

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Hartford Bible Convention.

REPORTED PHONOGRAPHICALLY,

BY ANDREW J. GRAHAM.

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To the Reader.

156

THOSE who were especially interested in the HARTFORD BIBLE CONVENTION have doubtless been disappointed on account of the delay which has attended the publication of its proceedings. The circumstances which occasioned this disappointment may be very briefly stated. At the request of the several speakers, and by order of the Committee, the portions of the Report containing the speeches of several gentlemen who reside at a great distance from New York were sent to them for a careful revision, and in some instances they were retained for a long time. This occasioned the repeated and protracted suspension of the work during the process of stereotyping, and must serve as an apology for its being so long delayed. The closing speech of Mr. Barker was not received at all, and, of course, is not embraced in the report as now given to the public. With this single exception, the present volume contains a faithful record of the Resolutions, Speeches, etc., of the Convention. Whatever may be thought of the various views advocated on

4

that occasion, this book sufficiently indicates the ability of the several speakers who took part in the discussion.

As Truth can not suffer from any ordeal to which it can be subjected, and as error must inevitably suffer from every fair trial, it is believed that this book will perform a useful mission in the world. If popular theology is not triumphantly sustained in its pages, it is neither the fault of those who called the Convention, nor of those who fearlessly responded to that call, and made it the occasion of vindicating other and perhaps more rational views.

The Committee desire to express their entire satisfaction with the very able and intelligent manner in which Mr. Andrew J. Graham, the reporter of these proceedings, discharged his laborious and difficult task.

THE

Hartford Bible Convention.

FIRST DAY—MORNING SESSION.

Thursday, June 2d.

A RESPECTABLE audience having assembled in the Melodeon on the morning of the 2d of June, at 10 o'clock, the Convention was called to order by Mr. A. J. Davis, when, on motion, Mr. William Green, Jr., of Hartford, was appointed president *pro tem.*

On motion, a committee of nomination was designated by the chairman, consisting of Messrs. A. J. Davis, Bartlett, and S. G. Finney; which Committee made the following nominations: for President, Joseph Barker; for Vice-President, J. K. Ingalls; for Secretary, A. O. Moore. These nominations were confirmed by the Convention.

The President, Mr. JOSEPH BARKER, then arose and said: I was not in the least anticipating a call to the chair; but as I have been called, I will take the place assigned me and proceed in the discharge of my duties. This Convention has assembled in consequence of a call, a copy of which I hold in my hands.

TO THE FRIENDS OF FREE DISCUSSION.

The undersigned, solicitous for the advancement of the cause of Truth and Humanity, hereby invite all who are friendly to free discussion, to attend a Convention to be held at HARTFORD, CONN., on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th of June

next, for the purpose of freely and fully canvassing the ORIGIN, AUTHORITY, AND INFLUENCE OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES.

This invitation is not given to any particular class of Philosophers, Theologians, or Thinkers, but is in good faith extended to all who feel an interest in the examination of the questions above stated. There are many who believe that a supernatural Revelation has been given to man; many others who deny this, and a large number who are afflicted with perplexing doubts—trembling between the silent skepticism of their reason and the fear of absolute denial. In issuing a call for a Convention, we have in view the correction of error, by which party soever entertained, and the relief of those who stand between doubt and fear, from their embarrassing position.

Some may have no doubt that the Jewish and Christian Scriptures have subserved an important end, and yet believe that their mission is nearly completed and must be superseded by a new dispensation; some may believe that their influence has been prejudicial in every respect, and that they have been a curse rather than a blessing to mankind; others may believe them a perfect record of the Divine will to man—good in the past and for all time to come; and others still may deny the plenary inspiration of the Bible, discarding much of the Old Testament, and receiving most or all of the New. Still, such diversity of opinion, instead of prejudicing the interest and good results which ought to attend such a Convention, will rather tend to increase its interest and enhance its value to the cause of truth.

Doubtless a free interchange of thought is the best mode of exciting inquiry and of arriving at the truth.

“He who has a truth and keeps it,
Keeps what not to him belongs,
But performs a selfish action,
And his fellow-mortal wrongs.”

We invite, therefore, all who feel an interest in this question, without distinction of sex, color, sect, or party, to come together, that we may sit down like brethren in a communion before the altar of intellectual and spiritual freedom.

Individuals whose names are marked thus,* are expected to take active parts, *pro* or *con*, in the deliberations of the Convention. The Convention will be addressed by earnest and able minds from Ohio, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and other States. The Convention will commence at 10 o'clock, A. M., at the Melodeon, on Main Street. The Discussion will be opened by a discourse from A. J. Davis.

Measures have been taken to secure the services of a good *photographic reporter*, to make a faithful record of the proceedings of the Convention. It is designed, as far as possible and agreeable to the individuals, to obtain a full and impartial *report of the speeches* made during the discussion, *pro* or *con*, for publication in a book form; and in order to prevent mistakes, misapprehension, or omissions in these reports, it is proposed to submit *each speech* to its author for revision before any authentic publication shall be attempted.

*Andrew Jackson Davis, Hartford.	F. M. Wallace, Hartford.
*William Lloyd Garrison, Boston.	L. M. Collins, “
*Rev. James Richardson, Jr., Dedham.	Semantha Mettler, “
*Joseph Barker, Millwood, Ohio.	J. R. Mettler, “
*Henry C. Wright, Boston.	Harmon Rowley, Chicopee Falls.
*Prof. S. B. Brittan, New York.	D. M. Covey, Southville, N. Y.
*Rev. Russell B. Ambler, “	Augustus H. Gilbert, Philadelphia.
*Selden J. Finney, Amherst, Ohio.	Jarvis Hall, Hartford.
*Rev. John T. Sargeant, Boston.	J. Silas Brown, “
*Rev. Charles Hammond, Rochester.	T. W. Chapman, “
*W. M. Payne, Hartford, Conn.	Roswell Parker, “
*Stephen S. Foster, Worcester, Mass.	Benjamin Lawrence, West Winsted, Conn.
*Abby Kelly Foster, “	Pierpont C. Turner, “
Joseph Barker, Jr., Millwood, Ohio.	Elisha M. Turner, “
Mary Jane Barker, “	Warren R. Hale, “
George E. Barker, “	Benj. Maston Watson, Esq., Plym'th, Mass.
Catharine D. W. Davis, Hartford.	J. F. Laning, Philadelphia.
William Green, Jr., “	Willard Griffin, West Granby, Conn.
Augustus O. Moore, “	J. H. Robinson, Boston.
Nina Moore, “	A Bingham, “
Maria H. Gillmore, “	P. B. Packhard, “
Dr. J. M. Riggs, “	Samuel Nichols, “
W. P. Donaldson, “	Miss C. Spencer, Bloomfield, Conn.
B. F. Clarke, M.D., Philadelphia.	Henry D. Robinson, Hartford.
Joseph S. Longshore, M.D. “	Hiram Rogers, “
S. Pancoast, M.D. “	Samuel D. Smith, “
Aaron Comfort, “	Harriet Bailey, “
Isaac Rehn, York, Penn.	M. S. Barber, “
Edward Jones, Rochester.	F. A. Burbank, “
Isaac Post, “	William Banker, “
Amy Post, “	R. B. Parish, “
Lewis Burtis, Rochester.	Luther Bartlett, “
Sarah Burtis, “	W. R. Woods, “
R. F. Walcutt, Boston.	Thomas Beach, “
Christian Sharp, Hartford.	Keziah Beach, “
A. W. Fox, “	Peter Osbourne, Morrisville, Penn.
J. H. Smith, “	Augustus Merrick, Concord, Mass.
R. K. Stoddard, “	Edwin Harmer, “
Mary B. Stoddard, “	N. H. Dillingham, M.D., “
Ella M. Watson, “	Mary P. Barnes, Hartford.
Cath. S. Loomis, “	Albert Lydecker, “

Hamlet E. Barber, Hartford.	Ezur Dennis, Boonton, N. J.
A. J. Tourtellotte, “	Eliza Dennis, “
Harvey Lull, “	Stephen Grimes, “
Almy Elliot, “	Phoebe E. Grimes, “
J. Seymour Brown, “	Marcus Everts, “
Louisa Fox, “	Lorenzo Hint, Stoughton, Mass.
Francis Doby, “	B. J. Butts, Hopedale, Mass.
Warren Callender, “	David B. Hamilton, Hartford, Conn.
Elliot Rogers, “	Mrs. Mary A. Hamilton, “
Valentine Nicholson, Harveysburg, Ohio.	Samuel Davis, Mendham, N. J.
Jane F. Nicholson, “	W. B. Johnson, Hartford.
William Hillis, “	H. F. Johnson, “
Mary Ann Hillis, “	Hamlet F. Roberts, East Hartford.
Dr. J. W. Johnson, Hartford, Conn. m	Louisa E. Roberts, Hartford.
Dr. Almanzon Clarke, Rochester, N. Y.	James A. Bill, Selma, Ala.
Henry Quinby, Mendon, N. Y.	Emeline A. Smith, Hudson, N. Y.
William Coates, Boonton, N. J.	Eliza Brown, Hartford.
John A. Cornelison, Hartford.	Delia Knox, “
Amos Whitney, “	Rev. Robert Grey, Modern Times, L. I.
Harvey Wilson, “	Mrs. Robert Grey, “
H. N. Slocomb, “	Joseph H. Cunningham, Channingv'e, N. Y.
Eli Nichols, Walthonding, Ohio.	Jane Cunningham, “
Anthony Gabriel, East Hartford.	J. S. Dow, Hartford, Conn.
Ransom H. Olmsted, “	R. Chadwick, “
P. A. Cattanio, New York.	William B. Dyer, Bridgeport, Conn.
P. E. Bland, St. Louis, Mo.	Solomon Purdy, Middlebury.
A. Frey, West Winsted, Conn.	John C. Steele, Amherst, Ohio.
Rodney Moore, “	Horace S. Steele, “
H. C. Whiting, “	Edgar W. Steele, “
H. W. Whiting, “	Henry Staggs, St. Louis, Mo.
Janette Coates, Boonton, N. J.	L. P. Britt, M. D., “
George M. Ely, “	Mrs. L. P. Britt, “
James Freeland, “	C. P. Morse, “
John Grimes, M. D., “	A. Miltenberger, “
James S. Norris, “	Charles Levy, “
Lucy S. Ely, “	Thom. Fairbridge, “
Ellen Ely, “	William A. Lee, “
John Wootton, “	John O. Wattles, West Point, Ind.
Philip Wootton, “	L. A. Hine, Floral Bluff, Ohio.
Hannah Wootton, “	H. W. Pinney, West Winsted, Conn.
George W. Steele, Amherst, Ohio.	Jesse Dutton, “
Isaac C. Steele, “	Luman White, “
Smith Steele, “	Aaron Burbank, “

Having read the call, he remarked :

I feel that the results of this Convention will be beneficial ; but I shall not at present make any remarks upon the call, but call upon Mr. Andrew J. Davis to open this Convention by an address.

The following Resolution was then offered :

Resolved, That each mind, by virtue of its endowments, rights, and liberties, should "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good,"

Mr. DAVIS then arose and said :

The course of Nature is marked by vast and mighty changes. In the lower departments of the physical world, one set of circumstances continue till their mission is completed, when they gradually expire, and from their ashes a *new order* of things is born into existence. Every great general *improvement* in the physical aspect of the globe—every magnificent alteration in the relation of things—is preceded, accompanied, and succeeded by some grand announcement and startling demonstration. The formation of mountains—those glorious symbols of everlasting truth—was accomplished by the most terrible convulsions. From center to circumference the terrestrial *ball* is shaken—portions fall while others rise—the earth trembles and quakes—and so are made the lofty mount, the beautiful valley, the undulating landscape, and the ocean's bed. But observe: terrible changes are *never* terrible in fact! Every alteration in Nature's domain is invariably succeeded by *better* circumstances. It is only man's short-sightedness which hinders his perception of the future good.

So in the religious world. There are circumstances—conditions of mind and organization—which demand a change. And he who interrogates the page of progress on this point, receives back the answer that, in the religious world great and startling alterations have from age to age occurred—disturbing, for the time being, the body of mankind with paroxysms of dreadful apprehension. But these changes are inevitable—indispensable, in fact, to the development and education of the world. The mounts of truth, the vast territories of reform, are thrown up out of dogmatism and despotism by stupendous efforts. And the genius of history, with pen and

ink ready, stands ever near to record the causes and consequences of the alteration; and so posterity and subsequent generations are enlightened. And the world at last learns the lesson, that Truth, like the ocean's tide, is ever onward and resistless.

There is nothing strong enough to stay the immutable workings of this principle of change—this law of alternation—this method of the universe! Kings, priests, and tyrants utter heart-rending groans, and remonstrate bitterly at the awfulness and majesty of Change. Wherefore? Because they are so delightfully circumstanced in external things, and so strongly intrenched in the compelled ignorance and consequent servitude of the masses! But, thanks to the Supreme Power of the universe, the law of reform works unchangeably onward, and the dreaded hour at last arrives. *The voice of justice*, so long silenced by prevailing powers, is heard thundering o'er palace and cathedral; and all time-sanctified institutions are invaded by the disciples of REASON, notwithstanding the lamentations of their conservative proprietors and dreamy inhabitants!

The object of this Convention is to explore and investigate the *origin, authority, and influence of the Old and New Testaments*.

What a question for the nineteenth century! In the opinion of many well-meaning persons, a convention, with such an object in view, can be nothing less than an act of supererogation. They suppose the origin, authority, and influence of the Testaments to be as well established as the sun in the heavens. This *superstition* is the chief in Christendom. Unaided by the revelations of science, how could the early inhabitants give us a Bible without mythology and errors? Without a philosophical and historical understanding of the *origin* of the Bible, how can we estimate its *authority*? Without a knowledge of the cause and extent of its *authority*, how can we ascertain the merits and demerits of its *influence*?

These, surely, are the questions for this age, because this age, more than any other, possesses the requisite information to answer them. The miracle of *Joshua* could not be answered until the immutable laws of planetary harmony were discovered; the cosmological theory of *Moses* could not be answered until the science of geology was developed. As these sciences have *for the first time* gained a footing among the people, even so for the first time are the people *prepared* for the examination of the questions before this Convention.

In certain prudential minds are dwelling diverse doubts respecting the *utility of conventions*—either as instruments of good or exponents of truth—more especially when called to the consideration of sacred themes. Most persons are educated to regard religion as too holy a matter for debate. I think that any thing is too holy for *an angry* debate—but *nothing is too sacred* for calm investigation!

As every fountain declares the impurities and excellences of its own waters, so, in this Convention, where *individuality* of character is particularly encouraged, must each speaker stand, in presence of his own conscience, responsible for the utterances of his nature. This is free discussion. And my recommendation to each one is, Be watchful, lest, in the exercise of this blessed privilege, you get too much *inspiration* through combativeness instead of conscientiousness; and in your anxiety to enforce a proposition, be careful lest your thoughts fall from the magnificent posture of *principles* to the common error of personalities. The Convention, if conducted with these simple precautions, can not fail of doing good.

I have said that no matter was too sacred for *calm* debate. The plea that religion is too delicate and divine for analytical examination, is, in my estimation, the excuse of *unsound* and *timid* minds. My eternal motto is, "Any theory, hypothesis, philosophy, sect, creed, or institution that fears investigation, openly manifests its own error."

We do not plant ourselves gladiatorially in the arena as

mere antagonists and combatants—not as mere destructionists, extremists, and infidels—but, in fraternal love, as the disciples of God-given REASON, as the uncompromising advocates for universal liberty of body and soul, as *constructionists* and lovers of moderation and temperance in all things, and as unflinching *believers* in the existence and universality of Eternal Truth; thus armed and equipped we come forth, and call upon every individual to bring his best thoughts on the points at issue before this Convention. The plea that religion is too sacred for public discussion appears transcendently *absurd*, when it is recollected that this subject is publicly debated in every pulpit in Christendom! But there is no freedom in it! Every stamp of mind is engaged in discoursing *religion* to the people. But it is all priestly and dogmatic. It is done in the *pulpit*—a consecrated battlement, where laymen, no matter how talented and accomplished, are not allowed to enter! But we come to *the freeman's pulpit*—to the public rostrum—and invite hither the victims of the other mode of discussing religion. We urge them to prefer their charges, state their grievances, put their objections; and the candid devotees of whatever creed are hereby warned to appear before a public tribunal, and defend their theology, and their interpretations of it, against the aspersions of disaffected minds.

Our course may be condemned, but, let it be duly remembered, that the *causes* for calling this Convention would not exist if Christendom were blessed with *Free Pulpits!* By free pulpits I mean churches where the reformer, the temperance man, the anti-slavery man, and the man of science, can go and lay his principles before the people—churches where conscience is kindly treated, where the law of individual liberty is worshiped.

Instead of this—which would do away with all necessity for Bible Conventions, and with all independent meetings for free discussion—the minister is encouraged in his efforts to

denounce and defame any new movement with his accustomed dogmatism, encouraged to prejudice the people against a matter of which they know absolutely nothing; and then, like the despotism of the Austrian government, the pulpit official closes up as far as possible every avenue to the presentation of a defense from the parties aggrieved. And what effects do these religious circumstances develop? I will show you. The people, conscious of having much truth, are driven at last from the pulpit of dogmatic theology to the platform of free discussion. And the consequence will be, that *the public rostrum will supersede the pulpit in value and for purposes of instruction*. Yea, our course may be condemned, as were the developments of Galileo; but I tell you that this Convention is but *the effect* of a set of circumstances in the religious world, which even one-sided and bigoted minds must apprehend and confess. When the cause is removed, the effect will disappear.

Most persons, I have said, are educated to regard religion as being too holy for public debate. But what is education? It is an implantation of certain symbols of thought, transferred from one mind to another, as the artist paints on canvas. Thoughts are not given in this way, but the symbols or forms of expression into which the internal forces of the mind flow up. All the liquid elements of mentality are formed and fashioned in accordance with the symbols placed upon the mind by the hand of the master—just as water takes the exact shape of the vessel into which it is poured!

Is education, then, a sacred and reliable authority? How do you know whether the writer of the Shorter Catechism was correct or incorrect? How do you know whether the religion of Moses was right or wrong? God speaks in the sanctuary of the living soul! He writes his religion upon the everlasting hills. It is simple, grand, and universal. It never changes. But do symbols remain unchanged? The Old Testament idea of justice is our idea of revenge. The old

conceptions of God will suit the modern devil. What though the Hindoo be educated to believe certain religious thoughts, is he therefore to be left undisturbed? Do not Christians send missionaries to place Christian symbols upon the heathen's mind? Shall we not, therefore, as Nature's missionaries, place Nature's symbols upon the Christian mind? The heathen loves his idols which man made; the Christian loves his Bible which man made; but we love Nature—physical, spiritual and celestial—which God made, and sanctifies with the undying glories of his Spirit.

Let us discriminate between religion and the symbols or *vessels* which are supposed to contain it.

If we have *wrong* symbols, the shape of our religion will be also wrong! Man outgrows the clothing of his youth; may he not also outgrow the symbols of his religion? The essence of all religions may be immaculate, which I fully believe; but if the symbols containing it be deformed, does it not follow that the shape of the religion would be correspondingly defective?

If you admit the probability of this proposition—which I think you can not escape—then, let me ask, how can you inform your own mind whether or not your religion be in the proper shape, unless you make the subject a theme for calm investigation? “Agitation of thought is the beginning of wisdom.” But you *fear* to investigate! *Any thing which fears investigation openly manifests its own error.* Do you *fear* to investigate religion lest you be led away from the smile of Heaven? What a groundless, ignorant fear! Is not heaven illimitable as the universe? Is not God everywhere present? Can you be led away from a Divine Spirit who is “before all things, and in whom all things consists?” Do you fear that, by investigation, you shall cease to be religious? Nay, nay, fear not; for true religion is the life of the soul! The love of worship is the strongest love, although in different natures it has different modes of manifestation.

Religion and human existence are one and the same in essence.

Suppose the Emperor Constantine saw fit to call a convention of bishops and laymen for religious purposes; and suppose he and they, after much confusion and dispute, decided upon what books should be regarded as "the Word of God," and *what books* should be rejected as *spurious* gospel—thus, by virtue of *external authority*, manufacturing for the whole world, and for all subsequent generations, *religious* symbols through which the human soul commonly thinks of divine and spiritual things—suppose all this to be historically true (which it is)—let me ask: Are we not *as fully* authorized, by an example or precedent so conspicuously set, to call another convention, to consider whether any emperor or bench of bishops have a *peculiar right* to determine the shape and pattern of our religion? Religion was not *too sacred* for investigation then! Why should it be too sacred now?

Still you question the *utility* of conventions for this purpose! You think free discussions do not develop truth—that people are too combative and impetuous—that the cords of bigotry are tightened by the fierceness of opposition to it. But my reply is, That conventions are useful only as plows are good for the soil—they turn up *new ground*, break away poisonous weeds, and demolish old stumps, for the subsequent planting of good seed.

Free interchange of thought and feeling is the only way to wisdom. Man's mind is developed by contact—is educated by the individualization and comparison of facts. Mind must first discover facts; then those facts must be by themselves examined; then they must be placed in contrast and juxtaposition; and then, from the latter arrangement, which comes within the jurisdiction of every rational being, there flow out certain definite *conclusions*: and these conclusions, the mind, by virtue of its constitution, is constrained to accept. Faith is the subject of volition. Like all organized

bodies, human minds yield to the strongest pressure. Faith comes from evidence. "He that believeth *not* shall be damned." Should a man be damned for a thing which he can not help? When properly applied to our faculties, the strongest proof makes the deepest impression.

According to this certain law, let me ask: How can a mind understand *religion* without investigation. A man may be a devoted frequenter of some particular church—may have listened with delight and edification to the exposition of a certain form of religious belief—but, having never compared one creed with another, what does he know of the foundation of popular theology?

He may read all the publications of his denomination—may know the Bible by heart—what does he know of real mental liberty?

I tell you that such a man is a thorough bigot! Should a reformer appear, this religious man, with the contents of the Bible at his tongue's end, begins his opposition by quoting texts. But as to whether those texts rest upon any divine authority or not, he never stops to inquire, nor any one else. If the Bible says so, that is all sufficient! Now what can such a mind know of impartiality and open-mindedness? What knows he of the glorious matrimonial principles whereby the universe was built; by which men and globes alike are regulated?

Concerning these things he is ignorant—for he would not be "wise above what is written."

And so, how profoundly does he abhor and condemn a Bible Convention! He is *sure* no good can come of it! In his opinion, it is as much as to affirm, that the Bible is somewhere unsound—that it is not what great scholars and eminent philosophers have claimed for it.

Therefore the prudential bigot thinks and asserts that the only effect of a Bible Convention can be to lead weak-minded (!) persons into skepticism, and strengthen the disbelief al-

ready existing. In plain English, it is dangerous to examine a subject, which, from repeated experiments, is found not triumphantly to survive the ordeal of a fair investigation!

Any thing which *fears* investigation openly manifests its own error.

Of all modern suppositions, I think, the idea that infidel arguments have all been fairly answered by Christian scholars, is the most prominent. There is much pretension and constrained composure based upon the efforts of Christian writers. All infidel objections, it is solemnly asserted, have been exposed and exploded over and over again. And churchmen say, that *all* that can now be adduced is but a rehash of old infidel arguments, which Dr. David Nelson and Leslie have completely refuted and overthrown.

I do not take issue on this point now, because I wish first to persuade you that we did not call this Convention for any such low groveling purpose.

We are actuated by no desire to spread skepticism on religious subjects—nay, we pray and work for theologic liberty, for universal peace, for human love and brotherhood, for the kingdom of heaven on earth—hence we design to do all we can to prevent skepticism in those principles which God declares to be *the true religion!*

With this Convention (or another which it may suggest) we mean to drive the plow deep into the soil of popular theology and into the origin of those texts which priests hurl at the movements of every true reformer.

It is my conviction, that the more a man knows, the less he believes.

The more we learn of the natural, the less we believe of the supernatural. Or, in other words, a wise man is seldom troubled with imagination—the reverse is also true. The firmest believer in the supernatural is one who knows but little concerning the physical laws of the world we live in. And as this vast system of natural existence is beginning to be

better understood, it is easier to investigate and decide upon the asserted supernatural and miraculous, and ascertain what is and what is not entitled to the dignified title of "plenary inspiration.

Since the development of the sciences of astronomy, geology, chemistry, etc., it can not be denied, I think, that there has been established *more doubt* than was *ever* before entertained respecting the supernatural origin and supernal authority of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Prof. Hitchcock, Prof. Silliman, and several Englishmen of scientific attainment, have labored to rescue the Mosaic and dependent records from the vortex of utter repudiation. But what have they accomplished? They have merely confirmed and consolidated the bigotry and superstition of persons already in the Church.

What further? They have merely convinced individuals on the *outer courts* of the sanctuary, that such minds are anxious to *nurse* and foster their reputation as orthodox authors—while their productions prove to the independent thinker, that they acknowledge but very little about the intrinsic weaknesses of the theology for which they so earnestly and solemnly plead.

Hugh Miller, author of "Foot-prints of the Creator," who has written as good a *plea* in behalf of his theologic faith as any Churchman could, is fully conscious of the ignorance of the clergy. He says,* "The clergy as a class, suffer *themselves to linger far in the rear of an intelligent and accomplished laity, a full age behind the requirements of the time.* Let them not shut their eyes to the danger which is obviously coming! The battle of the *evidences* (of Christianity) will have as certainly to be fought on the fields of physical science as it was contested in the last age on that of the metaphysics. And on this *new arena* the combatants will have to employ *new*

* Page 45, American edition.

weapons, which it will be the privilege of the challenger to choose. The old, opposed to these, would prove of but little avail." Hence the arguments of Nelson, or Leslie, or Paley, or Watson can have no weight in the stupendous battle about to be fought between despotism and liberty.

Notwithstanding this acknowledgment of ignorance on the part of the clergy as a class, there are persons who still regard them as masters in the theologic school—able to meet any objection which Astronomy, Geology, or Chemistry can urge against the authority of their system. Of course it is very proper to suppose, that the clergy are the possessors of the requisite *evidence* to prove the origin and sanctity of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Now we bring, not the objections of a party, but the developments of the nineteenth century, to bear upon the questions under discussion. *We are not anti-Christ*; but WE ARE anti-bigotry, anti-slavery, anti-superstition, anti-supernatural, *anti-everything* which militates in any manner against the development of human love and brotherhood. And we are (or I am at least) opposed to any thing in or out of the Bible which prevents or retards the normal growth of this religion. Greek, Hebrew, and Latin terms, however classic and high-sounding—a mere battle of texts—can have no possible weight in settling questions which involve the origin and veracity of a record which is already in the English language, and recommended by the American Bible Society, in its *present translation*, as being the infallible Word of God. The clergy should feel grateful to us for taking the trouble to show them the battle-field of this century!

Religion, I repeat, is not too sacred for public debate; for religion pertains to the universal conscience of man; it is the great corner-stone of the temple of human brotherhood, and a *Convention* is the instrument most calculated to chisel it out of life's foundations. This religion is not to be found between the lids of any book. It is in the soul of human kind. It

needs development. Conventions, conducted with magnanimity and virtue of purpose, will accomplish much good toward the unfolding of universal principles. Flowers can grow with strength and beauty only when well circumstanced. Conventions are valuable, not merely for the facts, truths, and arguments they spread before the minds of the people, but particularly for the freedom of sentiments, and the examples of courageous utterance in the presence of persons accustomed to pulpit monopoly. When the human mind is once freed, and the philosophy of conscientious independence is presented to it, it spreads its wings and soars to summits of thought before unknown. Reason, on the wings of faith in justice, is a bird of paradise. Its flight is outward, inward, onward, upward! And the material and spiritual universes are opened to these flights of freedom. The eagle is reason's symbol, but the serpent is the hideous type of slavery!

We contend not for partyism, but for the world. Independence of soul, based on integrity of motive, is now demanded. Let us teach—

“Each man to think himself an act of God,
His mind a thought, his life a breath of God;”

and let us—

“Bid each try, *by great thoughts and good deeds,*
To show the most of heaven he hath in him.”

We have no ambition to excel our neighbor in argument, for a fluent tongue can give to total errors the semblance of truth; and although the hearer might not be gifted in reply, his soul would surely remonstrate and condemn in silence. Nay, our only ambition is to be *true men and true women*; to show the most of heaven we have in us! In argument we require facts as signs to go by, and principles as truths whereby to interpret them. No anger, no uncharitableness; love only, and *independence* of soul enough to declare a living truth, even

though the “*heavens*” of popular systems fall, and the “*stars*” in the pulpits be blotted out.

“Read the face of Nature, that God-written Bible,
Which all mankind may study and explore,
Which none can wrest, interpolate, or libel its loving lore
Here learn we that our Maker, whose affection
Knows no distinction, suffers no recall,
Sheds its impartial favor and protection
Alike on all.”

The question of the *origin* of the Testaments is debatable from several stand-points; arguments flow in from sources hitherto unsuspected.

Archæological evidences are numerous. Antiquity is full of facts bearing directly on this point; but the difficulty of demonstrating the validity of historical records drives the investigator necessarily on the ground of internal evidence and inference. The proposition stands thus: Can a book have a divine origin which is self-contradictory, opposed to intuition and to fact? Can an unchangeable God, full of harmony and divinity, be the author of a book which contains inconsistencies, examples of revenge and repentance, and inculcates antagonistic rules for human life? One class of minds deny the existence of such inconsistencies and antagonisms between the lids of King James' Bible, while another class affirms them as demonstrable. If they do *not* exist, we infer the *divine* origin; if they do exist, we infer that the book is of *human* imperfection. Here is a subject for your investigation. Again, the *authority* of the Bible may be contemplated from several points: authority may be argued from the ground of utility—that it is the *best religion* in the world—that it satisfies the heart and the head—that it restrains vice and deifies virtue—that, without the Bible, we would be without a revelation of God's will, be ignorant of the scheme of redemption, and that our civilization is dependent upon the principles thereby inculcated. But it may be argued that civilization is *not* a child of Christianity—that its authority leads to

bigotry and intolerance—that *it is no better than the best part of any other religion*—that it does not satisfy but stultifies the heart, and confounds the head—that from the Bible we get our worst ideas of God—that the scheme of salvation does not save the world from sin, slavery, and discords—that its authority is good only so far as its contents stand the test of conscience and of scientific principles.

One class affirms, another denies. And this is the time for a thorough analyzation of these respective positions. “Nothing extenuate or aught set down in malice.”

Again, the *influence* of the Bible may be affirmed to be mild righteousness—that thousands are joyous under the blessings of the Christian religion, while the heathen, and nations without this system, are buried in ignorance and degradation. I think this point calls for special treatment from all minds. The question is, “Is the difference between heathen and Christian nations attributable to the influence of the Old and New Testaments upon the latter?” From this question all other questions under this head *radiate*; therefore, here is a subject for your investigation.

Brethren, let us free ourselves from the sectarianism of the churches, from the mythology of the Bible, from the slavery of fear, from the chains of superstition! Reason is the sovereign of the soul, and truth is the sovereign of reason. Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.

A gentleman whose name was not ascertained then rose in the back part of the house, and said that he desired a committee to be appointed to secure the printing of Mr. Davis' speech just as it was written. It was a most blasphemous document—a tissue of falsehood. If printed, he would pledge himself to see it answered. A committee should be appointed that it should be printed just as it was delivered. He believed that if left in Mr. Davis' hands, he would alter it to make it a little more readable

Mr. DAVIS replied that if he could be convinced that the gentleman would not alter it, he (Mr. Davis) would allow him to take the speech himself and get it published.

The GENTLEMAN answered that he would do so, and break up their conspiracy. The persons who had been the leaders in this Convention were a junto, whose object was to destroy every thing that was worth preserving in our institutions.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that it certainly was not argument to charge gentlemen with being engaged in a conspiracy—to speak of them as a junto. It would be well to express opinions with more moderation.

The GENTLEMAN then said that he hoped that the citizens would have a committee appointed for the printing of that document [Mr. Davis' speech].

CHAIRMAN.—I think our friend in the back of the house is proceeding rather hastily. I do not know what right any party has to demand that document. I hope we shall proceed in some sort of order, so that we may have a proper report of all our proceedings.

The GENTLEMAN.—I may be in the rear of the house, but I am in the front of the argument. I assert that if you come to seduce the affections of the people from their government, and to introduce anarchy and confusion, which I undertake to show, with that tirade of hellish stuff, you must submit your case to the citizens. I undertake to show that it is an attack upon all our institutions that are worth living for—it is a blasphemy.

Mr. B. F. MARTIN, in the midst of the boisterous uproar produced by the person whom, on account of being ignorant of his name, we have been obliged to call a gentleman, arose, and made a number of excellent remarks, not of any particular service to the noisy gentleman and his clique; yet at the conclusion of Mr. Martin's remarks, the Gentleman said that he demanded that a committee should be appointed to procure a copy of the speech of Mr. Davis, so that the Davisites,

and Finneyites, and Bedlamites might be exposed to the world in the attempts to uproot the foundations of society; whereupon

Mr. WRIGHT said: I hope that no man will listen to blackguards for a moment. It is unworthy our own character to do so. (Hear, hear.) Let us proceed in discussing the subject that is before us; and if any person professing to be a Christian comes into this Convention and gives such a specimen as we have had to-day, certain I am that there is no honest one in this house that will not *scorn* Christianity. I am sorry to see any person professing respect for the Bible come here to taunt, to ridicule, to talk as a certain man has talked in this audience; and I say that I hope that he will learn to his own advantage to remember that loving his neighbor as himself, he can not come here and show such a passion as that gentleman has shown; for certainly he seems to me to be in a passion. I hope, sir, that in this Convention we shall adopt rules by which we can regulate our discussions. To the friends present I wish to say that we adopt a principle of universal freedom of thought and freedom of speech. For myself, sir, I am here to give utterance to my *own* soul, and not to the soul of any other man. My tongue shall utter my thoughts, or nothing. I am not here to represent any human being but myself, and I shall speak my own thoughts, in my own way. I hope every other human being present will do the same; and I *do* hope that we shall not only learn freedom of speech and thought, but freedom to *hear*. There is such a thing as a right to speak and a right to hear. It seems to me that we are bound to hear every man—*any* man who utters his thoughts lovingly and kindly to us, no matter whether he agrees with us or not; and, indeed, I have come to that state of mind that I would far rather hear a man speak who is opposed to me, than hear one speak who agrees exactly with myself. My object is to seek truth; and if any man thinks differently from me on any subject, that is the man I want to

hear. If I were a Unitarian, and thoroughly settled in that doctrine, if I paid my money for a minister at all, I would pay it for a Trinitarian. If I were a Trinitarian, I would pay my money to a Unitarian. If a Mohammedan comes along, and wishes to show me the absurdity of Christianity, and the beauty and glory of Mohammedanism, that is the man I want to hear. Don't get angry with him. He is a man, and has just as good a right to his views as you have to yours, and the same right to utter his opinions any where in the universe of God that you have to utter yours. (Applause.) There should be perfect freedom of opinions, and perfect liberty to utter them; and we should set our faces like a flint against every thing to the contrary. Sir, I have settled down on this idea. Truth is indestructible—error alone can be destroyed, and whatever can be destroyed, *ought* to be destroyed. Mark it, Mr. Chairman, whatever is capable of being destroyed in religion, in theology, *ought* to be destroyed, and *will be*. (Applause.) It is not in the power of God himself to save any thing that can be destroyed, or that ought to be destroyed. He can not support error, and nothing but error *can* be destroyed. Truth can not be destroyed; not one truth can ever be rooted up. I say, therefore, give the man an opportunity who comes to destroy what he believes to be error; and if such a man goes to Dr. Hawes, and says to him, "I do not believe in the Bible as you do," and wishes an opportunity to correct some erroneous views concerning it, if Dr. Hawes be an honest seeker after truth he will say: "Welcome to you." (Applause.) He will say, "Here are the people to whom I speak. If your cause is wrong, we shall know it, and overthrow it. If it is truth, it can not be overthrown." So if an Atheist goes to any pulpit, and wishes to show the error, as he thinks, of the doctrine of the existence of a God, and wishes to show the evil influences of such a doctrine on the minds of men, give him an opportunity. Are you afraid that he can overthrow truth? Do you suppose that it is necessary for a

set of priests to gather around the throne of God to maintain it? Can not he maintain his own throne? If he can not, let him be overthrown. (Applause.) I say let every thing be destroyed in the universe that is capable of being destroyed, and let us learn to bring every thing to the test of our own souls—to the God that speaks within us—to the God of truth. But why are people afraid? Why do they cry out, “infidel,” “blasphemy?” Mr. Chairman, I stand before you as one proud to be called an infidel by some people. I am an infidel to their views. I can not be an honest man without it. I am an atheist to the God of a slaveholder, rumseller, or war-maker. I can not be an honest man and not be so, with my views of war, rumselling, and slavery. I believe that slavery is wrong. I believe that rumselling, rum-drinking, drinking alcohol in any shape, are all wrong; and, of course, the man that worships at the shrine of a God that sanctions such things, believes in a thing that I do not. I am an atheist to such a God, as Jesus was to the God of the Gentiles around him.

I want this discussion started just right. Let us be free with one another. You utter your thoughts, and I will utter mine; and after we have done so, let us compare notes, and see who is in the right, and who is in the wrong. Welcome the man who comes to tear down your religion, if he comes as an honest man; because, if he can tear any thing down in your religion, it ought to be torn down, and you ought to thank him for it; and if he can not, you need not be excited and troubled at all; because, if he can tear it down, your soul will be saved by the destruction of your religion. Do not be afraid. So I say in regard to your government. If there is a single principle in your government that can be torn down, it *ought* to be. If your government can be overturned, it ought to be. I mean with such weapons as we use. We only use the weapons of truth and reason.

I say, therefore, do not be fluttered about a man who comes to tear down what you believe to be sacred. I am not

troubled in the least, if a man comes to prove that I am a monkey. Let him try it. If I can not show that I am not a monkey, I must be called a monkey. If he comes to prove that I am a tiger, let him prove it, if he can. If I can not demonstrate that I am not a tiger, let him class me with the tigers. If a man comes to prove that I am a devil, and I can not prove the contrary, I must go to hell with the devils.

Now, sir, in the examination of the question before us, let us start with the principle that we will have perfect freedom of thought and freedom of speech; and while we exercise that freedom, we will leave others to do the same. Keep cool, be kind and loving, and at the same time plain-spoken. If any man feels disposed to denounce me—if it is in his heart, I hope that he will let it out—he will feel all the better for it.

Mr. Chairman, I hold views concerning many things different from the views of those who are before me—some things which scarce any one in this house would believe. I take my stand-point touching the Bible, and of every thing in it I shall deem it my right to speak with perfect freedom. I shall speak, when I have occasion, of Jesus of Nazareth, and other characters mentioned in the Bible, and of the writers of the Bible, with perfect freedom. All I ask is that you shall accord to me the rights of a man; and if you do not accord them, I shall *take* them. (Applause.) I will not speak here or any where by tolerance. I reject the word. I speak because it is a necessity of my nature—because it is my divine right.

As it respects the Bible, I would interpret it as my friend Davis does: historically, metaphysically, scientifically, and morally. I believe there are many things in that book opposed to the principles of morality! They can not stand. There are many things taught in it that I believe to be contrary to the fixed, eternal principles of justice and humanity.

If in any thing that Jesus taught, I think that Jesus spoke or taught any thing immoral, I shall expose it exactly as if it

had been spoken by any other man. I look at that book exactly as I do upon any other book—I have no more respect for it than I have for any other. I shall sit in judgment upon what it contains, and receive what I conceive to be true and reject what I believe to be false. I look upon Jesus of Nazareth exactly as I do upon any other human being, and I sit in judgment upon every thing he said and did, exactly as you would do or look upon me, as a man—just as I do upon the gentlemen that sit before me. Coming into being under the same laws that I came into existence under, accountable at the same tribunal, to be judged in the future by the same laws that I am to be judged by—he was a human being, and liable to be mistaken; and, therefore, in reading what he said and did, I claim the privilege to judge of the truth and the right of every thing he said and did exactly as I would judge of the sayings and actions of any body else. Now, judging of him as I do from my stand-point, I am committing great blasphemy and horrifying those who look upon him as a God. Now, if there be such before me, all I have to say is, “Be cool and quiet. Your taunting of blasphemy and infidelity will not disturb me a particle.” I have not come here to vindicate my right not to be called an infidel. I do not care what you call me. I am determined to live out myself in this world and not others. With this spirit let us go to work in this discussion.

On motion of H. WRIGHT it was decided that the Convention should convene in the forenoon at half-past ten o’clock, in the afternoon at half-past two o’clock, and in the evening at half-past seven o’clock.

Mr. WILLIAM STILLMAN next took the floor, remarking that he was glad that the Convention had adopted the principle of free discussion, and that their platform was made free to all. Freedom of thought and speech was the foundation of all liberty, and an essential principle of republican institutions. He was not afraid of the discussion of any subject. Truth

was mighty and would prevail. He differed essentially from the leading men of the Convention. He believed that the Bible was the word of God ; but he was willing that those who thought differently should have the opportunity of expressing their views. The Bible was true, and therefore would stand ; but if it could not stand, let it fall.

The Convention adjourned to half-past two o'clock, P.M.

FIRST DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION.

June 2d.

The Convention was called to order at half-past two o'clock, by the president, when,

On motion of H. C. WRIGHT, two vice-presidents were chosen—William Green, Jr., of Hartford, and S. J. Dorrance, of Newark, N. J.

H. C. WRIGHT then offered the following resolution :

Resolved—That the Bible, in some parts of the Old and New Testaments, sanctions injustice, polygamy, concubinage, prostitution, oppression, war, wholesale plunder, and murder, and therefore the doctrine that the Bible, as a whole, emanated from a God of love and justice, is false and injurious to the social and spiritual growth of man.

Mr. WRIGHT then remarked as follows :

If the Church and clergy can defend that book against these charges, it will stand—it will stand, I mean, as Divine authority. I have no fear that any thing that is true in that book can be overthrown. There is a great amount of pure and good instruction in it. There is a good deal that teaches human love and brotherhood. At the same time, there is a vast amount that teaches hatred, malignant wrath, revenge, injustice, and every conceivable wrong that man can pe

trate upon his fellow-being, and sanctions it with a "Thus saith the Lord." These charges we are prepared to sustain. I summon Christendom to the trial, and let me say, that Christendom will have to meet the question. I will address the conscience, reason, and intuitions of mankind, and I am not afraid at all to let the people judge of this matter. Let us meet the question fairly; and in doing so, I hope that all personal bickerings will be dispensed with.

Mr. DORRANCE, the vice-president, taking the chair, Mr. BARKER arose and said

I came to this Convention to hear and to speak, and I shall not, therefore, feel perfectly at ease to occupy the chair the whole of the time; I must take an opportunity of expressing some of my views on the great questions which the Call, read over this morning, submits to the Convention for consideration. The great questions are, first, what is the origin; second, what is the authority; and third, what is the influence of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures? what is their authority in matters of truth and duty, and what their influence on individuals and on society at large? Upon these matters I wish briefly to state my views. And, first, with respect to the origin of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Our view is that their origin is purely human. *When* they originated—in *what country* they originated—by what individuals they were written—and through what changes they have passed since they were first written, are questions which I do not feel myself competent to answer. My inability to answer these questions does not arise from not having sought information respecting them, for I have been seeking information on those points for about thirty years. All that I have to say, in respect to my opinions, is, that the writings appear to me to have had a purely human origin, and not to have originated, as is generally believed, in some supernatural interposition of Heaven. I have read numbers of books which proposed to

show when, and where, and how the various books comprising the Old and New Testament Scriptures originated; but I have not met in any of those books what appeared to me to be facts or decisive reasonings. Much that is given in those books as fact is manifestly fiction. Much that is given as argument is mere conjecture, or something stated on the authority of persons, whose authority itself requires confirmation.

