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What must we do to be Saved?

BY

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PART II.



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WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

AND now we come to John, and that is where the trouble commences. The other gospels teach that God will be merciful to the merciful, forgiving to the forgiving, kind to the kind, loving to the loving, just to the just, merciful to the good. Now we come to John, and here is another doctrine. And allow me to say that John was not written until long after the others. John was mostly written by the Church. "And Jesus answered and said unto him: Furthermore I say unto thee, that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Why did he not tell Matthew that? Why did he not tell Luke that? Why did he not tell Mark that? They never heard of it, or forgot it, or they did not believe it. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Why? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be born again.' That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit," and he might have added, that which is born of water is water. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be born again.'" And then the reason is given, and I admit I did not understand it myself until I read the reason, and when you hear the reason you will understand it as well as I do; and here it is: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

So, I find in the book of John the idea of the Real Presence. 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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth on the Son

hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live, And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. No man can come to me, except my Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. 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 that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. And he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." So I find in the book of John, that in order to be saved we must not only believe in Jesus Christ, but we must eat of the flesh and drink of the blood of Jesus Christ. If that gospel is true, the Catholic Church is right. But it is not true. I cannot believe it, and yet for all that it may be true. But I do not believe it. Neither do I believe there is any God in the universe who will damn a man simply for expressing his belief. "Why," they say to me, "suppose all this should turn out to be true, and you should come to the day of judgment and find all these things to be true. What would you do then?" I

would walk up like a man and say, *I was mistaken*. "And suppose God was about to pass judgment upon you, what would you say?" I would say to him: "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." Why not? I am told that I must render "good for evil." I am told that "if smitten on one cheek" I must "turn the other." I am told that I must "overcome evil with good." I am told that I must "love my enemies;" and will it do for this God who tells me to "love my enemies" to damn his? No, it will not do—it will not do. In the book of John all these doctrines of regeneration—that it is necessary to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; that salvation depends upon belief—in this book of John all these doctrines find their warrant; nowhere else. Read Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and then read John, and you will agree with me that the three first gospels teach that if we are kind and forgiving to our fellows, God will be kind and forgiving to us. In John we are told that another man can be good for us, or bad for us, and that the only way to get to heaven is to believe something that we know is not so. All these passages about believing in Christ, drinking his blood and eating his flesh, are afterthoughts. They were written by the theologians, and in a few years they will be discovered as unworthy of the lips of Christ.

THE CATHOLICS.

Now upon these gospels that I have read the churches rest; and out of these things, mistakes and interpolations, they have made their creeds. And the first church to make a creed, so far as I know, was the Catholic. It was the first church that had any power. That is the church that has preserved all these miracles for us. That is the church that preserved the manuscripts for us. That is the church whose word we have to take. That church is the first witness that Protestantism brought to the bar of history to prove miracles that took place eighteen hundred years ago; and while the witness is there Protestantism takes pains to say: "You cannot believe one word that witness says, *now*." That church is the only one that keeps up a constant communication with heaven through the instrumentality of a large number of decayed saints. That church has an agent of God on earth, has a person who stands in the place of deity; and that church is infallible. That church has persecuted to the exact extent of her power—and always will. In Spain that church stands erect, and is arrogant. In the United States that church crawls; but the object in both countries is the same—and that is the destruction of intellectual liberty. That church teaches us that we can make God happy by being miserable ourselves; that a nun is holier in the sight of God than a loving mother with her child in her thrilled and thrilling arms; that a

