, whose interest, by
the forced provision thus obtained, becomes still more closely identified with that of the earthly ruler.

One of the most noxious properties therefore, in the profession of men to which natural religion gives birth,
is its coincidence and league with the sinister interests of earth—a coincidence so entire, as to secure unity of
design on the part of both, without any necessity for special confederation, and therefore more mischievously
efficient than it would have proved had the deed of partnership been open and proclaimed. Prostration and
plunder of the community is indeed the common end of both. The only point upon which there can be any
dissension, is about the partition of the spoil—and quarrels of this nature have occasionally taken place, in
cases where the passive state of the people has obviated all apprehension of resistance. In general, however, the
necessity of strict amity has been too visible to admit of much discord, and the division of the spoil has been
carried on tranquilly, though in different ratios, according to the tone of the public mind.

The End.

"Is it Reasonable to Worship God?"
Verbatim Report of two Nights' Debate at Nottingham Between the Rev. R. A. Armstrong and Charles
Bradlaugh.

Printed by Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh, London 28, Stonecutter Street.

Preface.

I HAVE been invited to prefix a few sentences to this debate in its published form, and I am glad to avail
myself of the opportunity so courteously accorded.

Many have criticised my conduct in consenting to meet in public debate one whose teachings, both
theological (or anti-theological) and social, they and I alike regard as in many respects of pernicious tendency.
My reply is, that those teachings are influencing large numbers of men and women; that to denounce them, is
simply to intensify their influence in some quarters; and that they must be met face to face if their force is to be
diminished. I regard oral public discussion as one of the least efficient methods for the discovery of truth; but I
cannot blind myself to the fact that it is almost the only method by which what I hold to be true, can get the ear
and the attention of some classes of the community; and I perceive that if a man can trust his temper and is also
interested in his cause and not in himself, he may in this way do some good which he can do in no other. If it be
given him to touch one heart or enlighten one soul, it is a cheap price to pay, that a laugh may go against him,
or even that some good and sincere persons may think he has acted wrongly.

The debate itself can only touch the edge of subjects so stupendous as Theism and Worship. But some may
be led by it to thought or to study, on which they would not otherwise have entered.

I select three points in this debate for a further word or two:

(1.) I said Mr. Bradlaugh could not "conceive a better world." The expression is ambiguous. He and I both
conceive and strive to promote a better state of things than that now existing. But we can conceive no better
constitution for a world than that of a world so constituted as to evoke the effort of mankind to advance its
progress and improvement. The evil is not in itself good; it is only the necessary condition of good. The
moment you conceive a world existing from first to last without evil, you conceive a world destitute of the
necessary conditions for the evolution of noble character; and so, in eliminating the evil, you eliminate a good
which a thousand times outweighs the evil.

(2.) "Either," argues Mr. Bradlaugh, in effect, "God could make a world without suffering, or he could not.
If he could and did not, he is not all-good. If he could not, he is not all-powerful." The reply is, What do you
mean by all-powerful? If you mean having power to reconcile things in themselves contradictory, we do not
hold that God is all-powerful. But a humanity, from the first enjoying immunity from suffering, and yet
possessed of nobility of character, is a self-contradictory conception.

(3.) I have ventured upon alleging an Intelligent Cause of the phenomena of the universe, in spite of the fact that in several of his writings Mr. Bradlaugh has described intelligence as implying limitations. But though intelligence, as known to us in man, is always hedged within limits, there is no difficulty in conceiving each and every limit as removed. In that case the essential conception of intelligence remains the same precisely, although the change of conditions revolutionises its mode of working.

The metaphysical argument for Theism, though I hold it in the last resort to be unanswerable, can never be the real basis of personal religion. That must rest on the facts of consciousness verified by the results in character flowing from the candid recognition of those facts. It is useless, as well as unscientific, for the Atheist either to deny or to ignore those facts. The hopeless task that lies before him, ere Theism can be overturned, is to prove that experiences which to many a Theist are more real and more unquestionable than the deliverances of sight, of hearing, or of touch, are mere phantasies of the brain.

I addressed the following letter to the Editor of the National Reformer after the debate.

To the Editor of the "National Reformer."

SIR,—Some of those who heard or may read the recent discussion between Mr. Bradlaugh and myself may be willing to pursue the positive argument for Theism and Worship which I adopted—as distinguished from and supplementary to the ordinary metaphysical argument—at greater length than the limits of time permitted me to expound it in the debate. Will you allow me to recommend to such persons three works which will specially serve their purpose? These are—Theodore Parker's "Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion" (eighteen-pence, British and Foreign Unitarian Association, 37, Norfolk Street, Strand); F. W. Newman's "Hebrew Theism" (half-a-crown, Trübner); and the Rev. Charles Voysey's "Mystery of Pain, Death, and Sin" (Williams & Norgate, 1878). I would gladly add to these Professor Blackie's "Natural History of Atheism"—a book of much intellectual force—were it not that he indulges too often in a strain of superior contempt with which I have no sympathy.—I am, &c.,

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG.

NOTTINGHAM,

Sept. 9th, 1878.

I only now further desire to refer the reader to Mr. Brown-low Maitland's "Theism or Agnosticism" (eighteen-pence, Christian Knowledge Society, 1878).

Tennyson shall utter for me my last plea with the doubter to throw himself upon the bosom of God in prayer:—

"Speak to him, thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet,—

Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

R. A. ARMSTRONG.

NOTTINGHAM,

Sept. 23rd, 1878.

"Is it Reasonable to Worship God?"

The first of two nights' debate in the Co-operative Hall, Nottingham, between the Rev. R. A. Armstrong and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh; G. B. Rothera, Esq., in the chair.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have had the pleasure, during the last few weeks, of spending a very pleasant holiday on the heather-covered mountains of Scotland. On reaching Edinburgh on my way homeward, I received a letter from my friend, Mr. Armstrong, informing me of the arrangements for to-night's debate, and of the wish that was felt that I should preside. Though a private communication, yet as it contains the grounds upon which the request was made, and in part also those upon which I was induced to comply, I shall be glad if Mr. Armstrong will kindly give me permission to read that letter to you. It is as follows:—
"My Dear Sir,—I have obtained your address from your son, and you must blame him for enabling me to molest you with my importunities in the midst of your holiday.

"Circumstances have led to my receiving an invitation from the local branch of the National Secular Society, and from Mr. Bradlaugh, to debate with the latter on the reasonableness of religious worship. At first strongly disposed to decline, I have been led, together with the friends whom I have consulted, to believe that it was my duty to accept the task, and, however distasteful, I am now in for it.

"It is to take place at the Co-operative Hall, on two consecutive nights, Thursday and Friday, September 5 and 6, and we are most anxious to secure the services—which I hope will be chiefly formal—of a competent chairman who will possess the respect of both parties. My own friends and the Secularists independently suggested your name, and we all feel that we should be deeply indebted to you if you would preside over us on the two nights. My earnest desire is to throw such a tone into the meetings as shall make them really helpful to genuine truth-seekers, and I have good ground for believing that many such will be present.

"I sincerely hope you will do us all this favour. I do not know where else to turn for a chairman that will be so acceptable to all concerned. Your speedy and favourable reply will be very welcome to yours truly,

R. A. Armstrong.

"Burns Street, Nottingham,

"G. B. Rothera, Esq."

Aug. 24, 1878.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, on receiving that letter my first impulse was, I think naturally, to decline, and that for two reasons—first, I find that as one gets on in life there is a stronger and stronger disposition to avoid the excitement of public meetings, to seek more and more the ease of one's own arm-chair, and to enjoy that best of all society, our books (hear). Beyond this I had real misgivings as to my ability to fill, as I ought, the duties sought to be put upon me. Nevertheless, on slight reflection, these difficulties vanished. I felt that there were occasions, of which this, probably, was one, when it becomes us to lay aside considerations of personal ease and convenience in the hope to meet the wishes of, and to be useful to, one's neighbours and friends. Now, in occupying this position I must not be considered to identify myself with either the one party or the other (hear). I may agree with either, or with neither. I am here, as I believe you are here, interested in a question of the gravest concern to all of us, as an earnest inquirer, anxious to learn and not afraid to hear (applause). My position, I take it, is very much akin to that of the Speaker of the House of Commons. I have simply to regulate the order of debate, and to ask at your hands—what I am sure I shall receive—such orderly and consistent behaviour as will become an assembly of English gentlemen. Now, in those who have charged themselves with the responsibility of this debate we have men of acknowledged ability and high culture (applause)—men who, I am sure will know well how to reconcile the duties of courtesy with the earnestness of debate. In addressing themselves to the present question, it must, I think, be clearly understood that the question, as it appears upon the paper, is not to be narrowed to a simple inquiry whether it is reasonable that we should worship God. A much wider issue must be covered by the debate, if it is to satisfy the expectations, of this audience. The question is one, I take it, between Theism and Atheism. It is not enough to postulate a Deity, and then ask whether it is reasonable or not to worship him. What I think we have a right to ask is, that the gentleman charged with the affirmative of the proposition shall adduce such evidence as will establish satisfactorily the conclusion that there is a Deity to worship. The position of the Atheist, I take it, is not one of disbelief, but of simple unbelief. He does not say that God is not, but he affirms the lack of evidence for the position that God is (hear). He does not even say that there may not be a God. What he does say is that if there is a God he has failed to manifest himself, either by the utterance of his voice, in audible revelation, or by the impression of his hand upon visible nature. I take it, therefore, and think Mr. Armstrong will be prepared to accept the position, that it will be incumbent upon him, at the outset of the discussion, to address himself to a consideration of the proofs in favour of the position that there is a God to worship. If he succeed in this, then, I think, there will be a very difficult and trying ordeal before Mr. Bradlaugh to prove that, God, being existent, is not entitled to the reasonable worship of his creatures (applause). Pardon me these remarks by way of introduction. Before calling on Mr. Armstrong to open the debate, I may just say that, by arrangement between them, Mr. Armstrong, upon whom the affirmative rests, is to be allowed half-an-hour to open the discussion; Mr. Bradlaugh half-an-hour in reply: that then the next hour will be divided into quarters, each speaker having a quarter of an hour alternately (applause). The result of this arrangement will be that Mr. Armstrong will open the debate to-night, which will be closed by Mr. Bradlaugh, while to-morrow night Mr. Bradlaugh will open the debate and Mr. Armstrong will close it. This, I think, you will regard as a satisfactory arrangement, and a liberal one, inasmuch as Mr.
Bradlaugh concedes to Mr. Armstrong the advantage of the last word (applause).

MR. ARMSTRONG, who was cordially received, said: Mr. Chairman and friends—I wish to say two or three words at the outset of this debate as to its origin. You are many of you aware that a short time ago Mr. Bradlaugh visited this town, and gave a lecture in defence of Atheism, from this platform, in answer to Professor Max Müller's Hibbert lectures. I was led to be present then, and I offered some remarks at the close. Mr. Bradlaugh rejoined, and in the course of his rejoinder threw out, in a courteous manner, a challenge for me to meet him and discuss these weighty matters at further length. I thought no more of it then, not conceiving it to be my duty to take up that challenge. A few days afterwards, however, I received a letter from the Secretary of the Nottingham branch of the National Secular Society stating that many persons had been much interested in the words that fell from me, and that they would consider it an obligation conferred upon them, and others earnestly in pursuit of truth, if I consented to meet Mr. Bradlaugh in this manner. I replied, that for my own part, I was but little sanguine of any good effects, or a balance of good effects, resulting from such a meeting; but that the invitation being couched in such courteous and earnest terms, I would consult with friends on whose judgment I placed reliance, before finally replying. I consulted these friends, and at the same time thought the matter over further; and I came to the conclusion that, though it has undoubtedly happened that on too many occasions theological debates have been the root of bitterness and strife, yet, nevertheless, two men really in earnest about what they have to say, and speaking to persons also in earnest, who have come neither for amusement nor excitement—I came to the conclusion that a debate, conducted with tact and temper on both sides, might (may I say by the blessing of God?) conduce rather to good than to evil (applause). Under these circumstances, I accepted the challenge. I did so, though, as I said in my letter to the chairman, it is distasteful to me, because if I make anything of this occasion it can only be by exhibiting to you my inmost heart. We are not going to talk in a superficial manner—we are not going to bandy compliments, nor, I hope, exchange rebukes; but, each of us is going to search his inner consciousness, and try to express to the audience that which he finds therein. It is, perhaps, more distasteful to me on this occasion than to Mr. Bradlaugh, since I find, or believe myself to find, in my inner consciousness certain facts which Mr. Bradlaugh will no doubt tell you he does not find in his inner consciousness. These facts are to me of the most solemn and sacred nature conceivable, and to expose them before a large and public audience is a thing very like a sort of martyrdom. If I were not confident that, however little you may sympathise with what I say, you will treat it with respect or consideration, I woul never consent to drag the sacred thoughts of my soul before you to hold them up as an exhibition (hear). I am to maintain to-night—not to demonstrate (as you will see if you look at the bills)—the proposition that it is reasonable to worship God. Mr. Bradlaugh has not necessarily to disprove, but to impugn, that proposition. Now, all I have any hope of doing to-night is this—to show that it is reasonable for me and for others conscious of mental phenomena in themselves more or less akin to those of which I am conscious, to worship God. Would that I could touch you with the beauty and the sweetness of this belief—would that I could hold up before you, in all its glory and sublimity, in all its strength and holiness, the beauty and the sweetness of the worship of God. Gould I succeed in doing so, I should take your imaginations captive. I think I should get the suffrage of your reason. It is as though, sir, to-night, I had been called upon to prove that my dearest friend is worthy to be loved—ay, even that my dearest friend exists; for, if God is aught to us, he is our dearest, nearest friend—present when all others are taken from us, a sure refuge in every moment of temptation and of woe; the very highest and most intimate reality of which the mind can conceive—the sum and substance of all existence. Well, now, how do I know this God? Who is this God of whom I speak? Let me try to tell you how it seems to me that I have made acquaintance with him. I find that at certain moments of my life there is that which I can best describe as a voice—though it is a metaphor—addressed to me, influencing largely my conduct. I find that there are in me, as in all men, strong instincts, strong desires, strong self-interests—some lower, some higher, some less worthy, some more worthy, than others. I find that but for this voice of which I speak I should be entirely swayed thereby, as, so far as I can see, the brutes of the field and the forest are swayed thereby. But I find that sometimes, at moments when these instincts are the very strongest within me, and when I am about to throw myself into their realisation and give them expression in fact—I find, sometimes, at these moments that there comes to me somewhat which, so far as my consciousness delivers, is not myself. There comes to me somewhat stopping me from indulging these instincts and bidding me to curb them. I find at other times that my instincts of self-preservation, of self-regard, of pleasure-loving, and so forth—my appetites—would lead me to hold back from a certain course of action. So far as I can judge, looking into my own mind, myself is against that course of action. It appears to my reasoning powers and inclinations that I had better keep out of it. But there comes now somewhat which comes from outside, and which is no part of myself, which says, "Go and do it." That was so when I received the invitation to this debate. Again, I find that on certain occasions—alas! that I should have to say it—I have defied this monitor, I have done that which it told me not to do, or not done that which it bade me to do. I find then that there enter into me from somewhere—I know not from whence—pangs of remorse keener than ever came from any personal sorrow, more biting than
ever came from any physical pain. There have been times, however—let me thank God I can say so!—when I have obeyed this voice, followed its dictates in spite of all myself seeming to drag me from it; and my experience is that on these occasions there has entered my soul, from whence I cannot tell you, a peace surpassing that given us in any other circumstances—a peace in the light of which the sorrows that at other times might cut me to the heart seem light and small, a peace in the beauty and holiness of which these sorrows seem wonderfully diminished. I will tell you what I call the source of that voice which I fancy speaks to me in that fourfold manner. I call the source of that voice "God," and that is the first thing I mean by God. I call the source of all these monitions and admonitions, these exhortations and rebukes, this voice of reproval and of approval, the voice of God; because I must give it some name, and that seems to me the simplest and the truest name I can give it. I might, perhaps, be inclined to doubt whether all this was not fancy (though I hardly think I should) if, so far as I could gather, it were an unique experience of my own; but I find that it is not so. I find that this voice is recognised by every true man and woman I meet. They may obey it or not, but they recognise it, and allow that it is there. I behold the picture by Millais of the day before the awful massacre of St. Bartholomew. I see the maiden leaning on her lover's bosom whilst he looks down upon her with looks of love and tenderness, and she strives to tie around his arm a scarf. She knows of the impending massacre, that all Protestants are to be slaughtered, and she would fain put this badge upon his arm as a secret signal to preserve him from the sword. Does he accept this method of escape? Although his inclination is to remain with his beloved, the strength of his right hand is given to tear the badge from his arm, and he faces death, not with joy, but with an exceeding bitter sorrow for the moment—he faces death in simple loyalty and obedience to the voice which has spoken to his heart. That is an experience which you will all recognise—one which, in less or in greater force, we have all had. Whatever explanation may be given—and, doubtless, Mr. Brad laugh has an explanation of his own—this voice of conscience is to me one of the primary evidences of the existence of God. Nay, I will not call it. an evidence; it is God speaking to me (applause). This conscience has been described by Mr. Voysey, in his recently-published sermons in refutation of Atheism, as follows: "The collision is so complete between the higher voice and the impelling instinct, that one can only feel that the two are radically different in nature, and must have had a different source. . . . To have the power of doing intentionally what one shrinks from doing, and to deny one's self the pleasure which is so fascinating, and which one longs to do, is to prove the immense superiority of our inner selves over the visible universe." To have the power, as that man, that Huguenot, must have had it, to deny one's self the pleasure which is so fascinating, and for which one longs, is to prove the immense superiority of our inner selves when hearing the voice of God over the visible universe. Again, speaking of conscience, Voysey says: "The conscience which makes us mortify our flesh with its affections and lusts, and which often mars our happiness and embitters our pleasure, upbraids us with reproaches and stings us with remorse, that voice which hushes our cry for happiness, which will not endure a single selfish plea, but demands unquestioning obedience, and bids us fall down in the very dust before the Majesty of Duty—we all, in our secret hearts, revere this power, whether or not we obey it as we should. At least, we pay to it the homage of our inmost souls, and feel how great and grand it is to be its slave." Now, sir, I desire to pass on to another method, by which it seems to me that I apprehend this being. Having made the acquaintance with this awful voice—and the philosopher Kant said two things filled him with awe, the starry heavens and the moral nature in man—I pass on to another matter. Behold the starry heaven itself. I know not how it is with you, but I will tell you my experience—and we are told by scientific men that we must bring everything to the test of experience. Sometimes when I have been out of temper—as I am sometimes, like other people—sometimes, when I have been much distracted with cares, when troubles and pains have been thick upon me, it falls to my lot to go out beneath the starry heaven. What is it that I experience in my soul? I go through no process of metaphysical reasoning, I do not argue with myself, but I simply feel that there is a Divine presence there, in whose hand are all these stars and all these worlds—a great voice singing, "I am strong and I am good, and you are safe nestling in my hand." I know not if that corresponds with the experience of all here, but that it corresponds with the experience of many, I feel sure; and let me ask such not to drive away these holy feelings, but to trust them as the assurance which God gives of his presence. It may be that in those lakes and mountains which you, sir, have seen of late, you may have heard a message whispering to your soul of a peace beyond the peace of earth—of a presence before which all things are well. In others, not so sensitive perhaps to the beauties of natural scenery, such experience comes in the tones of music—in some grand symphony or some sweet song; and they feel lifted away from the things of earth, and they feel lifted into some presence in which it is a joy to be, and which fills their soul with peace. That presence I call, having no other name for it, the presence of God. Observe, that in this I am not philosophising about the cause—I am not saying that God is the cause and so on; I am only relating the experience of my consciousness, reported to you as faithfully and truly as I can read it. Let me read what Professor Blackie wrote the other day: "Many things can be known only by being felt, all vital forces are fundamentally unknowable." And, says Francis Newman, that arch-heretic: "The astronomer is ever aware of the presence of gravitation and the electrician sees all things
pervaded by electricity—powers descried by the mind, unwitnessed by any sense, long unknown to the wise, still unknown or undiscovered by the vulgar; yet this perception of things hidden is not esteemed cloudy." Now, having made some acquaintance with this awful, inscrutable something, to which I venture to give the name of God, I venture to lift up to it the voice of my soul, and strive to throw myself towards that Being. And what is my experience? Let us go to experience again: I find when my mind is bewildered and in doubt, when it is all involved with difficulties, that somehow, when I address that Being, there comes to my soul "clear-shining," and I see things plainer and more beautiful than before. I appeal to him in pain and sorrow—not with the coward's prayer, but simply asking that I may feel his presence, to endure it; and the pain and sorrow have become light on the instant assurance that God is there to comfort and console. I pray to him in weakness, when my strength fails, and what is the result? That a new manhood comes to me, and I feel that wondrous power which over-arches all the worlds, and I feel that I have in me also somewhat of his strength. I appeal to him, last of all, in temptation, when the wrong deed presses closely on my inclinations, and what do I find? That strength is given me to stand up against temptation, and he answers according to the immemorial prayer of Christendom: deliver us from temptation. This is experience, or I fancy it is. It is not theory. Again, I am in gladness. When is my gladness greatest, and when is it richest? Why, when it flows up and out, in thankfulness and adoration, to the source to which I trace it. Then my gladness seems to receive an influence which lifts it up above. No gladness is the true gladness without that. Let me conclude this half-hour by reading a very short extract from Professor Newman. Speaking of the instincts of mankind, he says:—

And the instinct of Religion is the noblest of them all, The bravest, the most enduring, the most fruitful in mighty deeds,

The source of earliest grandeur, unitress of scattered tribes; Even in the crudeness of its infancy, when unpurified by science, Yet teeming with civilisation, with statesmanship, with letters. Mistress of all high art, and parent of glorious martyrs. And if from it have come wars, and bigotries, and cruelties, Through infantine hot-headedness and unripeness of mind, We take your aid, O Sceptics! to purge it from all such evils, And kindly honour we pay to you for your battles against superstition;

Yet the very evils ye deplore, prove Religion's mighty energy, And the grasp deeply seated which she has within human hearts."

(Loud applause.)

Mr. BRADLAUGH: Thanking you, sir, for acceding to the request which I would have gladly joined in had I had any right of acquaintance to entitle me to make it; thanking you for undertaking what is always a troublesome duty, however well a debate may be conducted, of presiding over a discussion, permit me to say one word only as to the opening which fell from your lips. There is only one phrase in that which I desire to note, so as to save myself from the possibility of misapprehension. I quite agree with the view you put of the position the Atheist takes, except that if Dualism be affirmed, if more than Monism be affirmed, if more than one existence be affirmed, and if it be the beyond of that one existence which is called God, then the Atheist does not say there may be one, but says there cannot be one; and that is the only distinction I wish to put as against the very kind words with which you introduced the speakers this evening. The question for our debate is: "Is it reasonable to worship God?" and to determine this question it is necessary to define the words "worship" and "God," and next to decide whether belief in God is reasonable or unreasonable; and, secondly, whether worship is, under any, and if any, what, circumstances, reasonable or unreasonable. And I am afraid I must here except that, in the speech to which I have just listened, and which, from its tone and kindly style, is perfectly unexceptionable, there is not one word at present—it may possibly come later on—which may fairly be taken as approaching a definition either of the word "God" or the word "worship." By worship I mean act of reverence, respect, adoration, homage, offered to some person. According to this definition, worship cannot be offered to the impersonal, and according to this definition it would be unreasonable to advocate worship to be offered to the impersonal. Under the term "worship" I include prayer—which is, evidently, from the opening, also included in the term "worship" by the rev. gentleman who maintains the opposite position to myself—praise, sacrifice, offerings, solemn services, adoration, personal prostration. For the word "God," not having a definition of my own, I take—not having yet gathered, in what has fallen from Mr. Armstrong, enough to enable me to say that I understand what he means by it—I take the definition of "God" given in Professor Flint's Baird lectures; not meaning by that that Mr. Armstrong is bound by that definition, but asking him to be kind enough to note where he thinks that definition is incorrect, and to kindly tell me so, for my guidance in the latter portions of the debate. By "God," for the purpose of this debate, I shall mean a self-existent, eternal being, infinite in power and in wisdom, and perfect in holiness and goodness; the maker of heaven and earth. And by "self-existent" I mean, that, the conception of which does not require the conception of antecedent to it. For example, this glass is phenomenal, conceived, as all phenomena must be conceived, by the characteristics or qualities which enable you to think and identify it in your mind, but which cannot be conceived except as that of which there is possible antecedent and consequent, and which, therefore, cannot be considered as
so, what becomes of this "still small voice," of those desires and instincts? The mere fact that the mother may
organisation, including in that, transmitted predisposition of ability to possible thought or action. But if that be
Mr. Armstrong had defined exactly what it was he meant by conscience, because here we are going terribly to
"Do;" or the reverse; and thus voice is the evidence of Deity. I should have been obliged if
you whether there has been the same variation in the source of it? You say the source is God, and if so, how can
races, nay, more, if there be this variance in individuals of the same race at the same moment, and if the
distinctly in your mind from the sum and substance of all existence; because clearly,
when he used those words he had some meaning in his mind, and I should like to know these two things: First,
I would suggest it is because it does not clearly exist in his own mind. Now Mr. Armstrong says that he feels as
existence? And if we are included in that sum and substance of all existence, is it reasonable for one
distinguish God in your mind from the sum and substance of all existence? If you say that you identify God
wherever he distinguishes between God, in his mind, and the sum and substance of all existence; because clearly,
whether he thinks of God as "the sum and substance of all existence." I do not want to make any verbal trick, and if I am putting
exists. He spoke of God as being to him his dearest friend, and he followed that with some words as to which I
words "creation" and "destruction" are both words which have no other meaning to my mind than the meaning
self-existent according to my definition. By "eternal" and by "infinite" I only mean illimitable, indefinite, to
me—applying the term "eternal" to duration, and the word "infinite" to extension. I take Professor Flint, or
whoever may hold the definition I have given of God, by "maker" to mean originator; and then I am in the
difficulty that the word "creator," in the sense of origin, is, to me, a word without meaning. I only know
creation as change; origin of phenomena, not of existence; origin of condition, not origin of substance. The
words "creation" and "destruction" are both words which have no other meaning to my mind than the meaning
of change. I will now try to address myself to some of the arguments that were put forward by Mr. Armstrong.
He said that to him the notion of entering into this debate was distasteful to him, and he addressed somewhat of
an inquiry as to my own feeling on the matter. No! the discussion of no one subject more than any other is
distasteful to me, unless it be of a personal character, in which it might involve my having to say things upon
which I should not like to mislead and upon which it would be painful to me to state the facts. Then a
discussion would be distasteful to me; but such a discussion as this is not any more distasteful to me than the
discussion of an astronomical or geological problem; and I will urge to those who go even further and say, that
not only is such a matter distasteful, but that the discussion of Theism is really immoral, to such I would read
from a recent volume entitled "A Candid Examination of Theism":—"If there is no God, where can be the harm
in our examining the spurious evidence of his existence? If there is a God, surely our first duty towards him
must be to exert to our utmost, in our attempts to find him, the most noble faculty with which he has endowed
us—as carefully to investigate the evidence which he has seen fit to furnish of his own existence, as we
investigate the evidence of inferior things in his dependent creation. To say that there is one rule or method for
ascertaining truth in the latter case which it is not legitimate to apply in the former case, is merely a covert way
of saying that the Deity—if he exists—has not supplied us with rational evidence of his existence." Now, that is
the position I am going to put to you; and there ought to be nothing distasteful to anyone in proving most
thoroughly the whole of the evidence upon which his supposed belief in God's existence rests. The grounds of
his belief ought to be clear to himself, or they are no sufficient grounds for his belief, even to himself. If they
are clear to himself they ought to be clearly stateable to others; because, if not, they lie under the suspicion of
not being clear to himself. That which is sufficient to him to convince him, is either capable of being clearly
stated—although it may not carry conviction to another—or it is not. If it is not capable of being clearly stated,
I would suggest it is because it does not clearly exist in his own mind. Now Mr. Armstrong says that he feels as
if called upon to prove that his dearest friend ought to be loved, as if called upon to prove that his dearest friend
exists. He spoke of God as being to him his dearest friend, and he followed that with some words as to which I
am not quite sure whether he intended to use them in the sense in which they fell upon my ears. He described
God as "the sum and substance of all existence." I do not want to make any verbal trick, and if I am putting
more on Mr. Armstrong than he meant to convey I should like to be put right when he rises again, and I will ask
him if he considers God to be the sum and substance of all existing; and, if he does not, I will ask him in what
respect he distinguishes between God, in his mind, and the sum and substance of all existence; because clearly,
when he used those words he had some meaning in his mind, and I should like to know these two things: First,
do you identify God in your mind with the sum and substance of all existence? If not, in what respects do you
distinguish God in your mind from the sum and substance of all existence? If you say that you identify God
with the sum and substance of all existence, then I ask, are we included in that sum and substance of all
existence? And if we are included in that sum and substance of all existence, is it reasonable for one
phenomenon or for a number of phenomena, to offer worship to any of, and to how much of, what remains?
Then he addressed himself to the very old argument, which he put so beautifully, when he said: "How do I
know God?" and launched into what is known as the argument from conscience, an argument very fully stated
by Professor Flint in the Baird lectures to which I have referred. Mr. Armstrong said, and here I will take a little
exception; he said: "In me, as in all men here, are strong instincts; in me, as in all men, there are strong desires;
in me, as in all men, there is a voice." That is just the blunder; that is not true. I do not mean that in any sort of
disrespectful sense. If you take a volume like Topinard's "Anthropology" you find that men's desires, men's
emotions, and men's instincts all vary with race, all vary with locality, with type, all vary with what Buckle
called "Food, climate, soil, and life surroundings:" and I ask, if there be this variance in individuals of different
races, nay, more, if there be this variance in individuals of the same race at the same moment, and if the
members of the same race vary in different places and ages, as to their instincts, desires, and emotions, I ask
you whether there has been the same variation in the source of it? You say the source is God, and if so, how can
a variable source be a reliable object of worship? Then let us see a little more. "I do not desire to do something,
but my monitor says 'Do;'" or the reverse; and thus voice is the evidence of Deity. I should have been obliged if
Mr. Armstrong had defined exactly what it was he meant by conscience, because here we are going terribly to
disagree. I am going to deny the existence of conscience altogether, except as a result of development upon
organisation, including in that, transmitted predisposition of ability to possible thought or action. But if that be
so, what becomes of this "still small voice," of those desires and instincts? The mere fact that the mother may
have worked in a cotton-mill while child bearing and have had bad food, or that the father may have beaten her—his brutality may result in the awakening of a desire and instinct exactly the opposite of that which Mr. Armstrong has, and the organisation fitted for repeating which may be handed down through generations. I stood this morning for other purposes at the doors of Coldbath-fields Prison. One man who came out gave a sort of shrill whistle and plunged into the crowd with a defiant and a mocking air, showing that his conscience, his monitor, said nothing to him except that he was glad he was outside, and ready to war with the world again (applause). I am not wishing to press this view in any fashion unkindly or unfairly; I am only wanting to put the thing as it appears to me. I want to know: "Does Mr. Armstrong contend that there is a faculty identical in every human being which he calls conscience, which does decide for each human being, and always decides, in the same manner, what is right and what is wrong? Or does he mean that this 'monitor,' as he calls it, decides differently in different men and in different countries? And if 'yes,' is the source different in each case where there is a different expression? And if 'yes,' is it justifiable and reasonable to offer worship to an uncertain source, or to a source which speaks with a different voice, or to a source which is only one of a number, and of which you do not know how far its limit extends, and where its jurisdiction begins or ends?" Let us follow this out a little more. We have not only to define conscience, but we have also to define right and wrong, and I did not hear Mr. Armstrong do that. I did hear him say that when he had done something in opposition to his monitor he felt remorse. I did hear him say there was struggling between himself and his monitor, and here I had another difficulty. What is the himself that struggles, as distinguished in his mind from the monitor that he struggles against? If the struggle is a mental one, what is mind struggling against? and if it is not, how does Mr. Armstrong explain it? Let us, if you please, go to right and wrong. By moral I mean useful. I mean that that is right which tends to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, with the least injury to any. I am only following Jeremy Bentham. That is my definition of right. Many matters which have been held to come within that definition in one age have been found in another age not to come within it, and the great march of civilisation is that from day to day it instructs us in what is useful. I submit that instead of adoring the source of contradictory verdicts it is more reasonable to find out for ourselves some rule we can apply. For example, here Mr. Armstrong's conscience would not raise any particular objection to his taking animal food, unless he happens to be a vegetarian, and then, I am sure, he would conscientiously carry it out; but the majority of people's consciences in England would raise no great objection to taking animal food. Yet in China and in Hindustan hundreds of thousands of human beings have died because vegetable food was not there for them, and their consciences made them prefer death to tasting animal food. I want to know whether the conscience is from the same source here as in Hindustan, and I want to know, if that is so, which people are justified in worshipping the source? Take the case of murder. Mr. Armstrong's conscience would clearly tell him that it was wrong to murder me. And yet there are many people in this country who would not go to that extent. But I am going to take a stronger illustration. There are a number of people who think it perfectly right to bless the flags of a regiment, and to pray to the God whom Mr. Armstrong asks me to worship, that a particular regiment, whose flags are blessed, may kill the people of some other particular regiment as rapidly as possible. This shows that there are confusions of mind as to what is meant by murder, and a like confusion exists on a number of other matters on which the monitor is misrepresenting. And then Mr. Armstrong has said, "I mean by God the source of admonition, rebukes, remorse, trouble," and he says: "It is a conscience-voice which is recognised by every true man and woman." I am sure he would not wish to put any position stronger than it should be put, and he put it, too, that this was the feature in which man differed from the brutes. I am inclined to tell him that not only there is not that recognition to-day amongst the physiological and psychological teachers, but that we have a number of men whose researches have been collected for us, who show us that what you call the "still small voice," this monitor, these desires, instincts, emotions, are to be found—varied, it is true—right through the whole scale of animal life. Wherever there is a nervous encephalic apparatus sufficient you have—except in the fact of language—wider distinction between the highest order of human race and the lowest, than you have between the lowest order of human beings and those whom you are pleased to call brutes. I will now only take the illustration of the eve of St. Bartholomew, which is fatal to the argument of Mr. Armstrong. He gave the Protestant lover—a very fine character—rejecting the symbolic bandage, and preferring to die for his faith; or, as Mr. Armstrong put it, "to face death in simple loyalty rather than play the hypocrite, and the source of that feeling was God." Was that the source of the feeling which led Bruno to be burnt at the stake as if for Atheism, or for Vanini, burnt for Atheism; or for Lescynski, burnt for Atheism; or for Mrs. Besant, robbed of her child because of her avowal of Atheism (hisses)? You are hissing; wait whilst I answer. Is the source of your hissing, God? Then what a cowardly and weak thing, and little fitted for worship must be that source (applause). I desire to deal with this subject in all gravity, in all sincerity, in all kindness, but I plead for a cause—weakly, it is true—for which great and brave men and women have died, and I will permit no insult to it in my presence—(cheers)—knowingly I will pass none. I believe my antagonist to meet me loyally, honourably, and honestly, and I believe him to meet me earnestly and sincerely. I believe he has no desire to
wound my feelings, and I do not wish to wound his; and I ask you, the jury here, to try to follow the same example set by him in this debate (cheers).

Mr. Armstrong, being received with cheers, said: It is very difficult indeed to think on these deep problems under consideration with excitement amongst the audience present, therefore I hope that you will be as quiet as you can. I will begin at once with a confession—and this, at any rate, will be a testimony of my candour—by saying that the moment I had spoken certain words in my opening speech I thought: "Mr. Bradlaugh will have me there;" and he had me (laughter). The words were those in which I spoke of God as the sum and substance of all existence. Now, to me, God is a much simpler word than the phrase, "sum and substance of all existence." Whether God be the "sum and substance of all existence" I know not, for those words convey to me less clear meaning than the word "God" conveys to me. The source, moreover, of my immediate knowledge of God is such that it can make no asseverations whatever upon deep questions of metaphysics, as to what the "sum and substance of all existence" may consist. Mr. Bradlaugh has taken a definition of God from Professor Flint. He is a Scotchman, and Scotchmen are very fond of definitions (a laugh). Very often, too, their definitions obscure their subject-matter, and it is far harder to get any proper significance from them than in the thing which they intended to define. I am utterly incapable of saying whether that definition of Professor Flint's is an accurate definition of God or not. What I mean by "God," and perhaps Mr. Bradlaugh will take it as the best definition I can here give, is the source, whatever it be, of this metaphorical voice—of these intimations or monitions, that come to me in certain experiences which I have. Mr. Bradlaugh, of course, devoted much time to answering Professor Flint. He asked whether God was the source of that loyalty with which the Atheists he mentioned went to the stake, and I say from the bottom of my heart, that he was. God knows the Atheist though the Atheist knows not him. God is the source of loyalty of heart, in whomsoever it may be. If others are led to propound propositions which I believe to be false, and if they dispute other propositions which I believe to be true, do you think that God is going to judge them for that, so long as they have been true and faithful to their own reasoning powers (applause)? Mr. Bradlaugh noticed the phrase which fell from me, about a discussion like this being distasteful to me. I did not say that the matter under discussion was distasteful to me. I did not say that a discussion under other conditions would be distasteful to me. I did not say that it was at all distasteful to me to search the grounds of my own belief, for my own belief would be poor indeed were not such search my constant practice (hear, hear). Mr. Bradlaugh laid great stress, during the greater part of his speech, upon what appear to be, in different races and in different climes, the different and contradictory deliverances of conscience. That difficulty is one which has been felt by many persons, and dealt with, well and ill, by various writers. The difficulty is one of importance, and it arises, perhaps, from the word "conscience" being used in various different senses. My use of the word "conscience" is simply as being that voice of God (as I still call it) which says, "Do the right; don't do the wrong." It does not in any way say what is right or what is wrong. That which I call the right, like so much of our manhood, is the gradual development, and evolution of history, and it is largely dependent, as Mr. Bradlaugh says, upon climate and other external surroundings. We have to reason about what is right and wrong. We must have gradual education of the individual and of the race to get a clearer and more worthy conception of the right and wrong; and all I claim for conscience is that the man, having resolved in his own mind what is right and what is wrong, this conscience says, "Do the right, and do not the wrong." Therefore, instates of barbarous society, where misled reason has induced persons to think certain things were right which we look upon as crimes, still the voice of conscience must necessarily tell them to do the right. The thing is right to the individual if he thinks it right. It may be a terrible mistake of his—it may be a terrible mistake to believe or teach certain things; nevertheless, the voice of conscience says, "Do the right;" it does not define what the right is. That is one of the things which God leaves to be developed in humanity by slow degrees. Thank God, we see that the idea of the right and the wrong is purifying—is clarifying in the course of history. The conception of what is right and what is wrong is better now than it was a hundred years ago; the conception of what is right and what is wrong is better still than it was a thousand years ago. Many of the things then considered laudable are now considered base; and many of the things then considered base are now considered laudable. This voice of which I speak, however, like all other voices, may not be equally perceived at all times. Supposing that you were at school, and a certain bell rang at six o'clock every morning. If you accustom yourself to rising when the bell rings, you will naturally enough go on hearing it; but if you get into the habit of disregarding it, and turning over on the other side for another nap, the bell may sound loudly but you will cease to hear it. So it is, I take it, with the voice of God, which ever speaks—which ever pleads—but against which man may deafen himself. He may make himself so dull of understanding that he may not hear it clearly. Not only the individual man's own obstinacy may make him dull of hearing, but it must be conceded that this dulness of hearing may descend to him from long generations of those from whom he proceeds. It may be a part of his inheritance. But it does not follow that this voice does not exist, and that it does not still plead with him if he had the ear to hear it. No man is so lost but that if he strives to hear, that voice will become to him clearer and more clear. I ask you here
whether you find any difficulty in deciding what, to you, is right or wrong? Mr. Bradlaugh is very fond of definitions. The words "right" and "wrong" are so simple that any definition of them would only obscure them. I know, and you know, what you mean by right and wrong. If I say of a thing, "That is not right, don't do it," you know what I mean. Can I speak in any plainer way than to say of a thing, "That is not right"? If there is no better way of explaining what you mean than this—if there is no plainer way—it is best not to attempt to define the word, because the definition would only tend to obscure it. Not being much accustomed to debates of this description, much of what I desired to say in the first half-hour was not said. I am told that all this experience which I have been trying to relate to you is fancy, and I am asked to prove that there is some being who can be imagined to be this God whom I believe I hear speaking to me. I might ask: "Is it not enough that not only do I think I hear this voice, but that so many hundreds and thousands of the great and good have also thought so? Is it not enough that many of the great reformers, many of the great leaders in the paths of righteousness and mercy, in this England of ours, tell us that they hear this voice? You must, if you deny it, either think they lie or that they are deluded. When Newman, Voysey, Theodore Parker—the glorious abolitionist of America—say that it is their most intimate experience, it is somewhat shallow to assert that there is nothing in it. I am not one of those who think that the existence of a God can be proved to the understanding of every one in a large audience on à priori grounds. At the same time the balance of probability on à priori grounds seems to be, to me, strongly in favour of Theism. I find that there is, in my own mental constitution, a demand for cause of some kind for every phenomenon. I want to know what has led to the phenomenon, and I find a good many other people are apt to inquire in the like direction. Even very little children, before they are sophisticated by us teachers and parsons, want to be informed as to the causes of things. Another point—I cannot help believing that all cause must be intelligent. Yes, I knew that would go down in Mr. Brad-laugh's notes; but I say again, I cannot conceive of any cause which is not intelligent in some sort of way (applause).

