

COL. INGERSOLL'S AMERICAN SECULAR LECTURES.

SOME REASONS WHY ;

AND

CHINESE GODS.

BY

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SOME REASONS WHY.

THE history of the world shows that religion has made enemies, instead of friends. That one word "religion" paints the horizon of the past with every form of agony and torture, and when one pronounces the name of "religion" we think of 1,500 years of persecution, of 6,000 years of hatred, slander, and vituperation. Strange, but true, that those who have loved God most have loved men least; strange that in countries where there has been the most religion there has been the most agony; and that is one reason why I am opposed to what is known as religion. By religion I mean the duties that men are supposed to owe to God: by religion I mean, not what man owes to man, but what we owe to some invisible, infinite, and Supreme Being. The question arises, Can any relation exist between finite man and infinite being? An infinite being is absolutely conditional. An infinite being cannot walk, cannot receive, and a finite being cannot give to the infinite. Can I increase his happiness or decrease his misery? Does he need my strength or my life? What can I do for him? I say nothing. For one, I do not believe there is any God who gives rain or sunshine for praying. For one, I do not believe there is any being who helps man simply because he kneels. I may be mistaken, but that is my doctrine, that the finite cannot by any possibility help the infinite, or the infinite be indebted to the finite; that the finite cannot by any possibility assist a being who is all in all. What can we do? We can help man; we can help to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry; we can help to break the chains of the slave; we can help to weave a garment of joy that will finally cover this world. That is all that man can do. Wherever he has endeavoured to do more he has simply increased the misery of his fellows. I can find out nothing of these things myself by my unaided reasoning. If there is an infinite God, and I have not reason enough to comprehend His universe, whose fault is it? I am told that we have the inspired will of God. I do not know exactly what they mean by inspired. Not two sects agree on that word.

Some tell me that every great work is inspired, that Shakspeare is inspired. I would be less apt to dispute that than a similar remark about any other book on this earth. If the Jehovah had wanted to have a book written, the inspiration of which should not be disputed, He should have waited until Shakspeare lived. Whatever they mean by inspiration they at least mean that it is true. If it is true, it does not need to be inspired. The truth will take care of itself. Nothing except a falsehood needs inspiration. What is inspiration? A man looks at the sea, and the sea says something to him. Another man looks at the same sea, and the sea tells another story to him. The sea cannot tell the same story to any two human beings. There is not a thing in Nature, from a pebble to a constellation, that tells the same story to any two human beings. It depends upon the man's experience, his intellectual development, and what chord of memory it touches. One looks upon the sea and is filled with grief; another looks upon it and laughs. Last year, riding in the cars from Boston to Portsmouth, there sat opposite me a lady and gentleman. As we reached the latter place the woman, for the first time in her life, caught a burst of the sea, and she looked and said to her husband: "Isn't that beautiful," and he looked and said: "I'll bet you can dig clams there."

Another illustration. A little while ago a gentleman was walking with another in South Carolina, at Charleston—one who had been upon the other side. Said the Northerner to the Southerner, "Did you ever see such a night as this; did you ever in your life see such a moon?" "Oh my God," said he, "You ought to have seen that moon before the war." I simply say these things to convince you that everything in nature has a different story to tell every human being. So the Bible tells a different story to every man that reads it. History proves what I say. Why so many sects? Why so much persecution? Simply because two people couldn't understand it exactly alike. You may reply that God intended it should be so understood, and that is the real revelation that God intended. For instance, I write a letter to Smith, I want to convey to him certain thoughts. If I am honest, I will use the words which will convey to him my thoughts, but not being infinite I don't know exactly how Smith will understand my words; but if I were infinite I would be bound to use the words that I know Smith would get my exact idea from. If God intended to make

a revelation to me He has to make it to me through my brain and my reasoning. He cannot make a revelation to another man for me. The other man will have God's word for it, but I will only have that man's word for it. As that man has been dead for several thousand years, and as I don't know what his reputation was for truth and veracity in the neighbourhood in which he lived, I will wait for the Lord to speak again. Suppose when I read it, the revelation to me, through the Bible, is that it is not true, and God knew that I should know that when I did read it, and knew, if I did not say it, I should be dishonest. Is it possible that he would damn me for being honest, and give me wings if I would play the hypocrite? The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of the gentleman who reads it.