The origin of the Scriptures, therefore, appears to me to be wrapped in mystery. Any one that thinks otherwise, is not only at liberty to state his views to the Convention, but invited and urged to do so. And now as to the *authority* of the book. The common opinion is, that the Bible is the Word of God—that it is of Divine authority—that every thing it says on any subject ought to be received as decisive—that whatever it teaches is true—that whatever it states as history is fact—and that whatever it inculcates as moral duty is really binding on the consciences of men. The book is considered as a standard of truth and of duty—a perfect rule of faith and practice. It is generally spoken of as the last appeal in all questions of a theological and moral nature. It is considered that by an appeal to this book, all questions of importance to the present and future interests of man may be settled. This is the *common* view. Is it a *true* view? Is the testimony of the Bible to be received as decisive on matters of history, theology, and morals? Those who believe that the common view is correct, say they have reasons for their belief. Let them be so good as to state them. If they have reasons to satisfy their *own* minds, they may have reasons to satisfy *ours*. At present we know of no good grounds for regarding the book as entitled to this high place in the estimation of mankind. We know of no clear and decisive proof to show that the book is of Divine authority in any thing.

We have embraced every opportunity afforded us of hearing those who proposed to speak on this subject, and we have procured and read with care and impartiality, as far as we

could, every work that has been laid before the public on this point, and from what we have heard and read, we are led to believe that the common idea of the Divine authority of the Bible has no foundation in truth. The belief generally entertained on this point we conceive to be a great error, and an error exceedingly mischievous in its influence on society. Not only is it our impression that no *decisive proof* can be given of the Divine authority of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, but that proofs can be given *to the contrary*; and very *decisive* proofs. The book bears upon its very face the marks of its human origin. It proves itself to be of human origin by its imperfections and errors. Take any copy of the Scriptures—any copy of any edition—any edition in any language—take a copy in any form, either in book or manuscript, and we undertake to prove that that copy has no Divine authority about it. In speaking of the Scriptures, we generally refer to the common version, called “King James’ translation.” Let us, then, first direct our attention to it. We ask, Is the Bible in this form a book of Divine authority? Is its testimony decisive on any point of history, theology, or morals on which it may speak? Will any minister of the Gospel—any advocate of the supernatural origin and Divine authority of the Scriptures, say so? I believe not. Theologians, commentators, ministers of the Gospel, and even laymen, generally take the liberty, in their disputes with one another, of appealing from the common version of the Bible to what they call the original Greek and Hebrew. The advocate of predestination, when worsted in an appeal to the common version of the Bible, does not give up his point, but says, “The passages cited against me are, in the Greek and Hebrew originals, strongly in my favor, though in the common version they are against me!” Very few of you can have failed to observe, that it is a common practice of ministers of the Gospel in their ordinary discourses, to appeal from the common version to other forms of the Bible. The minister reads over the following text:

“Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed, on the churches in Macedonia!” He instantly remarks that the translation is imperfect. “*We do you to wit*” does not convey the meaning of the original, says he; “*We do you to wit*” means “We wish to inform you;” and the word “*grace*,” is somewhat obsolete. The meaning of the original is gift or favor. The minister again reads the following text. “Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because He laid down His life for us.” But, says the minister, if he be one of the less blind and bigoted ones, “this can not be a correct translation. *God* did not lay down his life; such a thing is impossible. The immortal God can not die. The common version is erroneous.” He tells his hearers that the word “*God*” in the common version is printed in italics, by which it is intimated that the word is not in the original, but that it is a word supplied by the translators, to make the passage express their own opinion or doctrine on this head.

There are but two examples of the common practice of appealing from the common version of the Scriptures to the Scriptures in some other form. No biblical commentator, then, no theologian, no minister of the gospel of any information, will contend that the Bible, as we have it in the common English translation, is a book of divine authority.

We may add, that the leading men in all denominations have not only believed the common version to be imperfect and erroneous, but have felt its imperfections and errors to be so many and so great as to feel themselves under the necessity of making other translations. Thus John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, made a new translation for his followers. Dr. Boothnoyd, of the Congregational Church, England, made another translation for the benefit of his denomination. Dr. Conquest, a layman of the same denomination, made a third translation, in which he states that he had made twenty thousand emendations. Alexander Campbell, the founder of a new denomination, here in America, has pub-

lished another translation of the *Christian* Scriptures. English Unitarians have published a great number of new versions of the New Testament, while laymen and ministers of all denominations still contend that none that have appeared as yet are what they should be—that none of them do justice to the originals—that none of them succeed in giving a correct idea of the original Greek and Hebrew, and that another and a better is called for. Episcopalians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and disciples all contend, and by their conduct prove, that they believe that the common version of the Scriptures is not correct; and that it is not therefore an authoritative book. No disputant will yield a point merely because it is proved by the common version. No one considers that he has established his point, unless he has proved, not only that certain texts in the common version are in favor of the point, but that those texts, as found in what they call the originals, are in favor of it.

The question of the authority of the Bible, then, is removed from the common translation to some other, or to what are called the original Greek and Hebrew. No person will contend, that while the English translation is imperfect and wanting in authority, the Spanish, Latin, French, German, Welsh, or Irish translation is authoritative. Some members of the Church of Rome may contend, now, that the old Latin translation, called the Vulgate, is of divine authority; but others of them will acknowledge that this version has often been improved, and that still it is not perfect. *All* translations, then, must be given up as wanting in authority. They must be considered as books having nothing more than human authority, which is no authority whatever.

They appeal, therefore, next to the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. *Those*, they say, are works of authority. Are they? Where is the evidence? We no sooner propose to refer to the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, than we are met by a number of contending Greek and Hebrew biblical critics,

each one contending that he, and he only, possesses what may be considered the most correct and authoritative text of these Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. For it should be remembered, that the Greek and Hebrew Bibles are not one, but many. If you wish to appeal to the Greek Testament, the question arises whether you will go to the common Greek Testament, or to Griesbach, or Schultz, or to some later compiler. Griesbach has some readings which the common text has not, and the common text has readings which Griesbach has not. Schultz rejects some readings which Griesbach retains, and Griesbach rejects some readings which Schultz retains. Some insert reading that others reject, and reject what others insert. And so it will continue to be. Now, no biblical commentator or critic will contend that *every* Greek Testament is a book of divine authority. He can not; because the different Greek Testaments vary too much with each other. What one teaches, another contradicts; and what one denies, another affirms. It is impossible they can all be right, though possible they may all be wrong. Not one of them is of divine authority.

Where shall we find our authority? We must go to the *manuscripts*, say they, which the publishers of the various Greek Testaments collated in forming their texts. We must go to the manuscripts, must we? But what *are* the manuscripts? When did they originate? Through what changes have they passed? Do they all agree? Do they all contain the same books? Or do they contain different books; and do those which contain the same books contain them in the same form, or in almost infinitely different forms? These are questions which the common people can not be expected to answer. Yet, mark, the authority is specially needed for the common people—something to give them decisive information with respect to matters of history, theology, and morals. But, as we said, the common people can not answer these questions. They can not refer to the Greek Testaments, or to the manuscripts

which lie behind those testaments. The people in general can not read Greek, and those who can, can not all consult the manuscripts. Where are the manuscripts? Who copied them from previous manuscripts? Where have they been kept? What assurance have we that they have never been corrupted during the dark and eventful ages of the past? What proof have we to satisfy the mind of the doubtful individual, that they have never been corrupted? None. But we *have* proof to the contrary—proof to show that those manuscripts have undergone serious changes—that they are as imperfect as any Greek Testament that was ever compiled; perhaps as imperfect as any translation that was ever made. Those different manuscripts which are the last appeal, vary almost endlessly.

One man, John Mills, collected no less than thirty thousand different readings; that is, he marked thirty thousand different places in which those manuscripts varied from each other. Sometimes, it is true, the difference was only slight—a difference in a letter, or a stop; but a letter or a stop is frequently of great importance. Take the following from a metrical version of the Psalms as an instance:

“The Lord shall come, and he shall not.” “Keep silence, but speak out.” Every thing here depends upon the stop or mark of punctuation. Place the full stop after the word “not,” and you have a contradiction. “The Lord shall come, and he shall not.” Then place a comma after the word “silence,” and you have another contradiction. “Keep silence, but speak out.”

Thus we can not infer that the difference between manuscripts is unimportant, simply because they only differ in the position or insertion of a mark of punctuation; sometimes a single letter entirely alters the sense. There are many different readings in the Greek manuscripts which theologians themselves deem of great importance. There are some passages which favor the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, as

they stand in some manuscripts; but those passages as found in other manuscripts do *not* favor this doctrine. In some of these manuscripts a passage will be found, which has been considered as the great resting-place of the doctrine of the trinity; but other manuscripts do not contain this passage at all. Since John Mills' time, other individuals have directed their attention to the matter, and have collected not less than one hundred and fifty thousand different readings; and the probability is, that future researches will increase the number to a quarter of a million. Now, *all* these manuscripts can not be of divine authority. Are *any* of them of divine authority? Suppose it were a fact that some of them were of divine authority, by what means should we distinguish those that were of divine authority from the rest?

Perhaps some one will say, by comparing them with the original manuscripts of the authors of the various Scriptures. But the originals have perished. They perished, probably, some fifteen hundred years ago. If they have not perished, they have, at least, gone out of sight; and no one knows where they can be found! You can not, therefore, compare the discordant manuscripts with the originals. You can only compare them with each other, or with your own ideas of what you think right. There is no divine or infallible authority to which we can appeal. All corrections hitherto made in those manuscripts have been made by men of fallible judgments. The texts of the Old and New Testaments have been collected by men who were biased by their creeds, and preconceived theological opinions, and therefore far more liable to err than most other men; and the consequence is, that we are left altogether without a book of any authority. The common translation, which is the only Bible known by people generally, was not the work of men, who not only gave sufficient evidence of great intellectual failings, but of the grossest moral defects—men who raised themselves to high places in the church by perjury—men who swore they believed things

that they knew to be false, and pledged themselves on oath to do what they never intended to do. Selfish, proud, intolerant, cruel men. It is doubtful whether any men can be found on earth who have given more reasons to the world to suspect the virtue of their characters and the purity of their motives, than that class of men from which the translators of the common version of the Bible were selected. And no one will contend that those who have published Greek or Hebrew Bibles were perfect in intelligence or virtue. No one will contend that those who made the manuscripts from which the Greek and Hebrew texts have been compiled, were men perfect in understanding or virtue. Every Bible in existence is the production of erring and imperfect men. We have no Bible which is not either a translation made by erring and imperfect men, or Greek and Hebrew compilation made by erring men, from discordant Greek and Hebrew manuscripts; nor have we a manuscript that is not the work of men who were fallible and imperfect.

I defy any clergyman acquainted with this matter to stand up here and *say*—we will make no mention of *proof*—I say, I *defy* any clergyman to say, that any particular translation, or version, or text, or manuscript, is any other than the work of fallible men. This, then, of itself settles the question as to the authority of the book. It is *not* a book of divine authority. Even supposing that the men who wrote the first manuscripts, wrote under special divine inspiration—even supposing, according to the common notion, that they were employed by God, as pens are employed by men, in writing the Bible—supposing that the words and thoughts were originally God's own words and thoughts, every thing being really true and absolutely perfect—truth without mixture of error—it would not alter the matter; because those original manuscripts no longer exist. If ever men did write under special plenary inspiration, the books they wrote have disappeared—we have them not. All that we have are imperfect copies—not of

the original books, but of other copies, which were themselves not copies of the original books, but of other copies, which were not copies of the original books still, but of other preëxisting copies, which were the work of fallible men, all containing in themselves marks of error and imperfection.

But this is not the only argument we use on this subject. We appeal to the *contents* of the book, as we have it, in proof that it is not a work of authority—a work on which we can rely. And if any individual should shift the responsibility from modern translations to more ancient ones, or from the more ancient translations to the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, the result will be the same. We challenge them to bring forward any book in Christendom which is not liable to the same objections that are brought against the common version, or to similar objections. There are objections to be brought against the Greek and Hebrew texts, which do not lie against the common version. In some respects the common version is inferior to the Greek and Hebrew Testaments; but in Athens the Greek and Hebrew Bibles are inferior to the common translation. There are some passages which, as they are found in the common translation, could be read in families, which could not be read in families as they stand in the Greek and Hebrew languages, if we were as conversant with those languages as we are with the English.

We will take, then, the common Bible, and we contend that it is possible to prove from the book itself, not only that it is not a book of divine and absolute authority, but that it abounds with grievous errors, with contradictions in reference to matters of fact, and inconsistencies with respect to moral and theological principles, with contradictions of our own experience and instincts—of our own reason—of what we *know* and *feel* to be just, and true, and good. Nay, further, that the book, as we have it, is acknowledged by some of its own advocates—some of those who believe it to be the Word of God—to contradict what are *known* to be *facts*.

Suppose we begin with the beginning of the book—the account of the creation as contained in Genesis. Is this account, as we have it here, and as it is understood by nineteen twentieths of the Christian world, strictly true? Is it in agreement with facts? Can its statements be reconciled with the revelations of geology—with the teachings of astronomy? Can they be reconciled with *themselves*? You will find even among those who favor the Divine authority of the Jewish Scriptures, persons who will acknowledge that geology does not agree with the common reading of the account of the creation, as given in the book of Genesis. This book would lead you to suppose that the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein, were created in six days; but geologists, even *Christian* geologists, will tell you that the earth's crust proves that the earth must have existed more than sixty thousand, or sixty times sixty thousand years. The account in Genesis, as generally read and understood, tells you that death came into the world as the result of man's sin; but there are not wanting theologians even, who will tell you that death prevailed in the world ages before the first human being appeared upon earth. The account in Genesis would naturally lead you to suppose that above the earth was a firm arch, a solid framework, above which were oceans of water; that in that framework were placed windows through which the water was occasionally let down, when the earth was to be watered, or when some intention existed in the Divine mind to drown its inhabitants. But theologians will now tell you that this representation of the matter is merely what they miscall *an adaptation of the truth to the common mind*. They will tell you that though it is God that is speaking, He is speaking in the erroneous language of men. They will confess that those who first had the Scriptures, were really taught by them to believe that above the atmosphere there *was* a solid framework in which windows were placed for letting down water, although no such thing existed. They distinguish between

what they call *real* truth and apparent truth; and they say that in the Book of Genesis God speaks not *real* truth, but *apparent* truth only, which being interpreted, is real falsehood. They do, in effect, give up not only the Divine authority of the Bible, but its common truthfulness. In truth, they make God a willful liar, a systematic deceiver. Some of these statements, as they stand in the common version, are not only opposed to the revelation of Geology and Astronomy, but to each other. In one place the book tells you that the light was created on the first day; and that on the first day the light was separated from the darkness, and that the light was called day and the darkness night; and that there there were three days and three nights before the sun, and moon, and stars were created; for a little after you are expressly told, that God created, on the fourth day, the sun, and moon, and stars, to divide the light from the darkness, etc. I presume that no individual would say that God separated the darkness from the light twice. I know there are those who try to get over this difficulty by saying that God created the light on the first day, and gathered it together and fixed it in the sun on the fourth day. And there are those, among whom is Dr. Adam Clarke, who contend that the light which God first created the *first* day, was *latent* light; *hidden* light. But the doctor should have known that it would be impossible to make three days out of latent, hidden, invisible light. (Hear, hear.) Again: another portion of Genesis tells you that God first created the different animals which live in the sea, in the air, and on the earth, and after that made man and woman; but another passage tells you that God first made *man*, and then created out of the ground all kinds of living creatures, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them, and to ascertain whether he could find among them a suitable companion; but among the sheep, the goats, the asses, and camels, man did *not* find a suitable companion—a helpmeet for him. *Then* God is said to have caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and

to have formed woman out of a rib which he took from his side during sleep. We have similar contradictory accounts as to the deluge, etc.

Now these contradictory matters do themselves settle the question as to the authority of the Bible. The book that contradicts science, and that contradicts itself, is a book of no authority whatever. It is not entitled to rule any man. But these are little matters. The book gives, I was going to say, the most unaccountable representations of God. That word I will, however, take back. It is wrong, perhaps, for any individual to undertake to say what views of God are unaccountable, especially when we consider that man may have originated with faculties inferior to those possessed by men at the present day; but while we may withdraw the word "unaccountable," we *must* say that the Bible contains the strangest, the wildest, the most inconsistent, the most monstrous and blasphemous representations of God that can possibly be conceived by the human mind.

In the first place, he is represented as a man—walking, talking, eating, and drinking. As a man, he is represented as finite in his presence, as finite in his dwelling-place. He is represented as living at a distance from the earth, and as not knowing what is going on among the earth's inhabitants; but as dependent upon the reports which he receives from his servants, as to the conduct of mankind. When in doubt as to the correctness of the reports brought him by his servants, he is represented as saying, "I will go down and see for myself." He is represented as not knowing what is in men's hearts until he has tried them. He is represented as in doubt as to whether Abraham really loved him or not, and whether or not he had in his heart the principle of unflinching obedience to his commands, until he had commanded Abraham to do what, if any spiritual communication should tell you to do, you would not consider the communicating spirit as good as he ought to be. He is represented as telling Abraham to

take his son and kill him, in order that he might have a proof that Abraham was willing to do any thing that he might command. When Abraham had prepared to kill his child, and held the torch to kindle the pile to consume to ashes his only son, God is represented as saying, "*Now I know* that thou fearest me, since thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from me." He is represented as in doubt as to the disposition of the Jewish people. The Scriptures represent him as saying that he had led them through the wilderness forty years, that he might try them, and know whether they would keep his commandments or not.

This, however, is only attributing to God innocent human imperfections. Other portions of the book attribute to him more serious characteristics. They represent him as doing that which is fearfully unjust and immeasurably cruel. I refer you, in the first place, to the representations contained in the third chapter of Genesis, of God's conduct toward our first parents and the race of mankind generally. 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." This represents God as subjecting woman, in all countries and ages, to certain pains and penalties, in consequence of the sin of one woman. Shall we believe this of God? Shall we believe that because Eve was first in the transgression, all women, throughout all lands, are to be in subjection to the end of time? Shall we believe, because one woman transgressed nearly six thousand years ago, that all women, in all ages and countries, are to be subjected to the most trying afflictions? Would it be just in God to punish all women for the crime of one woman?

Unto Adam God is represented as saying: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou

eat of it all the days of thy life: Thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field," etc.—Gen. iii., 17–19. I shall not stop to inquire whether death did enter into the world in consequence of the sin of Adam; nor whether thorns and thistles first began to grow at that time; nor whether they are a great curse to man; simply asserting that they are a great blessing, by reason of their bringing up to the surface certain qualities of soil which enrich the land; nor shall I stop to consider whether labor was first introduced into the world after the sin of Adam; nor whether man really does eat of the fruit of the ground in sorrow all the days of his life. I will not ask whether you eat of your food perpetually with sorrow, as I know you do not; and as some other parts of Scripture represent a portion of the race as eating their food with gladness of heart, it is my opinion that these representations are false—that man does not eat his food all the days of his life in sorrow, nor one day in fifty; that it is not a calamity to eat the herb of the field, etc., etc. But supposing those representations *were* true, the question arises, could God, could any being, justly inflict a number of curses upon every human being, throughout all ages and all countries, for the sin of one human being? Would not a God that could do so be justly chargeable with injustice. [A VOICE—Yes.] Would not those to whom he acted thus be entitled to complain? I do not believe that God ever did such a thing.

The representations of Genesis on this subject are contrary to other portions of the Bible itself. God is represented as sending forth a prophet to say, "They shall say no more, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge; but every one shall die for his own iniquity." "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die." "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." There is one thing that we can say in favor of the Scriptures, that they seldom or never teach a false

doctrine in one place but that in some other place they contradict it. They seldom or never in one place teach bad morality, but that in some other place they teach something which is in opposition to it, and in harmony with human nature. Hence, men may cull a great many good lessons from the Bible, provided they read with discrimination, "proving all things, and holding fast that only which is good;" but, at the same time, if men take the Bible as a whole, and try to reduce the whole to practice, they will be undertaking an impossibility, and be the means of making themselves exceedingly ridiculous, and of bringing themselves to a miserable end.

But these representations of God are not the worst that are given in the Scriptures. Other portions of Scripture represent God as demanding that the children or the grand-children should be given up and hung till they were dead, in order to turn away a curse from the land, and bring to an end a famine which is supposed to have been brought upon the country by the offenses of the grandfather. You will find passages representing God as sanctioning and commanding the most awful cruelties. These passages I will leave for my friend, H. C. Wright, to quote. In short, there is nothing which could be considered as unjust or wicked in a *man*, that God is not represented as doing or encouraging others to do, or permitting them to do without reproof.

We have spoken of the representations which the Scriptures give of God. Let us now refer to their teachings in reference to human duty. It seems to me that the Bible sanctions polygamy, concubinage, fornication, adultery, secret assassination, lying, theft, human sacrifices, murder, parental cruelty, slavery, war, conjugal infidelity, and every form of vileness and villany. It sanctions those things in every way in which a book can sanction such crimes. It commands them. It records instances of them without reproof. It represents men who are guilty of them as among God's favorites. These

would be thought a sufficient sanction of crime in any other book. Let us suppose for a moment that the book of Mormon is under discussion, and that theologians are discussing with a believer in that book, its merits. They represent it as sanctioning cruelty and war. The believer asks for proof, and is told in reply that there are certain passages in it which represent God as commanding certain persons to go to war; there are certain passages in which God is represented as rebuking certain persons because they had spared the lives of some of the vanquished. It is contended, too, by the theologians, that certain books of the Mormons sanction polygamy, because they not only mention polygamy without giving any intimation that it is wrong, but represent polygamy as practiced by God's best servants—the men after his own heart—men whom God holds forth as commendable for their virtue and goodness. But the Bible does all this. We will allow the defenders of the Bible to give their own tests in this matter, and by their own tests it shall be found that the Bible sanctions polygamy. Abraham is represented as practicing polygamy—polygamy or adultery, call it what you please—but does God complain of Abraham for doing so? Does any portion of the Bible do so? Does the Bible say that Abraham was an imperfect man, and that we must make allowances for him? It expressly says, or represents *God* as saying, that Abraham had obeyed the voice of God, and kept his charge—his commandments, statutes, and laws. If this is not sanctioning polygamy, I know not what is. David is represented as the special favorite of God. God is represented as taking special care of him. He is represented as walking with the Lord, with a perfect heart; yet David was a polygamist. The Bible never represents God as blaming David for polygamy. True, when David seduced the wife of Uriah, and slew him to conceal his crime, he was rebuked; but he is never rebuked for polygamy. God is represented as having given to David all the wives of his master, and the Bible says else-

where that David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, *save only in the matter of Uriah, the Hittite*. The Lord is represented as giving David all the wives of his master, Saul, *one of them being the mother of his first wife*. If this is not a sanction of polygamy, I know not what is.

Then in respect to slavery, the greatest crime and worst curse in God's creation, what does the Bible say? Does the Bible denounce slavery? Does it say that it is a calamity which no man would wish to have inflicted upon himself, his wife, or his children; and that therefore no man ought to inflict it upon any other human being? Does it say that slavery is always associated with every other evil, and that it can not be perpetuated without perpetuating all forms of cruelty? Does it say that slaveholding is a curse to the slaveholder, as well as a curse to the slave? Does it say that it is the sum of all villanies; and that he who is guilty of slaveholding is chargeable with every crime? Does it say that it is associated with licentiousness and corruption of every kind? *Does it say any thing of this kind?* Not a word; but it represents certain slaveholders as the best and wisest men mentioned in the Bible—men especially approved by God. It represents God as dooming woman to slavery to man; thus making slavery almost universal as the race. Another portion represents God as dooming one third of the human race to slavery to the other two thirds. It represents God as giving certain portions of the heathen to the Jews for bondmen—as giving them, not only as bond-servants, but as property, to be an inheritance for them and their children forever. The Ten Commandments make regulations for slavery; but utter not a word against slavery; they only require that the slaves should have rest on the Sabbath, and forbid people to covet their neighbors' bond-servants. It seems to me ridiculous that any man should call in question the doctrine of Professor Moses Stuart on this subject, in his work entitled "Conscience and the Constitution." It seems ridiculous that

any minister should stand up and say, that the Bible, from beginning to end, gives no sanction to slavery. I acknowledge that there is no great subject on which the Bible does not take opposite sides; but it is certain that portions of the Bible take the side of slavery.

If Paul be a true interpreter of Christ's doctrine, slavery is a thing concerning which a man should not trouble himself; for he says: "Art thou called being a servant, *care not for it*; but if thou mayst be made free, use it rather," as much as to say, "there is a *little* difference between slavery and freedom; but not much." Paul's anxiety is that men should think little of slavery and little of marriage—marriage, the first, the best, the happiest of all institutions on earth. He thought that it was best not to marry except for one purpose, and that for a low and brutal one. It would be better, at least in his time, to keep single, only it is better to marry than to ——. Look and see the expression for yourselves.

The Bible sanctions a system of slavery which allowed a man to scourge his slave to death, and go unpunished, if the slave lived a day or two after his scourging; simply because the slave was the master's money. I can not see, if the Bible be the only thing that is to disturb the conscience of the slaveholder, how the slaveholder's conscience has any need to be disturbed. Yet slavery is the greatest of all evils, if we regard it as a calamity; and the greatest of all crimes, if we regard it as an act.

Then, again, the Bible countenances lying. You all remember, who have read the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, Rebecca, Joseph, and David, that they all occasionally, at least, practiced lying in its most palpable form, saying that a thing was, when it was not, and that a thing was not, when they knew that it was. Some of them deceived for dishonest purposes—for unnatural and cruel purposes. Yet, in referring to these men, not a single writer of the Bible gives us the least hint

that these men did what was wrong in thus lying—that in lying they committed a sin.

If I am not mistaken, there are theologians in this country, who contend, on scriptural grounds, that in certain cases polygamy is to be tolerated—that we have no right to condemn it, or to make it a disciplinary offense—that we have no right to expel people from the church for it. The American Board of Missions has done this, if I am rightly informed. I have seen it stated in the papers, that that board has laid it down, or individuals, at least, connected with that board, have laid it down as a principle, that we have no right, on scriptural grounds, for excluding from the churches polygamists. [VOICE—They have made a report to that effect.] So I have read.

There is one body of men (I refer to the Latter-Day Saints) who call themselves Christians (and none of the rest do any more), and they lay it down as a principle that polygamy is right, and that there are cases in which a man would sin against God, against man, and against *woman* (laughter), if he did not take more wives than one; and they say, that provided his first wife has enough of the Holy Ghost in her, she will have no objection to her husband's having another wife, although she might not like it in the *natural* state. *Nature, unregenerate nature*, they acknowledge revolts against it; but grace will enable a woman to submit to it cheerfully. They contend, too, on scriptural grounds, that they have a right to murder, and they have persons among them whose business it is to see that no man escapes with life who is likely to betray them. They contend, also, that it is right to hold slaves, and they also believe it to be right to cut off all the Gentiles, and we are all considered as Gentiles (cries of hear, hear); and to me it seems as plain as the light of heaven, that the Bible is in favor of all these things. I have read discussions between Latter-Day Saints and orthodox clergymen, and I could not help feeling that the Latter-Day Saints have greatly

the advantage on scripture grounds, and that the orthodox man is as helpless as a child in their hands. The Mormonites have better grounds for receiving their books as God's word, than Christians have for receiving the Bible as God's word.

"Well, but," says some one, "Joseph Smith was a liar." But did Peter never lie? Did he not perjure himself on the most solemn of all occasions, and swear that he did not know his master? But do you, therefore, reject Peter's writings? "But that was before he was strengthened and illuminated by the Holy Ghost," you say. Well, then, take Paul's account of Peter's conduct *after* he received the Holy Ghost. He says that Peter dissembled, and that he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. It seems then, that a fault in a man *after* he has been filled with the Holy Ghost will not invalidate his writings, according to Scripture. In spite of all that can be said by orthodox theologians, the Latter-Day Saints will force them to change their course of argument, or compel them to tolerate, on scriptural grounds, polygamy, slavery, lying, murder, theft, and many other evils.

In the Old Testament writings, I know of no portion that is more generally read, more generally sung, and more highly praised, than the Psalms. But are the Psalms all divine? Are their moral teachings all of God? Just hear a few portions of them. Speaking of certain persons who reproached him, the author of the sixty-ninth Psalm says:

Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.—*Ps.* lxi., 22-25, 27, 28.

This is fierce and malignant enough. But listen now to another:

Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come unto his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he his girded continually. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul. But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name sake; because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.—*Ps. cix.*, 6-15, 17-21.

Can you find any prayer like that in any other book? Can you find any thing like it in the book of Mormon?—in the Shaster?—in the Koran?—or in any infidel book? If you found such a prayer in Thomas Paine's books, and did not happen to see it in the Bible, what would be your account of Thomas Paine's heart? You would tax your powers to the utmost to give a hellish enough description of it. "What a black monster! What a heart—full of bile! What a vast amount of *hell* must dwell in that man's bosom!" But this is in the Bible, and that being all divine, this prayer must be regarded as good; and to know whether our prayers be good or not, we must take care, according to the orthodox theory, to see that they agree with these examples just given from the Scriptures. In speaking of Babylon, the Psalmist says in the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." It is well that we (referring to the anti-bible men) do not say

such things. It is well that those who are called skeptics and unbelievers never utter such things, else how could we defend ourselves against our opponents? How can those who regard the Bible as a collection of pure morals—how will *they* defend themselves? and how will they justify their views of the book?

The Bible teaches bad morals on other subjects. Read the first five verses of the thirteenth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.—*Rom.* xiii. 1-5.

There was a time when I supposed that these passages were the rule by which we should be governed in political and governmental affairs. By this rule all are bound who receive the Bible as God's word. They must regard all opponents of existing rulers as rebels against God, and as sure of damnation. Washington would not have been very much helped in his cause, had he, just before an onslaught on the British army, read this passage to his soldiers: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." It would not have done much to make strong the hearts of those noble men who made the Declaration of American Independence. Then see the falsehood of the statement here made: "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil." "Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise

of the same." Falser statements could hardly be uttered. We know that "the higher powers"—"the rulers"—are not always a terror to evil works. We know, too, that those who do good works do not always receive praise of them. It is often the contrary. They often use the sword to execute wrath upon the *well-doer*, and to uphold the man that did evil. The rulers of this country do so at this hour. They threaten with punishment the man who helps the flying bondman, and praise the heartless wretches who pursue and capture them. If the doctrine contained in these passages be true, your forefathers, when they resisted the power of Great Britain, resisted God—they resisted his ordinances, and have received at his hands damnation.

The Bible inculcates bad morality with respect to husbands and wives. The New Testament requires every wife to be subject to her husband in all things, even as the church is subject to Christ. I heard a woman, last week, contending that the word "subject" here did not mean "obedient," referring to the original to prove her position. I referred her, nowever, to a passage where this distinction would not serve her. "Likewise, ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands," etc.—1 Pet., iii. 1. "For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. Even as Sara *obeyed* Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters ye are," etc.—1 Pet., iii. 5, 6. Here subjection and obedience both are required, and the subjection is unlimited, and the obedience is unmeasured; no exception is made. The wife may be much more intelligent than her husband—much more virtuous—much more faithful—much more true; but no matter, she must obey her husband in all things. Her husband may be as ignorant as an ass, and as cruel as a tiger; but no matter; the passage still requires that as the church is subject unto Christ, so the woman should be subject unto her husband in all things. The reasons assigned by the Bible

for this subjection and obedience are of the most foolish description possible. It argues that the woman should be subject to the man, because the man was first formed. It might with just as much propriety have reasoned that man should be subject to the ox, the ass, or the hog, because they were formed first. Other reasons are given by the Bible for this subjection of woman to man, all equally foolish, but it is not necessary to quote them. The doctrine taught in the passages alluded to evidently is, that man should be absolute in power, and woman absolute in subjection and obedience. A more unreasonable, unjust, or mischievous doctrine could not be taught.

A doctrine as dangerous is taught in reference to the church. All church members are commanded to obey those that have the rule over them. This is the sum and substance of all church tyranny. Men may affirm as often as they please that the Bible is opposed to priestcraft; yet it is a fact that the Bible teaches doctrines which are at the basis of all priestcraft. Even Jesus himself is represented as saying, that the people should obey those who sat in Moses' seat; and, although in some other places he is represented as warning his disciples against their doctrine, yet Paul recognizes the principle that rulers have a proper place in the church, and commands all Christians to obey those who have the rule over them, and who watch for their souls. Paul, in his Epistle to Timothy, speaks of elders who have ruled well in the church as entitled to double honor. We have principles in the Bible which, in defiance of all that can be said to the contrary, sanction the worst evils under heaven—slavery, which is the worst of all evils—then political despotism and church authority; and to say which of these is the worst would puzzle man; but whichever is worst, one thing is certain, that church authority—priestcraft—is always found on the side of slavery and despotism. We may justly represent Slavery, Despotism, and Priestcraft as a trinity of evils which will match all other evils combined. This is a small sample of the bad morality

and false theology taught in the Bible. A thousand samples of false and vicious doctrine might be given, but we have given enough as a beginning.

Supposing that it could be really proved by historical arguments—and no man knows how few and worthless the historical arguments are until he comes to seek for them and weigh them—I say, supposing that by some kind of external historical arguments a man could prove that the Bible came originally from God—that its contents were all divine—would he have succeeded in proving that the Bible was a perfect rule of faith and practice? We say, no. Even if true, it could not be a perfect rule of faith and practice; its meaning is so doubtful. It is utterly impossible to come to an absolute certainty as to what the Scriptures teach. They are so indefinite in their teachings, and the interpretations of them are so various and so inconsistent, that it is impossible for any mortal man to use them as a rule of faith and practice to advantage. The only way in which a man can make use of them to advantage is, to take all his best feelings and affections, his purest and divinest conceptions of duty, and his noblest and most elevated thoughts, and force them into passages of scripture, and call them his bible, and use them as his rule.

Mr. GEORGE STORRS then arose and said: Mr. Chairman, when a court is in session, or opens its session, and a person is brought before that court charged with crime, it is important to understand at the outset by what law that person is to be convicted of crime. The Bible is arraigned, charged with crimes, but we have not yet been told by what law the Bible is to be tried. This is a point that I want our friends to define. It certainly seems reasonable, that if any individual is to be tried on a charge, he should not only have the charges specified, but it should be specified against what law he has transgressed. What is the use of standing up and testifying

against a man ten thousand things, until you have told us by what law the charges are to be tried? Where is the law that proves that theft, and slavery, and lying, and murder, are crimes? Just let us have it. If that can be established by our friends, to the understanding of the audience, we are prepared to come and to see whether the Bible is guilty of the crimes charged, or not; and until that has been done, I maintain that every word that has been uttered here against the Bible, is without any force or weight; because it has not been shown that the Bible has transgressed any law. I do not stand here to advocate and defend every thing we find in our translations. I shall not stand here to defend the Bible against interpolations. You have charged the Bible with crimes. Point us to a clear law by which the Bible is to be tried, and we are ready to defend it. (Applause).

Mr. HENRY C. WRIGHT then said: I am glad that Mr. Storrs has brought up this subject. It is long since I have seen him; and glad am I to meet him here, and to hear him speak as he has. He calls for the law. He shall have it. (Applause.) I ask my friend, if he puts his finger into the fire and it is burned, if he asks where the law is by which he is commanded to get out of the fire? (Applause and laughter). If he takes arsenic into his stomach, does he ask where the law is by which he is forbidden to take arsenic? It is as simple as *a, b, c*. If a man cuts his throat, does he ask for the law that forbids him to cut his throat? If he were made a slave, would he stand up and ask the world for a law which forbids one man to make another his slave? Let that man's wife or child be placed on the block to be sold as a beast, and would he ask the question he has asked to-day—would he ask for the law that sanctioned such a thing? I have this to say to him in all frankness, that if he has not something in his bosom that tells him it is a sin, he is not a *man*; for on every heart of man is written by the finger of God, and incorporated into his being

an eternal law, that forbids a man to make his brother a slave. It is a self-evident truth not to be reasoned about. Not many years since, I had a conversation with a Campbellite minister in Cincinnati, on this very subject. I asked him, "Is there any law in human nature which teaches a man that some things are right and some things are wrong?" And he answered that there was not; but that all ideas of right and wrong were educated into man from something without, and that there was nothing in man that could give him any sense of justice, of truth, or falsehood. He insisted that there was no such thing as an innate perception of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, of good and evil. I then asked him if he had any thing that assured him that he existed. "To be sure," said he, "I have; I am conscious of my existence, and that is enough for me." But I replied, that I had no evidences of his existence at all, and desired him to prove it to me; but he could not prove it. "Well," said I, "do you believe that you are a human being?" "Of course," said he. "But what evidence have you of it?" I asked; but he could give no proof. He only knew that he was a human being because he felt a consciousness that he belonged to the human race. "But," said I, "there sits your sister with her babe in her arms. I take that babe and dash out its brains against the walls, after having been an inmate of her house for weeks, and after being treated kindly by all the family. Now, after I have perpetrated such an outrage, do you say that there is nothing in that mother's heart that assures her that I have grievously wronged her." "Nothing," said he. I looked at him, and said, "Are you a human being, or are you a beast?"

Suppose, Chairman, I dwell in your family for weeks, and receive your kindly sympathy and hospitality. But, in the darkness of midnight, I rise from my bed and enter your chamber of repose and stick a dagger into the hearts of each one of its inmates, and set the house on fire and burn you all up. The people all know it. Now I ask my friend, what

does he mean when he asks for a law to prove that such an act is wrong? We are told that Jehu commanded the heads of seventy children of Ahab to be cut off, not because the children had done wrong, but solely because their father had done wrong. Now I ask my friend, does he wish for a law to decide whether that act was just or unjust? Sir, that act is pronounced to be wrong by a law written in every human heart. Suppose that a man in this town had deeply offended me, or, in other words, that he had sinned against my nature. I go and take his four children and cut off their heads; not because they had done wrong, but because their father had done wrong. I wish to know if the people of Hartford want to know where the law is by which such an action is to be pronounced unjust? The whole community would pronounce me a wicked man. Suppose that an army is raised in Connecticut and placed under my control, that I may go to the city of New York and kill every man, woman, and child. I go to New York and kill all the men and burn the city; but bring back to Hartford the women and children and deliver them up to the governor and council of this city. They become exceeding wroth because I have not strictly obeyed their commands; and the governor of the city sends out men to butcher all the married women and all the "males among the little ones," and to keep the young maidens for prostitution. Does my friend Storrs wish to be pointed to a law that tells him that this is wrong—horribly wrong? Has he not something in his heart that tells him that such an act would be outrageously wicked? If you have not, my friend, what are you? Can any thing in God's universe make him believe that it is right? Nothing can, and yet he may read the thirty-first chapter of Numbers, and he will find that God is represented as saying to Moses, "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites;" and an army was sent out and all the Midianite men were slain, but the women and children were brought alive to the camp, and Moses was exceeding wroth,

and commanded all the married women and male children to be slain, and delivered over to his army all the maidens for prostitution. Do we need to ask where is the law that tells you that such a transaction is wrong? I ask every husband in this house: Do you need to ask where the law is that tells you that polygamy is wrong? Would you be perfectly reconciled to have your wife have two, or three, or ten husbands? Can you find in your souls a single element of the doctrine of polygamy? I ask any wife in this house, Would you be willing that your husband should have two, or a dozen wives—or three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines, like Solomon the wise man? and will any body ask, Where is the law to settle whether polygamy is right or wrong?

Is it asked where is the law to decide whether slavery is right or wrong? I reply (placing his hand on his heart) that it is here. God has written it, not on tables of stone, but in the human heart, and every human being comes into existence with a code of laws assuring him that certain things are right, and certain things wrong.

Man is under certain conditions of physical and spiritual life and health—certain conditions of the health of body and soul; and my objection to the Bible is, that certain parts of it, which sanction slavery, war, concubinage, prostitution, the death penalty, and certain other things, are opposed eternally and necessarily to the fixed conditions of the life and health of the bodies and souls of men. That book teaches us that one man has the right to dictate to his fellow-man what he shall do, and if he does not obey he can kill him. The Bible holds up the doctrine, that I have a right to tell my friend Green, for instance, what to do, and to kill him if he does not obey me; and will you tell me that my friend Green, Mr. Storrs, or any body else, needs any other law than the instincts of their own souls to tell them that it always was, and always must be, unjust, cruel, and tyrannical for a man to assume the right to tell his neighbor what he shall do, and to kill him if he

does not obey. I deny the doctrine entirely. I am under certain fixed conditions of life and health, and God himself can not justly violate these conditions, or authorize any man to violate them. Here we come to the very foundation of all things in the discussion, and my friend Storrs should be thanked for bringing up the question. Is there in the nature of man an absolute rule of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood? I maintain there is, and all I have to prove it is just this—I can not cut off my finger without suffering. It is a law of my being that I can not cut my throat without dying; for God has made a sound throat essential to human life. I can not knock out my brains and live; for God has made brains necessary to human life. I do not consider it possible for a man to smoke or chew tobacco without doing an injury to his system. I do not conceive it to be possible for a man to take alcohol into his system without injury to himself. So with regard to various other things.

Just so with regard to the soul. There are certain things a man can not take into his soul without injury. I do not believe, for instance, that it is possible for a man to be angry without injury to his soul. I will ask my friend Storrs if he was ever thoroughly angry? and I do not know but that he has been, for he has been in trying situations.

Mr. STORRS—About forty years since.

Mr. WRIGHT—How did it feel? Did it feel good, my friend? Did you not feel heartily ashamed when you had got over it? How would you feel to have had your neighbor take you by the hand, then, and say to you, “Be good-natured, friend Storrs, and look me right in the face.”

No man can get angry without losing something of his self-respect. It is a law of his soul, and he can not violate that law of his nature, which is love, without an injury. I say the same of revenge. Did a man ever return evil for evil without losing self-respect. If a man shakes his fist at me, and I shake mine at him—if he calls me a scoundrel, and I call him

a villain, I certainly do not feel so well, when I come think of it, as if I had said, "Father, forgive him, for he knows not what he does." And I say, that when the Bible allows of wrath—hot wrath—it violates the law of man's nature.

When Moses was up in the mountains, and the Lord was writing out the Ten Commandments, there was heard a shout of the people below, and all at once the Lord starts up and says, "Get out of my way, Moses, and let my wrath wax hot against the Israelites, that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation;" But Moses says to God, "Lord, don't do it. You will only make yourself ridiculous in the eyes of the Egyptians. Just have a little respect to yourself—do have a little patience. Don't kill them all off." He appealed to the Lord's ambition to prevent his killing the people. "Well," says the Lord, "I guess I won't kill them; but I tell you what I will do. Go, you, and gird on your sword, and get the sons of Levi to help you, and command them to put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And Moses did so, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men, and the wrath of the Lord was turned away." Not only is wrath here allowed to Moses, but the wrath of the Lord is represented as waxing hot. I say that wrath is contrary to the fixed law of the human soul. Yet the Bible attributes it to God. The Bible errs.