Mr. BRADLAUGH: There are two things which are evidently quite certain so far as my opponent is concerned; one is that we shall have a good-tempered debate, and the other that we shall have a candid debate. Mr. Armstrong has said frankly, with reference to the definition of God, that he is perfectly incapable of saying whether the definition of Professor Flint is correct or not, and he has, I think I may say, complained that I am too fond of definitions. Will he permit me on this to read him an extract from Professor Max Müller's recent lecture: "It was, I think, a very good old custom never to enter upon the discussion of any scientific problem without giving beforehand definitions of the principal terms that had to be employed. A book on logic or grammar generally opened with the question, What is logic? What is grammar? No one would write on minerals without first explaining what he meant by a mineral, or on art, without defining, as well as he might, his idea of art. No doubt it was often as troublesome for the author to give such preliminary definitions as it seemed useless to the reader, who was generally quite incapable in the beginning of appreciating their full value. Thus it happened that the rule of giving verbal definitions came to be looked upon after a time as useless and obsolete. Some authors actually took credit for no longer giving these definitions, and it soon became the fashion to say that the only true and complete definition of what was meant by logic or grammar, by law or religion, was contained in the books themselves which treated of these subjects. But what has been the result? Endless misunderstandings and controversies which might have been avoided in many cases if both sides had clearly defined what they did and what they did not understand by certain words." I will show you presently where this need of accurate definition comes so very strongly. Mr. Armstrong is quite clear that he knows what right means; he is also quite clear that you know what he means. That may be true, but it also may not, and I will show you the difficulty. Suppose there were a thorough disciple, say of some bishop or church, who thought it right to put to death a man holding my opinions. That man would think the capital punishment for heresy right, Mr. Armstrong would not. That man's conscience would decide that it was right, Mr. Armstrong's would decide that it was not. What is the use of saying you both know what is right? The word right is a word by which you label certain things, thoughts, and actions, the rightness of which you have decided on some grounds known only to yourselves. It may be they are pleasant to you or disagreeable to your antagonist. I, in defining morality, gave you my reason for labelling the thing with the name "right." Mr. Armstrong has given you no reason whatever. Mr. Armstrong says that conscience is the voice of God which says: "Do that which is right, don't do that which is wrong." Yet the divine voice does not tell you what is right and what is wrong. Hence that conscience talking to the cannibal: "It is right to eat that man, he's tender; it's wrong to eat that man, he's tough"—(laughter)—and the voice of God says: "eat the tender men because it is right; don't eat the tough men because it is wrong." I ask how that illustration is to be dealt with? If the voice does not in any way enable you to determine the character of the act, then it simply means that what you call the voice of God asks you to continue committing every error which has been bequeathed you from past times as right, and to avoid every good thing because in past times it has been condemned and is yet condemned as wrong. If that is to be the conclusion, then I say that the voice of God is not a voice to be worshipped, and that it is not reasonable to worship such a voice; and taking that to be the definition I submit that upon that a negative answer must be
given in this debate. Mr. Armstrong very frankly and candidly says that the conception of what is right and wrong is being cleared and purified day by day. That is, the conception now is different to what it was one hundred years ago, and better still than it was a thousand years ago; but the voice of God, a thousand years ago, told the Armstrong and Bradlaugh then living, to do that which conscience said to them was right, and which the conscience to-day says is wrong. Was God governed by the mis-education, the mis-information, and the mis-apprehension of the time? If the God was outside the ignorance of the day, why did he not set the people right? Was he powerless to do it? In which case, how do you make out that he is God? Or had he never the willingness to do it? In which case how do you make out that he was God good? And if he preferred to leave them in blindness, how do you reconcile that? Then we are told the voice is not always clear, but that you may make it more clear by a habit of obedience. That is so I suppose. And you may transmit the predisposition to the habit of galloping to horses on this side the ocean, the predisposition to the habit of trotting to horses on the other side the ocean; to thinking Mahommedanism in Turkey, and to thinking another "ism" in England, and some other "ism" in Hindustan. You do not transmit the actual thought any more than you transmit the actual gallop or trot, but you transmit the predisposition, given the appropriate surroundings to reproduce any action physical or mental. And the source of this is God, is it? I vow I do not understand how the Theist is to meet the contradiction thus involved. Then, Mr. Armstrong says that when he uses the word "right," he defies anyone to make it plainer. Let us see what that means: I forged a cheque; Mr. Armstrong says that's wrong. Why? Oh! it is a dishonest and dishonourable thing, it tends to injure, and so on. But let us see whether you are always quite clear about these things? When you are annexing a country, for example; praying to your God that you may annex successfully, and that he will protect you when you have annexed, does not your conscience run away with you, or does not God mislead you in some of these things? Is it not true that the moment you get outside the definition of the word "right," and the moment you say: "I have a standard of right which I will not tell you, because nothing I tell you will make it clear" you are launched at once into a heap of absurdities and contradictions? You think it is right to have one wife, the Turk thinks it right to have two. How are you to determine between them? It only means, that one of you has labelled bigamy "right" and the other has labelled it "wrong." You must have some kind of explanation to justify what you are talking about it. We had an argument offered by Mr. Armstrong which, if it meant anything, meant that the voice of the majority should prevail. Mr. Armstrong said, that it was not only his experience but that of thousands of others. Does he mean the argument offered by Mr. Armstrong which, if it meant anything, meant that the voice of the majority should prevail. Mr. Armstrong said, that it was not only his experience but that of thousands of others. Does he mean to tell me that problems of this kind are to be determined by an untrained majority, or by the verdict of a skilled minority? If by a majority, I have something to say to him, and if by the skilled minority, how are you to select them? In his first speech, which I did not quite finish replying to, we were told that God's peace and beauty were apprehended in lakes and mountains. But I have seen one lake—Michigan—the reverse of peace and beauty; I have seen little vessels knocked about by the waves, and dashed to pieces; and I have seen Mount Vesuvius when it has been the very opposite of calm and beautiful, and I have heard of the houses at Torre del Grecco—though I have never seen it—being burned in the night by the fiery lava stream. Where is the peace and beauty of that scene? You can take peace. Given a lake, and I can show you a tornado. Given a mountain and I can give you Vesuvius with the fiery stream burning the huts of the fishers on the slope of Torre del Grecco. Did God do this? Did God run the two vessels into one another on the Thames and have those hundreds of people drowned? If you take credit for the beauty you must also take debit for the pain and misery (applause). Well, then, I am told that religion is the noblest of all instincts. Max Müller tells us—whether that be true or not, as Francis Newman puts it—that religion is a word about which people never have agreed in any age of the world; about which there have been more quarrels than about any other word, and about which people have done more mischief than about any other word; and I will ask our friend to explain, if it be the noblest of all instincts, how is it that people have racked each other, and beheaded each other, and tortured each other by, or in the name of, this religion? We are told, and I am thankful to hear it, that we sceptics have purged it of a great deal of mischief, and we hope to do more in that way as we go on (applause). And here—and I want to speak with as much reverence as I can on the subject of prayer, and it is extremely difficult to touch upon it without giving my opponent pain—and I will deal with it as a general, and not a personal question. Mr. Armstrong said, after speaking of how he prayed against temptation: "He answered me as he has answered the immemorial prayer of Christendom and delivered me from temptation." Why does he not deliver from the temptation that misery, poverty, and ignorance bring to the little one who did not choose that he should be born in a narrow lane, or a back street, in an atmosphere redolent of squalor and filth? This little one, whom God can lift out of temptation, but whom he lets still be cold and miserable, whom he sees famishing for food, him whom he sees go famishing to the baker's, watching to steal the loaf to relieve his hunger—why won't he deliver this little one? Does Mr. Armstrong say: "Oh, the little one must know how to pray before God will answer him"? Oh, but what a mockery to us that the source of all power places within the reach of the temptation—nay, puts as though surrounded by a mighty temptation trap, so that there should be no possible escape—that little one, and then gives way to the skilled entreaty, high tone, habit-cultured voice which Mr.
Armstrong uses, while he is deaf to the rough pleading of the little one, and allows him to sink down, making no effort for his recovery! I have only one or two words more to say to you before I again finish, and I would use these to ask Mr. Armstrong to tell me what he meant by the word "cause," and what he meant by saying "cause must be intelligent"? By cause, I mean, all that without which an event cannot happen—the means towards an end, and by intelligence I mean the totality of mental ability—its activity and its results in each animal capable of it.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Bradlaugh has just been re- buking me for my laxness with respect to definitions, and has come down upon me with a great authority. Now, it is a habit of mine not to think much of authorities as authorities, but rather of the value of what they say. Mr. Bradlaugh came down upon me with Max Müller, and read a sentence in reference to the value of definitions, to the effect that they were wonderful things for preventing and avoiding controversies and disputes. Is it, I ask, Mr. Bradlaugh's experience that the number of definitions given from public platforms in his presence has tended to less controversy or to more? Has there been more or less talk with all these definitions, than there would have been without them? I fancied that Mr. Bradlaugh's career had been one very much connected with controversies, and that the definitions which he has been accustomed to give have not had the effect of leaving him in peace from controversy. I am perfectly amazed at Mr. Bradlaugh's memory, at the wonderful manner in which he manages to remember, with tolerable accuracy, what I have said, and to get down as he does the chief points of my speeches. I have, unfortunately, a miserable memory, although I have an excellent shorthand which I can write, and I cannot generally read it (laughter). Trusting, however, to those two guides, I must endeavour to reply. Mr. Bradlaugh unintentionally misrepresented me when he alleged that I had said that the voice of God, called conscience, was not always clear. I did not say that that voice was not always clear—but what I said was that it was not always clearly heard. I illustrated this by the simile of the bell, the sound of which was perfectly clear of itself, but which was not heard by those who would not hear. Mr. Bradlaugh also accused me of going in for the authority of majorities, because I quoted a number of names and said that I might quote many more who concurred in the belief in Deity grounded upon the sort of experience which I said that I had myself enjoyed. Now, the opinions of the majority have no authority—at least they go for what they are worth, but are not a binding or an absolute authority. But the experience of a majority, or of a minority, or of a single individual, has authority. The experience of a single man is a fact, and all the rest of the world not having had that experience, or thinking that they have not had it, does not make it less the fact. Therefore, if you have half-a-dozen men upon whose words you can rely, who say that they have had a certain experience, because Mr. Bradlaugh says he has not had such experience, that makes it none the less the fact. Now I approach that awful question which stares in the face of the Theist—and which oftentimes seems to stare most cruelly—this question of the evil in the world. It is a question upon which the greatest intellects of mankind have broken themselves, one which has never been really explained or made clear, either by the Theist or the Atheist, but which is probably beyond the solution of the human faculties. All that we can do is to fringe the edge of the mystery, and to see whether the best feelings within us seem to guide us to anything approaching a solution. Do you think that these things of which Mr. Bradlaugh has spoken do not touch me as they touch him? Look, say, at the poor child born in misery, and living in suffering; it would absolutely break my heart if I thought that this could be the end of all. I believe that it would weigh me down so that I could not stand upon a public platform, or perform the ordinary business of life, if I believed that there were beings in the world of whom misery and sin were the beginning and the end. But I thank God that I am enabled to maintain my reason upon its seat, and my trust intact. I know, or I think I know, God as a friend. If he be a friend to me, shall he not be a friend to all? If I know by my own experience his wondrous loving kindness, can I not trust him for all the rest of the world, through all the ages of eternity? You may see a son who shall be familiar with his father's kindness, who shall always be kindly treated by his father; and there shall be a great warm love between them. But the child sees certain actions on the part of his father which he cannot explain. He beholds suffering apparently brought by his father upon others, and is, perhaps, inclined to rebel against his father's authority. But which is the true child—the child who, having himself experienced his father's love, says: "Well, this is strange, it is a mystery: I would it were not so, but I know that my father is good, and will bring some good out of this which could not have been obtained otherwise;" or the child who says: "All my experience of my father's goodness shall go to the winds. I see a problem which I cannot explain, and I will, therefore, throw up my trust, rebel against the paternal goodness, and believe in my father's love no more!" It would be base in such of you as may be Athiests to rest in such a trust, since you do not know the love of God; but were you touched with that love, this trust would come to you. It would come to you in your best and truest moments, the moments when you feel that you are most akin with all that is good and holy, and when you feel, as it were, lifted above what is base. This problem of the evil in the world, I have said, surpasses the faculties of humanity to solve, either from the platform of the Theist, the Atheist, or the Pantheist. I ask you what you conceive to be the highest good to humanity? Is not the highest good, virtue? You say, it may be, happiness is better. Take the Huguenot. One way, with him, led to happiness,
the other to destruction. Was the choice he made the better or the worse? You say the better? Then you hold
that virtue is better than happiness. With regard to virtue, imagine, if you can, a world free from every sort of
suffering, from every sort of temptation, every sort of trial, what a very nice world to live in, but what very poor
creatures we should all be! Where would be virtue, where valour, where greatness, where nobility, where would
be all those high functions which call forth our reverence, and make us look up from men to the God of man?
The world is not made of sugar-plums. I, for my own part, cannot conceive how virtue, the highest good which
we can conceive, could possibly come about in human character unless human character had evil against which
it had to contend (applause). If you can tell me how we could have a world in which men should be great, and
good, and chivalrous, and possess all such qualities as raise feelings of reverence in our bosoms, where
nevertheless all should be smooth and easy, you will have told me of something which, I think, has never been
told to any human being (applause).

MR. BRADLAUGH: A large number of definitions lead to more controversy or to less. If the definitions are
offered to the minds of people well educated, and thoroughly understanding them—to much less controversy
and to more accuracy; and when they are offered to people who are yet ignorant, and have yet to understand
them, then they lead to more controversy, but even there, also, to more accuracy. I am asked: Can you tell me
how to make a world? I cannot. Do you intend to base your conclusions on my ignorance? If there be an onus,
it lies on you, not on me. It is your business to show that the maker you say ought to be adored, has made the
world as good as it can be. It is not my business at all to enter upon world-making. Then I am not sure—while I
am quite ready to be set right upon a verbal inaccuracy—I am not sure there is very much distinction between
the voice not being heard, and not being clearly heard. It is said to be the voice of God that speaks; but he made
the deafness or otherwise of the person to whom he speaks, or he is not the creator, preserver, "the dearest
friend in whom I trust, on whom I rely"—these are Mr. Armstrong's words. If God cannot prevent the deafness,
then the reliance is misplaced; if he made the deafness, it is of no use that he is talking plainly: if he has made
the person too deaf to hear his voice, then the voice is a mockery. Then I had it put to me, that the opinions of
majorities were not binding as authority; they only had their value as expressions of opinion; but that the
experiences of individuals are binding. What does that mean? Is there such a certitude in consciousness that
there can be no mistake in experience? What do you mean? When you have a notion you have had an
experience, and I have a notion you have not had it? Supposing, for example, a man says: "I have experience of
a room which raced with the Great Northern train to London; it was an ordinary room, with chairs and tables in
it, and none of them were upset, and it managed to run a dead heat with the Great Northern express." You
would say: "My good man, if you are speaking seriously, you are a lunatic." "No," he would say, "that is my
experience." Mr. Armstrong says that that experience deserves weight. I submit not unless you have this: that
the experience must be of facts coming within the possible range of other people's experience; and must be
experience which is testable by other people's experience, with an ability on the part of the person relating to
clearly explain his experience, and that each phenomenon he vouches to you, to be the subject possible of
criticism on examination by yourself, and that no experience which is perfectly abnormal, and which is against
yours, has any weight whatever with you, or ought to have, except, perhaps, as deserving examination. When it
possibly can be made part of your experience, yes; when it admittedly cannot be made part of your experience,
no. A man with several glasses of whisky sees six chandeliers in this room; that is his experience—not mine. I
do not refuse to see; I cannot see more than three. Mr. Armstrong says the problem of evil never has been made
clear by Atheist or Theist. There is no burden on us to make it clear. The burden is upon the person who
considers that he has an all-powerful friend of loving kindness, to show how that evil exists in connection with
his statement that that friend could prevent it. If he will not prevent it, he is not of that loving kindness which is
pretended. Mr. Armstrong says: "My dear friend is kind to me, shall I not believe that he is kind to the little lad
who is starving?" What, kind to the lad whom he leaves unsheltered and illclad in winter, whose mother is
drunken because the place is foul, whose father has been committed to gaol? Where is the evidence to that lad
of God's loving kindness to him? God, who stands by whilst the little child steals something; God, who sets the
policeman to catch him, knowing he will go amongst other criminals, where he will become daily the more
corrupted; God, who tells him from the Bench through the mouth of the justice, that he has given way to the
temptation of the devil, when it is the very God has been the almighty devil (applause). That may be a reason
for Mr. Armstrong adoring his friend, but it is no reason for this poor boy to adore. "Ah," Mr. Armstrong says,
"my reason for homage is this. I should be dissatisfied if this were going to last for ever, or if this were to be the
whole of it; that is so bad I should be in anguish were there no recompense." You condemn it if it is to continue.
How can you worship the being who allows that even temporarily which your reason condemns? Has he
marked his right to be adored as God by the little girl who is born of a shame-marked mother in the shadow of
the workhouse walls, who did not select the womb from which she should come, and whose career, consequent
on her birth, is one of shame and perhaps crime too. Ah! that friend you love, how his love is evidenced to that
little girl is yet to be made clear to me. Then comes another problem of thought which I am not sure I shall deal
fairly with. Is the highest good virtue or happiness? But the highest happiness is virtue. That act is virtuous which tends to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and which inflicts the least injury on any—that which does not so result in this is vice. When you put happiness and virtue as being utterly distinguished, in your mind they may be so, but not in my mind. You have confused the definition of morality which I gave on the first opening; you have, without explaining it, substituted another in lieu of it. You would be right to say my definition is wrong, and give another definition, but you have no right to ignore my definition and use my word in precisely the opposite sense to that in which I used it. A very few words now will determine this question for this evening, and I will ask you to remember the position in which we are here. I am Atheist, our friend is Theist. He has told you practically that the word "God" is incapable of exact definition, and if this is so, then it is incapable of exact belief. If it is incapable of exact definition, it is incapable of exact thought. If thought is confused you may have prostration of the intellect, and this is all you can have. Our friend says that he prays and that his prayer is answered daily, but he forgot the millions of prayers to whom God is deaf. In his peaceful mountains and lakes—Vesuvius and Lake Michigan escaped him. The fishers in Torre del Grecco, they on whom the lava stream came down in the night, had their lips framed no cry for mercy? Did not some of those hundreds who were carried to death on the tide of the muddy Thames, did not they call out in their despair? and yet he was deaf to them. He listened to you, but it is of those to whom he did not listen of whom I have to speak. If he listens to you and not to them he is a respecter of persons. He may be one for you to render homage to, but not for me. First, then, the question is: "Is it reasonable to worship God?" and the word "worship" has been left indistinguishably defined. I defy anyone who has listened to Mr. Armstrong to understand how much or how little he would exclude or include in worship. I made it clear how much I would include. Our friend has said nothing whatever relating to the subject with which we have had to deal. His word "God" has been left utterly undefined; the words "virtue" and "happiness," and the words "right" and "wrong," are left equally unexplained; the questions I put to him of cause and intelligence have been left as though they were not spoken. I do not make this a reproach to him, because I know it is the difficulty of the subject with which he has to deal. The moment you tell people what you mean, that moment you shiver the Venetian glass which contains the liquor that is not to be touched. I plead under great difficulty. I plead for opinions that have been made unpopular; I appeal for persons who, in the mouths of their antagonists, often have associated with them all that is vicious. It is true that Mr. Armstrong has no such reproach. He says that God will only try me by that judgment of my own reason, and he makes my standard higher than God's on the judgment day. God made Bruno; do you mean that Bruno's heresy ranks as high as faith, and that Bruno at the judgment will stand amongst the saints? This may be high humanity, but it is no part of theology. Our friend can only put it that because in his own goodness he makes an altar where he can worship, and a church where he would make a God kind and loving as himself, and that as he is ready to bless his fellows, so must his God be; but he has shown no God for me to worship, and he has made out no reasonableness to worship God except for himself, to whom, he says, God is kind. Alas! that so many know nothing of his kindness (applause). I beg to move the thanks of this meeting to Mr. Rothera for presiding this evening.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I wish to second that.

Carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN: Permit me just to express the obligations I feel under to you for having made my duty so simple and pleasant. My position as chairma necessarily and properly excludes me from making any judgment whatever upon the character and quality of what has been addressed to you. Notwithstanding that, I may say this: that it is, I believe, a healthy sign of the times of when a number of men and women, such as have met together in this room, can listen to such addresses as have been made tonight, for it will help on our civilisation. And if you want a definition of what is right, I say that our business is to learn what is true, then we shall do what is right (applause).

Second Night.

THE CHAIRMAN, who was much applauded, said: Ladies and Gentlemen—it is with much satisfaction that I resume, my duties as chairma this evening. No one occupying this position could fail to be gratified with the high tone and excellent temper of the debate which we listened to last night (hear, hear), or, in noting as I did, the earnest, sustained, and intelligent attention of a large and much over-crowded audience (applause). I regard this as a healthful sign of the times. There are those who look upon such a discussion as this as dangerous and irreverent. I do not share in that opinion (hear, hear). There is an intelligence abroad that no longer permits men to cast the burden of their beliefs upon mere authority, but which compels them to seek for reasons for the faith that is in them (hear, hear). To those, I think, such discussion as this, maintained in the spirit of last evening, cannot fail to be useful. It is obvious that the first requisite of religion is, that it be true. Fear of the results of
investigation, therefore, should deter no one from inquiry. That which is true in religion, cannot be shaken, and that which is false no one should desire to preserve (applause). Now, as you are aware, Mr. Armstrong in this discussion is charged with the duty of maintaining the proposition that it is reasonable in us to worship God. The negative of that proposition is supported by Mr. Bradlaugh. Under the arrangement for the debate, Mr. Bradlaugh is tonight entitled to half-an-hour for his opening, Mr. Armstrong to half-an-hour for his reply. After that a quarter-hour will be given to each alternately, until Mr. Armstrong will conclude the debate at ten o'clock. I have now great pleasure in asking Mr. Bradlaugh to open the discussion (applause).

MR. BRADLAUGH, who was very warmly received, said: In contending that it is not reasonable to worship God, it seemed to me that I ought to make clear to you, at any rate, the words I used, and the sense in which I used them, and to do that I laid before you last night several definitions, not meaning that my definitions should necessarily bind Mr. Armstrong, but meaning that, unless he supplied some other and better explanations for the words, the meaning I gave should be, in each case, taken to be my meaning all through. I did not mean that he was to be concluded by the form of my definition if he were able to correct it, or if he were able to give a better instead; but I think I am now entitled to say that he ought to be concluded by my definitions, and this, from the answer he has given (hear, hear). The answer was frank—very frank—(hear) and I feel reluctant to base more upon it than I ought to do in a discussion conducted as this has been. If I were meeting an antagonist who strove to take every verbal advantage, I might be tempted to pursue only the same course; but when I find a man speaking with evident earnestness, using language which seems to be the utter abandonment of his cause, I would rather ask him whether some amendment of the language he used might not put his case in a better position. His declaration was that he was perfectly incapable of saying whether the definition, which I had taken from Professor Flint, of God, was correct or not (hear, hear). Now, I will ask him, and you, too, to consider the consequence of that admission. No definition whatever is given by him of the word "God." There was not even the semblance, or attempt of it. The only words we got which were akin to a definition, except some words which, it appears, I took down hastily, and which Mr. Armstrong abandoned in his next speech, the only words bearing even the semblance of a definition, are "an awful inscrutable somewhat" (laughter and hear, hear). Except these words, there have been no words in the arguments and in the speeches of Mr. Armstrong which enabled me, in any fashion, to identify any meaning which he may have of it, except phrases which contradict each other as soon as you examine them (applause). Now, what is the definition of which Mr. Armstrong says that he is incapable of saying whether or not it is correct? "That God is a self-existent, eternal being, infinite in power and wisdom, and perfect in holiness and goodness, the maker of heaven and earth." Now, does Mr. Armstrong mean that each division of the definition comes within his answer? Does he mean that in relation to no part of that which is predicated in this definition is he capable of saying whether it is correct or not? Because, if he does, he is answered by his own speech, as a portion of this defines God as being perfect in holiness and goodness, in power and wisdom; and it defines him as eternal in duration and infinite in his existence; and also defines him as being the creator of the universe. Now, if Mr. Armstrong means that "as a whole, I can't say whether it is correct or not," or if, in defending his position, he means that, having divided the definition in its parts, he cannot say, whether it is, in any one part, correct or not, then I must remind him that, in this debate, the onus lies upon him of saying what it is he worships, and what it is he contends it is reasonable of us to worship (hear, hear). If he cannot give us a clear and concise notion of what he worships, and of what he says it is reasonable for us to worship, I say that his case has fallen to the ground. It must be unreasonable to worship that of which you, in thought, cannot predicate anything in any way—accurately or inaccurately (applause). Mr. Armstrong evidently felt—I hope that you will not think that the feeling was justified—that there was a tendency on my part to make too much of, and to be too precise as to, the meaning of words used. Permit me to say it is impossible to be too precise; it is impossible to be too clear; it is impossible to be too distinct—(hear, hear)—especially when you are discussing a subject in terms which are not used by everybody in the same sense, and which are sometimes not used by the mass of those to whom you are addressing yourself at all (applause). It is still more necessary to be precise when many of those terms have been appropriated by the teachers of different theologies and mythologies, such teachers having alleged that the use of the words meant something which, on the face of it, contradicted itself, and by other teachers who, if they have not been self-contradictory, have attached meanings widely different to those given by their fellows (hear, hear). I will ask you, then, to insist with me that what is meant by God should be given us in such words that we can clearly and easily identify it (hear, hear). If you cannot even in thought identify God, it is unreasonable—absolutely unreasonable—to talk of worshipping "it" (applause). What is "it" you are going to worship? Can you think clearly what it is you are going to worship? If you can think clearly for yourself what it is, tell me in what words you think it. It may be that my brain may riot be skilled enough to fully comprehend that, but, at any rate, we shall then have an opportunity of testing for ourselves how little or how much clear thought you may have on the subject (laughter and applause). If you are obliged to state that it is impossible to put your thoughts in words so clear and so distinct that I may understand the meaning of it as clearly as you do,
or that a person of ordinary capacity cannot comprehend the words in which you describe it—if that is impossible, then it is unreasonable to ask me to worship it (loud applause). I say it is unreasonable to ask me to worship an unknown quantity—an unrecognisable symbol expressing nothing whatever. If you know what it is you worship—if you think you know what it is you worship—I say it is your duty to put into words what you think you know (hear, hear). We have had in this debate some pleas put forward, which, if they had remained unchallenged, might have been some sort of pleas for the existence of a Deity, but each of those pleas has in turn failed. I do not want to use too strong a phrase, so I will say that each in turn has been abandoned. Take, for instance, the plea of beauty, harmony, and calmness of the world, as illustrated by lakes and mountains, to which I contrasted storms and volcanoes. Mr. Armstrong's reply to that was: "But this involves problems which are alike insoluble by Theist and Atheist." If it is so, why do you worship what is non-capable of solution? If there be no solution, why do you put that word "God" as representative of the solution which you say is unattainable, and ask me to prostrate myself before it and adore it? (applause). We must have consistency of phraseology. Either the problem is soluble—then the onus is upon you to state it in reasonable terms; or it is insoluble, and then you have abandoned the point you set out to prove, because it must be unreasonable to worship an insoluble proposition (applause). How do you know anything of that God you ask us to worship? I must avow that, after listening carefully to what has fallen from Mr. Armstrong, I have been unable to glean what he knows of God or how he knows it (hear, hear). I remember he has said something about a "voice of God," but he has frankly admitted that the voice in question has spoken differently and in contradictory senses in different ages (loud cries of "no, no,")—and those who say "no," will do better to leave Mr. Armstrong to answer for himself as to the accuracy of what I state (hear, hear). I say he frankly admitted that the voice he alluded to had spoken differently and contradictorily in different ages. (Renewed cries of "no"). I say yes, and I will give the evidence of my yes. (Cries of "no, no," "order," and "hear, hear.") I say yes, and I will give the evidence of my yes (hear, hear, and applause). Mr. Armstrong said that in one hundred years there had been a purification, and an amelioration, and a clearing away; and that that change had been vaster still since one thousand years ago (applause). He is responsible for admitting what I said about the definition of morality being different in one age and amongst one people to what it is in another age and amongst another people; and if that does not mean exactly what I put substantially to you, it has no meaning at all (loud applause). I strive not to misrepresent that which I have to answer; I will do my best to understand what it is that is urged against me. Those who hold a different judgment should try, at least, to suspend it until I have finished (hear, hear, and applause). In the Baird Lectures, to which I referred last night—and let me here say that I don't think that any complaint can be fairly made of my quoting from them—something was said last night about my using great men as an authority. Now I do not do that; but if I find that a man, whose position and learning gave him advantages with regard to a subject upon which I am speaking, and he has expressed what I wished to say better than I can do—if I use his language it is right I should say from where I have taken my words (hear, hear) And if I remember right, we had, last night, quotations from Charles Voysey, Professor Newman, Professor Blackie, and a host of similar writers on the other side. I take it they were given in the same fashion that I intended in giving the names of the writers of the quotations I have cited—not for the purpose of overwhelming me with their authority, but simply to inform me and you from whence were got the words used (hear, hear). Now, Professor Flint, in his book on Atheism, directed against the position taken up by men like myself, says: "The child is born, not into the religion of nature but into blank ignorance; and, if left entirely to itself, would probably never find out as much religious truth as the most ignorant of parents can teach it." Again, on page 23 he says: "The belief that there is one God, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, has certainly not been wrought out by each one of us for himself, but has been passed on from man to man, from parent to child: tradition, education, common consent, the social medium, have exerted great influence in determining its acceptance and prevalence." Now, what I want to put to you from this is that, just as Max Müller and others have done, you must try to find out whether what is to be understood by the word "God" is to be worshipped or not, by tracing backwards the origin and growth of what is to-day called religion. You will have to search out the traditions of the world, should there fail to be any comprehensible meaning come from the other side. Now, what God is it that we are to worship? Is it the Jewish God? Is it the Mahometan God? Is it the God of the Trinitarian Christian? Is it one of the gods of the Hindus? Or is it one of the gods of the old Greeks or Italians, and, if so, which of them? And in each case from what source are we to get an accurate definition of either of those gods? Perhaps Mr. Armstrong will say that it is none of these. He will probably decline to have any of these Gods fastened upon him as the proper God to worship; but the very fact that there are so many different gods—different with every variety of people—contradictory in their attributes and qualities—the very fact that there is a wide difference in believers in a God makes it but right that I should require that the God we are asked to worship should be accurately defined (applause). In the current number of the Contemporary Review, Professor Monier Williams, dealing with the development of Indian religious thought, has a paragraph which is most appropriate to this debate. He says, on page 246: "The early religion of the Indo-Aryans was a
development of a still earlier belief in man's subjection to the powers of nature and his need of conciliating them. It was an unsettled system, which at one time assigned all the phenomena of the universe to one first Cause; at another, attributed them to several Causes operating independently; at another, supposed the whole visible creation to be a simple evolution from an eternal creative germ. It was a belief which, according to the character and inclination of the worshipper was now monotheism, now tritheism, now polytheism, now pantheism. But it was not yet idolatry. Though the forces of nature were thought of as controlled by divine persons, such persons were not yet idolised. There is no evidence from the Vedic hymns that images were employed. The mode of divine worship continued to be determined from a consideration of human liking and dislikings. Every worshipper praised the gods because he liked to be praised himself. He honoured them with offerings because he liked to receive presents himself. This appears to have been the simple origin of the sacrificial system, afterwards closely interwoven with the whole religious system. And here comes the difficult question—What were the various ideas expressed by the term sacrifice? In its purest and simplest form it denoted a dedication of some simple gift as an expression of gratitude for blessings received. Soon the act of sacrifice became an act of propitiation for purely selfish ends. The favour of celestial beings who were capable of conferring good or inflicting harm on crops, flocks, and herds, was conciliated by offerings and oblations of all kinds. First, the gods were invited to join their worshippers at the every-day meal. Then they were invoked at festive gatherings, and offered a share of the food consumed. Their bodies were believed to be composed of ethereal particles, dependent for nourishment on the indivisible elementary essence of the substances presented to them, and to be furnished with senses capable of being gratified by the aroma of butter and grain offered in fire (homa); and especially by the fumes arising from libations of the exhilarating juice extracted from the Soma plant.” I will allege that you cannot give me a definition of God that does not originate in the ignorance of man as to the causes of phenomena which are abnormal to him, and which he cannot explain. The wonderful, the extraordinary, the terrific, the mysterious, the mighty, the grand, the furious, the good, the highly beneficent—all these that he did not understand became to him God. He might have understood them on careful investigation had his mind then been capable for the search, but instead of that he attributed them to huge personifications of the Unknown—the word behind which to-day is God, and it is the equivalent for all he observed, but did not comprehend, for all that happened of which he knew not the meaning (applause). It was not education but ignorance which gave birth to the so-called idea of a God (hear, hear). And I will submit to you that, in truth, all forms of worship have arisen from exaggeration and misapplication of what men have seen in their fellow-men and fellow-women. A man found that a big furious man might be pacified and calmed by soothing words; that a big avaricious man might be satisfied and pleased with plenteous gifts; that this one might be compelled to do something by angry words or harsh treatment; and that this one could be won by supplications to comply with his wishes—and what he imagined or observed as to his fellows he applied to the unknown, thinking, no doubt, that that which he had found efficacious in the known experience, might also be efficacious in that in which he had no experience. And what did you find? You found the sailor at sea, who did not understand navigation, offering candles to his Deity, or special saint, and promising more offerings of a similar character if the Deity brought him safe into port. I say it is more reasonable to teach him how to steer than how to worship, and also more reasonable to know something about the science of navigation. That would prove much more serviceable than worship, for when he relied upon candles, he ran upon rocks and reefs, but as soon as he understood navigation, he could bring his own ship safely into port (applause). Prayer is spoken of by Mr. Armstrong as an act of worship. What does it imply? It implies a belief held on the part of the person who prays, that he may be noticed by the being to whom he prays; and it also implies that he is asking that being to do something which he would have left undone but for that prayer. Then does he think that he can influence the person whom he addresses by his rank or by his position? Does he think he can influence his Deity by his emotion? Does he think that as he would win a woman's love, so he would gain God, by passionate devotion? Does he think that, as he would frighten a man, so he would influence God through fear? Does he appeal to God's logic, or to his pity? Does he appeal to his mercy or to his justice? or does he hope to tell God one thing he could not know without the prayer? (loud applause.) I want an answer, here, clear and thorough, from one who says that prayer is a reasonable worship to be offered to God (renewed applause). Something was said last night about a cause being necessarily intelligent, and I think, in my speech afterwards, I challenged the assertion. Nothing was said to explain what was meant, nothing was done to further explain the matter, and although I defined what I meant by cause, and defined what I meant by intelligence, no objection was taken. Now, I have seen a hut crushed by an avalanche falling on it, as I have been crossing the Alps. Does Mr. Armstrong mean to tell me that the avalanche which crushed the hut was intelligent, or that it had an intelligent wielder? If the avalanche is intelligent, why does he think so? If the avalanche has an intelligent wielder, please explain to me the goodness of that intelligent wielder who dashes the avalanche on the cottage? (applause). If you tell me that it is a mystery which you cannot explain, I say it is unreasonable to ask me to worship such a mystery—(renewed applause)—and as long as you call it a mystery, and treat it as that which you cannot
explain, so long you have no right to ask me to adore it. There was a time when man worshipped the lightning and thunder, and looked upon them as Deity. But now he has grown wiser, and, having investigated the subject, instead of worshipping the lightning as a Deity, he erects lightning-conductors and electric wires, and chains the lightning and thunder God; knowledge is more potent than prayer (applause). As long as they were worshipped science could do nothing, but now we see to what uses electricity has been brought. When they knew that the lightning-conductor was more powerful than the God they worshipped, then science was recognised the mighty master and ruler, instead of ignorant faith (applause). I have already submitted that there has not been the semblance of proof or authority for the existence of any being identifiable in words to whom it would be reasonable to offer worship, and I will show you the need for pressing that upon you. A strong statement was made last night which amounted to an admission that there was wrong here which should not be, and that, but for the hope on the part of the speaker that that wrong would be remedied at some future time, he would be in a state of terrible despair. He gave no reason for the hope, and no evidence why he held the hope. He only contended that things were so bad here that they would be indefensible except for the hope that they would be remedied. This admission is fatal to the affirmation of God to be worshipped in the way here mentioned. Then we had something said about experience. All experience must be experience of the senses: you can have no other experience whatever. To quote again from Max Müller: "All consciousness begins with sensuous perception, with what we feel, and hear, and see. Out of this we construct what may be called conceptual knowledge, consisting of collective and abstract concepts. What we call thinking consists simply in addition and subtraction of precepts and concepts. Conceptual knowledge differs from sensuous knowledge, not in substance, but in form only. As far as the material is concerned, nothing exists in the intellect except what existed before in the senses." It is the old proposition put in different forms by Locke, Spinoza, and others, over and over again, but it has to be taken with this qualification that you have innumerable instances of hallucinations of the senses. Delusions on religious matters are open to the remark that of all hallucinations of the senses—as Dr. H. Maudsley shows in the Fortnightly Review—of all hallucinations of the senses those on religious matters only keep current with the religious teachings of the day. Sight, touch, smell, hearing, feeling—all are the subject of illusion as is shown over and over again. Any man bringing as evidence to us the report of experience which is only of an abnormal character, is bound to submit it to a test which is something beyond in severity that which we should apply to normal events. The more abnormal it is the more particularity in detail do I wish, in order to examine it, so that I may be able to identify it; and the more curious the statement the more carefully do I wish to test it. Loose words in theology will not do, and here I submit that at present we stand, with, at any rate, on one side, nothing whatever affirmed against me. I gathered last night;—I hope incorrectly—I gathered last night—I hope the words were spoken incautiously—that Mr. Armstrong held it to be natural that a man should have to struggle against wrong, vice, and folly, for the purpose of bringing out the higher qualities, and that it was alleged that it was to that struggle we were indebted for our virtue. If that were a real thought on the part of Mr. Armstrong it is but a sorry encouragement to any attempts at reformation and civilisation. Why strive to remove misery and wrong if the struggle against them is conducive to virtue? It would take a long time to bring about any ameliorating change in society if such doctrine were widely held (loud applause).

The Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG, who was applauded on rising, said: Mr. Chairman and Friends—I wish, in justice to myself, to say that I freely offered Mr. Bradlaugh the choice of parts as to the order of speaking. I know not which way the balance of advantage lies; but after the speech we have listened to, I think you will agree with me that he who speaks first the second night has a considerable pull (laughter). Last night as I passed down that awful flight of stairs, which they must climb who, in this town, would soar from the nether world to the celestial realms of Secularism, I heard many comments, and among others one man just behind me said: "Oh! Armstrong is nowhere in Bradlaugh's hands. Bradlaugh can do just what he likes with him" (laughter). Now, my friend said the very truth in a certain sense. As a debater I am nowhere compared with Mr. Bradlaugh. He has fluency—I compute that in thirty minutes I can string together some 4,000 words, while, I fancy, Mr. Bradlaugh's score would be just about 6,000—so that to equalise our mere mechanical advantages I ought really to have three minutes to every two of his. If I have omitted many things which I ought to have said, it is due to this reason (laughter and hear, hear)—for I have not been silent during the time assigned to me. Of course, I do not complain of this. Then, to say nothing of Mr. Bradlaugh's powerful intellect, to which I do not pretend, and his wide reading, he is in constant practice at this work so new to me, so much so that I find almost every thought he expressed last night, and in almost—sometimes precisely—identical language, printed in his pamphlets, and much of it even spoken in one or other of his numerous debates. Take this, along with his prodigious memory, and you will see that the doctrine of Atheism has, indeed, in him, the very ablest defender that its friends could wish. And if what he says is not enough to demolish Theism, then you may be sure that Theism cannot be demolished (applause). But then, friends, I do want you not to look on this as a personal struggle between Mr. Bradlaugh and myself at all. I no more accept it in that light than I would accept a
challenge from him to a boxing match, and I think you will all agree with me that in that case, in discretion I
should show the better part of valour (hear, hear, and laughter). We are both speaking in all earnestness of what
we hold to be the truth. Neither of us, I presume, in the least, expects to make converts on the spot: converts so
quickly made would be like enough to be swayed back the other way next week. But we do desire that the seed
of our words should sink into your minds; that you should give them your reverent attention, that, in due
season, so far as they are good and true, they may ripen into matured convictions of the truth (applause). And
now let me look back at the position in which this conference was left last night. I am the more at liberty to do
so, as to-night Mr. Bradlaugh has only—or chiefly—done two things, namely, repeated some things which he
said last night, and answered certain arguments of Professor Flint. That is perfectly fair, but it is equally fair for
me to leave Professor Flint to answer for himself (hear, hear, and applause). And I complain that Mr. Bradlaugh
either did not listen to, or did not understand, what I endeavoured to put in plainest words about the function of
that voice of God which we call conscience (hear, hear). Observe, that while in different climes and ages, ay, in
the same man at different times, the conceptions of the particular deeds that come under the head of right differ,
the idea of rightness itself, of rectitude, is always and invariably the same, from its first faint glimmer in the
savage little removed comparatively from the lower animal, from which he is said to be developed, to the
season of its clear shining, luminous and glorious, in hero, prophet, martyr, saint—in Elizabeth Fry, in Mary
Carpenter, in Florence Nightingale. To speak metaphysically, the abstract subjective idea of right is the same
and one, but our ideas of the concrete and objective right develop and progress ever towards a purer and more
beautiful ideal. We have by our own powers to satisfy ourselves as best we can what is right. But when we have
made up our minds, the voice of God sounds clear as a bell upon the soul and bids us do it (applause). This I
stated again and again last night, yet to-night again Mr. Bradlaugh has confounded the two things. Mr.
Bradlaugh raised a laugh with his story of the cannibal objecting to the tough, and choosing the tender meal.
That cannibal, in so far, does but illustrate how a man is swayed by those lower instincts and desires which I
rigorously and definitely distinguished and separated from conscience. Why Mr. Bradlaugh confounded this
with a case of the deliverance of conscience I cannot think, because I am so sure it was neither to make you grin
nor to confuse your minds (hear, hear). The latter part of the first night's debate turned on the mystery of evil.
But Mr. Bradlaugh did not then venture to allege the possibility of a world in which noble character could be
developed without the contact with suffering and pain (hear, hear). He said he was not called upon to make a
world; happily not; but at any rate he should not question the excellence of the world in which he lives unless
he can at least conceive a better—(loud applause)—and I say that where evil had never been, or what we call
evil, manliness, bravery, generosity, sympathy, tenderness, could never be (applause). A world without
temptation would be a world without virtue (hear, hear). A world all pleasurable would be a world without
goodness, and even the pleasurable itself would cease by sheer monotony to give any pleasure at all. A world
not developed out of the conflict of good and evil, or joy and pain, would necessarily be an absolutely neutral
world, without emotion of any sort. Unless the whole tint is to be neutral, you must have light and shade; and
the only test by which to judge whether the power controlling the world is good or evil—God or Devil, as Mr.
Bradlaugh says—(applause)—is to note whether light or darkness preponderates; and not only that, but whether
the movement, the tendency, the development, the drift of things is towards the gradual swallowing up of
darkness by the light, or light by darkness; whether freedom, happiness, virtue, are in the procession of the ages
losing their ground, or slowly, surely winning ever fresh accession (applause). I take it, then, that if we are to
have a final predominance of goodness—nay, even of happiness, if you make that the highest good—it can only
be by these things winning their way by degrees out of the evil which is their shadow. And I invite you once
more to test this from experience. My own experience, clear and sure, and that of every other devout man, is
simply this: that whatever sorrow, whatever pain we suffer, though it wring our very heart, the time is sure to
come when, looking back thereon, we thank God that it was given us, perceiving that it was good, not evil, that
befel us, being the means, in some way or other, of our further advance in happiness or goodness, or nearness to
our heavenly Father. You tell me it is. all very well for me; but you point to those whose lot is cast in less
pleasant places, and ask me what of them? Is God good to them? Well, I will take you to a dark and dismal
cellar beneath the reeking streets of a mighty city. And this picture is not drawn from fancy, it is a photograph
from the life of one I know of In that dark and poor abode you shall enter, and you shall see an aged woman to
whom that spot is home. She is eaten up with disease, the inheritance, doubtless, of her forefathers' sin. For fifty
years her simple story has been of alternations between less pain and more. Beside her are two orphan children,
no kith or kin of hers, but adopted by her out of the large love which she nurtures, in her heart, to share the
pence she wins from the mangle, every turn of which is, to her, physical pain. Well, surely, she knows nought
of God, has none of those "experiences" which Mr. Bradlaugh treats as if they were luxuries confined to the
comfortable Theist in his easy-chair, or on his softly-pillowed bed. Ay, but she is rising from her knees to turn
to the dry crust on the board, which is all she has to share with the children. And what says she as you enter?
"Oh, sir, I was only thanking God for his goodness, and teaching these poor children so." Now, if Mr.
Bradlaugh is right in declaring we can know nought of God, then that old woman ought never to have eased her laden heart by the outburst of her prayer, ought to have cast out of her as a freak of lunacy the peace that stole upon her there as she rose from her knees, ought to have shunned teaching those children, whose lot was like to be as hard as hers, one word about the reliance that she had on God (applause). Instead of that she taught the prosperous man who stumbled down the broken stair into her abode, a lesson of trust and faith in the goodness and presence of God, which he never forgot as long as he lived (hear, hear and applause). I sat the other day beside a dying girl. Her body was in hideous pain, but her face was lit with a light of beauty and of love which told a wondrous tale of her spirit's life. She died, and her mother and her sisters weep to-day. But a new love, a new gentleness, a new sense of the nearness of the spirit-world has already blossomed in their home, and, I am not sure that they would call her back even if their voices could avail. So it is; this woe which we call evil is the sacred spring of all that is beautiful and good (hear, hear). To the Atheist the world's sorrow must, indeed, be insupportable. If he be sincere and have a heart, I do not know how he can ever eat and drink and make merry, still less how he can make a jest and raise aitter in the very same speech in which he dwells with all the skill of practised eloquence upon that woe (applause). If I were an Atheist I hardly think I could ever throw off the darkness of this shadow. But, believing in God, whom I personally know, and know as full of love, I am constrained to trust that, though this evil be a mystery the full significance of which I cannot understand, and though relatively to the little sum of things here and now it seem great, yet that relatively to the whole plan and sum of the universe it is very small, and that that poor child, born of sin and shame, who knew no better than to steal the loaf, shall one day wear a diadem of celestial glory, and be by no means least in the Kingdom of Heaven. And when I see the Atheist smiling, laughing, having apparently a light heart in him, I am bound to suppose that he too, somehow, trusts that goodness and happiness are going to win in the end—that is, that goodness is the ultimately overruling power. And if he believes that, he believes in the power which men call God (applause). Now, Mr. Bradlaugh has castigated me with some severity for not obliging him with definitions. It is impossible, he says, to be too precise in the use of words, and I agree with him. But by definitions I cannot make the simplest words in the English language more plain to you (hear, hear). He, himself, has given us some specimens of definitions which I do not think have made things much clearer than they were before. There are three words of importance in the title of this debate, and I will try, since Mr. Bradlaugh has experienced difficulty in understanding me, whether I can tell him more distinctly what I mean by them. Those three words are "reasonable," "worship," and "God." When I say it is reasonable to do a thing, I do not mean that I can demonstrate to you with the precision of mathematics that every proposition, the truth of which is assumed in that act, is true; but I do mean that the propositions, on the assumption of which the act proceeds, are, at least, sufficiently probable to win the verdict of an unbiased judgment, and that the act itself is likely to be found to be a good. Mr. Bradlaugh himself has defined "worship" as including "prayer, praise, sacrifice, offerings, solemn services, adoration, and personal prostration." If Mr. Bradlaugh will kindly occupy his next fifteen minutes by defining to me exactly what he means by each of those terms, I may be better able to tell him whether I include them all in worship, and whether he has left anything out. But at present I do not find that any one of them is simpler or more comprehensible than the term worship, while "prayer, praise, sacrifice, and offerings," each might mean at least two very different things; "solemn services" is hopelessly vague; "adoration," as I understand it, is included in some of the others; and before we know what "personal prostration" means, we must define "person"—no easy matter—and then explain what we mean by the "prostration" of that person (laughter and applause). Meanwhile, I have described, at the very outset, that energy of my soul which I call worship, namely, that in which I address myself to God as to one immeasurably
directly know him. Beyond that he is the subject of philosophy, but not of immediate knowledge. I believe him
to be very much more; but that does not affect the reasonableness of worshipping him, and that is the subject of
our debate (hear, hear). So that I cannot define God in the way I can define Nottingham, or Europe, or the earth
(hear, hear). I cannot tell how much is included in his being; how much, if any, is excluded. I can tell you what
he is to me, in relation to me—and that is the only way in which any entity can be defined—and I can tell you
what other men testify by word, by deed, by martyrdom, he is to them (hear, hear). Beyond that I have no
instruments by which to measure; and therefore I take up no pen with which to write down the measurements,
or define (applause). But Mr. Bradlaugh says if we cannot exactly define an object we are incapable of exact
thought or belief concerning it. Did Mr. Bradlaugh do algebra at school? That most exact and prosaic science
con- sists largely in reasoning about unknown quantities; that is, about some $x$ or $y$, of which you only know
that it has some one or perhaps two definite relations to certain other things. You don't know what $x$ or $y$ is in
itself—only some function by which it is related to $a$ and $b$ and $c$. From that relation you reason, and sometimes
from it you get by subtle processes to infer a vast deal more, and it will perhaps prove just from that relation
that $x$ must be such and such a number, or that it must be infinite. Does Mr. Bradlaugh say we can have no
exact thought about the $x$ in the algebraic equation, before we have worked out the whole sum? Yes, we know it
in its relations or some of them. Yet the very essence of algebra is that $x$ is undefined. The human soul is the $a$,
$b$, or $c$, the well-known, the familiar; God is the $x$, related won-drously thereto, yet none has ever had yet worked
out that sum. The supremest philosophers, who here are school-boys indeed, have only displayed workings on
their slates which, to use again mathematical language, show that $x$ approaches towards a limit which is equal
to infinity (hear, hear). But Mr. Bradlaugh says there should be no belief in that which we cannot define. Now, I
challenge Mr. Bradlaugh in all respect and sincerity to define himself (applause). If he declines or fails, I will
not say we must cease to believe in Mr. Bradlaugh, but that is the necessary inference from his maxims. Mr.
Bradlaugh says all experience must be the experience of the senses. By which sense does he experience love,
dignation, or all the varied sentiments which bind him to his fellow-men and women (applause)? Mr.
Bradlaugh told us in his concluding speech last night that no experience of another man's can be anything at all
to him until tested by his own. Is, then, a man born blind unreasonable if he believes that others have
experience of some wonderful sensation, making objects very vividly present to them, which they call sight?
Shall the man born deaf say he does not believe there is such a thing as sound? I know not whether Mr.
Bradlaugh has any personal experience of the heat of the torrid zone. Does he believe it? Has he tested the
height of Mont Blanc? If not, does he hold his belief in suspense as to whether it is 15,000 feet high or not? The
fact is the enormous majority of the beliefs on which we act every day of our lives with perfect confidence are
founded either on sheer Faith, untested and by us untestable, or on Testimony, that is the recorded experience of
others which we have not tested. But Mr. Brad- laugh says that if the alleged experience of another is
"abnormal" we must not believe it. He did not define "abnormal," and I want to know who is to be judge
whether my experience of the command that comes to me in conscience is abnormal or not. Mr. Bradlaugh?
This audience? With confidence I accept the verdict of any gathering of my fellow-men and women (applause). But
Mr. Bradlaugh says, if someone said a room ran a race, you would call him a lunatic. That argument means nothing, or else it means that Martineau and Newman, and all great and good who have recognised God—ay, and Voltaire and Thomas Paine—Theists both—are to be counted lunatics (hear, hear). Time has prevented—I hope it may not still prevent—my stating clearly what I
mean, when I proceed on philosophical grounds to allege my belief that there is an intelligent cause.
"Intelligent" I shall not stop to define, unless I am challenged to it, because I presume intelligence in you
(applause). "If there were no such supreme intelligence," says Mr. Voysey, "the universe, supposing it to be
self-evolved (and of course unconscious, since it is not intelligent) has only just come into self-consciousness
through one of its parts—viz., man. It had been, so to speak, asleep all these cycles of ages till man was born
and his intellect dawned upon the world, and, for the first time, the universe realised its own existence through
the intelligent consciousness of one of its products. I do not think absurdity could go further than that. If there
be no self conscious intelligence but man, then the universe is only just now, through man, becoming aware of
its own existence" (hear, hear, and applause). "Cause," Mr. Bradlaugh, I think, has defined, in language which
included the words, "means towards an end." A mean or means, however, is, by the very conception of the
word, the second term in a series of three of which the end is the third, and "means" implies some power
making use of those means, and that power is the first term in the series. Now, I claim that cause is that first
term, whether there be two more, or only one. By "cause" I mean—and you mean, if you will search your
thought—the initiating power, that which begins to produce an effect. Now, my mind is so constituted that to
speak to me of a power which initiates effects, yet is not conscious, intelligent, is sheer nonsense: therefore I
hold the power which displays itself as one in the uniformity of the laws of nature, and lies behind all
phenomena—the growth of the grass, the rush of the cataract, the breath of the air, the stately sailing of the stars
through their geometric paths, to be intelligent, conscious, to do it all by distinct purpose; and I can in no way
otherwise conceive. I conceive this source of the geometric motion of all the spheres and of the minutest dance of protoplasm in the nettle's sting as always, everywhere, of purpose producing these effects. And the worship which I gave God as I know him in relationship to me is refined and glorified by the conception which thus dawns on me of his being. And in the words of François Marie Arouet Voltaire, I commune thus with myself: "Where," says he, "is the eternal geometrician? Is he in one place, or in all places without occupying space? I know not. Has he arranged all things of his own substance? I know not. Is he immense without quantity and without reality? I know not. All I know is, that we must adore him and be just" (loud applause).

