

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

# REPLY TO GLADSTONE

BY

COL. R. G. INGERSOLL.

*Reprinted from the "North American Review,"  
June, 1888.*

WITH PUBLISHER'S NOTE, AND

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

By J. M. WHEELER.

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## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

MR. GLADSTONE, in his old age, has lost none of his versatility. Besides leading the Liberal party, he writes magazine articles on a variety of topics. He even aspires to add a new rôle to his repertory, that of Defender of the Faith. On the eve of the last general elections—perhaps the occasion was well timed—he burst upon the world with a vindication of the Mosaic cosmogony. This led him into a controversy with Professor Huxley, in which he displayed his usual ability as a rhetorician, with a surprising ignorance of the very rudiments of physical science. Recently he has championed Christianity against the scepticism of *Robert Elsmere*, and now he defends his creed against the attacks of Colonel Ingersoll in the *North American Review*.

Colonel Ingersoll's reply to Mr. Gladstone is here presented to the English reader. It was desirable that Mr. Gladstone's criticism should be presented with it, so that the reader might command a full view of the discussion. He has been communicated with, but he replies that he has made other arrangements; and whatever may be legally possible it would be unjust, or at least unmannerly, to reprint his part of the debate without his permission. Fortunately Colonel Ingersoll is a controversialist who always puts his opponent's case carefully before refuting it, and therefore the disadvantage of the absence of Mr. Gladstone's article from this *brochure* is reduced to a minimum.

This debate has a history. Six years ago Colonel Ingersoll, whose fame as a Freethought orator had become universal in America, was invited by Mr. Allen Thorndike Rice, the editor of the *North American Review*, to contribute an article on the Christian Religion. This was replied to by Judge Black, who relished the rejoinder so little that nothing could induce him to renew the

contest. During the autumn of last year the Rev. Dr. Field contributed to the same Review an "Open Letter to Colonel Ingersoll." This was replied to in an "Open Letter to Dr. Field." Dr. Field rejoined, and Colonel Ingersoll replied again. The great Freethinker's letters sent up the circulation of the Review to an unprecedented extent. Both are reprinted for English readers by the Progressive Publishing Co. under the respective titles of *Faith and Fact* and *God and Man*.

Whether Mr. Gladstone took pity on poor Dr. Field and chivalrously rushed to his rescue, or whether he was tempted by a very handsome cheque, is a question which he alone can answer. Be that as it may, the *Review* announced a forthcoming article by Mr. Gladstone on the religious opinions of Colonel Ingersoll. It duly appeared in the May number, and the *Review* went through a large number of editions. Probably half the ministers in the States bought a copy, hoping to find fresh "points" for their own answers to "the infidel."

Colonel Ingersoll lost no time in replying. His letter to Mr. Gladstone appeared in the June number. It will be highly relished by the Freethought party in England. The writer is in his very best form. Dialectically speaking, he flays his opponent; yet he does it with perfect courtesy, and pays him compliments while rubbing in the Attic salt. Mr. Gladstone tried to be equally urbane, though he did not always succeed. Sometimes he fell into a supercilious vein, and at others he petulantly quarrelled with the great Freethinker's "tone," as though all men should be as solemn as himself. But candor and good-nature predominated, and it was while under the influence of his better genius that Mr. Gladstone made the admission, which is at once true and well expressed, that "Colonel Ingersoll writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy."

It only remains to add that this seems a favorable opportunity for presenting a brief biography of Colonel Ingersoll. Mr. J. M. Wheeler had the materials already collected for another purpose, and he was able to draw up a narrative of facts and dates which will interest all admirers of the great Freethought orator.

## LIFE OF COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

THE proud title of Liberator is not only his due who, sword in hand, delivers his country from its oppressors. The shackles of bigotry and superstition are no less injurious than the dominion of a foreign foe, and the thinker who from his study combats the prejudices of ages, the orator who from the platform asserts the rights of the oppressed, or stirs men's minds from the lethargy of blind belief, deserve to be enrolled among the emancipators and benefactors of humanity. Such a Liberator is the subject of the present brief biography.