priest is better than a father ; that celibacy is better than that passion of love that has made everything of beauty in this world. That church tells the girl of sixteen or eighteen years of age, with eyes like dew and light—that girl with the red of health in the white of her beautiful cheeks—tells that girl : “ Put on the veil, woven of death and night, kneel upon stones, and you will please God.” I tell you that, by law, no girl should be allowed to take the veil and renounce the joys and beauties of this life. I am opposed to allowing these spider-like priests to weave webs to catch the loving maidens of the world. There ought to be a law appointing commissioners to visit such places twice a year, and release every person who expresses a desire to be released. I do not believe in keeping the penitentiaries of God. No doubt they are honest about it. That is not the question. These ignorant superstitions fill millions of lives with weariness and pain, with agony and tears. This church, after a few centuries of thought, made a creed, and that creed is the foundation of the orthodox religion. Let me read it to you :—“ Who-soever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith ; which faith except every one do keep entire and inviolate, without doubt, he shall everlastingly perish.” Now the faith is this : “ That we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity.” Of course you understand how that is done, and there is no need of my explaining it. “ Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.” You see what a predicament that would leave the deity in if you divided the substance. “ For one is the person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost ; but the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one ”—you know what I mean by Godhead—“ in glory equal, and in majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.” And that is the reason we know so much about the thing. “ The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Ghost eternal, and yet there are not three eternals, only one eternal, as also there are not three uncreated, nor three incomprehensibles, only one uncreated, one incomprehensible.” “ In like manner, the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Ghost almighty. Yet there are not three almighties, only one almighty. So the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God, and yet not three Gods ; and so, likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord, yet there are not three Lords, for as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so we are all forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of no one ; not created or begotten. The Son is from the

Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor begotten, but proceeding." You know what proceeding is. "So there is one Father, not three Fathers." Why should there be three Fathers, and only one Son? "One Son, and not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts; and in this Trinity there is nothing before or afterward, nothing greater or less, but the whole three persons are coeternal with one another and coequal, so that in all things the Unity is to be worshipped in Trinity, and the Trinity is to be worshipped in Unity. Those who will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the right of this thing is this: That we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man. He is God of the substance of his Father begotten before the world was." That was a good while before his mother lived. "And he is man of the substance of his mother, born in this world, perfect God and perfect man, and the rational soul in human flesh subsisting, equal to the Father according to his Godhead, but less than the Father according to his manhood, who being both God and man is not two but one, one not by conversion of God into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God." You see that is a great deal easier than the other way would be. "One altogether, not by a confusion of substance but by unity of person, for as the rational soul and the flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, and he sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, and he shall come to judge the living and the dead."

In order to be saved it is necessary to believe this. What a blessing that we do not have to understand it. And in order to compel the human intellect to get upon its knees before that infinite absurdity, thousands and millions have suffered agonies; thousands and thousands have perished in dungeons and in fire; and if all the bones of all the victims of the Catholic church could be gathered together, a monument higher than all the pyramids would rise, in the presence of which the eyes even of priests would be wet with tears. That church covered Europe with cathedrals and dungeons, and robbed men of the jewel of the soul: That church had ignorance upon its knees. That church went in partnership with the tyrants of the throne, and between those two vultures, the altar and the throne, the heart of man was devoured. Of course I have met, and cheerfully admit that there are thousands of good Catholics; but Catholicism is contrary to human liberty. Catholicism bases salvation upon belief. Catholicism teaches man to trample his reason under foot. And for that reason it is wrong. Thousands of

volumes could not contain the crimes of the Catholic church. They could not contain even the names of her victims. With sword and fire, with rack and chain, with dungeon and whip she endeavored to convert the world. In weakness a beggar—in power a highwayman—alms dish or dagger—tramp or tyrant.

THE EPISCOPALIANS.

