

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

THE  
HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

BY

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THERE is a continual effort in the mind of man to find the harmony that he knows must exist between all known facts. It is hard for the scientist to implicitly believe anything that he suspects to be inconsistent with a known fact. He feels that every fact is a key to many mysteries—that every fact is a detective, not only, but a perpetual witness. He knows that a fact has a countless number of sides, and that all these sides will match all other facts; and he also suspects that to understand one fact perfectly—like the fact of the attraction of gravitation—would involve a knowledge of the universe.

It requires not only candor but courage to accept a fact. When a new fact is found it is generally denied, resisted, and calumniated by the conservatives until denial becomes absurd, and then they accept it with the statement that they always supposed it was true.

The old is the ignorant enemy of the new. The old has pedigree and respectability; it is filled with the spirit of caste; it is associated with great events and with great names; it is entrenched, it has an income—it represents property. Besides, it has parasites, and the parasites always defend themselves.

Long ago frightened wretches, who had by tyranny or piracy amassed great fortunes, were induced in the moment of death to compromise with God, and to let their money fall from their stiffening hands into the greedy palms of priests. In this way many theological seminaries were endowed, and in this way prejudices, mistakes, absurdities, known as religious truths, have been perpetuated. In this way the dead hypocrites have propagated and supported their kind.

Most religions—no matter how honestly they originated—have been established by brute force. Kings and nobles have used them as a means to enslave, to degrade, and rob. The priest, consciously and unconsciously, has been the betrayer of his followers.

Near Chicago there is an ox that betrays his fellows. Cattle—twenty or thirty at a time—are driven to the place of slaughter. This ox

leads the way—the others follow. When the place is reached, this Bishop Dupanloup turns and goes back for other victims.

This is the worst side : There is a better.

Honest men, believing that they have found the whole truth—the real and only faith—filled with enthusiasm, give all for the purpose of propagating the “divine creed.” They found colleges and universities, and in perfect pious, ignorant, sincerity provide that the creed, and nothing but the creed, must be taught, and that if any professor teaches anything contrary to that, he must be instantly dismissed—that is to say, the children must be beaten with the bones of the dead.

These good religious souls erect guide-boards with a provision to the effect that the guide-boards must remain, whether the roads are changed or not, and with the further provision that the professors who keep and repair the guide-boards must always insist that the roads have not been changed.

There is still another side.

Professors do not wish to lose their salaries. They love their families and have some regard for themselves. There is a compromise between their bread and their brain. On pay-day they believe—at other times they have their doubts. They settle with their own consciences by giving old words new meanings. They take refuge in allegory, hide behind parables, and barricade themselves with oriental imagery. They give to the most frightful passages a spiritual meaning—and while they teach the old creed to their followers, they speak a new philosophy to their equals.

There is still another side.

A vast number of clergymen and laymen are perfectly satisfied. They have no doubts. They believe as their fathers and mothers did. The “scheme of salvation” suits them because they are satisfied that they are embraced within its terms. They give themselves no trouble. They believe because they do not understand. They have no doubts because they do not think. They regard doubt as a thorn in the pillow of orthodox slumber. Their souls are asleep, and they hate only those who disturb their dreams. These people keep their creeds for future use. They intend to have them ready at the moment of dissolution. They sustain about the same relation to daily life that the small boats carried by steamers do to ordinary navigation—they are for the moment of shipwreck. Creeds, like life-preservers, are to be used in disaster.

We must remember that everything in nature—bad as well as good—has the instinct of self-preservation. All lies go armed, and all mistakes carry concealed weapons. Driven to the last corner, even non-resistance appeals to the dagger.

Vast interests—political, social, artistic, and individual—are interwoven with all creeds. Thousands of millions of dollars have been invested; many millions of people obtain their bread by the propagation and support of certain religious doctrines, and many millions have been educated for that purpose and for that alone. Nothing is more natural than that they should defend themselves—that they should cling to a creed that gives them roof and raiment.

Only a few years ago Christianity was a complete system. It included and accounted for all phenomena; it was a philosophy satisfactory to the ignorant world; it had an astronomy and geology of its own; it answered all questions with the same readiness and the same inaccuracy; it had within its sacred volumes the history of the past, and the prophecies of all the future; it pretended to know all that was, is, or ever will be necessary for the well-being of the human race, here and hereafter.

When a religion has been founded, the founder admitted the truth of everything that was generally believed that did not interfere with his system. Imposture always has a definite end in view, and for the sake of the accomplishment of that end, it will admit the truth of anything and everything that does not endanger its success.