Robert Green Ingersoll, the greatest living American orator, and one of the most remarkable men of the day, was born in the township of Dresden, in the State of New York, on the 11th of August, 1832. He is thus a little more than one year older than the man with whom he has been most frequently compared, Charles Bradlaugh. He was of Puritan stock. His father was a Congregational minister, and Bob, as he was called by his comrades, was educated in accordance with the strictest opinions of the sect. But the trammels of theology never enmeshed his mind. He was a natural Pagan, fond of fun and adventure. He says in one of his lectures that he could never remember the time when he believed in eternal punishment, though he sometimes used to wonder God Almighty did not burn him to a cinder for playing truant from school. From such acknowledgments as these some sage religionists have concluded that Bob was a wild and forward youth. His brother, John L. Ingersoll, has, however, given his testimony, in answer to some calumnies from Talmage, that "As for Robert, I will say that he was as good and obedient a boy as I ever knew." The boy, too, seems to have educated his father, for, like so many other ministers, he came to give up the doctrine of eternal torments, though so clearly taught in the Bible. His liberal views raised dissensions among his flock, which gave his family some insight into the true inward spirit of religion.

Robert's boyhood was spent in Wisconsin and Illinois, where the family removed in 1843.

The keenness of his mind and the propensity which he displayed for arguing matters out with his father doubtless induced that parent to set him to the study of the law. When his term had expired he opened a law office in Shawneetown, Illinois, in conjunction with his brother, Eben C. Ingersoll. Political discussions occupied some share of their time, and his brother subsequently became a member

of Congress. In 1857 they removed to Peoria, and here Ingersoll was married. It was a most blissful union. Politics still occupied much of his attention, and in 1860 he put up, for the first and only time, for the House of Congress. His religious heresy, which he never concealed, was used against him, and he was defeated.

Upon the outbreak of the civil war in 1862 he entered into the Union and Anti-Slavery cause with enthusiasm. He raised the 11th Regiment of Illinois Cavalry, of which he was appointed colonel. Eminently capable of infusing his own spirit into others, he was beloved by his men, and numerous anecdotes are told of his generosity and bravery. One soldier loves to tell how, when wounded, he was covered with the colonel's own cloak during the severity of winter, and stuck to the colonel's whisky flask. He was in the battle of Shiloh and other engagements. Although earnestly convinced of the righteousness of the Unionist cause, he was too sensitive for the brutal trade of war. He says: "I never saw our men fire but I thought of the widows and orphans they would make, and wished they would miss." The fortune of war made him prisoner to the Confederates, but his eloquence on the anti-slavery side proved so "corrupting" to his captors that he was gladly exchanged. Returned to the North, he still fought with his tongue for the political rights of the black. Renowned for his legal advocacy, he was in 1866 appointed Attorney-General for Illinois. But for religious bigotry he would also have been made governor of that State. Asked once how much his fine copy of Voltaire cost him, he replied, "I believe it cost me the governorship of the State of Illinois." His private practice became large, and his generosity increased with his wealth. Ingersoll's money has always been at the service of those he loves. He has long had the custom of keeping a drawer where all his family go and take whatever they please. Asked concerning this by one of his interviewers, he replied, "I desire my children to have the same freedom as myself."

Ingersoll's home is a model one. Those who have the pleasure of visiting it come away with the observation, "See how these Freethinkers love one another." Perfect freedom reigns, yet each delights in sharing the pleasures of others. Ingersoll has never in his life beaten his children. He stigmatises the man who does so as a brute. He believes in the power of kindness. Shakespeare, "the inspired word," is on his table, and near it is a copy of Burns, "the family hymn book." His favorite modern author is George Eliot, but Darwin, Huxley, Humboldt, and all the best writers are in his library, not for show but for use. "What a grand house you live in!" a caller on Colonel Ingersoll is quoted as saying. "I wish," the Colonel replied, "that I lived in the poorest house in New York." "What do you mean by saying that?" the visitor asked. "I mean that I wish that every man in New York had a better house than I have." He is full of the milk of human kindness. A characteristic of the man is his refusal to buy articles

unless he knows the makers have been adequately paid. He has been known to keep an important client waiting while he has run from his office to pick up a fallen child, coming back with the remark that he never misses such a chance.