Yet they tell me this book was written by the Creator of every shining star. Now let us see. I want to be honest and candid. I have just as much at stake in the way of soul as any doctor of divinity that ever lived, and more than some I have met. According to this book, the first attempt at peopling this world was a failure. God had to destroy all but eight. He saved some of the same kind to start again, which I think was a mistake. After that, the people still getting worse, he selected from the wide world a few of the tribe of Abraham. He had no time to waste with everybody. He had no time to throw away on Egypt. It had at that time a vast and splendid civilization, in which there were free schools; in which the one man married the one wife; where there were courts of law; where there were codes of laws. Neither could he give attention to India, that had at that time a literature as splendid almost as ours, a language as perfect, that had produced poets, philosophers, statesmen. He had no time to waste with them, but took a few of the tribe of Abraham, and he did his best to civilize these people. He was their Governor, their Executive, their Supreme Court. He established a despotism, and from Mount Sinai he proclaimed his laws. They didn't pay much attention to them. He wrought thousands of miracles to convince them that he was a God. Isn't it perfectly wonderful that the priest of one religion never believes the miracle told by the priest of another? Is it possible that they know each other? I heard a story the other day. A gentleman was telling a very remarkable circumstance that happened to himself, and all the listeners except one, said, "Is it possible: did you ever hear

such a wonderful thing in all your life?" They had noticed that this one man didn't appear to take a vivid interest in the story, so one said to him, "You don't express much astonishment at the story?" "No," says he, "I am a liar myself."

I find by reading this book that a worse Government was never established by Jehovah; that the Jews were the most unfortunate people who lived upon the globe. Let us compare this book. In all civilized countries is it not only admitted, but passionately asserted, that slavery is an infamous crime; that a war of extermination is murder; that polygamy enslaves woman, degrades man, and destroys home; that nothing is more infamous than the slaughter of decrepit men, and helpless women, and of prattling babes; that the captured maiden should not be given to her captors; that wives should not be stoned to death for differing in religion from their husbands. We know there was a time in the history of most nations when all these crimes were regarded as divine institutions. Nations entertaining these views to-day are called savage, and with the exception of the Fiji Islanders, some tribes in Central Africa, and a few citizens of Delaware, no human being can be found degraded enough to agree upon those subjects with Jehovah. To-day the fact that a nation has abolished and abandoned those things is the only evidence that it can offer to show that it is not still barbarous; but a believer in the inspiration of the Bible is compelled to say there was a time when slavery was right, when polygamy was the highest form of virtue, when wars of extermination was waged with the sword of mercy, and when the Creator of the whole world commanded the soldier to sheathe the dagger of murder in the dimpled breast of infancy. The believer in inspiration of the Bible is compelled to say there was a time when it was right for a husband to murder his wife because they differed upon subjects of religion. I deny that such a time ever was. If I knew the real God said it, I would still deny it. Four thousand years ago, if the Bible is true, God was in favour of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination and religious persecution. Now we are told the Devil is in favour of all those things, and God is opposed to them; in other words, the Devil stands now where God stood 4,000 years ago; yet they tell me God is just as good now as he was then, and the Devil just as bad now as God was then.