THE next church I wish to speak of is the Episcopalian. That was founded by Henry VIII., now in heaven. He cast off Queen Catherine and Catholicism together, and he accepted Episcopalianism and Anne Boleyn at the same time. That church, if it had a few more ceremonies, would be Catholic. If it had a few less, nothing. We have an Episcopalian church in this country, and it has all the imperfections of a poor relation. It is always boasting of its rich relative. In England the creed is made by law, the same as we pass statutes here. And when a gentleman dies in England, in order to determine whether he shall be saved or not, it is necessary for the power of heaven to read the acts of parliament. It becomes a question of law, and sometimes a man is damned on a very nice point. Lost on demurrer. A few years ago a gentleman by the name of Seabury, Samuel Seabury, was sent over to England to get some apostolic succession. We had not a drop in the house. It was necessary for the bishops of the English church to put their hands upon his head. They refused. There was no act of parliament justifying it. He had then to go to the Scotch bishops; and, had the Scotch bishops refused, we never would have had any apostolic succession in the New World, and God would have been driven out of half the earth, and the true church never could have been founded upon this continent. But the Scotch bishops put their hands on his head, and now we have an unbroken succession of heads and hands from St. Paul to the last bishop. In this country the Episcopalians have done some good, and I want to thank that church. Having on an average less religion than the others—on an average you have done more good to mankind. You preserved some of the humanities. You did not hate music; you did not absolutely despise painting and you did not altogether abhor architecture, and you finally admitted that it was no worse to keep time with your feet than with your hands. And some went so far as to say that people could play cards, and that God would overlook it, or would look the other way. For all these things accept my thanks. When I was a boy, the other churches looked upon dancing as probably the mysterious sin against the Holy Ghost; and they used to teach that when four boys got in a hay-mow, playing at seven-up, that the eternal God stood whetting the sword of his eternal wrath waiting to strike them down to the lowest hell. That Church has done

some good. The Episcopal creed is substantially like the Catholic, containing a few additional absurdities. The Episcopalians teach that it is easier to get forgiveness for sin after you have been baptised. They seem to think that the moment you are baptised you become a member of the firm, and as such are entitled to wickedness at cost. This church is utterly unsuited to a free people. Its government is tyrannical, supercilious and absurd. Bishops talk as though they were responsible for the souls in their charge. They wear vests that button on one side. Nothing is so essential to the clergy of this denomination as a good voice. The Episcopalians have persecuted just to the extent of their power. Their treatment of the Irish has been a crime—a crime lasting for three hundred years. That church persecuted the Puritans of England and the Presbyterians of Scotland. In England the altar is the mistress of the throne, and this mistress has always looked at honest wives with scorn.

THE METHODISTS.

ABOUT a hundred and fifty years ago, two men, John Wesley and George Whitfield, said: "If everybody is going to hell, somebody ought to mention it." The Episcopal clergy said: "Keep still; do not tear your gown." Wesley and Whitfield said: "This frightful truth ought to be proclaimed from the housetop of every opportunity, from the highway of every occasion." They were good, honest men. They believed their doctrine. And they said: "If there is a hell, and a Niagara of souls pouring over an eternal precipice of ignorance, somebody ought to say something." They were right; somebody ought, if such a thing is true. Wesley was a believer in the Bible. He believed in the actual presence of the Almighty. God used to do miracles for him; used to put off a rain several days to give his meeting a chance; used to cure his horse of lameness; used to cure Mr. Wesley's headaches. And Mr. Wesley also believed in the actual existence of the devil. He believed that devils had possession of people. He talked to the devil when he was in folks, and the devil told him that he was going to leave; and that he was going into another person. That he would be there at a certain time; and Wesley went to that other person, and there the devil was, prompt to the minute. He regarded every conversion as warfare between God and this devil for the possession of that human soul, and that in the warfare God had gained the victory. Honest, no doubt. Mr. Wesley did not believe in human liberty. Honest, no doubt. Was opposed to the liberty of the Colonies. Honestly so. Mr. Wesley preached a sermon entitled "The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes," in which he took the ground that earthquakes were caused by sin; and the only way to stop them was to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

No doubt an honest man. Wesley and Whitfield fell out on the question of predestination. Wesley insisted that God invited everybody to the feast. Whitfield said he did not invite those he knew would not come. Wesley said he did. Whitfield said: "Well, he did not put plates for them, anyway." Wesley said he did. So that, when they were in hell he could show them that there was a seat left for them. The Church that they founded is still active. And probably no Church in the world has done so much preaching for as little money as the Methodists. Whitfield believed in slavery, and advocated the slave trade. And it was of Whitfield that Whittier made the two lines:—

He bade the slave ships speed from coast to coast,
Fanned by the wings of the Holy Ghost.