Ingersoll stands over six feet in height and is massive in proportion. His broad shoulders and chest capacity tell of strong vitality and lung power, improved by use. His head shows keen and bright intellectual power, his features are animated with frank good humor. Upon the platform he is full of action. He walks about and is emphatic in his gestures. But he is always easy and at home with his audience. He laughs at his own jokes, and seizes the moment when he is closest together with his hearers to lift them above themselves in some stream of noble thought or glowing feeling. He is one of the most natural of orators, never at a loss for a pregnant word, though he will occasionally pause, half hesitatingly, to give full effect to some telling phrase. He has been known to make a hard-headed jury laugh outright, and then put their handkerchiefs to their eyes within a few moments.

How great a political power fine oratory may be was seen at the Republican Convention of June, 1876, when Ingersoll proposed James Gillespie Blaine for President. The opposition testified to his abilities by insisting that the vote should not be taken until the following day, when the delegates would have recovered from the overpowering effect of his eloquence. Had it been taken during the enthusiasm excited by Ingersoll's speech, no doubt Blaine would have been triumphant. As it was, he lacked only 28 votes out of a total of 754. From that time his services as a campaign orator have been in demand throughout the States. He may be said, indeed, to have become the national orator, being continually selected to speak on any great public occasion.

In 1877 he was offered and refused the post of Minister to Germany, a position the United States always assigns to her most distinguished citizens. But Ingersoll was too busy for posts of honor. Not only was he employed in the most important law suits, which compelled his removal to Washington, but he devoted a considerable share of time to the advocacy of Freethought. It is greatly to his honor that one of his first published discourses was delivered in vindication of Thomas Paine, the rebellious needleman, to whom the debt of the American Republic can scarcely be exaggerated, yet whose memory has been assailed with the foulest malignity because he had the courage to seek to emancipate his fellows from the tyranny of priestcraft as well as from that of kings. Ingersoll, too, has been frequently attacked. Men who dare not meet him face to face malign him from their coward's castle of the pulpit. They have reported his conversion several times. They have made him lose his voice through infidel lectures, and swear that never again would he attack the Christian religion! His name is good enough to trade on, and skunks whose own merits would never insure them a hearing, seek notoriety by attacking

the infidel. But Ingersoll lives in the open, and his courage, manliness and generosity are well known.

Ingersoll is unmistakably the finest orator of the great Republic. Henry Ward Beecher, no mean rival, called him "the most brilliant speaker of the English tongue of all men on this globe." Not only does he draw larger audiences than any of his platform rivals, but his speeches will bear reading. They all bespeak the healthy large-hearted man who sees life steadily, and sees it whole. Occasionally he soars into the finest prose poetry. We always feel we are in the presence of a man who candidly says what he thinks and feels what he says. There is no beating about the bush with Ingersoll. He has seen and read with his eyes open, and he has the courage to tell the result of his investigations. The verbiage of sophistry has no effect upon him. He is satisfied with nothing short of the bed-rock of solid fact. Nothing is too sacred to be tested by reason. Appreciating the saying of Shaftesbury, that "solemnity is of the essence of imposture," he exposes the humorous side of the stupidly solemn. Whatever subject he touches he adorns with wit and vivacity.

Joseph Hatton, in his work entitled *To-day in America*, says "Ingersoll is not like any talker I have ever heard before. He reminds me a little of Spurgeon, whose Saxon-English and broad homely similes are akin to the Ingersoll method. He has not the dignity of Bright nor the polish of Gladstone; but he has the earnestness of both, coupled with a boldness of metaphor and a vigor of style that are peculiarly American. . . . I have seen nothing like the enthusiasm which his oratory evokes, not in multitudes of thoughtless people, but in vast assemblages of educated and responsible men and women who have paid four shillings each for their seats." Ingersoll has probably a larger personal following than any man in the States. Men and women feel that in emancipating their minds from superstitious fears, he has rendered them a personal service. Women, for whose equality of rights with man he is a determined advocate, always form a prominent feature in his audiences. They admire his manliness, strength, his chivalry and tenderness for the weak, and his fervent love of the home. The source of his power, is no less in his emotional and affectional utterances than in his intellectual courage. He has the true spells of persuasion, simple and direct speech, strong love of truth, and firm hold upon nature.