Mr. Chairman, I believe in the existence of a God; and I would say that God is to me an essential law of my being—a want or a *necessity* of my nature, just as much as food is, or air, or light. I can no more be without a God, than I can be without air and food; and to my mind it is ridiculous to talk about atheists. We may be atheists here (pointing to his head), but never here (laying his hand on his heart). God is not logic—he is love. He is not to be found in the head, but in the heart—deep down in the inmost of the human soul,

where love dwells. I can not be without the desire of immortality any more than I can be without air and light; and I believe in it, not because I see it taught in a book. I never go to a book to learn that there is a God, or to learn that I am to live in the great future. I feel it here (laying his hand on his breast), and I always felt it here ever since I was conscious of a moral existence.

Here, then, is the law, fixed and eternal, and God himself has no right to interfere with its natural functions. I wish to repeat it emphatically, that I do not believe in a God that claims a right to interfere with the laws of my nature—to suspend them for an instant, unless he changes my nature. When he makes me into something else from what I am now, then he can put me under other laws. It has been the false teaching of a false church that all rights belong to God, and that nothing but duties belong to men. Now, I believe that there are rights that belong to men, and God can no more justly interfere with my rights as a man, than I can justly interfere with his rights as God. There is a law stamped on the human heart, and in my opinion that is the only true revelation that God ever gives to any human being, and that revelation he has given to every one alike; and that is the law by which I would test the Bible.

The Rev. Mr. TURNER rose to request that some definite understanding might be had as to the length of time to be occupied by the speakers in favor of the Bible. He thought that the opponents of the Bible having occupied thus far the most of the time, there was not an equal opportunity given to the other side of the question. He would like to know by what rules the Convention was to be governed.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that the Convention was to be governed by the common rules of conventions. The gentleman (Mr. Turner) seemed to prefer a complaint which he (the Chairman) thought without foundation, inasmuch as the

speakers on the side of the Bible had just as good an opportunity as those on the other side to take time for the full expression of their views. His wishes were that the gentlemen in favor of the Bible should occupy, at least, one half of the time of the Convention. If they do not (said he), the fault will be theirs, not ours.

H. C. WRIGHT then offered the following resolution :

Resolved—That after this evening's session, each speaker be restricted in time to forty minutes, and after each speech, persons wishing to oppose the views of the last speaker, should have the precedence to the floor. [Adopted.]

Mr. PARKER PILLSBURY then rose and said: I rise to answer the question of my friend, Storrs. If it is not worthy of an answer, I hardly know of one that can be. I am glad to see Mr. Storrs here. I have known something of him for several years. He is the man to whom the only thing of the kind ever happened since the earlier days of Christianity—that while on his knees, in prayer, he was seized by a sheriff, and brought before a magistrate to answer to the charge of being a "*common brawler*;" and his brawling was, that he was on his knees invoking the aid of God in behalf of his labors for the oppressed, and it has been a matter of a good deal of pleasure to me, to find that his course has ever since been consistent with the position he then took as it regards the evil of slavery.

It seems to me that one friend, to-night, has answered this question sufficiently; and I have not risen to answer more perfectly, but only to give a corroborative authority. I think, with my friend, that law is universal. God never made a blade of grass, even, which is not as much under law as is the highest seraph that burns before his throne. There is not a flower that dots your beautiful gardens in this city, like angels' finger prints, that is not also under law; and if God has placed angels and flowers under law, so it seems to me

he has also placed man under law—man in his body and man in his soul. The body is under law, and violations of its laws are visited with a penalty, and there is no atoning sacrifice, no expiatory blood, that can remove the penalty. “The body that sinneth, it shall die.” So, in like manner, there is a law applying to the mind—that most beautiful flower of God’s own formation—that flower which is only germinated here as in a hot-house, to be transplanted to the gardens of Paradise to bloom forever—yes, that spirit is under law, and needs nothing to demonstrate what is that law, or from whence it came. Divinity is stamped upon it. The law that governs it is written upon it by the finger of the divine power that created it.

We who have assembled here in this Convention are charged with a degree of infidelity almost unparalleled in the annals of human depravity. There was once a Hartford Convention that stamped this place with notoriety. Here is another Hartford Convention that will, perhaps, be remembered ages after that one shall have been forgotten. There are momentous questions to be discussed here, and I desire that they shall be discussed in a calm, deliberative manner, and in so far as we *can* agree with those who are opposed to us, I think it is well that we should agree. The church and the ministry are, of course, on the other side of the question from us; because this Convention proposes to call in question the principles upon which the Bible rests. We propose to go down and strike upon its underpinning stones, and see if they are sound, secure, and will stand the tests of time, the shocks of eternity.

I think it well that we should not disagree with our opponents, when we might just as well agree. If they have foundations upon which we can build the superstructure of our faith, let us do so. I have here a work, coming from the very highest authority, which, I think, answers the question proposed by my friend Storrs, in part at least. The book

comes from no less a source than Andover Theological Seminary, from Professor Stuart; and his department in the seminary instruction was just that department which should give his authority in this Convention the greater respect. In this book (entitled a "Critical History and Defense of the Old Testament Canon"), on page 23, it seems to me he answers the question most forcibly and beautifully, for he says, "The demand of intellect and reason must be met, in order to satisfy a reasonable being." And again on page 352 he further declares, "The Bible is a book that, we may take it for granted, was made to satisfy the intellect and enlightened reason, as well as devotional feeling." And still again, on pages 410, 411, he says emphatically, "If there is any book in all the world, addressed to the sober reason and judgment of men, that book is the Bible. It is written by men, addressed to men, and designed for men. Of course, it adopts a human and intelligible manner of address throughout. * *

* * The Scriptures, written in any other manner, could be of little profit to us. And when we see methods of interpretation applied to them which no other book will bear, and which would hold any one up to scorn if he should adopt them in explaining a classic, how can it be expected that the understanding and reason will not distrust them, and sooner or later be sure to revolt against them?" And finally, on page 363, the Professor affirms, "When all is done and said, however, the understanding and reason remain to be satisfied. Nothing will stand that does not compose these to peace."

It seems to me that here we are fully agreed with Andover Theological Seminary, and it is only to this test that I wish to bring the Bible. I have come to this Convention as a learner—I have come to listen to men whose wisdom and knowledge are far superior to mine; and I shall sit at their feet with pleasure, and shall only arise to speak when I think there is a vacuum that I can fill; and I will say, as I have

been speaking of Nature, that I agree with Nature in one thing—I abhor a vacuum. (Applause and laughter.)

Mr. H. C. WRIGHT then said he would offer for discussion a resolution which he thought would call up the question asked by Mr. Storrs, as to the law by which the Bible was to be tried :

Resolved—That God has given to man a rule of life, by which if he lives, he will be just what God designed him to be, and that law is incorporated in the physical, intellectual, and spiritual nature of every human being.

Mr. PARKER PILLSBURY offered for discussion the following resolution :

Resolved—That if men are to prove all things, and only to hold fast that which is good, then any Bible or religion, Church or ministry, that defends or apologizes for slavery, war, oppressive governments, or any form of despotism or tyranny, secular or spiritual, governmental or individual, is to be specially examined and discussed, and approved or condemned according as those sins or systems which they defend shall be found at variance with the nature of man, and destructive of the happiness of the universe.

On motion, the Convention then adjourned to half-past seven o'clock, P.M.

FIRST DAY—EVENING SESSION.

June 2d.

THE Convention having been called to order, and Mr. Joseph Barker having made a brief recapitulation of the arguments presented in the preceding sessions,

Rev. Mr. TURNER arose to speak against the resolutions offered just before the adjournment, and said :

Mr. Chairman, in rising to discuss this subject, I do not stand before this Convention with a feeling of bigotry. I do not stand here to advocate the doctrines of the Bible unless there is good reason that the Bible should be sustained; nor would I, in broaching this subject, feel that it is below us to consider it in public debate. If the Bible is a good book, it is good enough to be talked about before the people; and if the Bible is a bad book, and it can be proved to be bad, the people are the very persons that ought to know it. (Applause.) Some who are present know very well that the views I entertain of public discussion are liberal, and I am far from supposing that every man who calls in question the Bible or its truthfulness is a designing man or a knave. I have for years been convinced that many of the closest thinkers in the community have been made skeptical as to the truthfulness of the Bible from the fact that the Bible, in the hands of the clergy, has been forced to prove doctrines that are not taught within its sacred leaves; hence I am willing, as an individual, that the truthfulness of the Bible should be discussed; but still, with my brother Storrs, I must insist upon having the law defined by which the Bible is to be tried. The Bible has preferred against it, by the resolutions which have been offered here, the most solemn and grave charges—charges which, if true, ought to excommunicate it from the community. Now, if the Bible is to be proved guilty, we insist upon having the law defined by which we are to decide. We are told that the law by which it is to be judged is within every human breast, in the very constitution of the human soul—that reason and conscience are to become the standard by which the Bible is to be tried upon the charges now preferred against it.

If this is to be the law by which the Bible is to be tried—if in the mind of man there is a law of right and wrong of sufficient authority to allow us to bring the Bible to it, then that law should be universal—it should be found in all human

nature; for every mind, every human soul is called upon under such circumstances, to render a verdict or to bear a part in erecting the standard by which the Bible is to be tried. Let us for a moment consider this matter and see if such a law is implanted in every human soul—a law that is not dependent on outward information and external instruction, as we were told that it is not. If it is universal and inherent in the nature of man, then we shall expect to find that law as really existing in heathen lands as we find it in America. Mark that Hindoo mother, with her infant in her arms, on the banks of the Ganges, hurling it to the monsters of the deep, and see her frantically exultant that she has by this sacrifice pleased her God! Will any contend that that mother does right? If there is a law of right and wrong in the human mind, how is it that this mother becomes so mistaken as to suppose that this act was a most solemn duty. If there is a law of right and wrong implanted in the human mind, how is it that the Hindoo widow throws herself upon the funeral pile of her husband that she may be consumed, thus robbing her children of their last and dearest hopes? If there is such a law in the human mind, why is it that all the cruelties of slavery are practiced? I believe that there is a feeling in the human heart that condemns the cruelties of slavery, and I am heartily glad that it is increasing; but, sir, why does it increase? There is a source from which it springs; but what is that source? Is it the human heart? If so, how is it that the slave-driver stands and draws his murderous whip without seeming to think that it is wrong? If this law is universal, how is it that the task-master, when he urges on the slave beyond his powers of endurance, does not feel that he is doing wrong? It is because there is no law within his heart, telling him that it is wrong. We see nations who go to war with other nations—we see an army arrayed against army upon the field of battle. If we go and talk with the rulers of those nations and officers of those armies, we shall find

that both sides will justify their course. Why do such things occur, if there is planted in the human soul a definite law of right doing! Why does it not appear to both parties alike? If this law of life is so universal, why is it that on both sides they do not discover what is right, and like men knowing what is right, abandon the wrong?

If a law of right and wrong is implanted in the human mind—if the human reason and judgment, the standard by which the Bible is to be tried, is so reliable, how is it that in communities reared under the same circumstances and instruction, persons differ so much in their judgments? Does the law of right tell my neighbor one thing, and me another? Does the law of right tell one portion of the community one thing, and another portion another thing? or is it a fact that men differ from each other in proportion to the dissimilarity of their mental organizations? I need not stand here and repeat the truth, so well established, that men differ in their judgment, which is accounted for from the fact that they differ in the construction of their brains. You take two heads organized precisely alike, and give them the same instruction, and their minds will be of the same nature—of the same mold; but we do not find two craniums alike; and therefore we do not find two minds alike. If the Bible is to be tested as to its worth by human judgments, then we will have as many minds in regard to the Bible, taken as a whole, as you have heads in this congregation, or in the world. This fact shows that there is somewhere a “higher law,” to which all these varied organisms must bow, and be in submission. There must be somewhere a standard for mind—a standard for morality existing somewhere. If there is a standard of morality in the human mind, how is it that we have these charges preferred against the Bible? If organisms are all alike, and my friend judges from his organism that polygamy can not be correct, how happens it that any men with the same law in their hearts ever *did* judge that polygamy was

correct? If this standard is alike in all minds—if there is a “thought of God” thus dwelling in every human soul, it has not changed; so that what was right in Solomon’s day would be right now.

We may despair of settling this question of the truthfulness of the Bible, even according to the showing of my friends who have spoken on the other side, by any standard that is erected in the human mind, for all men have a right to judge in this matter as well as we. Why, I am told, or at least I read from the call of this Convention, that there is a variety of opinion among those persons who do not accept the Bible as a revelation from God. It would be very strange, so far as their intellectual development is concerned, if there were not a vast variety of opinion. I venture to say, by a mere cursory examination of their heads (pointing to Mr. Wright and his coadjutors), by merely looking at them, that there is a vast variety of opinions, of judgments. (Applause, and cries of hear, hear.) Could we leave the question to them, should we be sure of a unanimous verdict? I venture to say we should not get such a verdict. But if there is a reliable standard in the human mind, why not? How is it that there are so many differences in theology as spoken of by my friend (Mr. Barker), if there is a sufficient standard in the human mind to judge the Bible by? (Applause.) In a word, does it not appear from the very fact that there is such a variety of mind which you see existing everywhere, that there must be some standard above the human judgment, else “where doctors disagree, who shall decide?” [A VOICE—Each one for himself.] “Each one?” Then we shall have just as many sentiments as there are individuals, and then, I ask (adverting to Mr. Davis and his teachings) how shall we ever get a “harmonial brotherhood?” (Applause and laughter.) I have been accustomed to consider harmony as a perfect commingling of sounds, and if you apply it metaphorically to theories, it must be understood to signify unanimity of thought, concord

of judgment; but how shall we ever have such harmony as long as men differ so much as we know them to differ? I have no objections, after this question of law has been settled, to coming right to the Bible; but I deem it to be fair for both sides of the question that the law by which the Bible is to be tried should be first settled. So I wish to keep this point before the mind, and to have it remembered, that if the human mind is to be that law, one thing is settled, and that is, that we need not discuss the questions proposed by the call for the consideration of the Convention; for we have them settled already. Every individual in this audience now holds that opinion which he would consider already sanctioned by that law. But is it argued that those minds who accept the Bible as divinely inspired may be changed? Very well; if men can be changed one way, they may be changed the other, and the standard law by which it is proposed to try the Bible is shown to be vacillating. This discussion has come up in a different form from that which I anticipated; however, I have no fault to find, only so far as the nature of the objections are concerned. The objections are of such a nature that they do not admit of a direct handling. If the question could be brought before the people in a more condensed and correct form, I should be happy to meet them; but as it is, we can not expect a satisfactory discussion; the more important points will not thus be reached. In this I speak as an individual; for I am the representative of no party, and I hold myself ready at any time to be converted to any thing that is truth. Truth is immutable, as has been said to-night, and all I seek is the truth, and when I know any thing to be true, to it my heart, my being shall bow. (Loud applause.)

In filing in objections against the Bible in respect of its teachings, of things it commands, and things it countenances, no regard has been paid to the time, the place, the circumstances under which the things claimed to be wrong have been done and countenanced. If, indeed, the Bible does

countenance things it has been charged with countenancing, it ought to be discredited ; but it seems to me that one great feature of the Bible has been overlooked, and that, too, by the chairman (Mr. Barker), who not only seems to have read a good deal *about* the Bible, but a great deal *in* it. It should be remembered that the Bible was not all given in a day—that it was designed to be adapted to the natures, the religious wants of mankind in all ages of the world—and is given with reference to God's advancing plan in the world.

If the whole Bible was applicable to the state of affairs now, it could not have been applicable to the state of the world centuries ago, simply because the state of affairs is now very different from what they were then. The Bible is adapted to the whole economy of God's government in the earth. We have in the Bible three kinds of truth, and in so speaking I use my own classifications. We have historical truth, in which we are taught by example ; present truth, which informs us of ourselves, our natures and the relations which we sustain to, and the position we should occupy in, the moral government of God ; and we have always had, and shall have till that Bible winds up, prophetic truth, which presents the future. Now, take that book, laid out from paradise lost to paradise restored, and consider it as applicable to any one generation alone, and it is not difficult to understand that men should find a great deal of fault with it ; portions of it could not thus apply harmoniously. We have for many years believed that the Bible was the standard to which every man should bow. This, our position, has been denied and condemned ; so now we want to know by what law the claims of the Bible are to be tried. We insist on this point, for when that question is settled we shall have found by what law you and I must be tried ; FOR THERE MUST BE A STANDARD. (Applause.)

Mr. GEORGE STORRS—The resolution brought forward at the opening of this Convention arraigned the Bible before

some court, and charged it with certain crimes. I would again ask, if a person be brought before a court, charged with crimes, if it is not right that the law should be defined by which he is to be tried—a law by which it can be judged whether he is a criminal or not? In reply to this question, my friend Mr. Wright—very prettily indeed—appeals to our feelings. “The law is planted in here (touching his breast)—in the constitution of our nature.” Is that the law by which the Bible is to be tried, and its morality or irreligion to be tested? Is that the law by which this book is to be proved a wicked thing, or to be justified? Is the Bible to be tried by this law in our nature, which says that murder, theft, slavery, etc., are wrong? I understand that the position which my friend (Mr. Wright) has taken is, after all, that the Bible is to be tried by natural religion.

Mr. WRIGHT—Yes, by natural religion.

Mr. STORRS—I ask you then to prove that God is possessed of a solitary moral perfection by natural religion. Tell me how, by natural religion, you are going to demonstrate but that there are more than a million gods in the universe? I am glad that he has said that it was natural religion. We come now to the point—we have something tangible. It is natural religion by which we are to try the Bible. All that you can prove by natural religion, with reference to supreme powers is, that there may be one God or many, and that the God or gods possess intelligence and power; and, for aught that you can know by natural religion, this God, or these gods, may have just the character which it has been contended by our opponents the God of the Bible possesses. Does natural religion teach you that God is good, when he suffers so much misery, and woe, and war, and slavery, and blood, and sickness, and death, filling graveyards with human beings? Now, where is your good God? Do not touch the Bible—stand off from that—let revelation alone. Just take your natural religion, and you can not prove that God is

good; and for aught you know, therefore, he is just such a character as sanctions war, slavery, polygamy, etc. I see no possibility of avoiding this conclusion. By natural religion how can you know but that it is right that God should destroy one class of men by another? How do you know that it is wrong for one nation to rise up against another nation, and to commit depredations and destroy one another by war? How do you know that it is wrong to practice polygamy? How do you know that it is wrong for God himself to interfere with my rights as a man, having created me? What does natural religion teach you about the animal creation?

See your neighbor take the calf and cut its throat before the eyes of its dam. She moans—she feels bad, don't she? Ah, it is a sin to take the calf and cut its throat—is it not? But natural religion says it is right—you want it to eat; but perhaps my friend *Wright* will say it is *wrong*. (Laughter.) Again, a man finds a swarm of bees in a tree, and cutting down the tree, he takes the bees and puts them in his beehouse, and tells them to work for him. They work all summer long; but finally the man comes along who says that he is the “slaveholder,” and that he wants the honey. He lights his match of brimstone under them, destroys their life, and takes the honey. He is a robber! Does natural religion say so? Oh, no; but they are inferior to me. Indeed, sir, how inferior you are to God! How do you know but that the God that made you has a right to command you to be slaughtered? Does natural religion tell you that he has not? No. The fact is, that natural religion can prove nothing only that there is a God—whether one or many can not be determined—and that that God possesses power and intelligence; but can not lead us one step farther in determining his character. Hence, I say, that the rule by which it is claimed that this Bible should be tried, is a defective one, and that the Bible can not be tested by it. But perhaps I shall hear some one saying, You are not going to compare us to the

lower and inferior animals? But, sir, what are you but an animal? I was glad to hear my friend Wright say, that if he did not have any brains, he would have no life; but take away his brains and he would be dead, just as dead as any other animal. Now, I ask, if natural religion allows us to enslave the lower animals—and a great portion of the community take their life out of mere sport—and if the law of natural religion was the same and unchangeable, if it would not condemn every man that takes the life of the meanest insect that crawls upon the earth? Our friends have been building upon a foundation that has been laid for them by some theologians, that man has an immortal soul—that he is a part of God. Whatever else may be charged upon the Bible, this can not. Man is only an animal till there is a development of moral powers by the application of a moral law. What, a part of God! Why, sir, if man is a part of God there is no such thing as sin; for sin being a departure from God—a violation of some law, there can be no such thing as sin, unless a man should deny himself. Man, a part of God! No, sir, that is an assumption of the human heart in its pride. They would be as gods. I maintain that man by his creation is only an animal of the highest order, and capable of higher development than any other animal; but as to his having an immortal soul, there is no such thing taught in the Bible; therefore the Bible is clear of that charge. Whatever else they shall claim is taught by the Bible, it never taught that man is possessed of an immortal soul. (Cries of Hear, hear.)

A great many complain because Adam should have been placed in a state of trial; but if he had not been, he never could have risen above the state of an animal, for holiness is not a creation, but a development; therefore the conditions for such a development were absolutely necessary for the development of Adam—for enabling him to rise in the scale of being and to become a partaker of the Divine nature, if faithful

to his God. His very trial was, therefore, on the part of his Creator, an act of mercy and of kindness. That trial was to develop the moral character of Adam, which, if in harmony with God, was to entitle man to an endless existence; but he was informed that if it was not in harmony he should surely die. When we inquire the meaning of death—what it is to die, we must, answer, that it is to return back to that state from which man came. What, to be annihilated? Yes, sir, to be annihilated. “But,” says one, “there is nothing that can be annihilated.” But I ask if he who created can not annihilate, if he will? The only question is in regard to his will. It is said that nothing can be annihilated; but I ask the objector if he means to say that God Himself can annihilate nothing? Do you not preach from day to day that God made all things out of nothing; and yet do you deny that that Being who created all things out of nothing can return them to the state of nothing—that is, to annihilate them.

Why, sir, I can annihilate some things. Bring me a glass globe. Can I not grind it to powder and annihilate it *as a globe*? You say the particles of matter remain. But does the globe *as a globe* remain? Manifestly it does not; it is annihilated. So man when annihilated will not exist *as man*, whatever becomes of the elements of which he was composed.

Adam was told by the Creator that in case he did not obey the law given to him he should return to the dust from which he came. Now, sir, do you tell me that natural religion teaches a contrary doctrine—the doctrine of the immortality of the soul? Can natural religion point into the future world? If so, what means all the speculation among heathen philosophers about the immortality of the human soul? I ask what does it mean, if natural religion can carry you to another world? No, sir, natural religion can do no such thing. It remains for revelation to bring forward and to develop a future

world ; and if it remains for revelation to do it, it remains for that revelation to state the terms upon which the Creator will give us a part in the future world.

I must refer to a few remarks that were made by my friend from Ohio (Mr. Barker), in bringing forward his objections to the morality of the Bible, in that it sanctioned various wrongs. Take, for example, slavery ; he left the impression upon our minds, by his remarks, that the Bible sanctioned such slavery as we are accustomed to contemplate—such slavery as American slavery. Now, sir, I deny it altogether. [The speaker at this point made a short comparison between the system of service sanctioned by the Scriptures and the American system, remarking that the Jews were forbidden to return a slave to his master, in case he escaped from his master ; as his leaving his master was evidence of hard usage, and that death was the penalty for stealing a man or having him in his possession after he was stolen—quotations from the Scriptures to this purport being made. On the occasion of a remark made by Mr. Pillsbury, the Chairman expressed a wish that speakers should not be interrupted, but that persons should take notes in silence of any thing they might wish to remark upon at some other time, when Mr. Storrs remarked that he had made remarks in a desultory manner, not having taken notes ; for that seemed too much like “distrusting the “law of nature,” the *noble brain!* (Laughter.)]

The Bible has been complained of on account of its teachings concerning women. They read to you, on the one side, passages telling the duties of the wife, but they read nothing prescribing the duties of the husband. Paul commanded that husbands should love their wives as they love themselves. It is a dreadful thing for a woman to be loved by her husband as he loves himself! (Laughter). I venture to say that there is not a woman of good sense in this house that will not risk the consequences, if she can get a husband that loves her as he loves himself.

The old theological notion of there being infants in hell not a span long has been adverted to. Suppose we throw the Bible away and do not let a ray of its light shine upon us, and I ask you where infants go to when they die? They go down into the grave, don't they? Then all the infants that die go into hell—your natural-religion hell (applause and laughter); and you can not demonstrate by your natural religion but that every infant goes into hell. The infant comes into the world a suffering being, travels on in pain and suffering, and drops into the grave. Now, where is your natural religion to comfort you. "Oh, I guess it has a soul that goes off in progression." "I guess!" *I* guess it is all guess-work. It is the Bible that brings to our view another state, and that by a resurrection through Jesus from the dead.

The question in regard to the Bible is not, in fact, whether that Bible is a revelation, but it is whether it is a faithful history of revelations and certain transactions connected with those revelations; and therefore the whole question turns on the credibility of the Bible witnesses, and whatever charges you may bring against hireling priests, these witnesses are to be judged in their testimony, according to the motives under which they may be reasonably supposed to have acted; and if it appears that their whole course was one of self-sacrifice and pain—that they jeoparded their very lives in giving their testimony, and nothing can be shown to the contrary—then you must accept them as credible witnesses. Further, when it is shown that this suffering and trial was foretold them by their beloved Master, there is no reason that can be given for supposing that they were designing men—men that would palm off on the world a falsehood. So if we go back to the Jewish priesthood—who may be considered as Bible witnesses—do we find them men of selfishness? Did they frame those laws? (turning to Mr. Wright.)

Mr. WRIGHT—Yes.

Mr. STORRS—Let us see whether they were knaves or not.

Is it any where evinced in these laws? Did they (the laws) reserve any portion of the land for the priests?

Mr. WRIGHT, interrupting Mr. Storrs, said—They reserve to the priests one-tenth of all other property.

Mr. STORRS—Does it look like knavery, I say, to cut them selves off from all possessions in Israel? Yet the people were to give them only one-tenth of their crops, etc., and where was the law compelling the people to give it, if they would not do it voluntarily? [Some interruption being made by some, the Chairman called them to order; and Mr. Storrs, supposing that he was called to order, left the stand, until after some little colloquy between several persons, and until after he was informed of his misapprehension of the Chairman's remarks, when he returned and proceeded in his speech.]

Now, I say that the priests did not make the laws, and I call upon my friend Wright to prove that they did; and if they did, they made just such laws as knavish priests would not have made—they made a law to prevent their holding possessions in Israel. They made a law by which it was made a voluntary affair with the people to pay them one-tenth of their crops, etc., or not; and there was no law compelling them to pay this tithe.

A VOICE interrupting—The people were not to have any wine the next year in case they did not pay this tithe.

Mr. STORRS—I ask if the priests themselves caused that there should be no wine the next year, after the failure of the people to pay tithe, or did He who caused the herb of the field to grow, cause that there should be no wine? Were you to give knavish priests now the power to make laws to regulate their own salaries, do you think that they would exclude themselves from having inheritances among the people, and not make any provision for compelling the people to pay tithes?

A VOICE—No, they would pay more attention to their bread and butter. (Laughter.)

Mr. STORRS—No, indeed ; but such was the fact in regard to the Jewish priesthood : they were excluded from having inheritances among the people, and there were no provisions made for enforcing the payment of the tithes—there were no pains or penalties to be inflicted upon the people in case of their failure to pay. Now, I ask, if such a code of laws gives any evidence of having been gotten up by a corrupt priesthood? No ; there is every evidence of the purity and goodness of their motives. So with reference to the witnesses of the New Testament. You say of a corrupt priesthood now-a-days, that they keep a good look-out for their bread and butter ; but they sacrificed all—being stoned, whipped, and imprisoned, and were assured by their Master that they should come to a violent death. They went out in the face of public opinion—against a corrupt priesthood—against a corrupt world, civil and ecclesiastical, with their lives in their hands, and proclaimed the great truths and facts of the New Testament. And what are these great facts? Why, the great fact—the solar beam of the New Testament is, *a resurrection from the dead* through our Lord Jesus Christ—that God has given unto us *eternal life*, and that this life is in his Son, and not in ourselves. Amid all their trials these witnesses maintained their integrity to the end. But you say that Peter denied his Lord, and cursed and swore. Well, I suppose he was a little afraid of the face of clay, as we are sometimes ; and who can wonder at it, when we think that we are possessed of human nature which shrinks at suffering? Why do you not tell us, that when Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, that he went out and wept bitterly? Would it not answer your purpose? It would not, would it? (Applause.) Does the Bible any where say, that any man on earth is ever so good that he may not sin in the hour of temptation? No ; if it did, this might be brought up as an excellent thing against the truth and inspiration of the Bible ; but it goes on the very ground that we are liable to sin, and that God has

promised that if we repent, and use those means or institutions which he has appointed, we may be forgiven our sins and be restored to his favor. And so Peter did, and on the day of Pentecost the fear of man was taken away from him. He will not deny his Lord now.

“No, to be sure, but he will dissemble.”

The flesh which you see, which must be kept “under,” is the source of sin; and in the hour of temptation the best man may be led, in view of pain and suffering, to commit a sin which, on reflection, he would stand up strong against, if he has the principle of holiness in his heart; and this was the case of Peter.

These witnesses went forward testifying to the truth, namely, that Jesus is the Son of God—that Jesus died—that God raised him from the dead—that he ascended into heaven—that he is coming again to judge the world, and to give to his people eternal life. They preached Jesus and a resurrection from the dead, and they went forward in their testimony, faithful unto the end; and, mark you, they did not, as hypocrites and dissemblers do, conceal their sins. Dissemblers and hypocrites do not tell their sins. No, no, sir, they cover up their sins. The New Testament witnesses did not cover up theirs, as is evinced by the very fact that we have a knowledge of them; and that is another argument in favor of the credibility of the witnesses. All these witnesses testified to facts and truths which they promulgated to the world at the hazard of their lives. As we go forward in this Convention, I have much to say, if I am permitted to say it. (Cries of hear, hear, and applause.)

Mr. J. K. INGALLS then said—It is sometimes the case, that when a party is to be tried, instead of pleading the justice of their cause, they question the jurisdiction of the court and the constitutionality of the law. It is behind this refuge that the friends of inspiration have taken their stand.

Now the ground which I shall assume is this: before you have taken the position that one thing is natural religion and another thing is revealed religion, you must prove that the Bible, with all its inspiration, with all its history, with all its revelations, is not in the domain of natural religion.

I believe and claim that the Bible is inspired. I do not believe that those men who suffered for the cause of truth and goodness were idle priests and designing men. I believe that they were true to the Spirit of God working in their inmost hearts. This position is necessary, or else we can know nothing of inspiration. I take the position, that either the human mind has capacities which are not only enabled and qualified to judge of truth and of what is right, but that it has capabilities for inspiration. If you deny that the human mind has no such capabilities, then you simply say, in so many words, that the Bible itself is a fallacy; because every word there penned, every truth there inscribed, was given to this world by, and through the instrumentality, the inspiration of the human. Well, say you, men were inspired in ages by-gone. Do you know that they are not inspired *now*? You insist that in our use of the Bible we shall admit that there is a law of progress in reference to the inspiration of the Bible, and yet you say that there is no law of progress pertaining to the human soul. Either the human mind is capable of inspiration—either it is to sit in judgment upon that book, or else that book is a fallacy and a fable. If the inspiration of that book is established, then you establish the capability of the human soul for inspiration (cries of hear, hear); and you can not establish one, it seems to me, without the other.

It has been said that those great principles which are the foundation of all that is good in Christianity—the great doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the fraternity of all men—rest upon the Bible; but I claim that they do not rest upon the laws of Moses, they do not rest upon the authority of any

book; they rest upon the authority of the great Jehovah inscribed in the human soul; and I ask, was not Jesus himself the first teacher of natural religion when he taught those great and ennobling truths by appealing to the untiring testimonies of nature. (Hear, hear.) He taught his disciples to return good for evil; not because Moses said so—not because He said so, but because their Father in heaven maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust.

I choose to regard these testimonies of the past experiences of our race as the storehouses of the human mind, wherein are deposited the treasures, thoughts, and experience of past ages. We do not want to throw that book away; we want simply to cull the good from the bad, and not impose upon the human soul a book which has its imperfections, and say to that soul, As you reverence God, you must receive this, and receive the whole of it; and it is upon this point that this whole question turns: whether the human soul is superior to all things else, or whether a book shall have control over the human spirit; it is, in fact, whether man is the rightful ruler of this world, or whether it is some ideal which the ages of the past have furnished us.

When my friend (Rev. Mr. Turner) was speaking of the progressive principles that he desired to have applied to the plan of God, in regard to the revelation of the Bible, I desired to ask him how he determines, in accordance with those principles, that inspiration has not been continued down to the present time. As we could not survive any length of time upon the accumulations of wealth and food of past time, without having recourse to the productions of the earth, so we can no more maintain our spiritual existence, except there be a constant influx of the Spirit of God for the development of our nature.

There is an idea entertained by the Swedenborgians—I speak of them with respect—that the Bible has an internal,

a spiritual signification, and that we must not understand it in accordance with its literal signification. I saw when our friend (Mr. Barker) was speaking this afternoon, that the objections which he brought against the Bible were only forcible on the ground of the strict and literal interpretation of the Bible. They would have no weight with an individual who believes that the Bible requires a spiritual interpretation.

It has been claimed that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the human mind is not the proper judge of the divine inspiration—that this standard is too changing and changeable. It has been said that the human soul did not have in itself a standard of right and wrong, as is made evident from the fact, that in countries where they do not have the Bible they do not have definite conceptions of duty. It seems to me that books are but the out-growth of the human soul, as the buildings here in Hartford are the representatives of your internal condition, the correspondents of certain conceptions of your souls; and the reason why they do not have Bibles or books teaching morals and sublime principles in certain countries is, because they have not come to that condition in which they are capable of producing them. The tree of humanity, then, has not arrived at the period when it is capable of putting forth such fruit. We should not consider books as implanting principles and truths in the human mind, but we should consider them as an expression, a correspondent of divine things imminent in the human mind, which make themselves more and more manifest as humanity rises in the scale of progress.

I wish our friends to inform us how they know that the Bible is the Word of God, and how they know that the Shaster or Koran is not the Word of God. "Oh," say they, "we have decided this matter for ourselves, and we have found that it is the Word of God." I ask if you would have known that it was not the Word of God if it had not been? Certainly you would, or else you would not have known that

it was the Book of God. In deciding this question you must have exercised the same judgment which you contend is not a competent judge of the matter. You clearly imply by your position that the Bible is the Word of God—our position—that the human mind is competent to decide whether any given book is the Word of God or not. So you perceive that those men who have dodged the question, occupy the same position that we do. The question is not, as has been represented, whether or not the apostles were all a set of scamps attempting to impose upon mankind. My estimate of the characters presented in the Bible may be as good as that of either of those gentlemen (referring to Messrs. Storrs and Turner), but to that estimate I do not find it necessary to subject my reason, and to say that I will not sit in judgment upon their productions—the Bible—when I have already sat upon it and decided it to be correct.

The Bible, like other books, is a picture of its author, and as a picture we admire it when it gives a life-like representation—our interest in it depends upon its truthfulness to Nature. The Bible has in many respects held up the mirror to Nature, and so far as it does we must love it; and it is for this reason that it has so long held on to the consciences and feelings of mankind, causing them even to receive and nourish the bad and prejudicial for the sake of the good.

Mr. HENRY C. WRIGHT then spoke as follows: The question at issue between us is this, whether man has in himself a power competent to decide what is true and what is false in principle, and what is right and wrong in practice. That is the question as I understand by my friend Storrs. If it is not, I wish he would say so.

Mr. STORRS—The question with me was to know by what supposed rule the criminal is to be tried.

Mr. WRIGHT—My answer is, by the soul of man, which I maintain is competent to decide what is right and wrong in practice, and true and false in principle. I understand my

friend to say that there is no such power in the human soul—that there is no case where the soul is competent to decide what is true and false, and what is right and wrong.

The gentleman (Mr. Storrs) brought up an instance, and asked, "What is it that leads the Hindoo mother to cast her babe into the Ganges to be devoured by the crocodile?" Will he tell this audience that the mother has no feelings that revolt against such an act? What is the reason that she does this deed? She does not do it from the impulse of her own soul. Is there a father or mother that can answer that she did it from her maternal instincts? Sir, a DAMNING system of supposed arbitrary revelation had been brought to bear upon that poor mother's soul—a system of revelation coming through some priest or religious chieftain, which told her that she must throw her child into the Ganges or be damned. (Loud hisses and applause.)

Yes, that terrific power which has, in all countries, wielded such mighty influence over the ignorant, *a supposed arbitrary revelation*, supposed to have come direct from God, was brought to bear upon this mother's soul, commanding her to violate the holiest instinct of her nature.

Again he asks what it is that causes the Hindoo widow to cast herself upon the funeral pile of her husband. What causes it? Will he dare stand up and say that it is the instincts of her heart that causes her to do so? What did it? A damning system of supposed arbitrary revelation that is brought to bear upon the poor ignorant creature. Mark you, it is not only the Christian system of revelation that is arbitrary and opposed to the interests of the world. To the Hindoo, the Shaster is a bible as sacred as your Bible is to you. To the Mohammedan, the Koran is a bible as sacred as yours is to you, and he is drilled into obedience to it exactly as the Christians are trained into obedience to their Bible. It can not be said that the Hindoo widow throws herself upon the funeral pile of her husband in obedience to the instincts of her

nature. We are told by the missionaries in Hindostan that while this terrible sacrifice is going on—while the widow is being burned to ashes on the funeral pile of her husband—the priests stand around the pile to compel the poor creature to lie where she is, and to prevent any one from taking her off.

There is no time for answering all these positions in detail, but I desire to answer them in brief by one short argument. I ask this audience, does Nature teach you how you wish others to love you, or how much you wish them to love you? Do you feel in your own souls, do you measure by your own souls, the amount of love which you wish others to have for you? You do not go to Moses, to Jesus, nor to the Bible to learn how much you want your wives to love you. You do not go to Moses nor to Jesus to learn how much you want your husbands to love you. You do not go to Moses nor to Jesus to learn how you want your children to love you. Mr. Chairman, *it is just ridiculous* to say the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice. You all know you never go to that nor any other book to learn how you are to feel and act in all the most intimate and important relations of life, but to your own souls. What did Jesus say about it? He says, "Love your neighbors." How? not as Moses tells you to love them, not as Jesus tells you to love them, but "*as you love yourself;*" and where are you to go to learn how you love yourself? Will you go to any thing outside of yourself? Your own heart tells you how much you love yourself. Just as you love yourself, so you must love your neighbor.

Again, the Bible tells you to do to others as you wish them to do to you. The same was told you by Confucius long before Jesus had a being. Where are you going to learn how you want others to treat you? to Jesus? to Moses? to Mohammed? No. To the Bible? You never think of it. Where do you go to learn how you want others to treat you? I say to your own hearts, and nowhere else. My friend Storrs does it exactly as I do: he goes to his own heart to decide

Heart
the love
of the
neighbor
as
they feel

the question how he wants others to feel and act toward him. Every other human being does the same. Every priest and Christian does the same. Yet they go on to reiterate the same falsehood—that they take the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice! I repeat, not in one act in ten thousand of your lives do you think of what the Bible says. The merchant goes about his business on 'change, and in his store, and he has a rule of action which is ever present, and he never thinks of his Bible from one week's end to another, in buying and selling, as a law of life. Priests and politicians, Church and State, seldom quote the Bible except to sustain slavery, war, or some great outrage upon justice and humanity. How does he wish others to deal with him? Here's the testimony (laying his hand on his breast)—*here*. As you wish others to treat you, so treat you them; and I maintain that even Jesus himself has settled the question between us, that man has in his own soul the power to decide how he is to feel and act toward his fellow-beings. In this the teachings of Jesus accord with the fact, and are, therefore, true and authoritative; for truth alone is authoritative.

Our friends (Messrs. Storrs and Turner) have placed before us all the testimony that could possibly be needed upon our side of the question. I think that they have given us an argument that demonstrates the falsity of their own position. What, in the name of Heaven, have they been about? They have been interpreting a book—what else have they done? What did they use in explaining it? Their tongues, merely? I reckon there was a soul that moved and guided the tongue. He may call it a brain, or a little bit of a muscle called a heart. There was *something*, however, by which they decided on the meaning of the passages in that book. They have been using their reasons and instincts through all this argument; and I say, that they being witnesses, there is something that decides between truth and falsehood, and right and wrong, in the soul of every human being. Here is a book—

the Bible. The first claim for it is, that it is, *as a whole*, the Word of God. Our friend appears on the platform to decide how much of it is true. He says that all is true, and I say, that only a part of it is true. How does he settle that it is all true? He brings the book to the test of his own soul, and so do I, and we come to different conclusions; and I say that the meaning of every passage in that book is to be decided in the same way, and in none other. He (Mr. Storrs) has been using his reason every step that he has taken in this discussion. He has assumed that there is a law above the Bible by which it is to be tested, and when he appeals to you, he appeals to your reason, to an inner law, by which he wishes you to test the force of his arguments.

Nobody in the universe has a right to decide this question for me. Nobody in the universe has a right to decide it for Mr. Storrs, except Mr. Storrs—nobody for Mr. Turner, but Mr. Turner. Shall we set up a priesthood to decide for us as to what is right and wrong? I repeat it, without qualification, that every human being should decide for himself, and there is no other way to determine what is right and wrong, or true and false. By the individual reason every question is to be settled. This is the law by which the Bible must be tried, and is tried by every human being. And when it is tested by reason, by the natural sympathies, instincts, and affections of the human soul, how monstrous are some of the teachings of the Bible! What unnatural, cruel, savage, revengeful, and murderous feelings and passions, commands and actions, it attributes to God! There is not a man nor a woman in Christendom who, if they were to find the same things in any other book, would not instantly conclude that it could not be from a God of love and justice.

The Convention then adjourned to Friday, ten o'clock, A.M.

SECOND DAY—MORNING SESSION.

Friday, June 3d.

AT ten o'clock, the Convention was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Barker, of Ohio, when

Mr. S. J. DORRANCE, of New Jersey, read the following resolution, offered by Mr. Wright, as the basis of his remarks :

Resolved, That God has given to man a rule of life, which will render him, if he lives by it, just what God designed he should be, and that the knowledge of this law can be obtained only by a careful study of man's physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature.

The circumstance which makes it proper now to consider the subject of this resolution is this: it has been affirmed that the writers of the Bible, whoever they were, believed God authorized men, in ancient times, nay, commanded them, to commit certain abominable crimes. That he commanded the Israelites, for instance, through Moses, to slay deliberately all the men of the Midianite nation, amounting to many thousands; to burn all their cities with fire, and having done this, to kill every male little one—which must have been several thousands—and every woman who had ever been married, and to preserve for *themselves* all the virgins, which amounted to thirty-two thousand. Now the record of human butcheries contains nothing more bloody, more savagely cruel and diabolical than this. This is not the only instance; it is but one out of many in which these Israelites perpetrated the most ghastly crimes ever committed on earth, by the express command of God, as they thought.

Indeed, I may say with perfect truth, there is no crime—the human imagination can conceive of none—the children of Israel did not commit, under what they supposed God's command. Murder, arson, pillage are terms that but faintly

describe the atrocities perpetrated by those reeking, red-handed butchers. Baby-murder! the murder of women by the thousand together, because they were wives and mothers! commanded by the All-just, All-wise, All-good Father of the universe! We believe God commanded no such thing. That Moses and his bloody associates were either mistaken or something worse. That it is a libel upon God's character to publish such things of him. That the writers of the Bible were mistaken about God's will in a great many cases, and conclude, therefore, that the Bible is not to be relied upon as a rule of faith or practice.