The writers of all sacred books—the inspired prophets—had no reason for disagreeing with the common people about the origin of things, the creation of the world, the rising and setting of the sun, and the uses of the stars, and consequently the sacred books of all ages have endorsed the belief general at the time. You will find in our sacred books the astronomy, the geology, the philosophy and the morality of the ancient barbarians. The religionist takes these general ideas as his foundation, and upon them builds the supernatural structure. For many centuries the astronomy, geology, philosophy and morality of our bible were accepted. They were not questioned, for the reason that the world was too ignorant to question.

A few centuries ago the art of printing was invented. A new world was discovered. There was a complete revolution in commerce. The arts were born again. The world was filled with adventure; millions became self-reliant; old ideas were abandoned—old theories were put aside—and suddenly the old leaders of thought were found to be

ignorant, shallow and dishonest. The literature of the classic world was discovered and translated into modern languages. The world was circumnavigated; Copernicus discovered the true relation sustained by our earth to the solar system, and about the beginning of the seventeenth century many other wonderful discoveries were made. In 1609, a Hollander found that two lenses placed in a certain relation to each other magnified objects seen through them. This discovery was the foundation of astronomy. In a little while it came to the knowledge of Galileo; the result was a telescope, with which man has read the volume of the skies.

On the 8th day of May, 1618, Kepler discovered the greatest of his three laws. These were the first great blows struck for the enfranchisement of the human mind. A few began to suspect that the ancient Hebrews were not astronomers. From that moment the Church became the enemy of Science. In every possible way the inspired ignorance was defended—the lash, the sword, the chain, the fagot and the dungeon were the arguments used by the infuriated Church.

To such an extent was the Church prejudiced against the new philosophy, against the new facts, that priests refused to look through the telescope of Galileo.

At last it became evident to the intelligent world that the inspired writings, literally translated, did not contain the truth—the Bible was in danger of being driven from the heavens.

The Church also had its geology. The time when the earth was created had been definitely fixed and was certainly known. This fact had not only been stated by inspired writers, but their statement had been endorsed by priests, but bishops, cardinals, popes and ecumenical councils; that was settled.

But a few men had learned the art of seeing. There were some eyes not always closed in prayer. They looked at the things about them; they observed channels that had been worn in solid rock by streams; they saw the vast territories that had been deposited by rivers; their attention was called to the slow inroads upon continents by seas—to the deposits by volcanoes—to the sedimentary rocks—to the vast reefs that had been built by the coral, and to the countless evidences of age, of the lapse of time—and finally it was demonstrated that this earth had been pursuing its course about the sun for millions and millions of ages.

The Church disputed every step, denied every fact, resorted to every device that cunning could suggest or ingenuity execute, but the conflict

could not be maintained. The Bible, so far as geology was concerned, was in danger of being driven from the earth.

Beaten in the open field, the Church began to equivocate, to evade, and to give new meanings to inspired words. Finally, falsehood having failed to harmonise the guesses of barbarians with the discoveries of genius, the leading churchmen suggested that the Bible was not written to teach astronomy, was not written to teach geology, and that it was not a scientific book, but that it was written in the language of the people, and that as to unimportant things it contained the general beliefs of its time.

The ground was then taken that, while it was not inspired in its science, it was inspired in its morality, in its prophecy, in its account of the miraculous, in the scheme of salvation, and in all that it had to say on the subject of religion.

The moment it was suggested that the Bible was not inspired in everything within it lids, the seeds of suspicion were sown. The priest became less arrogant. The Church was forced to explain. The pulpit had one language for the faithful and another for the philosophical *i.e.*, it became dishonest with both.

The next question that arose was as to the origin of man.

The Bible was being driven from the skies. The testimony of the stars was against the sacred volume. The Church had also been forced to admit that the world was not created at the time mentioned in the Bible—so that the very stones of the earth rose and united with the stars in giving testimony against the sacred volume.

As to the creation of the world, the Church resorted to the artifice of saying that "days" in reality meant long periods of time; so that no matter how old the earth was, the time could be spanned by six periods—in other words, that the years could not be too numerous to be divided by six.

But when it came to the creation of man, this evasion or artifice was impossible. The Bible gives the date of the creation of man, because it gives the age at which the first man died, and then it gives the generations from Adam to the Flood, and from the Flood to the birth of Christ, and in many instances the actual age of the principal ancestor is given. So that, according to this account—according to the inspired figures—man has existed upon the earth only about six thousand years. There is no room left for any people beyond Adam.