It is the merit of the orator that his language is level with the ear of the whole of his audience. Seldom in his speeches does he indulge in classical allusion such as that in the present reply to the flesh-eating birds fabled to inhabit the lake Stymphalus. His language is that of the people. His words are clear, short, crisp and strong, like that of the best poetry. His speeches are never wire-drawn. Every blow tells. Moreover, he has an aptitude of anecdotal illustration which carries all before it. He is reputed to be the best teller of a good story in America. The joke



may be an old one, but it is told with such point, humor, and evident enjoyment that it is irresistible. And then he passes from wit to pathos, like a beam of light streaming now on a bed of flowers and anon into a cavern.

All his speeches are animated by the moral sentiment. Take the following from his oration at the mass meeting on behalf of the civil rights of the colored people, held at Lincoln Hall, Oct. 22, 1883, which I transcribe because it has not hitherto been published in England.

"I am inferior to any man whose rights I trample under foot. Men are not superior by reason of the accidents of race and color. They are superior who have the best heart, the best brain. Superiority is born of honesty, of virtue, of charity, and above all, of the love of liberty. The superior man is the providence of the inferior. He is eyes for the blind, strength for the weak, and a shield for the defenceless. He stands erect by bending above the fallen. He rises by lifting others."

At this meeting Frederick Douglass, the slave orator, introduced Ingersoll by reciting Leigh Hunt's famous lines on Abou Ben Adhem, and the ringing cheers of the assembly showed that their appropriateness was felt.

In his present reply to Mr. Gladstone, Ingersoll alludes to the Poccasset religious maniac, Freeman, who went a step beyond Father Abraham and murdered his own child. A yet more celebrated instance of the fruits of fanaticism came under Ingersoll's own observation. It was his fortune to be in President Garfield's company on the memorable 2nd of July, 1881, when Guiteau assassinated the President in the waiting room of the Baltimore and Potomac Railway. Ingersoll at once threw his own body in front of Garfield while the assassin was continuing to fire. He would undoubtedly have been shot had not Guiteau at that moment been seized and disarmed. His courage and self-devotion was unavailing. Two rapid shots had already done their murderous work before any attempt could be made to protect the President, even by Mr. Blaine, on whose arm he was leaning; but the effort of Ingersoll to give his own life for that of his friend will ever redound to his honor.

Emerson well says there is no true orator who is not a hero. The orator must ever stand with forward foot in the attitude of advancing. Ingersoll's defence of Mr. C. B. Reynolds, who was indicted for blasphemy at Morristown in New Jersey, in 1886, was characteristic of the true leader. Though suffering from sore throat, and forced to forego important remunerative engagements, he personally appeared on behalf of the prisoner at the trial in May of last year. His *Defence of Freethought* on that occasion, in a five hours' speech to the jury, is a noble specimen of oratorical power. It doubtless had a powerful effect on the bigotry of New Jersey. Although, thanks to the adverse summing-up of the judge, he failed to get the prisoner acquitted, Mr. Reynolds was let off with a slight fine, which, together with all expenses, was met by

Colonel Ingersoll. Prosecutions for blasphemy will probably never more be heard of in New Jersey.

It is scarcely necessary to enumerate his published lectures and writings. They are almost as well-known in England as on the other side of the herring pond. The title of one of them, *Take a Road of Your Own*, illustrates the spirit of his teachings. No more telling indictments of orthodoxy have been published than his lectures on *Gods, Ghosts, What Must I Do to Be Saved, Myth and Miracle, Real Blasphemy* and *The Dying Creed*. *The Mistakes of Moses*, his largest work, is brimful of fun and lively argument. His first contribution to the *North American Review* was in August, 1881, when he wrote on the subject "Is All the Bible Inspired?" Since then he has held his own against Judge Black, Professor G. P. Fisher, and, more recently, the Rev. H. Field, who, being over-weighted by the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, is doubtless glad to have Mr. Gladstone come "to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Colonel Ingersoll has also contributed introductory chapters to *Modern Thinkers*, by Prof. Van Denslow; to *The Brain and the Bible*, by Edgar C. Beall; and to *Men, Women and Gods*, by Helen Gardener, a young lady he introduced to the Freethought platform. His writings are just like his speeches, and, we should surmise, are written to dictation. We can imagine we see him marching up and down, emphasising his points and softly chuckling as his humor occasionally ripples forth.