Other nations believed in slavery, polygamy, and war, and

persecution, without ever having received one ray of light from Heaven. That shows that a special revelation is not necessary to teach a man to do wrong. Other nations did no worse without the Bible than the Jews did with it. Suppose the Devil had inspired a book? In what respect would he have differed from God on the subject of slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, and religious persecution? Suppose we knew that after God had finished his book the Devil had gotten possession of it, and wrote a few passages to suit himself, which passages, O Christian, would you pick out now as having probably been written by the Devil? which of these two, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," or "Kill all the males among the little ones, and kill every man, but all the women and girls keep alive for yourselves,"--which of those two passages would they select as having been written by the Devil? If God wrote the last, there is no need of a Devil.

Is there a Christian in the wide world who does not wish that God, from the thunder and lightning of Sinai, had said: "You shall not enslave your fellow-man?" I am opposed to any man who is in favour of slavery. If a revolution is needed at all it is to prevent man enslaving his fellow-man. But they say God did the best he could; that the Jews were so bad that he had to come up kind of slow. If he had told them suddenly they must not murder and steal, they would not have paid any respect to the Ten Commandments. Suppose you go to the Cannibal Islands to prevent the gentlemen there from eating missionaries, and you found they eat them raw. The first move is to induce them to cook them. After you get them to eat cooked missionaries, you will then, without their knowing it, occasionally slip in a little mutton. We will go on gradually decreasing missionaries and increasing mutton, until finally the last will be so cultivated that they will prefer the sheep to the priest. I think the missionaries would object to that mode, of course.

I know this was written by the Jews themselves. If they were to write it now it would be different to-day. They are a civilized people. I do not wish it understood that a word I say to-night touches the slightest prejudice in any man's mind against the Jewish people. They are as good a people as live to-day. I will say right here, they never had any luck until Jehovah abandoned them. Now we come to the New Testament. They tell me that is better than the old. I say it is worse. The

great objection to the Old Testament is that it is cruel; but in the Old Testament the revenge of God stopped with the portals of the tomb. He never threatened punishment after death. He never threatened one thing beyond the grave. It was reserved for the New Testament to make known the doctrine of eternal punishment.

Is the New Testament inspired? I have not time to give many reasons, but I will give some. In the first place, they tell me that the very fact the witnesses disagree in minor matters shows that they have not conspired to tell the same story. Good. And I say in every lawsuit where four or five witnesses testify, or endeavour to testify, to the same transaction, it is natural that they should differ on minor points. Why? Because no two occupy exactly the same position; no two see exactly alike; no two remember precisely the same, and their disagreement is due to, and accounted for, by the imperfection of human nature, and the fact that they did not all have an equal opportunity to know. But if you admit or say that the four witnesses were inspired by an infinite being who did see it all, then they should remember all the same, because inspiration does not depend on memory. That brings me to another point. Why were there four gospels? What is the use of more than one correct account of anything. If you want to spread it, send copies. No human being has got the ingenuity to tell me why there were four gospels when one correct gospel would have been enough. Why should there have been four original multiplication tables? One is enough, and if anybody has got any use for it he can copy that one. The very fact that we have got four gospels shows that it is not an inspired book.

The next point is that according to the New Testament the salvation of the world depended upon the atonement. Only one of the books in the New Testament says anything about that, and that is John. The Church followed John, and they ought to follow John because the Church wrote that book called John. According to that the whole world was to be damned on account of the sins of one man; and that absurdity was the father and mother of another absurdity, that the whole world could be saved on account of the virtue of another man. I deny both propositions. No man can sin for me; no man can be virtuous for me; I must reap what I sow. But they say the law must be satisfied. What kind of a law is it that would demand punish-