MR. BRADLAUGH: It is perfectly true that what I have said here I have said before, and very much of what I have said I have printed before. I am quite sure that Mr. Armstrong did not intend that as any blame upon me. [MR. ARMSTRONG: Certainly not.] In fact, if any advantage accrued, it would accrue to him, because, having what I had to say on the subject to refer to, he would be better able to answer it by previous preparation. Why I mention it is because one person seemed to think that it was very reprehensible on my part to say here anything that was not perfectly new. I make no claim to originality, but try to say the truest thing I can in the clearest way I can (hear, hear, and applause). Then I am told that I did not pay attention enough to what was said last night about the functions of the voice of God. I have been told to-night that the idea of righteousness and rectitude has always been one and the same amongst all human beings, from the savage to the highest intellect. If telling me so is evidence of it, then, of course, I must be content. But, unfortunately, I am not content, but say that the evidence is all the other way (hear, hear, and a laugh). I have read carefully Wake's latest book on the evolutions of morality, tracing out the growth of notions of morality amongst savages. I have read Tylor, Broca, Lubbock, Agassiz, Gliddon, Pritchard, Lawrence, and I think I am familiar with the best of ancient and modern authors on the subject; and I say it is absolutely contrary to the fact that the notions of morality are, and always have been identical from the lowest savage to the highest intellect. It is absolutely contrary to the fact that one and the same idea of right always and everywhere prevails (hear, hear). It is not a question of my opinion; it is a question of the conclusive evidence laboriously collected on the subject, and I am sorry to have to put it in that plain and distinct way (hear, hear). Then I am told, and I am sure Mr. Armstrong would not have said that unless he thought he did, that he carefully separated last night the lower instincts which were not included in conscience from the higher mental qualities. But to my memory this was not so, and I have read the whole of the speeches to-day in the reporter's notes, and I must say I found nothing of the kind. Now we have a greater difficulty. How much and how many—how much of the mental instincts, and how many of the mental faculties—are we to class as going to make up conscience, and how much not? I do not pretend to make the classification. It rests upon the person who has the burden of proof here. I deny there has been, as yet, even an attempt at classification, and I call for some statement which shall enable me to understand that; without it is to be foregone. Then I had it returned upon me that I had no right to criticise this world unless I could conceive a better. The very act of criticism involves the conception of the better. When I point out something insufficient or wrong, that criticism implies the conception of something conceivably better if that were changed. If you want, now, an illustration of something possibly better, I would point to the famine in China. There, actually, millions of people are dying for want of food, and, for the purpose of sustaining life a little longer in themselves, the members of families are eating their own relations. If I were God I should not tolerate that—(applause)—nor could I worship a God who does. Mr. Armstrong, in his speech, pointed out what he terms an intelligent purpose. It may be for an intelligent purpose that millions of the Chinese should die of starvation, and actually eat one another for want of food; but if it is, I cannot understand the goodness of the intelligent purposer. You cannot take one illustration and say that it is the work of an intelligent person, and then take another and say that it is not. If it is the intelligence of God displayed in one case it must be in another, unless Mr. Armstrong contends that there are a number of Gods, amongst which number there must be a good many devils (laughter and loud applause). There are many things of a similar kind I could point out, and ask the same question with regard to: where is the intelligence of God as displayed in permitting the Bulgarian atrocities, the Russo-Turkish war, the Greek insurrection—or in the world nearer home, its crime, misery, and want (hear, hear, and applause). I do not draw the same moral from the story of the starving woman that Mr. Armstrong would draw. While you thank God for the crime, pauperism, misery, and poverty, I say that you are degrading yourself. The Atheist deplores the misery, the poverty, and the crime, and does all he can to prevent it by assisting the sufferers to extricate themselves, instead of spending his time in blessing and praising a God for sending the woe and attributing it to his superior intelligence (applause). Then there was an astounding statement which came more in the sermon part of the speech than in the argumentative portion of it (laughter). Perhaps that may account for the wealth of its assumption, and also for deficiency of its basis. It was that freedom, happiness, and virtue, through the power of God, were continually winning their way. How is it that an intelligent and omnipotent God does not look after them more, and see that they overcome opposition a little faster than they have done? Mr. Armstrong says that I fight shy of experience. I don't do anything of the kind. I fight shy of experience which will not submit itself to any test; I fight shy of experience which cannot bear
examination and investigation; I fight shy of such experience only. Our friend gives us the experience of a
dying girl. Now, I do not mean to say that every religion in the world has not been a consolation to dying
people—that belief in a God has not been a consolation to persons who have enjoyed the full power of their
mental faculties on their death-beds. Since I was in America some time ago I saw a copy of a sermon preached
by a New York clergyman, who had attended, what he believed to be the dying bed of an Atheist, and he said
that he hoped that Christians would learn to die as bravely and as calmly as the Atheist seemed prepared to die.
Luckily that Atheist did not die. He is alive tonight to answer for himself (applause, hear, hear). I don't think
an illustration of personal experience in that way can go for much. The man and woman who die in possession
of their faculties, with strong opinions, will generally die strong in those opinions. Men have been martyred for
false gods as well as for the one you would have me worship. It is useless to make this kind of an appeal in a
discussion, in which there was room and need for much else. Heavenly stars, a crown, and that kind of thing are
not as certain as they ought to be in order to be treated as material in this discussion. And then Mr. Armstrong
says what he would do and how he would feel if he were an Atheist. Charles Reade wrote a novel, which he
entitled "Put yourself in his Place." Mr. Armstrong has been trying to put himself in the Atheist's place, but he
has not been very successful (hear, hear). The Atheist does not think that all the evil which exists in this world
is without remedy; he does not think that there is no possible redemption from sorrow, or that there is no
salvation from misery (hear, hear). He thinks and believes that the knowledge of to-day a little, and to-morrow
more, and the greater knowledge of the day that will yet come, will help to redeem, will help to rescue the
inhabitants of this world from their miserable position: and further, that this is not to be in some world that is
to come, but in the world of the present, in which the salvation is self-worked out (loud applause). The Atheist
will not make promises of something in the future as a compensation for the present miseries of man. Instead of
saying that for prayers and worship the poor woman or man will have the bread of life in future, he tries to give
her and him the strength to win bread here to sustain and preserve life as long as it is possible to do so
(applause). The diadems, too—which our friend has to offer to the poor—which are to be worn in heaven by
those who have had no clothes here—possess no attraction to the Atheist; therefore he does not offer them, but,
instead, tries to develop such self-reliant effort as may clothe and feed those who are naked and hungry while
they are here. He directs his efforts towards human happiness in the present, and believes that in the future
humanity must be triumphant over misery, want, and wrong (applause). A diadem of celestial glory may or may
not be a very good thing; of that I do not look upon myself as a judge, so long as I have no belief in its
possibility. That there is much misery and suffering in the world I know, and it rests with Mr. Armstrong to
prove whether it is better to try and remedy it here or to worship its author in the doubtful endeavour to obtain
as recompense a crown of celestial glory (hear, hear, and applause). But which God is it that we are to worship?
Is it the Mahometan God, or the Jewish God? Is it one of the Gods of the Hindus? Is it the Christian's God? If
so, which sect of Christians? You must not use phrases which mean different things in different mouths (hear,
hear). Then we come to definitions, and, having objected that there was no necessity for defining, or having
objected that defining would not make things more clear, with the skill and tact of a practical debater, my friend
goes through every word (laughter). Prayer, we were told, has two distinct meanings. Might I ask in which
sense it was used in the first speech made last night? You did not tell us then that prayer had two senses. I ask
why you did not tell us? I might have thought it was one fashion when you meant another. I ask what meaning
you meant when you used it? What two senses has prayer towards God?—in which of the two senses did you
use prayer—and, knowing it had two meanings, why did you not tell us in which sense you used it? Then
praise, too, you said, is to thank God for his goodness; and as you used the word many times last night you
knew what you meant by it, having relied upon it so firmly that it seemed to be an evidence of God's existence
(applause). By sacrifice I mean an act of real cowardice. The coward does not dare to pay in his own person for
the wrong which he has done, so he offers something or somebody weaker in his stead. He tries by offering a
sacrifice to avert the vengeance which would fall—and, according to his creed, ought to fall—upon himself.
Sacrifice is the act of a coward (applause). Offerings are of flowers, of fruits; offerings of young animals,
lambs, kids; sometimes the offerings are things which come the nearest to their hands; sometimes the sacrifice
consists of inanimate things which had a special value to the worshipper; sometimes the first fruits of their
fields or flocks, which they offer to the source, as they think, of the plenty in those fields and flocks. In later
times, offerings have got to be much more complex; but even now you will still find them, in modified
fashions, in the Churches of England and Rome. The mutual system is that which operates in every form of
worship which makes any sort of claim to religion. The word "worship" was only used as a general word which
covers the whole of those forms, leaving our friends to select and repudiate, and in any case the burden is on
Mr. Armstrong to make the meaning clear (hear, hear). I read the whole of the speeches of last night without
finding any repudiation or question about the definitions I presented; and I submit it is scarcely fair, after what
has passed, to ask me to further define them at this late stage of the debate. I should have had no objection had
it been invited at the earliest outset (applause). Well, now, we have worship defined as "the energy of my soul."
Well, but you have not explained your soul. Why do you call it soul? Where is its place in your body? Is there anything about soul you can notice so as to enable me to know anything at all about it? Will you take your definition of soul from Voltaire, whom you have quoted against me? When you reply, will you tell us what Voltaire, Professor Newman, Paine, or Martineau say upon the subject of God, and in which of their writings you will find that which all the others would accept as a definition? You must remember the Theist of Paine's time is not the Theist of to-day, and I want you to tell us what are the specific opinions of each of those you have quoted—of Francis William Newman, of John William Newman, of Martineau, of Thomas Paine, of Voltaire—as to the questions I have asked (applause). Which of the Gods is it that I am to understand Mr. Armstrong as defending and asking me to worship (loud applause)?

MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I am somewhat at a loss as to which of the numerous questions I am to answer first. I shall not take them in any logical order, but simply pick out of my note-book the most important of them. Mr. Bradlaugh has said that the act of criticism of the world implied the conception of a better world. Mr. Bradlaugh has tried to describe his conception of the better world, and I have tried in my previous speeches to show that he would not make it better. And I again submit that, instead of being better, it would be worse (hear, hear). He says he does not draw the same conclusion from that poor woman in the cellar that I do. He says that while you are content to suffer, you degrade yourself. Now, there are two kinds of content. You may be content like the sloth or the sluggard, or you may be content like that poor woman, who while trying to improve her position, still remained poor to the end of her days, and yet at the same time felt the peace of God in her heart. Does the belief in a God, as a fact, make men less energetic and vigorous in improving their own condition, or trying to improve that of others? I don't believe it does (applause). I believe you have Theists as well as Atheists, who devote their kindly sympathies to the good of their fellow creatures. They are content in one sense and discontent in another sense. They have that holy discontent which makes them anxious to remedy the world's evil, and that content which makes them see God, who is working from evil to good (applause). We have been told by Mr. Bradlaugh what the Atheist will do; how he will give the bread of this life to the hungry child; the Theist will do the same (applause). The Theist will—but no, I will not institute these comparisons; we are each, I feel sure, striving to do our best; so I won't enter into comparisons (rounds of applause). He says it is unreasonable to worship an insoluble proposition. A proposition is a grammatical term signifying a statement, and I am not aware that I asked anyone to worship a statement or proposition at all. I have called upon you to worship God (applause). He says I did not separate the lower instincts from the higher mental qualities in man. I do not say I did. But I did separate the lower instincts from the voice of God in conscience. I said that it was entirely distinct from the lower instincts in man. I said that the voice had a right to command and rule these lower instincts (hear, hear). He asks me which God it is that I am preaching. I will tell you what God I ask you to worship—the best that you can conceive, whatsoever it is (applause). I want you all to worship the best that you can conceive (rounds of applause). If the Hindu's idea is the best he can conceive, let him, by all means, worship it (hear, hear). If the Jew's God is the best he can imagine, let him pay homage to it. If the Christian's idea of God is the highest he can conceive, let him be true to it and worship it, and it will make him a nobler man (applause). It is not mere names which signify in a matter of this kind. Though each sect may give him different names, it is still the same God (hear, hear). Mr. Bradlaugh wants to know which of them all I uphold as God; which of the different types I acknowledge, or ask you to acknowledge. Is it the God of Martineau, of Newman, of Parker, or of whom else? I say it is that which is common among them all—namely, the conception of goodness and excellence which you will find in every one of their definitions. It is that God which they all recognise, and concerning which they only go wrong when they begin to try and define it metaphysically (hear, hear). Mr. Bradlaugh wants me to define God; further than I have done so, I cannot. In the words of the Athanasian Creed an attempt is made to define the undefinable. The Athanasian Creed tries to explain the whole of that which overrules the universe instead of describing simply that which is in relationship to you. I have always been under the supposition that that was a practice of the theologian which had greatly retarded the progress of the world. Mr. Bradlaugh spoke of prayer as implying a hope—a hope to induce God to do what he would not do without prayer; and he wanted to know in what sense I used the word "prayer" in my speeches. I have not used the word "prayer" without describing what I meant. At least, I have not done so to my knowledge; if I have, I am sorry for it (applause). Mr. Bradlaugh says that prayer implies a hope of inducing God to do what he would not do without it. For my part, I doubt whether some things that have been called prayers, such as the prayers for the recovery of the Prince of Wales—(loud hisses and laughter)—for wet weather, and for fine weather, have very much influenced the divine counsels (hear, hear and applause). But what do I mean by prayer? As I have said before, the addressing of my soul to this power which I feel and recognise above me; and the law of the answer of prayer—and it is as much a law as any law of nature—is that they who do thus energise themselves towards God become thereby more susceptible to the energising of God towards them. The law is that he who energises or addresses himself towards God, consciously, reverently, and of set purpose, thereby sets at motion a law by which he becomes
more susceptible to God's addressing of himself to him, and so he gains to himself the strength, moral and spiritual, which we find in prayer (hear, hear). Mr. Bradlaugh picked out one of the words from his own definition of worship. By sacrifice he said he meant the act of a man who was too cowardly to bear the result of his own actions. As far as that definition goes, I may say I do not include it in my idea of worship (applause). Now, sir, I have striven to the best of my power to be precise and clear in my words. It is true I have not dealt with the matter from a platform purely metaphysical. I am a positivist in most things, understanding by a positivist one who founds his philosophy on observed phenomena. I have passed out of the stage in which men believe that theological theories will solve all the, problems of the universe. I have passed out of the stage in which Mr. Bradlaugh now is, in which metaphysics are looked upon as the best ground of reasoning we can have. I have passed into the stage in which positive thought, the recognition of phenomena, is recognised as the best starting-point we can have from which to get at the truth. Auguste Comte traces the progress of the thought of the world and of the individual from the theological stage to the metaphysical stage, and from that to the positive stage. I invite Mr. Bradlaugh to look at things from that stage, and to see whether he cannot make his thoughts clearer by the use of the positive method than by the use of the metaphysical (loud applause).

MR. BRADLAUGH: The curious thing is that I have never used the word metaphysics, and I have offered to affirm no proposition that does not relate to phenomena. I am astounded to hear that I am a metaphysician (laughter and applause). Is it because I only used language which I can make clear that my opponent gave me that title? It is because he does not use language that is related to phenomena that he is obliged to commend his Theism by speaking of it as a problem which is insoluble (applause). I have not done anything, as far as my case is concerned, except use language relating to phenomena. Now, I have only a few moments, and this speech will be my last in this debate. I would, therefore, like you to see the position in which we stand. I am told that the improvement I would suggest would in no sense tend to virtue. I must refer again to the state of things in China, where the members of the same family are eating each other for want of food. Would it not tend to virtue if their condition was remedied (applause)? I wish my friend and myself to look at things from this point of view, and, as he is in the positive way of thinking, let him put himself in the same state as they are, and then ask whether an amendment of the condition would not tend to greater virtue (renewed applause). What God is it that we are to worship? Oh, the God it is reasonable to worship the best we can conceive—but no conception has yet been put before us. You have been told a great deal about stars, but the more important facts and arguments still remain unchallenged (hear, hear). Now, I am asked, does belief in God hinder philanthropy? Yes, when it is held as those do hold it in some parts of the world, who think that God has designed, in his thought and intelligence, and for good purposes, that a famine should take place, such as the one in China (hear, hear). There are at least people among the Mahometans and the Hindus whose virtue has been clearly shown to have suffered much more from religion than from civilisation (applause). The case put as to prayer is one which I think has something peculiar about it. We are told first of the law of prayer, which is said to be as much a law of nature as any other law. Well, now, by law of nature (MR. ARMSTRONG: Hear, hear)—I don't know if I am misrepresenting you—I only mean observed order of happening (pouring water from glass); I do not mean that there has been some direction given that this water shall fall, but that, given the conditions, the event ensues. Law of nature is order of sequence or concurrence, the observed order of phenomena. What observed order of phenomena is there in the order of prayer? When the prayer prays "himself he sets a law in motion." Is this so? We are told that the prayer for the recovery of the Prince of Wales did not much tend to alter the divine counsel. Mr. Armstrong did not tell you how he knew that. His own admission here proves that prayer is sometimes offered in vain, taking the observed order of its phenomena (hear, hear). He spoke of the holy discontent in pious men which set them to seek to remedy evil. Holy discontent against the state of things which God in his intelligent purpose has caused! Then the holy discontent is dissatisfaction with God's doings. How can you worship the God with whom you are dissatisfied (applause)? But what is the truth of the matter? In the early ages of the world man saw the river angry and prayed to the river-god; but science has dispelled the river-god, and has substituted for prayer, weirs, locks, dykes, levels, and flood-gates (hear, hear). You see the same thing over the face of nature wherever you go. What you have found is this: that in the early ages of the world gods were frightful, gods were monstrous, gods were numerous, because ignorance predominated in the minds of men. The things they came in contact with were not understood, and no investigation then took place; men worshipped. But gradually men learned first dimly, then more clearly, and god after god has been demolished as science has grown. The best attempt at conception of God is always the last conception of him, and this because God has to give way to science. The best conception of God is in substituting humanity for deity, the getting rid of, and turning away from, the whole of those conceptions and fancies which men called God in the past, and which they have ceased to call God now (applause). Mr. Armstrong thought that it was because men had given different names to God that I tried to embarrass him by bidding him choose between them. It was not so; it is the different characteristics and not the different names that I pointed out as a difficulty. We have gods of peace, gods of war, gods of love, a god of this people, or of that tribe, a god of the Christians, a god of
misery, of terror, of beneficence—these are all different suppositions held by men of the gods they have created. It has well been said that the gods have not created the men, but the men have created the gods, and you can see the marks of human handicraft in each divine lineament (applause). I cannot hope, pleading here tonight, to make many converts. I can and do hope that all of you will believe that the subject treated wants examination far beyond the limits of this short debate. I have a very good hope indeed, and really believe that some good has been done when it can be shown that two men of strong opinions, and earnest in their expressions, can come together without one disrespectful word to each other, or want of respect in any way; without any want of due courtesy to the other, and with a great desire to separate the truth and the falsehood (applause). If there has been unwittingly anything disrespectful on my part, I am sorry for it. I have to thank Mr. Armstrong for coming forward in the manner in which he has done, and I can only ask all to use their services in making the spread of virtue, truth, and justice easier than it has been. I am aware that I have nominally a vast majority against me, but I do not fear on that ground, and still shall continue to point out falsehood wherever I may find it. At any rate, the right of speech is all I ask, and that you have conceded. I have only an earnest endeavour to find out as much as I can that will be useful to my fellows, and to tell them as truly as I can how much grasp. It is for you—with the great harvest of the unreaped before you—who can do more than I, to gather and show what you have gathered; it is for you who have more truth to tell it more efficiently; and when you answer me I put it to you that so far as the world has redeemed itself at all it has only redeemed itself by shaking off in turn the Thetic religions which have grown and decayed. So far, it seems to be a real and solid redemption (applause). When religion was supreme through the ignorance of men, the people were low down indeed, and a few devoted men had to grapple with the hereafter theory and all the content with present wrong which the belief in it maintained. Take a few hundred years ago, when there was little or no scepticism in the world. Only a very few able to be heretical—the mass unable and too weak to doubt or endure doubt. Look at the state of things then, and look at it now. Could a discussion like this have taken place then? No. But it can since the printing-press has helped us; it can since the right of speech has been in good part won. Two hundred years ago it could not have been. Two hundred years ago I could not have got the mass of people together to listen as you have listened last night and to-night, and had not men treated your religion as I treat it, we should not have the right of meeting even now (applause). If you want to convince men like myself, hear us; answer us if you can—say what you have to say without making it more bitter than we can bear. We must believe it if it is reasonable, and if not we must reject it. So long as there is any wrong to redeem we shall try to redeem it ourselves (applause). We may be wrong in this, but at least we do our part. I do not mean that in the same ranks as my friend there are not men as sincere and as earnest, men as devoted, men as human-redemption seeking as myself, but I, or the best of those for whom I plead, urge that their humanity is not the outcome of their theology (applause). Then their experience of right, their hope of life, and their experience of truth rest entirely on what they do here. And I will ask you this: do you not think it is quite possible, as Lessing says, that he who thinks he grasps the whole truth may not even grasp it at all? like the one deceived by the juggler's trick, he may think he holds something in his hand, but when it is opened it is empty (hear, hear). Take the truth as you can—not from me, not from him, not from any one man. There is none of the bad which is all bad, none of the good all good, none of the truth all true: it is for you to select, to weigh, to test for yourselves (hear, hear). Many of us stumble in trying to carry the torch in dark places in the search for truth, but even in our trembling steps the sparks we scatter may enable some to find the grains of truth we miss ourselves (loud and prolonged applause).

MR. ARMSTRONG: Mr. Bradlaugh, the body to which I belong also have the majority against them; over that we can shake hands. Let us try, each in our own way, as may best seem to us, to serve what we hold to be true (applause). Depend upon it, whether there be a God or not, we each shall do best so. If there be no God, then you tell me I shall still do well to serve humanity. And if there be a God, he will gather you also, my brother, to his arms, so long as you are true—true and absolutely sincere in those convictions which come to you from the reason which he has given you (loud applause). You have told us that while religion held sway men were down-trodden. While superstition held sway it is true they were (applause); while false ideas of a cruel and lustful God held sway, it is true they were (applause); but just in proportion as men's thoughts of God have purified and clarified, just in proportion as they have restored to Christianity its sweet meaning, just in that proportion religion has risen to be a power in the world of all that is good and sweet and holy (applause). Now, sir, to speak of what I said about the prayers for the recovery of the Prince of Wales. I said I thought they had been of little avail. But the prayer for spiritual purity from a Christian man does win its answer by a law—a law of nature, I will now say, since you have defined a law of nature as the observed sequence of phenomena; but I dared not so call it until I knew what your definition of nature might be. But let us come back from these philosophisings, in which it is so easy to go wrong, to the test of experience. Mr. Bradlaugh says I do not submit the experiences of which I have spoken, to the test. I invite you to test them, and see whether Mr. Bradlaugh has upset them or not. If you test them fairly and then find them false, then come and tell me so.
They are neither uncommon nor abnormal experiences, but the experiences of nearly every man and woman. It may be that their hearing is dull, but still they know the voice. You all know those in which the initiative comes from God, the voice of conscience, of which I spoke; you all know the solemn feeling which comes over you in the presence of the majesty of nature. You all may know the other things in which you have to take the initiative. Heed those things whether you believe they come from God or not, and you all may know the other—that of worship—and its answer. My contention solely is, that it would be reasonable for you to seek for that experience, that it is reasonable in us to practise it (hear, hear). And now I will tell you a little story for the end of this debate, of a little family of children; and as I shall not found any argument upon it, I do not think it will be unfair. They sat one Christmas Eve in a chamber where the wintry gloom of early twilight fell. The eldest son sat and talked of the goodness of their father, and how, from the earliest days he could recollect, his tenderness had sheltered him, and how he seemed to have a heart to love every little child all through the world, and how he was surely even now preparing some sweet surprise for them every one But John, the second boy, had lived all his life at a school on the far sea coast, where he had been sent, that rough ocean breezes might strengthen his weakly frame, and now, tanned and burly, he had just come home for Christmas, and he had not even seen his father yet. And he said he did not believe they had a father; that Theophilus, declaring he had seen him, was nothing to him, for if there was one thing he had learned at school, it was not to trust the experience of other people till tested by his own. But Edward said he, too, knew they had a father; he, too, had seen him, but he was very stern, and he thought they could all do as well without him, and what could be more unkind than to leave them there in twilight solitude on Christmas Eve. And little Tom sat apart in the very darkest corner of the room, with a tear-stained face, crying as if his heart would break, over the hard sums set him there to do, and thinking that his brothers were a selfish lot of fellows, to talk and talk, and not care for him and his hard task. And Theophilus had just come to steal his arm around little Tom's waist, and dry his tears, and try if he could not help him to do his sum, when the door of the next room was thrown open and a blaze of light flashed upon their faces, and one after the other they all rushed in and beheld their father standing by such a glorious Christmas-tree as boys never beheld before. And for each and all there were gifts so rare and precious—the very things they had longed for all the by-gone half. And for John, who had been so far away and had not known his father, there was a grasp of the father's hand so strong and tender, and a kiss from the father's lips so sweet and loving, that he felt as if he had known that dear father all his life; and as for little Tom, all his tears were dissolved in rippling laughter, and he quite forgot his sum, for on his brow was set the brightest coronet on all the tree, and they told him he should be king through all the long Christmas-day to follow. And now, dear friends, may the peace of God which passeth all understanding, that peace which the perishing things of the world can neither give nor take away, that peace promised to the weary by our dear brother, Jesus Christ, even in the midst of all his suffering and woe, be with you for ever. Amen (applause).

Mr. Armstrong having sat down, rose again and said,—And now, Mr. Chairman, I desire to move to you the hearty thanks of this meeting for your conduct in the chair, for your impartial manner of ruling over us, and the kind words you have spoken. I thank you, Mr. Bradlaugh, for the courtesy and fairness with which you have conducted your part in this debate; and I thank you, sir, for presiding over us (applause).

Mr. Bradlaugh: I second that motion. I cannot say that we can thank you for your fairness, for, fortunately, you have had no opportunity of showing it. But I thank you most heartily for accepting a position which might have been one of great difficulty and the taking of which may cause you to be misrepresented. I also thank Mr. Armstrong for having met me, and for the kindly manner in which he has spoken (applause).

The vote of thanks was put and carried unanimously.

The Chairman: Ladies and Gentlemen,—the thanks which have been given to me are due rather to the gentlemen who have spoken. I cannot but praise the admirable way in which they have rendered my position almost a sinecure. This debate has shown that a subject of such great importance can be discussed fairly, liberally, honestly, as this has been, and that no danger threatens him who occupies the chair, or those who lay their honest and earnest views before you. I feel that I have derived much knowledge from the truth which has been laid before us; and I do feel that there is a growing interest in things of this sort, which is itself a proof that discussions of this kind are very useful (applause).

Some Defects in our present System of Education. A Lecture.
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Education and Instruction.

I SUPPOSE it will scarcely be disputed that one of the most salient characteristics of contemporary society is
but destroyed by us. By no modern student of nature has this subject been investigated more thoughtfully and
which has in some manner been disturbed." Now, at every point of the earth's
re-establish an equilibrium
For the scientific definition of a storm is this:—"It is the movement of the air caused by its tendency to
regularity, are due to unnatural causes—to the destruction by human agency of the exquisite balance of nature. Wherever
civilized man plants his feet, he does his best to deface and to devastate it. "Wasting and destruction are in our
paths. The way of peace we know not; and there is no judgment in our goings." We exhaust the soil of virgin
lands by our egregious cupidity; we strip the mountains of the forests which cover them with a robe of beauty,
and we never dream of replanting them; we pollute with the noisome sewage of our cities the streams which
used to dimple in the breeze and sparkle in the sun; and we pour into the sea and block up our harbours with the
filth which, properly applied, would add to the fertility of the earth; but we cannot efface or destroy the majesty
of form, and the splendour of colour which are inherent in this beautiful world. It still wears its regal garment
with a grace and grandeur which are only partially smirched and marred by our defacing fingers, and it
continues to be an apparition of glory and delight—a divine idea made visible to us—in spite of ourselves. As
of old, the massive sierras lift up their dazzling crests of stainless snow into the azure heaven, flushing with the
sunrise, glittering like frosted silver in the full splendour of the noonday sun, glowing with the hues of gold at
sunset, and fading into wan spectres when the arch of heaven is powdered with star-dust in the purple midnight.
As of old, the spring comes to us in nature under the aspect of a perpetually renovated youth, and the summer
spreads a "light of laughing flowers" over the rejoicing earth, and autumn heaps upon us her unstinted
fruitfulness, and winter "giveth his beloved sleep." As of old, the chime of tinkling rill and "trotting burn," the
fragrance of the honeysuckle, the carol of the bird, the hum of bees, "the lisp of children and their earliest
words," possess the power to charm, but may we not say that no man regardeth them? Is it not true, as a recent
writer has said, that—

"We carry our sick hearts abroad amidst the joyous things
That through the leafy places glance on many-coloured wings,
They hold us from the woodlark's haunts and violet dingle's back,
And from all the lovely sounds and gleams in the shining river's track.
They bar us from our heritage of spring-time, hope and mirth,
And weigh our burden'd spirits down with the cumbering dust of earth?"

Why is this? The dissatisfaction I have spoken of is in and of the mind. It is both the result and the evidence
of mental disorder or disease, and more often than not of mental vacuity. A morbid craving for excitement
pervades all classes of society, and we find the outcome of it to be fast men and fast women, fast living, fast
travelling, fast literature, and a fast drama. Life is not an orderly march, but a swift race. It is not a beautiful
procession, but a wild, helter-skelter rush of phantom horsemen upon phantom horses in pursuit of phantom
objects. Many are trodden down, mangled, maimed, bruised, and killed in the impetuous chase, and those who
are not so, reach the verge of the grave with ex-hausted energies and empty bands. We have lost both the desire
for leisure and the capacity to enjoy it. Our lives being entirely out of harmony with nature, which is merely
another name for God's mind in operation for our instruction and delight, are as miserable and as unsatisfying
as they deserve to be. For what is the one unalterable and universal lesson which nature teaches us? Is it not
this? That all her processes are gradual, orderly, sequential, regular, and harmonious, admitting of neither
acceleration nor of retardation, excepting only in so far as we interfere with them, and that they are equally
removed from stagnation and precipitation. For thousands of years the length of the day and night in a given
latitude, at a given period of the year, has not varied a single second. For millions of years there has been and
could be no infraction of the law that two atoms of oxygen combine with one atom of carbon to form a
molecule of carbonic acid, and that that molecule cannot possibly be combined in any other way. To do so
would require the performance of a miracle, and to perform a miracle would involve a supernatural act, and to
imagine anything supernatural is to depose the Almighty from His supremacy, by supposing some being above
Him, and capable of overriding and overruling His laws, which being, like Himself, absolutely perfect, are
therefore absolutely immutable. We see, then, in nature, that all moves on with sublime steadiness and
steadiness, calm, equable, progressive and unresting, free from the tumult and the stir which agitate us, and
exempt also from the fret and fever of our discordant and misdirected lives; while it is beginning to be dimly
discerned that those convulsions of the physical world which seem to be inconsistent with this order and
regularity, are due to unnatural causes—to the destruction by human agency of the exquisite balance of nature.
For the scientific definition of a storm is this:—"It is the movement of the air caused by its tendency to
re-establish an equilibrium which has in some manner been disturbed." Now, at every point of the earth's
surface to which the so-called civilized races have penetrated, that equilibrium has been not merely disturbed
but destroyed by us. By no modern student of nature has this subject been investigated more thoughtfully and
more successfully than by Professor Marsh, of the United States, who writes:—"Wherever man plants his foot the harmonies of nature are turned to discords. The proportions and accommodations which insured the stability of existing arrangements are overthrown. Indigenous vegetable and animal species are extirpated by others of foreign origin; spontaneous production is forbidden or restricted, and the face of the earth is laid bare or covered with a new and reluctant growth of vegetable forms, and with alien tribes of animal life. . . . Man pursues his victims with reckless destructiveness; and while the sacrifice of life by the lower animals is limited by the cravings of appetite, he unsparingly persecutes, even to extirpation, thousands of organic forms which he cannot consume." Let me illustrate this connection of natural convulsions with human agency by the mention of a familiar fact. More than one-half of the old Roman empire is now either a desert, or is greatly reduced in productiveness and population. Vast areas that once waved with cornfields, and were adorned with forests, orchards, and gardens, are now an arid wilderness, with no evaporation, and with only a fitful and violent rainfall. Upon huge tracts of blinding sand the glare of the summer sunshine beats with fiercest power. The lower strata of the atmosphere, intensely rarefied, rapidly ascend, and there is a violent inrush of colder air from cooler latitudes. It depends upon the velocity of this inrush whether, in the districts over which it passes, there is a gale, a tempest, or a hurricane. These violent disturbances of the atmosphere, it is well known, have been increasing in frequency and in their calamitous results during the last century, because the area of devastation is being annually expanded by the spread of population in North America, in South Africa, and in Australia, where the overthrow of the balance of nature by the destruction of forests is being pursued with frightful vehemence and effect. Now, what lies at the root of these evils? It is not merely selfishness, but it is a selfishness which is greatly aggravated by ignorance. And for this, our systems of education, which are an inheritance from the middle ages, are mainly responsible. There never was a time when we knew so much—that is not worth the knowing: or knew so little—of what we ought to know, as the present.

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and we linger on the shore, And the individual withers, and the world is more and more."

Now, what are the first questions which each of us asks himself when his mind begins to unfold and consciousness awakens in him? Are they not these? "What am I? Where am I? Why am I?" Do our systems of education make any adequate provision for supplying us—I will not say with a satisfactory response, but—with the means of enabling us to obtain an intelligent reply to each of these interrogations? I think not. Up to a certain point, and in so far as they qualify us to read, write, and cipher, their utility is not to be questioned. But when a boy has acquired these necessary rudiments and implements, what follows? The rest are suffered to rust unused. Not unfrequently they are altogether atrophied. The memory should be the register of personal experiences, recorded for our information, guidance and warning; whereas it is a lumber room, crammed full of facts and dates, which are of no value to ourselves or to others. It is my serious and deliberate conviction that our methods of instruction, especially as regards what is called the higher education, are so many ingenious devices for crippling, distorting, and destroying the human mind, and that they are fatal to all originality, while it may be safely asserted that an erudite man—a "prodigy of learning" let us say—is one of the most useless creatures on the face of God's earth. Engage in conversation with him, and then enter into familiar chat with an intelligent gardener, and the chances are that you will learn something worth knowing from the latter, because he thinks his own thoughts, has nature for his schoolmaster, and is addicted by the very necessity of his calling to daily and hourly observation and reflection. Whereas the eyes of the learned man are set in the back of his head, and he lives amidst the shadows and the mould, and the mildew of the past. He could tell you all about the five great monarchies, the siege of Troy, the Achaian League, the Catiline conspiracy, and the Parthian revolt. But "what's Hecuba to us, or we to Hecuba?" I know what Lord Bolingbroke said about history being "philosophy teaching by example," but this, which is theoretically true, is practically false, for no nation was ever taught by the example of another. Communities are like individuals. Each must purchase its own experience, and it generally does so—as we are doing—at a particularly high price. Therefore, "let the dead past bury its dead." Heaven knows, the records of the human race are so full of bloodshed and misery, "Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands, Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands;"
our annals are all so "Centred in a doleful song, Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,"
that I could heartily wish they were obliterated from our literature, and that we might be no longer confronted by these ghastly chronicles of spoliation, butchery, brute violence, and devilish malignity.

I have said that the first thing a boy should be taught is, what he is! And I do not know any branch of study which is more delightful, or fuller of perennial interest, than that of the anatomy and physiology of the human frame; certainly none which is more indispensable to every one of us. Each of us inhabits a "temple not made with hands," which is so wonderful in its structure that the most imposing monuments of human architecture are mean, clumsy, and unsightly in comparison with it. But what do the generality of us know about this
elaborate palace, with its five gateways, its two rivers, its exquisite windows, its symmetrical dome, its telegraphic system, its never-flagging furnace, its double-action force-pump, its laboratory, its complicated and delicate mechanism, and that invisible something which sits in the upper chamber and communicates with the outer world by the intermediation of the senses? Upon the healthy and harmonious working of this wondrous fabric depends our happiness, as also our attainment of the natural term of our lives. And remember that all disease is unnatural. Health is the normal condition of humanity, and disease is simply the product and the penalty of disobedience to the laws of nature—that is to say, the laws of God. Sir John Lubbock has pointed out in his "Origin of Civilization," that savages are rarely ill. It is only when they are brought into contact with us, who call ourselves civilized, that they wither away before our epidemics and are blighted and blasted by our spirituous liquors. Much of the illness that exists is the result of sheer ignorance. We are strangers to the human edifices we inhabit; and being unconscious of the exquisite delicacy of their details, we derange and destroy them with criminal recklessness. But I think if every boy and girl were made acquainted with the general structure of the human frame, with the nature and operation of the five senses, and with the processes of respiration, nutrition, circulation, and locomotion, you would find such pupils coining back, like Oliver Twist, for more. Children are greatly interested in phenomena, and care very little for words, and names, and dates. But words, and names, and dates, unfortunately, make up the greater part of the sum of our education; and I entirely fail to see their value. Why do I want to burden my memory with such rubbish as the particulars of the Battle of Marathon, of the League of Cambrai, of the number of rooms in the Vatican, of the year of the Norman Conquest, or of the nature of the Pragmatic Sanction; when I can turn them up at a minute's notice in a Dictionary of Dates? But it is very material to my happiness and comfort, and to the welfare of those who are dependent upon me, that I should be well acquainted with the mortal tenement I inhabit, so as to keep it in perfect repair until my lease expires, and the old and worn-out building is pulled down. And children, I repeat, would receive with avidity any information respecting their own bodies. Suppose you see a boy lifting an apple to his mouth, and you explain to him in simple language all the actions involved, would he not listen to the narrative as readily as to a fairy tale? You say to him, either through the eye, or the sense of taste, stimulated by the recollection of the pleasure received from eating previous fruit of the same kind, a message was sent to the brain along the afferent nerves that you wished to renew the pleasure by eating that apple. The mind reads off that message in an instant of time, and transmits to the hand, through the efferent nerves, a message to grasp and convey the fruit to the mouth. In so doing, the cerebellum or little brain acts as a battery, and sends a current of electricity along the telegraphic wires; and in obedience to this command some thousands of delicate fibres, uniting in an elastic rope called a muscle, contract or shorten themselves, and by this means bring the arm up to the head. In so doing 30 bones are called into active exercise under constraint of the tightened muscular cordage, involving the rapid and easy play of such mechanical principles as the ball and socket, the hinge-joint, the block and pulley, and so forth. But the two sets of wires or nerves, the battery or cerebellum, and the ropes or muscles, as well as the machinery or bones which co-operated in producing this simple motion of your arm, lost something of their substance in the complex process. There was what physiologists call a waste of tissue, and this had immediately to be compensated for. All motion is the result of force, or mind; and involves the breaking down, decomposition, and removal of the material agencies through which it is accomplished. Now, an ordinary machine of steel and iron would wear itself out in time by friction and oxidation; but the human structure possesses the inherent power of reconstituting itself during the term of its natural existence. It has been aptly compared to a stupendous factory, in which vegetable and animal food is being transformed by solvent fluids into the raw material of the blood; and this, when aerated or vitalised by the lungs, replaces, by living cells, the dead cells which have fulfilled their office and have ceased to be. And thus you will see the paramount importance of a regular and adequate supply of nutritious food for body-building purposes, as also the indispensable necessity of breathing none but pure air, by day and night, so that the blood—"which is the life"—may not be impoverished or contaminated.

Take the eye and ear again. Do not you think that if the structure and functions of each of these marvellous avenues to the mind were explained to a boy, that it would interest him far more, and be of infinitely greater service to him, than any amount of information he may acquire about the campaigns of Cæsar or Napoleon? Show him that he possesses in the organs of vision a self-acting, self-adjusting photographic apparatus, compared with which the best instrument in Messrs. Batchelder's establishment is coarse, clumsy, and inconvenient; explain to him the formation of the ear, with its outer vestibule, its drum, its inner chamber, with its circular and oval windows, its hammer, and anvil, and stirrup, its two winding staircases, and its 3000 pianoforte keys and strings, and you will conduct him into a realm of wonders compared with which the cities we read of in the Arabian Nights are commonplace and uninteresting. Then show him that sound and sight are one, that the impressions produced by each are occasioned by vibrations—are merely modes of motion, in fact—and that the seven notes of music correspond with the seven colours which combine to form a ray of white light; and that boy, I venture to think, will begin to look at all objects, and to listen to all sounds in a
totally different manner, while everything he sees and hears will be invested with a new interest, and possibly with an unexpected charm. Not only so, but he will understand the preciousness of the organs and faculties of seeing and hearing, and will take greater care of them in consequence. The second thing our children should be taught is "Where they are," so that they may be induced to prize this beautiful earth, to perceive its never-failing and inexhaustible majesty and loveliness, may use without abusing it, may cultivate it in obedience to and harmony with the divine order of nature, and may dress it and keep it in conformity with the beneficent purpose and commands of its Creator. I do not know of any direction in which theology has been more mischievous to the Western nations than in diverting them from the observation and study of natural phenomena. And this has been the more culpable because such a systematic discouragement of natural science is diametrically opposed to the written word of God. In a book, the plenary inspiration of which I acknowledge without qualification or reservation, I find it thus written: "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world—even His eternal power and Godhead—are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, so that men are without excuse." Thus, then, we can only understand the ideas of God by the observation of the "things" that are made—that is to say, by the visible presentment of those ideas in the forms of which we can take cognisance by our senses. Nature must be our instructress. And the same impressive truth is repeated in the Hook of Job: "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee." Yet, until quite recently, the natural sciences had no place whatever in our systems of education; and it was not until about the beginning of the present century that men obtained a glimmering of the idea of evolution, so explicitly enunciated in the 139th Psalm: or arrived at a faint perception of the fact that the mental constitution of the lower animals is identical in its nature with our own, although it is emphatically declared in the first chapter of Genesis that there is "a living soul" in "every" beast of the earth, and in every fowl of the air, and in "everything that creeps upon the earth," while it is also proclaimed in the plainest of language, by the same Holy Scriptures, that "we have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." What the human, race has lost during the last eight centuries by shutting its eyes to "the things that are made," and by placing the study of Nature under a ban, it is impossible to compute. And if you are curious to know the amount of bloodshed, misery, and suffering which have resulted from the proscription of science by the various churches, you will find plenty of information on the subject in the works of Dr. Draper, Professor White (of the Cornell University), Sir David Brewster, and Mr. Lecky. In putting forward a plea for the education of the young in the natural sciences, so as to enable them to understand where they are, and what are the causes, operations, and consequences of the most familiar phenomena of every-day life, I am pleading for the means of their happiness, as well as for the cultivation of their minds. Believe me when I say it, as the result of my own experience, in the study of a great many branches of knowledge during the course of a busy life, that there is none so delightful and fascinating, none so ever fresh and never tiring, none which make us feel so truly that there is nothing smaller than ourselves and nothing greater than God, as the study of the natural sciences, and especially of natural history, more particularly if we look at all the forms of life—mineral, vegetable, and animal, as mind manifesting itself in various stages of growth. I have read, in my time, some exceedingly silly books, written by some exceedingly learned men to prove that certain things which our Lord assured us were "done" in parables" were actual miracles, or contraventions of natural law; but if you want a miracle in the true sense of the word—that is to say, something calculated to excite wonder and admiration, just look at the germination and growth of a seed. That is the most amazing fact with which I am acquainted, and the more I reflect upon it the greater is the awe I feel in its presence. Let us say that you visit Egypt, and obtain from the hands of a mummy embalmed 3000 years ago a few grains of wheat. To look at it you might suppose it to be dead. But you plant a single corn under favourable conditions, and, after a short time, the life—dormant for 30 centuries—begins to stir within it. Its vital principle—its mind—commences working in the darkness with a marvellous intelligence. It sends down a number of delicate fibres into the earth. These are its stomach. They absorb from the soil, digest, and assimilate the food it requires. It sends up a delicate shoot into the light and air. This becomes its organ of respiration, or lungs, as also of circulation for the sap or fluid, which corresponds with our blood. Why do these rootlets plunge into the dark mould, while the green blade aspires towards the light, breaks its way through the hardest crust, and rejoices in the sunshine? You will say that it obeys a law. But have you ever reflected upon the very obvious and simple truth that obedience is a mental operation, and that wherever such obedience is rendered, whether by gases in their combinations according to certain definite proportions, or by a crystal in repairing its fractured edges, by a plant, by a bird, beast, or man, the king of the beasts, there must be mind. Without it, obedience to law would be impossible. But pursue this phenomenon of plant-growth through all its stages. Watch the evolution of the stalk, the leaves, the flower, and the perfected grain or seed, and try to imagine yourself looking at these processes for the first time, and you will feel that you stand before the embodiment of a series of miracles, compared with which every achievement of human genius," as it is called, sinks into utter insignificance. Then reflect upon this further miracle. You sow the seeds
of six different plants in the same plot of ground, the constituents of the soil being identical throughout. Not only does each plant, in its growth and maturity, differ from all the rest in form and colour, in the shape of the leaf, and in the aspect of the flower, but the first will elaborate from sun and soil a certain quantity of sugar, the second gum, the third oil, the fourth starch, the fifth resin, and the sixth opium. And the more you examine the structure and functions of these plants with the microscope or otherwise, the more you will find to wonder at and admire.