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## REPLY TO GLADSTONE.

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*To the Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone, M.P.,*

*My dear Sir:*

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

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

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

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

But there is one thing that cannot be admitted, and that is your statement that the constitution of man is in a “warped, impaired,

and dislocated condition," and that "these deformities indispose men to belief." Let us examine this.

We say that a thing is "warped" that was once nearer level, flat, or straight; that it is "impaired" when it was once nearer perfect, and that it is "dislocated" when it was once united. Consequently, you have said that at some time the human constitution was unwarped, unimpaired, and with each part working in harmony with all. You seem to believe in the degeneracy of man, and that our unfortunate race, starting at perfection, has travelled downward through all the wasted years.

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

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

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

You have simply repeated a favorite assertion of the clergy, to the effect that man rejects the Gospel because he is naturally depraved and hard of heart—because, owing to the sin of Adam and Eve, he has fallen from the perfection and purity of paradise to that “impaired” condition in which he is satisfied with the filthy rags of reason, observation and experience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

cent man for the vices of another can hardly be called divine. Can a murderer find justification in the agonies of his victim? There is no vicarious vice; there is no vicarious virtue. For me it is hard to understand how a just and loving being can charge one of his children with the vices, or credit him with the virtues, of another.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If "orthodox Christianity" be true, an infidel has not the right to live. Every book in which the Bible is attacked should be burned with its author. Why hesitate to burn a man whose constitution is "warped, impaired, and dislocated," for a few moments, when hundreds of others will be saved from eternal flames?

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

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

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

With great propriety it may be asked: In the keeping of which Church is this "heavenly treasure"? Did the Catholics have it, and was it taken by Luther? Did Henry the VIII. seize it, and

is it now in the keeping of the Church of England? Which of the warring sects in America has this treasure; or have we in this country only the "rust and canker"? Is it an Episcopal Church, that refuses to associate with a colored man for whom Christ died, and who is good enough for the society of the angelic host?

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

These simple questions seem to have excited you to an unusual degree, and you ask in words of some severity "Whether this is the tone in which controversies ought to be carried on ?" And you say that "not only is the name of Jehovah encircled in the heart of every believer with the profoundest reverence and love, but that the Christian religion teaches, through the incarnation, a personal relation with God so lofty that it can only be approached in a

deep, reverential calm." You admit that "a person who deems a given religion to be wicked, may be led onward by logical consistency to impugn in strong terms the character of the author and object of that religion," but you insist that such person is "bound by the laws of social morality and decency to consider well the terms and meaning of his indictment."

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

It is not necessary for me to discuss this question with you. It has been decided by Jehovah himself. You probably remember the account given in the eighteenth chapter of 1 Kings, of a contest between the prophets of Baal and the prophets of Jehovah. There were four hundred and fifty prophets of the false God who endeavored to induce their deity to consume with fire from heaven the sacrifice upon his altar. According to the account, they were greatly in earnest. They certainly appeared to have some hope of success, but the fire did not descend.

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

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

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

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

The question arises: Has everyone who reads the Old Testament the right to express his thought as to the character of Jehovah? You will admit that as he reads his mind will receive some impression, and that when he finishes the "inspired volume" he will have some opinion as to the character of Jehovah. Has he the right to express that opinion? Is the Bible a revelation from God to man? Is it a revelation to the man who reads it, or to the man who does not read it? If to the man who reads it, has he the right to give to others the revelation that God has

given to him? If he comes to the conclusion at which you have arrived, that Jehovah is God, has he the right to express that opinion?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is still another test: The civilised man gives to others the rights that he claims for himself. He believes in the liberty

of thought and expression, and abhors persecution for conscience' sake.