We have lately had a meeting of the Methodists, and I find, by their statistics, that they believe that they have converted 130,000 folks in a year. That, in order to do this, they have 26,000 preachers, 226,000 Sunday-school scholars, and about 100,000,000 dollars invested in church property. I find, in looking over the history of the world, that there are 40,000 000 or 50,000,000 of people born a year, and if they are saved at the rate of 130,000 a year, about how long will it take that doctrine to save this world? Good, honest people; but they are mistaken. In old times they were very simple. Churches used to be like barns. They used to have them divided—men on that side, women on this. A little barbarous. We have advanced since then, and we now find as a fact, demonstrated by experience, that a man sitting by the woman he loves can thank God as heartily as though sitting between two men that he has never been introduced to.

There is another thing the Methodists should remember, and that is that the Episcopalians were the greatest enemies they ever had. And they should remember that the Freethinkers have always treated them kindly and well. There is one thing about the Methodist Church in the North that I like. But I find that it is not Methodism that does that. I find that the Methodist Church in the South is as much opposed to liberty as the Methodist Church North is in favor of liberty. So it is not Methodism that is in favor of liberty or slavery. They differ a little in their creed from the rest. They do not believe that God does everything. They believe that he does his part, and that you must do the rest, and that getting to heaven is a partnership business. The Methodist Church is adapted to new countries—its ministers are generally uncultured, and with them zeal takes the place of knowledge. They convert people with noise. In the silence that follows most of the converts backslide. In a little while a struggle will commence between the few who are growing and the orthodox many. The few will be

driven out, and the Church will be governed by those who believe without understanding.

THE PRESBYTERIANS.

THE next Church is the Presbyterian, and in my judgment the worst of all, as far as creed is concerned. This Church was founded by John Calvin, a murderer! John Calvin, having power in Geneva, inaugurated human torture. Voltaire abolished torture in France. The man who abolished torture, if the Christian religion be true, God is now torturing in hell; and the man who inaugurated torture is now a glorified angel in heaven. It will not do. John Knox started this doctrine in Scotland, and there is this peculiarity about Presbyterianism—it grows best where the soil is poorest. I read the other day an account of a meeting between John Knox and John Calvin. Imagine a dialogue between a pestilence and a famine! Imagine a conversation between a block and an axe! As I read their conversation it seemed to me as though John Knox and John Calvin were made for each other; that they fitted each other like the upper and lower jaws of a wild beast. They believed happiness was a crime; they looked upon laughter as blasphemy; and they did all they could to destroy every human feeling, and to fill the mind with the infinite gloom of predestination and eternal death. They taught the doctrine that God had a right to damn us because he made us. That is just the reason that he has not a right to damn us. There is some dust. Unconscious dust! What right has God to change that unconscious dust into a human being, when he knows that human being will sin; when he knows that human being will suffer eternal agony? Why not leave him in the unconscious dust? What right has an infinite God to add to the sum of human agony? Suppose I knew that I could change that piece of furniture into a living, sentient human being, and I knew that that being would suffer untold agony for ever. If I did it, I would be a fiend. I would leave that being in the unconscious dust. And yet we are told that we must believe such a doctrine or we are to be eternally damned! It will not do. In 1839 there was a division in this Church, and they had a law suit to see which was the Church of God. And they tried it by a judge and jury, and the jury decided that the new school was the Church of God; and then they got a new trial, and the next jury decided that the old school was the Church of God, and that settled it. That Church teaches that infinite innocence was sacrificed for me! I do not want it. I do not wish to go to heaven unless I can settle by the books, and go there because I ought to go there. I have said, and I say again, I do not wish to be a charity angel. I have no ambition to become a winged pauper of the skies. The other