Then, again, reflect upon the nature and phenomena of sight and smell as associated with the flower. You take a fuchsia, for example, some of the petals of which are purple, while others are crimson, and others are white. Are these exquisite colours which give so much pleasure to the eye, both separately and in their harmonious combination, so many properties residing in the flower? On the contrary, they are the reflections of different rays of light; and the impression produced upon the eye is the result of vibrations of that elastic ether which pervades all space. In other words, colour is light dissected, and light is merely a mode of motion, just as sound is a mode of motion. Each wave of light has a definite number of undulations, as also a definite velocity of speed. Thus the waves, which by their pulsation on the retina of the eye, cause us to receive the impression of redness, are in round numbers 40,000 in an inch; and their velocity is so great that they accomplish 477 million millions of undulations in a second; while the purple rays number 57,490 undulations in an inch, and 700 million millions of undulations in a second. The light is the life and the glory of the flower, which aspires towards it, feeds upon it, and rejoices in it. If you bend down the leafy shoot of a plant so as not to hurt it, and reverse the usual position of the faces of the leaves, you will soon find the latter twisting upon their petioles, and turning their upper surfaces to the light. Carry a plant into a dark room and leave it there, and it will gradually languish and die. For all organic activity is derived mediately or immediately from the sun; and life is most exuberant in those regions of the earth where the power of that luminary is the greatest. There also is vegetation the richest, the flavour of fruits the most luscious, and the colouring of birds, insects, fishes, and flowers the most gorgeous and resplendent; while we know that light everywhere quickens vital movements in animals, and especially the act of nutrition; and, therefore, our principal meal should always be eaten in the middle of the day, when the sun is at his meridian. Let us next turn for a moment to the odour of a flower—to that of the violet, for example. This is, like light, and heat, and sound, a mode of motion, and nothing more. There is an octave of musical vibrations, an octave of light or colour, and an octave of odours. There are tones and semitones of fragrance. As one of the most brilliant of French scientists (Papillon, quoting Piesse) has observed:—Some perfumes accord like the notes of an instrument. Thus almond, vanilla, heliotrope, and clematis, harmonise perfectly, each of them producing the same impression in a different degree. On the other hand, we have citron, lemon, orange-peel, and verbena, forming a similarly associated octave of odours, in a higher key. The analogy is completed by those odours which we call half-scents, such as the rose, with rose geranium for its semitone. And the sense of smell is produced by a motion communicated immediately to the nerve fibres of the nose from without; while the organ by which odours are perceived or received and discriminated, is as full of wonders as each of the other avenues to the brain. "The olfactory lobe" rests close upon that part of the floor of the cranium which is called the cribriform plate. This plate (lying between the sockets of the eyes), is perforated like a sieve, and it is through these perforations that the filaments from the olfactory lobe are sent down in immensely numerous threads into each division of the nose, where they terminate in a closely packed mass of olfactory cells. These receive the odorous impressions, while the nerve fibres announce to the brain the fact of an irritation having taken place, as also the nature of it. I have touched upon these things incidentally and by way of illustration, just to show what innumerable and illimitable fields of knowledge are opened up all around us, what a living miracle every one of us is, and how much there is to instruct, to interest, and to charm us, in the intelligent study of our own bodies, and of the forms and forces of nature with which we are incessantly brought into contact. The more we investigate the doings of the race to which we belong, as disclosed to us in history and biography, the more we find to shock, repel, disgust, and wound us. The annals of nations are so many magnified editions of the Newgate Calendar. The greatest scoundrels are the greatest heroes. The bloodiest deeds are those which live longest in story, and are celebrated with the greatest enthusiasm in song. I need scarcely remind you that the oldest epic in the world describes and commemorates a 10 years' siege and a protracted war; and that the most famous names in history are those of wholesale slaughter-men—eminent villains who butchered men instead of cattle. Most of us, in our schoolboy days, were made to learn the history of Rome—a nice record truly! There were the two brothers who founded the city, one of whom murdered the other, while the survivor fell a victim to the jealousy of the Senate. There was also the rape of the Sabines; the murder of Tullus Hostilius, and the destruction of his family and palace by fire; the assassination of the first Tarquin; the murder of Servius Tullius, who was trampled to death by order of his daughter; the reign of Tarquin the Proud, who got rid of his wife to marry her sister, and killed his father-in-law; the rape of Lucretia by Sextus, son of Tarquin; and so on, and so on, to the end of the chapter. Edifying information this! But then all history is alike, and the wretched creatures who are its factors are
"The fools to those they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule."

But turn from this black and bloody calendar of wrong and rapine, wickedness and woe, to the study of natural science, and it is like emerging from shambles, slippery with gore, ghastly with spectacles of ferocity and suffering, and foul with the reek of corruption, to "the balm, the bliss, the "beauty and the bloom" of a virgin forest, where the sunlight is sifted through the woof of aromatic leaves and fragrant blossoms, where the air is resonant with the melody of birds, and where everything the eye beholds is eloquent of God, the source of all good, the fountain of all wisdom, and the author of all blessings. Nature speaks everywhere the same language, which is the inspiration of the true artist, and the theme of the true poet. And of the many amazing thoughts which present themselves to our minds when we reflect upon her loveliness, there is none more startling than this—that so many of us should be, or should profess to be, hankering after another world, when we are so lamentably ignorant of that in which we are placed. We talk of a heaven which the theologian posits in some indefinable and undiscoverable region of space, but which the Holy Scriptures assure us must be founded within us, and established here on earth; but do we ever think of trying to make a little heaven around us? Do we ever, in the indulgence of that intense and all-absorbing selfishness which is the bane of society in all civilized countries, ponder upon the profound and impressive meaning of the inspired words, "If a "man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can "he love GOD whom he hath not seen?" Do we ever consider either the sacredness of the earth or the possibilities which lie within it? It is our native country and our home. We are "not set here to live as aliens," passing in disguise through an enemy's camp, where no allegiance is due; but we are bound to recognise our kinship to the whole of nature and to act accordingly. As an eloquent writer once observed, "If no heavenly voices wander around "us in the present, the future will be but the dumb change "of the shadow on the dial." The more I see of the transcendent beauty of the world, in so far as it still bears the divine impress of the Mind from which it emanated, and the more I reflect upon the wonders which present themselves for our instruction and delight in the "things that are "made," the greater becomes my regret that the natural sciences should be altogether excluded from, or should occupy so inferior and unworthy a position in, our ordinary systems of education. And let me beg of you to remember this—the students of nature never persecute, proscribe, imprison, torture, or destroy each other. No astronomer ever condemned another astronomer to the stake. No botanist ever butchered another botanist, because they disagreed about the classification of a flower. No geologist ever confined another geologist in the dungeons of the Inquisition, because they entertained differences of opinion with respect to the duration of the last glacial period. Nor have there been any scientific wars to soak the soil of Europe with the blood of controversialists fighting about a foolish symbol or concerning the genesis of life. On the other hand, if you would know how the study of the natural sciences inclines the human mind towards natural piety, just read that irrepressible burst of eloquence which broke from the lips of Linnaeus when he had completed his admirable work on the organisation of plants, and with which I may fitly conclude the present lecture:—"The eternal, vast, omniscient and omnipotent God has passed before me. I have not seen Him face to face, but a dim reflection of Him seizing on my soul, has plunged it in a stupor of admiration. I have followed here and there the traces of Him amidst the works of creation, and in all these, even in the minutest and most imperceptible, what power, what wisdom, what indefinable perfection! I have observed how all animal life is superimposed upon and interlinked with the vegetable kingdom, and how vegetation is associated with the minerals deposited in the entrails of the globe, while the globe itself gravitates in an invariable order around the sun, to which it owes its life. Then I have beheld the sun and all the other stars—the vast hosts of heaven, immense, incalculable in their infinitude, moving in space and suspended in the void by an incomprehensible First Motor, the Being of beings, the Cause of causes, the Guide and Conservesor of the universe, the Master and Workman of the stupendous fabric of the world. Everything that He has created bears witness to His wisdom and His divine power; while all things are at the same time the treasure-house and the element of our felicity. Their usefulness attests the bounty of Him who made them; their loveliness exhibits the magnificent beauty of His mind; while their harmony, their constancy, their exquisitely just proportions and their inexhaustible fecundity, proclaim the power of the omnipotent God.

Is it not He upon Whom you bestow the name of Providence? That is indeed the attribute, since it is only by His counsel that we can explain the existence of the world. It is therefore just to believe that He is a God, immense, eternal, whom no being has engendered, whom nothing has created, without whom nothing can exist, and who has made and ordained this universal work. He eludes our vision, while He fills our eyes with light. He is
apprehensible only by thought: for it is in that profound sanctuary that He veils His majesty from human ken." Such is the natural religion—such the glow, the rapture, the adoration, and the gratitude which are capable of being inspired by a loving and reverential study of the natural sciences, which ought to form one, at least, of the bases of all true education, in the highest and best sense of the word. And if I have refrained from touching upon the third of the questions with which I set out, namely, "Why am I?" it is because it would involve the discussion of a subject which would be provocative of angry controversy, for which this is neither the time nor place.

**The Divine Origin of Christianity;**

Accepting the Following Definition of Terms:

1. By "Divine origin," it is understood to be of Divine origin in the sense in which no other religion is.
2. In the term "Christianity," it is understood that there are included the Deity of Jesus, and His death as an atonement for man's sin.

**Debate Between M. W. Green (Affirming), and Charles Bright (Denying).**


G.STOKES, TAILOR, CLOTHIER & OUTFITTER, Opposite Baptist Chapel, Great King Street, Dunedin. ESTABLISHED, 1862. A very large assortment of first-class Goods always on hand. Style, quality, and fit guaranteed.

**Prefatory.**

THE DEBATE, of which the following pages contain a report taken in shorthand and transcribed by Mr. EDWARD DOWNEY, of the "Hansard" staff, arose out of a correspondence which appeared in a local news-paper between Messrs. GREEN and BRIGHT. This correspondence led to a meeting, in which Hon. R. STOUT assisted, on behalf of Mr. BRIGHT, and Mr. HISLOP, on behalf of Mr. GREEN. At this meeting the terms of the question to be discussed were agreed upon, and the further proceedings left to the direction of a joint committee, consisting of Messrs. GREEN, JAMES BLACK, JOHN HISLOP, and JOHN FERGUS; and Messrs. BRIGHT, JOHN LOGAN, ROBERT RUTHERFORD, and W. M. BOLT.

The regulations as to time under which the discussion took place were as follows—The debate to extend over three evenings of two hours each, and a fourth evening if either disputant desired.

On the first evening, Mr. GREEN to commence in a speech of half an hour, and Mr. BRIGHT to be allowed a similar period; then alternate speeches of a quarter of an hour each for the concluding hour.

On the second evening Mr. BRIGHT to commence in an address of twenty minutes, and Mr. GREEN to follow in a like time; then two speeches each of fifteen minutes, and a concluding speech, each, of ten minutes.

The third and fourth evenings to be the same with the exception of alternate openings.

The debate accordingly took place at the Queen's Theatre on the evenings of Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, January 21, 22, 23, and 25, and the holding capacity of the building was tested to the utmost, the stage even, being crowded with ladies and gentlemen. The proceedings were admirably presided over by Mr. A. H. Ross, Mr. DAVID HENDERSON acting as assistant chairman on Mr. GREEN's behalf, and Mr. ROBERT, RUTHERFORD on Mr. BRIGHT's. The immense audiences behaved most creditably, only occasionally giving expression to their feelings in applause or tokens of dissent. As these were specially deprecated by both disputants, no notice has been taken of them in the report, save when they directly affected the utterances of the speaker.

Although only a small charge for admission was made, namely, 1s. to the dress circle, and 6d. to the rest of the theatre, the proceeds amounted to £157 9s. 6d. The balance remaining from this sum, after payment of expenses of theatre, advertising, and report, was £86 19s.; and this, according to previous arrangement, has been handed over, in the names of Messrs. GREEN and BRIGHT, to the local Benevolent Institution.

**THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.**
First Evening.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. A. H. Ross) opened the proceedings by saying:—Ladies and gentlemen, it is scarcely necessary for me to state the object of our meeting to night, and I think the best thing I can do is to read the announcement in to-day's paper, which is as follows:—

Public Discussion Between Rev. M. W. Green And Mr. Chas. Bright. SUBJECT: "The Divine Origin of Christianity," accepting the following definition of terms:—I. By "Divine origin" it is understood to be of Divine origin in the sense in which no other religion is. 2. In the term "Christianity" it is understood that there are included the Deity of Jesus, and His death as an atonement for man's sin.

Mr. Green affirms; Mr. Bright denies.

The discussion will commence by Mr. Green making a speech of half an hour's duration, to be followed by Mr. Bright for the same length of time. Then, both gentlemen will alternately make speeches of a quarter of an hour's duration. It is intended to extend the discussion over three nights, but Mr. Green desires me to intimate that it is extremely probable he will require a fourth night. Before introducing Mr. Green to you, I would just say that on the part of the disputants this discussion will be conducted in a courteous and gentlemanly manner. I would ask the audience also to assume an attitude befitting the importance of the subject—that is, one of decorum and gravity. I would advise that there should be no expressions of applause or dissent, and that you should listen to the arguments that may be advanced in a calm and dispassionate manner. This is the best method of arriving at the truth. I now introduce Mr. Green to you without further remark.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman and respected friends—I would like to say, in connection with the advertisement calling this meeting, so that I may put myself right with the public, that while the Committee have inserted the word "Reverend," in the advertisement, and while I may be addressed by that designation by many outside, I lay no claim to the title, and have had nothing to do with its insertion in the advertisement. I make this explanation because I do not think it wise that any of us should take such a designation.

I feel that perhaps an apology is necessary for my standing here to-night to address this large assemblage upon the subject which this debate is to take place. It may appear as though, in my judgment, I considered that Christianity required to be defended. Now, I have no such thought. I believe that Christianity, having begun in the manner it did, having to light its way step by step, we may say inch by inch, until it had gained by peaceful measures its mighty influence over the millions that lived in that early period, it may be said to really require no defence in this age. For at least eighteen centuries Christianity has maintained its own conquering way; it has over-ridden all opposition, and although vast forces have concentrated all their efforts to overthrow it, Christianity yet remains, and I believe will remain until the grand climax that God intends to bring about shall have been effected by its instrumentality. The only reason why I am here to-night is because I find it stated in that book which I venerate and love, that we are to "Prove all things," and to "Hold fast that which is good," and further, that we are to be "Ready to give to every man who asks, a reason of the hope that is within us with meekness and fear." I have been led to undertake this debate because I believe there are many persons whose minds have been unhinged by statements which they have heard in regard to Christianity, and I know that when persons listen merely to one side of a subject, and when they are continually having it dinned into their ears that Christianity is behind the age, that it is really only fit for old women, and is not fit for full-grown men, they sometimes come to have the impression, if they are not properly instructed, that there is some truth in the loud statements that are made by those opposed to Christianity. I believe that Christian Ministers ought always to be ready to give a reason for the faith that is within them; that they ought ever to be ready at proper times to lay before the intelligent people by whom they may be surrounded, the evidences on which they believe it reasonable and right to receive Christianity; the evidences on which they are led to urge Christianity upon the attention and for the acceptance of their fellow human beings. Simply for these reasons I am here to-night. Believing in my heart that if there is anything true under the Heavens of God, it is the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that if there is anything at all adapted to the wants of man in his present condition it is that holy religion. I feel happy, under these circumstances, in being here to-night, in order that I may present to you some of the evidences upon which I, and many in common with me, believe that that holy religion is worthy of the acceptance of every thoughtful and intelligent person.

Now, with regard to the occasion of this debate, it seems necessary that I should make a remark or two at this opening stage. I may say that I am only a recent resident in Dunedin, and I feel that I occupy, to some extent, an invidious position tonight, seeing that there are ministers of long standing and of greater ability than myself, in this city, who might ably have defended the truth. But they have not, thus far, done so, and therefore, on that account, there may be some justification for my present position. I would also say here that I have been, as it were, drawn into this matter, without any original intention on my part of having anything to do with such
a thing us a debate. When I came here I found that Mr. Charles Bright—for whom personally I have a sincere respect—was lecturing in opposition to the Christian religion. I saw an announcement that he would lecture on "Our Saviour," and being curious to ascertain what would be the line of his argument upon such a theme, I attended his lecture. In my sermon on the following Sunday evening, I just adverted to a remark which I heard Mr. Bright make. I spoke to this effect: That the infidel lecturer at present in the city, while admitting that Christ was a good man, had yet been guilty of the illogical statement that while being a good man, his claim to be Divine was untrue—was a lie. This discourse was reported without my knowledge in one of the local newspapers. I cannot bind myself to that report because it was very imperfect, though I regarded its being published as an evidence of kindliness on the part of the newspaper proprietors. Mr. Bright wrote a letter to me, through the newspaper, in which he took exception to the term "infidel lecturer," and in which he asked if I would prove certain matters. Having heard in the meantime that Mr. Bright had challenged all the ministers of Dunedin to debate with him, I decided that I, at any rate, would not hold back if he should consider himself, in writing that letter, as challenging me to debate. I therefore asked him in my reply whether he wished me to answer his statements—or rather to prove the positions that he suggested—through the newspapers, or whether he desired me to do so on a public platform, where he would have the right of reply. Many of you have doubtless read the correspondence, and I may therefore simply add that out of that correspondence has arisen this discussion. That Mr. Bright is regarded by the people of this city as having thrown out challenges to the ministers of the city is evident from the following announcement which appeared in the Morning Herald of the 8th of January:—"It appears that Mr. Charles Bright, the Freethought lecturer, has at length, after repeated challenges, induced a gentleman of the clerical order to meet him on a public platform, for the purpose of engaging in a controversial discussion." It thus appears from this paragraph that Mr. Bright has been throwing out challenges, and I would say that if he believes that he has the truth, and that all we, who hold to the verities of the Christian religion are in error, all honour to Mr. Bright for daring to come forth and challenge the ministers of the day to sustain their position before the world.

I feel that I occupy a position of some little disadvantage to-night, from the fact that, although Mr. Bright has been the assailant of Christianity, he occupies simply the position of a defendant, and I that of an affirmant in this debate. I may say further that I feel the disadvantage of my position because, having wholly to occupy an affirmative position, it prevents me from making that assault upon the position of Mr. Bright which I would like to have made, if time and opportunity had permitted. I tried very hard to get Mr. Bright to take an affirmative proposition, as well as myself, covering the ground which he occupies as a Freethought lecturer; but he was not willing to do so. One of his committee was of the same opinion as myself—that in order to cover the whole ground, and to make this debate really what it ought to be, Mr. Bright should affirm a proposition covering his ground as an advocate of the all-sufficiency of human reason for man's guidance. Then we would have been able to put this matter in a more complete form before the public. In justice to my friend, I ought, however, to say that he did suggest several propositions when I urged this matter; but they were in such a form that I could not consistently take the negative of them, inasmuch as I believed they would not cover the ground which was desired.

Now, having made these preliminary remarks, I would remind you that our proposition to-night is, "The Divine Origin of Christianity," and that there is this definition in connection with our subject: That it is Divine in the sense in which no other religion is Divine; and that Christianity includes the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ—the word "Deity" has been used in deference to Mr. Bright, who holds with the Divine origin of all things in a certain sense. I say, then, that Christianity is taken to include the Deity of Jesus, and His death as an atonement for man. Now there was an absolute necessity, apparently, for this definition, for I may say that, although from report and our correspondence, I was led to believe him to be an opponent of Christianity absolutely, yet Mr. Bright professes that he is not an opponent of Christianity as he understands it, but that he does not regard as parts of Christianity, either the Deity of Jesus, or the doctrine of the Atonement. Now, I regard these as fundamentals, and that without them there can be no Christianity. Mr. Bright takes the position that man's reason is his highest guide, and that he has a right to use his reason in any manner he thinks fit. I must say that I consider his understanding of the use of reason, and the principles which he professes, are detrimental to the welfare of society at large: that if the principles he holds were to gain general acceptance with the people—while he would doubtless depurate such a state of things as much as myself—they would produce anarchy and wide-spread misery; they would utterly disorganise society, and prevent life and property from being secure.

But to return to the one point: Mr. Bright affirms that the moral teachings of Jesus Christ constitute, in his judgment, the sum and substance of Christianity, and that the Deity of Jesus, and His death as an atonement for man, are simply accretions which have been added by persons who lived subsequently to Christ, and are no part of the original Christianity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now you will perceive that I have, therefore, a very plain duty to perform to-night. That duty is to show from the Christian records that it is an essential part of the
religion of Jesus that He is Divine—Divine in a sense in which no other mortal is, and that He really did die, according to the teachings of those Scriptures which are our only guide and direction in connection with Christianity, for and on behalf of man. I know not what line of argument my friend may take in the course of this debate, nor how he may deal with this volume; but I certainly shall expect him to use reason in his manner of dealing with the subject. I would therefore say that, as we have no other records which profess to embody the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and really proclaim His gospel, this book must be taken as the legitimate expounder of what Christianity is. In order to establish that Christianity includes the two points in dispute, and to show that my definition is entirely true, I will first take the Gospels written by the Apostles of Christ and their immediate companions. I shall take, then, the early Christian literature, the Acts of the Apostles, and the epistles addressed to believing persons; then the statements made by early writers of the Christian Church; and I will also show from the writings of profane historians, and also from bitter enemies, that those two points are essential features in Christianity. Then, I say, that if I understand the necessities of Mr. Bright's position aright, or at all, it seems to me there will devolve upon him the duty of showing that these records, and the testimony which we have had handed down to us from those living in that time are not reliable; for if the genuineness and authenticity of these records cannot be overturned, then I say that beyond all controversy, beyond the possibility of its being shaken at all, I shall have proved that Mr Bright's statement as to what Christianity really is, is based upon an utter want of information as to the Christian records and the teachings of those early writers of the Christian Church; and that in maintaining that Christianity has nothing to do with the atonement for man, and the Divinity of Christ, he is really manifesting culpable ignorance of that with which he ought to be acquainted.

I know that in an assembly like this it will seem tedious for me to take the Bible in my hand, and refer to portions of it, verse by verse. But, ladies and gentlemen, let us understand each other. I am not here to-night to appeal to you by declamation. I do not want to excite feeling. I believe that Christianity, while it appeals to the heart of man, appeals also to his reason; and I wish during this debate to appeal to your reasoning faculties. I ask you, therefore, patiently to bear in mind what I read from this volume to-night and on subsequent evenings in connection with this important theme. In many parts of the Scriptures we have these two doctrines clearly presented as essential features of the teaching of Jesus. I will take each of these Gospels in their proper order, and cite from them.

In the Gospel of Matthew xi. 27, we have the Lord Jesus Christ speaking in language which can only be understood in the sense of his proper Divinity. In that verse he says:—"All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." If you will allow me to paraphrase the verse, by substituting the first person for the word "Son," and the word "God" for "Father," you will see the full force of the passage. It will then read as follows:—"All things are delivered unto me of God; and no man knoweth me, but God; neither knoweth any man God, save me, and he to whomsoever I will reveal him." No mere mortal, unless he were guilty of the most daring blasphemy, could utter words like these. In chapter xvi. of this same Gospel, and in the 16th verse, Simon Peter, in answer to a question from the Lord, said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." I know that some persons endeavour to explain away these words; but, I would simply say that, if the expression "Son of the Living God" is only to be understood in the sense in which you and I are sons of God, it was altogether unmeaning for the Lord to say to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." And it would be further unmeaning and unnecessary to give to him such a precious privilege as is here recorded merely because he had announced that which was previously known—that he was simply a son of God as Peter was himself. In the last chapter of this Gospel, and the last three verses, Jesus says: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I ask: Can it be possible that Jesus would place himself along with the infinite God—the Father and the Holy Spirit—if he did not claim to be divine in a sense in which no mortal on earth is divine? Passing, then, these statements in Matthew in regard to the Divinity of Christ, I notice the subject of His atonement, as found in this Gospel. You will probably remember the words in the 21st verse of chapter i., in which it is said: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save his people from their sins." Again, in chapter x. 12, 13, we have these expressions: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." In chapter xx., 27, 28, we have this further statement: "And whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Thus, in the Gospel by Matthew we see the proper Deity of Jesus is manifest, and His death as an atonement for sin. Taking now Mark's Gospel, we have at the very outset this declaration: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Then we have the statements made in chapter xiv., 61, 63, in connection with the same subject: "Again the High Priest asked Him and said unto Him, Art thou the
Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Now, the word "Blessed" is simply another designation for "God," and the question really was, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?" and His answer was "I am." Now, in this same Gospel, in connection with the atonement, in chapter x., 45, we have the words I before quoted from Matthew, "For even the Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." I now pass on to the Gospel of Luke. I can only refer to one or two passages in this Gospel, in consequence of the limited time at my disposal. In chapter x. 21, 22, we find this statement:—"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." We have ill chapter xix., 10, in connection with the atonement, the statement that He "came to seek and to save that which was lost." And in the last chapter of the book, verses 46, 47, the purpose of his coming is most clearly stated: "And said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Now here, in the Gospel by Luke, we have substantially the same teaching as we find in previous Gospels. In connection with the Gospel by John it seems almost unnecessary that I should read any Scripture at all, because I think even Mr Bright will admit that that Gospel is full of this theme. In the first four verses of that Gospel we read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." And as identifying this "Word" with the person of Jesus, in the 14th verse we find it stated: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." As I find that my half hour has expired, I have now to give place to my friend.

MR. BRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen: I must ask such indulgence at your hands as you may be inclined to give to me this evening in the tremendously difficult position in which I find myself placed. At the outset I would say, that this is the first time I have attempted to hold a public debate; therefore, for that reason, as a debutant, I may claim indulgence. But beyond and above that, the position occupied by a man like myself this evening in running counter to popular opinion, in appearing so presumptuous as I must appear to a vast number of the intelligent crowd I see before me, is such as to give me a claim to your very kindest consideration. I know this question will be in the thoughts of many of the ladies and gentlemen I see before me: Why should a poor puny mortal, like myself, venture to stand forth and to assail so grand an organisation, so world-wide a system as that of the Christian religion? The only answer I can give, is this: That I am impelled forward, almost in spite of myself, as I have been for these many years past, simply and solely by one thing, and one thing alone—a reverence for truth. It is because I feel within myself that I am following that brilliant star of truth which I see before me—that which appears to me, at all events, to be truth—that I venture thus alone forward, almost in spite of myself, as I have been for these many years past, simply and solely by one thing, and one thing alone—a reverence for truth. It is because I feel within myself that I am following that brilliant star of truth which I see before me—that which appears to me, at all events, to be truth—that I venture thus alone to stand before an audience like this, and to find myself in so startling a minority. I ask you for all the indulgence you can give me. At the same time I wish to say that I honour and respect my friend Mr. Green, for thus coming forward in order to give a reason for the faith that is in him; for surely the truth need not be afraid of public discussion; surely we may say in the words of that most liberal of men, possibly one of the clearest thinkers the world has known, John Milton: "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple. Whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?" Some will urge, I doubt not, that even if I, by reading modern literature—and the literature of the day is saturated with what so many call infidelity—have come to this conclusion, that much of what is styled Christianity is false, I ought not publicly to proclaim it. Tennyson, in one of his verses, has put this thought most beautifully:—

"Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days."

This would doubtless be well if there were merely a happy future to be found in this popular belief. But, alas! there is something behind that. In this belief, which is the orthodox conviction of our day, there is something besides "early heavens"—something besides "happy views." That sister, if her brother happens by more extensive and broader reading, to become a Freethinker, will night and day be upon her knees in an agony of grief, shuddering at the conviction that her brother is doomed to endure an eternity of torment. It is because of this dreadful background to the views of happiness that I feel, as all must feel who think unreservedly, that it is necessary we should no longer hesitate to speak out freely and frankly what we hold as truth—that we should
no longer, as Leslie Stephen says, "apologise for being in the right." We should no more "travel in disguise by circuitous paths," but should come forward and face whatever obloquy there may be in stating our convictions. In reply to the remarks made by my friend, that I, too, should have had an affirmative proposition, I deem it justice to myself to say that several affirmative propositions were stated by me, as my friend admitted; but on these propositions he was unable to take the negative side. The reason why he was unable to take the negative side was because on all questions, except as to the weight we respectively attached to the Scriptures, we were almost at one. I offered to take this ground: "That human reason is superior to Biblical authority." I think my friend supposes that he is himself of that opinion—

MR. GREEN: No.

MR. BRIGHT: For at all events he wished me to add "And is our highest guide." I thought that this would mean that I was setting myself up as a God Almighty. Therefore, I said that I would take that proposition, if it were worded as follows: "And is under God our highest guide." But then my friend would not take the negative, showing that he simply wished me to place myself in the position of affirming that there is no God, while I in my heart of hearts believe that God is all in all—that we, without the Divine mind above us, and through us, and in us, would be absolutely nothing, and that this grand and magnificent world would have been but chaos. Therefore I could not take the affirmative of a proposition which seemed to exclude the Divine direction from the Divine Universe. I say this much in defence of what might perhaps appear to be something like finesse on my part in forcing Mr. Green into the position of affirming, while I should simply have to stand and put him to the proof.

Now, with regard to this question that we are here to debate. The question, as you have heard it read, is one which was adopted by myself and my friend at a private meeting as bringing us on two opposite sides of the platform upon a topic where we really are in genuine antagonism; for surely it is not worth while spending our time in debate, unless there is a positive and true subject of opposition between us. I could not take the negative of the proposition that Christianity is of Divine origin, unless there had been some such interpretation as my friend's attached to it, because I conceive that of all things we know in this world, the system, or rather the systems of religion, which have served the turn of the best part of our race for so long a period, must be of Divine origin—that is, must have emanated, in the broad sense, from the Mind which controls and rules the Universe. Therefore I could not take the negative of a naked proposition of the Divine origin of Christianity. But when it came to a statement of what was meant by my friend by "Divine origin," and what was meant by "Christianity," I could very easily assume the position I hold to-night, because he speaks of the Divine origin of Christianity as bearing a totally different sense to the Divine origin of any religion which has helped forward other portions of the human race. Moreover, when he came to state what he meant by "Christianity," still more did I feel that I could readily take the negative. Christianity, in his idea, means that Jesus of Nazareth was God; that the Deity of Jesus is part of this Christianity, and also His death as an atonement for man's sin. Now my friend has not yet commenced to prove this allegation, He has proved that there is a certain printed book containing statements which lead him to this supposition; but he has not in any way advanced the slightest argument that Jesus was in very truth God. What will have to be the very first step in an argument of that kind? Surely the initiatory step will be to give us some sort of definition of what he means by God. What does the term "God" imply? How are we to conceive of God? Surely in anything like clear thinking that is the first stage we must set out upon in considering this strange and important question as to whether Jesus of Nazareth was God in person. What do we mean when we so glibly talk of God? In attempting to get at something like a definition of what we mean by the term God, I would draw your attention to what is said of him by one or two capable minds of the past. The writer of the Psalm lxxiii., says: "God is the strength of my heart." I presume he meant that God is the strength of all hearts that call upon Him for strength, or look to Him for strength, and even of those hearts which do not professedly look to Him for strength. In another part of the Scriptural writings God is spoken of as manifesting himself, not in the tempest, not in the storm, but in the "still small voice;" evidently illustrative of the still small voice within each of us if we will but listen to it—the voice we term "conscience" instigating us towards righteousness. Then we have the statement attributed to Paul, and contained in the writings termed "The Epistle to the Ephesians," that there is one God, above all, through all, and in all "—a definition of God to which I can most cordially assent with all the emphasis of which I am capable. Then we have another definition or description of God given us five centuries before the Christian era, by Xenophanes, the Greek:—"One God, not to be compared to mortals in form or thought—all eye and all ear—who without effort rules all things by the insight of his mind." Meaning, of course, by "all eye and all ear," that he is omnipresent and omniscient. Then we have Plato's statement, four centuries before the time of Paul, that God is Infinite Good, and the Author of Good, and that it is the perfection of man's existence to bring his nature as far as possible into harmony with God. Coming down to our own day we have that well-known and memorable definition of Matthew Arnold's, that God is "the stream of tendency which makes for righteousness"—the "Power, not ourselves," which impels to goodness. Now we have all these, and
innumerable other deliverances relative to God, but our highest and noblest ideals of the Almighty Ruler and
Inspirer of the Universe fall short of what he must be, and therefore there is, in my humble judgment, no way in
which we can define our ideal. I leave it, then, to my friend to say what he means when he speaks of God. For
myself I may say there are only two words contained in all the creeds which I can adopt as giving anything like a
statement of what God is. These two words are "infinite" and "incomprehensible." It seems to me we are bound to discern that God is thus infinite and incomprehensible—that any god who is less than universal cannot
in this age (or any age but one comprised of very ignorant beings) satisfy the ideal and aspirations of
religiously-minded men. In the past, we know the God of the Universe was represented as Jupiter, a great and
powerful man domiciled on a high mountain, with his Court and courtiers around him. Again we have him described in the Biblical Scriptures as a man who walked about in a garden, who was angry, who had
revengeful feelings, and who is delineated in all respects as a Great King seated on a throne. His hands, his feet,
his back, are spoken of; and in fact in all ways he is presented, as it is called, anthropomorphically. He is
described as a vast man, but still a man. Now it is well known that this ideal of God existed in the world, and
was the highest ideal that the human intellect could conceive. So long as this was the case we cannot he
surprised that in the olden times mortals were supposed to be the children of God in a different sense altogether
to that in which we are all of us children of God—that throughout the olden times men, and women too, were
put forward as the offspring of God. We have many instances of this kind. The learned author of "Supernatural
Religion," adduces several of them. We know that not only was it the case in Greece and in Rome that various
mortals were supposed to be children of God's in a different sense to others—in an absolute sense—but also in
the East, far away in India, and in China, they had their God-begotten men, who appeared to them too great, too
glorious, and altogether too remarkable to be mere mortals like themselves. They were so prominently in
advance of their era, that they were believed to be God-begotten. But what does my friend mean when he
affirms that Jesus of Nazareth was God in person? The difficulty to be surmounted is this: God being universal
and infinite, how could the infinite have ever been comprehended within one finite body? If he alleges simply:
"We have in Jesus of Nazareth a manifestator of Divinity greater than any the earth has seen," to the last letter I
am with him. I revere the character of Jesus as much as anyone now listening to me can revere it; and if Mr.
Green simply means that Jesus of Nazareth was a Divine manifestation, then I am cordially and heartily with
him. But he affirms far more than this. We can look upon the lily as it grows and spreads out its glorious white
leaves in the sun; and we can say: There is a manifestation of God in the vegetable kingdom. And if what is
meant by the statement that Jesus was God is simply that he was a glorious manifestation of the divine spirit in
the human kingdom, then I can heartily endorse the sentiment. But it is precisely because more than this is
meant that Rationalists start back. It is not because they are Godless that they decline to run with the crowd, and
to affirm that Jesus is God. It is because of their high and noble ideal of God—it is because they cannot
conceive of the Almighty mind of the Universe having been cramped and confined in one poor mortal
body—that they start back when this creed is thrust under their noses. I have nearly exhausted my time, and my
friend will doubtless say that I have not answered the propositions he has put forward. Well, to me there seems
no occasion for an answer to them. I can thoroughly subscribe to much that he has said. At the same time there
is this great distinction between us: That book which he held in his hand and requested me no longer to reason
over, for that is what it amounts to—I am to prostrate my rational faculties before it, and worship it as a
fetch—is the same to me as any other book. All that is good in it is good, and all that is bad in it is bad. I use
my reason in its interpretation. Still I am quite prepared to admit that there is probably no such remarkable book
in the Universe—at least none such familiar to us. Doubtless other nations have their sacred works which they
revere just as highly, and many of them containing morality almost as noble as the best which is to be found in
that Book. The simple fact that there are other works regarded as sacred by other families of mankind should
prevent us from bowing down before that book in its entirety, and should lead us to read it with free minds.
Where we see anything we can approve of, we should approve of it; and where there is anything that startles us,
we should examine it more carefully. Where wonders and miracles are put before us, as in so much of the
literature of ancient times, we should await further evidence. But wherever good, high, noble, and moral
sentiment is to be found in that work we can heartily coincide in it, and probably revere it quite as highly as
those who subdue their reason before it and accept all its statements as infallible authority.

But I am told that in that book we have evidence of the way in which we are to regard Jesus of Nazareth. It
seems to me that even in that Book, when intelligently read, you cannot deduce this from it: That Jesus ever
declared himself to be God—the God of the Universe. There does not appear to me to be one line in that
Book—and I have read it most carefully—that to a rational mind, free from prejudice, trained to enquire into
everything with a doubting and sceptical spirit (for that is a pure and good spirit, which has ever been useful to
the progress of the race in the past, and will be useful to it in the future)—nothing that absolutely binds the
intellect down and declares that you must conceive of this man, who walked the earth nearly two thousand
years ago, as being the infinite God in person; that there was no other God anywhere when he walked the earth:
and that when he died absolutely God himself, the Creator of the universe died, and poor mortal man had put an end to the earthly career of his own Creator. Possibly my friend will say that I misstate the case in this; but then surely he must be landed on the other horn of the dilemma. If Jesus were not in this sense God in person, then he was no more than a Divine manifestation in human form. And the moment that signification is introduced, it becomes a question for each Rationalist to form his own judgment upon. If not God in person, then he was less than God, and it is wrong to worship him. If he were God in person, surely at that time, when he was alive, God was to be found nowhere else. The whole world beside was in a Godless state; nowhere else could God have been at that time; he was there and there alone, walking the fields of Judea as a poor carpenter. As an infant, too, in the cradle by the side of Mary his mother, and there alone, the Almighty Mind manifested in this marvellous Universe, was "cribbed,-cabin'd, and confin'd."

Mr. GEEE: My friend has very properly anticipated that I would make the remark that he had not met the argument, which, it appears to me, is his proper and legitimate duty; and further, that he was not stating the case of Christianity aright when he gave such a representation of our views of the Lord Jesus Christ as he did. I do not intend to be drawn away from the proposition before us by any side issue. I do not intend, either to-night or at any other time, God helping me, to trouble about a definition of the Deity, for the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. But one thing must be clearly understood:—That no Christian at all affirms—certainly I do not, and I am not aware of any who do—that the whole of the Godhead was manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. Mr. Bright ought not to have taken this matter for granted, inasmuch as he knows that I simply used the term "Deity" in the proposition on account of his special interpretation of the word "Divine." He considers himself to be divine; he considers each of us an emanation of the Deity—this bouquet of flowers—these books. Now I say if he uses the term "Divine" in that sense, then I am under the necessity of finding a word which will convey Divinity in a higher sense in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not affirm that Jesus was God, nor was he man; we say He was God manifested in the flesh. He was the express representation of the Father's character and the brightness of His glory. He came in order that He might manifest, as far as that manifestation could be given in human form, the infinite Deity that fills the Universe. Therefore I say that Mr. Bright, in having spent so much time upon the definition of the Deity, and then in charging me with saying that Jesus was the only God, and reasoning on the absurdity of supposing that the whole of the Deity was cooped up in the person of one puny man, was really using his time for a purpose foreign to this debate.

Mr. Bright defines Christianity as the moral teachings of Jesus Christ. Now I would ask what right Mr. Bright has to give an arbitrary definition of Christianity, and to throw aside that book which is alone to be taken as expounding what Christianity is? When was my friend constituted an authority to define by his own mere ipse dixit what Christianity is, and to say, "I will not take that written or printed book as explaining Christianity, but I will say what Christianity is?" This appears to me, not to be reasoning, but just leaping right over the point which requires to be proved. If my friend says these statements are not the statements of Jesus—if he affirms that this book is not reliable—then we have a clear issue, and I must ask him to say why it is not reliable. But our position at the present time is to show that these two points—the Atonement, and the Divinity of Christ's nature in a sense in which no other being in the Universe is divine, except God—are parts of Christianity. In as much as He assumed human form, he was, properly speaking, neither God nor man, but God manifest in the flesh, or as the Greeks would term Him, Theanthropos. I say that having the declarations of the Scriptures upon this matter, we have just to go on in the course we began—to point out that these Scriptures declare that Jesus was Divine in the sense that is stated in the proposition, and that He did die as an atonement for man's sin, and I shall expect my friend, if he declines to accept this definition of Christianity, to show why he will not accept it—to show reasons why these records are not to be received as the true expounders of the nature of the Christian religion.

Now let me just finish the remarks I was making on the teachings of the Gospels, as to the Divinity of Christ. In this first chapter of the Gospel by John, we have Jesus spoken of as the "Word that was with God, and that was God," and also as the one "by whom all things were made," showing that there is true and essential Divinity predicated of Him in this verse. Then in chap. v. of this same Gospel, 17-23, it is said:—"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father; making himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth; and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." Now, that certainly cannot be predicated of any mortal man in the world. It can only be predicated of a Being who is Divine in a sense in which no earthly being is. Now we find in
connection with the Atonement, in this Gospel, the following statements:—Chap, iii., 14-16, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." In chap, vi., 51, the Lord Jesus says:—"I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the World." Thus, we have in these Gospel records the declaration of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death as an atonement; and if my friend denies that these things do form part of Christianity, then it is for him to show that these words can be properly understood in a different sense to that which I have named. If he can also show that these books are not to be relied upon as explaining what Christianity is, he will then be in his legitimate line of disproof; but unless he does this, he is certainly not meeting the argument which is legitimate in connection with our proposition.

Now, the next book which is regarded as of authority—or, for the moment we will leave out authority, and take it as simply written in the early period of the Christian age—is the Book of Acts. That book, whether written by inspired men or not, was beyond doubt, even by the admission of the enemies of Christianity, written in that early Christian period, and therefore if it teaches the Divinity of Christ and His death as an atonement, it will be part of our proof that the proposition as worded can be legitimately affirmed—that the Divinity of Christ and His death as an atonement are parts of Christianity. Now in the Acts, chapter ii., 36, the Apostle Peter, in preaching to the Jews, concludes his discourse with these memorable words:—"Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The term "Lord" is the translation which is given to the Hebrew terms Jehovah and Adonai—the one applying to the Divine Father, the other designating more especially the executive power of the Divine Being; and we see that this term is applied to Jesus, indicating that he occupied the position of the Divine Executive in connection with the government of the world. Again, in the 7th chapter, 55th and following verses, we find the following with regard to Stephen, the first martyr of the Christian Church:—But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." I am not concerned at this stage of our controversy to explain how Jesus can be Divine. I am simply establishing the fact that it is part of Christianity; and I want my friend to meet that point, for it is the first point we must settle. Now, in connection with His atonement, as taught in this book, in chapter v., 30, 31, we have these words:—"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." In addition to the Acts of the Apostles, let me point out that we have certain letters addressed to believers in various parts of the world. These letters form part of the early Christian literature, and whether it be admitted that they were written by apostles or apostolic men or not—whether it be admitted that they were written immediately subsequent to the death of Jesus, or towards the end of the first century—they certainly are the earliest Scriptures that we have next to the Book of Acts. I shall be prepared to show, when my friend is prepared to take up and grapple this point, that these Epistles were written in the first century, by the men whose names are attached to them, and that they are legitimate writings, declaring to us what is and what is not the religion of Christ.

Mr BRIGHT: As I had almost anticipated, it seems, if I may be allowed to say so, that my friend has not clearness of thought upon this question. It seems to me that he asserts the Deity of Jesus, and in the same breath declares that there was somehow or somewhere, a Deity superior to Jesus, or at all events, that Jesus was not all God. Then I say, we are entering upon the sphere of a plurality of Gods. If he was a Deity at all, surely he must have been the Deity. Is there any other Deity? If he were the Deity, then I again ask, where was the rest of the universe without the support of its God—that God who, as Paul says, is above all, through all, and in all? And not only Paul, but all the great minds of the past, and all the great minds of the present, admit the infinitude of God. Therefore, it all turns upon this point—Was Jesus the whole of God, or was he not? If he were not, then he must take his rank with other creations. He is no longer the Creator; and in that case, a vast stumbling-block in the way of Rationalists is removed. It is the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is put before us as the Creator that is so abhorrent to rational minds. Therefore again I say, it is upon this ground, and upon this ground almost alone, that any material difference of opinion should arise; because if Jesus be a Deity, he must, so far as I can form an idea on the subject, be the Deity. Otherwise he is merely a manifestation of the Deity—vastly superior in degree, possibly, to other manifestations, but still a manifestation of the Deity, the same as other men who have lived and breathed upon this globe.

My friend says I defined Christianity for myself as the teachings of Jesus, and asks me to show why I
defined Christianity in that manner. Now, I did not define Christian- tinity in that manner as a dogma for others. I defined Christianity for myself alone, because that is the position taken by a Freethinker. I did not come forward and say that others must believe as I believe. But for myself I define Christianity as comprehending mainly the teachings of Jesus and the example of his life. The reverence I entertain for Jesus is based more upon my appreciation of his life, as set forth in the traditional history concerning him, than even upon the goodness of his teachings. It seems to me to have been the life of a man who, of all the men I have read of, surrendered himself a willing sacrifice for the common weal. But that surely does not, in any sense or way, make him to be God in person. The moment you make him to be God in person, in that moment and to that extent you degrade humanity, because humanity, through the manhood of Jesus, is elevated. If you take away the highest peak of our mountain range of humanity, and declare that it is not a mountain peak of humanity at all, but something dropped down miraculously from the heavens, then the whole range is dwarfed. But if you leave that high and lofty peak before the view of men as an example of human life—a life towards which all may aim, however far short of it they may fall—then, indeed, you make it of some use to the race. And I maintain that the time when Christianity will play its noblest part in the history of mankind will be when Jesus is looked upon as our elder brother, one whose example is not rendered abortive by his being conceived of as a Deity, a superhuman production. I am asked to state why I take a view of Christianity different to that which is taken by the majority of people—because that is what my friend's interrogatory amounts to. I have surely the right of formulating my ideal of Christianity so long as I retain that right for myself alone. The wrong would begin if I put it forward as an act which is to be in any shape binding on other people. But for myself alone I assert that that book must come before my reason just the same as any other book. All that is in it of which my reason approves, I value and esteem; but with it, as with any other volume, I will not degrade my intellect by bowing down and saying that is good and moral, which appears to me bad and immoral.