ment of the innocent? Just think of it. Here is a man about to be hanged, and another comes up and says: "That man has got a family, and I have not; that man is in good health and I am not well, and I will be hung in his place." And the Governor says, "All right. There has a murder been committed, and we have got to have a hanging,—we don't care who." Under the Mosaic dispensation there was no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. If a man committed a murder he brought a pair of doves or a sheep to the priest, and the priest laid his hands on the animal, and the sins of the man was transferred to the animal. You see how that could be done easy enough. Then they killed the animal, and sprinkled its blood on the altar. That let the man off. And why did God demand the sacrifice of a sheep? I will tell you: because priests love mutton. To make the innocent suffer is the greatest crime. I don't wish to go to Heaven on the virtues of somebody else. If I can't settle by the books and go, I don't wish to go. I don't want to feel as if I was on sufferance,—that I was in the poorhouse of the universe, supported by the town. They tell us Judas betrayed Christ. Well, if Christ had not been betrayed no atonement would have been made, and then every human soul would have been damned, and Heaven would have been shut for rent. Supposing that Judas knew the Christian system, then perhaps he thought by betraying Christ he could get forgiven not only for the sins that he had already committed, but for the sin of betrayal, and if, on the way to Calvary, and later, some brave, heroic soul had rescued Christ from the mob, he would have made his own damnation sure. It won't do. There is no logic in that. They say God tried to civilize the Jews. If He had succeeded, according to the Christian system, we all would have been damned, because if the Jews had been civilized they would not have crucified Christ. They would have believed in freedom of speech, and as a result the world would have been lost for 2,000 years. The Christian world has been trying to explain the atonement, and they have always ended by failing to explain it.

Now I come to the second objection, which is that certain belief is necessary to salvation. I will believe according to the evidence. In my mind are certain scales which weigh everything, and my integrity stands there and knows which side goes up and which side goes down. If I am an honest man I will report the weights like an honest man. They

say I must believe a certain thing or I will be eternally damned. They tell me that to believe is the safer way. I deny it. The safest thing that you can do is to be honest. No man, when the shadows of the last hours were gathering around him, ever wished that he had lived the life of a hypocrite. If I find at the day of judgment that I have been mistaken, I will say so like a man. If God tells me then that he is the author of the Old Testament I will admit that he is worse than I thought he was, and when he comes to pronounce sentence upon me I will say to him: do unto others as you would that others should do unto you. I have a right to think; I cannot control my belief; my brain is my castle, and if I don't defend it, my soul becomes a slave and a serf.

If you throw away your reason, your soul is not worth saving. Salvation depends not upon belief, but upon deed—upon kindness, upon justice, upon mercy. Your own deeds are your saviour, and you can be saved in no other way. I am told in this Testament to love my enemies. I cannot; I will not. I don't hate enemies; I don't wish to injure enemies, but I don't care about seeing them. I don't like them. I love my friends, and the man who loves enemies and friends loves me. The doctrine of non-resistance is born of weakness. The man that first said it, said it because it was the best he could do under the circumstances. While the church said love your enemies, in her sacred vestments gleamed the daggers of assassination. With her cunning hand she wore the purple for hypocrisy, and placed the crown upon the brow of crime. For more than 1,000 years larceny held the scales of justice, and hypocrisy wore the mitre, and the tiara of Christ was in fact God. He knew of the future, He knew what crimes and horrors would be committed in His name. He knew the fires of persecution would climb around the limbs of countless martyrs, that brave men and women would languish in dungeons and darkness, that the Church would use instruments of torture, that in His name His followers would trade in human flesh, that cradles would be robbed and women's breasts unbared for gold, and yet He died with voiceless lips. If Christ was God, why did He not tell His disciples, and through them the world, man shall not persecute his fellow-man? Why didn't He say, "I am God?" why didn't He explain the doctrine of the Trinity? why didn't He tell what manner of baptism was pleasing to Him? why didn't he say the Old Testament is true?

why didn't He write His Testament Himself? why did He leave His words to accident, to ignorance, to malice, and to chance? Why didn't He say something positive, definite, satisfactory about another world? Why did He not turn the tear-stained hope of immortality to the glad knowledge of another life? Why did He go dumbly to His death, leaving the world to misery and to doubt? Because He was a man.