If the Bible is true, certainly Adam was the first man; consequently,

we know, if the sacred volume be true, just how long man has lived and labored and suffered on this earth.

The Church cannot and dare not give up the account of the creation of Adam from the dust of the earth, and of Eve from the rib of the man. The Church cannot give up the story of the Garden of Eden—the Serpent, the Fall, and the Expulsion: these must be defended because they are vital. Without these absurdities the system known as Christianity cannot exist. Without the Fall, the Atonement is a *non sequitur*. Facts bearing upon these questions were discovered and discussed by the greatest and most thoughtful of men. Lamarck, Humboldt, Haeckel, and above all, Darwin, not only asserted, but demonstrated, that man is not a special creation. If anything can be established by observation, by reason, then the fact has been established that man is related to all life below him—that he has been slowly produced through countless years; that the story of Eden is a childish myth; that the Fall of Man is an infinite absurdity.

If anything can be established by analogy and reason, man has existed upon the earth for many millions of ages. We know now, if we know anything, that people not only existed before Adam, but that they existed in a highly civilised state; that thousands of years before the Garden of Eden was planted men communicated to each other their ideas by language, and that artists clothed the marble with thoughts and passions.

This is a demonstration that the origin of man given in the Old Testament is untrue; that the account was written by the ignorance, the prejudice, and the egotism of the olden time.

So, if anything outside of the senses can be known, we do know that civilisation is a growth; that man did not commence a perfect being, and then degenerate, but that from small beginnings he has slowly risen to the intellectual height he now occupies.

The Church, however, has not been willing to accept these truths, because they contradict the Sacred Word. Some of the most ingenious of the clergy have been endeavoring for years to show that there is no conflict—that the account in Genesis is in perfect harmony with the theories of Charles Darwin; and these clergymen in some way manage to retain their creed and to accept a philosophy that utterly destroys it.

But in a few years the Christian world will be forced to admit that the Bible is not inspired in its astronomy, in its geology, or in its anthropology—that is to say, that the inspired writers knew nothing of



the sciences, knew nothing of the origin of the earth, nothing of the origin of man—in other words, nothing of any particular value to the human race.

It is, however, still insisted that the Bible is inspired in its morality. Let us examine this question.

We must admit, if we know anything, if we feel anything, if conscience is more than a word, if there is such a thing as right and such a thing as wrong beneath the dome of heaven—we must admit that slavery is immoral. If we are honest, we must also admit that the Old Testament upholds slavery. It will be cheerfully admitted that Jehovah was opposed to the enslavement of one Hebrew by another. Christians may quote the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," as being opposed to human slavery, but after that commandment was given Jehovah himself told his chosen people that they might "buy their bondmen and bondwomen of the heathen round about, and that they should be their bondmen and their bondwomen for ever." So all that Jehovah meant by the commandment "Thou shalt not steal" was that one Hebrew should not steal from another Hebrew, but that all Hebrews might steal from the people of any other race or creed.

It is perfectly apparent that the Ten Commandments were made only for the Jews, not for the world, because the author of these commandments commanded the people to whom they were given to violate them nearly all as against the surrounding people.

A few years ago it did not occur to the Christian world that slavery was wrong. It was upheld by the Church. Ministers bought and sold the very people for whom they declared that Christ had died. Clergymen of the English Church owned stock in slave ships, and the man who denounced slavery was regarded as the enemy of morality, and thereupon was duly mobbed by the followers of Jesus Christ. Churches were built with the results of labor stolen from colored Christians. Babes were sold from mothers and a part of the money given to send missionaries from America to heathen lands with the tidings of great joy. Now, every intelligent man on the earth, every decent man, holds in abhorrence the institution of human slavery.

So with the institution of polygamy. If anything on the earth is immoral, that is. If there is anything calculated to destroy home, to do away with human love, to blot out the idea of family life, to cover the hearthstone with serpents, it is the institution of polygamy. The Jehovah of the Old Testament was a believer in that institution.

Can we now say that the Bible is inspired in its morality? Consider

for a moment the manner in which, under the direction of Jehovah, wars were waged. Remember the atrocities that were committed. Think of a war where everything was the food of the sword. Think for a moment of a deity capable of committing the crimes that are described and gloated over in the Old Testament. The civilised man has outgrown the sacred cruelties and absurdities.

There is still another side to this question.