Even taking the orthodox view of that book, regarding it as a Divine production, the very book itself as it stands now, is undergoing examination by the race, in order to discover whether it is in every respect the word of God or not. In the earliest copies of the New Testament that we have—those which scientific criticism deems to be the earliest, the version found on Mount Sinai, and the version in the Vatican—many portions of the authorised New Testament are not to be discovered within those versions. Therefore it is alleged by the profoundest critics of our day that they form no part of the Word of God itself. Why, that beautiful incident in the Gospel to which my friend referred—the Gospel of John—that beautiful incident of Jesus, and the woman taken in adultery, is not to be found either in the Sinaitic or the Vatican version. Therefore, so far as those versions are concerned, it is not a part of the Word of God; and to those who think that we are bound by the book, and nothing but the book, and that that book is to be regarded as totally different to every other description of writing and printing, the moment it is shown that certain passages are not in the early writings, they cease to be a part of the Bible in any sense. So, all the concluding verses of the Gospel of Mark, all after the eighth verse, including that most important passage upon which more than any other the whole Baptist schism is based—the doctrine of immersion—are not to be found in the Sinaitic and Vatican versions. Hence even taking this comparatively superficial ground of Biblical criticism, I assert you cannot hold forth any book as being in itself—within its boards and nowhere else—the infallible word of God. Moreover, we know that a vast section of Christendom, consisting of at least 180 millions of believers, does not regard that book, which my friend holds forth, as the Word of God. It has another Word of God—the Douay version of the Bible as accepted by the Roman Catholic Church—and there is very much within it that is not to be found in the version accepted by my friend. The Sinaitic MS., discovered by Tischendorf in the Convent of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, is admitted, as I have said, by Biblical critics to be the earliest version of the New Testament. This is shown in many ways, one of which I may roughly intimate, viz.: that passages mentioned by some of the earliest Fathers, which are not to be found in other versions, are found in the Sinaitic version, showing that it must have been of early date. There is especially a passage mentioned by Origen, which is found in the Sinaitic version and in no other. There- fore I say the Sinaitic version is regarded as the most ancient; and in this version—now in the Russian Emperor's library at St. Petersburg—there is a book entitled the "Epistle of Barnabas," and one entitled the "Shepherd of Hermas," which form no part of the Word of God as received by my friend. Therefore I maintain even on this ground of mere Biblical and verbal criticism, I have a right to say that reason must not bow down before the book held out on this platform, as if it were proved to be of Divine origin,—a special revelation. But as you will have noticed, the whole argument of my friend upon this question is that certain statements are contained within the Gospel records. Well, I assert that the statements advanced by him from those Gospel records are of no authority to Freethinkers. The Freethinker holds the right to examine everything, no matter where it may be found—to examine everything for himself—to bring his own judgment to bear upon it. This right is not claimed by those who conceive themselves to be orthodox believers, yet in reality they themselves, pick and choose certain passages as having more authority than other passages, and will not be bound by everything that is to be found especially in the older portion of that book which they term the
infallible Word of God. They will not take these passages as if authoritative over their reason now. There are commands given in those earlier portions of Scripture which they will reject and plead a right to disregard. Well, if that be the case with orthodox believers, surely a Freethinker cannot be regarded as presumptuous if he goes still further and says, "Upon every statement that you put forward out of that book, I claim a right to exercise my reason—to see whether it accords with reason—to see whether it is consistent with the facts of the Universe as approved by science to the senses—to discern whether I am to receive it as really the truth, according to the highest truth known—the manifestations in nature of the Divine Mind." I say this is the right which every Freethinker asserts, and insists on exercising.

Mr. Green: I will take the remarks Mr. Bright has made in the latter part of his speech first in order. Let me say that we are very glad that the works of Barnabas and of Hermas were found in the place referred to; but until he can show that those two books have any claim to inspiration, and that they put forth any claim to be of authority in connection with the Christian religion, the mere fact of their being found along with the books of Scripture proves nothing whatever. "With regard to other portions of the Scriptures, I do not quite agree with the correctness of my friend's statement, but will pass that by for the present. Christians show their anxiety not to receive anything but what has clear evidence in its favour, so clear and convincing that it cannot be overcome; hence, when manuscripts have been discovered, and have been compared with the others, if upon careful examination it was found that there was not evidence sufficient to establish their claim to be considered inspired writings, writings which have come from the pens of the Apostles or of Apostolic men, they rejected them. I think this in itself is one of the most powerful arguments in favour of the authenticity of this book—that those who were examining the manuscripts should determine to accept nothing as coming from an authoritative source, unless it had all the evidence that human reason can possibly demand in favour of it.

Now let me say that my friend claims a liberty of a vast kind. He says books are of no authority to the Freethinker. Well, my impression is that it is difficult to tell what is of authority to the Freethinker. But can any of us by our mere statement, say that those historical records, which have been handed down to us from past ages, are to be taken as true or untrue merely because we say they are true or untrue? I say my friend must prove that the records which he refuses to accept as being true have not that evidence in their support which all true records ought to have; and if he says he exercises his reason, he must certainly allow us the right to exercise ours, and to say: "With all deference, Mr. Bright, we refuse to accept your statement as an authority, affirming that this book is not to be received, merely because you say it ought not. We want reason, argumentation, and not mere statement."

My friend has defined Christianity: First, he says he defines Christianity for himself alone. What is his guide in this definition? Another will define it in another way. How am I or you to decide which definition is true if we are not to refer to the records which tell us of the origin and promulgation of the Christian religion? The Baconian philosophy can only be known from the writings of Bacon; and the character of the Christian religion can only be known from the teachings of Jesus and of the Apostles. Therefore Mr. Bright's mere judgment of Christianity, apart from the records, can be of no weight to any intelligent and reasonable audience.

But let me show you how Mr. Bright places himself in a great dilemma. He says Christianity consists of the teachings of Jesus, and the example of a life. Then I have to ask: If Christianity consists partly of the teachings of Jesus, of what part? For I have shown that part of the teaching of Jesus consists in the affirmation of His Divinity, Divinity such as is possessed by no mortal being, and of the possession of power in his Human person, committed to Him by the Father, such as no mortal can claim. Now, if Mr. Bright says he declines to accept those statements of Jesus, is it not reasonable that I should ask him what portion of the recorded teachings of Jesus he takes as really having been spoken by him, and what part he rejects? Is it not reasonable that I should ask on what authority he accepts part as the teachings of Jesus, and rejects the other part? Are we to accept this or that merely because my friend says it? If so, are we exercising our reason in the manner in which he says every human being in this world ought to use it? Unquestionably not.

Again, let me say that my friend has spoken hastily. He charges me with want of clearness of thought in connection with the Divinity of Christ, and says that if Christ is God, there must be another God—a superior God—and that consequently there are two Gods in the Universe. I would just remind my friend that this is altogether beside the question. We have first to ascertain whether the Divinity of Christ is part of Christianity. We are not concerned at present with the question as to its reasonableness or otherwise. He affirms that this is not a part of Christianity, and I affirm that it is. Now, I say that the only way in which we can prove that it is a part of Christianity is, to take the records which declare what Christianity really is. If my friend will admit that this book teaches the Deity of Jesus, then I will be happy to pass over that part, and to grapple with him on the question of the reasonableness of the position taken up by this book. But he commenced his last speech by saying that even upon a reasonable—or, as he terms it, a rational—interpretation of the statements in this book, Jesus cannot be shown to be Divine. I have simply to ask him to take those passages, and to give us a rationalistic exposition which will be in harmony with grammar, and with those general principles of
interpretation which guide us in our understanding of all books, and show that the declarations in this book do not legitimately mean what I have asserted to-night they do.

Now, as further establishing my affirmation upon this matter, I have to say—and I will just affirm it broadly, and if my friend calls it in question, I will then give the proof—that in all the epistles which were written by the Apostles, or by Apostolic men, the Divinity of Christ, and His death as an atonement for man, form the sum and substance of those writings, and are the basis upon which the hopes of those Christian people are said to rest. Take those two points from Christianity, and you rob it of its very existence—of its very central truth—and you leave nothing to which the term Christianity can be legitimately applied. Let me further say, with regard to those early writers of the Christian Church who followed the Apostles in the age immediately succeeding, that Bishop Blunt, in his work on the "Use of the Early Fathers," gives abundant quotations clearly showing that they held the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death as an atonement for man. But as these were Christian men, and may therefore be said to be in favour of that of which they spoke, I will pass them by, and just go on to those who were not Christians, and we shall see that they too declare that those two positions were held by the Christians in that early age.

In a letter of Pliny's to the Emperor Trajan, we find him speaking of the Christians, and in connection with them he makes this statement:—"They (Christians) assured me that the main of their fault, or of their mistake, was this:—that they were wont, on a stated day, to meet together before it was light, and to sing an hymn to Christ, as to a God, alternately; and to oblige themselves by a sacrament (or oath), not to do anything that was ill, that they would commit no theft, or pillaging, or adultery; that they would not break their promises, or deny what was deposited with them when it was required back again; after which it was their custom to depart, and to meet again at a common but innocent meal." Now, the Divinity of Jesus is clearly manifest in the remark of Pliny that they offered worship to Jesus as to a God.

We have further testimony from Lucian, who wrote about the year 170. Speaking of the Christians, he says:—"They therefore *still worship* that great man who was crucified in Palestine, because he introduced into the world this new religion." By these two writers, who could have no purpose to serve, and who simply wrote from a knowledge of actual facts, we have it stated that the Christians worshipped Jesus as being Divine.

We have also the writings of Celsus—the greatest opponent of Christianity in that early age—and I will merely make the statement, without, at this point, proving it by quotations, that in his arguments against the religion of Christ, he refers, not only to the Divinity of Christ and to His death as an atonement, as being held by Christians universally, but also to almost every event in our Gospels. Having the testimony of these profane historians—having the testimony of unbelievers, who were opposed to Christianity and wrote against it (not only such as Celsus, but also Porphyry, Julian, and others subsequently)—it is clearly shown that it was part of the Christianity propagated in that first age, that Christ was Divine, and that He did die as an atonement for man.

But more than this, I will show you, even from the work of Strauss himself, that the Divinity of Jesus is really the very basis on which the Gospels are written. He says, the "hypothesis of the Gospel writers is that Divinity was the operating principle in Christ, irresistibly determining His every word and action." He says this is not his theory—nor is it my friend's; but here we have Strauss's admission, that the theory on which the Gospels are written, is that of the Divinity of Christ operating as a principle in him, irresistibly determining his every word and action. This being the case, and as I see my time is just expiring, I have to ask my friend whether he is prepared to admit that the definition which I have given of Christianity is true or not—that it includes the Divinity of Christ and His death as an atonement? If he is not so prepared, will he show that those historians are not reliable? As a reasonable man and a rationalist, will he give us the reasons on which he rejects this testimony, so that we may see whether he is really acting reasonably in so refusing to accept what, in any Court of justice in the land, would be regarded as legitimate evidence?

**MR. BRIGHT:** Replying to the last observation of my friend first, I would say that no Court of justice in the land ever has to examine evidence about such a startling proposition. The testimony required in order to prove an event has, according to all rules of evidence, to be doubled, trebled, and multiplied, if that event is of a prodigious and improbable nature. Therefore when such an extravagant proposition is required to be proved, as that an individual of the race who lived nearly two thousand years ago was a "Deity"—for that is the mildest way in which I can state the proposition put forward by my friend—surely any Court of justice would demand evidence of the most overwhelming character. I ask you to think for a moment what description of evidence would convince us at this day that any living man was God? That is what the definition accepted in this debate means, and I can put no other construction upon it. In what possible way could we at this day be persuaded of that fact? Suppose a man were now to be working all the miracles said to have been worked in Judea—suppose he were healing the sick in various directions wherever the faith of the people permitted him to so heal—suppose he raised in some instances the apparently dead to life—suppose he changed water into wine—and assume that he lived in all respects the life which is said to have been lived by Jesus himself in the
records accepted by my friend—could we yet believe that we had before us in any sense whatever, the
corporeal representative of the Almighty Mind which controls this Universe, the Being who is God over all,
above all, and in all? I think not. I do not see how evidence could be adduced to the satisfaction of any Court of
justice, of such a startling and marvellous fact as that would be.

My friend says he cannot receive the conclusions of my reason as being of any authority to him. I never
supposed that he could. But the question is why—using my reason for myself alone—am I to accept any
statement simply because it comes, or purports to come—for we have no conclusive evidence even of
that—from some ancient writer termed an Apostle? If the man were living and breathing before me, and
declaring to my face: "I am inspired by the Almighty to write this which you see me writing;" I would still turn
round upon him and say: "Where is the evidence of this miraculous fact? And even if you are inspired, still, is
that which you are writing to be regarded as of infallible authority to me? Am I not to use my reason upon it?
Must every supernatural fact there set down be taken by me as absolutely true, without any process of
ratiocination? Inspired or non-inspired I maintain my right to reason over it and guage its truthfulness." Seeing
that these accounts come to us through various translations of manuscripts and printed books, with alterations
and discrepancies at every stage, with various sects adopting various readings and interpretations—is it to be
thought for a moment that our reason is to be held in bondage to these old writings, when, even if the writers
were before us, we would decline to take their allegations as conclusive proof of infallible inspiration? My
friend says that there is nothing of authority to a Freethinker. What I assert is that there is nothing of authority
to a Freethinker which outrages his reason. A vast difference! Everything has to be brought to the bar of reason.
There is nothing which can be of authority over that, he must use his reason on every statement which is
presented to him. The moment his reason is satisfied of the demonstration of any statement—of the excellence
of any life presented—then he yields to it the loyalty which every intellect must give to that which appears to
be good, true, and beautiful. But not till then. It is therefore as much a question of reason with these old
writings as with writings of a later date. Would my friend yield his reason captive to any other writings? And
why to these? I have not heard a scintilla of argument urged why our reason is to be prostrated to these writings,
and to no others in the world. Therefore each one who feels so disposed—this is the position of
Freethinkers—may, without fear of priesthoods, or of any other social organizations, use his own reason, with
such aid as he may get from the writings of the past, in judging of the truthfulness or untruthfulness of every
portion of that written and printed record. My friend wishes me to prove that these writings are not authoritative
over reason? Am I called upon by my friend to remember that certain heathen writers speak of the ancient Christians as
worshipping Jesus of Nazareth. I ask: Is it likely that those old philosophers, in the supercilious glance they
threw at the early Christian worshippers—an obscure sect, Tacitus calls them, of superstitious men—according
to him, the scorn of the earth—would be enabled to determine whether they worshipped Jesus as a Deity, or
merely revered Him as a good and noble Prophet of the Lord? Is it likely that those ancient writers would be
able to distinguish on nice points of this kind, on which even in our day—with all the light thrown on the
subject—there is so much difference of opinion? We may take these references simply as they
stand—admitting, although it is by no means proved, that they are genuine—as indicative of what the old philosophers thought regarding an obscure sect, which, as stated in their writings, they looked down upon as thoroughly degraded. Therefore they do not help my friend in his theological assumptions. If my friend would convince Freethinkers of the truthfulness of his position, he has to demonstrate that Jesus was the Deity,—Divine in a totally different sense to any other human being. That is the position he has taken up, and that is where his proof has to come in.

I am told that the death of Jesus made atonement for man's sin. How comes it then that the sin of man still appears to be unatoned, and produces, as ever, evil consequences? Even according to the showing of the religious sects of the day, there are ninety-nine chances that a man living at this time will elude salvation, to the one chance there is of his obtaining eternal happiness. Therefore even from that point of view, how has the atonement acted so as to procure what it is affirmed to have accomplished? Moreover, we have this to look at: that throughout the wide wide world, there have been millions upon millions in every generation passing away who have never heard even the name of Jesus. Was this atonement made for them? Did it produce any effect upon them? Why, at this present day there are 622 millions of Hindoos and Buddhists, the Buddhists standing in somewhat the same relation to Hindooism as Protestants do to Roman Catholicism. So you have half the living world of this present moment given up to Hindooism and Buddhism—religions which have served their turn very well for them, but which my friend will still maintain, are not of Divine origin. Hence I ask: Where has this atonement, which was vouchsafed the earth 1800 years ago, been able to prove efficient? If these people, who have thus lived without a knowledge of this atonement, without a recognition of Jesus, are still able to obtain salvation then I say that this very act which my friend terms a beneficent and atoning act, has caused millions upon millions to be plunged into damnation, who otherwise might have escaped. For the populations who never heard of it are able to obtain salvation; while the vast majority of those who did hear of it, fail to secure the benefits which it was supposed to give.

**Second Evening.**

**MR. BRIGHT:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen—I feel satisfied that all concerned in this debate will felicitate themselves on the manner in which it passed off last evening. For my own part I may say, that it has been my earnest desire that this discussion shall be conducted with the utmost calmness, because, in considering a question of this nature, we know that there are naturally excitable feelings evoked on both sides, and unless we have something like a philosophical spirit in the audience as well as in the disputants, the debate becomes a mere wrangle. Therefore, I say, last night, we on this side may thank the audience; and I trust the audience on its part was satisfied with the way in which myself and my friend conducted our arguments.

My friend undertook last night to prove the Divine origin of Christianity in the sense which he put upon it in the interpretations well known to you. Had that Divine origin not been specified as in a different sense—not in a different degree—to that of other religions I could not have taken the negative. But when it is asserted that Christianity,—with this explanation of it, involving as it seems to me what is false in theology—is of Divine origin, and all other religions are asserted to be, by comparison, of human origin, I maintain we require a large amount of proof. If the proof is not merely to satisfy those who are already satisfied—those who, through early training, believe in the same way as my friend believes—if it is to prove satisfactory to those who doubt and disbelieve—then surely it will have to be of a very complete and thorough nature. Now, I do not think that as yet the proof has been thus complete. My friend stated that he occupied a difficult position in having to prove, while I might be satisfied merely with denying. But surely if he has truth on his side, affirmation should become tolerably easy. If it be simply truth which has to prove itself against falsehood, surely he has the better side of the argument. Would it be difficult to advance evidence in favour of the truth of the law of gravitation against a simple negative? Or if my friend were trying to show the wisdom of the command that we are to do to others as we would have others do to us, would he then occupy a difficult position in affirmation against a simple negative? Hence I say that if he have the full truth on his side, which he declared he had at the commencement—and as he no doubt thoroughly feels he has—he ought to occupy an easy and not a difficult position. For myself, I may state it seems to me all the other religions of the world are also of Divine origin, differing, if you will, in degree—not so well fitted for the foremost races among mankind—but still having their genesis in the same Divine Mind from which emanates the Christian religion. Of course I do not allude specially to the Jewish religion, as doubtless my friend would not except that from his divinely originated faiths, as upon the Jewish, the Christian religion itself affects to be based. But taking other religions, my object now is to try to show to those who may not have previously studied this question that the devotees of these religions put forward the same pretentions on behalf of their Divine origin as are put forward by the devotees of Christianity. I would refer first to the religion of that large mass of people, the Hindoos, now numbering
something like 139 millions. In the work I hold in my hand—that very excellent treatise by Viscount Amberley, entitled "An Analysis of Religious Belief," a statement is made regarding the extreme antiquity of the sacred books of the Hindoos; and I allude to this subject of antiquity as showing that what may be good in these books is not merely independent of the teachings of Jesus, but to all appearance, does not emanate from any sacred source as acknowledged by my friend. Lord Amberley says:—

"The extreme antiquity of our extant Veda is guaranteed by the amplest testimony. In the indexes compiled by native scholars 500 or 600 years before Christ, we find every hymn, every verse, every word and syllable of the Veda accurately quoted." (Max Miller's 'Chips from a German Workshop,' vol. 1, p. 11.) Before this was done, not only was the whole vast collection complete, but it was ancient; for had it been a recent composition it would not have enjoyed the pre-eminent sanctity which rendered it the object of this minute attention, And not only is the Veda ancient, but it has been shown that, from the variety of its component strata, it must have been the growth of no small period of time, its earliest elements being of an almost unfathomable antiquity. Max Miller, who has elaborately treated this question, divides the Vaidik age—the age during which the Veda was in process of formation—into four great epochs. The most primitive hymns of the Rig-Veda he attributes to what he terms the Chhandas period (from Chhandas, or metre) the limits of which cannot be fixed in the ascending direction, but which descends no later than 1,000 B.C. And he thinks that 'we cannot well assign a date more recent than 1200 to, 1500 before our era,' (Chips, vol. 1, p. 13) for the composition of these hymns."

A page or two further on, Lord Amberley says:—"Whatever their antiquity, the sanctity of these works in Indian opinion is of the highest order. Never has the theory of inspiration been pushed to such an extreme. The Veda was the direct creation of Brahma; and the Rishis, or Sages, who are the nominal authors of the hymns, did not compose them, but simply 'saw' them. Although, therefore, the name of one of these seers is coupled with each hymn, it must not be supposed that he did more than perceive the divine poem which was revealed to his privileged vision."

Now these Vedas contain morality of as high a character in many respects as is to be found in the sacred books of Christianity. I will read you just one or two short passages from one of the Vedas. It says:—"Any place where the mind of man can be undisturbed, is suitable for the worship of the Supreme Being." "The vulgar look for their gods in water; the ignorant think they reside in wood, bricks, and stones; men of more extended knowledge seek them in celestial orbs; but wise men worship the Universal Soul." "There is one living and true God; everlasting, without parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things." "He who considers all beings as existing in the Supreme Spirit, and the Supreme Spirit as pervading all beings, cannot view with contempt any creature whatsoever." "To know that God is, and that all is God, this is the substance of the Vedas. When one attains to this, there is no more need of reading, or of works; they are but the bark, the straw, the envelope. No more need of them when one has the seed, the substance, the Creator. When one knows Him by science, he may abandon science, as the torch which has conducted him to the end."

There are many other similar passages in the Vedas; but I will now just read a short passage from the sacred book of the Reformers among the Hindoos—the Buddhists—whose religion sprang up with Buddha, some 500 or 600 years before Christ, and being banished from India at an early date, took gradual possession of all that vast congress of peoples occupying China, Thibet, Japan, Ceylon, and elsewhere. This religion also contains the same high morality as the other religion. It has among its commandments a commandment not to destroy life, a legal or natural rights of other men, not to tell lies, and not to partake of anything intoxicating. The highest commandment not to obtain another's property by unjust means, not to indulge the passions so as to injure the legal or natural rights of other men, not to tell lies, and not to partake of anything intoxicating. The highest order of spiritual morality is inculcated in many passages of the Buddhistic sacred books. One passage runs thus:—

"Buddha said: Who is the good man? The religious man only is good. And what is goodness? First and foremost it is the agreement of the will with the conscience. Who is the great man? He who is strongest in the exercise of patience; who patiently endures injury, and maintains a blameless life. He is a man indeed! And who is a worshipful man (one deserving reverence, or a Buddha)? A man whose heart has arrived at the highest degree of enlightenment. All lust removed, all wicked actions uprooted, all within calm and pure, without blemish; who is acquainted with all things from first or last, and even with those things that have not yet transpired; who knows and sees and hears all things; such universal wisdom is rightly called illumination."

So with the religion known as Iranism, dating still earlier,—the religion which has Zoroaster for its author, and numbers the Parsees among its modern followers. The morality inculcated in its sacred books is of a similarly high character. These are some passages:—

"Do not allow yourself to be carried away by anger. Reply to thine enemy with gentleness. Avoid everything calculated to injure others. Take not that which belongs to another. Be not envious, avaricious, proud, nor vain. To refuse hospitality, and not succour the poor, are sins. Be scrupulous to observe the truth in all things. Fornication and immodest looks are sins. To think evil is a sin; strive therefore to keep pure in body
I may state that the extracts I gave from the Buddhistic and Hindoo writings are contained in a book, entitled "The Bible of the Ages." The last extract is from a volume by Hudson Tuttle, entitled "The Christ Idea in History." These illustrations might be multiplied to any extent, but they serve my purpose in sufficiently showing that among these great nations, during past ages, the people have been struggling towards righteousness. They have not the same animal force as the nations have with whom the Christian religion is the accepted faith; but notwithstanding that, they have peopled in an orderly fashion large quarters of the globe. And I ask: Are these religions simply human in their origin, while this other religion, with a morality of little, if any higher cast, is the sole religion that has been inspired by the Divine Mind? In my opinion, and in the opinion of nearly all those who deeply consider this question, the infinite Father of Humanity has left no portion of His family without its representative of the highest morality—the most perfect spiritual faculties. Throughout the wide wide world, we find that everywhere this Supreme Mind has been operating during ages past; and that it has not been left to one small secluded portion of the globe—one infinitesimal corner, as it were—to have conveyed to it, and it alone; a message of love for the comfort of the children of the Almighty. This is the ground large numbers of Freethinkers take in believing that all these religions have also been of Divine origin—that everywhere there has been operating in a more or less conspicuous degree the same Divine impulse. The Buddhists at this day, accord to the latest edition of "Chambers's Cyclopaedia," number 483 millions. Surely we cannot suppose that all these people now living, and all their predecessors throughout the past, who never heard even the name of Jesus—the only and solitary specimen of Divinity in human shape, according to my friend—were left in utter darkness without some evidence of that light which seems, in broken rays, to have come to the whole of mankind. I ask, too, why is my reason to act differently in considering the sacred books of those peoples who, during ages upon ages, have managed to live by them, and work righteousness by them,—why is my reason to act differently by these writings than by some other alleged sacred book? Why am I to be allowed to select what is good from these books, to take their enunciations as authoritative to the extent that my reason approves, and to reject in them all that appears fabulous and immoral, while the moment the sacred book of my friend is held up before me, I am to bow down and worship it as the infallible word of God? I ask: Where is the proof of this in the one case, and not in the others? Where is the proof that this Christianity is a Divine religion, and that no other religion known to humanity is similarly Divine?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman and respected hearers: I would just say in regard to the reference that has been made to other religions, that the mere profession of a religion, and the assertion that that religion is of Divine origin does not make it so. If those Hindoos and others can prove that their religion is of Divine origin by evidence which stands the test of all the rules that we are guided by in judging of evidence, then by all means accept it. If we are thus guided, and after examination are convinced that the evidence proves Divine origin, as far as evidence is capable of proving such a thing, then we ought to accept it as being so. But as I have said, the mere statement of Divine origin does not make anything so; and I am here to-night not merely to assert that Christianity is of Divine origin, but I am endeavouring, with the help of God, to prove that this proposition is absolutely true.

In regard to the Hindoo writings, I think it would have been better if my friend had read a little more at first hand, and not merely at second hand. Professor Max Müller is confessedly a scholar of the very highest reputation in connection with the Hindoo mythologies, and if my friend will take Max Müller's work, "Chips from a German Workshop," and read his lecture upon those ancient Vedas, he will find from Müller's own statement, the estimate which he puts upon the Vedic hymns, and upon the morality which is taught in these ancient writings. I admit they are the most ancient writings in the world next to the Scriptures; but as Professor Müller, after a most thorough and searching investigation into those writings, has said, when compared with the Scriptures which have come down to us through the Jews, when compared with their pure morality and their elevated conceptions of the Deity, those Vedic hymns sink into utter insignificance. If my friend had been better informed in regard to these Vedic hymns, he could never have passed the eulogy he has upon the morality and elevated conceptions of the Deity contained in them. I did not expect that he would refer to these matters to-night, and consequently I am not furnished with the testimony that would thoroughly establish this. But I will be to-morrow evening, and I will therefore pass it by, simply affirming that I have positive knowledge, from actual personal research, that his statement in connection with those books is not based upon clear and reliable testimony.

Now, let me point out to you that my friend altogether misapprehends the position which he occupies in this debate, and certainly, although he is a great advocate for reason, he must permit me to say that, in my humble judgment, he is not pursuing a reasonable course. You are aware that I am called upon to prove a proposition, namely, "the Divine Origin of Christianity." I am called upon to prove that Christianity consists of
Mr. Bright may be said to deify reason, for he says that nothing is of authority above reason, and that everything must be brought to the bar of his own reason (speaking of himself), or, making it more universal, to the bar of every man's own reason. Now, I quite agree that nothing is above reason in a sense, providing that we put in the "Divine" reason; but if my friend means that nothing is above "human" reason, then I draw a clear issue with him, and say that all the facts of history, and the evidence that comes from daily experience, are directly opposed to his principle. Do we not see that it is utterly impossible to find any human being whose reason is uninfluenced, either by passion, or self-interest, or inclination of one kind or another, and thus his reason has not the power of free exercise? Hence, we find men under the influence of reason inflamed by passion, becoming drunkards, indulging in lying, in swearing, in thieving, in thousands of vicious practices; and I ask, if, as my friend affirms, that what appears to any man's reason is right to that man, in the name of reason, what is there in the nature of things to prevent any man from being guilty of the most atrocious crimes, and justifying himself in them, if he can reason himself into the belief that those crimes are right? But if I take my friend's own companions, I say that the insufficiency of human reason is clearly demonstrated. My friend believes in a God—as you heard last night—but some of his friends do not believe in the existence of a God; and they profess they are brought to this by their reason. Now, is not this an evidence that mere human reason is not a sufficient guide? All the violations of law, all the evils that have arisen in the world in the past, have been committed under the guidance of reason, inflamed by passion, by self-interest, or some other feeling. I would call attention to this fact, that our partially informed reason cannot always guide us in the discovery of what is true, inasmuch as if a thing appeared improbable to my friend, he would reject it, not because the thing was really untrue, but it might be because of lack of information. You remember the Eastern prince who refused to call attention to this fact, that our partially informed reason cannot always guide us in the discovery of what is true, inasmuch as if a thing appeared improbable to my friend, he would reject it, not because the thing was really untrue, but it might be because of lack of information. 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cannot be bridged, as render it impossible that this theory can hold water, when fairly looked at. Yet if I understand rightly, my friend believes this theory, and that without either reason, testimony, or authority.

But more absurd still, my friend believes that man is infinite or immortal, and yet believes that man, the infinite, has grown from the finite! Now, let me ask you if there is anything in this volume which I hold in my hand (the Bible), so incomprehensible, so repugnant to our reason, so contrary to all that human thought could suggest, or that the reasoning powers of man could demonstrate, as that the finite creature could grow into the infinite? Yet my friend believes, that from the little speck of jelly, the oyster, the seal, the monkey, have been produced man, whom he terms an infinite and immortal being! I ask, then, what is there in the Scriptures of Truth that calls upon us to believe anything so monstrous, so capping the very climax of the absurd, so revoltning to our reason, and our senses, as this which I have mentioned.

Last evening, I showed that Christianity included the Divinity of Christ, and His death as an atonement, and I gave proof. You will remember that I cited the Scriptures, and the early Christian writers; I quoted profane historians, also those who were opposed to Christianity, and then I quoted Strauss. Now my friend rejects this definition of Christianity, and says: "I claim the right to define Christianity for myself!" You will remember that I endeavoured to convince him of the unreasonableness of that course, by pointing out, that if we wanted to know what was the Baconian philosophy, we must go to the writings of Bacon in order to find out what it was. Now, my friend appeared to be in a state of confusion, for he said: "We do not take Bacon as an authority." The question was not as to the authority of Bacon; but, how can we know what Bacon taught, except by consulting Bacon's writings? Now let me give an illustration from Mr. Bright himself. In the correspondence that took place between us in the newspapers, he said: "I should not have deemed it necessary to communicate further with you publicly, had you not stated in your last that my position is generally regarded to be that of an opponent to Christianity! My position is not generally so regarded by those who are in the habit of attending my lectures, and the opinion of others can be of little value, as it is based rather on ignorance than knowledge." Now, my friend in that letter takes it for granted, that anyone wishing to know what his views are, must go and hear him; and that is just what I say in regard to the subject under consideration, that anyone wanting to know what Christianity is, must go to the records where we have the sayings and doings of Jesus. My friend's statement, "I define Christianity for myself," is the very apex of unreasonableness instead of reason; and I call upon him during the further course of this debate to manifest more reason in his arguing than he has shown in connection with this matter.

"The teachings of Jesus and the example of a life," Mr. Bright defines Christianity to be. Now, in my concluding words I ask him again, as I asked him on the first night, either to show that the statements I have quoted from this book, are not the statements of Jesus, and if, in his judgment, they are not, let him tell us which he takes to be the statements of Jesus, and which are not, and on what authority he takes or rejects them; or, if he cannot do that, let him take the passages I have cited from Christ's own words as proof of the Divine nature of Jesus, and show that I am not giving them their legitimate meaning. Unless he takes this course, these is no reason on his side of the debate. It is for him to meet the arguments I am presenting, and I would say that as my friend wishes us to reject Christianity, and to accept his ignis fatuus of human reason, which has led to such disastrous results in the history of the race, he must give us evidence that will convince our judgment ere we can do so.

MR. BRIGHT: It is a very fortunate thing for my friend that he is addressing an audience already for the most part convinced of the truth of the view he takes. (Strong tokens of dissent.) Otherwise he would indeed be in a very serious predicament, because he has not yet advanced the slightest proof why there should be any difference made in taking as Divine the writings which he believes in, in preference to other writings believed in by other portions of mankind. He simply makes assertions, but he has not advanced one iota of proof why, when we see in those writings things which are contradictory to observed facts, we should believe them to be true merely because they are in that book. I say that my ideal of Christianity must be made to accord with my ideal of what is true. If it does not accord with that it has to be rejected, and so far from my being in a position which may be denominated as a muddle, I would leave those who are un-prejudiced on this question to say what sort of muddle my friend was in last evening when he attempted to explain how Jesus of Nazareth was at the same time the Deity, and yet was less than the Deity; how he was and was not God in person; how he was equal to the Divine, the Creative, and the Eternal Power, and yet at one and the same time was something less. He never attempted to explain how those two contradictory assertions could be made to agree. My reason is ready to be convinced if he can advance anything in the nature of proof of that which he asserts; but until that is done, I have just the same right of selecting from those writings that which appears to me to be true, and rejecting that which appears to me to be false, as I have in the case of sacred writings published in unfamiliar parts of the world. I challenge him, also, to show why I am not to act by those Biblical writings the same as I do by other commingled historical and moral compositions. Take, for instance, the life of Plato. Am I to be told that everything which appears in the life of Plato is to be accepted by me as authoritative truth, if I agree with
the teaching advanced by Plato, and the morality which he and his friends practised? Surely I must accept that which appears to me accordant with proved facts, with truths of Nature, and reject the rest. Mr. Lewes in his "Biographical History of Philosophy," states, in regard to Plato:—

"So great a name as Plato's could not escape becoming the nucleus of many fables; and we find, accordingly, the later historians gravely repeating all sorts of miraculous events connected with him. He was said to be the child of Apollo, his mother a virgin. Ariston, though betrothed to Perictione, delayed his marriage because Apollo had appeared to him in a dream, and told him that she was with child."

There are innumerable fables mentioned by other historians of a somewhat similar character. Now the proposition which my friend has to prove, not to the satisfaction of those who have been trained in a special form of belief, but to the conviction of a jury previously unacquainted with the facts of the case,—a jury, say, composed of half a dozen Buddhists, and half a dozen Hindoos—is: Why mankind should receive as absolute fact all that is stated in one published book; but that with another book, published about some other personages, they may use their reason to reject all that does not accord with the observed phenomena of nature, and to accept all that appears to be good and worthy of acceptance by rational beings? That is the proof I ask. To prove merely that certain allegations are to be found in a certain writing—to prove that that writing has for a long time been received in a certain sense—is absolutely no proof. Why, for something like 4,000 years known, and an immense period non-historical, the whole of mankind—not merely one section of it—believed that the earth was simply a plain, and comparatively a small one; that the heavens constituted a solid canopy supported on pillars resting on the outskirts of the earth; that the sun was a luminary which absolutely rose at one side of the earth and went down at the other. All that was believed in such a thorough way that men who contradicted it, became of their clear observation of facts, were put to death. For 800 years that struggle went on between the rational minds—the freethinkers, the observers of facts—and those who pinned their faith to what had been believed in the olden days. We know the result. We know now that a man would be regarded as tremendously ignorant if he spoke of the Universe as being what it was believed to be by the ancients. Yet the very book which my friend holds to be the Word of God contains the statement that at a certain time the sun was held suspended in its course—that by some miraculous process the sun was not allowed to move in its supposed transit. And for what purpose? That a certain commander, with a horde of bravos might slaughter a larger proportion of the enemies opposed to him. If we are to take everything in that book as absolutely true, without bringing our reason to bear upon it, we must believe that that phenomenon occurred, and for the reason therein stated.

A VOICE: You cannot prove the contrary.

MR. BRIGHT: I know I cannot prove the contrary, but I can prove that if that is accepted as true, it must produce in the mind of the believer a lowering and degrading ideal of the Deity. If the infinite God, to whom we all look—aye, even those whom my friend terms Atheistic, though they may ignore the mere name, is to be described as commanding that the sun shall be stopped in its course in order that there may be a larger slaughter of His human children by their brethren, the ideal of the Deity is degraded, and the mind of the man who entertains that ideal is proportionately impaired and dwarfed. All I contend for is that rational Christianity shall be made to coincide with observed facts—that it shall not out- rage those facts. It is an all important matter that this shall be, because at the present time the religion set up as something that is to be bowed down to and worshipped whether it be rational or not, is of such a character as to divide man from man, to prevent humanity uniting as a brotherhood, and advancing in the path of progress. It is for that reason that those who are denominated by all sorts of opprobrious names—Atheists and Infidels—desire that the truth should become better known, that people should come to think what their religion really means, so that it may no longer stand in the way of men acting together for the public good. By the fruits of a religion you may judge it, and I ask what must be the nature of that religion which sets up a clannish spirit, which prevents one man from fraternally acting with another merely because of a question of opinion? Why, the other day, in a religious paper published here, I saw a strong objection urged to the course pursued by Mr. Gough, the teetotal lecturer, because he affirmed he would act with a man in the temperance cause whether that man was a Christian or not. Surely it is self-evident that a theology which would thus attempt to step between man and man, which would encourage its disciples to say, "Stand aside, for I am holier than thou art."—being based, as Freethinkers believe, not on truth but on errors of the past—should give way to a more rational belief. All that is good in the Christian religion—all its high morality, all that which says, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," "love God by performing acts of goodness towards man"—we should retain. But this barbarous theology, declaring that a man in order to be saved from some terrible and eternal punishment, must believe whether his intellect enables him to believe or not—should be at any rate relegated to the realm of speculation, inasmuch as it cannot be brought down to the platform of proof. My present objection to the theology advanced by my friend, and declared by him, rightly or wrongly, to be contained in that book (some people assert that it is not in that book, but I have nothing to do with that subject, inasmuch as this is not a debate between a Unitarian and a
Trinitarian; it is a debate between a religionist and a freethinker)—my objection is not so much that the idea of
Christ being Deity is abhorrent to my reason, but that it is a dogma which is not proved. That is the vital point
in this debate. It is a doctrine which emanates from times when people were not critical in their
judgment—when they did not know the characteristics of nature as we know them—when they believed
the universe to be a large square plain, and that the Deity was in the shape of a big man sitting on a throne above
the firmament. But now, when, greatly through the teachings of science in the direction which my friend
appears to conceive to be so ridiculous—through the hypothesis of evolution, which is by no means such a new
thing as he would make it out to be—we conceive of an Infinite Mind ruling the universe by eternal laws which
are eternally operative, we cannot assume as true what was readily received in the past. We bring a more
critical spirit to bear upon these questions, and if they cannot prove themselves as facts, we relegate them to the
realm of speculation and poetry.

My friend has made himself merry at the expense of the evolutionary theory of creation. It forms no part of
the questions before us this evening, but assuredly the idea of the universe having advanced by eternal laws of
the Creative Mind from primeval fire-mists to a nucleus of matter, containing the potentialities of all the
marvellous developments we see around us, is not more incredible or ridiculous than the idea that at a certain
specific time, and in one corner of the earth, the Deity stepped down from his heavenly residence, and moulded
a man out of clay like a sculptor would mould him, and then, discovering that this man wanted a wife, set him
asleep, took a rib from him, and transformed it into a woman. If we come to the merely extravagant and
ludicrous, surely the latter idea is far more inconceivable than the former.

MR. GREEN: I am sure your intelligence must at once see that there is something far grander and nobler,
something which commends itself more to the intelligent judgment, in the account of the formation of man
given in Genesis, than in the theory of my friend that we came from that little speck of jelly which progressed
in the way I have described. I am quite willing to leave that matter to your judgment.

Now my friend took up Strauss's statement, that Christianity must be made to coincide with ascertained
facts. But suppose that some person was writing a work on geography in the country of that Eastern prince I
have mentioned, and that a traveller came to the writer and said, "In describing certain parts of the globe, such
as England, America, and other countries, it will be necessary to mention that water, under certain atmospheric
influences, congeals, and becomes so hard that people are able to walk over it." The writer replies, "Oh! not at
all. It is contrary to ascertained facts, and in writing on geography, of course we must make it coincide with
ascertained facts." Now I would ask: Are that man's "ascertained facts" the whole of the facts of nature? And
does my friend, acting in the same spirit, pretend to arrogate to himself such a wide, universal knowledge, that
he can state what, in every part of our globe, coincides with fact? The thing is absurd upon the face of it. And in
connection with the manifestation of the Deity in human form, you will observe that he has not attempted to
show that the Christian doctrine of Divine manifestation is at all more absurd than that of the creation or growth
of an infinite being out of a finite being, as he holds.

Now let me say in regard to one portion of my friend's speech, that I was very sorry to hear it, because he
was evidently appealing to the lower feelings of the audience when he talked about certain things mentioned
in the Bible as in his judgment wrong. In proving the Divine Origin of Christianity we have nothing to do with the
slaughtering of the Amalekites, or with any of these other things written in the book, and to which my friend
objects. I am prepared to defend all that is there sanctioned if my friend is willing to take it up, and he need not fear any unwillingness on my part to meet him on those points. But I say those matters have nothing to do with the
question now in hand; and you must have seen that he did not attempt to meet the point really before us. If he
allows me to take it for granted that his definition of Christianity rests simply upon his mere assertions, and that
he wants us to take it upon his authority—which authority, in the case of others, he so denounces—I am
willing to let it rest there. But you will see clearly by his silence, that he has been compelled to admit that his
definition of Christianity is purely arbitrary, and utterly irrational, and contrary to all reason. He asks, "Why are
we to accept this book above all other books?" Now I have not said a word during this debate about inspiration.
It is not our proposition. I take the facts of the Bible just as I am bound to take the facts in the History of
England or France, or of any past age, if that history comes down to me upon testimony that cannot with reason
be refuted. A man would be regarded as a simpleton who refused to accept the facts of history. So I say in
connection with the history of Christianity in this book. During this debate I take it simply as credible history,
and upon this I am willing to rest my case. In answer to my friend's request, I will now give you a brief outline
of some of the evidence on which we accept it as credible history.

Last evening my friend spoke of the deterioration of manuscripts. Let me say that Scripture manuscripts
have not deteriorated more than classical manuscripts, nor more than is reasonable, when we consider that in
copying all written documents, there must be many clerical errors, such as the wrong spelling of a name,
leaving out letters, inserting a pronoun instead of a proper noun, &c. Now, unless he will say, that because
these errors are in the classical manuscripts, we must therefore reject them, he cannot say that because similar
errors are in the Scripture manuscripts we ought to reject them. Of the work of Cicero, called *De Amicitia*, one thousand copies were made from the original copy carefully written out by Tiro his freedman; and although Atticus, his friend and publisher, sought out the cleverest copyists to be found, of those thousand copies no two of them agreed with each other. Therefore, we say that although there has been great care shown in the copying and preservation of Scripture manuscripts, yet there have been such errors. But as my friend accepts the classics as being substantially the same as written by their authors; so we say, that on the same grounds, the manuscripts of the New Testament are to be received. Now, the oldest manuscript of the classical authors, that, of the historian Herodotus, does not date back more than to the ninth century, and there are only fifteen manuscripts by this author, whereas we have more than one thousand manuscripts of the Scriptures, more than fifty of which are more than one thousand years old. The Alexandrian manuscript dates to the middle of the fourth century; the Vatican manuscript is even older; and the Sinaitic manuscript, to which reference was made last night, comes evidently, very nearly to the beginning of the third century.

My friend spoke of the Epistle of Barnabas, and of the Shepherd of Hermas, found by Tischendorf in the Nunnery or Convent of Mount Sinai, as if those books were recently discovered, and were regarded as newly discovered inspired writings. Now, no person read in ecclesiastical history was ignorant that the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hennas, were books known and read in the second century, and extracts from which had been preserved in the work of Eusebius. If I did not misunderstand my friend, he also said that some of the books we have in our New Testament are not found in that Sinaitic manuscript. Let me say that, if I understood him rightly, he is in error. That Sinaitic manuscript dates doubtless to the early part of the third century, within about 170 or 180 years of the death of Christ; and with the exception of the latter part of the Gospel of Mark, and the first eleven verses of the 8th chapter of John, the authenticity of which was questioned long before this manuscript was discovered, all the other portions of our Scriptures are found complete in that ancient manuscript. Now, is there one classical author of whom we have manuscripts of such a date as this? We see that from these three manuscripts alone—the Alexandrian, the Vatican, and the Sinaitic—we get a purer text of the Scriptures, than can be obtained of any one of the classical authors, whose writings are taken without question in the present day.

Now let me proceed to a few more facts. I would say that it is not needful to go back to prove that those books existed centuries ago, because we have the admission of Strauss, in the first volume of his "Life of Jesus," which I hold in my hand, that in the year 150, beyond all question, the first three Gospels were in existence; and he admits that, between the years 170 and 180, all the four Gospels, as we now substantially have them, were in existence. Now, mark, this is the admission of Strauss, one of the most bitter and most learned opponents of Christianity in modern times, and we take this admission of an enemy as irrefragable proof of our position, that our New Testament, as it is now, existed in the year 175, and that that testimony cannot be refuted.

But I likewise hold in my hand the work of Ernest Renan, and he states that, in his work, Strauss has paid too much attention to the theological, and too little to the historical view of the question—that he has passed over the historical facts with insufficient consideration. Renan declares in the introduction to his bock, that the Gospel by John—which is the one most questioned of all in the present day (though not anciently), because of its clear teachings as to the Divinity of Christ, was so widely known, and generally accepted in the year 150, that it was quoted from on all sides without the slightest question. Not only so, but Renan states that the whole of our four Gospels, when the historical testimony is fairly taken into account, must be placed within the first century of the Christian era. Now, let me read an extract from the historian Froude, showing the bearing of this fact upon our position. He says:—"If, as English commentators confidently tell us, the Gospel of St. Matthew, such as we now possess it, is undoubtedly the work of the publican who followed our Lord from the receipt of custom, and remained with Him to be a witness of His ascension; if St. John was written by the beloved disciple who lay on Jesus' breast at supper; if the other two were indeed the composition of the companions of St. Peter and St. Paul; if in these four Gospels we have independent accounts of our Lord's life and passion, mutually confirming each other, and if it can be proved that they existed, and were received as authentic, in the first century of the Christian Church, a stronger man than M. Renan will fail to shake the hold of Christianity in England."

*Short Studies, page 207.

And with all due deference to my respected friend, I would say that, unless he can shake the evidence which I have just very briefly and imperfectly outlined, but which I am prepared to present more at large; unless he can show that these narratives were not written within the first century of the Christian era, I have no hesitation in saying, that it will take many more men than he, and of far greater mental power, to shake the hold of Christianity on the people of New Zealand, Australia, England, and of the world; for while those testimonies remain, I care not whether they are regarded as inspired narratives, or as simple histories, and considering what those men who wrote them had to suffer for no earthly good that they could gain, no power on earth, no human
ingenuity, no human skill or eloquence, can at all destroy their influence over the minds, and, we thank God, also over the hearts and affections of myriads of our fellow human beings, whom they have raised, and elevated, and made happy, by their cheering promises, by their pure and elevated morality, and by their description of a Being of infinite love, of infinite mercy, and at the same time, of infinite justice, and who has manifested that love in a scheme which is in harmony with man's nature, and in adaptation to all his wants, and to the dearest aspirations of the human spirit.