At this point we are met in this way—If, as you believe, the Bible does not represent the character and will of the living God truly and reliably, then there is no such representation in existence, and the human race are necessarily ignorant of either. If God's will be not revealed here, then it is not revealed anywhere, and men do not and can not know the will of God at all. God's will is the law, and the only law of mankind. If his will has not been revealed in the Bible, then the law is not known.

By what law, then, do you propose to judge the Bible? Where is the law? Every thing that is right, is right *because* it is the will of God. Every thing that is wrong, is wrong for the same reason.

But if the Bible be not true, you do not know his will, and can not know it, consequently have no means of judging what is right and what wrong.

To this we reply: There is a law older than the Bible, old as the human race, old as the possibility to enjoy and suffer, extending its binding force to every human will, and known to the human race through the natural exercise of conscience. This law is known to the entire race of mankind, and has been known since men were men. The wise and the simple, the young and the old, all know it, and can not but know it, unless they be idiots or insane. All can not state it in words,

nor can all understand the verbal formulas which constitute its statement in the abstract. Yet there is not a conscience that does not spontaneously reveal it, nor a human consciousness within which it is not contained.

To make this point clear is the sole object of my remarks. It is necessary to observe that the word "law" does not always designate the same thing. When used in reference to the physical powers of nature, it means simply the invariableness of the action of these powers under the same conditions. Thus it is a law of the power embodied in water invariably to solidify the water under given conditions. It is a law of magnets invariably to attract each other by their dissimilar poles. It is a law of dry and properly constituted gunpowder to assume invariably the gaseous form when ignited by a spark. But when the word law refers to the will-power—to the human will—it does not mean that this power acts invariably in the same way under the same conditions, but the way it *ought* invariably to act *under all possible circumstances*. How a power acts is one thing; how a power ought to act is quite another.

Obviously the moral law is not what the human will invariably *does* do, but what it *ought* invariably to do, under all circumstances. It means *one* rule of action for the entire human race in all ages and countries, and under all circumstances. It is not an arbitrary rule which God's will created. It is a necessary rule which determines even the divine will. It is not the law because God wills it, but God wills it because it is law. It is the law which precedes and regulates the divine volition, not that which comes from it. It is as well the law of the divine as of the human will.

Such a law can not, in the nature of things, be a rule of *external action*. External action can not conform to *one sole rule* without variation throughout the entire world of mankind. They can not, for instance, everywhere eat the same sort of food, in exactly the same quantity, at precisely the

same hour, in summer and winter, sick or well; nor wear exactly the same vestments, nor live in houses just alike the world over, nor do precisely the same sort of work, in all ages, without regard to strength, or health, or sex, or youth, and any other circumstance whatever.

Obviously the moral law does not apply to external action—to movement in space. No *one* rule of outward conduct can be devised that could consist with the law of progress. Bees, the world over, observe one rule of outward conduct. But the first generation is as wise as the last, builds its comb, and makes its honey as well. So of other animals.

In animals there is no progress, no improvement in conduct.

If one rule governed the external conduct of mankind, one generation must be just like another, as is the case with bees. The moral law can only apply to somewhat in which the entire human race can and *ought* to be alike—alike without regard to age, sex, country, condition, or any other circumstance whatever. This something is precisely this, the *general aim* of the soul. This ought to be the same in all mankind.

Every human creature, the world over, ought to have the same general aim: namely, to promote his own well-being, and the well-being of all others whom his conduct affects. The moral law prescribes one and the same general aim for all men. It does *not* prescribe one and the same external action to all. Seek constantly and diligently your own permanent welfare, and that of the rest of mankind is the *only* precept of the moral law. Never seek to promote your own good at the expense of another's, nor your own enjoyment at one time, at the expense of your own suffering at another. This is the negative form of stating the same thing. Love your neighbor as your self. That is, seek to promote his welfare as you seek to promote your own.

Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye

even so unto them. That is, since you necessarily desire others to promote your happiness, do you seek to promote theirs. All these are but different modes of stating the *one sole* precept of the moral law. This precept is applicable *only* to the *mind's aim*. If the aim agree with this precept it is right; if not, it is wrong. If a man's *aim* agree with this precept he is a good man, though he fail to accomplish it. If a mother *aim* to promote her child's welfare by striving to restore it to health when sick, she is good, though she, through mistake in selecting medicine, actually kill it. He whose aim constantly agrees with this precept is a man after God's own heart. No matter how humble, how poor, how ignorant, how feeble; no matter what the age, sex, or condition, he who aims so, and not otherwise, is as good, morally speaking, as man can be. Successful accomplishment is not the test of virtue.

The poor cobbler in his stall, scrupulously avoiding to do any thing hurtful to others to promote his own welfare, while faithfully stitching to give daily bread to his wife and babes, is worthy all honor—while the rich merchant, bent mainly to enrich himself, quite careless how others fare, is ignoble, though he really, by his outward conduct, promotes the welfare of thousands. This not being *his Aim*, goes not to his credit in the view of the wise.

The moral law, then, just prescribes one thing, and one only, to all human beings. It says to all, Aim at good, welfare, happiness, well-being (it matters little which term is used), for yourself and others. The sole function of conscience is to make this one thing known to the human race. Those who complain that conscience varies in its judgments in different countries, and almost in every man, so as to be, as a guide to action, almost worthless, or quite, entirely misconstrue its function. They confound it with that of a very different faculty. They seem to regard conscience as a sort of maid-of-all-work, having no specific duty, but to attend to matters and things in general. A very little reflection would discover,

that if conscience could not only reveal the aim which should animate the race, but at the same time prescribe the means adapted to its accomplishment, it would render useless any other faculty whatever. We have an understanding as well as a conscience. Its function is to discover the means by which the end prescribed by conscience may be accomplished. Conscience *never* prescribes different aims to different men; but understanding *does* suggest different means. Conscience *never* errs—understanding *does* err. All the *seeming* errors of conscience are *real* errors of the understanding. Conscience prescribes to all mothers to aim at the permanent good of their children. Whether the mother be a Hindoo or a Hottentot, a Jew or a Christian, a Catholic or a Protestant, makes no difference. The understanding of all mothers must decide upon the means of accomplishing this aim.

The Hindoo mother, taking the traditions of her country to be good evidence, instead of taking nothing for good evidence, not verified by experience and observation, judges the means to be, throwing her baby into the sacred river Ganges. This is obviously an error of the understanding about a question of fact, not an error of conscience respecting an aim. The aim is right; the means not adapted to accomplish it. If throwing children into some sacred river were really the very best means of promoting their everlasting welfare, I should advise all mothers to cast them in.

The judgment of conscience is a priori. The judgment of the understanding a posteriori. The one is infallibly certain before experience—the other depends upon experience. This distinction is of the first importance in the discussion of moral questions. By not sufficiently attending to it, conscience has fallen into general disrepute, as a useless faculty, or rather a faculty performing its function so badly, that, for all practical purposes, the race of mankind might as well have none at all. The human conscience has been libeled quite long enough. It is, in fact, the grand faculty of the soul. It performs its

function with undeviating accuracy. It is the ground of the possibility of virtue. It is no mere factitious concern, subject to change its judgment as the fashion changes, and to be modified to suit the fancy of whoever or whatever happens to lead popular opinion. It is a *natural* faculty, having a *natural* function, which it spontaneously, *infallibly*, and irresistibly performs, in *precisely the same manner*, throughout the entire world of mankind.

The human stomach does not more constantly and naturally convert food into blood, than conscience indicates to man the aim that should direct all his activities. No man judges, no man can judge, thanks be to conscience, that he ought constantly to aim to make all men suffer as much as lies in his power. Consequently no man proposes to pursue such a diabolical line of conduct. Every man necessarily judges the contrary. That the moral law prescribes the *ultimate aim* for every will, and prescribes nothing else, is seen from this. Moral character is always determined by the actor's aim. The effect of his external acts has nothing to do with it. If one aims to save his neighbor's life by shooting a bear that is pursuing him, and in his haste and anxiety kills the man, nobody pronounces him guilty. His aim agrees with that prescribed by the moral law, and therefore is right. If this law required the *result* invariably to agree with the aim, and the means employed to be in all cases exactly adapted to produce such a result, then this man would be guilty. He, in that case, would have gone counter to the law. The law, by the supposition, not only requiring a good *aim*, but likewise a good *result*—he has broken the law in not obtaining the result required.

Hard, indeed, would man's lot be, if the moral law required a good result with the same strictness that it requires a good aim. Aims depend on the will, and on this only. Results depend on the action of the physical powers of nature. Whether a man *aim* to produce a field of corn rests with him;

whether he *do* produce one depends on other power than his. Therefore the moral law requires good *aims* only. The human conscience requires only this, and this it *invariably* and *everywhere* requires.

Paul and Apollos could *aim* to convert men to Christ; but, as Paul well intimated, it was not in them to command success. Results, as before observed, depend on the action of the physical powers of nature. The action of these powers depends on the supplying of certain conditions. This, again, on our knowing these conditions, and this, again, on experience and observation. But if the moral law extended to the result of action, as it does to the aim, we could never try an experiment without running the risk of committing a crime. The result being, from the nature of the case, doubtful, might not be what the law required, and we might sin while having the best aims conceivable.

The moral law relates to the aims or purposes of the soul, and to these only. It prescribes one and the same ultimate aim to every will in the universe. This one aim is the good, the happiness, the well-being of one's self *and* one's neighbor. Conscience, naturally and spontaneously, recognizes this aim as the only right one. It naturally, irresistibly, and universally recognizes the soul's obligation to will so, and not otherwise. This is the sole function of conscience. But simply willing my own and my neighbor's good does not produce it. Action, external action, the use of means, is therefore necessary. External action is action in space. It is the action of the physical powers of nature. Results, all results whatever, so far as man is concerned, depend on the action of these powers.

Before man can excite these to action, and direct them with success to the accomplishment of his purposes, *he must know* their laws. To obtain a knowledge of their laws is the great function; not of the conscience, but of the understanding. If the understanding be well posted up in the knowledge of

these laws, means will be well chosen and the soul's purposes successfully accomplished. If the understanding be ignorant of these, if it misconceive them, means will be ill chosen, and mischief and misery will inevitably result.

A Hindoo mother, ignorant of the powers in nature and their laws, supposes powers that do not exist. She desires good for herself, good for her babe, and *aims* to produce it. Being ignorant, and trusting the traditions of her country, she supposes throwing her child into the Ganges will do what really it will not do. This is an error of her understanding, not of her conscience. Enlighten her understanding and she will discontinue the practice. If she did thus, in order to make her child and herself suffer, without any belief that the suffering would be temporary, and ultimately lead to happiness; if she judged she *ought* to *aim* at the production of suffering, as an ultimate end, then I should say enlighten her conscience. There is a thousand-fold more mischief in the *results* of human action than is in men's aims. Set all that down to ignorance. Enlighten men's understanding, and the world will *seem* better, and *be* happier. For really men *seem* a great deal worse than they are. Obviously no man *aims* to make himself suffer, but the contrary. The *result* of his conduct is, however, to bring suffering to himself through mistaking the means by which a contrary result might be secured.

We stupidly blame men as if they actually aimed at all the mischief they do, and we shall continue to act in this stupid fashion until we accustom ourselves to distinguish the aims of the soul from the results of outward action, and to perceive that the moral law prescribes aims only, not results. Men violate the law, for the most part, in not aiming at the good of others while pursuing their own, and not by directly aiming to produce misery. They break the law negatively, not positively, by not including enough in their aim, instead of aiming at the opposite of what the law requires. The seller of rum, for instance, aims at his own good, all the good perhaps he has any

idea of, the good of eating, drinking, and sleeping, and pursues this aim by doing what he *knows* injures his neighbors, not *because* it injures his neighbors, but because he promotes, as he conceives, his own good. He, in common with the greater portion of other men, leaves out of his aim the good of his neighbor. This the law imperiously requires him to include in it.

He leaves it out. Other men, very respectable men, leave it out; *not*, however, through *ignorance* that the law requires them *to leave it in*; no man ever sinned, or *can* sin, through ignorance of the law. Sin consists in doing what one *knows* to be wrong. He who does not *know* he ought to include the good of his neighbor in the general aim of his life, does not sin by leaving it out. He may leave it out innocently. It is probably as contrary to the general plan of the Almighty for tigers to kill men, as for men to kill men. Tigers do not *know* they ought to include in their aim the good of men as well as their own good; therefore it is, and *therefore only*, that tigers do not sin in killing men. They have not conscience. If men did not know, *could* not know, what the aim of the soul should be, no man *could* sin. To say, therefore, that man can not know *right* from wrong without a miracle, without supernatural light, and at the same time to accuse him of sin, is the *ne plus ultra* of absurdity. To say man is incompetent, by reason of the defective nature of his faculties, to judge the aims of the persons whose actions are described in the Bible, is to perpetrate this very absurdity. If I did not know the aim of Joseph's brothers when they cast him into the pit, and lied to their old father, to be wrong, what would be the sense of describing to me this action? It would, in that case, seem to me just as right as any other. But having the faculty to distinguish right aims from wrong ones, such cases appeal to it, exercise it, and cause it to take a distinct form in my consciousness. This is the sole use of describing such cases to me. If I had no such faculty, more than a horse has, none could be appealed to, and you might as well, for all purposes

of moral instruction, tell the story to the horse. Everywhere the Bible presupposes, and takes for granted, such a faculty in the human race. It everywhere addresses it, and by addressing, implies that it is a valid faculty (for what would be the sense of addressing a wretched, rickety faculty likelier to be false than true in its responses?), and the main use this book has served consists in its appeals to this faculty of the soul.

Much that the Bible approves of, very much, agrees with the natural dictate of conscience. Much, also, does not agree; and this conscience can know as well as the other. It is one of the gravest mistakes ever made to deny the validity and authority of conscience. The idea of substituting the Bible for it is absurd. The Bible is the grandest monument antiquity has left upon earth in proof of its validity. It has done much, very much, to cause the workings of this faculty to stand out prominently and boldly in our consciousness. By presenting us the record of the doings of a highly distinguished ancient nation—distinguished by this very fact, that it had become conscious of the workings of conscience, though not particularly enlightened in its understanding, since it could, and did believe, that God required it to violate its conscience, in dealing with everybody but Israelites—by presenting this record so as constantly to appeal to the conscience, by exhibiting the nation's conduct ever in a moral point of view, it has done much good. But since the attempt to substitute it for the conscience and understanding both; since the attempt to make the human race walk by the light of Moses and the Israelitish prophets, denying any light in modern men, save what percolated through the souls of these, it has done unmitigated harm, and has worked evil continually. Instead of supplying the conditions of exercising and developing conscience, it has superseded conscience, extinguished its heavenly light, rendered men incapable of knowing that a crime is a crime, if Moses and his associates thought it was not, and is constantly made use of to justify the worst crimes of modern

times. Thus it is harming mankind, and it becomes needful to investigate its real character.

At this point Rev. B. Danforth, of Boston, having arisen to speak, a colloquy ensued between Messrs. Turner, Pillsbury, Storrs, and others, as to the right of Mr. Danforth to speak at that particular time; and it being decided by the Chairman that Mr. Danforth was entitled to the floor as being, in accordance with his declaration, opposed to the position of the last speaker, Rev. Mr. Turner, appealed from the decision of the Chair, but the decision of the Chair being sustained, Mr. Danforth proceeded in his remarks, which, on account of their irrelevancy to the subject under discussion, are omitted.

Rev. GEORGE STORRS having briefly reviewed the position that he took in a former speech with reference to the necessity of defining a law by which the Bible is to be tried, and having recapitulated his arguments against the sufficiency and reliability of the law which had been adduced by his opponents, proceeded in his remarks as follows :

I desire to make a few comments upon the speech of the speaker of this morning (Mr. Dorrance). He commenced with his illustrations, and began down with the blade of grass. "It comes up by a law infixed into its very nature. It does not ask any other blade of grass whether it may grow and expand itself, or not. That law is a law that can not be interfered with." But, sir, here comes up an oak, right by the blade of grass, and roots it up, and destroys its claims and rights. Is there any law violated there? Suppose we go a step farther. Yonder is a piece of ground being covered with beautiful things that grow well, and this oak comes up, and spreads out its boughs far and wide, and overspreads the little things, and cuts off the sun from them. Natural religion says it has no business to interfere with them. Does natural religion say that that oak is

guilty of a crime? or does it say that the oak has a right to grow as well as the grass, and take off the sun from the grass? I am only wishing to show that natural religion, after all, is not a religion or theology by which we can try the Bible. *No, sir.* But to travel on a little farther in this scale of up-rising, we come to the animal creation. Let us see about this law of natural religion, or natural theology. Here are the fishes. Every fish has a right to grow; but a big fish comes along—he has a right to swallow down the little one—down he goes. (Laughter.) What right had he, by natural religion, to swallow down his little fellow? Does not natural religion come in and say that this big fish was a “great sinner?” What a grand law by which to determine the moral character of God—the great Being who created all things! Travel along in the scale of these creatures a little farther, and what do you see there? Why, one of the charges brought against the Bible is, that it countenances polygamy! Indeed, sir! Well, how do you know but that *that* is right? Does natural theology teach the contrary? Travel through the whole animal creation, and do you find any thing that forbids it there? Understand me not as standing here to defend polygamy; I am only endeavoring to show that the rule by which you claim to judge the Bible is a defective and unreliable rule.

Now, if this law means any thing, it means that you should respect the right of every creature—it means that you should respect the right of the horse, of the ox, and of the honey-bee; but you just put your yoke upon the neck of the young ox, and though he may rear, you goad him up to do contrary to his sense of right and liberty, and use his services all his life long, without recompense or without reward. Does natural religion say that that is not wrong, that you have not invaded his rights? Will my friend Wright affirm that it is wrong thus to subjugate the ox? and so in regard to the whole process of subjecting the animal creation, and making them subservient to man. Does natural religion forbid this right

of taking the inferior creatures and subjecting them to our own use—even to taking away their liberties and their lives? I ask if natural religion does not forbid it, how do you know then that natural religion forbids God using man in the same way that men use animals? God surely is more above us than we are above the animal creation. For all that natural religion can affirm, his power and right may be as much superior to us as it is possible for us to conceive.

Now, suppose I should say that two and two make twenty. "Don't everybody here say no?" says the speaker. Sir, how came you to say no? Does the natural understanding, unenlightened, untaught, say no? Suppose I tell a child that two and two make twenty, will he say that it is not twenty? How does he come to know that two and two do not make twenty, but that they make four? Does he know it by natural instinct, or did he have to be taught by some one above him? "Suppose," said the speaker, "you were told that my nose is twenty feet long, does not the natural sense say no, that is a great deal too long?" I ask, what is this natural sense? Is it something given to us by instinct, or is it something received by instruction from others? Suppose I tell a child who has no knowledge of measures and distances, that your nose is twenty feet long, he would certainly take my assertion as true. If natural religion is to be relied upon, the moment you tell him that the nose is twenty feet long, he would know that it was not so. How can he know what is right and wrong but by some rule that has been developed from some higher source. I admit that when God has promulgated a law, he allows us to use our reason. I admit, sir, that revelation is made to reason, and we have a right to employ our reason upon it. God has constituted man with a capacity for reasoning, but that capacity has to be developed under some system of instruction. Shut up a man above; put him where he never can see his fellow-man, and then, when years have passed away, see how much he can receive, see how

much he knows about what is right and wrong. I apprehend that it is the plainest thing in the world, that natural religion can never give us one ray of light as to the moral perfections of God. No, sir. Natural religion can never reach that point; and I beg the audience to give their attention to this fact—that our friends have not touched this question. They have not told us by what law of natural religion they can take away from the cow the calf, producing so much injury to her feelings. How do they know but that that Being who is above us—that is, over us, may, if he please, take away *our life* when he pleases? It has not been answered yet. I maintain it has not been touched.

Mr. S. J. FINNEY, of Ohio, remarked: I was somewhat surprised on hearing the old call made for our definition of the law by which the Bible is to be tried, and more especially when the gentleman came upon the stand and proceeded, by the action of his natural powers, to show that man's natural religious powers can not be the rule by which we are to judge the Bible. In remarking concerning one of the illustrations made by my friend from Newark, New Jersey (Mr. Dorrance), he says that the blade of grass springs up, and the oak coming up near it tears it from the soil and destroys its rights and claims. I deny that any such thing is to be found in nature. An oak grows not up in a night. It grows up gradually and quietly, and gently crowds the blade of grass along; and there is a perfect reciprocation of rights between the noble oak and the tender blade of grass. (Applause.) He tells you that you can not discover by natural religion one ray of light with regard to the moral perfections of Deity. Who ever heard such an absurd proposition as this! He will claim for the Bible that it is a revelation of God, and that no ray of light ever came from God upon the subject of religion, except what came from that Bible to us; because he claims that that is the standard, and the *only* standard.

Now, sir, he is either simply ignorant of the history of nations, or else he is intentionally silent upon the subject. I would like to know where the law of right originated. If all noble and elevating thoughts—if all pure religious conceptions are to be gained through the medium of a divine revelation—are to come through the Bible, I would like to know by what means Pythagoras, who lived six hundred years before Jesus of Nazareth, was enabled to attain to the conception of those noble sentiments and pure maxims which he gave to the world. You may go to nations entirely distinct from the Jewish nation, and you will find a religion far more natural and beautiful than any received from the Jewish Scriptures. The wild Indian of the forest had a universal Spirit-Father whom he worshiped. He was taught in the rising and the setting of the sun the benevolence of his Spirit-God; and the very gift of the soil over which he chased the flying deer was an evidence to his mind of the bounteous goodness of his own Spirit-Father, as we find by examining the character of the Indian tribes from the very earliest period of the history of the Indian nations. Why, the man must be wild to make such an assertion, that we know nothing of the character of God by the light of nature. I would like to know, too, as friend Wright asked, from what source Jesus ever drew his sublimest truths? As friend Ingalls said last evening, he drew them from the universality of the operation of universal principles; and from the universal benevolence of the operation of such principles in nature he forced home upon the mind of his hearers the thought of the universal benevolence of the heavenly Father. He points them to the rising sun. "Behold!" says he—*mark this*—"your Father maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good; and he sendeth his rain upon the just and upon the unjust." Here is a natural religion, Mr. President, which appealed to the thought of Jesus, and through him found sweet utterance to his friends. (Applause.) Again he refer-

red to the child, and said: "Suppose you should tell the child that two and two make four, would he know this to be the case till he was taught it?" I will ask who could teach him—his father? And who taught the father? "Oh, *his* father taught him;" and so you may run back to the first man—and who taught him? Do you find it in the Bible? No, it can not be found there. Then, again, that twice two are four, is a truth which the native red man, without the Bible, has discovered. It is a truth which all nations of the earth have discovered, and every man knows this. Where did it come from? "Oh, it was taught to them." Did God give them a special revelation to teach them that twice two are four? No. It exists in the man's thoughts, and in the relation of units to each other—it exists in ourselves. I say when I pick up one unit, "one;" when I pick up another unit I say, "two"—another, that is "three"—another, that is "four." What do I mean by the terms, "one, two, three, and four?" They are terms which I have developed to express the relation of these units. God never taught this to man through revelation according to his (Mr. Storrs) idea of revelation.

As our friend Wright said last evening, the very attempt to show why we can not judge the Bible by natural religion, is not only an evidence of the existence of that law of life—of right and wrong in the soul—but it is an evidence of its reliableness and sufficiency, as a test of all matters of faith. If there is a law higher than this, why does he not bring it forward to settle this question beyond the possibility of a doubt. Why does he not bring his Bible on to the stand to prove his positions true?

I contend that his idea of natural religion is altogether too limited. He disjoins nature. He says man can not discern what is right by natural religion, simply because beasts violate what men conceive to be right and proper. It is disjoining nature; for the plant has its laws of growth, the animal king-

dom has its laws of growth and action, and every other species of existence have *their* laws of growth and action. Hence, I say, how absurd to take the laws of my nature and apply them to the brute! What would you think of arraigning a brute, and charging him with murder, because he had eaten up a fellow-brute? What would you think of the act of taking a brute, and bringing him on to the stand to prove that I have no law within my nature sufficient to govern me, simply because the brute has none? What folly! Natural religion, when relating to man, must be found in man himself; and when we take the whole compass of man into consideration, we shall not see any disjointed connection—we shall see no inharmonious relations of the various parts of nature. There is a sentiment, as the friends of this sentiment have developed before, existing in the human heart universally, and that sentiment found expression in Pythagoras as well as in Jesus, who lived six hundred years after Pythagoras: "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you."

This law is deeply engraven in man's nature, and no bible, no priest, can ever blot it out. (Applause.) Jesus, as has been said, did not refer to the writings of Moses to render authoritative his teachings, but threw each man upon his nature, and said, Act out your desires, your natural aspirations; in other words, act in accordance with yourselves, not with Moses, or me, or any body else, and you will accomplish the grand result of your existence.

My reason, all the faculties of my intellectual and mental nature are faculties for the expression of the natural religion which God by his eternal law has embodied in my constitution. This is so with every human being, and this principle of which I spoke is universal: "Do ye unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." It lived before Jesus lived—found its *expression* before he lived—will live while humanity shall live. Why? Because it is the natural development of the soul itself. Why, here (laying his hand

upon his breast), my friends, it exists—right in your heart. It is not a matter of revelation *at all*.

You have a certain dealing with one of your neighbors. What is the first thought you would have as regards your connection with that neighbor? Suppose you think: "Well, now, my neighbor sleeps with his door unlocked. He has money in his vault, and I will go and steal it." I ask every man and woman, what would be the first thought you would have? You would say at once, "It is not right;" and this would be the feeling of your heart if you had never seen a Bible. You bring yourself in a moment to consider the relations subsisting between yourself and neighbor, and from those relations you learn that such an act could not be right. It is not derived from revelation. It is the natural out-speaking of the human soul. If you want proof of this, go to the red man of the forest. Do you ever find him thieving from his fellow? It is a well-known fact, admitted by all who are conversant with the savages, that they have a strict and holy regard to this law of individual rights. If we show that this law is applied and is understood outside of the pale of revelation, as we think we have shown—I say, if we show that it has a practical operation, where revelation does not exist, we prove that the law is inherent in the soul, and that the soul has developed it.

If we were to take the position of our friend Storrs, we should say emphatically, that man can know nothing whatever from the action of his faculties, and that he can know nothing unless it is revealed to him by God. You will see that following his course of reasoning to its ultimate, this is the only conclusion to which he can arrive.

Again, from the very fact that law is addressed to the human soul, implies a capacity in the soul to appreciate those laws and apply them. We should be exceedingly foolish if we were to command the granite rock to do to its fellow as it would have its fellow do to it—it would be foolish to make

such a command, because we should see that there was no capacity in the rock to appreciate the command. So a revelation addressed to man, to be useful, must be something which his soul has the capacity to understand, to appreciate, to apply. If it is a true revelation, he will understand it to be true only when he sees that an application of it is just what all his various relations demand; and then he will see that the law does not exist simply because it is in the revelation, but because the relations develop it. If then he judges that the revelation is true, because he finds that it is what the relations demand—develop—he judges of the law—and the capacity to judge of the law lies in his own soul; and if he has a capacity to judge of the relations which make the law, he certainly can judge as to the truthfulness of a revelation which can only be an exponent of the laws developed by the relations.

The Convention then adjourned to half-past two o'clock, P. M.

SECOND DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION.

Friday, June 3d.

The Convention having been called to order by the President, Mr. BARKER, of Ohio, Rev. Mr. TURNER made the following speech:

The position of the question before the audience is still deeply interesting. The question as to the law by which the Bible is to be judged is still the matter of discussion; and since several arguments made by the gentleman this morning have not been met, which arguments deserve attention, I

propose to refer to the main positions taken by the speakers in their several arguments. We still insist that an adequate law for the testing of the Bible has not yet been adduced. This law, it has been said, is in the human mind—in its very constitution. This position has been argued at length by the speaker referred to, and most ably too, considering the position; but in defending this position, the idea has been conveyed to the audience that if the law of the human mind was not an adequate law by which to try the Bible, it is not capable of trying any thing. It has been intimated that we have supposed, on our side, that man has no capabilities of judging in any matter.

This, Mr. President, is a wrong construction of our position. We readily affirm that man has the capacity for reasoning; is able to try questions; to try even the Bible; to try all the doctrines of the Bible; but, sir, at the same time, we affirm that we must have some *law* by which to try the Bible and its doctrines.

When a criminal is put upon trial, he is called to trial before a court with a competent jury. The business of that jury is to judge in the case of the trial of that man; but, Mr. Chairman, who ever thought that the jury were the *law*? Who ever dreamed that the jury had a right to *make the law*? They, sir, are called into court to try a supposed criminal by law and evidence; hence, when that criminal is put upon trial, the peculiar nature of the crime with which he is charged is first brought out, alleged, and then the law is defined by which he is to be tried by the court; there are authorities cited, touching the case. After it is decided by what law his individual case is to be tried, he is put upon trial; and the jury are to judge in that case according to the law and the evidence given in the case.

Now we do not stop to dispute the testimony that has been offered against the Bible at this time. That is not the point in hand at present; but we now want to know the law, the

standard by which the character of the Bible is to be denoted, and then we will proceed with the testimony in its favor.

The speaker this morning (Mr. Dorrance), in endeavoring to show that there is a law interwoven in the constitution of every human being capable of judging of the truthfulness and value of the Bible, was most ingenious in his argument. He was not only ingenious, but evinced a depth of thought and study of nature and man that should be respected by every individual on the opposite side of the question; but observe, that with his ability and ingenuity he gave us two peculiar illustrations that in themselves may deceive you, if you do not carry them a little further than my friend carried them. Take, for instance, the egg. He says, that in this egg is a natural law by which the chicken is ultimately evolved. Most assuredly. We admit this position to be a fact—a fact as clear as that the sun shines, and you will not ask me to prove that the sun shines, because you can not see it through this roof. But while we admit that the law is in the egg that it shall evolve a chicken, not a man, does it follow that the law is in the chicken that two chickens, hatched in the same nest, shall not quarrel? (Applause and laughter.) As soon as the chickens are evolved they begin to act—and they act for themselves, and, by and by, if one interferes with what the other supposes to be his rights, they fall to quarreling. If the law by which they were governed was perfect, why should we see any quarrel between them? So with man. Does the law that brings into existence, under given circumstances, a *man*, and not an *animal*, regulate the mind and brain of the man after he is brought into existence? He referred us to man, and said, “that in man there is a law, not only to bring him into existence, but to regulate the man afterward;” and we were told that, “*that* law to regulate the man is in the brain.” We love to hear men speak as if they had brains, and as if brains were necessary to make a *man*. We admit that there is a law woven into the brain of man, and that the result of

that law is thought ; but does that law regulate the thoughts of the man ; make him think in a given channel ; prevent him from quarreling with his fellow ; does it always lead him right ?

The speaker (Mr. Dorrance), this morning, ingeniously put us, as it were, upon trial, to see whether we could or not decide any thing ourselves ; and really, at first sight, it looked like a position that would stand. He says, "Tell any man that two and two make twenty, and would they believe it?" Well, at first, I thought that no one could ; but I again thought within myself, "How do you know that two and two are not twenty?" "I know it," says an individual ; "I know it ; I have it in *here*," in the heart, where some folks have all their religion. "I have an internal knowledge of it ; I have it in my brain ; in my senses." But suppose that the law that decides the manner of counting said, that two units should be called twenty instead of four, or that four units should be called twenty instead of four, what would become of your internal knowledge. We know that two and two are not twenty, because the *law* regulating numbers has decided that twenty units shall be called twenty, and not four. In this case, as in all others, the human mind devolves the matter by an adequate law.

Then said the speaker, "I am sixty feet high." Well, his *thoughts* are sixty feet above every one who thinks that because a man who calls in question the Divine authenticity of the Bible is an infidel, and that no question should be discussed with him. "Will any body," said the speaker, "believe that I am sixty feet high ? You know better." But how do you know that he is not sixty feet high ? Suppose that it was decreed by the law of measurement that sixty inches should be counted sixty feet, would he not be sixty feet high ? methinks he would be considerably more than sixty feet high. Don't you see that the law of measurement governs your mind, and decides this question by determining the length of

a foot? The last speaker in favor of the idea that this law, by which the Bible is to be judged, is in the human breast, says as an evidence that there is a law in the human mind, "The natural religion of the red man of the forest teaches him the law of right." He calls our attention to the red man; to the savage tribes, that have not been interfered with by the religious institutions of our day; with what the heathen calls, when they come into his land, *Christians*. But can we learn from the red man of the forest that the infallible law by which the Bible is to be judged is in the human mind? We were told that the red man of the forest generally worshiped a Supreme Being. Admit this of many tribes, and then do we know; do we learn from them in their subsequent religious rights, that the law by which this question and other questions of like moment are to be decided, is in the breast; is in the man? What does the law within the savage breast teach him that he should do? It teaches him that he shall revenge his supposed wrongs, even upon his own red brethren of the forest; and do you not see him do it, relentlessly and unremittably, and that at the distance of years—keep it as it were a sacred trust committed to him by his father? and he will not only revenge his own wrongs but the wrongs of his father or his great-grandfather, if the man remember that wrong. The tenderer part of the human family—the females, are the most degraded slaves—are treated as things of little or no use, as the Southerner uses his slave. What did the wild man show that he was taught by this natural law of right and wrong when the white man entered upon his dominions? Why, he regarded the coming of the white man to this continent as an invasion of his rights. Now, what does the law within tell him he ought to do? That law says he ought to meet him and oppose him at every step. Have the savage tribes retired beyond the Rocky Mountains because a law of right has told them that they ought to give away to the white man or pale man? No, sir, they have gone there, because

driven there by force. Their own judgment is still convinced that the white man ought to be sorely punished, and had they the power committed to them, though they are reduced to a handful, you would find the law of the savage mind there still—they would punish, yea, exterminate their enemies.

As the doctrine of the immortality of the soul supposed to be taught by the Bible has several times been adverted to, I desire to say a few words concerning it. I wish we could placard the truth on this great subject in characters of living fire on the blue arch of the universe, that no such doctrine is taught in the Bible. The natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine that has been entirely originated in the human brain, and if that brain is the infallible *law*, then the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is of course true; but such folly is not chargeable to the Bible. We say, then, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not taught in the Bible; and because we defend this truth, we feel, so far as a public name is concerned, that we are brethren; at *least* they call us *all* infidels. Very well; they may charge me with infidelity. I publish it to the world, and would that with my own hands I could write it in living lines of light and give it to the four winds of heaven that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of natural immortality; but, at the same time, we do aver that life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel, which Gospel we stand here to defend, but that life and immortality are *only* to be received through the resurrection from the dead. In all the Gospel, I repeat, which we stand here to defend, and which we love, you will find it constantly written that life and immortality are to be given to man beyond the resurrection of the dead, and we teach in perfect harmony with this that when this *man*, in being, reasoning to-day, full of life and energy, falls into the cold embrace of death, he lies there just as unconscious as the dust into which he falls, until the trump of that coming one breaks that slumber and gives him life. The speaker the last upon

the floor then said, as he was drawing his remarks to a close, that we should not appeal to the brute creation to learn any thing of natural religion. He is astonished that we should refer to the broad laws of nature so as to learn any thing of natural religion from the brutes. We must not descend below the human species; not go below man, to learn any thing of this natural religion. If, Mr. Chairman, there is a natural religion, does not that natural religion rise from some basis, and from its beginning reach its climax? Is there any thing on earth without a beginning? Does natural religion begin and end with man? Well, then, grass has nothing to do with it. Why then refer to the grass?

Mr. FINNEY—The statement that I am represented as making is, that we should not appeal to the brute creation for natural religion—for evidences of it. Gentlemen, I made no such claim. The sentiment advanced was that we should not appeal to any lower forms in nature to govern man in his higher developments—that the lower forms were adapted to their own plane and sphere, and that men must not take lower forms for their entire standard. (Applause.)

Mr. TURNER—I would not knowingly misrepresent the remarks of any man upon the other side of the question. The speaker says we should not appeal for evidence of natural religion to any thing lower than man; or, to exercise our judgment, if I understand him, in regard to man and natural religion, we must not appeal below him—that man being so much above the brute, so much above the animal race, he has in himself a perfect right to do what he will with the brute creation, because he is above the brute creation. The brute must submit that man should do with him just as he pleases, because he is a brute. Now, when there is a God above men, what shall he do with man? Must man submit because there are agencies or beings above him? or is he a being independent, and must God himself bow to man? We are thrown at once upon the very position before taken, that if there be a

law in natural religion, then there is a beginning. It has its germination somewhere—it rests on a basis somewhere, and rises to its climax. Is man a grade of being in the race of beings, or did he grow after the manner geology says the earth grew? If he is what the Bible informs us he must be, is he amenable to some higher power, or is he the lord of all creation? If, then, he is lord of all, why, then, he is the *very law* which our opponents claim. Then he ought to decide the character of the Bible, and he needs no revelation nor light above himself; but if he is only a grade of being in the scale of beings, there are beings above him. If it be admitted that there is a Creator *behind* him, then that Creator has a right to do with him as he pleases, just as really as the man has to do so with something below him, provided he has all the claims the Creator has upon man; but man could never create the first animal. And God, or something else, has created you and me; and call the Creator what you will, He or it is the first cause—and that is the law higher than man, to which the brute must appeal. The Creator has the undeniable right of disposal. My friend says the brute must appeal up to man, because man is a higher order of being, and whatever he decrees, the brute must tamely submit—must yield obedience. The whole brute creation must tamely submit, because man is above him. If so, unless we can show that man is the root of creation—the highest being—we must find a law by which our reasons are to be regulated. The ox has reason. Sir, I know they call men infidels for saying this. We know, however, that the ox reasons. Now, is the reason of the ox, of the horse, and of all animals that we make subservient to our will, to be dictated to by us? Are they to be governed by laws we enact? Certainly. Then what law governs us—and to what law should we appeal? The friend last up said that Jesus, in his doctrine, did not appeal to the law of Moses, but threw man back upon his own nature—upon the law within himself. The text, I suppose, referred to (for it was not

quoted), is this: "Why judge ye not of your own selves what is right?" In this, it is supposed that Jesus conveyed the idea that there is no appeal from the law instituted by himself, to the law of God gone before—and that is, a simple appeal from all law—from all Scripture, to the law within each individual's heart. Is this doctrine true? Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John, since which the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it, and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of this law to fail." "I come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it." Jesus says to the unbelieving Jews that were ready to take him and sacrifice him, "If ye had believed in Moses, ye would have believed in me; for he spoke of me." In these appeals to Moses—and we might speak of a dozen instances where Christ directly appealed to Moses. Christianity is directly founded on the preceding economy. But what of the text? "Does not Jesus," says the hearer, "really throw man back upon this law within himself? for he says, 'Why judge ye not within yourselves what is right?'" Read the text in its connection. By what law were they to judge what is right? There was a law constantly appealed to by the Saviour, and by that law they were to judge what is right. They had the law, and read it every day. They did not know what the law was; they did not understand what was taught in it; therefore Jesus said: "Why judge ye not by your own selves?" I see you have a mind capable of receiving—why do you not judge by that law which you have received from Moses for yourselves?

Mr. JOSEPH BARKER then arose, and said: It appears to me astonishing that those individuals who appear as defenders of the Divine origin and authority of the Bible should be willing to leave the question in the condition in which it is at present. It seems strange to me that no attempt should be made by them to answer the charges which have been preferred against

the Bible. It seems strange that hour after hour should be spent in talking about a law by which the Bible is to be tried, instead of at once attempting to refute the charges preferred against it. If I had been in the place of our opponents, I would not have allowed the Bible to remain for one moment in the doubtful position in which they have allowed it to remain so long. I would at once, myself, have stated the law by which the Bible should be tried; I would have proved the law to be a just and proper one; and then have proceeded to refute the charges by appeals to that law. (Cries of hear, hear.) But our opponents have had their reasons for the course they have pursued; and we will not inquire into those reasons, but pursue our own course. I have a few remarks to make with reference to the remarks made by the speaker who last occupied the stand. (Mr. Turner.) After noticing his remarks I shall briefly recapitulate what has been advanced on our side of the question, and show what has been said by our opponents in reply.

When Mr. Turner sat down, he was laboring to make the impression, that when Jesus said, "Why judge ye not of yourselves what is right?" his meaning was, "Why do ye not examine by the law of Moses, and ascertain for yourselves what is right, and just, and true, and good?" Now Jesus could not mean that, for he had set the law of Moses aside. He had told his disciples, that though it was said in the law of Moses, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," yet the proper course was not to resist evil. Again he had said, "It was said by those of old time, 'Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement;' but I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, save for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." After Jesus had set aside the law of Moses, he could not regard it or refer to it as a standard.

[Mr. TURNER explained at this point, that he understood the

law by which the disciples were to judge what was right, to be the law or doctrine of *Christ*.]

Then (said Mr. Barker) Christ is to be judged by Christ, although Christ himself says, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." (Applause and laughter.) Our opponents are perpetually calling out, "By what *law* do we judge the Bible?" We answer: we confine ourselves to no *one* law; we confine ourselves to no two laws; we appeal to no three or four laws; and prove it partly by them all. We prove the Bible to be inconsistent with itself. We prove it to be inconsistent with our own nature. We prove it to be inconsistent with the revelations of science. We prove it to be inconsistent with our own experience. Is not this enough? If not, tell us what you want. Lay down the law yourselves. We are not ambitious to lay down the law by which to judge the Bible; we shall be satisfied to abide by any law by which such a question can be decided. If our opponents would really bring forward a law, and give us any reason to consider it a just law by which to judge the Bible, we would judge it by their law. We would meet them on their own grounds. We should be able to prove by any law or standard of judgment, that the common notions regarding the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are altogether foundationless. Let us now review the ground we have traveled. Perhaps most of our hearers will remember the character of the remarks we made at the opening of this Convention. We stated our views, first, in respect to the origin of the Scriptures, observing that we knew nothing of the persons who wrote these Scriptures; that the time *when* they were written was unknown; that the alterations through which they had passed were so numerous that they could not be told. We stated that there was no evidence with which we were acquainted that they originated in any Divine interposition of Providence; at the same time we asked for any information that could be given by any one on the opposite side in reference to this point.

Our next remarks were on the authority of the Bible. We observed, first, that we knew of no Bible in existence that even the clergy themselves would say was a book of Divine authority. We began with the common version of the Bible, and showed that no theologian, no priest, no Gospel minister, chose to abide by it as an authority, but regularly referred to what he considered the Greek and Hebrew original. We then observed that what are called the Greek and Hebrew originals were not one, but many, and that they all differed—that they differed seriously—that they were all the work of fallible men—that no one, therefore, would choose to abide by the Greek text of the New Testament, or by the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, but would appeal, when they felt themselves pressed, from these texts to the manuscripts from which they were compiled.

We then proceeded to state that biblical critics themselves informed us that there were more than one hundred and fifty thousand various readings of these manuscripts; that the manuscripts were the work of erring men, and that therefore they could not appeal to those manuscripts as decisive authority. We then showed that there was nothing beyond these manuscripts to which we *could* appeal—that the original productions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Solomon, David, Matthew, and Paul, and the like, if such works ever did exist, were lost—that the last of them had been lost some fifteen or sixteen centuries ago; and that, therefore, there was no book called the Bible that the clergy themselves could claim to be of Divine and absolute authority.