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

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

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

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

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

Jehovah did not tell the husband to reason with his wife. She was to be answered only with death. She was to be bruised and mangled to a bleeding, shapeless mass of quivering flesh, for having breathed an honest thought.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You may reply that the inhabitants of Canaan were unfit to live—that they were ignorant and cruel. Why did not Jehovah,

the "Father of all," give them the Ten Commandments? Why did he leave them without a Bible, without prophets and priests? Why did he shower all the blessings of revelation on one poor and wretched tribe, and leave the great world in ignorance and crime—and why did he order his favorite children to murder those whom he had neglected?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In regard to Abraham, the argument is precisely the same,

except that Jehovah is said to have interfered, and allowed an animal to be slain instead.

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

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

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

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

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

You have taken the position that the conditions are different; and you say that: "According to the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve were placed under a law, not of consciously perceived right and wrong, but of simple obedience. The tree of which alone they were forbidden to eat was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; duty lay for them in following the command of the Most High, before and until they became capable of appreciating it by an ethical standard. Their knowledge was but that of an infant who has just reached the stage at which he can comprehend that he is ordered to do this or that, but not the nature of the things so ordered."

If Adam and Eve could not "consciously perceive right and wrong," how is it possible for you to say that "duty lay for them in following the command of the Most High"? How can a person "incapable of perceiving right and wrong" have an idea of duty? You are driven to say that Adam and Eve had no moral sense.



How under such circumstances could they have the sense of guilt, or of obligation? And why should such persons be punished? And why should the whole human race become tainted by the offence of those who had no moral sense?

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

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

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

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

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

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

You see clearly that the Hindoo mother, when she throws her babe into the Ganges at the command of her God, "sins against first principles"; but you excuse Abraham because he lived in the childhood of the race. Can Jehovah be excused because of his youth? Not satisfied with your explanation, your defences and excuses, you take the ground that when Abraham said: "My son, God will provide a lamb for a burnt offering," he may have "be-

lieved implicitly that a way of rescue would be found for his son." In other words, that Abraham did not believe that he would be required to shed the blood of Isaac. So that, after all, the faith of Abraham consisted in "believing implicitly" that Jehovah was not in earnest.

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

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

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

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

There is nothing in Darwin to show that all has been evolved from "primal night and from chaos." There is no evidence of "primal night." There is no proof of universal chaos. Did your Jehovah spend an eternity in "primal night," with no companion but chaos ?

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

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

do with the truth of the Bible, and with the existence of a personal God of infinite power and wisdom.

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

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

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

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

If you are convinced that Moses and Darwin are in exact accord, will you be good enough to tell who, in your judgment, were the parents of Adam and Eve? Do you find in Darwin any theory that satisfactorily accounts for the "inspired fact" that a Rib, commencing with Monogenic Propagation—falling into halves by a contraction in the middle—reaching, after many ages of Evolution, the Amphigenic stage, and then, by the Survival of the Fittest, assisted by Natural Selection, moulded and modified by Environment, became at last, the mother of the human race?

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

According to your idea, Jehovah prepared a home for his children—first a garden in which they should be tempted and from which

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

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

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

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

Can this be called reasoning ? Why should the infinite demand a sacrifice from man ? In the first place, the infinite is conditionless—the infinite cannot want—the infinite has. A conditioned being may want ; but the gratification of a want involves a change of condition. If God be conditionless, he can have no wants—consequently, no human being can gratify the infinite.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a matter of fact, the history of the world has been such that

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

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

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

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

And is this the end of your argument, "That you are not able to explain the inequalities of adjustment between human beings"? Is the solution of this problem beyond your power? Does the Bible shed no light? Is the Christian in the presence of this question as dumb as the Agnostic? When the injustice of this world is so flagrant that you cannot harmonise that awful fact with the wisdom and goodness of an infinite God, do you not see that you have surrendered, or at least that you have raised a flag of truce beneath which your adversary accepts as final your statement that you do not know and that your imagination is not sufficient to frame an excuse for God?

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

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

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

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

to decide according to the balance of the evidence as it seems to you”?