Mr. Bright: The chief question in this debate, my friend seems entirely to lose sight of, viz., that it is a question of dogma as against reason. My friend introduces such an argument as, that an Eastern prince did not believe in the formation of ice, because he had never seen it formed, and the testimony relative to its formation was insufficient. That was a very proper position for the Eastern prince to take up. Why should he believe in the formation of ice, if he had insufficient evidence of the fact? By-and-bye, after he had ample evidence of the phenomenon occurring, he would accept it and believe. But here lies the whole point. We assert that we are asked to believe a marvellous story on insufficient evidence, or on no evidence whatever; that dogma, and not evidence is thrust down our throats. The moment we can get testimony which our reason accepts, that moment, as a matter of course, everything becomes clear, as it would with those who, having hitherto had no evidence regarding the formation of ice, declined to believe in it until approved on good testimony. This is a process which is perpetually being performed. Science is continually advancing, in despite of incredulity, into the domain where it compels submission to that which it declares to be true. But how does it compel submission? Not merely by assertion, not by pointing to its formulas in ancient writings, not by showing that men believed so at a time when they were credulous and not scientific, but simply by demonstrating it—just as Newton demonstrated the law according to which the heavenly bodies move. By mathematical calculations he showed that a body like the moon, for instance, must move precisely with the rapidity with which the moon moved, if his law was correct, and he pointed to what absolutely occurred as proof of what he advanced. That is the way science challenges our acceptance. But here it is dogma we are speaking of.

My friend seems to me to surrender the entire question in dispute when he says that those infallible Scriptures—the word of God put into black and white—if we do not accept which, we are told we shall be condemned to an eternity of torment, are, forsooth, only a little freer from error than certain classical manuscripts, regarding which it scarcely matters anything what our opinions may be. It seems to me that everything is surrendered if that is the view he accepts. I ask, where is the infallibility, where the truth, of every word within that book, so that upon the authority of that book alone, we are to believe that certain occurrences took place that our mind would otherwise reject? Where is that infallibility gone if we are simply to consider that book in the same way as we would consider a manuscript of Cicero's? That is the position I am maintaining, but surely not the posi-of my friend. That is the view in favour of which I am arguing. I say: Take that book, and look at it with the same rational eye with which you would examine the writings of Homer. Take within it all that is good and beautiful, all that can be made to advance humanity farther than it is at present; and reject all that is degrading, or opposed to scientific conclusions. That is my line of argument, and I cannot understand my friend taking up the same position, and putting those writings forward to be examined in the same way as writings about which it matters not what our opinion may be. In dealing with a subject where dogma is thrust at us, we have to deal with it far differently to any question where it does not signify much what our belief may be. That Eastern prince would be just as well off, disbelieving in the formation of ice as believing in it, except that he would be minus the knowledge of one fact of natural truth. But we are told that if we disbelieve the Deity of Jesus, all eternity before us is to be of a dismal and horrible nature. Surely the two things cannot for a moment be brought into comparison. When we have it dinned in our ears that our personal salvation depends upon some specific form of belief, our reply is that the evidence on which that belief rests, must be of a character far more conclusive in its nature than that affecting the critical aspects of certain Grecian or Roman manuscripts.

My friend affirms that the statement he puts forward—the theology he advances—is not merely part of Christianity, but is absolutely true and rests upon demonstrable testimony and credible history. My argument is that it rests upon incredible history and insufficient testimony, and that so soon as our reason is free to act, his theology is rejected; that we see nothing like it happening around us; that there are no such, marvellous occurrences now as he believes in—no such unnatural incidents as many of those described in the book which he declares to be entirely the Word of God. That is the reason why those who think freely say: We reject this because it is not borne out by what we observe around us. But my friend asks, do I know all the observed facts of nature? No—of course I do not. But when I have to reason for my own satisfaction, as Pope asks:—"How can I reason but from what I know?" From what other foundation am I to reason? I do not profess to know all things, but when I come to reason on any question of history or nature, I can only reason from the knowledge I possess from my own observation, or such testimony of others as seems to me to be credible and trustworthy. That is the way all men throughout Christendom, act by every writing in the known world, save and except the
of the modern age, why are we not to use our reason regarding their utterances and writings? The question at stake between us turns on that point. A revelation to one man is not a revelation to any other man. A revelation to a man who may be writing before me, and who may say that what he is writing has been revealed to him by the Divine Mind, is no revelation to me. It would merely be a statement by that man that he had something revealed to him, and then it would be a question for me to consider whether or not his alleged revelation were true; which means, whether or not it were in accordance with the ordinarily observed facts of nature. Therefore all the argument my friend is advancing regarding the date of the writing of those Scriptures is beside the question, Rational men must use their reason upon those Scriptures; and incidents like that of a man living three days and nights in a fish's belly, or of another man slaying a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, may be regarded by them just as incredible when found in the Bible, as if put forward in Homer, in the Vedas, or in any other ancient MS. Therefore, throughout the Scriptures, the same as through those other writings, my reason must operate. I dare not, I cannot abandon it simply because certain incidents appear in one book rather than in another book.

The word "Christianity" is used by my friend as if, when he used it, he had stated something specific beyond the definition as it stands in the debate now being argued. But his Christianity differs materially from the Christianity of the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church, or the Episcopal Church. The Roman Catholic Church comprises, at the lowest estimate, 180 millions of followers, who conceive that the dogma of the Virgin Mary, being the Queen of Heaven, is part of Christianity. In that respect their Christianity is something opposed to the Christianity of my friend, and yet they likewise affect to base their faith upon what they conceive to be the Divine Word. When he uses this term "Christianity," he ought to remember that in this debate it simply means what he has explained it to mean: the Deity of Jesus, and his death as an atonement for man's sin. We cannot go beyond that, and these are the two points which, if he wishes to convince those who do not think as he thinks, he is still called upon to prove—to prove in some shape or way, so that our reason may accept them as Divine truths—so that we may see that this man, who lived nearly 2,000 years ago, was truly and really the Deity—and so that we may know—because he has scarcely as yet touched upon that question—that his death was an atonement for man's sin, and that our belief in that death (for I presume that would be part of what he would state) is necessary for our salvation. We want some distinct proof of that—something more than its being written in a particular book; for we all know that the doctrine assumes to be based on what is written in those ancient MSS. No Freethinker denies that; no one has the temerity to assert that it is not written there in some shape. We know that divers people put a very different interpretation upon those writings in many ways. We know that vast numbers of Christians deny that there is any proof of the Divinity of Jesus in that book. But that is not what I am here to debate. Let some Unitarian debate that. But what I hold is that I, as a Freethinker, have a right to reason through and through that volume, and that anything therein contained not acceptable to my reason, I, acting for my individual self alone, am justified in rejecting.

Mr. GREEN: That matter of the Eastern prince and the formation of ice, is rather a stumbling block in the way of my friend, for this reason: my friend's principle is, that whatever appears to be true to my reason, and his reason, and the reason of every other person, is true to that person. But the mere denial of the existence of ice by the Eastern prince, did not make the existence of ice not to be a fact; and therefore, I say, that just as my friend is not fully informed of the evidence in connection with Christianity, his rejection of Christianity does not make Christianity untrue. I would say further, that, while I shall not be drawn from the point by his statement about damnation, &c., that if God has not given sufficient evidence to convince every reasoning man who will impartially and carefully consider the evidence that he has given in support of Christianity, he could not with justice, judge or condemn any for not accepting it. But just as the man, who knows he cannot walk on air, if he steps over this platform, must come to grief by falling on the floor, and can keep himself from doing it by knowledge and reason, so God, who has a right to impose laws on His creatures, does so for our good, and if He has given us evidence that those laws do emanate from Him, then, if the punishment which comes from the violation of law comes upon us, it results from our own ignorance of that which reason—which our own intuitions, springing from our relationship to our Creator, would teach us ought to have been observed.

In regard to this statement of my friend that Christianity began in a non-critical period, I may say that it is just like some other of his statements—not based on sufficient evidence. May I ask if Plato, Zeno, Zenophon, Socrates, and others, had no critical acumen? If not, then may I ask, why those samples of ancient eloquence have not only been handed down to the present time, but are even models in our seminaries and universities? My friend knows—I cannot presume that he is ignorant—that the age in which Christianity arose was not a mythical age; that, leaving out of consideration the present enlightenment of the modern age, there never was a
period of more enlightenment, or a period when philosophy was more highly cultivated, and critical acumen keener, than the time when Christianity began. And I say, that if such a system could not begin in the present day, and claim to be founded on miracles, without the most convincing evidence being given, because of the critical acumen of the people now living, neither could it have arisen in that age, for we see that, in regard to powers of reasoning, in regard to keen sightedness as to things that were ludicrous and absurd, that age will bear favourable comparison with the age in which we live. I say that if my friend asserts the contrary, he manifests that he has insufficiently read the history of those times.

He says that Christianity rests on incredible history. Why? Simply because it declares that miracles were wrought. Now, "why is it incredible? Simply because miracles have not been wrought before his eyes. But because miracles are not wrought in my presence, does that prove that miracles have not been wrought, and never can be? Do you not see my friend’s process of reasoning? While it is the reasoning of, that "modern man of God," whom my friend appears to admire—David Hume—it is certainly not reasoning that will commend itself to the judgment of those who think that unless we can comprehend the entire scheme of the Universe, unless we can know the working of the Divine Being in all things, we cannot say that the working of miracles is contrary to all experience. It may be contrary to mine, but it may not be to that of other persons. I would say here, that if we have miracles presented to us upon credible testimony, as being wrought in the presence of a number of individuals; if those miracles were such as were cognisable by the senses; if in connection with those miracles, institutions were established which have continued down to the present day; and, if the record of those miracles was written by those who saw them, then I challenge anyone to say that the miracles in support of which this testimony is given, can, in the nature of things, be false. If miracles, proved by such testimony, are not reliable, then there is no proof that my friend sits at this table writing at the present moment, because nothing in the wide Universe can be demonstrated to man.

Now, let me make a remark as to my Christianity differing from that of other persons. I have nothing to do with who it may differ from. It is the Christianity of this book—the Bible—that I am defending. If my friend is opposing the evils that have crept into so-called Christianity, if he is opposing its excrescences, and unlawful accretions, I would say to him over this table, “Give me your hand, and we are united to pull down all human additions, and to destroy every-thing that has not upon it the stamp of Divine authority.” It is the Christianity that came from Jesus and from his Apostles, that I am advocating, nothing more and nothing less—and believing, as I do, that if there is anything true under the heavens, it is true, I hope to defend it until life shall cease.

Let me just call your attention to another point. He asks: Why are we to accept the statements of this book? I reply to that: Just as we accept credible history; and as no sane man would be considered justified in refusing to accept the facts of history which have been recorded on reliable testimony, so in connection with this matter, if it can be proved that those witnesses are reliable, then their evidence is to be received. Now, although my friend has talked about an infallible book and inspiration (you see he keeps wide of the point we have before us), and has given us this question of the definition of Christianity, he evidently feels that that is a point too warm to touch upon further. But I say that with regard to the infallibility of this book, I have not said one word. I am prepared to prove the Divine Origin of Christianity upon the simple fact of the credibility of these writers as historians. If it were necessary, I would be prepared to establish their inspiration; but with a freethinker—with my friend—who does not believe in inspiration, it would be foolish for me to take that inspiration for granted, which would need to be proved. Now, I am trying to prove Christianity upon the ground that these accounts are credible histories, and if my friend denies they are credible, I will be prepared to give further evidence to establish that point.

With regard to the testimony which we have in this book, I just wish to say further, that from A.D. 175, or I might say from 140 up to A.D. 202 or 220, there lived three men—Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Irenæus. Clement of Alexandria lived in Egypt, and may be said to speak for the Christians of Egypt and Palestine. Tertullian wrote at Carthage, and may be said to speak for North Africa and Italy; while Irenæus, who lived at Smyrna, but who wrote at Lyons, may be said to speak for Asia Minor and Western Europe. Those three men declared that during their lifetime, and we may take it to include as far back as their memories carried them, our four Gospels were accepted as the productions of Matthew and John, who were apostles, and of Mark and Luke, the companions of apostles, and that testimony Strauss and Renan accept. Now, we may take this further position: We have Irenæus, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John the Apostle. Here is a chain of three links: Irenæus, Polycarp, and John. Now, leaving the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, for the present, and dealing simply with the Gospel of John, I ask: Could that Gospel have been fabricated during the lifetime of Irenæus? Remember that he proved his sincerity by dying in attestation of his faith in Christ. If he knew that the Gospel of John, and the other Gospels, were not in existence in the early part of his lifetime, and that years later, they came into existence as forgeries, and not as the result of Apostolic writing, would he have died in support of their claim? Then, supposing you say that they were forged in the
days of Polycarp. But he, too, died as a martyr. Can we suppose that he would die in support of that which he knew to be false? Can we suppose that this Gospel was forged during John's lifetime, and that he did not denounce it? It is simply preposterous. Now, notice: No doubt John would tell Polycarp, his disciple, what were the Scriptures written by the Apostles, and the other authentic records of Jesus; Polycarp, teaching Irenæus, would declare to him those Scriptures which were of authority, and of which he had been informed by John. I ask my friend to break that compact chain of three links. I say it is unbreakable, and so long as that chain remains, the basis on which those Scriptures rest, may be said to be unassailable. I have not said all that may be said in order to show that these witnesses are credible, but I wish to pass on to another point before I close to-night; and that is to show the reason why we accept Christianity as being of Divine origin.

I have proved—and my friend cannot disprove—that the Divinity of Christ, and the atonement, are parts of Christianity, and I now, therefore, proceed to the second part of my proposition. But before doing so, let me just mention—having shown the grounds on which we accept the New Testament—that, with regard to the Old Testament, we have an equally reliable foundation. In the work of Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," 12th Book, 2nd chapter, you will see an account there given how Ptolemy Philadephus, having heard of the existence of the Jewish records, desired to obtain them, and wrote to Eleazar, the High Priest of the Jews asking him to send the manuscripts of their scriptures, and to select six persons from each of the twelve tribes, to go to Egypt to translate those books into the Greek language, that he might have them in his largo and extensive collection. Now, Josephus declares that this was done, and therefore, we have clear evidence that, at least 280 years before Christ, the Old Testament Scriptures, as we now have them, were trans- lated into the Greek language, and circulated among the Hellenist Jews, so long before the things predicted in them are said to have been fulfilled. And further, in regard to the Book of Daniel, which is a hardly contested book, you will find it stated in the 11th Book of Josephus, 7th and 8th chapters, that when Alexander was intent upon destroying Jerusalem, the priests came out in procession to meet the conqueror, and that Alexander gave up his intention of destroying Jerusalem, because the high priest produced the Book of Daniel, and showed it to him, in which it was predicted that one from the Greeks should conquer Asia, and which he took to have reference to himself.

MR. BRIGHT: My friend says that my rejection of Christianity does not prove it to be false. That is no argument whatever, because a Roman Catholic would say that my friend's rejection of the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church does not prove that to be false. Of course my rejection of anything does not prove it to be false; but the question to be settled in this debate is not the question of my rejection, or anyone else's rejection of alleged facts, but the proof, or lack of proof, upon which those alleged facts are based. My friend implies there is the same certainty of the truth of what he terms Christianity, as there is that if we step off this platform into the air we shall have a fall. The latter fact, as the French say, may go without saying. Anyone would know at once, that on stepping off a height into space, he would have a fall. But is it equally clear that a person stepping from the ground on which my friend stands—the ground of the Deity of Jesus, and of His death as an atonement for man's sin—and trusting entirely to nature and science, would therefore be subjected to a fall? Have we seen no grand lives lived by those who have denied my friend's dogmas? Why, the greater number of the celebrated names of later times are the names of men—and women too—who have denied these things. Let anyone read the autobiography of Harriet Martineau, for instance, and see how that brave woman lived for 21 years under sentence of death, passed upon her by her doctors, who told her she was suffering from heart disease and could not call an hour her own. She lived after that, 21 years of public usefulness and calm happiness and yet without one vestige of this belief which my friend says is so necessary. Where shall we look for nobler lives than those of Channing and Theodore Parker? At this moment nearly all the great men in the ranks of science and philosophy are men who do not believe in this Deityship—men like Darwin, Tyndall, Haeckel, and Huxley. I could mention nearly all the scientific men of our time as men of that character. I could refer to Draper, Lewes (who is just dead, and who was the husband of George Eliot), George Eliot herself, Walt Whitman the poet, Froude the historian, Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, Alfred Russell Wallace the great naturalist, Crookes, Buchner the German scientist, Swinburne, Gambetta, Newman, Greg, Lecky, Lord Amberley (now dead, from whose book I quoted), and scores upon scores of others. I ask, therefore, is it as certain that those who step from the belief that my friend holds step from a stronghold into helplessness, as it is certain that if you step off this platform you lose your foothold? I say it is not a fall to step off a belief which is unsupported by rational evidence. On the contrary, it is an elevation to a higher and purer atmosphere.

I think that my friend must have been rather attempting to play upon our credulity, when he said that the events to which he referred—the events which he is endeavouring to prove true—happened in an age which we may term critical. Doubtless, in other portions of the world, there were critical men living—men who would have given the events to which my friend refers, a very different consideration to that which they received from the few ignorant people cognizant of them. We find that these very events which are recorded in the Bible to have occurred—marvellous events, like a darkness coming over the face of the earth for at least three hours—are not chronicled elsewhere. Gibbon, the historian, draws prominent attention to this point. At that
time there were living the elder Pliny, and Seneca, the philosopher, whose principal satisfaction it was to take a note of all marvels then happening; and yet this marvel, which out-marvels all marvels, and that other marvel of the graveyards giving up their dead, found no record in the writings of these men. Therefore, I say, so far as the testimony of the men of experience as critics in that age goes, it tells strongly against the allegations put forward, and not in their favour. Moreover, the historian Josephus, who is regarded as in the main, a credible chronicler, and who absolutely writes concerning that very neighbourhood and period, taking a note of some of the minutest events said to have occurred, positively takes no notice of those marvels which my friend alleges to have happened. Doubtless, there is one paragraph in his large history which does speak of Jesus Christ, and says of him: "If it be lawful to call him a man." But that paragraph is so evidently one interpolated at a later day, that there are very few people at this time, however prejudiced they may be in favour of those alleged facts that my friend is supporting, who will attempt to hold that this paragraph is a part of the true and original writing of Josephus. Therefore, I say that all the testimony, so far as criticism at that period is adducible, tells immensely against the position which my friend occupies. But even, as I said before, if there were far more evidence in those writings than can be found in them, favourable to such a marvellous phenomenon as that of a man being the Deity, still we are entitled to use our reason upon them. Are we, at this day, to be placed in a different position towards those alleged occurrences to that occupied by the very men who are put forward as contemporaries of Jesus himself? Are we not to exercise our judgment upon them, when we are told that one of his own apostles declined to believe merely in the resurrection of him whom we are now assured was the Deity? One of his closest followers declined to believe in that resurrection unless he had an opportunity of touching and seeing. Are we—those amongst us who think for ourselves—now to believe on the evidence of remote and unknown witnesses, simply because these marvels have for so long passed current as truth? All religious marvels and doctrines are believed until they come to be critically examined, and the age of free and critical examination of these alleged Christian truths is only just now commencing. (Expressions of dissent.) I assert—and defy contradiction—that the time is only now arriving when, for instance, such a fundamental debate as this would be patiently listened to by an audience like that I see before me.

Mr. Green: I would like to ask my friend what Harriet Martineau's dying peacefully has to do with evidence against the Divine Origin of Christianity? I would ask also: Is he, who is the denouncer of all authority, now to ask us to bow down before this august assembly of names that he has repeated in our hearing? Can we not, on the other side, mention Sir Francis Bacon, who believed in Christianity; Sir Isaac Newton, and numbers of others—the highest ornaments in the constellation of the literary world? I do not care to mention those names, because I do not accept the authority of names. I believe in the use of reason in thoroughly sifting evidence which may be presented to the mind. But when, by the use of reason, am convinced that the Divine Being is speaking, then I say that I must accept the statements of the Divine Being even where, as in some cases it may be, I do not understand the reason of them, and while I may know the fact that is stated, I cannot explain how the things that are mentioned can really be. I say there is a province for reason and a province for faith.

My friend again says that Christianity was not born in a critical age. I have simply to reiterate what I said before. Does my friend mean to say that even in Judea, where those events took place, there were not critical men? Was not Philo, who has written one of the most learned treatises on philosophy, a Jew? Was not Josephus, one of the most able—indeed, we may say, the most able—historians of that time, a Jew? I ask, were not the miracles of the apostles wrought in learned Greece, in Ephesus, in Corinth, and in the various cities of those parts? I say again, my friend is manifesting that he has not taken sufficiently into account the evidence presented, or he could not affirm that it was not the very highest period of the critical age, that existed prior to these modern days.

I will just call your attention in my concluding time to one or two thoughts in connection with the Divine Origin of Christianity. I would ask you: Supposing that we conceived it possible that the Divine Being would communicate a religion for the guidance of man, can any man say it is not possible? And when we conceive the relationship of the Creator to the creature, and the need of that creature to be guided; when we conceive the love which the great Universal Father must have for his children, does it not amount to a certainty that he would not leave them in the midst of the quicksands and shoals of life without some guide in order to direct them, and save them from misguided reason, inflamed by passion, self-interest, and all the other influences so powerfuly operating around us on every side?

Now, admitting the possibility of a system of religion being made known to man, then the question arises as to how it would be possible to prove to man that such a religion was Divine. You and I, as reasonable persons, must admit that a religion which professes to be of Divine origin must have testimonials which could not be expected in the case of one which merely claimed to be human. If we are called upon to accept as an emanation from the Deity anything whatever, we must have evidence in harmony with the nature of that Deity, to prove that this system is not one which could have originated with man, but must have originated with the Divine Being Himself. Is not this really undoubted? Can any person say it is contrary to reason? I would ask
further: What line of proof could God give to us that this system of religion He had presented was really from Himself? There are two ways in which it might be done. One would be by predicting the coming of this system hundreds of years before the event, and by describing the nature and general character of the person by whom the system was to be brought into operation, so that when the event took place, those living at the time of the fulfilment would be clearly enabled to see that the predictions had reference thereto. That is one way.

Further, if God was pleased to commission some person to make known this system of religion to the world, is it not reasonable that that person who claims to be the Divine messenger should give us credentials proving that he possessed powers such as we do not possess? If I came to any of you and said: "My friend, I am inspired by God to speak to you as I do," would my saying so be proof of my inspiration? Suppose a number of men came to you, and said they were commissioned by the Almighty, would their statement make that an actual fact? We would naturally say: "If God sent a messenger. He would give him credentials; those credentials must be of a nature that a man could not manifest without the aid of God; and therefore we ask you for your credentials." Seeing that it is beyond the power of mortal man to foresee a long concatenation of events, and to predict them exactly as to time and general circumstances, I ask: When we find such a large body of predictions uttered hundreds of years before the event, and when we find that those predictions are actually fulfilled, is not that evidence of the Divine origin of the system that was predicted in them? But if, in addition to this, we have the person who Himself introduced it, giving us His credentials by working miracles, is it not just what would have been expected under the circumstances? If I can prove that these two lines of evidence were found in connection with Christianity, have I not established that it is of Divine Origin in a sense in which no other religion in the world can be said to be Divine, unless it will produce the same credentials—which, I affirm, no other religion in this world can at all produce? I will not enter to-night upon details, but will reserve them till to-morrow night. I will say, however, that these two points are well worthy of your consideration. I say again, it is a possibility, as we must admit, that God not only might, but would, communicate to His offspring some lesson for their guidance—some religion whereby they might know how to act. I say, in opposition to my friend, that the ancient philosophers \textit{wonted authority}—they had reason, and were sick of it. If my friend reads the dialogue between Socrates and Alcibiades, he will see how that wise sage dissuaded Alcibiades from going to offer prayer to the Deity, because they needed someone to declare to them the character of the Deity, and how they might offer acceptable prayer. We see that the ancients were pining for someone who could speak as from God. Their reason led them unto quagmires. They felt that their reason could give them no certain knowledge as to their past history, their present position, or their future destiny; and hence they pleaded for authority. This intuition of their nature, we say, seems to point to the reasonableness of that which is presented in the religion of Christ.

decorative feature

\textbf{Third Evening.}

\textbf{THE CHAIRMAN:} Ladies and gentlemen—Before the debate is recommenced, I wish to announce that Mr. Green has exercised his right to ask for a fourth night, as he thinks it necessary for the completion of his argument. Before the debate was opened it was agreed that either of the disputants should be entitled to claim a fourth night's debate. The debate will, therefore, be continued and concluded on next Saturday night.

\textbf{MR. GREEN:} Mr. Chairman and respected hearers: Before resuming the thread of the argument at the point at which I left off last night, I think it right to advert to one or two things that have been mentioned by Mr. Bright during the course of the debate thus far. You will remember that on the first evening, in his opening address, my friend appealed to you for sympathy, because he regarded himself as coming before an audience, under circumstances such as the present, for the first time; and feeling that a tremendous amount of responsibility rested upon him, he claimed, on that account, your indulgence and sympathy. Now, since that statement was made, I have revolved it over and over in my mind; and I would just suggest to my friend, with all deference, that the "tremendous responsibility" which rested upon him, came at the time when he set himself to oppose that which he is hero to-night—and has been for the last two nights—for the purpose of endeavouring to destroy. And when I remember the statement that I have repeatedly heard since I came to your city, how he has for the past year been challenging all the ministers of Dunedin to defend their position, I must confess I am at a loss to understand that \textit{ad misericordiam} appeal with which my friend began his address on the first evening.

Last evening, also, he seemed to be in the same strain. Now, I know not who are sympathisers, or who are not. I believe this audience is set to a critical frame of mind, to judge of the arguments, and I thought last night, that it was hardly wise or fair for my friend to suggest, when he saw the argument had produced a certain impression, that it was because the chief part of the audience were sympathisers with the views I was
presenting. Now, certainly it is not the interest of the audience to believe in that which is untrue; and if my friend can present arguments which will undermine the foundations of Christianity, I think he need have no trouble whatever as to sympathy. I do not trouble about sympathy. All I ask is a fair field and no favour. We, as Christians, want no favour. We say: Only examine the evidence we present for your consideration, and then we have all that we desire.

Another matter which also struck me as very remarkable, was that which occurred last night, and to which I briefly referred, namely, the presentation of a long list of names by my friend as a justification for his believing in the theory of Evolution. Now, it appears to me that my friend plays fast and loose with reason. At one time, he says: "I am not going to accept any authority; but I will simply accept that which is in harmony with my own reason." Then at another time—as last night—he seems to advert to authority. Now, I wish to remind him to-night that there is really no authority upon those matters—that in connection with the theory of Evolution, if he is to follow authority, even the authority of its great exponents, he must change very much, and very "frequently. I know that my friend does not trouble about consistency; that he affirms he is progressing, and that he may take a different position tomorrow from that which he occupies to-day. I would say that that being the case, it places him in this position: That he is clearly not a reliable instructor for those who are seeking for truth, seeing that those changes ought not to take place so rapidly, if he were guided by true reason, as apparently they are likely to do with him. I have in my hand a work by Professor Dawson, one of the leaders in the scientific world, and his work is entitled, "The Story of the Earth and Man." I commend it to your perusal. In this work Professor Dawson shows the various theories that have been suggested in connection with the doctrine of Evolution. He points out that Parsons and Owen, who form one of the schools holding the theory of Evolution, affirm that there is an innate tendency in every species to change in the course of time, although they can give no evidence, nor yet any reason for it. Mivart and Ferris, again, believe in exceptional births, either in the course of ordinary generation, or by the mode of parthenogenesis. Again, Hyatt and Cope believe, or rather suppose, that the known facts of reproduction, acceleration, or retardation observed in some humble creatures, are evidences of this theory of Evolution. Lamarck and others say, that "new forms, arising in any of these ways, or fortuitously, may, it is supposed, be perpetuated, and increased, and further improved by favouring external circumstances, and the effect of the organism to avail itself of these," while Darwin, to whom my friend appears generally to look, holds to "the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest." I do not know whether my friend is aware of the fact that even Darwin has changed his views since he wrote his work, and has stated that he had been aware of certain facts which another scientist has brought forth in connection with this matter, his own work would not have been written, or if written, that his statements would have been largely modified. That being the case, away goes my friend's authority for holding this theory of Evolution, in connection with which there are so many other theories, so many suppositions and suggestions that are hardly worth a moment's consideration.

Another point to which I would like to advert is, that when I again urged the necessity of my friend showing why he did not accept the definition of Christianity which I gave, and which I supported from the Scriptures, from the early writers of Christianity, from its enemies, from profane historians, and from Strauss himself, he said that that was not his duty, but that if this was a debate between a Unitarian and a Trinitarian, that would come in very properly. Now, I must confess that I do not quite understand what my friend is, because—and I say it without desiring to be personally offensive—Freethinkers seem to be either nothing, or everything. You cannot tell what they are, for you find one man holding certain views, and he is a "Freethinker;" and another man holding other views, which are diametrically opposed to those of the other, and he, too, calls himself a "Freethinker." But laying aside that question, I say that when my friend positively affirmed that those two items, the Divinity of Christ and His death as an atonement, were not a part of Christianity, it certainly devolved upon him to show, either that I misapprehended the statements I quoted, or, that those statements were really not made. I say that whether he be Unitarian, Trinitarian, or no Arian at all, his duty was clear in connection with this matter.

But my friend led you to the myths, and read passages in connection with certain supposed manifestations of the Deity in human form. I have fortunately given a little consideration to this matter, and I wish to point out that the highest authority who has written upon this subject, Max Müller, declares that in those ancient writings there were no such ideas as my friend and others suppose. Those ancient writings are in the poetic form, and poetry cannot be construed as prose. The mistake has been caused through taking their concrete form of speech, and understanding it as we do our abstract use of words. Professor Müller illustrates the matter thus:— "Where we speak of the sun following the dawn, the ancient poets could only think and speak of the sun loving and embracing the dawn. What is with us a sunset, was to them the sun growing old, decaying, or dying. Our sunrise was to them the night giving birth to a brilliant child, and in the spring, they really saw the sun and the sky embracing the earth with a warm embrace, and showering treasures into the lap of Nature." -- Lecture on Vedas, in "Chips from a German Workshop."
Then he gives instances where those ancient writers use the words night, day, &c., personifying them, and where our modern translators, taking those names which have simply reference to night, day, dawn, and so on, as if they were persons, have taken out of the ancient writings a meaning that never was in them. I hold in my hand a report of a debate which I had in Melbourne last year with Mr. Walker, the Spiritist. If you will excuse me making such a reference here, you will find in this report that Mr. Walker, in a very able manner, took up this question of mythology. I would, therefore, recommend any person who wishes to be acquainted with what can be said on that matter, and who wishes also to get within the arcana of that terrible delusion of modern days—Spiritualism—to obtain this book.

Although my friend last evening eulogised so very highly those Hindoo writings, it was evidently because he had not gone to original sources for his information. This copy of the debate which I hold in my hand, contains many extracts which I have personally taken from works in the Melbourne Public Library. I can verify them, because I have copied them from their original sources, and know what they are. This is what Max Müller says in regard to the matter to which my friend referred:—"According to the orthodox views of Indian theologians, not a single line of the Vedas was the work of human authors. The whole Veda was in some way or other the work of the deity." "The human element, called paurusheyata in Sanscrit, is driven out of every corner or hiding place, and as the Veda is held to have existed in the mind of the deity before the beginning of time, every allusion to historical events, of which there are not a few, is explained away with a zeal and ingenuity worthy of a better cause. But let me state at once that there is nothing in the hymns themselves to warrant such extravagant theories. In many a hymn the author says plainly that he or his friends made it to please the gods; that he made it as a carpenter makes a chariot."

Lecture on Vedas, in "Chips from a German Workshop."

Müller says:—"The historical importance of the Veda can hardly be exaggerated, but its intrinsic merit, and particularly the beauty or elevation of its sentiments, have by many been rated far too high." "Large numbers of the Vedic hymns are childish in the extreme; tedious, low, common-place. The gods are constantly invoked to protect their worshippers, to grant them food, large flocks, large families, and a long life; for all which benefits they are to be rewarded by the praises and sacrifices offered day by day, or at certain seasons of the year."—*Ibid.*

My friend wished you to believe that those writings conveyed the most elevated conceptions of the Deity. Müller says that:—"Hidden in this rubbish there are precious stones; only, in order to appreciate them justly, we must try to divest ourselves of the common notions about polytheism so repugnant, not only to our feelings, but also to our understanding," "With regard to the style and character of these hymns on which so much labour has been expended, it may be remarked that they contain very little poetry of an agreeable or elevated order. *Nothing whatever that could be compared for a moment with the Psalms of David.* As mere literary productions, apart from their Archaic value, we doubt if any man could be found to read them."—*Ibid.*

Quoting again from this work to which I previously referred, Müller, in giving his estimate of the Hindoo writings as compared with Christianity, says:—"That by a comparative study of them we shall learn to appreciate better than ever what we have in our own. No one, who has not examined, patiently and honestly, the other religions of the world, can know what Christianity really is, or can join with such truth or sincerity in the words of St. Paul, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.'" Again he says:—"Many are the advantages to be derived from a careful study of other religions, but the greatest of all is, that it teaches us to appreciate more highly what we possess in our own. Let us see what other nations have had, and still have, in the place of religion. Let us examine the prayers, the worship, the theology, even of the most highly civilised races, the Greeks, the Romans, the Hindoos, the Persians, and we shall then understand more thoroughly what blessings are vouchsafed to us in being allowed to breathe, from the first breath of life, the pure air of a land of Christian light and knowledge. We have done so little to gain our religion, we have suffered so little in the cause of truth, that, however highly we prize our Christianity, we never prize it highly enough until we have compared it with the religions of the rest of the world."

Lecture on Vedas, in "Chips from a German Workshop."

So much for my friend's statement with regard to mythology. I do not think it is needful for me to trouble more in regard to it. No one stands higher than Professor Max Muller in the scientific world in connection with philological researches; and with reference to those ancient mythologies, if we are to take authority at all, his judgment is worthy of all respect.

Now let me just resume the argument which I began last night. But as I see I have only two or three minutes, I must be content with simply recapitulating, in order to prepare you for the argument. In the preface which I gave last night to this portion of my subject, you will remember that I called your attention to the question of the *possibility* of a revelation coming from God, and no one, I said, could deny the possibility; and that, when we reason from the relationship of the Creator to the creature, the extreme probability of a revelation seemed to be proved. But when we reason further from man's helplessness, and the sympathy of the Great
Mr. BRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen—I shall pass over the remarks of my friend personal to myself almost without comment, for they have no bearing on the subject of debate. He has to prove a certain proposition, and that is what I am anxiously waiting for him to prove. He says that it was strange for me to make the appeal I did in my opening address the other evening, but when I am standing up to try to show an audience which is certainly Christian, and to a large extent orthodox Christian, that they may be wrong in their theological belief, surely it must be the merest affectation to assume that mine was an unnecessary appeal. Suppose any of you were to enter a Mahommedan country, and were to argue against the orthodox Mahommedan faith before a large mass of believers in the doctrines and theology of Mahomet, would you not deem it necessary at the outset to endeavour to allay their prejudices, and enlist their forbearance and sympathies. I do not say it offensively to any portion of the audience, but there must be prejudices among men and women who have been trained from infancy to a particular form of assumption. I am told by my friend that humanity yearns for authority—that this much vaunted reason is not sufficient. Now I ask, has not that been the statement put forward by priesthoods in all ages—deprecating anything of the nature of doubt or scepticism, and condemning heresy? In every age we have been told that it is for authority humanity craves—that reason is not sufficient. Why, that is the cry of the Roman Catholic Church, the leading church even yet of Christendom; that is the statement put forward by those who, from the Protestant Church, are now rejoining that ancient ecclesiastical body—that it is authority they want. In a late copy of the weekly edition of the London Times (November 20th, 1878) I find a letter from a reverend gentleman who has just joined the Roman Catholic Church—the Rev. Orby Shipley. The remarks contained in that letter would very fairly represent, as it appears to me, the stand which my friend is now taking on behalf of authority against reason. Mr. Shipley speaks of the religious dogmas he has been previously teaching as a Protestant clergyman, and goes on to say:—

"All this I have held and done, as I now perceive, on a wrong principle—viz., on private judgment. When I became convinced that the right principle of faith and practice in religion was authority; when I saw clearly that it is of less moment what one believes and does than why one accepts and practices, then I had no choice as to my course. The only spiritual body which I could realise that actually claimed to teach truth upon authority, and that visibly exercised the authority which she claimed, was the Church of Rome. For the last time, I exercised my private judgment, as every person must exercise that gift of God in some way and to some extent, and I humbly sought admission into the communion of the Catholic Church."

I say that if authority is to override reason, the Rev. Mr. Shipley is acting consistently in seeking re-admission to the fold of the authoritative church. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Shipley recommends the same proceeding to the rest of the Protestant clergymen in these words:—"They have only to exchange—though the change indeed is great, and is not made without cost—the principle of private judgment for the revealed basis of faith, which is authority." And if authority is to override reason, that is the course that all dogmatists who would be logical, are bound to take.

You cannot too carefully carry in remembrance the precise subject that we are debating. My friend keeps on asserting that he is proving that the Deity of Jesus and his death as an atonement are a part of Christianity. I am not here to deny that. I am here simply—(Hisses). Surely you are showing you have not confidence in your advocate if you hiss. I say I am not here to deny that these are part of Christian doctrine as popularly understood; but I am here to deny, assuming these are a part of Christian doctrine, that such Christianity is of Divine origin, and that all other religious inspirations are, by comparison, of human origin. That is the subject of debate—not what is Christian Doctrine even in the opinion of my friend. I take his interpretation of it as it is stated in the subject put forward for discussion. It is evident what he conceives to be Christian doctrine, and it is also evident to everyone that that is the popular belief—that an immense majority of people in Christendom will share the conviction of my friend. But the question is: Taking all that as demonstrated, taking that as part of Christian doctrine, is this Christian theology, thus stated, of Divine origin? I call upon my friend again to advance his proofs that this particular theology is of Divine origin, and that all other inspirations of other races of mankind are to be regarded as simply of human origin.

My friend has quoted the opinion of Max Müller that the Christian religion is superior to the other religions, and that the better you become acquainted with the other religions the more readily will you admit the fact. As cordially as he can, I would endorse that assertion in respect to the Christian philosophy. My argument is that it is a question of degree in all these religions, not a question of signification. That the Christian religion,
broadly considered, may be the highest thus far developed. I am not here to deny. I am here simply to assert that the Universal Father of the race has not left the rest of His family as spiritual orphans; that they too have inspirations fitted for them; and that the Christian inspiration is only higher in degree, not totally different in sense and origin. But as my friend appears to think highly of the opinion of Max Müller on a question of this sort—as he conceives that Müller's opinion is to have great weight on the subject of religion—I would draw his attention to Max Müller's sentiments as stated in his lectures recently delivered in Westminster Abbey, and printed in the *Contemporary Review*, on "The Origin and Growth of Religion." My friend, the other evening, put forward, and rather ungraciously it seemed to me, as a sort of taunt, that some of my friends were Atheists. Doubtless that may be true. I am happy to say that I have friends of various descriptions of belief, very many of them being orthodox Christians; for there are some orthodox Christians, I am rejoiced to assert, who regard conduct as above opinion. When he advanced it as a sort of taunt, that there were some of my friends who were Atheists, did he mean to imply that they were not good men—that they did not do their duty to society?

**MR. GREEN:** No.

**MR. BRIGHT:** What then does he mean? If their reason, freely exercised, leads them to conceive that there cannot be known to the human mind any object of worship—not that there is no such object—surely they are not to be blamed for stating the fact for the sake of complete truthfulness. By those who see in every movement of nature a Divine Mind operating, they must be regarded much as men who are colour-blind—who simply cannot see that which the majority of the race see clearly. I allude to this matter principally, however, because I want to direct attention to what Max Müller says on this subject of Atheism. In the lectures to which I have referred, he says of Atheism that it is "the power of giving up what, in our best, in our most honest moments, we know to be no longer true; it is the readiness to replace the less perfect, however dear it may have been to us, by the more perfect, however much it may be detested, as yet, by others. It is the true self-surrender, the true self-sacrifice, the truest trust in truth, the truest faith. Without that atheism, no new religion, no reformation, no resuscitation, would ever have been possible; without that atheism, no new life is possible to any one of us. In the eyes of the Brahmins, Buddha was an Atheist; in the eyes of the Athenians, Socrates was an Atheist; in the eyes of the Phariscees, St. Paul was an Atheist; in the eyes of the Swiss Judges, Servetus was an Atheist." Thus we "find that if Max Müller praises Christianity highly, he also praises Atheism highly, and his opinion on the one must be taken to be just as valuable as on the other. For my part I do not advance any writer's opinion as a matter of authority. It is advanced because it agrees with the conclusions of my own reasoning faculties, and is a good statement of the case as I would desire it to be stated. And here, I would refer, in passing, to my friend's allusion to the eminent names introduced by me last night. My friend has entirely misrepresented, doubtless unintentionally, the reason of that introduction. I did not bring in those names as authority on behalf of the doctrine of Evolution. Surely the names of Channing, Parker, and Harriet Martineau, who say little or nothing about Evolution, would not be so introduced. I advanced those names in reply to an illustration given by my friend tending to show that those who surrendered this particular Christian faith he is advocating, lost something tremendous—that their life henceforth became, not a burden perhaps, but at any rate an aimless life, bereft of the aspirations which are essential to human happiness. Therefore I mentioned the names of some of the grandest of our race, as showing that, without that particular faith they were yet enabled to live noble, useful, and even happy lives. That was the object of my introduction of those names.

Now, with regard to this question of the revelation that my friend says must be obtained, if any religion is to be valuable to us. I think it is Greg, ill his "Creed of Christendom," who says,—"there are some people who cannot trust God unless they have His promises in black and white." To me it seems that by the study of Nature, by the teachings of Science, by the deductions of Philosophy, and by a free interpretation of all the religious teachings of the past, be they in the Bible or other sacred books, we can discover the signification of God's dealing with the human race—sufficiently at all events to be enabled to say that if we wish to be happy in this life, and to have the prospect of happiness beyond, we must "make for righteousness." That is the object of all religion, and my denial of the Divine origin of this particular faith, in a special sense, is simply because it is a revelation to a select few. I am pleading for a revelation to the whole race. I say God has not left any portion of His children without divine witnesses, and that, therefore, this particular revelation is not of Divine origin if all the others are of purely human origin. The mere fact that certain portions of those other sacred books may appear silly or foolish when read by one not trained to regard them with sanctity, is one which should not be unexpected by rational men. On this subject I will just quote the words of my friend's authority this evening—Max Müller. In the book I hold in my hand, by Moncure Conway, entitled "The Sacred Anthology," and in the preface to this, the 4th edition, Mr. Conway quotes the following words of Max Müller, contained in a review Müller wrote of this book in *The Academy*, the well-known critical journal, on Oct. 31st, 1874. Max Müller says, and his opinion on this subject is well deserving of our attention:—"The fact is, that what we call the beauty or charm of any of the sacred books, can be appreciated by those only whose language has been fashioned, whose very thoughts have been nurtured by them. The words of our own Bible cause innumerable
strings of our hearts to vibrate till they make a music of memories that passes all description. The same
inaudible music accompanies all sacred books, but it can never be rendered in any translation. To the Arab,
there is nothing equal to the cadence of the Koran; to us even the best translation of Mohammed's visions
sounds often dull and dreary. This cannot be helped, but it is but fair that it should be borne in mind as a caution
against declaring too emphatically that nobody else's mother can be so fair and dear as our own." As the time
allotted me has expired, I would just say before I sit down, that all of you have been nurtured on the Bible, and
therefore when you come to try and realize what other peoples think of their sacred books, you must necessarily
be prejudiced, and apt to conceive that they cannot have the same Divine origin as your own.

MR. GREEN: May I say that, taking Professor Max Midler's definition of Atheism, and not that which would
now be the definition of Atheism by many persons, viz., the denial of the existence of a Supreme Being, I do
not know that I would be very far from echoing his eulogy, seeing that the spirit of Atheism, in Müller's
judgment, seems simply to be the spirit of investigation.

I was sorry that my friend should speak of my having said anything that had the appearance of being
offensive, for I think he must, and ought, to distinguish between things which are in themselves offensive, and
can only be spoken with an offensive purpose, and those which legitimately arise out of the argument. My
friend has not taken an affirmative proposition covering his ground, and I must, therefore, whenever I can, as
my argument will allow, show how inadequate to the requirements of man, his principle of the sufficiency of
reason, is; so that the other night, I adduced the fact that a number of those who are delighted listeners to my
friend, are Atheists, while he is a Deist, in order to point out that evidently "reason" is not a safe guide, seeing
that it leads both of those parties to diametrically oposite conclusions. My friend styles them colour-blind. Well,
if they are content to be considered colour-blind by him, and as not having sufficient "reason" to see what to
others appears reasonable, I am content. But I cannot see that it is in harmony with his own principle, "that
whatever appears to a man to be true, is true to that man;" for, according to his principle, if a man believes there
is no God, then it is true to him that there is no God; but if a man believes there is a God, then, however
contradictory, the fact of his believing it, makes the existence of a God to be a fact to him. I had no intention
personally to reflect on character, but the argument was strictly legitimate under the premises.

Now my friend brings up authority, and says this is just what priests have always been crying out for. What
do I care what priests have been crying out for? I am a "Freethinker" in the true sense of that designation, and I
say that while I bow to the authority of the Supreme Being, I refuse to call any man master in spiritual things;
and hence I would kick authority, whether that of priests, parsons, or any other persons, to the winds. I want no
one to take my word for granted merely because I am what is called a minister. I refuse to accept any authority
but that which comes from God, save and except the civil authority of the land, and that which has been
appointed by God in connection with religious government. My friend's argument upon that matter does not
affect me at all. I will go with him hand and heart in pulling down all unrighteous authority, for all authority
over the human intellect, imposed by man, is unrighteous. God, who has formed the mind and knows its
capacities, is the only one who has a right to have authority, and to say what we shall believe for our good, and
what we ought not to believe; or what if we do believe, will be to our injury or otherwise.

I think my friend was hardly fair in that statement which he again made about his denial of the Divinity of
Christ, and the Atonement being parts of Christianity. He says: "I am not here to deny that these are a part of
Christianity as popularly understood." Now, I can hardly clear my friend from the charge of endeavouring by
words to impose upon you. He knows quite well that he is denying, in this proposition, that the Divinity of
Christ and His death as an Atonement, are parts of the Christianity taught by Christ. We have nothing to do
with what is "popularly" understood. He is here denying that it was taught by Jesus, and by His apostles, and
the early Christians, and to say therefore that he is not here denying that it is part of "popular" Christianity, is
simply to play upon words, and really, whether he intends it or not, by his words to lead you astray.