The point, then, of authority is given up. It is acknowledged that there is no authoritative Bible in existence, even if there ever was such a thing.

Our next remarks went to prove that the contents of the book itself showed that it was not the book of God. I referred to its historical contents, beginning with its professed history of creation, showing that that history contradicted

facts. If the Bible declares that there is a solid framework over our heads—that in this framework sun, moon, and stars are fixed—that all the waters from which the showers come are placed above that framework—that the water is let down through windows, etc., and if we see in nature no such thing—if, on the contrary, we have *evidence* that there *is* no such thing, it is proved that the Bible errs, and that, therefore, it can not be a book of Divine authority. That the Bible does thus err, we showed that theologians themselves acknowledged. Professor Hitchcock, Dr. Pye Smith, and numbers of other theological critics, acknowledge that the statements of the Bible in reference to these points are not scientifically true. Even though they believe that God wrote the very words of the book, they say that he used erroneous forms of expression in condescension to human ignorance—adapting his thoughts to the ideas of men; which in plain English means that God wrote falsehoods.

So with respect to other statements in the account of creation; we showed that some of those statements contradicted each other, and that others of them were proved to be false by our own experience—observe—*by our own experience*. These charges have not been met. We next showed that the Bible contained false theology. We referred to the scriptural representations of God. He is represented in several places as a man, as walking, as talking, washing his feet, eating veal, wrestling with a man, and being beaten by him. He is represented as living at a distance from the world, as being personally unacquainted with what was going on on the earth, as deriving his information from servants, and when, having reason to distrust the truthfulness of his messengers, he is represented as saying that he would go down to the earth and see for himself. The Scriptures represent him as not knowing what was in man's heart—as being uncertain whether Abraham did really fear him or not, until he tried him, by commanding him to offer up his only son as a sacrifice.

God is represented not only as subject to all human weaknesses, but, what is worse, he is represented as exceedingly unjust—as subjecting all women to the most grievous calamities, simply because one woman sinned before any of the rest were born—and as subjecting all serpents to a curse because one serpent did a wrong. God is also represented as cursing the earth for man's sake, forcing every individual to eat of the fruit of the ground with sorrow all the days of his life. He is represented as guilty of the worst of crimes, the grossest injustice, and the most frightful cruelty.

We next referred to the morality of the Bible, showing that it contradicted what we *know* to be right. We gave many instances of its bad morality. We did not content ourselves with saying that the Bible contradicted what we learn to be true from other quarters, but showed that it contradicted in one part what it taught in other parts—teaching in one passage that God punished the whole world for the sin of one or two; then, again, declaring that “the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father the iniquity of the son; but that the soul that sinneth, *it* shall die.” And so on other subjects.

Not one word is said by our opponents about all this. Instead of answering these charges—instead of trying to refute them, they simply ask, “By what law do you condemn the Bible?” To adapt ourselves to their apparent weakness, we stooped to state by what law we deemed the Bible should be tried. For myself, I stated that I considered the law suggested by Jesus, in the words addressed to the unfaithful servant, was sufficient: “Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee.” If I can prove that a man is inconsistent with himself, that he acts contrary to what he lays down as his rule of life, I have all the proof I want that he is not what he should be. I prove him wrong by his own confession—by his own principles. I condemn him out of his own mouth. And if I prove that the Bible, which is put forward as a book of Divine au-

thority, of absolute truth, contradicts itself—that it says one thing in one place, and says the opposite in another place—if I prove that the Bible in one place represents God as merciful, and then in another place represents him as cruel—if I prove that the Scriptures in one case represent God as punishing with death the child for the sin of the father, and then in another case represent him as declaring that in no case will he do such a thing, and acknowledging that it would be unjust to do such a thing—if in one case we find the Bible forbidding murder, while in another case it represents God as commanding murder—if in one case we find that the Bible declares that all liars shall have their portion in the lake of fire and brimstone, while, in other parts of the Bible, God is represented as declaring that certain eminent liars walked, in all respects, blameless before him, do we need any other proof that the claims put forth in behalf of the book are false? Is not the book proved imperfect by its own testimony? Do we need any other law by which to convict the Bible of imperfection?—by which to prove that it is not a work of Divine and absolute authority? We repeat, Will any man here stand up and say that we need any other law by which to try the Bible than the Bible itself? (Cries of “No! no!” and applause.)

But suppose that our opponents should still say, “We want another law by which to try the Bible.” We give them another law; and that, too, in accordance with the teachings of the Bible itself. The Bible tells us that nature reveals the character of God, and that it reveals not only God’s power and intelligence, leaving unrevealed his moral character, but all that can be known of him, his moral as his natural perfections. The Bible expressly teaches, as may be seen by reference to the words of Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, that nature reveals God’s character both fully and clearly. Paul says, “Because *that which may be known of God*”—that is, *all* that may be known of God, for he makes no exceptions—“*that which may be known of God* is

manifest to them ; for God hath showed it unto them." How ? He says, "The invisible things of God"—his attributes, without any exception—"from the creation of the world are *clearly* seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse." (Applause.) Here, then, as the poet says, "The whole Godhead"—for the writer makes no exception, no limitations—"the whole Deity is known." "All that which may be known of God" is revealed by God, and is so revealed that it may "clearly be seen ;" hence he says, "so that they are without excuse"—without excuse, for not knowing, as his words afterward plainly mean, that God was a benevolent father, and for not being thankful to him. And this same Paul says, that the moral law, the rule of life, is written on men's hearts, thus teaching us that men may know what is right or wrong, what is good or evil, by consulting their own hearts, by comparing things with what is written there. Hear his words : "When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves ; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Here, then, we have another law by which to judge the teachings of the Bible. The Bible itself authorizes us to condemn whatever is contrary to the renditions of nature, or to the law of 'right written on our hearts. Paul himself judges things by this law.

We refer you again to what he says in the preceding chapter with regard to certain practices prevailing among the nations. Does Paul describe certain bad passions or practices as sins against Moses ? Nothing of the kind. He speaks of men as being "without *natural* affections." He speaks of "forsaking the *natural* use" of their own bodies, and having recourse to that which is *unnatural* or *not* natural ; plainly laying it down that there is a "natural use," which may be

known by all to be right, and an unnatural use, which may be known by all to be wrong. With Paul, then, that which is "natural" is good, and that which is unnatural is bad. Nature, then, is the standard of good. (Applause.) Nature is the standard of theology. By nature, then—nature in general, and our own nature in particular—we may try the teachings of the Bible, both on theology and morals.

We have other proof of this. What is God's glory? We are often told by theologians that God's *goodness* is his glory. Yet the Bible says the heavens declare or reveal the glory of God. They add that the earth is full of God's goodness. The Psalmist then thought that he could see God's goodness in nature. He also thought that others might do so, for he says, "The works of the Lord are great, and sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

Again, if God can not be known by his *works*, how *can* he be known? A man is known by his works. The selfish man is known by his niggardly conduct. We know the generous man by his efforts to promote the improvements and happiness of his fellow-men? We know even a tree by its fruits, and can not we know God by his works? God has presented more works to our view than any man has, and marks as indicative of his character. If from the infinite variety of God's works we can not ascertain the character of God, how can we expect to learn the character of a man from his comparatively few works? And how shall we know God by his *words*, supposing him to speak in words, unless we first know him by his works? If we can not know that God is true before he speaks to us, how can we know that his words are true? According to what our friends say, for any thing we can know to the contrary, God may lie. If we can not know whether God is true or not without the Bible, how can we know that what he says in the Bible is true? The Bible tells us that God is truthful, and will not lie; but how do we know that the declaration of the Bible is true, unless we know, beforehand,

from nature, that God is true? Unless we know something of the truthfulness and goodness of God by nature, before the Bible, how are we to know that God has not given us the Bible with the cruel design of destroying us by leading us astray?

Again, believers in the Bible generally believe that God's qualities may be learned from nature. We often hear them arguing thus: "We know from nature that God is all-powerful—that he who formed the eye can see—that he who formed the ear can hear; and we know, therefore, that God has power to reveal himself; we know that he is good and inclined to do men good; we conclude, therefore, that it is probable that God has made a revelation of his will to man." After such an argument in the favor of revelation, they proceed to say: "If God has given a revelation, where shall we find it? And here, again, they follow a course opposite to that of any opponents here." They do not say man can not distinguish a true rendition from a false one. They do not speak contemptuously of their reason or judgment. They do as we do. "This divine revelation is not in the Koran," say they. But how do they know that the Koran is not the revelation of God? They will answer, "The Koran can not be a revelation of God, because it tells monstrous tales—inculcates bad morality—and presents sensual views of the heavenly state; which plainly proves that it came from an erring and a sensual mind." But suppose the Mohammedan should say, "How do you know that these things which you object to are not right?" By what *law* do you judge the Bible? The advocate of the Bible would turn away from such questionings with pity and disgust. Such talk might serve to pass away an hour; but they would rather look like an evasion of the great question at issue, than like a manifest attempt to settle the question in an honest, plain, and common-sense manner.

But I may proceed in my remarks on the Bible. I say that the Bible could never serve as an authority; could never

answer the purpose of a standard of truth and virtue, or of a rule of faith and duty, its meaning is so doubtful. And we have no infallible interpretation of the Bible. Suppose, even, that the Old and New Testaments came from God; that they have been preserved perfect, and translated under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, what then? Are they a perfect rule of life? a perfect rule of faith and practice? Nothing of the kind. Let a man attempt to use them as such, and what will be the result? Eternal uncertainty. Let him begin with the New Testament. The first doctrine we find announced is, that "Jesus came to save his people from their sins." But who are his people? Some say the Jews; some God's elect; some all mankind. Which is right? It is not decided. He is to save his people from their sins. What does that mean? *How* is he to save them from their sins? Is he to save them from the punishment of sin only, or from sin itself? Is he to save them by changing their natures, or by covering them with his own righteousness, thus merely hiding their sins as with a cloak? Theologians are not agreed; and the Bible will not settle their disputes. All is left in uncertainty. Then, again, take the text, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." But what do you mean by "repent?" What is it to "repent?" "Well," say they, "the original means to change your mind." What is the nature, and what the extent of the change required? Does the Bible say what it is that the mind is to be changed from, and what it is to be changed to? It does not. Hence, other disputes. One supposes one thing is meant, and another supposes another thing; and a hundred different things are supposed to be intended by the word "repent." Here, also, it leaves the matter uncertain.

"But as to morals," say they, "the Bible is perfectly plain, and certain." Suppose we quote a few texts from Christ's sermon on the Mount, and see. The first passage of that celebrated sermon is, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs

is the kingdom of Heaven." Is *this* quite plain? What does "poor in spirit" mean? Opinions differ. How are we to decide as to which is the right meaning? But the meaning is not all that is doubtful. The *reading* is disputed. Some say that the words, "in spirit," do not belong in the original. That the passage ought to read, "Blessed are the poor." Which is the correct reading? We are at a loss. Supposing the common reading to be right, we ask, what does "poor in spirit" mean? A Chinese once translated the words, "Blessed are the mean, low, niggardly spirited." This will hardly be thought a good rendering. "Well," says one, "it means humility; it means, 'Blessed is the man that is poor, and yet not troubled on that account.'" Says another, "It means, 'Blessed are those who have low views of themselves.'" And thus they differ, and thus they may differ for ever. Then the very first passage on moral subjects can not be surely or satisfactorily interpreted. It is, then, no rule of practice. We do not know what "poverty of spirit" is; and if we did, we might not think it a virtue.

The next text is, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." What is it "to mourn?" "It means to weep, lament, and cry." Do you mean to say that all who weep and lament are happy? "No," you say, "that is not reasonable." And do you reason, then, on this subject? It *says*, "Blessed are they that mourn." "Well," say you, "we can't think that all that mourn are blessed." It must mean some particular kind of mourning. Thus, then, it appears that what you mean by your Bible is not simply the Bible as it stands, but something which you put into its words. You put your own ideas of what is right and reasonable into the words, and call them your Bible. Some say, "It means, 'Blessed are those that mourn for their sins.'" How do you know it does? If Jesus had meant that, he could have said it as easily as you can. He either did not mean it, or else he purposely left the matter in such a doubtful state that the

words can not be of any use as a standard of right. I believe Jesus meant literally, "Blessed are those that mourn or weep, and blessed are the poor." He appears to have believed wealth and mirth as damnable, and poverty and sorrow as saving; and to do this is in agreement with other parts of the Gospel. Take another passage: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Well, what does the word "fulfill" mean? "It only means that Jesus came to complete the law and make it a broad rule of life." Jesus says, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of Heaven." What means this? Are all the commandments of the law of Moses still in force, not excepting the least? That can not be. Jesus himself broke some of these "least commandments, and taught men so." Then we are still at a loss to understand what Jesus did mean. If he meant what he said, then the law of Moses is still the rule of life, and every man who professes to be a Christian is bound to obey it.

There is another passage: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." What! must you not judge at all? "Oh, yes, we must judge on some subjects. We must judge whether the Bible is true or not." The words say, "Judge not." What does "judge" mean? "It means '*rash* judging,'" say some. But how do you know that it means "rash judging?" If Jesus meant "rash judging," could he not have said so as well as you? But suppose that he meant "rash judging," I ask you, if you have any standard in your mind by which you can determine when judging is "*rash*" and when it is not? If you have not, you must take the law as it stands, and never judge again, not even your opponents on this stand, "lest ye be judged." If you say it means something different from what it says, you make your minds the standard of right, and only take the Bible when you have made it speak your own ideas.

There is another passage: "Whosoever is angry with his brother, without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." "Whoever is angry without a cause." Why, whoever was angry with his brother without cause? Every one who is angry has *some* cause. "Oh, it means a *just* cause." Why, then, does it not say so? And as it does not say so, how do you know that it means a "just cause?" "Because the passage would not be reasonable; not worthy of God as it stands. The word '*just*' must be put in to make it worthy of God." Then you think you can mend the Bible by that which is in your own mind? Yet you say the law by which the Bible is to be tried is not in the mind. [Time expired.] (Applause.)

MR. PILLSBURY remarked that the words, "without a cause," in the text that had been just commented upon by Mr. Barker, were supposed to have been put in by the translators.

MR. WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON said, as Rev. Mr. Turner was about rising to speak, that he hoped that if there were any other persons desirous of speaking in favor of the Bible, besides Messrs. Turner and Storrs, they would be allowed to do so. He hoped that the whole time on that side of the question would not be taken up by those two gentlemen to the exclusion of all others.

Rev. Mr. TURNER then came to the platform, and remarked as follows: I do not wish to come forward as if I crowded *myself* forward; nor do I wish to stand here and speak if my speaking is deemed an intrusion. All I ask in the premises is this: I wish to stand here just as long as a representative is wanted on my side of the question, when another of my brethren is not ready to step forward. It would be my choice to be in my own room retired, on account of my health.

Mr. President, I shall not insist probably upon all the time

allowed me by previous agreement. We are charged, very kindly it is true, in the last speech with avoiding the question at issue by a sort of subterfuge. I have charity enough to believe that my friend the Chairman in this remark did not intend to convey the idea that we wished to dodge the question of canvassing the claims of the Bible. My friend the Chairman would not make such a remark as that intending such a thought. Is it not a known fact, that when any charge is brought against any text or portion of the Bible, that there must be some law by which its truth and meaning shall be decided? Is it not a known and an established law in this case as in every thing else? Why, even my friend himself admits this fact. He admits that there must be a law by which to determine the question debated. The heathen claims to know and give that law—the law of natural religion, and our argument has been founded upon this point simply, that the law adduced was not an adequate law, and we have illustrated and proved our position. Now, one single illustration more, and I pass to something else. The very fact that my opponent gives to this audience all the evidence of honesty that you can ask—the fact that my friend and myself disagree upon this subject—is proof that there is no law in the constitution of our natures adequate to decide this question; else why does not my friend think just as I do, and why do not I think as my friend does?

One point which I shall dwell upon for a little while, is the charge of falsehood against the history of the creation. Here is one of the gravest charges in fact that is made against the Bible. This history, or the history of the creation, is said to be untrue. I know that my friend the Chairman has brought forward some seeming objections of vast import, but when I come to that, I shall ask his questions, and answer them by the Bible. Does the friend produce a reason well-founded from a right consideration of the record? How does my friend prove that the history of creation, recorded in the Bible

—in Genesis—(this first book we used to read when children with a great deal of reluctance, but have come to read in more mature life with some degree of delight) how does he propose to prove that the history there recorded is untrue? Some internal objections were raised, which I have not time to meet now; but the main thing is that it disagrees with science. What science, Mr. Chairman? With the science of geology. And how old is geology? it is in its swaddling bands. Well, it is, in the estimation of my friend, perhaps, and in other minds, perfectly sufficient to test the Bible. Supposing geology does array itself against the history of the record of the creation of the world, it is supposed to be all-sufficient to prove that record untrue; but let me say, Mr. Chairman, geology is but an infant, and partly an idiot at that. It is a science in which no two writers agree in all its parts. The Bible is said to be wrong, because the Bible disagrees with geology; but geology is right, because it contradicts the Bible. We are not an enemy to the science of geology; but, sir, we look with the utmost disdain upon the claims of geology as a perfect science. The philosophical mind has not to reason half an hour before he sees the fallacy of the problems that have been brought before the public as infallible laws of geology.

Suppose some philosophical mind should attempt to get up a science of geology, and suppose some one should ask him, "How came this tree?" How did the Creator produce the tree? Suppose we are told that the tree was produced from its seed. Then is it proved how the Creator produced the seed? The question is this, Did the seed grow, or did the Creator produce a tree that produced the seed? The one is as easily produced by the Creator as the other. Then we will for a moment proceed to consider the new system of geology proposed upon this principle. How did God make the world? Did it grow, or did he make the world as geology finds it? The science of geology, instead of taking the world as God made it, find-

ing certain supposed marks of age in it, runs back to a supposed beginning, and says the world has grown. This is the philosophy that is said to contradict the Bible. "Oh" they say, "I demonstrate geology." We deny its demonstration in a great many of its parts, and is the speaker alone in denying this. It is known, I presume, to the chair and this audience, that geology, in many of its parts, is disputed entirely by some and received by others—by men, too, equally capable of plowing to the depths of the earth. Now, if the Bible is to be tried by this science of geology as it now is, the first thing to be done is to show us a demonstration of geology in all its parts, and then bring the science of geology to this "standard law of nature" that is claimed to be in the breast; and let the universal brotherhood of human nature say that geology is right; then we will bring the Bible to the standard, and see if the record is true; for if a law of that kind exists in the human mind, that law has a right to be satisfied in your mind as well as in mine. If it is a law, it is a reliable law; for it is claimed that truth is immutable, and if immutable, then it is immutable alike in all, and must find its satisfaction in any problem proposed to it in all alike.

It is said that the history can not be correct, for it contradicts astronomy. Does it, indeed? What part of astronomy does it contradict? Are any particular features of astronomy defined that it contradicts? I am not aware that there are any that have been defined, and if features are contradicted, are these features demonstrated to be absolutely true? Are all problems in astronomy infallible? Some of them are, we know, but are all? Do you know that these heavenly bodies are worlds inhabited by people? Do you know any thing about it? Much called astronomy is human guess-work.

If the Bible is claimed to be contradicted by astronomy, show us the point in astronomy that contradicts the Bible—give us a chance to put our hand on the point, and then we will meet this objection, and measure swords over the very

hub of the question, and see whether it is correct or not. Give us the point; then show us where that point is—show us that it is absolute truth, and if it contradicts the Bible when you have shown it absolute, then, sir, we will retreat from our position.

But other things are said to have shown that the Bible could not have emanated from a good God. "Why," says my opponent, "does not the Bible say that 'by man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men.' Now, can it be, he asks, that a good God can teach such a sentiment? What! Doom a race to death because of the sin of one man?" Mr. Chairman, I would like to know where it is said in the Bible that God doomed a race to death on account of the sin of one man. We deny that the Bible teaches any thing of the kind. But does not the Bible say that "sin entered the world, and death by sin?" Yes; but does it say that God passed death on all men? My friend has got before his text. Death has, indeed, passed upon all men. Do you expect that a man doomed to mortality will propagate a species that can live without dying? Can a stream rise higher than its fountain? Death passed upon the posterity of Adam as the necessary result of his own mortality. My friend speaks of the curse that was inflicted upon all women for the sin of one woman; but does the Bible say that God, on account of the sin of that one woman, doomed her daughters to the same suffering? It says no such thing. It is a charge without foundation, Mr. Garrison; but, may I ask, is it not a fact that her daughters do suffer. This is admitted; but, sir, we just meet the question here as in the former case. Do you expect the stream will rise above its fountain? Why this suffering? Would there be suffering if it was not for the mortality, the weakness, the disordered state of this organism? No, sir; and I judge that the speaker this morning knows enough of the human frame to know this fact. How came this disordered state? It is entailed upon the race

of man, not because they have sinned against God directly, but because the fountains were polluted, and the necessity follows that the stream should be polluted also.

Again, it is said that God cursed all serpents on the account of the sin of one. Now I am not going to say what that serpent was; I only say as I have of the man, and as I have of the woman, that all this is a gratuitous charge on the Bible. Now, then, if it is proved that all serpents have descended from that one, we have only to urge the same argument as before—the stream never rises above its fountain; all generated life is of necessity stamped with the attributes of the generators.

But we are told, again, that the record is incorrect, or that it is justly chargeable with an appearance of wrong, from the fact that it represents God as speaking to Adam after he had sinned in the following manner: "Because thou hast done this, in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread until thou return unto the ground, for out of it thou wast taken." I understand my friend in his first remarks to fix a charge of inconsistency at least upon this record, "Because," said he, "who knows but that it is proper for man always to sweat, and always to work, and always to earn his bread?" Is it necessary that we should prove that it was not the design of God that man should labor and be an industrious being, in order to show that this is a curse pronounced upon man? Of what sort would his labor have been if he had retained his standing in the garden? Admit, if you please, that he was a being constituted for activity—and we love to defend such an idea, but we teach also that, under the curse, man was subjected to a kind of labor—to a suffering in labor—to a wear in labor that he would not have known if he had retained his innocence—if he had stood under the law of God as he was charged to stand. This record, or this history, is not doubted so far as this is concerned, that by the sweat of the face man does eat bread. How is the bread of the human family ob-

tained? It is in the sweat of the face—perspiration, indicating waste.

The Bible says not only, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou returnest unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken," but it says, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return!" Did God form man of the dust of the ground? This was his origin. We see the human being come into existence. We see him hurried down by disease, or accident, as the case may be, as he comes to the grave; and in a little while we look for that once loved form, but we see it not. It has returned to its dust. So it is written. One side of the statement of man's origin and doom we agree is true. It is always before our eyes; and is the other part to be relied on—was man formed of the dust of the ground? and if not, tell us how he came into being. The latter part of this declaration is now justified by almost every individual in this creation. Scarce is there a heart here that has not bled over the ravages of death. Scarce is there a heart here that does not mourn the absence of dear friends that have moldered back to dust.

This record does not say that all men are reduced to dust on account of, or because of, that one man's sin. My friend probably thinks of one text that he will quote, and we will take this opportunity to explain it. "So death passed upon all men; for that all have sinned." "Were they to sin by consent? If not, then how have they sinned?" We are driven back to the single position that they sinned only in our federal head, and die the Adamic death only descended from the man that had fallen into a dying state.

We read well another text, that, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." How do they die? They go to the dust. How are they made alive from the dust? We hope only in the resurrection from the dead. Just as men die, go down to dust, so in Christ will the same all be made alive from that death, but every man in his own order. It is said that the Scriptures contradict themselves.

The most prominent contradiction claimed is this, referring to the declaration that men die on account of the sin of one man, sin having entered into the world by woman. It is said that it is inconsistent to believe in the Bible, because it teaches such a doctrine in one part, when in another place it says, "The child shall not die for the sin of the father." Had my friend quoted the whole text, we should have been better satisfied. The whole text says that this proverb *has been used* concerning the land of Israel, but they shall no more have occasion to use this proverb in Israel, but that this should be God's law hereafter. What? Why, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Children shall not die for their father; nor the father on account of the sin of the child. Does my friend (Mr. Barker) claim that the same death is in view in this text that was in view in the text compared with this? There is something to do besides quoting texts when you are going to quarrel with the Bible. Does not that book talk of a second death? Which of the deaths has it in view in this case? Does God intend to say that the human family shall not die, since they have descended from Adam? No, sir, he intends no such thing. He intends, as you will see from the context, that death which is the penalty of your own transgression; and that is not the death of Adam, so that no change or contradiction has taken place in the Bible. It is only blurring things up with a disordered mind, that makes the Bible contradict itself.

In part, my friend misunderstood me in regard to my reference to Christ, and the words teaching the law. He says in his remarks that Christ came not to destroy the law; but he says that Christ does teach that law, and we are under the law, and it is authoritative; in another place he says it does not teach that law.

Mr. BARKER said: I did not say what law Jesus spoke of. All I said was, that no one could ascertain from the Bible what law he refers to.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—Now the question is asked, “What law does he refer to?” I was astonished this afternoon to see my friend make his best argument from the writings of the apostle. Does not that portion to which he referred teach what law was intended, and that the law did not expire until Christ was nailed to the cross? We have only just to mark the way-boards that the Scripture places upon the track, and there is no difficulty—and only apparent contradictions are made by a neglect of these directories.

Mr. WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON then said: I do not rise to speak, but to read some resolutions. We are not here to ascertain whether Calvinism, Lutheranism, or any other ism is right or wrong; but the object is to ascertain whether the Bible as a whole is of God, and was given by Divine inspiration. I propose, this evening or to-morrow, to speak to the following resolutions:

1st.—*Resolved*, That the doctrines of the American church and priesthood, that the Bible is the Word of God; that whatever it contains was given by Divine inspiration; and that it is the only rule of faith and practice, is self-evidently absurd, exceedingly injurious both to the intellect and soul, highly pernicious in its application, and a stumbling-block in the way of human redemption.

2d.—*Resolved*, That this doctrine has too long been held as a potent weapon in the hands of time-serving commentators and designing priests, to beat down the rising spirit of religious liberty, and to discourage scientific development—to subserve the interests of blind guides and false teachers, and to fill all Christendom with contention and strife; and, therefore, the time has come to declare its untruthfulness, and to unmask those who are guilty of this imposture.

3d.—*Resolved*, That “the Word of God is not bound” either within the lids of any book, or by any ecclesiastical edict; but, like its Divine Author, was before all books, and is everywhere present, and from everlasting to everlasting—ever enunciating the same law, and requiring the same obedience, “being quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword”—the Bible itself being witness.

4th.—*Resolved*, That it is a secondary question as to when, where, or by whom the books of the Old and New Testaments were written;

but the primary and all-important question is, what do they teach and command? And in order to ascertain this, they are to be as freely examined, and as readily accepted or rejected, as any other books, according as they are found worthless or valuable.

5th.—*Resolved*, That it is the climax of audacity and impiety for this nation to pretend to receive the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and then to make it a penal offense to give it to any of the millions who are held as chattel slaves on its soil, thus conspiring to make them miserable here and hereafter.

6th.—*Resolved*, That judging them by their course of action toward all the reforms of the age, and their position in society, the clergy of this country, as a body, would as readily burn the Bible to-morrow, if public sentiment overwhelmingly demanded it, and persecution and loss of character should be the result of disobedience, as to-day they are found earnest in their indorsement of the plenary inspiration of that book, in accordance with public sentiment.

Mr. PILLSBURY—Mr. President, the question before this Convention for discussion is the origin and authority of the book commonly called "the Holy Bible." Our opponents opened the argument on their side by demanding very vehemently, as it seemed to me, the *law* under which the book is to be tried. It was objected that if man's own reason and conscience be the standard of judgment, then we should have as many bibles as there are men. It might be an answer to that difficulty to ask, how many have we now, the Church furnishing her own law of decisions? If we yield our own individual judgment to her combined wisdom, her organized verdict, then how many bibles, or, rather, *interpretations* (which is virtually the same thing), have we? We surely can not be very profoundly penetrated with the unanimity, the fraternity of the so-called Christian Church of the country, particularly on this subject. He is a pretty learned man who knows the name and number of all the sects leaning for support on the Bible, even did he know nothing else. He should have a conferred degree—a doctor of *divisions*, if not of divinity.

The spirit, too, which animates these various clans, is not

always the most gentle. We doubters and disbelievers have little to boast of in that direction. But we really need not fear to go into the "World's Fair," in New York, for exhibition by the side of those who claim authority to settle all theological questions for us, and to give us the example of a true Christian life.

We might ask, Mr. Chairman, of these self-constituted lights and guides of ours, if there be any standard whatever by which to test the character of this book, and if there be, is it any thing but somebody's personal opinion and judgment. It may be that of one person or more. But, after all, what is it but the decision of beings just like ourselves; one it may be, or perhaps of many.

Mr. Storrs declared, with great assurance as well as force, that not a single divine perfection of Deity was taught in natural religion. Here now is a most instructive instance of the agreement there is among believers in the divinity of the Bible. I will illustrate it in a moment. My own acquaintance with books and authorities has been lamentably limited. True, I was once taken from the farm and admitted by favor and grace into a very short-lived theological seminary, and there spent most of three years. Then I made a pilgrimage to Andover, the Mecca of theological discovery and devotion for New England orthodoxy. But all these were a poor preparation to meet one in debate, of the age, experience, and wisdom of our friend Mr. Storrs. At least such was my feeling. It seemed to me rather remarkable, therefore, to hear him declare what he did so intrepidly about natural religion. The recollection of my old lessons in theology is not very vivid. Before venturing any reply, I stepped into a book store over the way to refresh my memory. Just as I feared, the standard authorities contradict our friend altogether. They say, "NATURAL THEOLOGY is the science which treats of the *being*, *attributes*, and *will* of God, as evinced from the various phenomena of created objects, and he who can not

read in the great volume of nature the existence, and, to some extent, the character of its Author, would derive little benefit from any commentary upon it."

Which now shall we believe, Mr. Chairman? You remember with what energy and confidence our friend made his declaration. In the same work, the definition of NATURAL RELIGION is, "that knowledge, and veneration, and love of God, and a practice of those duties to our fellow-men and ourselves which are discovered by the right use of our natural faculties."

Here again Mr. Storrs is at variance with the best authorities of the Church. Let him look to it. The definition of revealed religion is, "that which we derive from the Holy Scriptures, as to the resurrection of the dead, and the final disposition of the different members of the human family." Did not our friend speak with rather too much boldness, both as to fact and good taste?

In this matter, then, we agree with the orthodox idea of natural religion. Natural religion does teach all we can or need know as to the being, perfections, and attributes of the Deity. I regret that my brother Storrs is not in the same faith and fellowship.

Mr. Turner said, in evidence of the great necessity of a revealed religion, and of the insufficiency of natural religion, that the Hindoo mother was so debased in her mind and spirit, as that she could take her infant children, one after another as they were born, and cast them into the Ganges, to be devoured by crocodiles or to be drowned. There is a little mistake in my friend's mind as to the reasons why the Hindoo mothers do this. That is the result, not of *natural*, but of *revealed* religion. That is taught by the Shaster, a most voluminous scripture of theirs, in which the Ganges is held a holy, consecrated stream—holier to the Hindoo than the Jordan to the Jew.

The mother is taught by the Brahmins, the ordained priests

of Hindoo faith, that the way to procure the favor of the God who presides over the Ganges and over her, is to make an offering from time to time of the fruit of her body for the sin of her soul. But the missionaries who go there say it has been the grief of many mothers to have done it. And they say their souls always revolted at the dreadful sacrifice. It was so commanded, however, and they submitted. As regards the burning of widows on the funeral pile, to which reference was also made, it is unknown at the present time. It was practiced, however, for the same reason that the mother threw her children into the Ganges. It was not done in accordance with natural religion. It was a monstrous violation of the dictates of natural religion; and was a part of what our friend Wright called the "arbitrary teachings of a devilish theology." That was the cause—the entire cause of that terrible institution among the Hindoos. Let me show, Mr. Chairman, what our artificial religion teaches us.

I was a member of the Congregational Church. My father has long been an orthodox deacon, and my mother has baked I know not what number of sacramental loaves; and so I was probably as religiously educated as almost any before me at the present moment. I remember there was once a great revival of religion in our parish—almost all the young people were very much excited upon the subject of religion. A protracted meeting was commenced. I remember very well some of the teachings of the pulpit in that meeting. One day in particular (it was a dark, gloomy day out-doors, but it was far darker within), one of the ministers ascended the pulpit, and made an appeal to the young. You will not wonder, probably, that I should recollect this appeal. It was in substance this: "Your parents are now praying for you with an intensity and fervor perhaps unknown to them before. God has this afternoon come very near. His presence seems hovering over us. We can almost see him with our natural eyes. And it is not too much for me to say, as a minister

of the Gospel, from this sacred place, that if you do not now embrace the offers of mercy, some of you at least will be sealed for damnation—sealed forever.”

Mr. Chairman, it need not be said the interest and excitement by this time amounted to a frenzy. But the scene was not closed yet. The preacher went on: “Those mothers of yours are wrestling with God in your behalf with such agony of earnestness as you doubtless can not know. But what must be your feelings in eternity if you resist all these prayers, live on impenitent, and finally die in your sins and sink to hell—what must be your feelings, should you be permitted to look up from your dread abode to the blissful seats above, and behold that mother of yours looking down upon you? There you are, tossed upon the billows of the lake of fire and brimstone—screwed down under the tortures inflicted by a righteous and avenging God. And there stands your now praying mother, her work for you all done—all her prayers offered, all her counsels given, all her warnings. And as she beholds your anguish, and hears your wails and groans rending the caverns of your prison, *she, too, lifts higher and higher her shouts of praise and gratitude to God, glad that His justice is honored and His glory increased in your damnation!*” (Deep sensation.) Such was the appeal.

So, Mr. Chairman, were we taught; so, too, alas! were the mothers who bore us and who loved us with all a mother’s love. What a faith is that which can transform these mothers on earth—mothers here in life—to monsters in heaven! Sir, I have seen one of them more than once at the bedside of a sick and dying child. In her love and grief she forgot herself; sleep, food, weariness, every thing was uncared for, unfelt in the agony she experienced, as her loved one writhed in the grasp of the king of terrors. Yet that same mother’s minister taught her, and she believed that in heaven the unutterable and unending misery of that same child might make her supremely blest, the happiest among all the shining ones.

Natural religion beautifies her as a mother; artificial religion can thus wither her to a monster. She could even weep when told of the Hindoo who fed her babe to crocodiles, or drowned it in the Ganges. But her own child, not sinking in the peaceful Ganges, but in a lake of brimstone burning with fire; not eaten by crocodiles, but torn or tormented with those dragon-devils seen and sung in the visions of Patmos—her own child so seen and so suffering is to swell her now glorified spirit to ecstasies of joy before unknown!

Mr. Chairman, contrast a moment the condition of these two classes of mothers. The Shaster and the priest who expounds it, teach the scenes on the Ganges. But the missionaries tell us, that the sacrifice often almost breaks the mother's heart. It is commanded, however, and she bows in sad submission.

Now let her embrace the faith that has been preached to us, to you and me. It shall bronze her maternal nature, until she too can believe it possible for her to see her children plunged, not in "Gunga's stream," their little spirits forthwith evaporating to paradise with the ascending waters, but into weeping and wailing torments, gnashing their teeth in unutterable woe, while God can live to inflict or keep alive the victim to suffer his vengeance. Which mother has most need of the mission cause? Why may not the Hindoos have their "Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" as well as we? Not, surely, because we do not need a better faith than this of ours.

On the subject of the creation, and the arguments deduced from the science of geology against the authority of the Bible, I scarcely feel prepared to speak at all—certainly not at this moment. Had I expected this part of our work to-day, or this afternoon especially, I would have been prepared with a few suggestions. I am sorry for the inability which must make me so inadequate to this important branch of our subject. Others will doubtless do it yet better justice. All my

early life was lingered on the soil or the rocks that covered it; for our farm was a perfect "Arabia Petrea." And could you visit it, you would see at a glance that whoever had to keep soul and body together by delving there, would have other work than studying geology, or any thing else.

It was well said by my excellent friend Davis, that "the man who knows the most will believe the least." That saying is worthy a place in any Scripture, ancient or modern. The Church, however, has peculiar reasons for all her doubts. Her doubts are bold, blind denials. I have heard her scout geology in all her high places. She seemed to think science would even bow to superstition, as it so often has in the ages past. But she sees her sad mistake. Now she is going about to reconcile the gospel of geology with her gospel of Genesis. She seems willing to meet at least half way. She will carry Genesis up to geology, if that will condescend to meet her down half way. But truth and nature never compromise. They must stand; whatever falls. Scripture may bow to Science—Science to Scripture, never!

An English work has just appeared, which the Church hopes will extricate her from all her troubles in this matter, and lift her forever above the shafts of scientific investigation. It undertakes to harmonize all the conflicting doctrines between Genesis and geology. The pulpit seems delighted with its new champion. A most eminent orthodox clergyman, in New Hampshire, hastens to review it, and to bestow upon it high encomium. He is so fully and completely satisfied with the statement of the argument, that he says, "It is to be presumed that the Bible will not be again assaulted from this quarter, since the deeper geology sinks its shafts into the earth, the more numerous are the pre-Adamite witnesses for the Divine Record whom it awakens from their long sleep, and brings forward to give their unbribed testimony."

The book is by a Dennis Crofton, an English gentleman, and the American edition is accompanied by a highly com-

mentary introduction, from the pen of Professor Hitchcock, of Amherst College.

Mr. President, you and I remember when geology was scouted as the highway to infidelity. Now "the deeper its shafts sink, the stronger it makes the Divine Record." But where is the six thousand years' theory and the Genesis argument for the Sabbath? Professor Hitchcock has long known that the earth was millions of ages old, instead of a few thousand years. But he kept it to himself, and let the Church grope on in blindness. The late work of Mr. Crofton goes deeper yet, and Garrison is no longer an infidel, only for doubting that God kept the first Sabbath alone as a day of repose. Thus were we taught, till geology exposed the delusion. We thought God, fatigued and worn out with the labor, the wear and tear of creating the world, with its machinery and inhabitants, retired for the seventh day and devoted it to refreshment and rest. But we have found out our mistake, and have learned that a day at creation was more than a Sunday or a Monday.

Mr. Crofton labors to prove that the account of the creation in Genesis is mainly correct and correspondent with the facts in geology. One of his arguments is this: He goes on to say that "the first verse of Genesis describes the original creation of the whole universe; and that the history is then dropped altogether, until a period immediately antecedent to the creation of the human race." The *materials* of the world were created, he claims, as stated in the first verse. Here, now, comes the harmony betwixt Genesis and geology. Listen to it: "*But an almost boundless interval of duration elapsed between the period embraced in the first and third verses of the chapter.*" (Cries of hear, hear.)

Now there is reconciliation for you betwixt Genesis and geology. The author then goes on to speak of "*the formless and void state of the earth, during which the astounding changes took place indicated by the different fossiliferous strata, when*

during these long ages the earth was inhabited by successive tribes of animal and vegetable creations, and widely differing from the types of those now existing." This is precisely in keeping with the argument of Professor Agassiz—an argument which, when he first made it, caused him to be branded as an infidel, and holds him so still. I wish here to say to my friend Turner, that had he read the work of Mr. Crofton, he would not have spoken with half the confidence he did on the discovery of geology. "The more a man knows, the less he believes;" and the more modest he will be, too, in offering his opinions.

I will detain the audience with but another single allusion to the book of Mr. Crofton. The reviewer says that this book is "biblical;" yet how long is it since William Lloyd Garrison was branded as an infidel over the world, because he dared to assert that the position taken by the elder Dr. Beecher, that "the Sabbath was the central sun of the moral universe," was not supported by Genesis?

He says, "There may have been a long interval in duration between the creation of 'the heaven and the earth' mentioned in the first verse of the first chapter of Genesis, and the continuation of the earth's history in the second verse; or, in other words, credibly with the historic style of writing in the Scriptures, *a long interval of time may be passed over in silence between two immediately connected verses, without any intimation that such a wide interval existed.*

"Thus in Exodus, second chapter, an interval of seven or eight years is passed over without notice between the first and second verses; in Deuteronomy, tenth chapter, the period of thirty years, between the fifth and sixth verses, is not mentioned; in Ezra, fifty-eight years are not noticed between chapters six and seven; and in the one hundred and fourth Psalm, the long period of sixteen hundred years, between the fifth and sixth verses, is passed over in silence. A period, therefore, of vast duration may have elapsed between the

events mentioned in the first and second verses of Genesis, though no notice is taken of it."

Such, then, is the boasted agreement between geology and Genesis, and this the Church fancies is to stop the mouths of all inquirers into moral and natural science and truth. And this, too, she claims as a triumph. It must be at best like that of an ancient conqueror, who said, "True, it was a victory, but another such would be ruin." Which has yielded, Science or the Bible? The one had its theory and chronology—reaching back six thousand years. The other contradicted both, and claimed theories of its own establishing, and a chronology that might challenge the arithmetic of angels to compute its duration. Which theory and chronology are now received? Mr. Chairman, the Church has yielded, yielded most reluctantly to be sure—but, as always before, science has triumphed, as it ever must, over all else besides.

The Church always resists the new-born truths. As in the days of Jesus, she fancies herself all *righteous*, and despises others, and all *wise*, too, as righteous. How many did she kill and destroy a century or two since for supposed witchcraft? If a woman hazarded a life of single bliss, she was easily suspected. If she grew homely as she grew old (no very strange phenomena), suspicions ripened into probabilities. If she were poor, and kept that fearful cat, *the supposed saddle-horse of all witches*, probabilities became certainties—she had surely married herself to the devil; and so from the gibbet they swung her away to the bed and board of her infernal bridegroom, all in obedience, as they said, to Scripture command.

Long enough after the courts refused to convict, the Church and pulpit clamorously demanded their helpless, harmless victims. I have in my house a sermon delivered two hundred years ago, by a most eminent clergyman of England, from the text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Its delivery must have occupied more than three hours; but it is a defense of the witch-hanging habit of those days, more able than any

I ever saw besides. There are skill, logic, power about' it, more than in a basket full of the sermons of our times. But powerful as the argument was then considered, the minister would go to the mad-house now who should admit it as outweighing the smallest dust of the balance. Science or common sense was in time victorious over the delusions of artificial religion.

It is now six years since my attention was called to the subject before this Convention; and this constant dread of the existing established church to receive any new doctrine induced me to believe that neither slavery, war, nor intemperance could be abolished until the faith of mankind was shaken in the divine authority of written, re-written, transcribed, re-transcribed, translated, and re-translated Scriptures. A people blindly bowing before such divinities never will, never can, advance. Progress is too high a word for such.

But suffer me another instance of the triumph which humanity and reason have achieved over the blind presumptions and assumptions of the Church.

Once the Church believed (or said she did) in the damnation of infants, born or unborn, if non-elect. Some of you have doubtless heard the doctrine. Why, Mr. Chairman, the shores of the lake of fire and brimstone were supposed to be scattered with skulls of infants, as the sea-side with shells. (Laughter.) Our friend Mr. Storrs alluded to this subject last evening. The ministry brought this doctrine to market along with their other sectarian wares, while it would sell and command ready pay. In time humanity was sick and ashamed of a monstrosity so impious, so awful. Now the doctrine is nowhere—and, what is more, the ministry are declaring, so help them Heaven, it never was preached in this country, nor believed. Very recently a long newspaper controversy was carried on in Concord and Boston between two leading denominations, the Orthodox and the Free-will Baptists, the latter charging, the former denying. And so stern

was the denial, that at one time it seemed as if it would win the day. An authority was found, however, which settled the point forever.