day a young gentleman, a Presbyterian who had just been converted, came to me and he gave me a tract, and he told me he was perfectly happy. Said I: "Do you think a great many people are going to hell?" "Oh, yes." "And you are perfectly happy?" "Well, he did not know as he was, quite." "Would you not be happier if they were all going to heaven?" "Oh, yes." "Well, then, you are not perfectly happy?" "No, he did not think he was." "When you get to heaven, then you will be perfectly happy?" "Oh, yes." "Now, when we are only going to hell, you are not quite happy; but when we are in hell, and you in heaven, then you will be perfectly happy? You will not be as decent when you get to be angel as you are now, will you?" "Well," he said, "that was not exactly it." Said I: "Suppose your mother were in hell, would you be happy in heaven then?" "Well," he says, "I suppose God would know the best place for mother." And I thought to myself, then, if I was a woman, I would like to have five or six boys like that. It will not do. Heaven is where those are we love, and those who love us. And I wish to go to no world unless I can be accompanied by those who love me here. Talk about the consolations of this infamous doctrine! The consolations of a doctrine that makes a father say: "I can be happy, with my daughter in hell;" that makes a mother say: "I can be happy, with my generous, brave boy in hell;" that makes a boy say: "I can enjoy the glory of heaven, with the woman who bore me, the woman *who would have died for me*, in eternal agony"! And they call that tidings of great joy! No Church has done more to fill the world with gloom than the Presbyterian. Its creed is frightful, hideous, and hellish. The Presbyterian God is the monster of monsters. He is an eternal executioner, jailer and turnkey. He will enjoy for ever the shrieks of the lost—the wails of the damned. Hell is the festival of the Presbyterian God.

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

I HAVE not time to speak of the Baptists,—that Jeremy Taylor said were as much to be rooted out as anything that is the greatest pest and nuisance on the earth. He hated the Baptists because they represented, in some little degree, the liberty of thought. Nor have I time to speak of the Quakers, the best of all, and abused by all. I cannot forget that John Fox, in the year of grace 1640, was put in the pillory and whipped from town to town, scarred, put in a dungeon, beaten, trampled upon, and what for? Simply because he preached the doctrine: "Thou shalt not resist evil with evil." "Thou shalt love thy enemies." Think of what the church must have been that day to scar the flesh of that loving man! Just think of it! I say I have not time to speak of all these sects—the varieties of

Presbyterians and Campbellites. There are hundreds and hundreds of these sects, all founded upon this creed that I read, differing simply in degree. Ah! but they say to me: "You are fighting something that is dead. Nobody believes this now. The preachers do not believe what they preach in the pulpit. The people in the pews do not believe what they hear preached." And they say to me: "You are fighting something that is dead. This is all a form, we do not believe a solitary creed in the world. We sign them and swear that we believe them, but we do not. And none of us do. And all the ministers they say in private, admit that they do not believe it, not quite." I do not know whether this is so or not. I take it that they believe what they preach. I take it that when they meet and solemnly agree to a creed that they are honest and really believe in that creed. But let us see if I am waging a war against the ideas of the dead. Let us see if I am simply storming a cemetery. The Evangelical Alliance, made up of all orthodox denominations of the world, met only a few years ago, and here is their creed: They believe in the divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of the holy scriptures; the right and duty of private judgment in the interpretation of the holy scriptures, but if you interpret wrong you are damned. They believe in the unity of the godhead and the trinity of the persons therein. They believe in the utter depravity of human nature. There can be no more infamous doctrine than that. They look upon a little child as a lump of depravity. I look upon it as a bud of humanity, that will, in the air and light of love and joy, blossom into rich and glorious life. Total depravity of human nature! Here is a woman whose husband has been lost at sea; the news comes that he has been drowned by the ever-hungry waves, and she waits. There is something in her heart that tells her he is alive. And she waits. And years afterwards as she looks down toward the little gate she sees him; he has been given back by the sea, and she rushes to his arms, and covers his face with kisses and with tears. And if that infamous doctrine is true, every tear is a crime, and every kiss a blasphemy. It will not do. According to that doctrine, if a man steals and repents, and takes back the property, the repentance and the taking back of the property are two other crimes. It is an infamy. What else do they believe? "The justification of a sinner by faith alone," without works—just faith. Believing something that you do not understand. Of course God can not afford to reward a man for believing anything that is reasonable. God rewards only for believing something that is unreasonable. If you believe something that is improbable and unreasonable, you are a Christian; but if you believe something that you know is not so, then—you are a saint.