Col. Ingersoll read several extracts from the Bible, which he said originated with Zoroaster, Buddha, Cicero, Epictetus, Pythagoras, and other ancient writers, and he read extracts from various pagan writers, which he claimed contrasted favourably with the best things in the Bible. He continued, that no God has a right to add to the agony of this universe, and yet around the angels of immortality, Christianity has coiled this serpent of eternal pain. Upon love's breast the Church has placed that asp, and yet people talk to me about the consolations of religion. A few days ago the barque Tiger was found upon the wide sea 126 days from Liverpool. For nine days not a mouthful of food or a drop of water was to be had. There was on board the Captain, mate, and eleven men. When they had been out 117 days they killed the captain's dog. Nine days more—no food, no water, and Capt. Kruger stood upon the deck in the presence of his starving crew, with a revolver in his hand, put it upon his temple, and said, "Boys, this can't last much longer; I am willing to die to save the rest of you." The mate grasped the revolver from his hand, and said, "wait;" and the next day upon the horizon of despair was the smoke of the ship which rescued them. Do you tell me to-night if Capt. Kruger was not a Christian, and he had sent that ball crashing through his generous brain, that there was an Almighty waiting to clutch his naked soul that he might damn him for ever? It won't do. Ah, but they tell me you have no right to pick the bad things out of the Bible. I say, an infinite God has no right to put bad things into His Bible. Does anybody believe if God was going to write a book now he would uphold slavery: that He would favour polygamy; that He would say kill the heathen, stab the women, dash out the brains of the children? We have civilized Him. We make our own God, and we make Him better day by day. Some honest people really believe that in some wonderful way we are indebted to Moses for geology, to Joshua for astronomy and military tactics, to Samson for weapons of war,

to Daniel for holy curses, to Solomon for the art of cross-examination, to Jonah for the science of navigation, to St. Paul for steamships and locomotives, to the four Gospels for telegraphs and sewing-machines, to the Apocalypse for looms, saw-mills, and telephones; and that to the Sermon on the Mount we are indebted for mortars and Krupp guns. We are told that no nation has ever been civilized without a Bible. The Jews had one, and yet they crucified a perfectly innocent man. They couldn't have done much worse without a Bible. God must have known 6,000 years ago that it was impossible to civilize people without a Bible just as well as they know it now. Why did He ever allow a nation to be without a Bible? Why didn't He give a few leaves to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?

Take from the Bible the miracles, and I admit that the good passages are true. If they are true they don't need to be inspired. Miracles are the children of mendacity. Nothing can be more wonderful than the majestic, sublime, and eternal march of cause and effect. Reason must be the final arbiter. An inspired book cannot stand against a demonstrated fact. Is a man to be rewarded eternally for believing without evidence or against evidence? Do you tell me that the less brain a man has the better chance he has for heaven? Think of a heaven filled with men who never thought. Better that all that is should cease to be; better that God had never been; better that all the springs and seeds of things should fall and wither in great Nature's realm; better that causes and effects should lose relation; better that every life should change to breathless death and voiceless blank, and every star to blind oblivion and moveless naught, than that this religion should be true.

The religion of the future is humanity. The religion of the future will say to every man, you have a right to think and investigate for yourself. Liberty is my religion. Everything that is true, every good thought, every beautiful thing, every self-denying action—all these make my Bible. Every bubble, every star, are passages in my Bible. A constellation is a chapter. Every shining world is a part of it. You cannot interpolate it; you cannot change it. It is the same for ever. My Bible is all that speaks to man. Every violet, every blade of grass, every tree, every mountain crowned with snow, every star that shines, every throb of love, every honest act, all that is good and true combined, make my Bible, and upon that book I stand.

THE CHINESE GOD.