A few centuries ago nothing was more natural than the unnatural. Miracles were as plentiful as actual events. In those blessed days, that which actually occurred was not regarded as of sufficient importance to be recorded. A religion without miracles would have excited derision. A creed that did not fill the horizon—that did not account for everything—that could not answer every question, would have been regarded as worthless.

After the birth of Protestantism, it could not be admitted by the leaders of the Reformation that the Catholic Church still had the power of working miracles. If the Catholic Church was still in partnership with God, what excuse could have been made for the Reformation? The Protestants took the ground that the age of miracles had passed. This was to justify the new faith. But Protestants could not say that miracles had never been performed, because that would take the foundation not only from the Catholics but from themselves; consequently, they were compelled to admit that miracles were performed in the Apostolic days, but to insist that, in their time, man must rely upon the facts in nature. Protestants were compelled to carry on two kinds of war: they had to contend with those who insisted that miracles had never been performed; and in that argument they were forced to insist upon the necessity for miracles, on the probability that they were performed, and upon the truthfulness of the Apostles. A moment afterward, they had to answer those who contended that miracles were performed at that time; then they brought forward against the Catholics the same arguments that their first opponents had brought against them.

This has made every Protestant brain "a house divided against itself." This planted in the Reformation the "irrepressible conflict."

But we have learned more and more about what we call Nature—about what we call facts. Slowly it dawned upon the mind that force is indestructible—that we cannot imagine force as existing apart from matter—that we cannot even think of matter existing apart from force—that we cannot by any possibility conceive of a cause without an

effect, of an effect without a cause, of an effect that is not also a cause. We find no room between the links of cause and effect for a miracle. We now perceive that a miracle must be outside of Nature—that it can have no father, no mother—that is to say, that it is an impossibility.

The intellectual world has abandoned the miraculous. Most ministers are now ashamed to defend a miracle. Some try to explain miracles, and yet, if a miracle is explained, it ceases to exist. Few congregations could keep from smiling were the minister to seriously assert the truth of the Old Testament miracles.

Miracles must be given up. That field must be abandoned by the religious world. The evidence accumulates every day, in every possible direction in which the human mind can investigate, that the miraculous is simply the impossible.

Confidence in the eternal constancy of Nature increases day by day. The scientist has perfect confidence in the attraction of gravitation—in chemical affinities—in the great fact of evolution, and feels absolutely certain that the nature of things will remain for ever the same.

We have at last ascertained that miracles can be perfectly understood; that there is nothing mysterious about them; that they are simply transparent falsehoods.

The real miracles are the facts in nature. No one can explain the attraction of gravitation. No one knows why soil and rain and light become the womb of life. No one knows why grass grows, why water runs, or why the magnetic needle points to the north. The facts in nature are the eternal and the only mysteries. There is nothing strange about the miracles of superstition. They are nothing but the mistakes of ignorance and fear, or falsehoods framed by those who wished to live on the labor of others.

In our time the champions of Christianity, for the most part, take the exact ground occupied by the deists. They dare not defend in the open field the mistakes, the cruelties, the immoralities and the absurdities of the Bible. They shun the Garden of Eden as though the serpent was still there. They have nothing to say about the Fall of Man. They are silent as to the laws upholding slavery and polygamy. They are ashamed to defend the miraculous. They talk about these things to Sunday-schools and to the elderly members of their congregations; but when doing battle for the faith, they mis-state the position of their opponents and then insist that there must be a God, and that the soul is immortal.

We may admit the existence of an infinite being; we may admit the

immortality of the soul, and yet deny the inspiration of the Scriptures and the divine origin of the Christian religion. These doctrines, or these dogmas, have nothing in common. The pagan world believed in God and taught the dogma of immortality. These ideas are far older than Christianity, and they have been almost universal.

Christianity asserts more than this. It is based upon the inspiration of the Bible, on the Fall of Man, on the Atonement, on the dogma of the Trinity, on the divinity of Jesus Christ, on his resurrection from the dead, on his ascension into heaven.

Christianity teaches not simply the immortality of the soul—not simply the immortality of joy—but it teaches the immortality of pain, the eternity of sorrow. It insists that evil, that wickedness, that immorality and that every form of vice are and must be perpetuated forever. It believes in immortal convicts, in eternal imprisonment and in a world of unending pain. It has a serpent for every breast and a curse for nearly every soul. This doctrine is called the dearest hope of the human heart, and he who attacks it is denounced as the most infamous of men.

Let us see what the Church, within a few years, has been compelled substantially to abandon—that is to say, what it is now almost ashamed to defend.