They believe in the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and

in the eternal punishment of the wicked. Tidings of great joy! They are so good that they will not associate with Universalists. They will not associate with Unitarians; they will not associate with scientists; they will only associate with those who believe that God so loved the world that he made up his mind to damn the most of us. The Evangelical Alliance reiterates the absurdities of the Dark Ages—repeats the five points of Calvin—replenishes the fires of hell—certifies to the mistakes and miracles of the Bible—maligns the human race, and kneels to a God who accepted the agony of the innocent as an atonement for the guilty.

WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE ?

THEN they say to me: "What do you propose? You have torn this down, what do you propose to give us in place of it?" I have not torn the good down. I have only endeavored to trample out the ignorant, cruel fires of hell. I do not tear away the passage: "God will be merciful to the merciful." I do not destroy the promise: "If you will forgive others, God will forgive you." I would not for anything blot out the faintest star that shines in the horizon of human despair, nor in the sky of human hope; but I will do what I can to get that infinite shadow out of the heart of man.

"What do you propose in place of this?"

Well, in the first place, I propose good fellowship—good friends all around. No matter what we believe, shake hands and let it go. That is your opinion; this is mine; let us be friends. Science makes friends; religion, superstition, makes enemies. They say: Belief is important. I say: No, actions are important. Judge by deed, not by creed. Good fellowship—good friends—sincere men and women—mutual forbearance, born of mutual respect. We have had too many of these solemn people. Whenever I see an exceedingly solemn man, I know he is an exceedingly stupid man. No man of any humor ever founded a religion—never. Humor sees both sides. While reason is the holy light, humor carries the lantern, and the man with a keen sense of humor is preserved from the solemn stupidities of superstition. I like a man who has got good feeling for everybody; good fellowship. One man said to another: "Will you take a glass of wine?" "I do not drink." "Will you smoke a cigar?" "I do not smoke." "May be you will chew something?" "I do not chew." "Let us eat some hay." "I tell you I do not eat hay." "Well, then, good-by, for you are no company for man or beast." I believe in the gospel of Cheerfulness, the gospel of Good Nature; the gospel of Good Health. Let us pay some attention to our bodies. Take care of our bodies, and our souls will take care of themselves. Good health! And I believe the time will come when the public

thought will be so great and grand that it will be looked upon as infamous to perpetuate disease. I believe the time will come when man will not fill the future with consumption and insanity. I believe the time will come when we will study ourselves, and understand the laws of health, and then we will say: We are under the obligation to put the flags of health in the cheeks of our children. Even if I got to heaven, and had a harp, I would hate to look back upon my children and grandchildren and see them diseased, deformed, crazed—all suffering the penalties of crimes I had committed. I believe in the gospel of Good Living. You cannot make any God happy by fasting. Let us have good food, and let us have it well cooked—and it is a thousand times better to know how to cook than it is to understand any theology in the world. I believe in the gospel of good clothes; I believe in the gospel of good houses; in the gospel of water and soap. I believe in the gospel of intelligence; in the gospel of education. The school-house is my cathedral. The universe is my Bible. I believe in that gospel of justice, that we must reap what we sow. I do not believe in forgiveness as it is preached by the church. We do not need the forgiveness of God, but of each other and of ourselves. If I rob Mr. Smith and God forgive me, how does that help Smith? If I, by slander cover some poor girl with the leprosy of some imputed crime, and she withers away like a blighted flower, and afterward I get the forgiveness of God, how does that help her? If there is another world, we have got to settle with the people we have wronged in this. No bankrupt court there. Every cent must be paid. The Christians say, that among the ancient Jews, if you committed a crime you had to kill a sheep, now they say “charge it.” “Put it on the slate.” It will not do. For every crime you commit you must answer to yourself, and to the one you injure. And if you have ever clothed another with woe, as with a garment of pain, you will never be quite as happy as though you had not done that thing. No forgiveness by the Gods. Eternal, inexorable, everlasting justice, so far as Nature is concerned. You must reap the result of your acts. Even when forgiven by the one you have injured, it is not as though the injury had not been done. That is what I believe in. And if it goes hard with me, I will stand it, and I will cling to my logic, and I will bear it like a man. And I believe, too, in the gospel of Liberty, in giving to others what we claim for ourselves. I believe there is room everywhere for thought, and the more liberty you give away, the more you will have. In liberty extravagance is economy. Let us be just. Let us be generous to each other. I believe in the gospel of Intelligence. That is the only lever capable of raising mankind. Intelligence must be the savior of this world. Humanity is the grand religion, and no