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

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

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

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

Is it in accordance with reason that an infinitely good and loving God would drown a world that he had taken no means to civilise—to whom he had given no Bible, no gospel, taught no scientific fact, and in which the seeds of art had not been sown; that he would create a world that ought to be drowned? That a being of infinite wisdom would create a rival, knowing that the rival would fill perdition with countless souls destined to suffer eternal pain? Is it according to common sense that an infinitely good God would order some of his children to kill others? That he would command soldiers to rip open with the sword of war the bodies of women—wreaking vengeance on babes unborn? Is it according to reason that a good, loving, compassionate, and just God would establish slavery among men, and that a pure God would uphold polygamy? Is it according to common sense that he who wished to make men merciful and loving would demand the sacrifice of animals, so that his altars would be wet with the blood of oxen, sheep, and doves? Is it according to reason that a good God would inflict tortures upon his ignorant children—that he would torture animals to death: and is it in accordance with common sense and reason that this God would create countless billions of people knowing that they would be eternally damned?

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

There is this curious fact: The far past and the far future seem to belong to the miraculous and the monstrous. The present, as a rule, is the realm of common sense. If you say to a man:

"Eighteen hundred years ago the dead were raised," he will reply: "Yes, I know that." And if you say: "A hundred thousand years from now all the dead will be raised," he will probably reply: "I presume so." But if you tell him: "I saw a dead man raised to-day," he will ask, "From what madhouse have you escaped?"

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

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

"Our demands for evidence must be limited by the general reason of the case. Does that general reason of the case make it probable that a finite being, with a finite place in a comprehensive scheme devised and administered by a being who is infinite, would be able even to embrace within his view, or rightly to appreciate all the motives or aims that there may have been in the mind of the divine disposer?"

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

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

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

There were thousands and thousands of opportunities for this



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

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

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

In my opinion, Shakespeare was, intellectually, the greatest of the human race, and my intention was simply to express that view. It never occurred to me that any one would suppose that I thought Shakespeare a greater actor than Garrick, a more wonderful composer than Wagner, a better violinist than Remenyi, or a heavier man than Daniel Lambert. It is to be regretted that you were misled by my words and really supposed that I intended to say that Shakespeare was a greater general than Cæsar. But, after all, your criticism has no possible bearing on the point at issue. Is it an effort to avoid that which cannot be met? The real question is this: If we cannot account for Christ without a miracle, how can we account for Shakespeare? Dr. Field took the ground that Christ himself was a miracle; that it was impossible to account for such a being in any natural way; and, guided by common sense, guided by the rule of investigation such as common sense teaches, I called attention to Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, and Shakespeare.

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

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

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

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

Why should a husband and wife be compelled to live with each other after love is dead? Why should the wife still be bound in indissoluble chains to a husband who is cruel, infamous and false? Why should her life be destroyed because of his? Why should she be chained to a criminal and an outcast? Nothing can be more unphilosophic than this. Why fill the world with the children of indifference and hatred?

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

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

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

Theologians have the habit of using names instead of arguments, of appealing to some man, great in some direction, to establish their creed; but we all know that no man is great enough to be an authority, except in that particular domain in which he won his eminence; and we all know that great men are not great in all directions. Bacon died a believer in the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. Tycho Brahe kept an imbecile in his service, putting down with great care the words that fell from the hanging lip of

idiocy, and then endeavored to put them together in a way to form prophecies. Sir Matthew Hale believed in witchcraft not only, but in its lowest and most vulgar forms; and some of the greatest men of antiquity examined the entrails of birds to find the secrets of the future.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You say that "you have known a person who, after studying the old classical or Olympian religion for a third part of a century, at length began to hope that he had some partial comprehension of it, some inkling of what it meant." You say this for the purpose of showing how impossible it is to understand the Bible. If it is so

difficult, why do you call it a revelation? And yet, according to your creed, the man who does not understand the revelation and believe it, or who does not believe it, whether he understands it or not, is to reap the harvest of everlasting pain. Ought not the revelation to be revealed?

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

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

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

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

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

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

In my Letter to Dr. Field I stated—not at the time pretending

to quote from the New Testament—that Ananias and Sapphira, after talking the matter over, not being entirely satisfied with the collaterals, probably concluded to keep a little, just enough to keep them from starvation if the good and pious bankers should abscond. It never occurred to me that any man would imagine that this was a quotation, and I feel like asking your pardon for having led you into this error. We are informed in the Bible that “they kept back a part of the price.” It occurred to me, “judging by the rule of investigation according to common sense,” that there was a reason for this, and I could think of no reason except that they did not care to trust the apostles with all, and that they kept back just a little, thinking it might be useful if the rest should be lost.