With regard to the proposition as to the Divine Origin of Christianity, I have pointed out that it was utterly
impossible for human beings to predict events hundreds of years before they occurred, and as we may suppose
a revelation from God to be possible and reasonable, and as a communication coming from Him must have
credentials, we therefore should expect, either that these incidents would be predicted beforehand, or that at the
time the communication appeared, miracles would be wrought as evidencing Divine origin, and that if we had
both those lines of evidence, then that which came to us with those claims would have proved its position as
having come from God. Now, in regard to the Old Testament Scriptures, let me repeat that they existed in the
Greek translation 280 years before Christ came, and let me further intimate, that those Scriptures have been
preserved to the human race by a people directly and bitterly opposed to Christianity. My friend may object to
this view, but so far as I am concerned, I believe that as a Providential arrangement, God designed that even by
this to-be-regretted circumstance of the opposition of the Jews, there should be one of the strongest and most
irrefragable evidences in favour of Christianity adduced in subsequent times. For had the Jews all received
Christ, and become Christians, do you not think that it would be at once urged: "Of course, there is harmony
between the Old and New Testaments. Why, the whole thing has been in the hands of one people, who have made them to fit in one to the other?" But as the Old Testament has been in the hands of the bitter opponents of Christianity, and as by that Testament we prove a long chain of prophecy, clearly indicating the coming of Christ and his religion, which prophecies are clearly fulfilled in the New Testament, we have in this a testimony which no power on earth can overturn, until it utterly obliterates from the page of history the last eighteen centuries of bitter, fierce, and oftentimes vindictive opposition on the part of the Jews to the religion of Christ. I am not here speaking against the Jews. I would regard it as the highest honour to be a Jew, if that had been the will of God; but I say it is a fact that they have been bitterly opposed to Christianity, and that they persecuted its advocates in that early age. But, notwithstanding all this, their own Scriptures are the most valuable testimony to the Divinity of its origin.

In Jeremiah, chap. xxxi., v. 31, God is represented as finding fault with the Jews, and saying that a time would come when he would make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. There is a prediction uttered 600 or 700 years before the event occurred, that a new covenant, differing from the Mosaic economy, would be made with the Jews. In the Book of Daniel, we have an account of four Empires identical with the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires. And it is declared:—"In the days of these kings (evidently referring to the last of the Empire's, from the particular details there given) shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these Kings, and it shall stand for ever." "Kingdom" means "reign;" we have God's laws thus reigning in our hearts which will never be destroyed. I thank God for the faith which I have; that, notwithstanding all opposition, that "kingdom" or "reign" never will be destroyed, while this condition of things endures.

Then, again, we have that prediction uttered by Jacob:—

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Now, the Shiloh, the setting up of the Kingdom, and the statement made by Jeremiah, were all understood by the Jews prior to Christ, to have reference to the Messiah, and to what he would do. Well, we are able to trace Judah as an independent and self-governing people, until nearly the 12th year of our Saviour's life, when Archelaus was deprived of the government, and Judea became a Roman province. Never till then did the government go utterly from the hands of Judah, except during those brief periods of captivity which they suffered in punishment for their sins; but from that date, the government has gone, the Shiloh came, and the sceptre was taken from Judah, and has been kept from then until the present day (unless, by the way, there is truth in the theory that the Queen of England is the lineal descendant of David), but of that matter I am not here to speak.

I would say further in connection with these things, that we have the declaration in the Old Testament that this coming Messiah was to be a Divine personage. In the 9th chapter of Isaiah, we find it is said: "Unto us a child is born." The present tense is used, indicating the absolute certainty of the event, and assuring them that it was as certain of fulfilment as if it already were an existing fact. It is said: "Unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Not only so, but in the 13th of Zechariah we have the same intimation as to the Divine nature of the coming Messiah, when it said: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," which was quoted by the Saviour in connection with His own sufferings. Again, we find that he was to be born in Bethlehem, and we have its fulfilment in the Gospel narrative of Matthew, chap. ii. He was to be born of a Virgin Mother. In the Garden of Eden it was said, "of the seed of the woman" God would raise up one to bruise the serpent's head. "Seed of the woman," mark you; not of the man. In Isaiah, chap. vii. v. 14, we read:—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." And in Jeremiah, chap. xxxi.—the very chapter where the new covenant is predicted—this same fact is stated, only in different words: that God would manifest a wonder—"A woman shall compass a man." Probably my friend will challenge this prophecy in Isaiah, and will say that it refers to the birth of Maher-shalal-hash-baz, the son of the prophet; but I am prepared to show by clear evidence from the book itself, that no such position is sustainable. The son of the prophet is never termed "Immanuel," as this person is. The land is never said to be his, as it is said to be the laud of "Immanuel;" and the whole circumstances clearly prove that this prediction was not spoken to Ahab the King; but, because Ahab refused to listen to the words of the prophet, the prophet turned to the people and said to them that God would give them a sign—that a virgin would conceive and bring forth a son, and that they would call his name Immanuel.

Mr. Bright: My friend claims to be a Freethinker, and yet he expects that there shall be a uniformity of opinion.

Mr. Green: No.

Mr. Bright: He has been ridiculing the Freethinkers, because some of them are Deists and some Atheists.
He therefore expects uniformity of opinion.

Mr. Green: No.

Mr. Bright: So it seems to me. At any rate that would be the idea one would glean from the words of my friend. Now, the very essence of freedom of thought is, that there shall be freedom, and consequent diversity of opinion; that we shall look to conduct, not to opinion, in forming our estimate of others; that those who conduct themselves well shall be enabled to associate together cordially, although some of them may have Atheistic opinions, and others may have Deistic opinions. I do not know from what particular source my friend has gained his information about Atheists forming a part of those who attend my Sunday evening lectures; but at all events he has asserted it. It appears to be regarded by him as something in the nature of a taunt, by his bringing it forward so frequently. Now, Freethinkers do not anticipate that they shall agree with one another in opinion—above all in theological opinion. They expect that there shall be evidence that each is desirous of doing what good he can in the world; but, beyond that, they do not look for uniformity of opinion as a necessary precedent to united action. Each one is his own priest, and looks to no one but himself for absolution. His authority is the individual mind which is exercised in believing or disbelieving.

My friend, in the same breath, said that he was averse to authority imposed by man. My contention is, that the theology he advocates is imposed by human authority, where it contravenes Rationalism. He is bringing forward now, as against that view, the predictions pointing directly, he alleges, to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, and argues that therefore—I presume that is what the deduction would come to—he must be the Deity, and that his death must be an atonement for man's sin. Why, even granting that he were the Messiah in the sense of being the messenger of the Divine Power, does it follow that those assertions which my friend undertakes to prove must have a foundation in fact? He himself admits that the very people to whom those prophecies were given—among whom the Messiah was alleged to have come—rejected him and declared that he was not the fulfilment of those prophecies, given in their own language; and, it is to be presumed, best understood by them. And really, it seems to me that to an enlightened mind, looking at this question fairly, and accepting the records as they stand, there was good reason for declining to receive him as the fulfilment of those prophecies. One of the foremost facts in connection with those prophecies was that the coming Messiah was to be a Prince of the House of David, a Lion of the tribe of Judah. A lengthy genealogy is given in the Gospels according to Matthew, and according to Luke, of Jesus of Nazareth, to show that he fulfilled those predictions. But when we look at these extraordinary genealogies do we find that they bear out the statement they are supposed to substantiate? On the contrary, do we not discover in the genealogy as shown in the Gospel according to Matthew that Joseph is declared to be descended from David, to be of the tribe of Judah, through David's son Solomon? and then follow a number of names—given in the Old Testament, and capable of verification there—of the various progenitors of Joseph. But there is this extraordinary fact to be remembered: That after bringing this genealogy down to Joseph, Joseph is declared not to be the father of Jesus. Now, taking my friend's illustration, suppose it were deemed necessary to show, as is alleged by some, that Victoria, our present gracious queen, is a descendant of King David, and suppose her genealogy were elaborately traced back from the Duke of Kent, her father, to King David himself. But if, after it was thus traced, it was asserted that the Duke of Kent was not the father of Queen Victoria, would anything be gained by the previous genealogy? Moreover, we must not forget that in the other genealogy given in the Gospel according to Luke, this same Joseph is again traced back to David, and found to-be of the tribe, of Judah, but this time he is traced back to another son of David—not to Solomon, but to Nathan—and the whole of the names with one or two exceptions are different in the genealogy given by Luke to those in the genealogy given by Matthew. Now I ask you if this occurred concerning anything in which your feelings were not enlisted—to which you had not been early trained to give reverence and worship—if it were found in any of the ancient books of the Hindoos or Buddhists—would not that be convincing evidence to you that those genealogies could not truly fulfil the prophecies which said that the Messiah was to be of the House of David—a Lion of the tribe of Judah? Why, the Jews above all nations have held that descent must be through the male line. Through the father the descent must come. The Jews never thought anything whatever of the women in tracing descent. In olden times they did not even allow the women to worship; and up to this day in the synagogues the women are not permitted to tread the floor of the place of worship, but are seated in a gallery apart. Women among the Jews are not confirmed in religion on arriving at years of discretion the same as the males. Therefore even yet this strong inclination prevails to make the male the be-all and end-all in the family and especially in the tribal life. We do not even know the name of Noah's wife, the mother of humanity. The woman from whom the whole human race is said to have sprung, is not even mentioned in the Jewish Scriptures, but is simply spoken of as Noah's wife. So with the mother of David—we do not know who she was. The names of women are deemed to form no part of genealogy among the Jews. There could be no fulfilment of the prophecy, then, that the Messiah was to be of the tribe of Judah, excepting through male descent. These genealogies show that an attempt was made to trace it in the male line—to bring it down to Joseph—but then after all they are valueless, as Joseph is
declared not to be the father of the Messiah. I say therefore that in a rational view—the Jews were justified in assuming that those prophecies of theirs, always regarding the Messiah as a Prince of the House of David, were not fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. And although in after times it came to be asserted that they were fulfilled by the Christians who doubtless believed that they were fulfilled, still it regains for us to look at the question ourselves and see if this were truly and really any fulfilment of those prophecies which declared that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah—of the House of David.

But as I have said, this is a side issue. It has nothing to do with this debate, for even assuming that Jesus was the Messiah prophecied of—even granting that those prophecies pointed directly to him—still, for all that, he may have been but a spiritually-minded man—a man of the most advanced character you may please to assume—but still not Deity. It does not prove, or go to prove in the slightest degree, that this assumption of the Deity of Jesus is of Divine origin; and that is the affirmation my friend has undertaken to prove. The position taken by the majority of those who freely enquire into these subjects—who do not and cannot regard them as too sacred for their reason to be exercised upon—is that these old records come to us in a form similar to other traditions,—that they cannot be regarded as historically accurate. Even at this, our day, it is most difficult to get historical accuracy about any of the subjects that come prominently before the world. I was reading the other day of a transaction in which Ex-President Grant, of the United States, was interested. It was stated as a historical fact, that, on assuming command of the Federal army, General Grant had an interview with President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, at which President Lincoln directed him to conduct his campaign in a special way, and that Grant replied: "I can do it, but it will cause the loss of 100,000 more men than would otherwise be required." That was affirmed by a trustworthy chronicler, writing a history of the Civil War, to be a fact. Lincoln was dead; Seward was dead; and had Grant, the only other person present at the interview, been dead, that statement would have gone before the world to all time as a historical fact. Ex-President Grant, however, was himself appealed to and requested to say whether it was true or not. He declared emphatically that he was never interfered with in the slightest degree either by President Lincoln or Secretary Seward, but that the whole conduct of the campaign was left to himself. So that promising historical fallacy was nipped in the bud. We need not, however, look further than our comparatively small proceedings—even at this debate—for evidence of the fact of how easily contemporary records may be mistaken. I find in a telegram sent to a Wellington newspaper last week, that it was stated a debate was about to take place between the Rev. Mr. Green and Mr. Charles Bright, and the subject was declared to be "The Divine Origin of Christchurch!" At some future day—a century or so hence—if the subject be deemed of sufficient importance, possibly some antiquarian investigator might discover that telegram, might see that it had never been contradicted, and might adduce it as showing what an extraordinarily important and even miraculous place Christchurch was fancied to be at that epoch. If in our own day, then, we find such mistakes arising, can we suppose for one moment that in remote ages and countries, when printing was unknown, when even manuscript was a mysterious thing which only one here and there was taught to decipher, the events transpiring would be placed on record with infallible and uniform accuracy?

MR. GREEN: I would just like to say in regard to the statement of my friend—that I believed there ought to be uniformity of opinion, and which I thought it right to contradict at the time, that whether he may be able at present to understand it or not, this is the position which I hold: Uniformity of faith, but diversity of opinion; faith, resting on credible testimony—that is, testimony which by all the laws of evidence is found to be credible.

Now, in connection with this statement that I have made about Atheism; I am very sorry that my friend will bring in the personality. Let me then say, what I would not have said otherwise: That I believe the Atheist is more reasonable than the Deist. And for this reason—and hence you will see there was no taunt—if a man believes there is a great Universal Father, who has love in his heart—(if we may use this expression anthropomorphically—and it is necessary thus to speak when speaking of God, for the Divine Being has affection towards his offspring) and yet has left his offspring without instruction and guidance, is to be guilty of that which is utterly unreasonable. I believe myself that God has left no part of humanity without a directory, and that he will judge them according to the directory he has given them. And I say that the position of the Atheist, who denies a Deity altogether—though in my judgment not at all in accordance with reason and observed facts—is far more reasonable than that of the Deist; for it is far more reasonable to deny the existence of a great universal and loving Father, than that that Father should exist, and yet leave his offspring without a revelation of himself. I simply mention this to show that there was no thought of a taunt. I am forced to say these things, and I do hold that they come legitimately within the sphere of my argument in this debate.

My friend says the Jews best understood their own prophets, and yet they rejected Christ. Now, I do not wonder at their rejecting him. Any person who studies this Bible, or who would study it before the coming of Christ, would be perplexed, because in connection with the Messiah there predicted, there were certain things indicating a position of humiliation and suffering, and others indicating a position of exaltation which it was
difficult to understand could apply to a human being. This peculiarity could not be understood except by the
revelation contained in the New Testament; and hence no wonder the Jews before Christ were divided into two
sects: the Palestinian Jews and the Alexandrian Jews. The Jews of Palestine took those Scriptures that referred
to the manhood of Christ, and regarded him as a man, a hero, and a soldier; whereas the Alexandrian Jews laid
those aside, and said they could not be true if the others referring to divine attributes were true, and as they
could not conceive those statements which indicated Deity to belong to a man, they therefore regarded the
Messiah as merely an ideal. Hence the existence of these two sects before Christ came, and, from the points of
view at which they looked at these matters, it was reasonable that they should not understand. Prophecy can
only be understood fully as it is fulfilled. When all the indications that have been outlined in prophecy are seen
to converge to one focus, and centre in one individual, they are understood and clearly seen to be true. I do not
think, taking what I have said into account, that it is any wonder the Jews rejected Christ and crucified Him,
believing he was an imposter, and thus without intending it, fulfilled the very predictions that were found in
their law. But my friend says that, even admitting all those prophecies referred to the Messiah, they will not
prove the deduction I wish to draw from them, namely, His divinity and death as an atonement. I draw issue
here, and affirm, that if the predictions declare the Messiah was to be Divine—that, as Isaiah predicts, he was to
be called "the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Everlasting Father," and so on—if all those predictions in regard
to his manhood and divinity, converge, coalesce, and harmonise in him; and if it is stated that the Messiah
would suffer for the sins of others, then, beyond doubt, they do establish those points. As human foresight
could not lead to the prediction of events hundreds of years beforehand, those prophecies prove that the Divine
Mind must have been guiding, controlling, and regulating, and thus preparing evidence, whereby we who live
now, and those who lived at the time of, and subsequent to, our Saviour's coming, might see the invulnerability
of the foundation on which his claims to our acceptance rested.

Now, I am glad to be able to congratulate my friend on his coming to the point, although he says it is a side
issue. His reference to the genealogy—to the statement that the Messiah was to be of the House of David—a
lion of the tribe of Judah—is really to the point; and for once during the course of this debate, I will say my
friend shows that he has really—though perhaps unconsciously—apprehended the real point. Let me say that if
my friend could prove what he has asserted—namely, that Christ did not descend from the House of David, and
the tribe of Judah, then I would admit readily—for I am ready to admit anything that is capable of being
established—that the claims of Christ fall utterly to the ground. Let me say that all those genealogies of the
Jews, through the captivity, had fallen into some degree of confusion, although not so great but that they
understood them. The very fact that for several hundreds of years after the commencement of Christianity, no
Jew is found urging genealogical inconsistencies as against the claims of Christ, proves that in their judgment,
those apparent, but not real discrepancies, were only on the surface. Let me say further, that during the life of
Jesus it was not known by the Jews but that Joseph was really the father of Christ, and therefore, so far as that is
concerned, there was no justification—from any knowledge they are said to have had that Joseph was not His
father—for their rejection of Christ. But let me point out in reference to the genealogy in the Gospels that it was
necessary to prove, in the first place, that Christ descended according "to the flesh from David—that he had the
very blood of David coursing through His veins by being descended from one of his posterity. And I say that if
you take the statement made in the Gospel by Luke: "Being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph," and refer the
words, as I think they may be, both to Jesus and to Joseph, you will see that, as some translators of our
Scriptures, efficient scholars in the Greek language say, this statement is, "Being as was accounted by law, the
son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli." and we have at once this fact: That just as men sometimes marry
ladies whose parents have had no sons to perpetuate their name, and at the request of the parents of the lady
take her name in order to perpetuate it; so among the Jews, for the purpose of tribal arrangements, and the
perpetuation of names in families where the parents had no sons, the man who married the eldest daughter, or
only daughter, took the name of her father, and was really, and legitimately in the eye of the law, the son of that
person whose daughter he had married. Now we see that the genealogy by Luke is properly the genealogy of
Mary; but because, as my friend correctly said, the Jews took no account of women, Mary is ignored, and
Joseph her husband is placed in her position. But do you not see that Mary's genealogy was absolutely
necessary in order to prove that Christ had descended from David by blood? Mary was His mother, and he had
no earthly Father, so that un-doubtedly her genealogy was necessary to be given to establish the fact of blood
descent from that notable King of Israel.

Now, taking Luke, as establishing the descent by blood from David, it may be asked: Why was it that the
genealogy by Matthew was given? Let me again remind you that the Jews, when Christ was living, were not
aware of what we now know. But suppose it happened—please bear with me in making this reference—that
persons have offspring soon after they have entered into the matrimonial state, and prior to the time, when,
according to those arrangements which are right, and in harmony with Divine laws, progeny should result, do
we not know that if the child is born but one day after the marriage ceremony is performed, that child is
legitimate, has a legal title to property, to the name of the father, and to all the immunities that a child, born under proper legal requirements, would have? Now, as we have seen, Christ descended from David, by blood, through Mary, but it may be asked, how is the claim to the throne of David established, seeing that the throne came, not through the line of Nathan (from whom Mary was descended), but through the line of Solomon? Does not this show us the necessity of Joseph’s genealogy being given by Matthew, to prove that, as Jesus was born in wedlock, and took the name of Joseph, His reputed father, He legitimately inherited the throne to which Joseph, the lineal descendant of Solomon, had a legitimate and inalienable right? Thus, two genealogies were absolutely necessary to establish blood descent and a legal right to the throne of David.

I have just two minutes left, and let me say further in connection with my proofs, that we have the statement made by the prophet Haggai that the Messiah was to come when He was generally expected; and if those predictions existed before Christ came, we naturally would expect that there would be a looking forward to the coming of some personage at that time. Now, I will read from three historians, none of whom are acceptors of Christianity. Suetonius says:—“There had been for a long time, all over the East, a prevailing opinion that it was in the fates (the decrees or prophesies) that at that time some one from Judea should obtain the empire of the world. The Jews, applying it to themselves, went into a rebellion.” If these prophecies did not exist how could that expectation have been entertained? Tacitus, in his history, b. 5, c. 13, says:—“Many were persuaded that it was contained in the old writings of the priests, that at that very time the East should prevail, and the Jews should have the dominion.” Josephus, who had taken up the Alexandrian philosophy, and did not believe in a real and tangible Messiah, in his Antiquities, b. 6, c. 5, sec. 4, says:—“But now what did the most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was found in their sacred writings, how, ‘about that time one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.’ The Jews took this prediction to themselves in particular, and many of their wise men were thereby deceived in their determination.” These extracts show that there was just such an expectation as we would suppose to have existed.

MR. BRIGHT: Notwithstanding what has fallen from my friend, I again assert that we are now debating a side issue, because, even if he could prove his case, in regard to those genealogies, he would be as far as ever from proving that Jesus was the Deity. Therefore, he is debating a side issue. But, taking that side issue for what it is worth, I find my friend says that those genealogies had fallen into a degree of confusion. I think most of you must admit that if this be a part of my friend’s case, it may be taken as proved. They had certainly fallen into some degree of confusion, if it be true, as he says, that one of them was intended to apply to Joseph, and that the other one, although purporting, the same as the first, to apply to Joseph, was intended to apply to Mary. First, I ask how it is that under these circumstances the two genealogies are not given by one evangelist? How is it that it is two different writers who give these two different and strangely conflicting accounts? Surely, if this important point had to be proved that one of these genealogies applied to Joseph, and the other to Mary, notwithstanding that in both Joseph is named, it would have been given by one writer, and not left to be suspected, as, in spite of what my friend says, it must now be assumed, that there was a great discrepancy between these writers, and that both could not be true, later commentators have conceived this explanation as a loophole of escape. That appears to me to be the rational view. Furthermore, we have a strange element introduced into these two genealogies—and you must pardon me if I appear to be pressing this view of the case. I know very well—I feel it strongly, and regret to feel it—that I am hurting the emotional faculties of many here in speaking thus plainly of what they regard as a sacred subject; but with me one thing alone is sacred, and that is Truth. Reverence for truth impels me to point out that in these two genealogies, examined a little closer, we find this most remarkable discrepancy: That, whereas in Matthew there are 25 generations given as from David to Joseph, on the other hand, in Luke—even taking that enormous jump which my friend says we are to take, and assuming that the genealogy by Luke applies to Mary—we have no less than 41 generations as from David to Mary, represented by Joseph. That is a difference between the husband and wife of a period of time amounting to from 400 to 450 years. The difference between 25 generations and 41 generations, at the lowest computation, would amount to 400 or 450 years. What would we suppose now if in English history we had a genealogy traced down to a woman in our own day, and if those two people were declared to be married?

My friend says, in reference to the suggested substitution of the name of Mary for Joseph, that the Jews were not aware, of what we now know, but of what, through the traditions of that time, and through additions to this old story by later writers, we have come to assume to be knowledge. That is the real ease. In all these questions it appears to me it is assumption that is put forward instead of knowledge, and Rationalists are expected to entertain these assumptions in the same way as they would entertain facts of science, and to admit...
them as proved, when, to their minds, they appear to be the wildest speculations.

My friend said at the outset of his remarks that what he advocated was uniformity of faith and diversity of opinion. To me this is a mere juggle on words. I cannot understand what it means. What is covered by faith, and what by-opinion? For a long time faith was supposed to include belief in the idea that the human race was created only 5,000 or 6,000 years ago. Now that is obliterated by the facts of geology. Lyell, in his work, "The Antiquity of Man," shows that man has probably inhabited this earth for something like 250,000 years. That question involved formerly a matter of faith. Was it not also a matter of opinion? How has it changed since? How is it that no intelligent man now believes that this globe is only 6,000 years old? Has not this opinion changed through the facts of science advanced, and proved by the true hand-writing of God which cannot lie and which is recorded in the strata of the rocks? It is always received with such an amount of chagrin by theologians of all characters as to lead us to think that it trespasses upon faith as well as opinion.

However, I will dwell on that point no farther, but will endeavour, if I possibly can, to bring my friend back to the question we are debating. I assert again that all these deductions based on what may be found in a particular book do not go in any shape or way to prove the case of the Divine origin of what my friend calls Christianity. To do that he has to show the divine origin absolutely of those very records that he is quoting. Has he attempted for one moment to do that? He is simply showing that certain things are in his opinion doctrinal Christianity as found in that book. But has he adduced any evidence in this debate that that book from which he quotes is to be regarded as of Divine authority in a different sense to the sacred books of other religionists? In regard to the matter contained in the sacred books of other religionists, we do not need to ask the opinion entertained by Mas Müller or any body else, regarding their goodness. We can judge for ourselves. I could quote passage after passage if time allowed of the most exquisite morality contained in those books. We need not entertain by Mas Müller or any body else, regarding their goodness. We can judge for ourselves. I could quote passage after passage if time allowed of the most exquisite morality contained in those books. We need no authority to tell us whether it is morality or not to love our neighbours as ourselves, or to show our love to God by acts of kindness and love to men. Therefore I say we can discover for ourselves that there is much beautiful moral teaching within those books.

Mr. Green: My friend appears to feel that the question of evolution is rather a delicate one. I do not wish
to press it, but if he will say that certain things we believe in are absurd and do violence to reason, I must again persist in bringing up that, in my judgment, utterly absurd theory, that the finite produced the infinite, and that from the monkey came the man. Now, I say I may believe in a theory of evolution, and yet not in that theory which my friend holds, and which I regard as utterly irrational.

Let me show you the difference between opinion and faith. "Faith comes by hearing." In other words, belief, for faith and belief are synonymous, is produced by testimony; while opinion may be but a conception of the mind without any real or tangible foundation, if I am to believe anything, I must have testimony. If I am to believe in evolution, as my friend holds, I must either see the monkey transformed, into the man, or have that fact testified to, by witnesses who saw it and are trustworthy; or I must have some evidence from the geological strata of our earth showing that this process did take place, in order that from those rocks I may have the testimony. Now, until I have testimony to produce faith or belief, the theory must remain, if I hold it at all, in the region of opinion. There is the difference between faith and opinion.

But my friend quotes Lyell, and says he has proved that the race of man is 250,000 years old. Allow me to say that my friend is evidently behind the age. Just as a friend said to me in Melbourne, when he asked me what newspaper I read, I replied, "The Age," and he remarked, "Oh! you're behind the age." So, if my friend is not aware that Lyell has been proved to be in error in many of his conclusions, he is simply behind the age.

Now, in connection with this matter of the genealogy, I still say I am very glad my friend has taken it up, because it is the nearest approach to grappling with the proposition that he has yet made. In connection with this question he asked why Matthew did not give both accounts, if both accounts were necessary? He also referred to the statement that the persons living in those days were not aware of the circumstances in connection with the birth of Christ, and further, as to the discrepancy in the number of generations in the two genealogies. Now, a little suggestion will show you how easily explainable those apparently difficult matters are. If my friend would ask the question from history: For whom did Matthew write? he would find that Matthew wrote for the Jewish Christians, who were well acquainted with the genealogical tables. Now, when Matthew wrote for the large number of Christians in Palestine, he knew that if he gave the broad outlines of the genealogical table, those men—every one of whom could run up the table on his fingers' ends from the living generation up to David—would know that those persons who were left out were not left out through ignorance on the part of the writer, but simply because the writer was writing to those as well acquainted with the whole genealogical table—and which is supplied fully in the Old Testament—as he was himself. Matthew knew, that to establish the claim of Jesus to the throne of David, it was only necessary to prove that He was, by law, the son of Joseph, legitimately taking his name and claiming his rights, because they were all aware that he was the son of Mary. In one place it is said: "Is not this the son of Mary?" And in another place: "Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee." The Jews knew that Mary was His mother; but it was necessary, when the matter of His claim to the throne of David was under consideration, that it should be seen that He was legally entitled to the claims which were Joseph's as the descendant of David, through Solomon. Now, in the case of Luke, we have a difference. Luke is writing for Gentile hearers. He wrote to one Theophilus—evidently a Greek, for he had a Greek name; and the whole circumstances indicate that he was a Grecian. Now, suppose Luke made the jumps Matthew had made, what would be the result? This Greek would have said: "I cannot understand how there can only have been so few generations between Mary, the mother of Jesus, and David, her ancestor." And hence, because he was writing to Greeks, and because it was necessary to enter into detail, he gives the whole of the names, showing also, as was necessary, that Jesus was, through Mary, descended lineally from David, the King of Israel. Now, this is just the explanation I have to offer. And in regard to their not knowing the circumstances connected with the birth of Christ, at the time of our Saviour's life, we are to bear in mind that the apostles did not know it probably, until the momentous events connected with His life and death were over. We do not know at what time they obtained the information. We know the promise of the Holy Spirit was given to them to guide them unto all truth. We have no intimation as to when the truth was revealed; but that it was revealed, those men declared, and proved that they believed their declaration to be true, by being willing to lay down their lives in attestation thereof.

Let me now point out further in connection with the Christian evidences, that Isaiah predicts, in the 53rd chapter, that Christ was to be born in a poor and mean condition. What could more fully fulfill this prediction than His being born of Mary, a family so far removed from the Royal line, and at the same time in such poor circumstances—"a root out of a dry ground," as Isaiah calls it—and that then by the marriage of Joseph and Mary, He should have a claim to the throne of David?

It is also predicted in Isaiah that the Messiah would come while the temple stood. Now, if Jesus had come 50 years later than He did, He would not have come while the Temple stood, because it was razed to the ground forty years after His death, and has never yet been restored. Although Julian tried to falsify prophecy by rebuilding the Temple, the operations of the workmen were put an end to by fire coming from the foundations. Again, it is predicted that the Messiah would not be a soldier but a prophet—that He would not come as
ordinary persons did, and that although not descended from the Levitical tribe, He would yet come as a priest to atone. This is predicted clearly in the 110th Psalm. Then there is the prediction in Zechariah ix. 9, which was fulfilled by Christ riding into Jerusalem on an ass, and the people saying to Him, "Hosanna to the Son of David—Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

MR. BRIGHT: Still debating this side issue, and avoiding the main question, I take up my friend once more on the question of the genealogies. He has explained that there was no need for Matthew to give the whole of the names of the pedigree between David and Joseph in his account because they were well known to the Jews, and were to be found in their own Scriptures. But my friend has forgotten to mention that there are only four more names to be found in the Jewish Scriptures than are to be found in the genealogy of Matthew, and that, even if those four names were introduced, there would still be a discrepancy of twelve generations, or at least three centuries between the husband and wife, always assuming that Luke's genealogy can be made to apply to Mary. I believe I am right in making that assertion. I have not at this moment the means of verifying it; but I have not the slightest doubt, speaking from memory, that I am perfectly correct in saying there are only four more names in the Jewish Scriptures than are mentioned in Matthew. Therefore there is still that tremendous discrepancy.

I am told by my friend, and it appears to be advanced as if it were proof of the Deity of Jesus, that the Apostles were ready to die for him. Surely this is a strange conclusion to reach. Surely we know well that loyal followers of a great man have been ready to die for their commander without that commander being elevated to a Divine station. We have instances both in ancient and modern times, of men dying readily on behalf of capable and superior men to whom they were linked by ties of fellowship. Even in our own day we need not go far to discover instances of that kind. Although, therefore, the Apostles proved they were ready to die for their opinion of Jesus' divine mission, that does not show that he was the Deity, which is the point my friend has got to prove.

My friend seems to think that I somewhat shirk this subject of evolution—that I do not like it—an evolution seems in the opinion of my friend, to consist of one circumstance—that of a monkey becoming a man. Now evolution deals with something more than that. It asserts that all formations from the remotest ages up to the present time, have gone on without any breach of continuity—that throughout the abyss of time everything has been gradually developing, just as the acorn, when planted in the ground, grows up in the course of a century to be a grand and beautiful oak tree. Will anyone assert that the fact of the oak tree growing up in a hundred years from an acorn within the ground, having in it the promise and potency of that tree, is less glorious than if the tree shot up in a night and was formed there by a miracle? Is it not, as it develops, miracle enough? And surely in this grand universe there is miracle enough in the idea of its natural growth. Moreover, we have this joyous fact before us: If it be true, as Evolution teaches, that out of the remote past we have advanced by natural development to what the earth and the human race have now become, what a glorious promise we have for the future—the past being the foundation from which that future is to spring, not by a miracle, not by magical conversion, but by natural force, and the race being impelled to make for that righteousness which the Divine Spirit seems to engender. It appears to me that the theory of Evolution is at all events grander than the scheme of occasional interferences on the part of some outside Creator. My friend makes merry over this transfer as he calls it, between the monkey and the man, and asks for a monkey to be brought before him and changed into a man. I cannot myself accommodate him in that capacity. I am as I am. Monkey or man, I am here. And really, if I were in a position to make my choice, I would just as soon have ascended from the animal kingdom by gradual development, with all the rational promise therein implied, as to have at any past time descended from a perfect position, and been degraded to a lower scale in creation. Looking at this question of evolution in the light of reason, it seems to me to be at least as capable of rational reception, and far more capable of rational proof, than the idea that there have been miraculous interferences with the universe at any time in the past. The inspiration I believe in is perpetual, and its outcome is beginning to be recognized in Evolution.

My friend talks of miracles. I cannot see why, if there were miracles two thousand years ago, there should not be miracles now. Surely we need miracles now just as much as in the past. There is now as much confusion in the matter of religion as in the past—as much difficulty in obtaining an authoritative faith. The world is now as much in doubt as ever on these questions. "We stand then in urgent need of miracle, if miracle is to be the attestation for faith. To mo, none is needed, for there is one gigantic miracle ever presents. We know more of the working of God in nature than we knew in the past, and that knowledge seems to me to present the grandest miracle possible to be conceived. To think that this great globe 24,000 miles in circumference, has spun round 2,000 miles on its axis while we have been sitting in this theatre,—to think that it has sped during the same time, some 150,000 miles in its swift course through space! Can any conception of miracle exceed that? And must not the knowledge of miracles like these lead us to form a grander ideal of the Deity than if we believe that 2,000 years ago some magical intervention took place which has failed to gain the end it was represented to
aim at,—the salvation of the race. People sin now, as then; and now, as then, only require more knowledge of God's natural laws to become less sinful. As knowledge grows—as a thorough education progresses—sinfulness will decrease. I see nothing that has been achieved by those extraordinary interventions that my friend speaks of. I do not see why our faith should be called upon to swallow those ancient miracles, while all the grand present miracles of nature challenge recognition around us.

**Fourth Evening.**

**Mr. Bright:** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—My friend the other evening adopted a common argument when he tried to persuade you that those who gave up the authority of revelation, to be logical, were bound to be Atheists. Now the profound and extended view which science takes at this day more than at any time past—for science is advancing with gigantic strides every year—almost necessitates the assumption of a Divine Power overruling the universe. Rather than trust to any words of mine in this connection, I will read a few lines from a volume just issued from the London Press, written by the Rev. H. R. Haweis, an eminent believer in Evolution. He says:—"We may try and construct the universe without having recourse to a guiding mind,—we may place mind at the end, and call it man, instead of placing it at the beginning, and calling it God. We may put aside the old argument from design as unsound, and call for one speck of living jelly, which is to take the place of God, and which contains within it the promise and potency of all terrestrial life; but as soon as our thoughts begin to dwell on this original speck of jelly, we ask, Whence hath it life and motion? Life, we are told, is a property of organised matter. We ask, What is it that organises matter? It gets organised by the play of forces in certain directions. And then comes the last inquiry, which, as it were, throws us straight into the arms of that God from whom we are vainly endeavouring to escape,—What directs those forces in one way for order and creation, rather than in another way for confusion and chaos? There is no answer but this: mind, Divine mind, God. Sometimes we think, and sometimes we don't think; but in either case God is the one ark of rest to which we return again and again, the one stable thing up the great flood." That is the position which the great majority of Rationalists assume at this day, and from that position they are not readily to be dislodged.

When last evening I said that I did not stand here to deny that the Deity of Jesus and his death as an atonement for man's sin were a part of Christianity, I was encountered, from many among the audience by what seemed like cries of derision. I was not surprised at that, because the audience are not supposed to make themselves carefully acquainted with the subject of debate; but I was astonished that my friend seemed to endorse those cries. He appeared to conceive that I was here to maintain the negative of that proposition. I must therefore again call attention to the subject of debate, which was carefully considered by myself and my friend before adoption. We are met to discuss the Divine Origin of Christianity, accepting (not denying) the following definition of terms:—

"That by Divine Origin it is understood to be of Divine origin in the sense in which no other religion is," and that "in the term Christianity, it is understood there are included the Deity of Jesus and His death as an atonement for man's sin."

For the purposes of this debate, then, I stand here and accept this definition of terms, but accepting this definition of terms, I deny that such Christianity is of Divine origin. That is the position in which the debate stands. To make this matter clear, let me have recourse to an illustration. Suppose my friend were to maintain that this city of Dunedin was now in the location which it was intended to occupy by those who left England to settle this portion of New Zealand; and defined Dunedin as including the inhabitants of the Peninsula. I accept that definition for the purpose of debate, but then maintain that the city, so defined, was not the Dunedin intended by the original settlers. What would my friend have to do? Surely he would have to go to the documents originating from those settlers to discover what was their intention, and one of his very first steps would have to be to prove that the documents which he produced did originate from those who came to effect this settlement. Bear in mind I do not stand here even to deny the Biblical origin of Christianity. I stand here to deny the Divine origin of Christianity, in the terms specified by my friend, and accepted by me. Therefore you see, just the same as in the debate regarding Dunedin in the way I have put it, he would have to show that the documents he produced had really emanated from the men he stated they did emanate from; so when he goes to the text of Scripture in order to show what he supposes Christianity to be, there is a prior step, which he has never yet taken, and that is to show that those texts of Scripture are of Divine origin. Moreover, my friend even goes farther than this would indicate, for he stands in the same position as if he should assert that this settlement of Dunedin is the only, settlement in New Zealand which took place under the authority of (he British Crown. He asserts that this religion, and this only, is of Divine origin, and, by implication, maintains that the others are of human origin. My contention, in denying this proposition of my friend, is that the Divine Mind has inspired
in a more or less supreme degree, and is still inspiring, messengers and messages to all portions of our race.

I have already drawn attention to the enormous preponderance of other religions in the world. In the latest statistics I have been able to procure—those contained in the article on "Religion," in the edition just published of Chambers's Cyclopædia—it is shown that the total population of the world amounts to about 1,291 millions. Of that number, 483 millions are Buddhists; 139 millions are Hindoos; 103 millions are Mahommedans; and 198 millions are of other religions; making a total of 923 millions. This leaves only 371 millions of Christians. I assert that it is more in accordance with Divine laws as we observe them in the universe, and, therefore to my thinking more likely to be true, that all other races should have had their inspirations, than that they should have been left forsaken by the Infinite mind. I do not mean to say that those inspirations are equal in degree, but in signification of "divine origin," they are identically the same. Therefore it is on that account, too, that I deny the Divine origin—in the sense in which my friend has explained, and I have accepted—of Christianity. Hence I once more assert—and I think you will admit that I have made good my position—that in this debate, and for its purpose, I do not stand here to deny that the Deity of Jesus is part of Christianity.

But assuming, as I have done previously, that we had agreed to debate the Biblical origin of Christianity, and not its Divine Origin, then it seems to me it would be more rational, in order to discern what Christianity should be, to endeavour to discover what was the mind of Jesus. For this, purpose I would not take the fourth Gospel, which, in my belief, gives us the mind of Plato, the great Greek philosopher, and not the mind of Jesus. In the first place, it is written in the language of Plato, and not in the language of Jesus. In the next place, the Greek in which it is written—we are told by the foremost Greek scholars—is of a pure and cultured character, such as we could not expect from an unlearned fisherman of Judea—Greek far superior to the Greek of the Apostle Paul, who was, by comparison with John, a learned Jew. Moreover, we have this fact: That a school for the cultivation of the philosophy of Plato was established in the East about the time that Christianity originated. We have here a perfect concatenation of facts, showing the probability that this Gospel of John, which was admittedly of comparatively late composition, gives us rather the mind of Plato than the mind of Jesus. But to discover the mind of Jesus, it seems to me we must go to the synoptical Gospels; we must look at his own utterances given there, and above all we must look at his utterances on important occasions. Now, if we study the whole of that magnificent body of morality and spirituality contained in the Sermon on the Mount, we would find anything to justify the Christianity put forward by my friend? If, further, we appeal to the occasion, when Jesus was absolutely asked by an auszxous enquirer:—"Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"—we find he first reproves the enquirer for calling him "good," saying there is none good but one—God. Then he goes on to tell him that he is to keep the moral commandments, specifying them, and adding, according to Matthew, that he is to love his neighbour as himself. He gives those moral commandments—not even mentioning the ceremonial commandment of the Sabbath—as the formula which will enable the enquirer to earn eternal life. Then he says farther, when the young man tells him that he has kept those commandments: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor . . and come and follow me." Follow him, mark, who at that time was standing in opposition to the orthodox priesthood, and denouncing the dignitaries of the day. He was struggling against a lower form of religion, the heritage of the past, and was pointing his finger to the higher ideal—the inner heart-worship which, he desired, might be the religion of the future. One more illustration of the mind of Jesus. On that other most important occasion, when he presented the remarkable allegory regarding the good who were to be blessed, and the wicked who were to be accursed—the allegory of the goats and the sheep—what was it that he specified as causing the distinction between the two? Was it any point of doctrine? Was it any question of belief in him as the Deity, or in his coming act of atonement? Not in the least degree. On the contrary, all that is specified by him as comprehending the difference between the wicked and the good is, that the wicked neglected their poorer fellow-beings—worked for selfish ends, and not for their fellow humanity; while the good are shown working for the benefit of their fellow-creatures. That is the cause of the division—the good on one side and the wicked on the other. It is not on account of such doctrine as my friend is advancing, but entirely on account of that grand religion of Humanity, which I maintain is of Divine Origin, and will be eternal.

If we take the religion put forward by my friend, and if it should be discovered at any future time that the whole of that Book upon which he relies—the whole of those Gospels—were a concoction of dishonest men, where would be his system of theology? But even supposing that it were discovered that those Gospels were a concoction and not historically true, still this Divine religion to which I am alluding—the religion of active goodness, the religion of doing to others as we would have others do to us—would stand its ground, showing that it is based on God's eternal laws, and not on the mere authority of any printed volume.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman and respected hearers: I am sorry that I cannot compliment my friend, either on his powers of argumentation, or upon his ingenuousness. In the first place he appears to have wasted both his first speech tonight, and his last speech on the last occasion, on matters altogether irrelevant to the question.

Now, in regard to John's Gospel, I was upon that matter on Wednesday night, and my friend did not assail
the argument; but on this, the last night of the debate, having refreshed his memory with what I cannot but term stale arguments against John's Gospel, he enters upon a kind of guerilla warfare, picking off a straggler here and there, for the purpose of detaching me from the main object of my argument.

As to his definition of Christianity, my friend distinctly stated that he believed in the Divine Origin of Christianity, leaving cut the Divinity of Christ and the Atonement. If that is not a denial, and if it does not place upon me the responsibility of proving that these are essential parts of Christianity, then I must confess that I have yet to learn what reason does teach. I have yet to learn what the denial that certain things belong to something else, involves on the part of one who affirms they do belong to it. I shall not waste time on these matters, but shall pass on to other points of much greater moment.

Noticing the remark with which my friend began, I shall have to speak on this question of Evolution again, because he wasted the latter part of last evening's time upon it, and has also taken up part of to-night. I am sorry to have again to say that my friend does not appear to be fully read on these matters, and evidently shows that he is not quite competent to speak with "authority" upon them? He has to-night stated that the latest science teaches that the theory of Evolution, necessarily leads to the acceptance of a Deity. Now, I have to draw issue here, and to assert that Herbert Spencer, the highest exponent of the theory of Evolution, affirms, that this theory drives the very idea of a Deity out of the Universe—"that God is unknowable, and Creation unthinkable." My friend is evidently too "credulous" when he reads from a falsely-called "Reverend," who asserts what he has read. If my friend would read more generally, and not give us mere scraps, we should then have a greater body of truth. In regard to the waste of time on Thursday night, and the eulogy pronounced upon this theory of eternal progression from little germs, which advanced onward to man, and that contains future glories that are now hardly imaginable, it appears to me that when my friend looks at this matter fairly, and allows unbiased reason to have her way, he must be convinced—and probably a blush will suffuse his face that he has not seen it sooner—that he has been ignoring his own true reason. My friend, in stating that there has been eternal progression without any break, shows that he has not sufficiently considered facts which geology reveals—and when I use those expressions, I do so because I desire to be candid. I do not wish to pass reflections upon my friend; but when he comes forward as the assailant of Christianity, and presumes to challenge right and left, I say his erudition, his general information, must bear scrutiny; and I affirm, that when he states there has been eternal progression, steady and continuous development from lower to higher forms, he manifests an apparent ignorance of facts, which is culpable in a person occupying such a position as that which he has taken. If we take the Paleozoic or primary period of the world's formation, we find certain organizations during that period; but when we step from that to the mesozoic or secondary period, what do we find? Why, we find something that would make a person stepping from the one to the other feel that, like Rip Van Winkle, he had been sleeping one hundred years, so great and remarkable is the change that has taken place. In the paleozoic age we find nothing at all like what we see in the mesozoic age. In the mesozoic age, instead of finding dwarfed animals—as would be the case if my friend's theory of steady and continuous progression were correct—we find monstrous reptiles, some of which were no less than 20 feet high. I give you as my authority Professor Dawson, in his work on the "History of the Earth and Man," and I believe his statements are unchallengeable. There is the cetosaurus, or "Whale-Laurian," supposed at one time to have been an immense aquatic creature; but since demonstrated by scientists to be something like the hippopotamus, living in water and on land, and subsisting on herbs. It was more than fifty feet long, and ten feet high. And I ask: If there has not been this steady progression in size, but this tremendous leap from the smaller forms of the paleozoic to the monsters of the mesozoic, and then back from these to the smaller forms of the Neozoic or tertiary, how can my friend's theory hold water? When these facts are borne in mind, we see that between those ages, there are chasms that cannot be crossed, and as far as at present appears, it is utterly impossible for them to be.

But more, I say that this theory does violence to reason, because Spencer and others affirm, that all dungs have come from inert matter—this speck of jelly being a more advanced development. But until we see a stone before our eyes becoming an organised being, there is not the slightest reason for supposing that inert, lifeless matter, can become a living organisation. I challenge the world to find anything that caps the absurd so much as the assertion that the character of the Lord Jesus Christ—which you have heard my friend eulogise in such glowing terms to-night—has, through this steady progression in harmony with irreversible law, such as he has attempted to describe, arisen from a little particle of inert lifeless matter—that all those delightful teachings, those pure moral sentiments, found in the Gospels, have really been developed from lifeless matter. And yet, while we are required to believe this, we are not told how this immense chasm, between this small beginning and transcendent ending, has been bridged! I say that when my friend professes to be rational, and yet holds views such as these, it shocks my sense of right to hear him make such a profession.

Further, if we take this idea of progress and view it in the light of the history of man, where is the evidence? He said, on Lyell's authority, that man has existed for 250,000 years. I have only to say in regard to Lyell's
hypotheses—for they are but such—that they are not worthy of much reliance, inasmuch as later science has shown that his statements as to deposits in rivers, &c., were thousands of years in error. But if we admit that man has been on the earth 250,000 years, we should expect, according to my friend's theory, that the remains of the first man found would be of a very low type. Yet what is the case? The brain of the earliest found man is fully equal in size to the brain of man in the present day. If you go back to ancient times, and ask where is this progression—is it in physical man?—you find that the men in ancient times were equal in stature, if not greater, than at the present time; or if it is in the intellectual sphere of man's being, you find that the ancients were equally subtle with the men of these days. Specimens of their eloquence, and of their reasoning, have each been handed down to us, and can hardly be surpassed. And, moreover, this monstrous theory of Evolution held by my friend, instead of being a modern discovery, is simply a resuscitation of a theory held by the ancients, and found in the earliest poetry and philosophy, when people were not only not critical, but were in a state of childhood and infancy. I affirm—and I ask my friend to contradict it if he can—that this theory of Evolution as at present held, is found in the earliest poetry and philosophy of those ancient heathens, and thus, instead of being an original discovery of the present day, it is but a resuscitation—as are all those theories that oppose Christianity—of old ideas long since exploded.