*First*, the astronomy of the sacred Scriptures; *second*, the geology; *third*, the account given of the origin of man; *fourth*, the doctrine of original sin, the fall of the human race; *fifth*, the mathematical contradiction known as the Trinity; *sixth*, the atonement—because it was only on the ground that man is accountable for the sin of another, that he could be justified by reason of the righteousness of another; *seventh*, that the miraculous is either the misunderstood or the impossible; *eighth*, that the Bible is not inspired in its morality, for the reason that slavery is not moral, that polygamy is not good, that wars of extermination are not merciful, and that nothing can be more immoral than to punish the innocent on account of the sins of the guilty; and, *ninth*, the divinity of Christ.

All this must be given up by the really intelligent, by those not afraid to think, by those who have the courage of their convictions and the candor to express their thoughts. What then is left?

Let me tell you. Everything in the Bible that is true is left; it still remains and is still of value. It cannot be said too often that the truth needs no inspiration; neither can it be said too often that inspiration cannot help falsehood. Every good and noble sentiment uttered in the

Bible is still good and noble. Every fact remains. All that is good in the Sermon on the Mount is retained. The Lord's Prayer is not affected. The grandeur of self-denial, the nobility of forgiveness, and the ineffable splendor of mercy are with us still. And besides, there remains the great hope for all the human race.

What is lost? All the mistakes, all the falsehoods, all the absurdities, all the cruelties and all the curses contained in the Scriptures. We have almost lost the "hope" of eternal pain—the "consolation," of perdition; and in time we shall lose the frightful shadow that has fallen upon so many hearts, that has darkened so many lives.

The great trouble for many years has been, and still is, that the clergy are not quite candid. They are disposed to defend the old creed. They have been educated in the Universities of the Sacred Mistake—Universities that Bruno would call "the widows of true learning." They have been taught to measure with a false standard they have weighed with inaccurate scales. In youth, they became convinced of the truth of the creed. This was impressed upon them by the solemnity of professors who spoke in tones of awe. The enthusiasm of life's morning was misdirected. They went out into the world knowing nothing of value. They preached a creed outgrown. Having been for so many years entirely certain of their position, they met doubt with a spirit of irritation—afterwards with hatred. They are hardly courageous enough to admit that they are wrong.

Once the pulpit was the leader—it spoke with authority. By its side was the sword of the State, with the hilt toward its hand. Now, it is apologised for—it carries a weight. It is now like a living man to whom has been chained a corpse. It cannot defend the old, and it has not accepted the new. In some strange way it imagines that morality cannot live except in partnership with the sanctified follies and falsehoods of the past.

The old creeds cannot be defended by argument. They are not within the circumference of reason—they are not embraced in any of the facts within the experience of man. All the subterfuges have been exposed; all the excuses have been shown to be shallow, and at last the Church must meet, and fairly meet, the objections of our time.

Solemnity is no longer an argument. Falsehood is no longer sacred. People are not willing to admit that mistakes are divine. Truth is more important than belief—far better than creeds, vastly more useful than superstitions. The Church must accept the truths of the present.

must admit the demonstrations of science, or take its place in the mental museums with the fossils and monstrosities of the past.

The time for personalities has passed; these questions cannot be determined by ascertaining the character of the disputants; epithets are no longer regarded as arguments; the curse of the Church produces laughter; theological slander is no longer a weapon; argument must be answered with argument, and the Church must appeal to reason, and by that standard it must stand or fall. The theories and discoveries of Darwin cannot be answered by the resolutions of synods, or by quotations from the Old Testament.

The world has advanced. The Bible has remained the same. We must go back to the book—it cannot come to us—or we must leave it forever. In order to remain orthodox we must forget the discoveries, the inventions, the intellectual efforts of many centuries; we must go back until our knowledge—or rather our ignorance—will harmonise with the barbaric creeds.

It is not pretended that all the creeds have not been naturally produced. It is admitted that under the same circumstances the same religions would again ensnare the human race. It is also admitted that under the same circumstances the same efforts would be made by the great and intellectual of every age to break the chains of superstition.

There is no necessity of attacking people—we should combat error. We should hate hypocrisy, but not the hypocrite—larceny, but not the thief—superstition, but not its victim. We should do all within our power to inform, to educate, and to benefit our fellow men.

There is no elevating power in hatred. There is no reformation in punishment. The soul grows greater and grander in the air of kindness, in the sunlight of intelligence.

We must rely upon the evidence of our senses, upon the conclusions of our reason.