A book turned up, written by a distinguished doctor of divinity, and of medicine also, entitled "The Day of Doom; or, a Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment." When the author (Rev. Dr. Wigglesworth) died, the celebrated Dr. Cotton Mather was selected to preach the funeral sermon. In the discourse are many highly complimentary allusions to the pastoral labors and the written books and productions of the departed minister. Among the rest, the "Day of Doom" is thus characterized: "The 'Day of Doom' has been often reprinted in both Englands; and may, perhaps, find our children, till the Day itself shall arrive."

The book is indeed wonderful, if not so immortal as was predicted. It is in a sort of doggerel poetry, common in those times. It calls up the different classes of the race of man to the bar for trial, hears their defense, and then assigns them their place in weal or woe. The infants are reserved to the last. I will recite you, Mr. Chairman, some specimens of the scene:

" Then to the bar all they drew near
 Who died in infancy—
 And never had, or good or bad,
 Effected personally—
 But from the womb unto the tomb
 Straightway were carried—
 Or at the least, ere they transgrest
 Who thus began to plead."

Then follows a long and, as I think, able defense of their case by the infants themselves. Had I been judge or jury, they never should have been condemned, if the heavens fell. They are not able to see why, since Adam, the cause of their fall, is pardoned for his actual sin, they are to be condemned, cast off, and boiled in the lake of fire forever—who knew nothing

and could do nothing betwixt the womb and the tomb, and whose only cradle was a coffin.

But the poem proceeds with the trial :

“ Then answered the Judge most dread :
 ‘ God doth such things forbid,
 That men should die eternally
 For what they never did.
 But what you call old Adam’s fall,
 And only his trespass,
 You call amiss to call it his,
 Both his and yours it was.
 You sinners are ; and such a share
 As sinners may expect,
 Such you shall have ; for I do save
 None but my own elect.
 Yet to compare your sin with theirs
 Who lived a longer time,
 I do confess yours is much less,
 Though every sin’s a crime
 A crime it is—therefore in bliss
 you may not hope to dwell ;
 But unto you I shall allow
 The easiest rooms in hell !! ’ ”

(Laughter and great sensation.)

But, Mr. Chairman, there is small comfort in even this assignment of rooms. For a little farther on, we are assured that in the most favored places the climate is decidedly too tropical for health, comfort, or convenience :

“ But who can tell the plagues of hell
 And torments exquisite ?
 Who can relate their dismal state
 And terrors infinite ?
 Who fare the best, and feel the least,
 Yet feel that punishment,
 Whereby to naught they should be brought
 If God did not prevent.
 The least degree of misery
 There felt, is incomparable ;

The lightest pain they there sustain
 Is more than intolorable.
 But God's great power, from hour to hour,
 Upholds them in the fire,
 That they shall not consume a jot,
 Nor by its force expire."

(Immense sensation.)

So did the pulpit once teach—so once did the people learn. So would it have been to-day with us, had the prayers and anathemas of the Church against progress and reform prevailed with God.

But the Church bows always her sinews of steel, when she can resist no longer. She asks leave to be—to exist—of the public opinion. She preaches any gospel which that public dictates. The hanging of women for witchcraft, the doctrines of election and reprobation, the Genesis argument for the Sabbath, the damnation of infants, and the worse than heathen fable of a lake somewhere whose waters are molten brim stone, blue blazing forever and ever, all these have had their day. Theological volcanoes they were in their time; but they are now quenched, let us hope, eternally.

We are now met to settle, or at least to try, another great doctrine. I could wish this might be a finality to the Babel jargon of sectarian faiths—a *final* tribunal to the spite and spleen of dogmatic theology. We are easily striking to-day upon the underpinning stones of the great fabric of religious superstition, which has deluged the earth in the blood of millions of human victims—which marshaled the crusades, built and sanctified the Spanish Inquisition, founded the French Bastille, and kindled a thousand hells in almost all the lands, terrible as described in the apocalyptic vision, or the fearful fancies of "Paradise Lost."

And even this last stronghold begins to be shaken. Geology is doing that for humanity which Genesis has failed to do. Rather, it is undoing the work which Genesis has so long done in the hands of a blind or bigoted priesthood. Let us

rejoice, Mr. Chairman, that we have at length found a true revelation—God's own word literally written on "tables of stone." And the yet unknown Scripture, the voice of the ages, is fast being unrolled and read. It shines in the stars. It is hieroglyphed in the flowers. It speaks in the tempest. The shuddering spheres proclaim it. Like its Author, it is everywhere present. Anointed visions see it. All that have ears to hear shall hear it. It is gilded with the glory of its Great Author. And it shall yet bring, not damnation to infancy, or to any age, but joy and gladness to all the now sorrowing children of a loving Father.

SECOND DAY—EVENING SESSION.

Friday, June 3d.

REV. GEORGE STORRS arose and said: The Bible is on trial, charged with the blackest crimes. We have called for the rule by which the Bible is to be tried, and we are told that that rule is natural religion, or, in other words, the religion of nature. I do not know that there has been any receding. My friend Wright said very distinctly, that the rule by which the Bible was to be tried was the religion of nature. If they recede from that position, I have no objection certainly; but it is manifest that there must be some rule. Now to say that the rule is in the Bible itself, is to say that the criminal is to be judged by himself. (Cries of hear, hear.) It is taken for granted that he is a criminal. Now what law has he violated? Has he violated the religion of nature? I wish it to be distinctly understood with regard to myself, as I have before said, I do not stand here to contend that every thing written in that Bible is inspired of God. That is not my position.

I do not stand here to say that every sentiment that is uttered in that Bible is approved of by the God of the Bible. I do not stand here to affirm, when a certain character said, "Thou shalt not surely die," that that was inspired by God. No, it was a libel upon God. I said last evening, that I conceived that the true question should be, not is the Bible a revelation from God, but is the Bible a true *history* of revelations given to men in times past, and does it contain a true record of transactions connected with these revelations? As I have already said, the truth of that position depends upon the credibility of the witnesses; but I am not going to argue that point again to-night. What does the resolution charge upon the Bible? Who has ever said that the Bible, "*as a whole,*" emanated from God? I have just quoted one text that is recorded there that did not emanate from God, but from his enemy. The objection, however, that is urged against the Bible—the crime that is charged upon the Bible, is not a new one. It is substantially the same that has been urged by many eminent men prior to this day. We here give you a quotation from Lord Bolingbroke. He says: "The God of Moses is partial, unjust, cruel (hear, hear); delights in blood, commands assassination, massacres, and even exterminations of people, etc. (Hear, hear.) The God of Paul elects some of his creatures to salvation, and predestinates others to damnation, even in their mothers' wombs. If there was not a Being infinitely more perfect than these, there would be no God at all, nor any true religion in the world. But there is most assuredly such a Being, and he who proposes any system of religion wherein this all-perfect Being is not to be found, may say he is not an Atheist, but can not say with truth that he is a Theist."—Works, vol. v., p. 600. Here you perceive substantially the same argument. It is not a new one. How is the Bible tried by natural religion—the religion of nature? By contrasting it with the character of the God of nature? If I have misstated the question, I have not intended to. I

have not come here with any feeling of quarreling in my heart. (Hear, hear.) I am almost prepared to say from my very heart, that I respect the Deists because they have rejected the Bible; they having been taught that the Bible teaches certain doctrines, which I am satisfied are not to be found in it, but originated in the perverse understanding of men. Now, sir, we are going to test the God of the Bible by the God of nature, and see how the God of the Bible stands by this law in respect to the God of nature. Now shut up the Bible and look at the God of nature. The God of nature is cruel. "What, "the God of nature!" Yes, sir, outrageously cruel, barbarously cruel. "How do you prove that charge?" Go yonder, sir; see where that city stood. All were in the enjoyment of blessings and sympathy of friendships, rejoicing in each other's love, the love of society, and the God of nature marched through by his earthquake, shook the foundation of the city, and buried them in ruin! Is the God of the Bible worse than that? What has he done worse than that? (Applause.) Here is a populous country that spreads itself along the pleasant river, and the fields are whitening for the harvest. The inhabitants dwelling along the borders of that river are flourishing and in prosperity. Their families are happy; but the God of nature pours down the waters, and the river rises and swells, and sweeps away their dwellings, and destroys the inhabitants. Ah! did the God of the Bible do any thing worse than that? Come, God of nature, stand up and defend yourself. We charge you with being a cruel God. (Applause.) We see men spread abroad over the land, pursuing the business of life, and not interfering with the God of nature; but the God of nature travels along through the country with the cholera, and calls off thousands upon thousands. Does he not sanction "wholesale murder?" We are trying the Bible by the God of nature, and I will ask you, as a jury sitting on the trial, if, so far, the God of nature is not likely to be quite as bad as the God of the Bible?

But, sir, we don't stop here—we go further. You complain, perhaps, that the God of the Bible authorized Moses to exterminate whole nations—wholesale murder you may call it, if you please. How has the God of nature acted in this respect? I beg leave again to refer to Bolingbroke. It is in his views on the subject of evil, in his Works, vol. v., pp. 403, 404. He says: “True it is that men are sometimes involved in general calamities, which they can neither foresee nor prevent, such as inundations, earthquakes, pestilences, *and the entire devastations of kingdoms or provinces by savage and barbarous people, like the Huns of old, or the Spaniards, in later ages.* But these calamities are rare. *They may be considered as chastisements, for chastisements are reasonable when there are any to be amended by partaking of them, or by being at least spectators of them.* They may be considered as mere effects, natural, though contingent of matter and motion in a material system, put in motion under certain general laws. *If they are seen in the first light (i. e., of chastisements), they should teach mankind to adore and to fear that Providence which governs the world by particular as well as by general dispensations.* If they are seen in the second (i. e., as mere effects, etc.), *they should suggest some other reflections which are not without their utility neither.*” On page 438, Bolingbroke says: “Cotta, who exercises greater injustice toward God than any of the tyrants he quotes did toward men, is much scandalized that those two eyes of the Mediterranean coast, CORINTH and CARTHAGE, were put out, etc. *But how did he know that Mummius and Scipio (the Roman generals by whom these cities were destroyed) were not instruments of the justice of Providence, as well as of Roman policy and passion?* The worst men, and the Romans were none of the best, are employed to punish the worst. None so fitted to the task. They are the instruments, and in their turn the examples of divine justice. The wealth, the splendor, the magnificence of Corinth were great, but Corinth was a sink of iniquity. Carthage was

a great and powerful state, but the Carthaginians were a faithless, factious, and cruel people. *Might not these be the remote and true causes* (of the judgment of God upon them), whatever the immediate and apparent were of their destruction?"

Now, sir, here is one who is talking of the God of nature. He admits it right, and undertakes to justify the God of nature in suffering those two eyes of the Mediterranean Sea to be put out. For what reason? "Why," says he, "they were abominably corrupt." Therefore the God of nature was justified in causing them to be destroyed, and destroyed, too, by the wickedest of men. Now I ask this intelligent congregation, whether the cases are not very parallel with the God of the Bible; and whether the God of the Bible is to be condemned by the God of nature. What was the reason which the God of the Bible himself assigns, why Abraham was not yet to possess the land of Canaan? Why? His posterity were to be kept out of that land for centuries to come. Turn to the Bible itself and hear what it says, Genesis xv. 13-16. After speaking to Abraham of the bondage of his children in Egypt, He says, "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again." Now mark, "*For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*" What is that, sir? Why, the God of the Bible did not allow Abraham to possess that land, or injure its inhabitants, for the reason that their iniquity was not yet full; but when it was full, as Lord Bolingbroke says, the iniquity of Carthage and Corinth was full; then, sir, the God of the Bible did the same thing that the God of nature did.

Now, sir, how are you going to condemn the God of the Bible by the God of nature? Whoever will take the history of the world will find that the God of nature has suffered and countenanced the same crimes which it is affirmed the God of the Bible has; and without spending time to go into the details, we will say that the God of nature has countenanced, sanctioned, and sustained exterminating war, Lord Bolingbroke himself being witness on the subject; so the God of

nature is a "wholesale murderer." Sir, if the God of the Bible was, so is the God of nature; and once judged by that law, the Bible stands at least on an equality with the God of nature, or with natural religion, if you like the expression better.

But, sir, why is it that there must be a disposition or inclination on the part of some on this question to foist upon the God of the Bible certain doctrines which the Bible never taught, and never does teach? I am of opinion, as at the outset, that the question first of all to be settled is, not whether the Bible is a revelation of God, but whether it is a faithful history of revelations made at different times to different persons under different circumstances, and a faithful history of transactions connected with those revelations? Now, sir, we take a transaction which was referred to last evening, and yesterday. My friend Pillsbury asked me last night why I would not take up the case of the slave whipped to death? Now, sir, we are going to turn to that text. Did my friend Barker intend to insinuate to this congregation that the God of the Bible sanctioned the whipping of a slave to death, and because he was the money of the master, the master was not to be punished for it?

Mr. BARKER—I said that the Bible lays down the principle, that if a man whip his man-servant or his maid-servant, so that the servant *dies*, if the servant does not die the same day, then the master shall not be punished; and the reason assigned by the passage is, "because he is his money."

Mr. STORRS—Now, sir, we will read the passage, mark you—the question was, whether the God of the Bible sanctions the murder of a slave? "And if a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall surely be punished;" and what is the punishment? "He is his money, and must not be hurt." Just let the Scriptures explain themselves and get their own testimony. The same chapter, twelfth verse, says, "He that smiteth a man so that

he die, shall be surely put to death." That is the plain statement. "But, perhaps," says one, "that does not exactly prevent his smiting a slave so that he dies."

Mr. BARKER—Does Mr. Storrs mean to say that he has read the whole passage referring to the smiting to death a servant?

Mr. STORRS—No, not now; I am coming to it by and by. Turn to Deuteronomy, 19th chapter. Here are provisions made, that in case a man slew his neighbor, not intending his death, he might, by fleeing to a city of refuge, be preserved from death, if it was a manifest fact that he did not intend to kill him; but the person could not be saved from punishment where there was an intention of killing. Mark the law: "But if any man hate his neighbor, and rise up against and smite him that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities, then the elders of the city shall send and bring him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee."

Now, sir, I ask, if the law does not clearly specify that in case a person intends to kill another, there should be no such thing as deliverance? that he should die. That was the penalty. We come back again to the 21st chapter of Exodus. You have seen that this man who is supposed to have a pecuniary interest in this man-servant or maid-servant is found chastising or whipping them for some supposed imaginary or real offense. Why, says the law, "If he die under his hand he shall be surely punished;" and the punishment is, "he shall surely die for it." But says the following verse, "and notwithstanding if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." (Hear, hear.) Did you ever hear of manslaughter? What is the punishment spoken of in the text? *Death*. Well, now, this person who has thus inflicted upon a man-servant or a maid-servant chastisement,

or punishment, or whipping, so that after a day or two he dies, it is supposed, from the very nature of the case, that he did not intend to take the life of his servant; therefore the punishment which had been specified beforehand was not to be inflicted upon him. I ask if this is not the case in modern days with our laws? Does not the law call it manslaughter, where a man lingers along a day or two after he is injured, and where it is proved that the one injuring him did not intend to take his life. The very fact that the master has an interest in the servant is *prima facie* evidence that he did not intend to take his life; and therefore is an evidence that he did not intend to commit murder. The impression has been made that the Bible sanctions such a thing as American slavery; but we have in the chapter before us now—"and if a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid that it perish, he shall let him go out free for his eye's sake."

He was punished for smiting out his eye by the loss of all pecuniary interest, whatever it was. "And if he smite his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake"—for loss of a tooth. Pretty good punishment, was it not? that he should be obliged to lose the property he had in this servant. Therefore you see that the law guards against injury in inflicting punishment upon these servants. I say, then, sir, that the reason why he should not be punished *with death* is a good reason; and the principle that is admitted in the administration of common law under our own government; that is, the principle that circumstances may go to show that the man did not intend to kill. Here, then, sir, we conceive that the God of the Bible is not so bad as they have charged him to be in this particular.

Now, sir, there is another point upon which I wish to enter, though I have not time, of course, to go into it at length; and I simply suggest an idea without dwelling upon the point I intend to take up at another time, when I speak again. It will be a point which has a connection with the last speech we

heard this afternoon. I have almost wondered that those who bring all the evidence against the Bible they can possibly bring, have not complained that the God of the Bible should allow his people to sell meat that died of itself to strangers. Now, say they, "See what the God of the Bible does!" What does he do? If you mean any thing, you mean to say that "he lets them cheat the stranger." The God of the Bible makes a law, and says, "I design you to be a holy people. You shall not eat that which dieth of itself, but you may sell it to the stranger. He may eat it;" that is, if he will. What a terrible, unholy God he must be! Now, sir, just look here. We live in Connecticut. The Legislature assembles here in Hartford, and they pass a law prohibiting the people of Connecticut from eating that which dies of itself. What would be the use of such a law as that? Nobody in all Connecticut ever thinks of eating meat that dies of itself; but, now, suppose in opposition to this, that the whole community should prefer their meat half tainted before they began to eat it, because it would be *more tender!* (Laughter.) Suppose that they should go and bury meat, as the dog does, till putrefaction commences, and then eat it; then the Legislature meet and adopt a law prohibiting such things. Does not that law purport that the people of the State of Connecticut have been accustomed to do such things heretofore? The very fact of a prohibitory law being enacted, shows that men did, in the time of Moses, eat such meat as God prohibits the people of Israel from eating; and that the nations around them would do it still: to them therefore they might sell it. There may be persons round about Connecticut who are still in the practice of eating that which dies of itself. Now, if these inhabitants prefer to have such meat, let them have it. If you let your neighbor have it, when he was not accustomed to eat such, and deceived him in the matter, I admit you would do wrong. I trust that every one will make this distinction.

Mr. WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON then made the following speech :

Mr. Chairman, this afternoon I offered a series of resolutions, and intimated that perhaps, at some subsequent stage of our proceedings, I would endeavor to say a few words in their defense.

I do not now intend to follow the friend who has just sat down (Mr. Storrs). I have listened in my time to a great many arguments which I have deemed exceedingly fallacious and extraordinary ; but I must say, in all frankness, that I have never heard arguments, to my own mind, more fallacious and extraordinary than those which our friend has served up to us this evening. (Applause and hissing.) However, on this occasion I waive any examination of what he has said, because I wish to draw the attention of this great assemblage to what I conceive to be the real point at issue. Our friend (Mr. Storrs) has said that the plenary inspiration of the Bible is not the question before us, nor does he seem to regard it as of any importance.

Rev. Mr. STORRS—I beg to correct the statement of the speaker. I do not think that the question is not as to the inspiration of the Scriptures ; but I think that the credibility of the witnesses should be considered as establishing, or not, the fact of inspiration, and the facts connected with that inspiration.

Mr. GARRISON—Our friend asked, who believes that every thing in the Bible was given by inspiration ? Who believes that all the books of the Old and New Testament were dictated by God, and written under the direct superintendence of his Spirit ? I answer, all evangelical Christendom professes to believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. Have you not been taught to believe it, and that to doubt it, and especially to deny it, is nothing better than rank infidelity ? Have not books and sermons been published by theological professors and eminent divines to prove that every portion of the

Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, bears the divine impress, and is to be implicitly received as the truth? Is not that volume styled "the *sacred* Scriptures"—"the *holy* Bible"—without exception or discrimination, from beginning to end? And is it not dogmatically presented to us as the only rule of faith and practice? Now, regarding this as the real question at issue, I propose to meet it at this time, and therefore will read the resolutions which I offered this afternoon, with express reference to it. [For resolutions, see pp. 142, 143.]

[Having read his resolutions, which were listened to with great attention, and greeted with cheers and occasional hisses, Mr. G. proceeded to remark:]

Mr. Chairman, the object which has brought us together is, undeniably, a very important one. The question before us should be discussed in sincerity of spirit, with the utmost candor, and with that gravity which belongs to it. It is not that my hands are not full—it is not that my mind is not pre-occupied with other matters of great importance to the cause of liberty and humanity, that I am with you on this occasion, but it is mainly because your Convention, being called for a good and lawful object, is nevertheless an unpopular meeting. (Cries of hear, hear.) God forbid that I should be ascertaining for myself where the popular side is to be found, that I may stand upon it, and therefore be safe as to my reputation! A popular truth does not need my aid, and I shall not proffer any in that direction. A hunted, proscribed, outlawed truth commends itself to my warmest support, and both by choice and by destiny I feel that I am allied to it, now and for ever. (Cheers.)

Sir, I know well the cost of an appearance in a Convention of this kind. I anticipate all that will be said, maliciously and opprobriously, on both sides the Atlantic, in regard to the resolutions which I have read in your hearing, and to my participancy in your proceedings. Already I hear the outcry of "Infidel! *infidel!* INFIDEL!" on the part of those occupants

of the pulpit, who, while they are strong in their "coward's castle," never dare to make their appearance on a free platform before the people. I know, moreover, it will be said that this is another evidence of the infidel character of the anti-slavery movement. I know that the American Anti-Slavery Society will, by the bigoted and pharisaical, by the designing and wicked, be held responsible for the sentiments I may utter on this occasion. Shall I, therefore, be dumb? Will it indeed injure the cause of the slave, so dear to my heart, for me to express my thoughts conscientiously about the Bible? I do not believe it. Have I any right to speak on any other subject than American slavery? or am I morally bound to give it my undivided attention? Why, sir, no freedom of speech or inquiry is conceded to me in this land. Am I not vehemently told, both at the North and at the South, that I have no right to meddle with the question of slavery? And my right to speak on any other subject, in opposition to public opinion, is equally denied to me; not, it is true, by the strong arm of government, but by the cowardly and tyrannical in spirit. Now I stand here, not as an abolitionist, not to represent the anti-slavery cause, but simply as a man, uttering my own thoughts, on my own responsibility; and, therefore, whoever shall avail himself of my presence here to make me odious as the advocate of the slave, or to subject any anti-slavery body to reproach on that account, will reveal himself in his true character—that of a bigot, a hypocrite, or a falsifier.

Sir, let me illustrate our position as a Convention in regard to the authenticity and infallibility of the Scriptures.

If a meeting were to be called at St. Petersburg, in Russia, to inquire into the "divine right" of Nicholas to rule autocratically over that empire, there would be an intense excitement in that city, and the daring individuals assembling to take part in the proceedings would be hurried off to prison, and perhaps capitally punished, for their "treasonable" conduct. You and I know the reason why.

If a meeting were to be called at Rome, in Italy, to inquire into the infallibility of the Romish Church, it would excite popular indignation, and the individuals attending it would be in imminent danger of their lives from the power of the Pope on one hand, and the blind fury of the populace on the other. You and I know the reason why.

If in Mohammedan countries a meeting should be called to inquire into the sacredness of the Koran, a general excitement would follow, doubtless, and the daring man venturing to raise that issue would be hunted down as an "infidel," unfit to live. You and I know the reason why.

So, let a meeting be called in Charleston, South Carolina, to inquire into the rightfulness of the slave system, and Lynch law would be instantly applied to the man or men who should venture to come together to make any such inquiry. Such a meeting would not be tolerated for a moment. You and I know the reason why.

Sir, the analogy is perfect in my opinion. The holding of this Convention in evangelical Connecticut creates general uneasiness, alarm, and indignation, and subjects its members to scorn and contumely, if not to bodily peril! In this case, too, you and I know the reason why. Yet, sir, ours is a free meeting—free for all; as an anti-slavery meeting in Charleston would be free; as a meeting at Rome, to inquire into the infallibility of the Romish Church, would be free; as a meeting at St. Petersburg, to canvass the right of Nicholas to exercise absolute power, would be free—that is, if such could be held.

We are told, on the right hand and on the left, that the fact of the plenary inspiration of the Bible is as clear as the noon-day sun. It is so well settled, that it is absurd to think of disturbing it. There is all the evidence that the human mind can desire to sustain the declaration that God did give this book to us to be the sole rule of faith and practice. Well, if it be so, then they who question the divinity of the Bible

are the men to dread an open encounter. In that very book we are assured that "the righteous are as bold as a lion, but the wicked flee when no man pursueth." (Applause.)

Now, let a meeting be called by pro-slavery men in any anti-slavery town (if you can find such an anomaly in the United States), and let it be announced that the platform will be free to all, and that the humanity of the anti-slavery movement will be the subject of investigation. I do not think that there would be any angry excitement on the part of the abolitionists. I do not believe that they would keep away from the meeting. I am sure they would say, "That is just what we want! Our cause will gain new adherents by this investigation. We will not fail to be present." Nor do I think that the quiet of the most thoroughly temperance town in America would be greatly disturbed should a body of rumsellers and moderate drinkers call a meeting in it, to consider whether the doctrine of total abstinence is sound, and invite all the teetotalers to come and participate in the discussion. I think the friends of temperance would say, "It will be an excellent opportunity afforded us to do something more for our glorious cause. We shall be able to confront the very men who have hitherto stood aloof from us, and who need to be reformed. We will gladly accept the invitation."

But, sir, the opponents of abolitionism call no such meeting, and make no such overtures. The fact is exactly the reverse of this. They are consciously in the wrong. Rumsellers and moderate drinkers never invite teetotalers to stand upon the same platform with themselves. They deprecate all agitation, and know full well they have every thing to lose by an open encounter.

Now for the application in the present case. It is alleged that this Convention has been called by "heretics" and "infidels." Be it so, for the argument's sake. The platform is, nevertheless, free for all, and each side is to be fairly and fully heard. It is, therefore, just the occasion that the professed

believers in the holy origin and divine authority of the Bible should be glad to improve, to the discomfiture of those who would strip the book of at least no small portion of its sanctity. And so they would, instead of shrinking from the discussion, and exciting popular indignation, if they really had any intelligent and rational belief on the subject. The book may be all that they affirm in its behalf, but by their conduct they show that they have no solid faith in its divinity; for, if they had, they would rejoice to stand here (as abolitionists and teetotalers are glad to stand in the presence of the advocates of slavery and rum), and give "a reason for the faith that is in them."

Sir, what is the question before us? It is not whether the Bible, in many parts of it, is not an invaluable book. It is. It is not whether it does not contain many glorious truths and precious promises. It does. It is not whether it has not many righteous commands and excellent precepts, which ought to be obeyed. It has. It is not whether it has not been of more good than harm to mankind, in spite of all its errors and perversions. I believe it has.

The question is, is the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, an inspired book, so that we are bound to receive every thing as true in its pages, without submitting it to the test of reason? If it be not wholly inspired, as our friend Mr. Storrs admits it is not, then how much of it is inspired?

REV. MR. STORRS—All that claims to be.

MR. GARRISON—How much claims to be inspired, and how much not inspired—and who shall determine the question? I should like to see the man here, anywhere, to take that book, and, beginning at Genesis, proceed through the entire volume, and put his finger upon what he considers as given by inspiration of God, and see how much he will leave of it, and what are his ideas of inspiration.

Now the assertion that every thing in the Bible is inspired is the height of absurdity. To say, for example, that it re

quired a revelation from heaven to record the fact that Samson went to sleep with his head in the lap of Delilah, or that he caught three hundred foxes, and tied their tails together, and put a firebrand between them, is folly. When it is narrated that a viper came out of the fire and fastened itself upon Paul's hand, is this inspiration? And so of ten thousand incidents chronicled in the Bible. What a man can see with his own eyes, it requires no supernatural aid to record. Hence, if only a part of the Bible is inspired, it is not wholly inspired; if only a part of it is from above, it is not all from above; if only some portion of it is sacred, it is not all sacred; and, therefore, what is generally claimed for it is false, and whatever is false is injurious to the world. How is the quantity of inspiration to be authoritatively settled?

All Christendom professes to receive the Bible as the Word of God, and what does it avail? What does all Christendom say as to the teachings of the book? Out of this "inspired" volume comes Romanism; for Rome believes in the Bible. Out of it comes Mormonism; for the Mormons believe in the Bible. Out of it come Episcopalianism, Swedenborgianism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, and all the other sects, whose name is legion. All these claim a Divine sanction from the Bible; and yet they are strongly arrayed against each other—rejecting each other's interpretation of the book, and each aiming to exterminate all the rest.

Now, certainly, the Bible does not go for Romanism, and against it; for Episcopalianism, and against it; for Presbyterianism, and against it; for Methodism, and against it; for Universalism, and against it—etc., etc. If it does, then it is a book full of glaring contradictions, and, of course, can not have had a Divine origin.

Who is it, I ask, that believes in the Bible? *What* is it to believe in the Bible? A man tells me that he receives it all as the inspired Word of God. What does that prove? Nothing. It gives me no knowledge of his mind or heart. He

might just as well have remained dumb. I therefore proceed to ask him, What does this inspired word teach and require? He begins to tell me; and I find he is either a Papist, a Mormon, a Swedenborgian, a Presbyterian, or a Universalist—and so on, *ad infinitum!* What, then, have I ascertained? What Divine inspiration is? What the Bible actually enjoins? No; but simply what *he thinks* is inspired, and what *he interprets* the Bible to mean. Now, what he believes on this subject is one thing; what the exact truth is, is quite another. The most any man can say, with any degree of humility, in regard to the Bible, is, “In my judgment and my conscience, it teaches this or that doctrine, which I regard as Heaven-derived”—but holding himself liable to be mistaken, and ready at all times to be corrected. We must have no papal assumption in this discussion. Thank God for the great doctrine of Protestantism—the right of private judgment as to the teachings of any book, as to what is the truth, —even against all ecclesiastical edicts and theological dogmas ever promulgated. “So, then, every one of us must give account of himself,” not to the Romish Pope, not to the Presbyterian General Assembly, but “unto God.” Therefore it is your prerogative and mine to take the Bible and examine it for ourselves—accepting whatever of truth, and rejecting whatever of error we discover in its pages, though all the rest of mankind dissent from our conclusions. This is not to be granted to us as an indulgence, but conceded as a sacred right, to be exercised without persecution or condemnation.

Sir, what does the Bible teach? One says, it teaches eternal punishment for the wicked; another says, it teaches no such doctrine, but just the reverse—universal and ultimate salvation. One says, it teaches that God exists in a trinity; another says, it teaches expressly the unity of God. In Russia, its religious expounders say it sanctions autocracy as a rightful form of government. Nicholas himself believes in

the Bible, only it is the Bible so interpreted as to go for Nicholas. (Laughter.) In England, the Bible expositors say that it sanctions a limited monarchy, and enjoins this as a duty—"Honor the king." In our country, they assert that the Bible goes for Republicanism; and that no man should be king over us, Paul and Peter to the contrary notwithstanding. (Applause.) Is this to believe the Bible, or to reject it? Which is the "infidel" party in this confusion of tongues? Again: Does the Bible inculcate the doctrines of total depravity, and yet deny it? Does it go for immersion as the only true baptism, and then for sprinkling or for pouring? Does it allow taking oaths, and then forbid swearing under all circumstances? Does it sanctify the first day of the week as the Sabbath, or require the observance of the seventh day, or hallow all days alike? Does it teach the duty of total abstinence, and at the same time approve of the moderate use of intoxicating drink? Does it assert the equality of woman with man, or place her beneath him? Does it go for a union of Church and State? Of course it does, on the other side of the Atlantic; but on this side it does no such thing. Does it require temple worship, on stated occasions—or does it sweep it all away, and approve of that worship only which is "in spirit and in truth?"

To all these inquiries, the most conflicting answers are made by those who profess the greatest veneration for the book. It is as plastic as clay in the hands of the potter, and molded into any conceivable shape. Is a man a warrior? He goes to the Bible with the war-spirit, and, running over its pages, he picks out what he says justifies him in his military profession. Is it with the spirit of peace that a man is imbued? He examines the book with that intent, and all he finds in favor of peace he arrays on his side of the question. Does a man believe in enslaving a portion of the human race? Then he interprets the Bible in accordance with his theory, and proclaims the system to be divinely instituted. Is he an

abolitionist? Then he does what in him lies to make it the ally of freedom.

So we have these various interpretations, and they are without end, whether relating to the existence and attributes of God, to the nature and mission of Jesus, to religious rites and duties, to matters of faith and practice, to what belongs to the past and concerns the future, to time or to eternity. Now, which of these is reliable, and who is to assume the robes of infallibility? Who accepts or who rejects the Bible? Is it Trinitarian or Unitarian, Calvinist or Universalist, Monarchist or Republican, Slaveholder or Abolitionist?

Now let us come to something practical. Here is the question of slavery. Shall we go to the Bible to learn our duty in regard to it, or to determine its character? We shall never settle it by any such reference. The Bible never yet settled any controversy. Every thing must be decided upon its own merits. We must judge of the tree by its fruit. Facts are more decisive than verbal declarations. Let us look at the slave system as it is, in a legal and practical point of view. If it works well for our country, and scatters blessings wherever it goes, then do I not care what any book in the universe says: I will go for it. But it is impossible to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.

Here is the question of capital punishment. How is it to be settled? By appealing to the Bible? Never. You may find texts on one side, and texts on the other; and all the time you are wrangling about what the Bible teaches, the necks of men will continue to be broken. Now if it can be shown that the gallows prevents the shedding of human blood, restrains from the commission of crime, and benefits society, it needs no other defense. But this can not be done, and the reverse of this is true; therefore the gallows should be cast down, no matter what may be said in any book to the contrary.

So in regard to war. If its fruits are good—if it improves the manners and morals of those who engage in it

—if it is promotive of human happiness and freedom, then its justification is made out. But if, on the other hand, it militates against the progress of the human race, and against human liberty, then it was never justifiable, and ought never to be countenanced.

Have we an infinite God or a finite one?—one who is the same from everlasting to everlasting, or one who has no fixed laws by which he governs the universe? Does God, in one age of the world, not only authorize, but require his children, to perpetrate deeds which, in another age, are inherently cruel and morally wrong in his eyes? Are the laws of our being changeable? Are our relations to him, and to each other, evanescent or mutable, or are they not always the same, though often misunderstood and disregarded?

Now remember, that moral distinctions are never interchangeable and never conflictive. Thus “war” means all that belongs to war—“peace” all that pertains to peace. If peace be right, and God requires it, war must be wrong, and God never authorized it. If God commands me ever to speak the truth, he never authorized any man to tell a lie. If God commands a certain thing to be done, as in accordance with his own will, and because it is right at one time, he never commands an opposite thing to be done at another period. He never can make wrong right, or right wrong—what is obedience to-day, sin to-morrow. Otherwise, we have a changeable, fickle, finite God, who rules capriciously in the universe, and knows not what a day may bring forth. But the Bible represents God in his double character; therefore it is fallible, and not divinely inspired.

I have no doubt that the writers of the Old Testament, whoever they were, believed what they put down when they wrote, “And the Lord said unto Moses,” “unto Joshua,” and to many others, “Let this be done,” or “See that ye do it not.” I do not accuse them of designing to palm off on the world a falsehood. I presume they wrote according to their

highest conceptions of the character of God. Doubtless they believed—or, if you prefer, Moses himself believed—that the Lord required all that is alleged by them. But this proves nothing, excepting that those writers, though honest, were woefully mistaken as to the mind of God, as many have been since their day.

What is to be gained by getting the assent of the whole world to the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible? You do not thereby attain to unity of faith or practice. I have said that all Christendom professes to receive the Bible as from God; yet all Christendom is full of strife in regard to what are the teachings of the book. What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? All that we can get from any one is, simply, what *he* believes the Bible teaches—nothing more. He may, or may not, correctly interpret its meaning; but his interpretation is not necessarily the Bible, nor his notion of inspiration, inspiration itself. Each one must decide for himself, and all dogmatism, self-conceit, and infallibility must cease.

Those who make the loudest professions of faith in the Divine authenticity of the Bible evince the most uneasiness whenever it is proposed to make an independent investigation of its claims. For example: this Convention was fairly and impartially called, in language wholly unexceptionable, and in a kind and magnanimous spirit; and the clerical advocates of plenary inspiration were especially invited to attend. Where are they? Will they say that the Convention is beneath their notice? Is this the reason that they are absent? We have had, it is true, two of the clerical profession to take the platform in opposition; but then, popularly speaking, they are both heretics. One is my old friend, George Storrs, whom I have not seen for some time—a man who, in the darkest period of the anti-slavery struggle, dared to look the slave-power in the face, and stood up like a man in defense of the down-trodden slave, though branded as a fanatic and

ultraist. He is here, but unfrocked by the popular clergy, and regarded as theologically erratic. He can afford to stand here better than he could to be an abolitionist, for it will cost him nothing. And his friend and associate (Mr. Turner) is in the same category, as to his theological views. None of us have any reputation to lose; and so we are all heretics together. (Laughter.) But where are the soundly orthodox and publicly recognized clergymen? Where are the teachers and masters in Israel? "Instinct is a great matter." If the educated, popular, "evangelical" clergy of our country felt that they could stand on a free platform, and successfully discuss this question before the people, they would not be slow to come here, carry off all the honors, and put the laurel wreath around their brows. (Applause and hisses.)

One of my resolutions affirms unequivocally, that if public sentiment should demand of the American clergy that they cast the Bible into the flames, they would as readily do it to-morrow, as to-day they are loud and voluble in their indorsement of it, in accordance with public sentiment. Is this an unjust charge? Do not the facts of the case warrant it? Where, as a body, do they stand? Are they not always on the popular side—always going with the multitude, even if it be to do evil? When or where, in any instance, have they dared to grapple with a corrupt public sentiment, and to run the risk of losing their salary and position in society? I tell you that men who can see the image of God desecrated, and three millions of their own countrymen trampled into the dust, and turned into goods and chattels, and sanction the awful deed, because public sentiment demands it at their hands, are the men who would just as readily throw the Bible—all the books in the universe—into the flames, if the same pressure was brought to bear upon them as in the case of the enslaved in our land. The greater includes the less; "for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift"—a man or a book? The clergy of the country, with here and there

an exceptional case, have no other God before them than public sentiment. Just as public sentiment changes they change. They have no "higher law." They are facile trimmers and obsequious time-servers. And it is so in the nature of the case; for, by their very position, they must necessarily conform to the views of their employers, or they will not be employed; and so they are fearfully tempted, all the way through, to suppress their convictions of duty, where an unpopular truth is struggling upward, lest they shall be turned out of house and home, with their wives and little ones, not knowing where to lay their heads. It is a trying and terrible position; and the wonder is, not that so many of them fall, but that any of them are able to preserve their integrity. But they are none the less guilty for being thus tempted; for they claim to be dead to the world, ambassadors of the despised Nazarene, "watchmen upon the walls of Zion," and are therefore to be measured by their own standard, and condemned out of their own mouths.

Mr. Chairman, is it indeed true that the Bible is "the word of God?" "Is it able to make men wise unto salvation?" Is its circulation essential to the redemption of the world? So we are told by the clergy and the church. Then look at this soul-harrowing-fact. As a nation, we are overwhelmingly orthodox; yet what are we doing? An act of unheard-of monstrosity! We have deliberately conspired, with Satanic malignity, to prevent one sixth portion of our population from having the Bible, so that they may not know what it is that God requires—so that they may have no chance for their souls' salvation—so that their eternal damnation may be made sure! For is it not a fundamental doctrine in the orthodox creed, that those who die in their sins, unrepentant, shall be damned beyond recovery? And yet this orthodox nation makes "the Word of God" a sealed book to three millions of people, who are groping in darkness, "without God and without hope," and, by reducing them as near as possible to the

brute creation, endeavors to force them down to hell, under the slave-driver's lash! Oh! if there be such a place as the hell described, and if there be in it one portion lower and hotter than another, surely it must be reserved for those who are doing this work of damnation to those whom they enslave!

But I am not willing to take the American clergy and church at their word, though they claim to be "evangelical." They can not believe in such a doctrine, or in such a place of torment. It is too horrid a thought, that, believing it, they deliberately strike down the sacred institution of marriage at a blow; make "Sodom and Gomorrah" the condition of the whole Southern country; take away the Bible, and the means of learning the way of salvation; corrupt, debauch, and imbrute on a colossal scale, so as to make the damnation of their victims inevitable, according to their own creed! No, sir; I choose not to credit what they say they believe in regard to those who die unrepentant; for otherwise it makes them monsters in the universe of God. The truth is, their faith is abstract and traditional; they believe what it is fashionable to believe, and are careful never to be found in conflict with public opinion. Their piety walks in silver slippers.

The clergy generally teach that the Bible is from God, and we must not question its divinity or authority; and thus they attempt to stultify our reason. Then they claim that God has called them to be the expounders of His Word. In this way they acquire power, and subserve their own selfish purposes. They care nothing for the Bible, aside from their professional calling. It is "the means whereby they live," and get reputation and influence. They belong to the class whom Jesus branded as "blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel"—"hypocrites, who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither going in themselves nor suffering them that are entering to go in"—"for all their works they do to be seen of men."

Yes, sir; "to be seen of men!" They must be deferentially recognized in their professional garb, or their piety will not operate. Let me give you an illustration. Formerly it was customary in our anti-slavery meetings to call directly upon this or that clergyman present to offer vocal prayer; and there was never any backwardness on their part, so long as they were singled out, and it was officially announced from the platform that "the Rev. Dr. ——," or "the Rev. Professor ——," would invoke the blessing of Heaven upon the object for which we had assembled. Afterward, partly to give no offense to our Quaker associates, but mainly to abolish every distinction of this kind on the anti-slavery platform, this formality was dispensed with; and while, as hitherto, an opportunity was granted for vocal prayer, it was left to the spontaneous prompting of the soul that might feel moved to offer it, without regard to station. What, sir, has been the result? Those reverend interceders have never since offered up a single supplication, though sometimes present in great number! Yet they say it indicates a sad lack of devotional feeling to open such meetings without prayer in the manner designated. Why, then, have they remained dumb? No matter what may be their reply—their professional pride has been wounded, for they "love to be seen of men."

So in regard to the Bible. Professionally they will do it homage, so long as they can profit by it. They will interpret it only to the extent that public sentiment will bear. They have no vision for the future, but live in the past. They dare not be men now. No reformatory movement receives any countenance from them; for they are among the wise and prudent, and, instead of being willing to be made of no reputation, like the Master whom they profess to follow, demonstrate by their lives that they love the praises of men more than the praise of God.

I shall reserve what I have to say in further elucidation of this subject for another occasion.

Mr. SELDEN J. FINNEY, of Ohio, offered the following resolution :

Resolved—That all the Orthodox clergymen of the city of Hartford, and of all other places who have received or seen a copy of the call for this Convention, and can, and have not and will not, come forward upon this platform, and defend or attempt to defend the Bible from the charges brought against their views of its origin, authority, and influence, by free and unprejudiced minds, have openly declared their own infidelity to their professions of theological faith; that they love religious tyranny better than religious freedom; that they have, by refusing to discuss with us the great questions before this Convention, declared publicly their weakness and the folly of their arrogant assumptions to be called competent teachers of the people, upon all matters pertaining to theological, religious, and moral subjects; that they love popular favor more than common good; that they are, therefore, moral cowards, and deserve to be abandoned by public patronage, and pointed out by every true reformer as the Pharisees of this nineteenth century—seeking to enslave more and more the mind of man to the dark dogmas and absurd superstitions of ancient mythology.

The Convention then adjourned to June 4th, half-past ten o'clock, A.M.

THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION.

Saturday, June 4.