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

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

Whereupon Peter said :

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

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

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

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

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

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

They were given as two passages. No one for a moment supposed that they would be read together as one, and no one imagined that any one in answering the argument would be led to believe that they were intended as one. Neither was there in this the slightest negligence, as I was answering a man who is perfectly familiar with the Bible. The objection was too small to make. It is hardly large enough to answer—and had it not been made by you it would not have been answered.

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

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

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

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

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

Does history show that there is a moral governor of the world? What witnesses shall we call? The billions of slaves who were paid with blows?—the countless mothers whose babes were sold?

Have we time to examine the Waldenses, the Covenanters of Scotland, the Catholics of Ireland, the victims of St. Bartholomew, of the Spanish Inquisition, all those who have died in flames? Shall we hear the story of Bruno? Shall we ask Servetus? Shall we ask the millions slaughtered by Christian swords in America—all the victims of ambition, of perjury, of ignorance, of superstition and revenge, of storm and earthquake, of famine, flood and fire?

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

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

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

I still insist that human affection is the foundation of the idea of immortality; that love was the first to speak that word, no matter whether they who spoke it were savage or civilised, Egyptian or Greek. But if we are immortal, if there be another world, why was it not clearly set forth in the Old Testament? Certainly, the authors of that book had an opportunity to learn it from the Egyptians. Why was it not revealed by Jehovah? Why did he waste his time in giving orders for the consecration of priests—in

saying that they must have sheep's blood put on their right ears and on their right thumbs and on their right big toes? Could a God with any sense of humor give such directions, or watch without huge laughter the performance of such a ceremony? In order to see the beauty, the depth and tenderness of such a consecration, is it essential to be in a state of "reverential calm"?

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

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

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

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

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

Can we stop thinking?

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

You have not even attempted to answer my arguments upon these points, but you have unconsciously avoided them. You did not attack the citadel. In military parlance, you proceeded to "shell the woods." The noise is precisely the same as though



every shot had been directed against the enemy's position, but the result is not. You do not seem willing to implicitly trust the correctness of your aim. You prefer to place the target after the shot.

The question is whether the will knowingly can change evidence, and whether there is any opportunity of being dishonest in the formation of an opinion. You have changed the issue. You have erased the word formation and interpolated the word expression.

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

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

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

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

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

that Napoleon expressed his real opinion when he justified himself for the assassination of the Duc d'Enghien ?

If you answer these questions in the affirmative, you admit that I am right. If you answer in the negative, you admit that you are wrong. The moment you admit that the opinion formed cannot be changed by expressing a pretended opinion, your argument is turned against yourself.

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

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

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

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

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

and prejudice does raise a clamor, and the intellect is affected and the judgment is darkened and the opinion is deformed; but the prejudice is real and the clamor is sincere and the judgment is upright and the opinion is honest.

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

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

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

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

It may be that the Thugs were taught that murder is innocent; but did the teachers believe what they taught? Did the pupils

believe the teachers? Did not Jehovah teach that the act that we describe as murder was a duty? Were not his teachings practiced by Moses and Joshua and Jephthah and Samuel and David? Were they honest? But what has all this to do with the point at issue?

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

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

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

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

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

You must admit that the opinions, habits and religions of men depend, at least in some degree, on race, occupation, training and

capacity. Is not every thoughtful man compelled to agree with Edgar Fawcett, in whose brain are united the beauty of the poet and the subtlety of the logician—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Science is the enemy of fear and credulity. It invites investigation, challenges the reason, stimulates inquiry, and welcomes the unbeliever. It seeks to give food and shelter, and raiment, education and liberty to the human race. It welcomes every fact and every truth. It has furnished a foundation for morals, a philosophy for the guidance of man. From all books it selects the good, and from all theories, the true. It seeks to civilise the human race by the cultivation of the intellect and heart. It refines through art, music, and the drama, giving voice and ex-

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

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

Again assuring you of my profound respect, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

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