For many centuries the Church has insisted that man is totally depraved, that he is naturally wicked, that all of his natural desires are contrary to the will of God. Only a few years ago it was solemnly asserted that our senses were originally honest, true and faithful, but having been debauched by original sin, were now cheats and liars; that they constantly deceived and misled the soul; that they were traps and snares; that no man could be safe who relied upon his senses, or upon his reason;—he must simply rely upon faith; in other words that the only way for man to really see was to put out his eyes.

There has been a rapid improvement in the intellectual world. The

improvement has been slow in the realm of religion, for the reason that religion was hedged about, defended and barricaded by fear, by prejudice and by law. It was considered sacred. It was illegal to call its truth in question. Whoever disputed the priest became a criminal; whoever demanded a reason, or an explanation, became a blasphemer, a scoffer, a moral leper.

The Church defended its mistakes by every means within its power.

But in spite of all this there has been advancement, and there are enough of the orthodox clergy left to make it possible for us to measure the distance that has been travelled by sensible people.

The world is beginning to see that a minister should be a teacher, and that "he should not endeavor to inculcate a particular system of dogmas, but to prepare his hearers for exercising their own judgments."

As a last resource, the orthodox tell the thoughtful that they are not "spiritual"; that they are "of the earth, earthy"; that they cannot perceive that which is spiritual. They insist that "God is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit."

But let me ask, What is it to be spiritual? In order to be really spiritual, must a man sacrifice this world for the sake of another? Were the selfish hermits, who deserted their wives and children for the miserable purpose of saving their own little souls, spiritual? Were those who put their fellow-men in dungeons, or burned them at the stake on account of a difference of opinion, all spiritual people? Did John Calvin give evidence of his spirituality by burning Servetus? Were they spiritual people who invented and used instruments of torture, who denied the liberty of thought and expression, who waged wars for the propagation of the faith? Were they spiritual people who insisted that Infinite Love could punish his poor, ignorant children for ever? Is it necessary to believe in eternal torment to understand the meaning of the word spiritual? Is it necessary to hate those who disagree with you, and to calumniate those whose argument you cannot answer, in order to be spiritual? Must you hold a demonstrated fact in contempt; must you deny or avoid what you know to be true, in order to substantiate the fact that you are spiritual?

What is it to be spiritual? Is the man spiritual who searches for the truth; who lives in accordance with his highest ideal; who loves his wife and children; who discharges his obligations; who makes a happy fireside for the ones he loves; who succors the oppressed: who gives his honest opinions; who is guided by principle; who is merciful and just?

Is the man spiritual who loves the beautiful; who is thrilled by music, and touched to tears in the presence of the sublime, the heroic, and the self-denying? Is the man spiritual who endeavors by thought and deed to ennoble the human race?

The defenders of the orthodox faith, by this time, should know that the foundations are insecure.

They should have the courage to defend, or the candor to abandon. If the Bible is an inspired book, it ought to be true. Its defenders must admit that Jehovah knew the facts not only about the earth, but about the stars, and that the Creator of the universe knew all about geology and astronomy even four thousand years ago.

The champions of Christianity must show that the Bible tells the truth about the Creation of Man, the Garden of Eden, the Temptation, the Fall, and the Flood. They must take the ground that the sacred book is historically correct; that the events related really happened; that the miracles were actually performed; that the laws promulgated from Sinai were and are wise and just, and that nothing is upheld, commanded, endorsed, or in any way approved or sustained that is not absolutely right. In other words, if they insist that a being of infinite goodness and intelligence is the author of the Bible, they must be ready to show that it is absolutely perfect. They must defend its astronomy, geology, history, miracle, and morality.

If the Bible is true, man is a special creation, and if man is a special creation, millions of facts must have conspired, millions of ages ago, to deceive the scientific world of to-day.

If the Bible is true, slavery is right, and the world should go back to the barbarism of the lash and chain. If the Bible is true, polygamy is the highest form of virtue. If the Bible is true, Nature has a master, and the miraculous is independent of and superior to cause and effect. If the Bible is true, most of the children of men are destined to suffer eternal pain. If the Bible is true, the science known as astronomy is a collection of mistakes—the telescope is a false witness, and light is a luminous liar. If the Bible is true, the science known as geology is false and every fossil is a petrified perjurer.

The defenders of orthodox creeds should have the courage to candidly answer at least two questions: *First*, Is the Bible inspired? *Second*, Is the Bible true? And when they answer these questions, they should remember that if the Bible is true, it needs no inspiration, and that if not true, inspiration can do it no good.