The Convention having been called to order by the President, Mr. Barker, of Ohio—

A discussion ensued as to the method of regulating the debate, and as to the length of time to be occupied by each speaker, in which discussion Messrs. Pillsbury, Barker, Blackwell, Turner, Storrs, Davis, Garrison, Burgess, and Mrs. E. L. Rose participated.

The previous question was then moved; and it being decided which side of the question was then to be heard—

Mr. S. B. BRITTAN, of New York, came forward and made the following speech :

Mr. Chairman, I am prompted to ask your attention and the indulgence of the audience on this occasion, because I feel assured that the views of a large number of Spiritualists, respecting the Bible, have not found an expression in the able addresses already delivered. I propose to take a somewhat different view of the subject, and may not precisely agree with any one of the several speakers who have preceded me.

I can not say that I am here to *oppose* the Bible, nor shall I insist that its *errors* are divinely inspired. However, I regard this book as a work of peculiar interest, and I can not doubt its value to those who entertain rational views of its contents. I am happy to *accept* this book, but I must receive it for what it really is. I can not take along with it the sacred fictions to which it has given birth. The book contains many beautiful and useful things. There is much valuable *history* in the Bible which it would be folly to reject, and I therefore receive it *as history* ; I accept its poetry—of which there are some sublime and beautiful examples—as *poetry* ; its records of spiritual experience are very numerous and greatly diversified, and I joyfully embrace these as among the proofs of our immortal life, and as illustrations of the intercourse between the Physical and Spiritual Worlds. Its descriptions of so-called miracles I must regard as honest, and for the most part reliable accounts of actual occurrences. With my present views of the nature of the human mind, and of the philosophy of inspiration, I can not suppose that those who recorded such experiences were free from a liability to err, but I do feel assured that they were honest men, and that many of the phenomena described were produced by the direct agency of spiritual beings. That the Bible is either entirely or exclusively the word of God—the *letter being inspired*—or that it comes to us with Divine, infallible authority, *I do not believe.*

No language is adequate to express our highest thoughts, or to disclose our deepest emotions. Men who are not inspired, according to the prevailing acceptance of the term, often feel that all language is too tame and powerless to reveal the depths of mortal feeling, or to reach the loftiest conceptions of the human intellect. And if we, who claim no

very exalted inspiration, find language wholly inadequate to this purpose, how can any man be so profane as to attempt to rank the Infinite beneath himself by presuming that the ALL of revelation is comprehended in this single book! Indeed, the idea that any written communication can be an infallible guide to all men under every circumstance of life, and in every age of the world, is, in my humble opinion, simply absurd; for however perfect the sources of this inspiration may be, perfection in the absolute sense certainly does not characterize *the modes* of this intercourse. High and holy beings may have inspired many things contained in these Scriptures—I believe they did—but the assumption that we have here a complete transcript of their thoughts, and more especially that the book contains all divine wisdom which it may be requisite for man to know in the present and the future, is to limit the Infinite and to set bounds to human progress.

I need not remind you that the meaning of words is often determined by parallels of latitude and longitude. The meaning of an important passage is sometimes entirely obscured by our inability to determine the sense in which the author employed a single term, or by the carelessness of the transcriber or printer in pointing a paragraph. Moreover, the various mental attributes and tendencies of men lead to the adoption of as many opinions as there are expositors or readers. This is obviously true in the widest sense among men who do their own thinking. If the writers of the ancient Scriptures were overshadowed by a Spiritual and Divine presence, they may have understood what they endeavored to express; but if the Divine afflatus was long since withdrawn, and men are no more inspired, it is morally impossible, at this remote period, that the original impressions should be communicated to us. Before we can be unerringly informed and directed, we also must be inspired, and not merely the sources of that inspiration, but its *modes*, and our capacity to apprehend the import of divinely-originated ideas must be perfected.

Revelation can not make any thing true that was not true before. It never did create any truth. The word implies nothing more than this: Revelation is the making known by means of written characters, articulate sounds, or otherwise, some truth that before existed. All the truths of revelation existed in the constitution of things long before they found ex-

pression in human language. The act of tracing them on stones, parchments, or in books, adds nothing to their significance or authority. The original revelation of God is recorded in the Physical and Spiritual Worlds. These constitute a grand and comprehensive record of God's thoughts, which no utterance of ancient prophet, or seer, or record of Jewish traditions and miracles, has ever equaled.

Some years since I was brought to the ordeal of deciding whether I would remain in the Christian Church or not. The issue depended on my solution of the single question, whether I would consent to accept this book as an unerring guide in all matters of faith and practice. The ecclesiastical association of which I was a member required me to file a declaration with the standing clerk, to the effect that I believed the Scriptures to contain "*a sufficient,*" and, indeed, "*the only rule of faith and action,*" for all men in all ages of the world. On reflection I found that my faith and practice, in the various relations of life, were regulated and governed by all that I had learned from every other source as well as from the Bible, and consequently I could not make the declaration. I am sorry to say that this ordeal was instituted by one of the professedly liberal Christian denominations—the Universalists. Those who had inculcated the largest liberty consistent with Nature and Reason, who had loudly professed to exercise the broadest charity, and to favor the most unlimited toleration of theological opinions and modes of religious culture and worship, ventured, in an hour of seeming peril, to falsify their professions by this effort to shackle the mind. I had never been catechised on this point, and on entering the Church no clerical inquisitor thought proper to question the general soundness of my religious opinions. There was, at that time, no morbid apprehensions that the Church was in danger. The door stood open, and the sentinels did not invariably require the shibboleth or theological pass-word. I was allowed to walk erect into the Church, and to stand upright after I was in; and when at length the judgment was required to bow, when the deepest convictions were to be smothered and the soul dishonored, I took the hazard of walking out of the Church. (Applause.) There was room enough outside, on the great plane of nature and reason, where I might be permitted to study the sublime revelations of the Universe without re-

straint, and to worship the Father in spirit, in his own great temple.

Now, while I accept the Bible with the qualifications already specified, I hold that nothing in this world is too sacred to be examined. (Cries of hear, hear.) If I can not subject its contents to the action of the rational faculties, and decide upon its merits precisely as I am accustomed to judge of other books, take it away. (Hear, hear.) Give it to beings that have no reason. For what purpose are these faculties given to me—to man—if not that they may be exercised? Is not the Universe revealed to us to incite them to action? The Material and Spiritual Worlds are filled with problems of vast significance and revelations of wondrous power and glory; and these, and all things, invite us to observe and to reason. If, therefore, any man has a sacred book, a stereotyped theology, or a lucrative settlement that is likely to be jeopardized by the developments of science and the results of enlightened reason, he had better dispose of his interest in the same now, for the present age will try his treasures "as by fire."

An ancient inspired speaker once said, "In him (God) we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). If the Divine Spirit is in all and every thing that has life, if his presence and power are revealed in the beautiful forms and activities around and within us, we can not resist the conviction that Inspiration is universal and perpetual. GOD IS IN ALL THINGS, and by the power of his indwelling presence all things have life. The Infinite Spirit dwells in all men, therefore all are inspired, not indeed in the same measure, but in degrees corresponding to their several wants and capacities. If God is in all, if the divine life and thought flow into and animate all living and intelligent creatures, it may reasonably be inferred that revelation is purely natural—in the sense in which we use the term—and that all men, in every age of the world, have been inspired of God, in so far as they have become fit receptacles of the Truth.

It will be perceived that Inspiration, as viewed in this connection, is something more than the mere records of Hebrew prophets and poets. It is the influence of the Spiritual World which overshadows the realms of physical existence and the power of the ever-present God—present in every thing, but

especially in the human spirit. Inspiration is not, for these reasons, confined to this book; it is not all comprehended in any other book, nor yet in all books. It is a living, present, and universal truth, displayed in the graduated influx of the elements of the Spiritual into the Physical Worlds. Inspiration is not unnatural; as we employ terms, it is not *supernatural*. And here I wish to define what I understand by *Nature*, for we may differ endlessly about *things* unless we agree in the use of *words*. It is believed that nine tenths of all the controversies, from first to last, have arisen from a different understanding of *terms*, rather than from any radical difference with respect to *principles*. (A VOICE—"Yes.")

The common idea presumes that Nature comprehends merely the visible forms and phenomenal aspects of things. It limits Nature to what addresses the senses only. The inward laws and vitalizing principles of the Universe, and all Spiritual existences, are not included in the domain of Nature according to this definition. If nature only embraces what is tangible to the senses, I believe in *supernaturalism*; so do you; so, also, do all men. But we object to the popular definition. Nature, as we regard the subject, is not the mere *shell* of the Universe, and the superficial aspects of its ever-changing phenomena; it comprehends the whole system of outward existences, with their internal forces, and the laws which regulate all invisible material processes and external developments. Whatever, therefore, relates to mind in its mundane relations comes within the domain of Nature; and as all inspiration and revelation, in every age of the world, have been given to us through the medium of the human faculties, revelation is seen to belong to the empire of natural results. If, on the contrary, Nature is admitted to comprehend only the grosser forms and visible changes of the material world, the execution of the simplest mechanical operation is supernaturally performed, inasmuch as the ordinary operation of material forces, unaided by intelligence, would never construct a table, or print a copy of the Scriptures. Thus it will be perceived that the printing and binding of the book are supernatural in the same general sense in which the revelations it contains are so.

The veil that separates man from the invisible world is being drawn away or rendered transparent to the illuminated vision.

We are now assured that man sustains vital and definite relations to the world of spiritual realities as truly as he does to the grosser forms and phenomena of the world below. Nothing can so exalt man above all low and groveling pursuits as the consciousness that he is forever allied to the spiritual and divine. Men have long been constrained and materialized by the fiction that their relations are all earthly, and that they have no capacity to receive divine instruction from any higher source than the pulpit. It has been said, "As a man thinketh, so is he;" if he is only conscious of the existence of the material chain which connects him with inferior creations, he must necessarily feel that he is cut off from all companionship with higher natures. This conviction can only debase and sensualize the man by checking his noblest aspirations and diverting the whole current of thought and feeling into material and earthly channels. On the contrary, tell him that he is not less intimately allied to the inhabitants of the Angel-world, that he is surrounded by spiritual principles and entities, and that in proportion as he lives naturally and truly he will be conscious of his higher relations, and enjoy communion with the invisible and divine, and you exalt, dignify, and spiritualize his humanity.

I can not indorse all that has been repeatedly expressed or implied before this Convention respecting the clergy. I do not believe that, as a body, they are willfully hypocritical. When I remember how many have torn themselves away from friends, from the sanctuary of home, and from the altars of their country, and have exhausted their energies, and laid down their lives in heathen lands, I may question their wisdom, but I am also bound to respect their motives. While I am altogether in favor of free thought and speech, I will neither ask nor exercise the liberty to assail my fellow-men in a spirit of acrimony. It is the rightful prerogative of every man to express in civil terms his convictions respecting any and every subject which involves the rights and interests of mankind. This liberty I claim without hesitation, and exercise without restraint. Let us be free in this manner. In the language of another :

"Let truth no more be gagged, nor conscience dungeoned,
Nor science be impeached of godlessness.

* * * * *

But let every man have due liberty
To speak an honest mind in every land."

H. C. WRIGHT—I wish to call the attention of the Convention to the charges that have been tabled against the Bible. I will add to those charges. I care only to answer one point made on the other side of the question. I am not anxious to answer any thing they say, except to allude to one idea, and that will come in the process of my remarks. I offered a resolution at the opening of this meeting, charging the Bible as sanctioning polygamy, concubinage, prostitution, wholesale plunder and murder, and oppression, and I think that these charges have been sustained; and not one word has yet been said to meet the arguments that have been made on the subject, not a word. (Hear, hear.) My friend Barker has presented a great multitude of passages to sustain this charge; but one single passage has been touched upon which we have presented—to wit, the one touching slavery or oppression; and how has that been met? I leave it to the friends to say, only just repeating the passage. There is a passage which tells the Israelites that they may purchase certain persons, and give them to their children for their possession forever; and there is a passage which authorized a master to whip his slaves to death, and he is not to be punished because they are his money. There is the passage. I leave it. Besides *that*, I do not know that any effect has been made to meet the arguments we have presented. I have other arguments to present against that book, and one which strikes at the foundation of the old idea of revelation or inspiration. It is this: that book represents God as punishing this world—punishing human beings by arbitrary laws and arbitrary penalties. I will not quote one passage to prove this. I repeat the charge, and I wish it might be answered, if any body sees fit to answer it. That book represents God as punishing men by arbitrary laws and arbitrary penalties. What I mean by arbitrary penalties is, laws given by arbitrary command to some individual designed to cover the whole human race to the end of time, and arbitrary penalties affixed to

them. Now, sir, this is a point that I wish to dwell upon considerably. I deny that the God of nature ever issued to the human race a single arbitrary law, or affixed to any law an arbitrary penalty; but all his laws and all his penalties are fixed, unchanging, written in the nature of man's body and soul; and I repeat, that if men would abide by the laws that God has incorporated into their nature, their bodies, and souls, and obey these wants, they would be just what they are capable of being, and just what God designed they should be. I will repeat it in other words: Man has certain wants—natural wants. The first object is to ascertain what are those natural wants; and the second is, to give these natural wants a natural and healthful supply; for instance, we want air, we want light and food to sustain our bodies; we want society, love, and sympathy to sustain our souls. We are under certain fixed conditions of life and health, of body and soul, and the first great business of man is to find out what are these conditions of life and health, and to comply with them; and this is the whole of human life and duty. A book is presented to me called the Bible, and I am required to believe that, as a whole, it is the Word of God. But I find that book filled with arbitrary commands which interfere with these fixed conditions of life and health. For instance, they interfere with the law of parentage. Is there a man or woman, that is a father or a mother, that does not know that to stone a child to death for disobedience is opposed to the fixed law of parentage—the instinct of parental laws; and yet there is a command to the parent to stone the child to death for disobedience. Is there any person that does not know that the command that a child should be put to death for the sin of the parent is opposed to the instinctive feeling of justice in the human soul? Now the Bible comes in with an arbitrary command, and sending Abraham to go to a certain mountain, and there to kill his child as a sacrifice to God. I have been often asked, Would you offer your child as a burnt-offering if

God should command you to do it? No, I would not, is my answer. What would you do? I would lay such a God on the altar, and I would sacrifice him to justice and humanity—*i. e.*, I believe in the existence of no *such* a God. (Hisses and applause.) It has been often asked of me, Would you stone your child to death for disobedience if God told you to do it? No, is my answer, I would not. What would you do? I would stone all *such* Gods to death, and let the child live. God, as a rule of life to man, is to each one just what he conceives him to be. I defy the power and scorn the worship of the God of man as I do the power and worship of Moloch or of Juggernaut, *because* he sanctioned or required practices as impure, as unjust, and as murderous as do these. Moses' ideas of God were about as false and unnatural as are those of the Hindoo or the Mohammedan. Yet we are required to receive them as true! I have no respect for a God that requires me to violate the laws of my being. The God of the Bible does in some places require human beings to violate the fixed laws of their nature. I will not obey any such behest, come from whom it may. I have in myself fixed, inherent rights; and so has every other human being. It is unjust for any being in the universe to require us to disobey the fixed condition of life, body and soul, and then leave us to the penalty of that disobedience. God can not justly suspend a single law of my being while he is God and I am man. When he changes my nature, then he may put me under other laws; but with this nature I am under fixed conditions of health and happiness, and God has no right to change them unless he changes my nature. Now the Bible comes in, and in the name of God requires man to violate these fixed conditions, and commands men to hate and to slaughter one another, and to do various deeds, without any regard to the fixed conditions of life and health under which the true God of nature placed them.

I wish to say here, in answer to the friend who, last night,

called our attention to earthquakes, to floods, to cholera, and to pestilence—he says, “God has swallowed up cities by earthquakes; God has swept the world with a flood, and with the cholera.” I simply deny that God ever sent an earthquake to kill human beings. He never sent a flood nor a storm to kill men, and I believe it is a blasphemous libel upon a wise and just God to say that he ever sent a thunderbolt to destroy any one. And I repeat that He has no right so to do. I say that Deity has no right to take me out of this state of existence, except by one process; and it is the very process by which he changes the caterpillar into a butterfly, *i. e.*, by a fixed and just law; and if human beings would allow these laws to work out their designed results, we should be carried on our course just so long as we are to be—*which I think is for eternity*—without any pain, sorrow, or anxiety; but in all harmony, joy, and love. It is monstrous to say that God ever sent an earthquake to destroy a city. My reply is, that if the city had not been there, the earthquake would have come there just the same. The earthquake is under fixed laws as much as I am; and if men get in the way of earthquakes, men must die. Earthquakes are just as essential to the happiness of mankind as food is; and if men do not get in the way of floods, the floods will not touch them. I walk through your streets, and a thunderbolt comes from the clouds, and kills me; but God did not send that thunderbolt to kill me.

The thunderbolt was drawn down, and it struck me and killed me, but God did not put me there to be killed, nor send that to kill me. But whence comes cholera? It is simply the result of human agency. Did men live rightly, do you think they would ever suffer from cholera? I wish to say once for all, to cover the whole ground, I do not believe that God ever took a human being out of this world except by one process. I do not believe that He ever put to death an infant, or a child, or a human being in the strength of manhood and womanhood, but only by the operation of natural law. He

takes them out of this state into another happily and pleasantly, not by suffering and anxiety. This is *His* way, and if we go out in any other way, it is not God's doings.

I once had a friend who lost a child in this way. The child was three months' old. It was in pain. The mother gave it a dose of paregoric, and the child died. The priest came to preach the funeral sermon. He took for his text, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away" (two falsehoods in one passage), "and blessed be the name of the Lord." He went on to say that the Lord killed his child, first because he foresaw that the parents would love the child better than they loved him; in the second place, he foresaw that the child, if suffered to grow up, would become a sinner, and be in danger of going to hell; and so he killed it in infancy to save it from hell. But it was the mother that killed the child, not God. She gave the paregoric. She killed the child as really as if she had struck a dagger to its heart, not, indeed, intentionally, but ignorantly. Who was responsible for the existence of that child? Why, the book represents God as responsible for its existence, as the Creator of all the children. With all deference to the book, I say the father and mother were responsible for the existence of the child, as really as I should be responsible for my death if I should cut my throat. It is false to say that God is responsible for the existence or death of the child. GOD NEVER KILLED A CHILD. Children die. One half of all that are born die under five years of age. To make God responsible for this wholesale slaughter "of infants, little ones," is to make him a fiend or a fool—too wicked or too weak to be loved and respected. And such is the being presented by parts of the Bible, and by Christians and heathens, to be loved and worshipped as God! I have no *such* God before me.

I deny the idea of an arbitrary revelation, and the Bible purports to be such a revelation. Do you think a God of justice could give a law of life to *one* man for the whole race?

My idea is this, that every human being brings into existence with him, by virtue of his existence, a law of life. He is under fixed natural conditions of health and life, with which, if he complies, he will be a happy man in this world—just what God wants him to be. (Applause.)

Now what in the world can we ask for more? We know it is so, that every human being is under certain conditions of life and health, of body and soul; and just in proportion as we comply with these conditions, we shall be happy—we shall be in heaven. Just in proportion as we disobey and disregard these conditions, we shall be in hell, *here* in this state, not off yonder. I care nothing about future hell, if I can keep out of it here; nor your heaven in the future, if I can keep in it now. The only way to escape a future hell is to keep out of a present hell. The only way to secure a future heaven is to secure a present one.

The Bible represents God as establishing a priesthood, and sacrifices of animals. If it represents any thing it does that. I shall not quote a passage to prove it; there is the Book. You all know it makes God responsible for the existence of a priesthood and a system of bloody sacrifices.

Now, will you tell me where God ever imposed upon human beings a duty which they can not perform, each one for himself and herself? Will you tell me that the Author of my being has put me under laws which I must get somebody else to obey for me? that I must run the risk of having my eternal destiny depending upon the chance of my getting a certain priest, that must be decked in the contemptible tomfoolery of the high priesthood, in order to stand between me and my God. (Hisses and applause.) Will you tell me that God converts himself into an almighty tailor, to show men how to make a garment for the priests; and then into an almighty carpenter, to show men how to erect the altar and the ark. *See the picture.* See the lard, the liver, the fat, and entrails of that ox burning on the altar. See the smoke with

the foul smell ascending, and the great God bending down from the skies over it, and snuffing it in as a sweet-smelling savor. And with such a bloody service God is said to be well pleased. (See the first ten chapters of Leviticus.) It may please the God of Moses, but it must be of no avail before the God of nature. He requires love, justice, and mercy, and not sacrifices. Those who attributed such things to God may have been *honest*, but they were mistaken. Is it possible to conceive that the Almighty should ever establish such a law as that? Every human being is to be his own priest, and his own church, and his own lawgiver, judge, and king, UNDER GOD. Each one must decide for himself what is right or wrong, on his individual responsibility.

Now I will go to the New Testament. I have a controversy with some things in that portion of the Bible, and I wish to speak with all deference to your opinions of Jesus of Nazareth. I have many views of him, and shall speak of him from my stand-point, not from yours. I believe him to be a man, and nothing more. I sit in judgment upon his teachings and doings as I do upon those of other men, and I judge him by the same law by which I would judge any other man. If I see any thing that I think was wrong in him I say so. I would say here I believe that he was a pure and perfect spirit, and had high and holy motives. I love the name. I never in my life had as just and true an appreciation of Jesus of Nazareth as I have at this moment; but while I say this, I believe in one great essential point. Jesus of Nazareth was mistaken. He did seek to found a sect in the world. I repeat it, he sought to found a sect among men as other reformers of his age did, in Greece and Rome, in Persia and in Egypt, and the sect he founded is called Christians now; and of all the sects that ever this world saw—of all the sects the earth knows—not one has ever committed more gross outrages upon humanity than the sect called Christians—*never*. The history of Christians—of Christianity—demonstrates the truth

of my remark. I say that *sect*, as a sect, mark you. There are noble individuals who have come out, I know, and now stand as infidels. I would not go anywhere but right here before us, and I know my friend Garrison will excuse me; if he does not, I shall say it. When he began the anti-slavery movement he belonged to the Christian sect—and the most orthodox of these too. He vainly supposed that he could get the Christian sect to help him—to aid his work. He appealed to the ministers of Christendom; he implored them. I know he did. He advertised in a Boston paper, asking for a house in which he might plead the cause of millions of our down-trodden countrymen. No Christian house in the city could be opened for him. He had nothing to pay for it; and he said, “I will not pay for it, for I am bleeding for humanity. If I do not have an offer of a house in which to plead their cause, I will plead it on the commons;” but the Atheists’ hall was offered him *gratis*. (Applause.) He had to go to Atheists to get a place to plead the cause of humanity. Humanity was driven out of the Church. There was more sympathy for humanity in the Atheism of Boston than in the religion of Boston. I prefer a humane Atheism to an inhuman religion, or anti-slavery and anti-war Atheism to a pro-slavery and pro-war religion. In this country Christendom has about one hundred millions of dollars invested in houses consecrated to God, who does not need them; who says he “dwells in a house not made with hands.” A hundred millions of dollars, to carry on your God-worship in these temples that are not to be opened to the cause of humanity! Those who own them are called Christians; and it is a sect that purports to have been founded by Jesus of Nazareth. He founded a sect, and those of his followers, at the beginning, were devoted men. *Paul!* I admire the energy and enterprise of the man to establish what he believed to be truth. I admire the spirit of Jesus that led him to Jerusalem, when he knew what should befall him there. He died for what he believed to be true.

That is the highest glory a man can have on earth. Though you be mistaken, if you are ready to suffer martyrdom for what you believe to be true, as Jesus did, you shall have my boundless respect and admiration. But Jesus established a sect. The first members of that sect were true and devoted men and women; but, as in all sects, in the course of time it became a pure despotism, and every step of progress in science that sect has opposed, as a sect. It has imprisoned men for the discovery of the modern science of astronomy; it has imprisoned men for discoveries in chemistry; and what was it that tried to put down Mary Wortley Montague for introducing vaccination from Mohammedan countries into Christian England? When Dr. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, who was it that arrayed themselves against the circulation of the blood? (Applause.) The whole Christian Church. Who was it that offered in the Evangelical Alliance in Edinburgh a resolution to inquire into the tendency of total abstinence to infidelity? When I was in Edinburgh there was offered at a session of that body, by one of their members, a resolution to this effect: "*Resolved*—That a committee be appointed to inquire into the tendency of total abstinence societies to infidelity."

The Reverend donkies! I thought I could see their ears elongating! It was solemnly argued for a long time, until a friend offered an amendment to this effect: "*Resolved*—That the committee be instructed to inquire into the tendency of drunkenness to Christianity."

What founded the inquisition? Who hung the witches? Who have been opposed to the spirit of religious toleration? What, Mr. Chairman, has put on the statute-book of this State a law, now standing as a part of the statute of the laws of the State of Connecticut? It is headed, "Crimes against Morality and Religion—Blasphemy. Section 80th of the Laws of Connecticut. Every person who shall be guilty of blasphemy against God, or either of the persons of the Holy Trinity"—

mark it—"or the Christian Church, or the Holy Scriptures, and shall be thereof duly convicted, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars, and by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding one year." I ask who is it that put it on the statute-book? (A Voice—Good men.) I answer, it is the Christian sect. The Trinity has been established by law, and it is made a crime in Connecticut to be a Unitarian. (Applause.)

I say Jesus was mistaken when he founded a sect. Again, Jesus was mistaken. He established a false principle when he said, "Whoso believeth not shall be damned," as though a man was to blame or not for his belief. He can not help but believe if there is evidence for it; and if he can not find evidence, then he can not believe. Death was threatened, in the old dispensation, to all who called in question the Jews' idea of God—persecution of the most cruel and bitter kind was their portion. The husband was to conspire against the wife of his bosom, if she changed her views concerning God. They were neither to spare their son nor daughter, and they were themselves to hurl the first stone at them.

Jesus, too, was opposed to the law of marriage. In Jesus' definition of adultery, he says, "I say unto you, whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his own heart." Does he mean to say that it would be a sin to live with a woman as a wife, without a legal recognition of it? No such thing; for he had little heed to human legislation in any thing. He simply meant to say, that if a man desires a woman, he is an adulterer. He established the rule, that for a man to wish for a wife, or a woman for a husband, was inconsistent with the highest point of perfection at which he aimed; and this was the rule of the Essenes, a sect among the Jews; and it was common in Greece and Rome among all who sought for a higher state of purity. I say Jesus put his foot on the marriage law of our nature. In doing so, his motive was good, but in judg-

ment he erred. Paul, in imitation of Jesus, said, "It is better not to marry;" and the early Christians sought to carry it out, and the result was most disastrous. They retired into caves and deserts. Men were separated from women, and women from men. I believe that Jesus was mistaken. Man can no more live without woman, and become what he was designed to be, than he can live and be raised without food or air, nor can woman without man. The wife is more essential to the eternal happy destiny of the husband than Jesus of Nazareth is, and so the husband to the wife. If every man can truly sing the song of "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good-will to men," it is over the advent of the husband to the wife, and the wife to the husband, as in the marriage relation, and when they take their child unto their arms, and say, "This is our child." It is a savior to them both. Christendom points men to Calvary for salvation. It will ere long direct them to marriage. It will be seen that we are more dependent for our character and destiny for time and eternity on our relations to the living than to the *dead*. The mission of the husband to the wife, of the wife to the husband, and of the child to the parents, is more directly connected with the character and destiny of the human family than is the mission of Jesus. The man who is prepared to meet his wife, the woman who is prepared to meet her husband, and the parents who are prepared to meet their child, these are the men and women who, alone, are truly prepared to meet their God; for such are the pure in heart, who see God. Jesus could not be one of earth's saviors in the true and highest sense, because he was neither a husband nor a father. He knew not how to guide men into the purest and most exalted relations of life, because he never entered into them himself. In many things his life was worthy of imitation. In regard to marriage and parentage, his teaching and example were unnatural; *and few there be that heed them*. On the subject of marriage and parentage the Bible is mistaken throughout.

In the Old Testament, *prostitution* is sanctioned in its most revolting form ; in the New Testament, the marriage relation is entirely discouraged. In the former, boundless indulgence is granted and encouraged to the sensual passion ; in the latter, its indulgence is entirely discouraged. The former encourages one extreme ; the latter, the opposite one. Both err, and the error has been most disastrous to all who take the whole Bible as the Word of God.

Then who can really believe the story of the *miraculous conception*? It is simply monstrous. There is no evidence that Mary herself, or her son Jesus, ever heard of it. Had the story been found in any other book, not one would now believe it. Should a woman in Hartford, under like circumstances, give out such a story, respecting the paternity of her child, would the ministers and churches believe it? No. Why should they have more confidence in a woman who is said to have made such a report eighteen hundred years ago, than in her who shall make it now? I can hardly persuade myself that there is a man or woman in this State who really *feels* and *believes* that Jesus, or any other human being, ever was, or ever will be, born of woman without a human father!

Equally difficult is it to persuade myself that any human being can really feel and believe that a God of justice can be appeased by the shedding of innocent blood. *Justice* satisfied by the blood of the gentle Jesus! *Divine* justice appeased by the blood of one whose soul was *love*, whose life was *innocence*! Even *human* justice would scorn to be appeased by such a cruel and inhuman deed. Suppose I am a sinner fleeing before an avenging God. God, with fiery eyeballs, flaming with wrath and revenge, and face flushed and rendered hideous by furious anger and "wrath waxed hot," rushing upon me with the uplifted sword of justice, to thrust me through the heart. As he is about to slay me, in steps Jesus, his own son, as he is called—his only begotten and well-beloved son—between him and me, and says, "Father, spare that guilty

rebel, and kill me." "No matter whom I kill," exclaims the wrathful Father, the revengeful Judge. "I must have blood. I must kill somebody. My justice can never be satisfied without blood. It can be appeased by the blood of the innocent as well as by the blood of the guilty. I am not at all particular whose blood it is, provided blood is shed, for 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission,' and my justice can never be appeased. *My* sense of justice can be met by the blood of my own innocent, well-beloved son, as well as by the blood of that daring, guilty violator of my law, and contemner of my authority." So that *just* God, as he is called, thrust the sword into the heart of the loving, innocent Jesus, and pours out his blood, and lets the guilty sinner go! What a picture! Yet it is the picture Christendom says the Bible presents of God. And I look at the book as it is in the minds of those who take it as their infallible guide. The Bible errs. The doctrine of vicarious atonement is dishonorable to God, and most ruinous to the moral nature of man. When justice can be appeased by injustice; when love can be satisfied with hatred; when truth can be satisfied with falsehood, sincerity with hypocrisy, kindness with unkindness, purity with impurity, good with evil, then, and not till then, can God be reconciled to man by the cruel murder of the gentle Jesus. The gospel scheme of salvation, so far as it rests on the doctrine of vicarious atonement, is founded on cruelty and injustice, and presents God as a monster to be loathed, rather than as a father to be loved and adored.

What shall we do to be saved? The Bible, the Koran, the Shaster, the Zendavesta—all give essentially the same answer. They all point to a power outside of ourselves. Nature points to a Redeemer, a Recuperator in our own souls. If we wound our souls by sin, the life-principle, the God within us, must heal that wound, or it never can be healed. Nature is true—the Bible errs in this matter.

There are *contradictions* in the Bible in fundamental moral-

ity. It says to the world, in substance : You shall not kill, and you shall kill ; you shall not lie—you may lie ; you shall not steal, and you may steal ; you shall not commit adultery, and you may commit adultery—for polygamy and concubinage are simply *adultery, prostitution*, no matter who in heaven or earth sanctions. The Bible says : You shall not commit murder, and you may commit murder ; for *war* is *murder* in spirit and practice, no matter who, in the heavens above or the earth beneath, sanctions ; it can be nothing less than murder, assassination, and piracy before great Nature's law of love, justice, and life. The Bible says : You shall not return evil for evil, and you may return evil for evil ; you shall not hate your brother, and you may hate him ; you shall love your neighbors, and may hate them ; that you shall not oppress the poor and helpless, and that you may whip your bond-men and bond-maids to death, without guilt, because "*they are your money !*" There is not a good moral precept inculcated in the Bible whose opposite is not sanctioned or commended. To reconcile these contradictions is the great business of all believers in the Divine origin and authority of the Bible, as a whole. Their souls are ever attempting to effect a compromise between the extremest contradictions in morals. The belief in the doctrine that the Bible, as a whole, is the Word of God, necessarily tends to beget, and fasten, and perpetuate a spirit of compromise between truth and falsehood, and between right and wrong. What else could ever have led this nation to attempt a compromise between liberty and slavery ? Humanity never could have produced the Fugitive Slave Law. Nature and Nature's God repudiate the monstrous alliance. None but souls accustomed to reconcile the contradictions of the Bible could ever have attempted to effect the great American Compromise—a compromise that is yet to make humanity blush with shame and weep with sorrow over those who have been its representatives on earth.

Mr. Chairman, one thing more, and my mission in this Con-

vention is ended. Why should we set up a claim for the writers of the Bible which they never set up for themselves? We know not who wrote the first five books of the Bible. We know not who wrote the books of Joshua, Judges, Kings, Chronicles, Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song. But we do know that not one of these lays the least claim to inspiration. Whoever wrote them had the good sense not to claim any special, supernatural assistance from God in writing. Yet we claim it for them without the least evidence of the fact, and without even knowing who they were. The four Evangelists, that profess to write the history of Jesus, and who have given us all we do or ever can know of him, not one of them claims infallibility as a writer. They do not profess to be inspired. Not one allusion is made by the New Testament to their inspiration. There is not one word, in the book itself, from which it can be inferred that Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John were inspired of God to write the life of Jesus. Not a miracle was pretended to have been wrought to prove that they were commissioned of God, and by him rendered infallible to write an account of Christ's sayings and doings. The priesthood and church of Christendom practice a falsehood and impose on mankind when they set up a claim of infallibility for writers that make no such claim for themselves.

MR. WILLIAM L. GARRISON—I wish to refer to a remark made by my friend, Henry C. Wright. It is a form of statement that is likely to be misunderstood. He said that if God wanted him to do a certain thing, he would cut the throat of God. (Mr. WRIGHT—I said, "Such a God.") What I wanted our friend to say is, that it is not possible for him to conceive that God could do such a thing, and that he would treat such a representation of God as a false representation.

MR. WRIGHT—I wish to use a form of expression not to be forgotten—one that would deny in an emphatic manner the

existence of any being who would require me to violate the laws of my being. Any such being I would trample under foot.

Mr. GARRISON being asked by Mr. Haze to explain what he meant by the term, "human redemption," as used in one of the resolutions offered by him, answered: "Human redemption" is progression in knowledge, in wisdom, and in truth; thus perfecting ourselves; simply a matter of progression—redemption from a low and fallen state, bringing us up to a high and exalted one. (Applause.)

Mr. HAZE was thankful that after hard work he has received an answer to his question. He would say that Mr. Garrison's definition was totally unsatisfactory and infinitely untrue. (Laughter.) His (Haze's) definition of "human redemption" was, "man's redemption from corruption ——"

The CHAIRMAN—Do you say, Mr. Haze, that Mr. Garrison has told you a lie?

Mr. HAZE—I say that I did not receive it as a true definition.

The CHAIRMAN—You did not ask him to give you a true definition, but simply to say what he (Mr. G.) meant by the use of the words "human redemption." (Laughter.)

Mr. GARRISON—I never wish to waste time on persons who wish take a man in his words—who pay attention to mere verbal criticism. (Applause.)

Rev. GEORGE STORRS offered the following resolution:

Resolved—That the Scriptures are in harmony, both in precept and doctrine, with the great facts of history, and with the physical, moral, and social nature of man, and, so far as they have been permitted to exercise their legitimate influence, have elevated, purified, and ennobled man morally, socially, and politically.

The Convention then adjourned to half-past two o'clock P.M.

THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION.

Saturday, June 4th.

The Convention having been called to order at half-past two o'clock P.M. by Mr. Barker—

REV. GEORGE STORRS, of New York, said: The great theme before this Convention is the trial of the Bible. It is said that we come here and repeat over and over again things we have said before—that we manifestly come here with nothing to say. I ask if in this respect we have differed essentially from our friends on the opposite side of the question? We labored at the outset of this Convention to see if there was a law by which the Bible could be tried, and after laboring for nearly two days we consented, for the sake of having the argument go on, that the law adduced should be the law by which the Bible should be tried, and that law was stated to be natural religion, or the God of nature. By the religion of nature or the religion of the God of nature the Bible and the God of the Bible are to be tried. Then I endeavored to show the congregation last evening that in this trial the God of the Bible suffered nothing in comparison with the God of nature, and if that was to be the rule by which the God of the Bible was to be tried, either the God of the Bible must go clear, or the God of nature was in the same condemnation. My friend Mr. Wright has felt, I have no doubt, the force of that remark; therefore he has labored very hard to acquit the God of nature, and to bring out fresh charges against the God of the Bible. The Bible, he says, represents God as ruling the world by arbitrary laws and penalties. He affirms that the God of nature does not rule the world by arbitrary laws and penalties. Am I right in saying that you affirm it?

Mr. WRIGHT—Yes, I do affirm it.

Rev. Mr. STORRS—Sir, what law by which the God of nature rules the world does he ever change? What penalty that the God of nature has affixed to his laws does he ever alter? If that is not arbitrary law—arbitrary penalty, I ask to know what is? One of the very charges which they bring against the God of the Bible is, that he does sometimes change his laws; therefore the law, speaking in the most absolute sense, is not arbitrary, but it is subject to be changed by the Author of that law, while the God of nature is unchanged and unchangeable in his laws and in his penalties.

Mr. WRIGHT—I desire to say that I used the terms fixed laws and fixed penalties, and arbitrary laws and arbitrary penalties, as laws and penalties that are opposed to each other.

Rev. Mr. STORRS—Fixed fast in fate? Then what are you but the mere machinery of the God of nature? But “the God of the Bible is a very cruel God.” The God of the Bible is represented as “commanding parents to stone the child to death. Abraham is commanded to butcher his son;” and, says my friend Wright, “I have been asked if I would do such a deed if God commanded it? No, I would not; but I would *cut the throat of such a God.*” Well, I was a little surprised at that remark of my good friend Wright, because, formerly, when a *follower of Jesus*, he was a peace-man—a non-resistant. (Applause.) Formerly, if a man should take his child and dash out its brains before his eyes, he would not strike him to keep him from doing it; but he has changed since he has become a worshiper of the God of nature, and is now a war-man to the knife.

Mr. WRIGHT—I wish my friends to keep in mind, distinctly and emphatically, that by that form of speech I desired to show that I do not believe in the existence of any such being as a God who ever did command men to take the life of any human being. I do not believe that in cutting the throat of

such a God, I would be cutting the throat of any thing more than a mere metaphorical God. (Applause.)

REV. MR. STORRS—I deny that the God of the Bible ever commanded Abraham to butcher his son. He told him, indeed, to go and offer him up as a burnt-offering; but when Abraham took hold of the knife, God commanded him to stop. He had gone beyond what he told him to do. But my friend Wright will have to butcher his God, and cut his throat as sure as life; because the God of nature has given the *command* to delicate mothers, and *compelled* them to *butcher* their own children, and *eat* them too. Is it, or is it not a fact that in sieges of cities, where they have been driven to desperation for the lack of food, mothers have killed their own children, and eaten them to preserve their own life? What was it that commanded them to this? *The God of nature!* (Applause.) The God of nature, when he saw that they were like to starve to death, commanded them to “butcher” their children, and they actually did butcher them. Has the God of the Bible done any thing worse than that? No, sir. The God of nature has shown himself to be altogether as guilty as the God of the Bible; and if my friend Wright is true to his declaration, he will have to take his knife and cut the throat of his God of nature. “The God of nature,” he says, “never did send earthquakes to kill men—earthquakes are natural omens.” They are then the *natural actions*, I suppose, of the God of nature. Are they? If it is not understood in this way, I confess myself incapable of telling how it is understood.

MR. WRIGHT—My remark is, that earthquakes are the effects of natural causes.

REV. MR. STORRS—Who constituted those natural causes? (Applause.) The God of nature, I suppose. (Applause.) Does his God escape? “The God of nature in these natural causes did not kill these inhabitants in these cities; oh no—they only put themselves right across where his car came!”

But, sir, the God of nature drove his car right through their cities, and never gave them the least notice that he was coming. Surely that was almost as bad as going into the draw at Norwalk. (Laughter.) This God of nature having established in his works natural causes which produce earthquakes that will swallow up cities if they happen to be planted in a certain place, if he was a good God, one would seem to think that he would have sent some notice to the children of men, and tell them not to build the city, for his car of an earthquake was going to plow through there. But, sir, he leaves them in total ignorance, and allows them to plant their cities and go on to great happiness and prosperity; and then, without a solitary warning, the God of nature drives his plow of destruction through their streets.

But our friend Wright is very accommodating to the God of nature. If he were half as accommodating to the God of the Bible, he would not find so much difficulty. I should like to know what can be found in that manifestation of the God of nature that goes to prove his goodness. Can the God of nature speak to men really in any way possible? If he can, why did he not give them some notice that he was going to destroy such a section of country, and that therefore they must move away from it, else he should destroy their lives? How good he must be to destroy all their labors, and destroy their families! "But the man would not have been hurt when the lightning fell from heaven, if he had not been in the way of it." Indeed he would not! But did the God of nature tell him, when he was walking along; that he was going to get in the way below? Did he not suffer him to go on, and dash him to death in a moment?

Now, suppose we should make such a defense of the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible, when he divided the earth among the children of men, divided a certain portion to the children of Israel. He determined to establish that people in that land; but here is another class of men that come

along, and plant themselves down in the land of Canaan, to possess the land that God had designed for a particular people. Instead of keeping on their own inheritance, they plant themselves there in that land. The time comes when the God of the Bible is determined to put his people in possession of the land which he reserved for them at the creation.

Now, sir, what does he do? Why, it is true he does not send an earthquake through the land, and take them all by surprise. Did he give them no notice of what he is going to do? At first, he waited until their corruption was such, in wickedness, that they were no longer to be endured. He had previously informed Abraham (see Gen. xv. 16) that the reason why he would not at an earlier period cut off the intruders in Canaan was, that "their iniquity was not yet full." But when it was full, and God's purpose to put Abraham's seed in possession of the long-promised land was now to be accomplished, he does not take them by surprise; he gives them forty years' notice that he is going to dispossess them. And during that forty years he performs certain miracles or actions which were designed to convey to the inhabitants of the land the fact, that the God of the Bible was determined to bring a people in there, to whom that land belonged. He gave them timely notice of it; and they who were believing saved their lives, as Rahab and her family. But all did not believe. Suppose, then, that he commissioned His people to destroy that people out of the land, has he done any thing worse than the God of nature, who destroyed the cities we spoke of? The question is not whether we can defend the God of the Bible, but whether he can be defended in view of the law by which he is to be tried. We might make the same remark in regard to pestilence.

Our friend Wright told us that this, too, was a natural affair; but suppose it is a natural affair—suppose it is in the course of nature, I ask again, who controls that course of nature? Is it the God of nature? and if so, I ask if the God

of nature is not chargeable with this terrible crime of sweeping millions of the human race away by the most desolating pestilence ?

Just here, at this point, I beg leave to be permitted to read a little from some eminent men on the other side of the question. The names of Hume and Bolingbroke are well known by my friends on the opposite side of the question. Here let me say, that I do not despise any man for being a Deist. I do not use the term Deist ever reproachfully. It is simply one who rejects what we denominate revelation. He believes in God, and revelations of the God of nature. I can not wonder that there are so many Deists in the world, when they suppose that the God of the Bible will do certain things which are attributed to him. I wonder that the whole world are not Deists under the theology in which we have been trained. (Hear, hear.) But if we have the time, we will show that these most objectionable doctrines, which have led so many into the rejection of revelation, have no foundation in the Bible. [The speaker read from Mr. Hume's "Essay on Providence and the Future State," as found in "Dr. M'Culloh's Analytical Investigations concerning the Credibility of the Scriptures," vol. i., p. 97.]