Four members of a select committee have informed Congress that "Jos has his temple of worship in the Chinese quarters, in San Francisco. Within the walls of a dilapidated structure is exposed to the view of the faithful the God of the Chinaman, and here are his altars of worship. Here he tears up his pieces of paper; here he offers up his prayers; here he receives his religious consolations, and here is his road to the celestial land." That "Jos is located in a long, narrow room, in a building in a back alley, upon a kind of altar;" that "he is a wooden image, looking as much like an alligator as like a human being;" that the Chinese "think there is such a place as heaven;" that "all classes of Chinamen worship idols;" that "the temple is open every day at all hours;" that "Chinese have no Sunday:" that this heathen god has "huge jaws, a big red tongue, large white teeth, a half-dozen arms, and big fiery eyeballs. About him are placed offerings of meat, and other eatables—a sacrificial offering."

No wonder that these members of the committee were shocked at such a god, knowing as they did that the only true God was correctly described by the inspired lunatic of Patmos in the following words:

"And there sat in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow: and his eyes were as a flame of fire: and his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace: and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp, two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength."

Certainly, a large mouth, filled with white teeth, is preferable to one used as the scabbard of a sharp, two-edged sword. Why should these gentlemen object to a god with big fiery eyeballs, when their own Deity has eyes like a flame of fire?

Is it not a little late in the day to object to people because they sacrifice meat and other eatables to their god? We all know, that for thousands of years the "real" God was exceedingly fond of roasted meat; that He loved the savour of burning flesh, and delighted in the perfume of fresh warm blood.

The following account of the manner in which the "living God" desired that His people should sacrifice, tends to show the degradation and religious blindness of the Chinese:

"Aaron therefore went unto the altar and slew the calf of the sin offering which was for himself. And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him. And he dipped his fingers in the blood and put it upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar: but the fat and the kidneys and the caul above the liver of the sin offering he burnt upon the altar, as the Lord commanded Moses, and the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire without the camp. And he slew the burnt offering. And Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood which he sprinkled round about the altar. * * * And he brought the meat offering and took a handful thereof and burnt upon the altar. * * He slew also the bullock and the ram for a sacrifice of peace offering, which was for the people. And Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood which he sprinkled upon the altar, round about, and the fat of the bullock and of the ram, the rump and that which covereth the inwards, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver, and they put the fat upon the breasts and he burnt the fat upon the altar. And the breasts and the right shoulder Aaron waved for a wave-offering before the Lord, as Moses had commanded."

If the Chinese only did something like this, we would know that they worshiped the "living" God. The idea that the supreme head of the "American system of religion" can be placated with a little meat and "ordinary eatables," is simply preposterous. He has always asked for blood, and has always asserted that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

The world is also informed by these gentlemen that "the idolatry of the Chinese produces a demoralizing effect upon our American youth by bringing sacred things into disrespect, and making religion a theme of disgust and contempt."

In San Francisco there are some three hundred thousand people. Is it possible that a few Chinese can bring "our holy

religion " into disgust and contempt ! In that city there are fifty times as many churches as joss-houses. Scores of sermons are uttered every week ; religious books and papers are plentiful as leaves in autumn, and somewhat dryer ; thousands of bibles are within the reach of all. And there, too, is the example of a Christian city.

Why should we send missionaries to China if we cannot convert the heathen when they come here ? When missionaries go to a foreign land, the poor benighted people have to take their word for the blessings showered upon a Christian people ; but when the heathen come here they can see for themselves. What was simply a story becomes a demonstrated fact. They come in contact with people who love their enemies. They see that in a Christian land men tell the truth ; that they will not take advantage of strangers ; that they are just and patient ; kind and tender ; and have no prejudice on account of color, race, or religion ; that they look upon mankind as brethren ; that they speak of God as a universal Father, and are willing to work, and even to suffer, for the good not only of their own countrymen, but of the heathen as well. All this the Chinese see and know, and why they still cling to the religion of their country is to me a matter of amazement.