God can put a man in hell in another world, who has made a little heaven in this. God cannot make a man miserable if that man has made somebody else happy. God cannot hate anybody who is capable of loving anybody. Humanity—that word embraces all there is. So I believe in this great gospel of Humanity. “Ah! but,” they say, “it will not do. You must believe.” I say, No. My gospel of health will bring life. My gospel of intelligence, my gospel of good living, my gospel of good-fellowship will cover the world with happy homes. My doctrine will put carpets upon your floors, pictures upon your walls. My doctrine will put books upon your shelves, ideas in your minds. My doctrine will rid the world of the abnormal monsters born of ignorance and superstition. My doctrine will give us health, wealth and happiness. That is what I want. That is what I believe in. Give us intelligence. In a little while a man will find that he cannot steal without robbing himself. He will find that he cannot murder without assassinating his own joy. He will find that every crime is a mistake. He will find that only that man carries the cross who does wrong, and that upon the man who does right the cross turns to wings that will bear him upward for ever. He will find that even intelligent self-love embraces within its mighty arms all the human race.

“Oh,” but they say to me “you take away immortality.” I do not. If we are immortal it is a fact in nature, and we are not indebted to priests for it, nor to Bibles for it, and it cannot be destroyed by unbelief. As long as we love we will hope to live, and when the one dies that we love we say: “Oh, that we could meet again,” and whether we do or not it will not be the work of theology. It will be a fact in nature. I would not for my life destroy one star of human hope, but I want it so that when a poor woman rocks a cradle and sings a lullaby to the dimpled darling, she will not be compelled to believe that ninety-nine chances in a hundred she is raising kindling wood for hell. One world at a time is my doctrine. It is said in this Testament: “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;” and I say: Sufficient unto each world is the evil thereof. And suppose after all that death does end all. Next to eternal joy, next to being for ever with those we love and those who have loved us, next to that, is to be wrapt in the dreamless drapery of eternal peace. Next to eternal life is eternal sleep. Upon the shadowy shore of death the sea of trouble casts no wave. Eyes that have been curtained by the everlasting dark, will never know again the burning touch of tears. Lips touched by eternal silence will never speak again the broken words of grief. Hearts of dust do not break. The dead do not weep. Within the tomb no veiled and weeping sorrow sits, and in the rayless gloom is crouched no shuddering fear. I had rather think of those I have loved, and lost, as

having returned to earth, as having become a part of the elemental wealth of the world—I would rather think of them as unconscious dust, I would rather dream of them as gurgling in the stream, floating in the clouds, bursting in the foam of light upon the shores of worlds, I would rather think of them as the lost visions of a forgotten might, than to have even the faintest fear that their naked souls had been clutched by an orthodox God. But for me, I will leave the dead where nature leaves them. Whatever flower of hope springs up in my heart I will cherish, I will give it breath of sighs and rain of tears. But I cannot believe that there is any being in this universe who has created a human soul for eternal pain. I would rather that every God would destroy himself! I would rather that we all should go to eternal chaos, to black and starless night, than that just one soul should suffer eternal agony.

I have made up my mind that if there is a God, he will be merciful to the merciful. Upon that rock I stand.—That he will not torture the forgiving. Upon that rock I stand.—That every man should be true to himself, and that there is no world, no star, in which honesty is a crime. Upon that rock I stand.—The honest man, the good, kind, sweet woman, the happy child, have nothing to fear, neither in this world nor the world to come. Upon that rock I stand.