Now let me pass on to this matter of the genealogies. My friend made a great deal of the point that there are only 32 names in Matthew—admitting the four that should be supplied from the Old Testament—whereas there are 42 in the genealogy by Luke; and he pointed out that it was something like a man living 100 or 450 years ago, marrying a woman living in the present day. Let me say that I am indebted to my friend for his emphasis on this point; and let me affirm also that when every objection that can be urged against the Bible, and Christianity, is fairly examined, it amazes me how that objection is turned into one of the strongest possible proofs that mankind could conceive, of the truthfulness of that revelation. I affirm that the genealogy of Matthew covers the same number of years as that of Luke, and I invite my friend to attempt to controvert it. I do not know who may have written on this matter; but I like to obtain when possible, information at first hand, and as my friend emphasised this point, I have taken the trouble to go through the historical record of the Kings.

Let me premise that royal families are subject to greater vicissitudes than private families; and that the list of the royal family given by Matthew would therefore be more subject to changes than the private family recorded by Luke. If I were to say that between the persons named in Matthew, there were much longer periods—even a generation or two in some cases—than those named by Luke; unless I could give proof of my assertion, you would think it a hard case indeed which needed to rest upon such a supposition. Now it is actually the case that there are these long intervals. For instance, in connection with the history in the Book of Kings; if we take David and Solomon, we find that David's oldest son did not reign, but Solomon, one of the youngest. Solo-man was a young man when he began to reign, and was probably born when David was about fifty years old, and as David, after a reign of forty years, died at the age of seventy, Solomon would thus be twenty years of age when he began to reign. Now here, in the case of the first two names in the descent, those of David and Solomon, we have a gap where we can save twenty-five years which will go towards filling up the apparent difference between the two genealogies. I have not time to present all the evidence I have prepared, but I may mention in connection with King Jehoram, that the fact is stated in Chronicles ii. 21, 17, that his family were all slain with the exception of his youngest child, and this youngest child succeeded him on the throne. We find further, that as the children of Ahaziah were all slain, except the youngest, by Athaliah, his wicked and cruel mother, another irregularity occurred in the succession, and consequently in the genealogy also. There was an interregnum of a few years, and then Joash, the son of Ahaziah, who had been hidden six years, and was then seven years of age, began to reign, and continued forty years. Another thing to be noticed is, that when Jehoiachim was taken captive to Babylon he was thirty-six years of age, and was thirty-seven years in prison at Babylon. At the end of that time he was taken out; his prison clothes taken off, and he was exalted above the other subject kings in Babylon. At that time he was seventy-three years of age, Salathiel, his son, was born in Babylon and doubtless after that captivity was over, and thus we have another fifty years more gained towards filling up this gap. I have gone carefully through the chronological history of every one of those kings, and leaving out the fourteen names from Salathiel down to Joseph, regarding whom we have no chronological data, I have found that Matthew's genealogy covers 1,035 years, reckoning the generation at twenty-five years; while Luke's genealogy, reckoning the generation at the same rate of twenty-five years, covers 1,050 years. Thus we have a discrepancy of only fifteen years. If we had the chronological data of those other fourteen names, do you not think we could till up that gap? I affirm that this is simple fact, and can be supported beyond all cavil. Under these circumstances it was utterly impossible for Matthew to have manufactured that genealogy, and it, becomes one of the strongest evidences of the authenticity of the book he has written. Those apparent contradictions, when examined, prove that the man who wrote the gospel was none other than a man of truth, a man who knew of what he spoke, a man who may be relied upon. But another
argument is to be drawn from this fact. I say that Matthew's list having been based on a genealogical table of the Kings, which, on comparison with the historical record, is proved to be true, and as those genealogies were all lost at the destruction of Jerusalem, and have never since been recovered, the fact that Matthew wrote that genealogy proves that he had the record before him. As those records were lost at the destruction of Jerusalem he must have written before that event, and must have consequently written within forty years of the death of our Blessed Lord. We thus see how strong is the confirmation which this genealogy gives to the Gospel of Matthew. I will now pass on to my affirmative argument.

Mr. Bright has asserted that I have not attempted to show the Divine character of Jesus in any sense, and I am reminded of the remark, that I must prove the Divine origin of the Scriptures before I can prove my proposition. Now, if I prove, as I have done, that those Scriptures existed hundreds of years before the events narrated in the Gospel took place, and that the predictions, which could not have been uttered by man, were literally fulfilled, does not that prove that the predictions were given under "Divine direction? If my friend is a Rationalist, using his reason, surely I need not emphasize that any more. But he says, even if all those prophecies were admitted, they would not prove the Divine origin of Christ, and I suppose he would say in the same way with regard to miracles, that if admitted, they would not prove the Divine origin of Christianity. Now let me ask: If those prophecies were uttered hundreds of years before the event, and were all literally fulfilled, saying that a certain person was to come, that he was to be of Divine nature but in human form, and that he was to atone for man; and if that person comes, and works miracles in attestation of his claims, such as no mortal could work—can the human mind demand stronger proof than this? I ask my friend, if he does demand stronger proof, to tell us of what kind it is.

MR. BRIGHT: My friend asked if it were not an essential part of his mission in this debate to prove Christianity from the documents. It is no doubt an essential part of what he has to prove, but it is not the most important part. He has further to prove that those documents are of Divine origin. Suppose that instead of discussing with my friend I were discussing with a Buddhist; and that this Buddhist asserted to me that Buddha was divinely born of Maia—that being a virgin she had that child, Buddha, who was the man-God. I ask how he knows that. He quotes from his sacred books in proof of his assertion. Would I not then come with this further demand: You say that the texts you quote are of remote antiquity. I do not doubt it, because it is generally from remote antiquity that such stories emanate. But now will you please demonstrate that those texts are of Divine origin? I say that is the crux my friend has to tackle. The thing he has to do after, or before, proving Christianity from the documents, is to prove the Divine origin of those documents.

My friend affirmed that Evolution left no opening, as it were, for a Deity, and he asserted that scientific men denied the existence of any divine power.

MR. GREEN: I only cited Herbert Spencer.

MR. BRIGHT: He referred especially to Herbert Spencer. Now Herbert Spencer—I recollect as well as if I were reading the book now—uses in more than one place the words, "The Power that controls the Universe."

MR. GREEN: What is it?

MR. BRIGHT: Herbert Spencer does not pretend to say what that power is, and to do that, I think, will take a far greater man than my friend on the platform. With regard to the question of Evolution, if it were part of the theme we have met to debate, I would be happy to discuss it with my friend, and try to prove to him that, rationally regarded, it does not for one moment exclude the Divine Mind from the Universe—nay, rather that it insists upon a Divine Mind not inspiring the world 2,000 years ago or more, and then retiring, but a Divine Mind inspiring the world now, still regulating the world in all directions, and controlling its affairs—a living God, not a God of the remote past. My friend spoke of lifeless matter. Evolution would never sanction the use of the term. There is no such thing as lifeless matter. We do not know, as all Evolutionists say, the promise and potentiality of matter. We do not know what each atom of matter contains. The Evolutionist sees reason to believe that every atom of matter is inspired by the Divine mind—that God is universal and infinite. Let those who believe that God is not infinite and not universal conceive of an atom of matter without His power in it. If it be true, as asserted in the Christian Scriptures, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father—if it be true, as Paul declares, that God is beyond all, above all, and in all, surely there cannot be an atom of matter anywhere that is not a manifestation of God.

I pass over what my friend said with regard to Lyell's hypothesis. I believe that book of Lyell's—the Antiquity of Man—can very well take care of itself. It has been criticised over and over again, and numbers have endeavoured to show that it is not based on sound scientific knowledge, but they have failed most notably. And even those who argued that Lyell was wrong, have never for one moment pretended to assert that Genesis was right.

I come now once more to this question of the genealogy of Jesus. It has been re-introduced by my friend; and I think I might almost leave it to my audience to judge whether in going to the Scriptures to put this and that passage together, and to make this Mosaic work in order to discover what is true religion, and in avoiding
all reference to what I spoke of as that which Jesus himself declared was necessary to salvation, my friend does not stand self-condemned. If we have to go and piece this and that together—if we have to obliterate the name of Joseph in the genealogy and insert that of Mary—if we have laboriously to make up for largo spaces of missing time—and all this in order to justify the truth of a particular doctrine—surely it is more in accordance with rational Christianity to go to the fountain-head and see what Jesus himself affirmed when asked what was necessary in order to obtain eternal life. With respect to the genealogy, my friend acknowledges that there are only four names which can be introduced into Matthew's account in order to fill the large gap between it and the genealogy by Luke. Now, I do not want to charge my friend with what he did not hesitate to charge against me, namely, a lack of ingenuousness but I do not think he should have calmly stated the other evening that if the names in the Old Testament were introduced into the genealogy by Matthew, they would make up for this alarming gap of 400 or 450 years, without at the same time telling you that there were only four names that could be so introduced. However, my friend insists now there are four names to be introduced into the genealogy by Matthew for the period that elapsed between David and Joseph. If this be so, I would ask him to account for that verse in Matthew, which says that there are fourteen generations from David to the carrying into Babylon, and fourteen generations from the carrying into Babylon to the time of Jesus? If those four names are introduced, this statement of Matthew's is wrong, and there are more than fourteen generations. But if the four names are not introduced, we have the lapse of time I have pointed out. But even with the introduction of those four names there is still this bungling process to be performed by which my friend endeavoured to show that one king lived to 70 years of age, and did not have a son until he was nearly dying, and so on.

I will now pass to what my friend said in answer to my demand that he would prove the Divine origin of the Scriptures, from which he quoted. He pointed out that there were predictions concerning them, and he alleged that those predictions could not have been uttered by man. Now, I ask again how does my friend know what can be uttered by man, and what cannot? I have here a volume, entitled "Predictions Realised in Modern Times," published in London. This volume is filled with latter-day prophecies, very many of them of a most extraordinary character, a large part of which were verified in quite as strange a fashion as that verification which my friend desires you to believe in. Therefore, even supposing that there were such predictions, they do not prove that they required more than the human mind, assisted by that inspiration which I conceive to be universal—that inspiration which is operating now as in the past. We have no proof that the human mind is incapable of originating those predictions.

Then my attention is directed towards miracles. Well, I assert that the miracles of antiquity—those of my friend the same as others—must stand or fall entirely by the rules of historical evidence. For the proof of a miracle, we require testimony of a most overwhelming kind. You have seen in our own day what sort of testimony is required to prove a miracle. You know the reception which the alleged miracles of one Christian Church encounter from the rest of Christendom. I have read accounts of some of these miracles—especially of two in France, one being the alleged apparition of the Virgin Mary in the mountains of La Salette—and I must say that if anything could prove so remarkable and marvellous an occurrence, the proofs contained in a book published on the subject seem to be altogether irreparable. The examiners into the proofs on that occasion were not priests of the Roman Catholic Church itself, but included a vast number of free thinking magistrates; and the testimony they elicited from the two children, examined apart, and from the various persons living in the neighbourhood, was of the most astonishing character. If alleged miracles can be proved by historical testimony, then it seems to me that these apparitions would stand a better chance of being demonstrated than any similar incident in the remote past. For if you examine the Scripture miracles as historians, what evidence really have you? Have you the testimony of any one person upon whom you can place your finger as a reliable historical character? Can you point to one of them as you can point to Josephus, and say where he was born, give the names of his parents, give an account of his life? Not one witness of those miracles can be produced who stands in the same relation to them as Josephus stands to that period of history. I say, therefore, that with regard to the testimony of miracles historical methods have to be pursued, and before you can argue from them that any book is of Divine Origin, you have to bring historical tests to bear, and discover if you can whether those miracles really occurred; and when you have so substantiated them, you have further to learn whether they are of a character demanding Divine intercession, or whether they are merely due to unexplained laws in nature.

Mr. Green: My friend tells us no one knows what is in matter, or what matter is; yet strange to say, we have this paradox: while nobody can tell what is in matter, he affirms that a part of the Divine mind is in every particle of matter, and that there is no such thing as dead matter; although our senses would, say that if "inert" means "lifeless," there is an immense amount of lifeless matter indeed. I leave the paradox with him.

With regard to the saying of the young Ruler to Christ, "Good Master," &c, it is not needful that I should trouble about it, as I think no one using his reason, is at all likely to misunderstand it. As to modern prophecies, I can only say: Produce them; show that they have the same credentials as those we say are recorded in this...
Book, and then they will be worthy of consideration. Further, in regard to the miracles said to be performed among the Roman Catholics, I am not here at all to question anything about the Roman Catholics, or any other body; but I say: Let us have evidence such as can be presented in favour of the miracles of the New Testament, and whether my friend will believe them or not, I will believe them; for if they have the same kind of evidence, they must be true.

Now, let me resume my affirmative argument. I may say that I am sorry I have not had time to go all through the predictions; I can only now simply state that they have reference to the whole of our Saviour's life, His sufferings, His death as an atonement for man, His resurrection, and His ascension. All these things are predicted, and they were literally fulfilled. But there is one special prediction in the 9th chapter of the Book of Daniel worthy of special and emphatic notice, and which I regret I cannot now dwell upon, where the very year of our Lord's coming is predicted; and I affirm, that according to the testimony of Josephus, he came exactly at that time when those seventy weeks of years were fulfilled. I ask you to study that prophecy for yourselves, as time fails me to more fully refer to it to-night. Not only were the seventy weeks of years fulfilled, but also the very things that were predicted would be accomplished when he came. Again I repeat, that as it is beyond the power of the human mind to foresee events hundreds of years before they take place, and especially such a long concatenation of events, beyond all doubt, the book in which those predictions are found, proves itself to be from the Divine Mind, and from no other source.

Now, taking those things as I have stated, and passing on to this question of miracles which my friend has referred to—thereby rather anticipating my argument—I would just say that he takes the position that all miracles are impossible, inasmuch as it is more likely that all testimony would be false, than that a miracle would be true; and in this he follows in the path of that "modern man of God," David Hume—whom he characterises by that expression. Let me call attention to this: My friend denies the possibility of any testimony to prove a miracle. I really must again bring up that Eastern prince, and the formation of ice. My friend affirms that miracles are against all human experience. That Eastern prince was told by men from colder climates that water, under certain atmospheric influences, congealed. The Prince exclaimed: "I will not believe it! It is contrary to all human experience." He is told: "Here are men prepared to testify." They say: "We come from that country; we have seen it with our eyes; we have handled the congealed water with our hands; we know it to be true." "But, sirs," he would say, "I believe it is more likely that your testimony should be false than that a miracle should be true; and, therefore, as this which you tell me is contrary to all human experience (meaning simply his experience), I refuse to believe it." And David Hume's and my friend Mr. Bright's statement, that "It is contrary to all human experience," simply means that it is contrary to the experience of David Hume and Mr. Charles Bright, and those who think it well to regard the matter in that light.

I wish to say in regard to miracles, that of course they are uncommon. I would define a miracle as an event whose only antecedent is the Divine will and power. Miracles, in their very nature, must be uncommon. "We have miracles really all around us—in the sense of things the modus operandi of which we do not understand—in fact myriads of miracles—but because they are common, and are in harmony with certain supposed laws by which they are governed, we do not style them miracles. We therefore say, that miraculous interventions of the Divine Being—acts simply resulting from His will—must in their very nature be uncommon. Hence, when any friend asks: "Why are there not miracles now equally as in the past?" I reply: They would no longer be miracles if they were as common as you would like them to be. But I ask: Are not miracles possible? Is there a human being in the world who can venture to say they are impossible? Probably my friend will, because he appears to be a Pantheist, according to his last statement about every particle of matter having in it a part of the Divine essence, and Pantheism is simply Atheism, the denial of the existence of a personal Deity; therefore, if my friend is to be understood to be an Atheist in this sense, as his words would seem to imply, he of course will say that miracles are impossible. The only question for us to consider is: May miracles be reasonably expected in the presentation of a new religion which has imperative claims upon the attention of man, and the rejection of which involves sorrow to those so rejecting it? Certainly, if God chose to impose a religion upon man, the rejection of which must be calamitous to him, he must, in all reason, make the evidences by which that religion presents itself to man, so clear and convincing, that no reasonable and impartial man could reject them. Hence, we think rationally, that miracles must have been wrought to attest the Divine origin of the religion of Jesus. Now, we need only ask: Have we testimony that miracles were wrought, and was that testimony reliable? Passing that by for the moment, I wish you to notice the miracle of our Saviour's own life and teachings; and I say that in this itself, we have a greater miracle than anything that can be found throughout the world. On this point let me read from Rousseau, one of those who take a position similar to that of my friend: "Is it possible," says he, "that the sacred personage whose history it (the Bible) contains should be himself a mere man? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his instructions! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what fitness in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where
In every other life," says Napoleon, "than that of Christ, what imperfections, what inconsistencies! Where is the character that no opposition is sufficient to overwhelm? Where is the individual whose conduct is never modified by event or circumstance, who never yields to the influences of the time, never accommodates himself to manners or passions that he cannot prevail to alter?

"I defy you to cite another life like that of Christ, exempt from the least vacillation of this kind, untainted by any such blots or wavering purpose. From first to last he is the same always the same, majestic and simple, infinitely severe, and infinitely gentle; throughout a life that may be said to have been lived under the public eye, Jesus never gives occasion to find fault; the prudence of his conduct compels our admiration by its union of force and gentleness. Alike in speech and action, Jesus is enlightened, consistent, and calm. Sublimity is said to be an attribute of Divinity; what name, then, shall we give to him in whose character were united every attribute of the sublime?

"I know men, and I tell you that Jesus is not a man.

"In Lyceurgus, Numa, Confucius, and Mahomet, I see only legislators who, having attained to the first place in the State, have sought the best solution of the social problem; I see nothing in them that reveals divinity; they themselves have not pitched their claims so high.

"It is evident that it is only posterity that has deified the world's first despots,—heroes, the princes of the nations, and the founders of the earliest republics. For my part, I see in the heathen gods and those great men, beings of the same nature with myself. Their intelligence, after all, differs from mine only in form. They burst upon the world, played a great part in their day, as I have done in mine. Nothing in them proclaims divinity; on the contrary, I see numerous resemblances between them and me. Common weaknesses and errors. Their faculties are such as I myself possess; there is no difference save in the use that we have made of them, in accordance with the different ends we have in view, our different countries and the circumstances of our times.

"It is not so with Christ. Everything in Him amazes me; His spirit outreaches mine, and His will confounds me. Comparison is impossible between Him and any other being in the world. He is truly a being by himself; His ideas and His sentiments, the truth that He announces, His manner of convincing, are all beyond humanity and the natural order of things.

"His birth, and the story of His life, the profoundness of His doctrine which overturns all difficulties and is their most complete solution, His Gospel, the singularity of this mysterious being, His appearance, His empire, His progress through all countries and kingdoms,—all this is to me a prodigy, an unfathomable mystery, which plunges me into a reverie from which there is no escape, a mystery which is ever within my view, a permanent mystery which I can neither deny nor explain.

"I see nothing here of man. Near as I approach, closely as I may examine, all remains above my comprehension, great with a greatness that crushes me; it is in vain that I reflect—all remains unaccountable."

Sentiments de Napoleon sur le Christianisme par le Chevalier De Beauperne, quoted from Hanna's Life of Christ, p. 254—256.

"Above all, the most valuable part of the effect on the character which Christianity has produced by holding up in a divine person a standard of excellence and a model for imitation, is available even to the absolute unbeliever, and can never be lost to humanity. It is the God incarnate, more than the God of the Jew or nature, who, being idealised, has taken so great and salutary a hold on the human mind. And whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left, a unique figure, not more unlike all his predecessors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of his followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which he is reported to have wrought. But, who, among his disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospel? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; as certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort. Still less the early Christian writers, in whom nothing is more evident than that the good which was in them was all derived from the higher source."
If, then, neither the fishermen of Galilee, nor St. Paul nor the early Christians, were capable of inventing these early records, whence did they come?

If my friend can explain a life like that on any other basis than that given in the Scriptures, we shall thank him for the explanation.

MR. BRIGHT: I am certainly rather surprised that my friend, after complaining of the pressure of time, should go on quoting those long opinions of other people regarding the character of Jesus. If it comes to a question of opinion on the Deity of Jesus, against Rosseau's I would be inclined to stake that of Voltaire, against Napoleon I would pit Frederick of Prussia, and as to the opinion of John Stewart Mill, I, for one, cordially say "Amen" to it. But my friend, although finding time to read these long extracts, declined to answer my arguments respecting the teachings of Jesus when addressed as "Good Master." Surely that quotation of mine deserved a word of comment. It must be tolerably palpable that there, at all events, Jesus himself seems in so many works to rebuke anyone who would attempt to apply to him the epithet which he says is only to be applied to God. Surely that must be the signification of the quotation if we take the fair meaning of it. I would again ask my friend if he will condescend to answer those arguments which in the early part of the debate he said he was waiting for? I ask him too, if he can give any explanation of that heart-rending exclamation which came from the lips of the crucified Jesus, and manifested, if anything could, the depths of human suffering:—"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Will he explain in accordance with his theory of the Deity of Jesus, whence that cry arose, and to whom it was addressed? I call attention again to the fact that we are now away from our proper theme. We are debating the Biblical origin of Christianity which is not, in this discussion, denied; but waiving that, I ask: What is his explanation of this heart-rending appeal, as well as of the quotations to which he has avoided reference.

Moreover, on the question of the fulfilment of predictions being necessary to show the Divine origin of any Scripture, I would refer to the prediction stated to be made by Jesus, that he would remain three days and three nights in the grave; whereas, according to the account itself, he was only one day and two nights therein. I would ask my friend to explain the failure of that prediction, if by the success of predictions we are to judge whether or not Christianity is of Divine origin. My friend misstated altogether the argument of Hume, and therefore, of course, the position I take up as endorsing the argument contained in Hume's celebrated essay. My friend stated that Hume asserted, and that I asserted with him—and I am greatly indebted to my friend for coupling the two names together—that it was more likely that all testimony was untrue than that miracles were true. Now, that is not at all the argument taken up by David Hume in connection with miracles. His assertion is that we only know of the natural—of what occurs in nature—by testimony, that we can only ground our opinion upon testimony, and, in stating "such is the course of nature," we mean that "such is the testimony of observed facts." Therefore, when any one person, or two or three persons, or even a hundred persons, come and tell us something opposed to the general testimony of observed facts, it is more likely that those men lie, or are mistaken, than that the testimony of the rest of the race should fail us. He contends, moreover, that when we get sufficient testimony to prove a miracle, as against the overwhelming testimony by which we prove natural events, then the miracle ceases to be a miracle, and becomes a natural event. It is proved by such a mass of testimony that it is no longer a miracle, but takes its place in nature, and is discovered to have been before but an unexplained and misapprehended fact of nature. Thus, in the past, we have those who were ignorant of the way in which eclipses were produced, regarding them as miracles. Nor can we be astonished that when the ancients saw the face of the sun or moon darkened, they should have supposed, with the little knowledge they then had of the Universe, that some offended Deity was hiding the face of the luminary, and that it was a miraculous portent? So the rainbow was also regarded as a miraculous portent, as were innumerable phenomena we now know to be natural. The argument of Hume is, that if it comes to pass, through frequent occurrence, that any wonderful thing regarded in the past as a miracle is recognized as a fact through sufficient testimony, then we come to know that it was not miraculous, but a natural event. That is precisely what is now occurring with many of the incidents that were believed in Bible times to be miraculous. Why, Materialists like Lewes, Clifford, and H. G. Atkinson, are admitting that there are many strange occult phenomena in mesmerism and clairvoyance, before deemed either untrue or miraculous, but regarding which, such a sufficiency of evidence is being obtained as to show that they have to take their place in a domain of nature not previously investigated. That is the view I take of many so-called miracles. The time will come—nay, it is rapidly approaching—when nearly all those marvels of the past will be seen to belong to a portion of nature not yet fully explored; but, if proved to be true, they will take their place as natural events, and will cease to be regarded as miraculous. Hume's statement remains unanswered and unanswerable, that when you get testimony sufficient to prove an apparent miracle it ceases to be a miracle, and is recognized as a natural event. That disposes altogether of our persistent friend, the Eastern prince.
operation? I do not presume to say; but I do say that we only know the Divine Power by his manifestations. It is what we see in nature that teaches us how God inspires and acts; and when we say that a thing is not possible, or that it is opposed to nature, we simply mean that God has not taught us that he acts in that way. He teaches us day by day the method of his action in nature. We bow to that teaching, and if we discover in the remote past any event that seems to fly in the face of observed facts, we await further evidence. We do not even rashly pronounce it impossible; because as the French philosopher Arago says: "Out of the sphere of mathematics it is presumptuous to use the word impossible." My friend thinks that occurrences happening in occult directions, such as the spheres of Mesmerism and Clairvoyance are impossible; but I simply say we know of God's action merely by the observed mode of that action. We investigate nature to discover what natural laws are; and when we speak of natural laws, we simply mean the way in which observed phenomena operate. We do not mean that there is some external lawgiver who fulminates those laws. By the law of gravitation is meant the mode in which bodies in space tend towards each other. By the law of evolution is meant the way in which matter gradually changes, unfolds, and develops. Thus when we speak of a law of nature we simply mean the way in which phenomena operate, and hence the way in which the Divine Mind causes them to operate. Therefore when we read of a fact in nature termed a miracle, and said to attest Divine power, we say that the Divine power is known only through nature, that the alleged occurrence is opposed to the observed method in which the Divine power operates, and that we do not see sufficient evidence to convince us that the miracle ever happened.

Moreover, we must not forget this: My friend in answer to my question why miracles did not happen now, said that if they happened frequently they would become common. All I can say is that they did happen frequently, if we can accept the testimony which proved satisfactory in those olden times. They were always happening, at the genesis of every nation. We find miracles at the commencement of the Greek history, and we have the miraculous preservation of Romulus and Remus at the foundation of the Roman nation. At the initiation of the Hindoo dispensation there is nothing but miracle. The Buddhist religion is all based on miracles. The same is the case with the Mahomedan. We find Mahomet having interviews with the angel Gabriel, and we have still, if we choose to believe it, Mahomet's coffin miraculously suspended between heaven and earth. Miracles in the olden times were almost as common as natural facts are now, and people were prepared as readily to believe in them.

My friend has twitted me with being a Pantheist. If I am a Pantheist, surely Paul, who said God is above all, beyond all, and in you all, must also have been a Pantheist. It seems to me that whatever may be true or false in religion, Pantheism must be true when it declares the infinitude of God, when it affirms that God is everywhere, that there is no escape from Him,—that He is universal. Whatever else may be true or false, to my mind that declaration of Pantheism must be true. But if it be true it does not follow that the love of God is incapable of making itself felt in response to the love of His human family; it does not put that love beyond our reach. I say we are still enabled to receive that love, and enabled to feel that we are nurtured within the arms of the Infinite. It is this very supremacy of law, this absence of miracles and magic that enables men who study nature to rely on the Divine Soul, to feel the utmost confidence in Him; to rest assured that no irresponsible power can cast us into eternal torment if we do not believe in one direction, and eternally favour us if we only believe in what seems to us to be incapable of proof. We know, as Paul said, that as a man sows so he shall reap; and are aware that we may rely on the Divine law in every direction. It is this very reliance on law that enables scientific men in our day to discern that even in morality and in sociology—that is, the science of society—we may still rely on law, and therein discern Divine principles at work, ensuring us that here too, precisely as we sow, so we shall reap, that just as we are enabled to act now, so we shall gain the bane or benefit of those actions in this world, and in all worlds beyond.

MR. GREEN: As my friend quotes the apostle Paul to contradict his (Mr. Bright's) own statement, I think I may very well leave the matter in its present position. In one breath he said that persons are condemned merely because they do not believe, and that they are saved merely because they believe; and in the next breath contradicted it by quoting Paul's words, that "as a man sows, so shall he reap," (which is the real teaching of the Gospel.) I think I may leave that matter to answer itself.

In connection with Pantheism, let me say that Paul was not writing of such as my friend Mr. Bright—good, upright, and moral a man as he may be—but writing of Christianity and of this Christian doctrine, that the Spirit of God dwells in the heart of every Christ-loving man who is sincerely seeking to do God's will; and therefore, "God is in you all," not in every human being, which is the sense in which my friend uses it. My friend says I misrepresented Hume. Well, I will come to that when I mention miracles again.

He asks me to favour him with an explanation of the passage "Good Master," and to give him the meaning of the exclamation "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me! He also refers to the Saviour not being three days and three nights in the grave. Some have said—I do not know if it be true—that my friend is of Jewish birth. (Hisses.) When I tell you that I would regard it as the highest honour on earth if I were a
descendant of Abraham, why do you act thus? There are a large number of Hebrew gentlemen on the platform, and they all well know that there are what are called Special Sabbaths—that is, days of rest—under the Jewish dispensation; and in the Gospel narrative it will be seen that that day was a "high day"—a special Sabbath—for which the day on which Jesus was put to death, was the preparation. Now, I have simply to call upon my friend to prove that that Sabbath day, on the day preceding which Christ was crucified, was the legal seventh-day Sabbath, and was not one of those special Sabbaths that are so often spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures. Then, in regard to that statement about "Good Master," Now, I have to put a question to my friend. Jesus said to the Jews: "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" I would put the same question to Mr. Bright. They replied, "The son of David." "How then," said Jesus, "did David call Him Lord?" I ask my friend to explain how the Messiah could be David's son, and yet David's Lord? Now, just as the Saviour presents His Divinity in that question, so He presents another thought in this expression "Why callest thou Me good?" That young man who came to Him looked upon Jesus merely as a man, and because evidently he was a self-righteous man, because he prided himself upon having observed the perfect law of God, the Saviour wanted to impress in that man's mind the fact that there was no earthly being good, that is, no merely human being; therefore Jesus, in speaking to this young ruler, who looked upon Him simply as a man, and saying "Why callest thou Me good?" really meant to impress upon him this fact: That no man on earth is good, and that consequently neither was he (the young man) good. The Saviour is not there speaking in the sense my friend would imply, but is seeking to impress on this young man the fact that there is no mortal on earth good; that goodness belongs only to the Divine Being, in its true and essential sense.

My friend asks why the expression: "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me!" was used? I reply, simply because of that which to my friend is so absurd—because Jesus was perfect man and yet perfect Deity, manifest in human form, and was dying in man's form and on man's behalf. It was because He was our substitute, dying on our behalf that the Divine Being, looking upon Him as such, and as having resting upon Him the accumulated sins of the world, did not give Him aid in that hour of His extremity; therefore, as He was in man's form, so, in our stead, bereft of all support, as a culprit dying on account of wrong, but at the same time realising His own close relationship to God, He exclaimed, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me," and with a broken heart He gave up His Spirit. That appears to be the reason why.

Now, in regard to miracles, my friend says I misrepresented Hume. Well, I am quite content to leave my representation as it stands, and when the debate is published you will see that I have just stated, only in other words, what my friend asserted. He says, speaking of phenomena unexplainable to the ancients, but since found to be in harmony with natural laws, these were once miracles, but are not now." But suppose that a man in that day came and said: "You think these are all miracles, but I am able to explain the whole phenomena in connection with these matters, and to show you they are simply the working out of the laws of the Divine Being." Would not that person show a knowledge beyond and above all that portion of the race then living, which would prove that he had a revelation, that must have come, not from human consciousness, but from the Divine Being, and would not that have been a miracle? But what do we see in connection with the miracles of Christ? If we have dead men raised to life, if we have disease dispersed at a word—the blind made to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak—done simply by the power within Himself—I ask my friend to deal with those matters and show how they can be resolved into operations merely of certain laws? And even when he does this, I shall simply affirm that it only proves that the Lord Jesus Christ had a knowledge of those laws which no mortal could have, and it therefore truly demonstrates His Deity.

Let me ask you to notice that all His miracles were cognisable by the senses, done in the open day, and in the presence of large numbers of witnesses, and that the Gospel writers who give the accounts of them, saw the miracles with their own eyes. If you can find miracles wrought in these days which can present such reliable testimony, I say by all means believe them. It is a peculiar characteristic of Christ's miracles that they displayed no vindictiveness, and that they were purely works of benevolence. See Him raising the daughter of Jairus to life; giving back a living son to the widowed and previously sorrowing mother; behold Lazarus given back to his distressed and dejected sisters; see Him feeding thousands with bread miraculously increased. These are all deeds of a character indicating that the Being who manifested this power was animated, not by "human" sympathy merely, but by a spirit such as was never before seen in man.

Then take the miracle of the resurrection, predicted by the Saviour himself before it took place. His death he predicted, and, as my friend himself has said, his resurrection also. The disciples, notwithstanding that they had been told over and over again, did not expect it; and when they heard of it, they would not believe it, except upon ocular demonstration, and those men were only convinced when that demonstration was given. It was given to eleven witnesses, and afterwards to five hundred, more than half of whom, Paul, says, were alive when he wrote that letter to the Corinthian Church, which even Strauss admits was written within thirty years of our Saviour's death. I ask how can these things be untrue? Then, if we take into account the character of those men who were witnesses—fishermen whose keen eyes were well suited to detect such things—men who for three
and a half years had been companions of the Lord. They saw him after he was risen: they heard him speak; they saw him eat, and ate with him; touched his body; saw the prints of the nails and the spear; and, I ask, Could these men have been mistaken in connection with such matters as these? It may be said they might have been deceivers, or they might have been deceived. What I have stated proves that they could not have been deceived; deception was utterly impossible, because of the vast number of witnesses, which are given as five hundred and twelve, Paul himself being included. That those witnesses were not deceivers is, I think, very clear from the fact that there could be no reason whatever for any deception on their part. The Gospel narrative is such that it could never have been conceived by them. A spiritual system such as that developed in Christianity was beyond the capacities of any men such as those. I have pointed out by the quotations from Mill, and others, that those men were incapable of giving expression to a system so unique, so complicated, and yet so simple and perfect in all its parts, as the Christian system. Then, friends, let me ask you further, what object could those men have in thus acting as impostors? They were disinterested, were they not? What was it that they gained? What could men like these have for their object in propounding a morality such as that in the New Testament record? Was it to make money? Priests in these days oftentimes play upon the credulity of people in order to get money; but in this blessed volume the very opposite of that spirit is seen. Had they no self-interest whatever? Yes, they had; but it was an interest not of the pocket, but of the soul, referring not to time but to eternity, and to secure their interest they were terribly in earnest. Animated by a purified spirit, they followed Christ in all his teachings, and in thus carrying out all that he had pointed out to them, they realised that their highest spiritual interests were secured. They had now found that after which the ardent souls of the whole human race had been yearning for century after century, and which they had been privileged now to see. I say that, when we look at all these things, and consider that those men died in attestation of their testimony, the evidence is overwhelming.

My friend asked the other evening what proof it was of the veracity of those writers that they were willing to die for their Master, and said that many persons had been found who were willing to die for their noble masters, and that this case of the Apostles was one of a similar nature. Now, it is true the Apostles were willing to lay down their lives for Christ in the manner suggested, for we find that on one occasion, when Jesus was going to Jerusalem into the midst of the enemies who were thirsting for his life, Thomas said to the other disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with him." But an the present instance there is no parallel between the cases. Those men died, not for their Master, but in attestation of the truth of the things which they asserted in regard to him, and of which they declared they had actual knowledge. They died, if my friend's theory is true, in favour of what they knew to be a lie; and I say, that for men to give up all that is dear to humanity, everything that is regarded as pleasant and agreeable, and to their worldly interests, and to die for what they knew to be untrue, is a greater miracle than the world has yet been called upon to receive.

MR. BRIGHT: It would seem to me just as impossible as I believe it seems to my friend, that any man should yield up his life for what he knew to be a lie. Men do not die on be-half of known lies. The Apostles died for their faith in a glorious commander. Jesus was a peaceful and willing sacrifice,—one who died for them and all mankind in one sense—the sense in which all great martyrs die, in order that by their death they may show the better way—the way of righteousness, to the race. I say there is nothing astonishing in the fact of the apostles being willing to die for their faith in a man like that. But does their death for him prove that he was the Deity? Is there an atom of proof in that death of theirs of the truth of my friend's theology? On the contrary, must we not be surprised to see that men should, like the Apostles, live throughout a considerable time with a man who is declared to be the Deity, and that yet they should not know it? If they did not know it, living through a portion of his life with him, can we possibly know it on written testimony? If they did not know it, and were so astonished when they heard of his resurrection (the very event that might be anticipated of a Deity) that they took it at first to be an "idle tale," can those who now elect to think clearly on the subject be blamed if they disbelieve this theology to be true? Those men might die on behalf of the spiritual hero, and the system they wished to uphold. I believe thoroughly that they were completely earnest men, but earnest men are not infallible; they are not always capable of distinguishing precisely truth from error.

My friend, at the commencement of his last address, took an opportunity of stating that I was of Jewish descent. Well, I do not know for what purpose he introduced that statement. I am sure he was communicating very little news to the majority of the people of Dunedin. It is a fact I have never attempted to conceal. I am not ashamed of being descended from the same race as Jesus of Nazareth, and if my friend thinks that is a taunt he used towards me—and I cannot see any other reason—(Cries of "No.") Then why was it needlessly introduced? I have endeavoured throughout this debate not even to make use of a satirical observation at the expense of my friend. When, the other evening, I indulged in a slight joke about men and monkeys, I made it at my own expense rather than at the expense of my friend. I have at every stage of this debate stopped myself when on the eve of making use of a satirical or severe observation against my friend. Even when I might have pressed home what seemed a tremendous advantage in argument I did not do so. For instance, on the evening when I spoke of the genealogies, I might, if I had chosen, have driven home a very strong case, but I declined to do so. And this
is the first time I have had to seriously complain of my friend introducing any observation into this debate which I think he should have avoided. With regard to what he advanced touching a special Sabbath, all I can say is that, being of Jewish descent, I do not know of it. I am not aware of it, or of the alleged preparation for this special Sabbath. And I say again that seeing this system of theology has to be upheld by these continual changes in the meaning of words, by this perpetual introduction of new interpretations of obvious expressions, we should rather, in order to get a rational explanation of what Christianity should be, go to the mind of Jesus himself. Let us refer to his direct teachings when he was asked: "What am I to do to obtain eternal life?" and when he set before that "anxious enquirer" the formula he deemed necessary in order to secure that eternal life the enquirer was seeking.

The whole of this question, it seems to me, is based upon the one important fact: Do we or do we not receive every word in a certain book as the infallible word of God? Do we regard it as a book upon which we are not to exercise our reason, but before which we are to bow down and worship? And if it be a revelation of God to such an extent, then I say it is unlike all the rest of His works. It is not made so clear and plain that a rational mind can understand it, the same as a rational mind is capable of understanding the other works of nature. Surely if it were such a revelation, every word in it ought to have had supernatural care accorded it. Every time it was translated from one tongue into another we have a right to expect that it would have received the same Divine superintendence. Yet we find this book treated precisely as a human work; looked at by numbers in that light; criticised on all hands; certain portions of it obliterated, they not being supposed to be the genuine word; and certain other portions mistranslated, as we now learn from superior scholarship. All this occurs with this alleged word of God. More than that, if it be a revelation in the sense in which my friend says it is, how comes it that a small portion only of God's immense family has become aware of it? And even among that portion, at this day, it is still held to be doubtful by a vast number whether it is a true verbal revelation or not.

I have not been attempting in this debate to gain a momentary victory over my friend, nor have I expected, among my audience, to make any sudden conversions. Sudden conversions are of very little value in the eyes of Rationalists; and they do not much believe in them. My whole and sole object has been to sow some seeds of thought; and I anticipate—nay, I know—that I have sown seeds of thought that will sprout and blossom and bear fruit in years to come. I thank the audience for the quiet hearing I have received each evening of this debate, and—notwithstanding the complaint I felt compelled to prefer a few moments ago—with the friendliest feeling towards the gentleman whose views I have been opposing, I must, in conclusion, respectfully but firmly assert that the Divine Origin of Christianity, as specified and defined by my friend, remains still unproved.

Mr. Green: I rise at the present time with sadder feelings than I have experienced at any other period during this debate, because when I see a man aggrieved, I feel grieved if I have in any way been the cause of it. As my friend appears to be deeply grieved, I am sorry; but I cannot recall what I have said. I do think that my friend stands self-condemned. He says that he never hid from the people that he is of Hebrew birth and that it is a fact well known. Then why this indignation because I referred to it? Did I not say that I would regard it as the highest honour if I were in the same position? Did I not make the reference in order to appeal to his own consciousness, and the consciousness of the Hebrew gentlemen around me, as to the truth of the fact which I stated? It is a known fact that there are many Hebrews in Dunedin, and they need not be ashamed of their presence here to-night. Did I not simply appeal to their consciousness on this question of special Sabbaths? Where then is the reflection? My friend has tried to bring home some personal remarks when there was no necessity. I am sorry he is offended; but I say it is either from a misunderstanding, or from some other reason that I shall not attempt to define. Now, in connection with this matter, I would say that if he does not know of special Sabbaths, then he is not sufficiently acquainted with his ancestral writings; because the Jews of this day know that there are many, even now, of such Sabbaths, which they are taught to observe, and on which, if they keep their law, they will not do a particle of work, or anything else that would be unlawful on the ordinary Sabbath.

Now, a point in connection with the genealogy, which I overlooked in my last speech. My friend said that I had stated that all those names omitted, and which the Old Testament supplied, would fill up the vacuum in the genealogy by Matthew. Now, may I tell you that it is a remarkable circumstance that those names do fill up the major portion of the vacuum. In connection with the first of the three omitted names in verse 8, there was the murder of Ahaziah's children by their unnatural grandmother; then an interregnum, during which the murdress, Athaliah, reigned; and after her deposition, the crown was given to Joash, a child of seven years, the youngest son of Ahaziah, and the only one who escaped the murderous hand of Athaliah. Also, where the fourth name is omitted, that of Jehoiachim, it is in connection with the birth of Salathiel in Babylon, and when his father was 73 years of age. So that my statement was actually in accordance with fact.

My friend says in regard to the death of the Apostles, that their dying for Christ does not prove that the things they taught were true. I never urged the fact for such a purpose. I did not perpetrate such an illogical
concluded the proceedings. This was carried amidst loud applause, and having been duly acknowledged, a vote of thanks to the Chairman thanks to Messrs. Green and Bright for the able and courteous manner in which they had conducted the debate.

The Hon. Robert Stout (the Attorney-General) moved, and Mr. Thomas Fergus seconded, a vote of thanks to Messrs. Green and Bright for the able and courteous manner in which they had conducted the debate. This was carried amidst loud applause, and having been duly acknowledged, a vote of thanks to the Chairman concluded the proceedings.

statement as that. But I say, that if I die for my attestation of anything, no matter what it may be, it proves, not that the thing I died for attestation of is true, but that I believed it to be true. Is not that clear? Then, if I have actual knowledge of the truth of the thing for which I die; if I declare that I saw, or felt, or heard that of which I affirm, and if my evidence is confirmed by ten others who also saw, and felt, and heard, and who are likewise willing to attest their declaration with their lives, is not that evidence, clear and unquestionable, of the truthfulness of that for which I and they were willing to die? Certainly none could be more so. I would like to say in connection with my friend's last remarks, that I fully sympathise with him in his desire to give expression to the truth. No one has heard me suggest any other thought than that as his motive. I do not believe in imputing motives. While I must say, in all candour, that I think my friend has been deficient in argument, at the same time, I am ready to acknowledge that he has not been deficient in courtesy. I will say that for him with the utmost readiness.

In regard to Christianity, I would like to say, during the last few minutes that remain to me, that it appears to me, that apart from all these things which I have mentioned, there are other and even more convincing proofs of its Divine origin can be presented. We know that no human government can at the same time display infinite justice, infinite mercy, holiness, and love, or even any of these characteristics. If justice is to be heard, mercy is shut out; and if mercy has its way, justice is shut out. If mercy is to be shown to the culprit, we have no holiness, in the sense of maintaining purity, and the integrity of law; while if mercy is not shown, love of the governed by the governing cannot be manifested. In observing human laws, we see that no such system as that which we find in the Gospel of Christ could ever be thought of. In Christianity we find as the underlying basis that sin is the transgression of law, and that man, having transgressed the law, is a sinner. If my friend believes in a personal Deity—of which I am doubtful, owing to his last statements—he must believe the Deity is a moral governor, as well as the governor of the merely physical universe. If He is a moral governor, then He must have moral laws; and as we know that men break physical laws, there is hence a probability of their breaking those moral laws. Now, seeing that the laws of the Infinite are immutable, and cannot be broken with impunity, there must be either the death of the criminal who breaks them, or some means of harmonising the manifestation of mercy with the Divine justice. Now, the Gospel represents God as an infinitely just governor, who cannot forgive sin unless all the requirements of justice are met. And as the requirements of justice could not be met by human beings, Heaven itself supplies the victim whose one sacrificial offering, because of His Divine nature, is ample to satisfy all the requirements of Divine justice, and to open the way for the bestowment of mercy upon the whole of the human race. Thus we have in the Gospel an exhibition of infinite justice such as could never have been suggested by the human mind; and, at the same time, we have infinite mercy shown to the sinner; for while justice is amply satisfied, mercy is shown to the fullest extent; for we receive a free and full pardon, without anything being done on our part. I say that such a scheme manifests infinite wisdom; that it is beyond the capacity of the human mind to compass it; and that it bears upon it the impress of its Divine author. It is just what we might expect a father to do for his children. Will not a father and a mother die readily for their children? Will they not do anything they possibly can to relieve their children from calamity? Therefore is it not reasonable that the Infinite Father should devise a plan whereby His own law should be vindicated, His government upheld, and yet mercy shown to His children? And see how it affects the matter. As an illustration of this I may mention, that Joseph Cook, in his Boston lectures, tells of a schoolmaster, well known to his auditors, who had taken the Gospel plan, and carried it out in his school. He had certain rules in his school, and for the violation of those rules there was a penalty. A scholar having transgressed, was brought before the master. The master read the rules, and having expatiated upon the necessity of those rules being observed for the well-being of the scholars themselves, he said: "Now, the punishment must be inflicted; but I am willing to bear it for you in order to show you that I take no pleasure in punishing you, and that all I want is that my laws for your good should be upheld." Putting the rod into the scholar's hand, and holding out his own, he said, "Strike my hand." The scholar takes the rod, but stares with astonishment at such an unknown proceeding. When he hears the master persisting, he does strike, but very gently; and then—and you might have seen the red flush mounting to his face—he lets the rod fall, at the same time bursting into tears. He cannot strike. Why? Because the schoolmaster had followed the Divine philosophy, and by bearing the punishment of the wrong-doer, he killed the seeds of rebellion in the boy's heart. In that school, when the principle in operation was understood, there were never any more breaches of the law.

As my time has expired, I must now conclude with this final statement, that in the illustration I have presented, we have a practical application of the principle of that Divine philosophy seen in the scheme of redemption, and by means of which, God is seeking to bring the Universe into harmony with His will.
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