We all know that the disciples of Jesus do unto others as they would that others should do unto them, and that those of Confucius do not unto others anything that they would not that others should do unto them. Surely, such peoples ought to live together in perfect peace. Rising with the subject, growing heated with a kind of holy indignation, these Christian representatives of a Christian people most solemnly declare that :

Anyone who is really endowed with a correct knowledge of our religious system which acknowledges the existence of a living God and an accountability to Him, and a future state of reward and punishment, who feels that he has an apology for this abominable pagan worship, is not a fit person to be ranked as a good citizen of the American Union. It is absurd to make any apology for its toleration. It must be abolished, and the sooner the decree goes forth by the power of this government the better it will be for the interests of this land.

I take this, the earliest opportunity, to inform these gentlemen, composing a majority of the committee, that we have in the United States no " religious system ; that this is a secular govern-

ment. That it has no religious creed ; that it does not believe nor disbelieve in a future state of reward and punishment ; that it neither affirms nor denies the existence of a " living God ;" and that the only god, so far as this government is concerned, is the legally expressed will of a majority of the people. Under our flag the Chinese have the same right to worship a wooden god that you have to worship any other. The constitution protects equally the church of Jehovah and the house of Joss. Whatever their relative positions may be in heaven, they stand upon a perfect equality in the United States. This Government is an infidel Government. We have a constitution with man put in and God left out ; and it is the glory of this country that we have such a constitution.

It may be surprising to you that I have an apology for pagan worship, yet I have. And it is the same one that I have for the writers of this report. I account for both by the word *superstition*. Why should we object to their worshiping God as they please ? If the worship is improper, the protestation should come not from a committee of Congress, but from God himself. If He is satisfied, that is sufficient.

Our religion can only be brought into contempt by the actions of those who profess to be governed by its teachings. This report will do more in that direction than millions of Chinese could do by burning pieces of paper before a wooden image. If you wish to impress the Chinese with the value of your religion, of what you are pleased to call " The American system," show them that Christians are better than heathens. Prove to them that what you are pleased to call the " living God " teaches higher and holier things, a grander and purer code of morals than can be found upon pagan pages. Excel these wretches in industry, in honesty, in reverence for parents, in cleanliness, in frugality ; and above all by advocating the absolute liberty of human thought.

Do not trample upon these people because they have a different conception of things about which even this committee knows nothing.

Give them the same privilege you enjoy of making a God after their own fashion. And let them describe him as they will. Would you be willing to have them remain, if one of their race, thousands of years ago, had pretended to have seen God, and had written of Him as follows : " There went up a smoke out

of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth; coals were kindled by it, * * * and he rode upon a cherub and did fly." Why should you object to these people on account of their religion? Your objection has in it the spirit of hate and intolerance. Of that spirit the inquisition was borne. That spirit lighted the fagot, made the thumbscrew, put chains upon the limbs, and lashes upon the backs of men. The same spirit bought and sold, captured and kidnapped human beings; sold babes, and justified all the horrors of slavery.

Congress has nothing to do with the religion of the people. Its members are not responsible to God for the opinions of their constituents, and it may tend to the happiness of the constituents for me to state that they are in no way responsible for the religion of the members. Religion is an individual, not a national matter. And where the nation interferences with the right of conscience, the liberties of the people are devoured by the monster Superstition.

If you wish to drive out the Chinese, do not make a pretext of religion. Do not pretend that you are trying to do God a favour. Injustice in His name is doubly detestable. The assassin cannot sanctify his dagger by falling on his kness, and it does not help a falsehood if it be uttered as a prayer. Religion, used, to intensify the hatred of men toward men, under the pretence of pleasing God, has cursed this world.

A portion of this most remarkable report is intensely religious. There is in it almost the odour of sanctity; and when reading it, one is impressed with the living piety of its authors. But on the twenty-fifth page, there are a few passages that must pain the hearts of true believers. Leaving their religious views, the members immediately betake themselves to philosophy and prediction. Listen:

"The Chinese race and the American citizen, whether native-born or who is eligible to our naturalization laws and becomes a citizen, are in a state of antagonism. They cannot, nor will not, ever meet upon common ground and occupy together the same so-called level. This is impossible. The pagan and the Christian travel different paths. This one believes in a living God; that one in the type of monsters and worship of wood and stone. Thus, in the religion of the two races of men, they are as wide apart as the poles of the two hemispheres. They cannot now, nor never (sic) will, approach the same religious altar.

The Christian will not recede to barbarism, nor will the Chinese advance to the enlightened belt [wherever it is] of civilization. * * * He cannot be converted to those modern ideas of religious worship which have been accepted by Europe, and which crown the American system."

Christians used to believe that through their religion all the nations of the earth were finally to be blest. In accordance with that belief missionaries have been sent to every land, and untold wealth has been expended for what has been called the spread of the gospel !

I am almost sure that I have read somewhere that "Christ died for *all* men," and that "God is no respecter of persons." It was once taught that it was the duty of Christians to tell to all people the "tidings of great joy." I have never believed these things myself, but have always contended that an honest merchant was the best missionary. Commerce makes friends, religion makes enemies; the one enriches, and the other impoverishes; the one thrives best where the truth is told, the other where falsehoods are believed. For myself, I have but little confidence in any business, or enterprise, or investment, that promises dividends only after the death of the stockholders.

But I am astonished that four Christian statesmen, four members of Congress in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, who seriously object to people on account of their religious convictions, should still assert that the very religion in which they believe—and the only religion established by the living Godhead of the American system—is not adapted to the spiritual needs of one-third of the human race. It is amazing that these four gentlemen have, in the defence of the Christian religion, announced the discovery that it is wholly inadequate for the civilization of mankind; that the light of the cross can never penetrate the darkness of China; "that all the labours of the missionary, the example of the good, the exalted character of our civilization, make no impression upon the pagan life of the Chinese;" and that even the report of this committee will not tend to elevate, refine and Christianize the yellow heathen of the Pacific coast. In the name of religion these gentlemen have denied its power and mocked at the enthusiasm of its founder. Worse than this, they have predicted for the Chinese a future of ignorance and idolatry in this world, and, if the "American system" of religion is true, hell-fire in the next.

For the benefit of these four philosophers and prophets, I will give a few extracts from the writings of Confucius that will, in my judgment, compare favorably with the best passages of their report :

“ My doctrine is that man must be true to the principles of his nature, and the benevolent exercises of them toward others.

“ With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and with my bended arm for a pillow, I still have joy.

“ Riches and honour acquired by injustice are to me but floating clouds.

“ The man who, in view of gain, thinks of righteousness : who, in view of danger, forgets life, and who remembers an old agreement, however far back it extends, such a man may be reckoned a complete man.

“ Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness.”

There is one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life ; Reciprocity is that word.

When the ancestors of the four Christian Congressmen were barbarians, when they lived in caves, gnawed bones, and worshiped dry snakes, the infamous Chinese were reading these sublime sentences of Confucius. When the forefathers of these Christian statesmen were hunting toads to get the jewels out of their heads to be used as charms, the wretched Chinese were calculating eclipses and measuring the circumference of the earth. When the progenators of these representatives of the “ American system of religion ” were burning women charged with nursing devils, these people, “ incapable of being influenced by the exalted character of our civilization,” were building asylums for the insane.

If we wish to prevent the immigration of the Chinese, let us reform our treaties with the vast empire from whence they came. For thousands of years the Chinese secluded themselves from the rest of the world. They did not deem the Christian nations fit to associate with. We forced ourselves upon them. We called, not with cards, but with cannon. The English battered down the door in the names of Opium and Christ. This infamy was regarded as another triumph for the gospel. At last, in self-defence, the Chinese allowed Christians to touch their shores. Their wise men, their philosophers protested, and prophesied that time would show that Christians could not be trusted. This

report proves that the wise men were not only philosophers, but prophets.

Treat China as you would England. Keep a treaty while it is in force. Change it if you will, according to the laws of nations, but on no account excuse a breach of national faith by pretending that we are dishonest for God's sake.