"Allowing the gods to be the authors of the existence or order of the universe, it follows that they possess that precise degree of *power, intelligence, and benevolence which appears in their workmanship* ; but nothing further can be proved, except we call in the assistance of exaggeration and flattery, to supply the defects of argument and reasoning. So far as the traces of any attributes at present appear, so far we conclude that these attributes exist. *The supposition of further attributes is mere hypothesis* ; much more the supposition that, in distant regions of space, or periods of time, there has been or will be a more magnificent display of those attributes, and a scheme of administration more suitable to such imaginary virtues."

Last night we were told to remember that the Bible says *yea*, and the Bible says *nay*. Now Mr. Hume, who is a Deist, says *yea*, and then the Deist here says *nay*; then their theology may be called in question as well as ours. [Mr. WRIGHT—To be sure.] And who shall decide? That is the question exactly. (Hear, hear.)

Again, Mr. Hume says: "*The great source of our mistake in this subject, and of the unbounded license of conjecture which we indulge, is, that we tacitly consider ourselves as in the place of the Supreme Being, and conclude that he will, on every occasion, observe the same conduct which we ourselves, in his situation, would have embraced as reasonable and eligible. But besides that, the ordinary course of nature may convince us that almost every thing is regulated by principles and maxims very different from ours; besides this, I say, it must evidently appear contrary to all rules of analogy, to reason from intentions and projects of man to those of a being so different, and so much superior. In human nature there is a certain experienced coherence of designs and inclinations, so that, when from any fact we have discovered one intention of any man, it may often be reasonable from experience to infer another, and draw a long chain of conclusions concerning his past or future conduct. But this method of reasoning can never have place with regard to a being so remote and incomprehensible (as God), who bears much less analogy to any other being in the universe than the sun to a waxen taper, and who discovers himself only by some faint traces or outlines, beyond which we have no authority to ascribe to him any attribute or perfection.*"

Lord Bolingbroke, in his Works, vol. iv., pp. 87, 88, says: "We are made able to arrive, by a proper exercise of our mental faculties, from a knowledge of God's works, to a knowledge of his existence, and of that infinite power and wisdom (intelligence) which are demonstrated to us in them. Our knowledge concerning God goes no further." Do you hear them say, "Hear, hear?" (Applause.) Lord B. continues—

“ We are in absolute ignorance of the real essence and inward constitution of every sensible object. How much less reason is there to expect any knowledge of the manner of *the being, nature, and essence of the invisible God, or of his physical and moral attributes, beyond what his works, the effects of his nature and attributes, communicate to us?* This degree, this sufficient degree of knowledge concerning God, is a fixed point, on one side of which lies Atheism, and metaphysical and theological blasphemy too often on the other.”

Now I ask the congregation who have heard this morning, whether one Deist does not say *yea*, and the other *nay*—whether the God of nature is not as much at variance with himself as the God of the Bible.

There is one other point that I shall notice in the remarks of my friend Wright this morning, particularly. He tells us that Jesus was good—a good man. Thank him for that. He says that Jesus founded a sect. Any harm in that, friend Wright? [Mr. WRIGHT—Yes.] Very well, how did he found it? In any other way than you are founding a sect now? [Mr. WRIGHT—Yes.] *No*. Well, but what of that? Was the sect good at the outset? Yes; my friend Wright acknowledged that the persons concerned in it, at the outset, were good men. [Mr. WRIGHT—Yes.] I thank him. The men that were first concerned in founding this sect were good men, true men, faithful men, Christ-like men; and they demonstrated their integrity to the truth, by contending for the truth even unto death, at the hazard of their lives. What then? Since that period this sect have become corrupt, and done certain things injurious to society. I am rather glad my friend Wright said, that “those who *assume* to be this sect have had an injurious influence upon the world.” Don’t you say so, brother Wright?

Mr. WRIGHT—Mr. Chairman, if it is proper to answer, I may answer; but yes or no would not express what I should want to say. I meant this, that those who profess to be guided

by the spirit of Jesus, but have no more affinity to that spirit than Satan has, have perpetrated the foulest crimes. I do not believe that a man under the guidance of the spirit that Jesus had would ever commit these horrible sins.

Rev. Mr. STORRS—He says these men do not belong to Jesus. What, then, have they to do in pouring contumely upon this sect, or the system Jesus introduced? Why bring them to this stand, when he says himself that they have no affinity to Jesus? He has given us the argument. He has told us that Jesus was good—that the men to whom he committed this work were good and true men. He has now told us that those who *assume* to be of that class act just as contrary to Jesus and his first ministers, as Satan does to God. I will use the expression for him although I do not know that he used it.

Mr. WRIGHT—I was certainly misunderstood. I wish to say this first. I believe the spirit of Jesus is the spirit of love. I believe Jesus was mistaken when he aimed to establish a sect—to organize a perpetual organization among men, called a church, in its external form, simply on the ground that the experience of the world demonstrates that when men attempt to organize the spirit of love, forgiveness, and goodness, and true principles into a corporate body, in church or state, the necessary result is, that that organization will fall into the hands of ambitious, avaricious, and wicked men, as it has done in the Christian world. I say the church organization does not represent the spirit of Jesus, and can not do it. It is a spirit that can live only in individual man, and not in an organization. It is an impossibility that an organized church of any kind can be a true representative of the spirit of Jesus; but I can not stop here to say why it is so, but will just say that it is perfectly obvious that the spirit that can exist only in the single, individual heart of man, designed to govern the soul and life of the individual, can not be put into an organization that has all its outward forms, creeds, and so forth;

to be under the guidance of certain persons called priests. I am my own church, and every man and woman should be the same.

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON—What if it be true that Jesus did establish a sect, or whether it be evil or not evil? I ask if we came here to discuss this question, and whether we ought not to keep a little more strictly as to the question of the inspiration of the Bible. I admit that friend Wright brought it in, but I do affirm that in his case it was not called for; nor should we have much time occupied with it.

Mr. WRIGHT—I brought in that idea to show that the Bible, in representing Jesus as the founder of a sect, attributes error to Jesus—a mistake to Jesus of Nazareth.

The CHAIRMAN—I think in the relationship in which Mr. Wright introduced the mention of Jesus, it was right. It shows that the Bible, having represented Jesus as a perfect man, represented him also to be an imperfect man.

Rev. Mr. STORRS—If this be an extraneous matter (one says *yea*, and the other says *nay*), I am not to blame for its being introduced, and I am only striving to follow it. I will not now stop to investigate the fact whether Jesus did found a sect or not; but if he did found one, I ask upon what principles he founded it? My friend Wright will not deny but that the principles were right. He says that he was a man. Very well; suppose he was nothing but a man, then could he foresee that such glorious principles as he laid down would be corrupted and perverted, and entirely departed from, on the supposition that he founded a sect?

Now, sir, I ask again, what were the principles upon which he founded that sect? “Ye know,” said Jesus, to these very men who were to preach his truth, “Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise *lordship* over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so *it shall not be among you*; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant or minister;” that is, one

to minister to them—to do them that service which they might need for their welfare or happiness; but he charged them most solemnly that they should not exercise lordships over one another, and the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles comes forward, and in writing to the church at Corinth says: “Not for that we have *dominion* over your *faith*, but are helpers of your joy.”

Here, sir, are the principles of the founder—if you will have it so—of this sect; and I ask, sir, if it is not clear and plain that the founder of this sect, if it be a sect, did clearly denounce and condemn the course which those who “assume” to be of this sect have pursued for centuries past? Why, then, sir, are we cited, I ask again, to the wickedness of those *professing* to be of this sect, “who say they are Jews (Christians), but are not—but do lie?” Why are we cited to them as any reproach upon Christianity? “If Jesus was a good man,” say you, “he ought to have known just such rascality would have come up.” Indeed! but then you say that he was a man. I have answered my friend only on his own ground.

Mr. DORRANCE, of New Jersey, in the chair.

Mr. JOSEPH BARKER made the following remarks: It appears to me that the proper plan for the advocates of the common notion respecting the Bible in this Convention to have pursued would have been to have presented to the Convention a resolution affirming the truth and the divine authority of the Bible—its agreement with man’s nature, and nature generally, and then to have proceeded to bring forward their arguments—leaving those arguments to be examined by those who differed from them. This course, however, they have not pursued. They have affirmed nothing. They have attempted to prove nothing. Those who took the negative have been so situated as to be obliged to assume the affirmative. In consequence of this the discussion has not been so regular, and may

not have been so interesting as it might have been. If our friends on the opposite side of the question had helped their memory by taking notes, and had taken care not to let our arguments slip by, the evil, if not prevented, would have been reduced to the smallest point. But they have not done so. Our opponents have proved that they possess, to a remarkable extent, the power of forgetfulness, the faculty of overlooking, or letting slip by unnoticed, our arguments. I may say, without exceeding the truth, that ninety-nine out of a hundred of our arguments have been left entirely untouched. An answer made incidentally by our friend H. C. Wright to one of their queries has been the great thing on which they have harped. Our remarks have scarcely been once referred to, and the impression made on the minds of the audience is, and ought to be, that they are allowed to pass thus unnoticed, because our opponents feel that they are not to be grappled with. (Hear, hear.) Besides, our opponents, in reality, are taking our side. It is plain that if Mr. Storrs succeeds in establishing the position he has been endeavoring to establish, he will prove the Bible to be false. He has been endeavoring to prove that the God of Nature is outrageously cruel. Does he not see that if he had succeeded in proving it, he would have proved the Bible to be untrue; for the Bible says that the God of Nature is *good*—good to *all*—good to man—good to every living thing—filling the mouth of every living thing with good. It declares that the earth is *full* of his goodness. Either, therefore, Mr. Storrs' assertion respecting the God of Nature is false, or the Bible is false. If the believers in the Bible will really say to the Atheist that the true, and only true, idea of God is that of a being infinite in power, infinite in wisdom, who knows what is best to be done; and infinite in goodness, and always disposed to do the best he can, and perfectly free and independent in will—if they will grant that this is their only true idea of God, the Atheist has them as sure as death. (Applause and hisses.) A God infinitely *good* would not allow any

misery, if he could help it. An *almighty* God *could* help it, if perfectly free; and if there be misery in the world it is demonstrated beyond all question that there is no such God. There is, there can be, no Almighty God who possesses infinite love, wisdom, and a perfectly free and independent will. Our opponents must modify their ideas of God, or cease to complain of the spread of Atheism. They must admit that there are things conceivable which God can not do.

I honestly declare to you that I believe in no such God as the one portrayed by orthodoxy. I believe in a God that does the best he can. I believe in a God that has nothing in him opposed to goodness; but I believe that there is no God that can make and govern a world without allowing evil or imperfection to exist.

Mr. Storrs says that nature does not reveal God. Then the Bible is false; for the Bible says that the heavens declare and reveal the glory of God; that day and night, sun, moon, and stars, the earth and sea, every thing, in short, reveals Him. But Mr. Storrs says nature does not reveal the *moral perfections* of God.

We say, again, then, if that is so, the Bible is false; for it says that "the invisible things of God"—his attributes, without any exception—"from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," even his eternal power and Godhead—that is, the Godhead generally,—the *whole* Godhead. The Bible plainly teaches that that which may be known of God is revealed to the Gentiles; that is, *all* that can be known of God is thus revealed by nature.

It was said by Mr. Storrs that Christ formed no sect, any more than we are forming one. Are we naming a number of principles and saying that "he that believeth not shall be damned" to hell, but that he that believeth shall be saved? Are we giving rules of ecclesiastical discipline, and saying how all my friends shall be governed, and the like? But we are

not talking about what Jesus did merely, but about what the Bible says. Now the Bible requires a church, and requires all Christians to belong to it. It requires rulers in the church, and commands all Christians to *obey* those rulers; thus laying the foundation for priestly authority, blind faith, and spiritual servility, and all the crimes and horrors that flow from them.

The fact of the Hindoo mother throwing her child into the Ganges was adduced as an evidence that natural religion teaches such things. Now will Mr. Turner say that because persons who have the Bible do things contrary to piety and virtue, that therefore the Bible commands those things? Is he willing that we should charge it with commanding every foolish and wicked thing done by people who happen to have the Bible? No such thing. He would say at once that a man may have a Bible, and not read it; or he may read it, and not understand it; or he may even understand it, and yet not like to obey it. And a man that was candid would acknowledge the same in respect to the laws of nature. A man may have the Bible of nature, and not read it; he may read it, and not perfectly understand it; he may partially understand it, and not always obey it. Mr. Storrs knows this.

The vast variety of opinions among men was mentioned by Mr. Storrs as a proof that there could be no such natural revelation as we speak of; but on the same grounds he might say that there was no revelation in the Bible, for where will he find a greater variety of opinions or less unanimity than among those who have the Bible and profess to receive it as their rule of faith and practice. Or where will he find blacker or more outrageous notions prevailing?

Mr. Storrs said that "we could not find out from nature whether there was one God or a million of gods." But the Bible teaches us that nature reveals but one God; if, therefore, his position be true, the Bible is false.

Said he, "How do we know but that there may be a million gods." If there be a million, they are one in will and work.

They are all alike, they all take the same side, and we are as safe as if there were but one. What matters it how many gods there are, if they are all good?

“Can God be good and yet permit so much suffering in the world?” Who will prove all that is called evil *is* evil? Who will prove that darkness is not as useful as light in a world like this? Who will prove that pain is not essential to life, and that it is a demonstration of the goodness of God, when thoroughly understood—as much a blessing as any pleasure we enjoy?

Mr. Storrs says: “Natural religion neither teaches God’s character nor man’s duty.” Well, then, what kind of a God is the God of these men? for more than nineteen twentieths of the world are left with nothing else but natural religion. Can God be aware that the Bible is so necessary to mankind, and yet leave so many of his children without it? The first part of the Bible did not come into existence until some thousands of years after the world was created. It is not yet two thousand years since the better portions of the Bible came into existence. Even now, not one man in a hundred knows the Bible—nor more than one in twenty has ever *seen* one perhaps—and not more than one in a hundred has read it and understood it to any extent. There is only nature therefore to enable them to grope their way to Deity—to heaven. God can not think the Bible essential to human happiness, or, if he *loves* all mankind, he would take care that all mankind should have it. God has not so low an opinion of natural religion as Mr. Storrs; else, if he loved mankind as the Bible represents, he would have given them something better. (Laughter.)

“But do we know that God has not a right to command one man to kill another?” We answer, God can have no right to command us to do what our nature tells us it is wrong to do. God can not command things to act contrary to their nature. And it is contrary to man’s nature to kill innocent, unoffending human beings. It may be disputed whether nature

dictates the killing of men in self-defense; but among unprejudiced people it can hardly be disputed whether God can command men to kill thousands and tens of thousands of innocent and helpless women and children. The advocate of the Divine authority of the Bible must know that God has actually done this.

“If the law of nature allows man to enslave lower animals, and to work them without wages, why may it not allow a man to enslave men, and take their services without wages?” We answer, the law of nature does *not* allow us to work animals without wages. It requires us to look to the comforts of the creatures in our service. It prompts me to do the best I can for my cattle. If George Storrs does work his cattle without wages, he is a transgressor both of the law of nature and the Bible; for even the Bible says, “a merciful man is merciful to his beast.” I give to my cattle the best wages that they can and are capable of receiving. I do the best for them I know. I do not ask God to do any better to me than I do to my cattle.

“Man was merely an animal till developed by the moral law; Adam was merely an animal, and could never have been any thing more than an animal, unless he had had this law to develop his moral nature.” Then God was merely an animal originally, according to Scripture, for it says Adam was made in God’s image. (Applause and laughter.)

It has been frequently said, that the variety of opinions among those without the Bible is an evidence of the insufficiency of natural religion; and I must again allude to this matter. Now the fact is, there are ten different doctrines among the Christians where there was one among the ancient Pagans, so that if the diversity of opinions among the ancient Pagans is an evidence of the insufficiency of natural religion, then the tenfold greater diversity among believers in the Bible will prove it to be tenfold worse than natural religion.

Mr. Storrs said, that “we had tried to make the impression

that the Bible sanctions *American* slavery." I believe not. But if the Bible sanctions slavery at all, it does, in effect, sanction it in any form. And it is certain that the slavery of the Bible was bad enough; for it recognizes man as property, to be left to the owner's children, as an inheritance forever; and it gives to the owner of the slave the right to whip him to death, provided he did it in such a way that the slave should linger a day or two after his scourging; and the reason assigned why the owner was not to be punished in such a case, is simply, that "the slave is his *money*." If the Bible will allow the *beginning* of slavery, it will allow the end. American slavery was once not so bad as now. Slavery, in its mildest form, is so bad a thing, that if it is allowed to exist in a community at all, it will soon spread out into frightful shapes, and even enslave the whole community. Slavery must either be put down entirely, or it will grow worse and worse, till it becomes intolerable. You can not keep it in bounds. Either liberty must extinguish slavery, or slavery will extinguish liberty. (Applause.)

When referring to the Bible teachings concerning the relations of husband and wife, Mr. Storrs said that I told only half the truth concerning it. He said, the Bible commands husbands to love their wives as their own flesh, and, he asked, "what wife would not obey a man who is commanded to love her as he loves himself?" What does Mr. Storrs mean? Does he know what he is saying? I would not obey a man merely because he happened to be commanded to love me. The kindest person may command what it would be death to do. Love often does mischief when it thinks to do good. Even love itself would be no sufficient reason for obedience, unless joined with wisdom. It does not follow, therefore, that because a person loves us, we ought to obey him. Much less are we bound to obey a person merely because he is *commanded* to love us. Although the Bible commands the husband to love his wife, it does not *guarantee* that he shall love her.

Nor does the Bible say that the woman was to obey her husband, because the husband was to love her—but because “man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man”—one of the darkest reasons that could be assigned even by a half-savage man.

Mr. Storrs says, “The Bible is a faithful history of transactions connected with revelation, and its truth is to be established by the credibility of the witnesses for it.” But where are those credible witnesses? We know of none. The testimony of the old Jews and priests is not credible. Even the testimony of the apostles is not to be relied on in this matter, supposing them even to have given any testimony on the subject. And it is certain that the testimony of those who succeeded them is not to be relied on. To prove that the testimony of the old Jewish priests is not credible, I will give you Jeremiah’s testimony respecting them. When speaking of the priests of his time, he says, “From the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealt falsely.” To what particular priest did he refer? Strange enough, he lived in the time of the priest Hilkiyah, who professed to find the book of the law of the land, in the days of Josiah. You may find the story in 2 Kings xxii.

And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah, a servant of the king’s, saying, Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. So Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and

Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.—2 *Kings* xxii. 8, 10-14.

In those days there appears to have been a dispute between the priests and the prophets with respect to the origin and obligation of sacrifices. The priests, who lived by the sacrificial system, contended that sacrifices were of divine appointment; the prophets contended that they were not.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Put your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.—*Jer.* vii. 21-23.

Such was the language of the prophet. Just at this moment Hilkiyah declares that he has found a book that will settle the question, the book of the law of the land. Doubts arise as to the genuineness of the book; but the question is settled by reference to a woman named Huldah, whose answer, in truth, is too vague to settle any thing with rational and candid people. Those who can believe that God once gave a book of laws to the Jews—that this book was lost, that after a length of time this book was again found by the chief priest, etc., must have their belief. The impression the story makes on my mind is, that the book was forged by Hilkiyah, and imposed upon the credulous king and people for the purpose of supporting the system of sacrifice and priestly craft assailed by the reformatory prophets of the day. This view will seem natural to those acquainted with priestly history. Priests have practiced such frauds in all ages. The forgery of sacred books is quite in their way. And these are the witnesses on whose testimony we are to believe in the supernatural origin of the Books of Moses, as they are called. The persons on whose testimony we are called upon to believe in the Divine authority of other portions

of the Bible, are not a whit more trustworthy than the high-priest Hilkiah. I wish I could dwell on this part of the subject. It would unfold a world of fraud and villainy utterly inconceivable by persons ignorant of priestly history. Little do people know on what uncertain foundation their faith in the Divine authority of the Bible rests. The witnesses referred to by Mr. Storrs were, according to the Bible itself, among the most covetous of their race, and were liars to a man.

Mr. Storrs said that the Jewish priests must have been unselfish men, or else they would not have deprived themselves of a share of the land. We, however, think differently. The priests could afford to do without land so long as they could secure the best share of its produce without the toil and trouble of cultivating it. And that they *did* secure to themselves the best portion of the produce of the land is evident from the Book of the Law. Hear what Dr. Nelson says on this subject :

“I have often wondered that any thing ever prevailed on the Jews to receive that law. The law of Moses called for tithing three several times. If we compute the offerings and sacrifices, gifts and multiplied requirements, we find that it must have reached near about *five tenths*, or one half of the whole income. Surely if ever a people were to work and have nothing, to toil and give it all away, here is the instance. I have often wondered that all the promises or threatenings they heard, that all the wonders they saw, etc., ever made a nation agree to receive a code of rules which called for, seemingly, almost *all* the property they could possibly possess.”

Yet this is the law that proves, in Mr. Storrs' opinion, the disinterestedness of the priests—a law which gives nearly all the property of the nation into their hands, and leaves them to enjoy it in comparative idleness!

Mr. Storrs talks about the veracity of the New Testament witnesses—the truthfulness of the apostles, etc. Now, if the Bible be true, one of the boldest and most forward of the

apostles denied his Master; and even after he got filled with the Holy Ghost, he dissembled so shamefully that Paul had to withstand him to his face. And observe, he dissembled, not to escape some fearful persecution, but simply to prevent himself from losing the friendship of some that differed from him about the obligation of the Jewish law. If Peter, who, according to the Bible, was an eyewitness of the works of Christ, and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, could thus dissemble or lie, why might not Paul, who was not an eyewitness, but one who received the Gospel on hearsay or by visions? We know what both hearsay and visions often are.

But I defy any man to prove that any apostle ever wrote a line of any of the gospels now in existence. I defy any man to prove that any one of the gospels were written within a hundred years after the appearance of Christ on earth. Our own conviction is, that all the gospels go under false names. It was laid down in those early times as a principle, that it was a good thing to lie for the cause of God and the good of souls. And the early Christians did lie to a most appalling extent. They did especially forge lies with respect to sacred books. If you will read Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, you will find that it was a regular business in those early ages to make epistles, gospels, and acts of the apostles, and other works of this description, and give to them the names of celebrated persons. He will tell you, in fact, that they not only laid it down as a principle that it was good to lie for the truth, but that they acted upon the principle with the most unconscionable regardlessness of restraint. And priests have lied for the Bible from that day till now. The Roman Catholic priests will tell you what *cheats* the Protestant ministers are, and the Protestant clergy will tell you what *cheats* the Roman Catholic priests are. The priests of all the sects have practiced fraud. The Lutherans publish a Bible as Luther's Bible, containing the book of Revelations, though they know that Luther rejected that book and refused it a place in his version of the Bible.

The Church of England priests lie and perjure themselves without end. The Methodist preachers have mutilated and corrupted John Wesley's writings. Even the Quakers have altered the writings of George Fox. They all use fraud. They maintain their influence by fraud. Fraud is their life. (Applause and hisses.)

I defy all the priests in America to convict me of the slightest mis-statement or exaggeration in my charges against the priesthood of the day ; I would, if I had time, prove them all by quotations and facts which would astound you all, and make the blood of those who are not acquainted with the doings of councils, synods, convocations, and Methodist conferences chill, and make your flesh creep on your bones. I will give you an example of the falsehoods published by those men. [As the speaker was about to read from Dr. Nelson's work, Mr. Pillsbury rose and said that he thought it would be well to remind the audience that Dr. Nelson's work was an orthodox textbook, and then perhaps the geese and goslings would not hiss so much.]

Dr. Nelson's work on the "Cause and Cure of Infidelity" has been adopted and published by the American Tract Society, so that all the leading priesthoods of America have made themselves answerable for its statements. They have put them forth as their own. Yet this book contains the most disgraceful and outrageous falsehoods. It abounds with them. I will give an instance, which you may all see for yourselves to be a gross, a palpable, and willful falsehood. It is on pages 228 and 229. Dr. Nelson says he was once an infidel, and was reading the works of Voltaire to confirm him in his infidelity. He says he found every article to be a falsehood, a willful falsehood. Yet, strange to say, he gives from Voltaire, as an example, an article that is perfectly true, and uses, in order to make it look false, a most impudent and daring willful falsehood himself. You shall hear his own words :

"I read," says Nelson, "from the pen of this prince of

philosophers, the following declaration: Men saw Isaiah walking *stark naked* in Jerusalem, in order to show that the king of Assyria would bring a crowd of captives out of Egypt and Ethiopia, who would not have any thing to cover their nakedness. Is it possible that a man could walk *stark naked* through the streets of Jerusalem without being punished by the civil power?"

Now hear what Dr. Nelson says about this paragraph of Voltaire's. He says: "What impression must this make on one who had opened the book in search of support in his system of infidelity? I had read the Bible, and heard it read often (through necessity), when I was young. I knew that many who read this [paragraph of Voltaire's] would think it true, but *I* knew it to be *false*, and I knew that the *author* must have known its untruth. He knew that the man without *arms* [*weapons of war*] was, and is called, *naked*, in a military sense."

Thus speaks Dr. Nelson. We shall soon see who is the willful liar. Does the word *naked*, in the passage referred to by Voltaire, mean without *arms*—without weapons? And did Voltaire *know* that that was its meaning. Let us read the passage. Where is it? Dr. Nelson does not quote the passage. He does not even tell us the chapter and verse, nor even the book where the passage is to be found. This looks suspicious. It seems as if he did not wish us to find the passage; as if he were afraid of us examining it. He had need to be afraid. But we have found the passage notwithstanding. It is in Isaiah, twentieth chapter. I will read it. The question is, does the passage speak of real nakedness, or of the want of weapons of war. Dr. Nelson says it refers to want of weapons, and that Voltaire *knew* it did. Then hear it:

"In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, and fought against it, and took it, the Lord spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying: Go and loose the *sackcloth* from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot."

“Loose the *sackcloth*,” mark you; not your sword and helmet; not your bow and spear.

“And the Lord said: Like as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their *buttocks uncovered*, to the shame of Egypt.”—*Isa.* xx. 1-4.

And this is the passage which Dr. Nelson says referred to the want of arms or weapons, and that Voltaire *knew* it did; and that in representing it as referring to literal nakedness, Voltaire told a willful lie? Was ever a more barefaced, impudent, outrageous falsehood uttered? And this is the way the priesthoods of the day belie the men who differ from them! And this is the way they defend the Divinity of the Bible! You may judge what their testimony is worth. And this is the way in which the advocates of the Bible, and the priesthoods generally, attempt to mislead men. No faith is to be placed in any of them. The words of Jeremiah are true of them to this hour.

“Every one is given to covetousness—every one dealeth falsely.”—*Jer.* vi. 13.

I will prove to you that the leaders of all the sects, and the most popular ministers in defense of the Divinity of the Bible, have dealt thus falsely. Give me time, and I will make the matter plain as the light.

I will prove that the work of Hartwell Horne, a work in high repute on both sides of the Atlantic, abounds in falsehoods of the grossest character, and in misrepresentations of the most criminal description. I will prove to you that there is not a work written by an orthodox writer in behalf of the common notions of the Bible, which does not systematically misrepresent the sentiments and character of those who oppose those notions.

The frauds of orthodox writers are truly appalling. I will prove to you that the evidences of Divine revelation are no

evidences—that they are fabrics of ignorance, credulity, and deceit—that the external and internal evidences of the Divine origin of the Bible will not bear examination. I will prove to you that the prophecies to which reference is made in support of the notion of the Divine origin of the Bible do frequently prove just the contrary. I will prove to you that from the beginning to the end the Bible has not a page which does not give decisive evidence that it is the work of men, and that the very best portions of the Bible are mixed with the most mischievous of all theological and moral dogmas. I vouch for the truth of every charge I have made; and I also aver that the charges I have made are not one twentieth of the charges that I am prepared to make and establish. But my time is up.

[It was here voted that Mr. Barker should continue his remarks till he had finished his speech. He accordingly proceeded. The following is the substance of what he said.]

We have contradictory accounts of creation in the Bible: one representing the inferior creatures as being made before man; and the other representing man as being made before the inferior creatures. We have contradictory accounts of the flood of Noah. We have contradictory accounts of Abraham, utterly irreconcilable with each other. One represents him as too old to have a child without a miracle, before Isaac was born. Paul speaks of him as being as good as dead before the birth of Isaac. Another account represents him after the death of Sarah, when fifty years older, as marrying Keturah, and having quite a number of children by her, without any miracle at all. See Genesis xxv. 1-6.

We have contradictory accounts of wars spoken of in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles—contradictory in respect to the numbers that went out to war, the numbers slain, and with respect to the particular events that took place in connection with the wars. We have contradictory accounts

respecting the chieftains engaged in those wars. We have contradictory accounts with respect to the simplest of all things—as to who killed Goliath; one account declaring that David killed him, and another account stating that Elhanan slew him. 2 Sam. xxi. 19. In this latter passage the translators have put in “*the brother of*” to hide the contradiction. There are hundreds of historical contradictions in the Old and New Testaments.

Yes, there are contradictions in the New Testament. We have contradictory Christs and contradictory gospels. One Christ we have in the Gospel of John, and another perfectly distinct in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We have contradictory accounts of Christ’s genealogy, and both genealogies differ from the corresponding genealogies given in the Old Testament. We have two different accounts of his doctrine—one representing Christ as warning people to beware of the teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees, and another representing him as commanding the people to hearken to their teachings, and do what they bid them. One represents him as doing away with the law of Moses, and another represents him as establishing it. We have contradictory accounts respecting Christ’s death; and contradictory accounts respecting his resurrection. We have contradictory accounts respecting Judas. One says that he hanged himself, and another says he bought a field and then fell down, and, bursting in sunder, his bowels gushed out.

We have contradictory doctrines in the Epistles and the Gospels; and the Acts of the Apostles contradicts the Gospels.

We have contradictory representations of God in the Bible. Some passages represent Him as being like a man, and others as being a spirit, and not like a man. Some passages tell us that he is all-mighty, and others represent him as not being able to vanquish certain armies because they had chariots of iron. He is sometimes represented as all-wise, and then again as not knowing what people think, or what their intentions

are, until he has tried them. No man hath seen God at any time, says one. He is spoken of as the Being whom no man hath seen or can see. God is sometimes said to be invisible, and at other times it is said that he has been seen many times by various persons. Some passages say that no man can see God's face and live; while others say that men have seen him face to face and yet lived. One passage represents Moses as not getting a view of God's face, yet as having an opportunity to observe his back parts. Some passages say that God is no respecter of persons; while in others he is represented as hating some poor creatures and loving others before they were born. Some passages say that God is love, others say that he is a consuming fire, furious in his wrath, terribly jealous, and represent him as destroying whatever comes in his way unless he meets with some one to reason or persuade him into self-control. Some passages say that he is unchangeable; others represent him as frequently repenting. Some represent him as threatening ruin to a city, and then repenting of it, falsifying the prediction of his prophet, and vexing the prophet, because he would not kill the people, and thus verify his word. Some passages represent him as never being weary; and others represent him as being weary, and resting to take his breath. Some passages represent God as strictly just; while others represent him as punishing the innocent with the guilty.

Mr. Storrs said that God did not require Abraham to kill his son. One thing is certain: he required him to offer up his son as a burnt-offering, which would require him to offer him up dead, and therefore to kill him first, or to offer him up alive, and thus burn him to death. Some passages tell us that God can not lie; while others represent him as employing lying spirits, and as sending deceivers, if not for the deception, for the trial of his own people. One passage speaks of him as sending men strong delusions of the devil, that they may believe a lie. Some passages say that God commands circumcision; and others say that he considers it just nothing. Some passages

say that he requires sacrifices; and others say that he has no pleasure in them, and that he did not require them. Some represent him as being everywhere; and others, as living up in one place, and coming down when he has business to transact, or special information to look for in this lower world. Some passages represent him as forgiving sin; and others as acting on the principle of letting every man reap what he sows. One says that he is immortal; another that he once laid down his life. True, as to the genuineness of some passages which speak of God's dying or shedding his blood there is some dispute; but we have to do with the Bible as read by the common people. When the original is brought forward, we shall prove that to be worse than the translation in many cases. To proceed. Some passages speak of God as one; yet others speak of him as several. One says God tempteth no man; another says he tempted Abraham, and told him to offer his son as a burnt-offering. And these are not all the contradictory representations of God to be found in the Bible.

The Bible has contradictions of Nature. It contradicts geology. Some theologians of late have been compelled to study geology, and they have discovered that geology in some twenty-six particulars contradicts the Bible as generally understood till this time. True, Professor Hitchcock says that all that is necessary to reconcile geology and Genesis is to interpret Genesis correctly; but, at the same time, he requires you to put into the words a sense quite different from that which they express. He says, in short, that God uses language that is not scientifically true—that he speaks of things in the erroneous language of the ignorant fathers of our race; which is, of course, to say, that he uses language which is false. The Bible contradicts astronomy, meteorology, and zoölogy, or natural history. The Bible also gives us false chronology and false physiology, and false psychology. It contradicts the established principles of dietetics. It has contradictions with respect to the conduct of rulers—with respect to poverty,

wealth, honor, reproach, persecution, and quiet lives. In one case it says, "Blessed are the poor;" and in another case it represents God as promising great wealth as a blessing. In some cases it speaks of a good name as a sweet thing; and in others it represents reproach and persecution as desirable. It has three doctrines on the subject of wealth and poverty. At one time it represents wealth as a blessing, and at another time it represents wealth as a great danger, and poverty as a great blessing; and in another place it says, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me; for I have found that poverty tempts men to steal, and riches causes them to deny God." I think the third doctrine is the truest.

The persecuted are at times pronounced the blessed ones; and yet they are commanded to pray for kings, and for all in authority, that they may not be persecuted, but lead peaceful and quiet lives. Those that wrote the latter had begun to enjoy their salaries, and they wanted the kings to let them alone, that they might enjoy their income in quiet. One passage represents that circumcision is required; and another teaches that if you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. One requires retaliation, and another says that this is not the correct principle—that you must not resist nor retaliate evil. The Bible contradicts itself on the subject of punishment—in some cases requiring most savage, brutal, bloody punishments; while on other occasions it requires you not to judge or punish at all, but to forgive all that offend you, even to seventy times seven, even as you wish to be forgiven yourself. In one case you are required not to be angry at all; while in another you are permitted to be angry, though required not to be angry longer than till sundown (Laughter); yet some passages say that *God* is angry every day with some people. Some passages tell you that you must offer animals in sacrifice; and others tell you that you must do no such thing. Some portions of the Bible require temple-worship; if you live three hundred miles

off you must go to the temple three times a year; and yet other portions tell you that you are neither to worship God in this or that place, but in spirit and in truth.

Some passages represent the ordinances of sacrifices as coming from God; while others declare that God never instituted them, nor wished for them—that he does not like them now, and that all that he wishes of men is that they should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God. Some passages say that you must obey God rather than men; while others say that you must obey rulers, submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, and that for the Lord's sake; and one tells you that if you resist them you will receive damnation.

Some passages forbid murder—others command it. Some forbid theft—others enjoin it. Some forbid frauds and lies—others represent God as setting the example of both, and as specially blessing people who use them. Some speak of marriage in one light, and others in another light. One passage says that it is honorable—another says you had better not marry if you can do without; though it adds, “it is better to marry than to ——.” Read the passage yourselves. It might not be considered proper to quote it here. Mr. Wright's explanation of the passage, “he that looketh upon a woman,” etc., seems to me to be true. Some passages manifestly favor celibacy.

The Bible contains contradictory laws on the subject of divorce, on the rights and duties of women, and on the subject of polygamy. Some passages represent God as forbidding polygamy, and others represent him as giving more wives to one who had already a great number. We have contradictory doctrines in the Bible on the subject of adultery, of fornication, of concubinage, and of incest. We find contradictory doctrines concerning works and faith, some passages declaring that we are justified by faith without works; and others that we are justified by works and not by faith only. We find contradictory accounts of the Sabbath—some passages requiring it to

be kept holy ; and others saying that those who observe holidays and Sabbaths are fallen from grace.

The Bible contains contradictory directions on oaths. One place says swear—another swear not at all. It contains contradictory rules about meats, sometimes forbidding what at other times it allows.

Again, the Bible contains *bad* morality. It contains bad morality with respect to parents and children—authorizing parents to beat their children unmercifully, and even to have them stoned to death in some cases. The doctrine of Solomon, the wise man of the Bible, is so bad, that if he had been the most foolish man on earth he could hardly have taught a worse doctrine. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, he says, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him, though he before said that if you bray a fool in a mortar his foolishness will not depart from him. Correct thy son while there is hope, says the Bible, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. I bear about me the marks of blows, and the effects of the torments to which I was subjected by my father, to this day, who was taught by the Bible not to spare the rod, lest he should spoil his child. Oh, the hell in which I spent my youth in consequence of those inhuman proverbs! A curse on that wisest of men and on his most foolish and cruel doctrine. I must ever feel coming from the depths of my heart a gush of melancholy indignation when I think of the tortures that my poor father endured when he felt himself obliged to beat me, and when I remember the tortures I myself endured in consequence of his faith in that horrible doctrine.

The Bible contains bad morality in reference to husbands and wives. It gives the husband authority to rule the wife ; and requires the wife to be subject unto her husband in all things. A most monstrous doctrine ! An intelligent woman obedient to a stupid, foolish man ! A virtuous woman obedient to a vicious, cruel man ! A woman tortured and murdered in spirit, obedient to the man who has tortured and destroyed her ! There

are no exceptions made. And there are no limitations to the subjection of woman. And all this simply because man was formed first, and then the woman! It should be remembered that the hog and the ass were formed before man, and that man, therefore, according to this reasoning, should be subject to the hog and the ass. (Laughter and applause.)

The Bible contains bad morality in reference to civil and political matters. It requires us to obey magistrates, to be subject to every ordinance of man. Here is the "Fugitive Slave Law," for instance, *the most outrageous* insult upon man—(cries of "Hear, hear." Applause and hisses)—the most heartless, infamous, inhuman, devilish act that ever came from the corrupted heart—yet we are required to obey it, or be damned! So with the impious and bloody laws of the popedom, and the murderous laws of the tyrant aristocrats of Great Britain and Ireland. We must obey them all, or be damned. We must never resist the tyrants! If rulers command us to rob or kill—to worship a piece of bread or a piece of gold—to say we believe what we know to be false, and to denounce as false what we know to be true—to kidnap the sons and daughters of our brethren, or capture the fugitive slave and return him to bondage—we must do it on pain of damnation. There is nothing so atrocious or infernal but rulers may command. There, for instance, is the Fugitive Slave Law of this country. Neither earth nor hell has any thing worse. Neither fallen man nor fabled devil can devise a law more villainous. Here, too, are all the enormities of our Southern code. You have here the consummation of all unjust, unrighteous, cruel, insolent, and outrageous acts of legislation, and you are bound, if the Bible is your rule, to obey them all. Your preachers know what they are doing when they teach from the pulpit that you must obey the laws of the land. And Daniel Webster and Moses Stuart knew what they were about when they said that you must obey the laws of the land or disobey the laws of God. The Bible, by commanding men to obey magistrates, makes the laws of the land into the laws of

God. Then look at the barefaced falsehood by which this bad morality is enforced. The Bible says we are to be subject to rulers, because rulers are not a terror to good men's works, but to the evil. An astounding falsehood. It goes on: Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. Another monster falsehood. Here is William Lloyd Garrison, who has been engaged in a great, good work for twenty years, do they praise him? Have they not tried to be a terror to him? Have they not offered a sum of money for his head? What say you of all the stir this government made, some time ago, to frighten people from disobeying the Fugitive Slave Law? Were they, or were they not, a terror to good works? The rulers of Jesus' time were a terror to good works. They frightened Peter out of his senses, and made him deny his Master. Why, Paul himself once used the authority of the rulers of his day to frighten people from obeying Jesus, and murdered those who stood firm. Paul did not always praise the doers of good works. I do not believe that Paul wrote this—he could not. But here it is. It is part of the Bible. The passage says, that rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil; while everywhere, and in all ages, rulers have been a terror to good works, and upholders of evil. In England, instead of being a terror to evil works, they have licensed drunkenness, and set themselves against the temperance reformation, lest the revenues should be diminished. In Hamburg and some other cities they have licensed prostitution. This passage further says, "do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same"—the rulers. I repeat, I would like to know what praise the rulers of this country have given Lloyd Garrison! I would like to know what praise the rulers of England gave to William Penn, or to the poor Quakers generally, some of the best people that ever lived on earth, when they filled the dungeons so full with them that they had no more room, and put a number of them to death! What praise did the rulers of their day give Jesus of Nazareth, Paul,

or the early Christians generally? The passage is as false in its statements as it is vicious in its morality. But to proceed.

We have in the Bible bad morality in reference to slaves and masters. The slave is to obey his master. He is to put his master in the place of God. Slaves are taught that in obeying their masters they are obeying God; though we know that they are sometimes commanded to act the thief, the murderer, or the prostitute. Submission to prostitution, obedience to God!

We have next commands to obey church rulers, laying the foundations of priestly power, and rearing a structure of impiety and inhumanity never equaled on earth before. If these commands had been obeyed, free thought, free speech, would have been unknown. The popedom and the inquisition would have reigned over all. But, thank God, the world has always had its heretics and infidels.

Then we have commands of intolerance toward heretics and unbelievers—warning Christians not to receive into their houses a man that teaches a doctrine different from their own. In some parts of the Bible human sacrifices are required, and that in the most horrible form. Savage and bloody punishments are as common as the laws themselves. In the Old Testament you shall find capital punishment threatened to, at least, a hundred crimes; and many of these so-called crimes are no violations of the laws of nature whatever.

We have God presented to us next commanding the unnatural, cruel, and bloody rite of circumcision, and demanding it on the pain of death or excommunication.

Then we have a countless multitude of ridiculous laws concerning sacrifices, offerings, priests, priestly garments, tabernacle, ark, altars, and I can't tell what; all tending to place the property, the souls, and the bodies of men at the mercy of an idle, overfed, licentious, proud, and revengeful set of priests. More ridiculous and contemptible laws surely never were

enacted. Yet they were all written by God, according to the Bible.

Then we have the institution of a number of ridiculous holy days, which could be of no use to the people—holy days and holy years, when the land was to lie waste. It is impossible to count the number of foolish and mischievous laws in the Old Testament; and you will find some even in the New Testament. Here are a few examples.

It is said, for instance, if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally to all men, when every body knows that if a man were to pray for wisdom for a year, if he did not do something else than pray, he would be a bigger fool at the end of the year than when he began his prayer.

Next came the laws of schism, making a division in the human race binding, though they forbid divisions in the Church. One passage represents those who separate themselves from humanity, as sectarians do, as sinners; while others *require* believers to separate themselves from mankind on pain of damnation. Then the Bible represents the world in general as lying in wickedness, while it represents the small remnant of believers as belonging to God, thus filling men with a pharisaical pride, and leading them to regard with pity and contempt the rest of mankind, causing them to refuse any fellowship or communication with them. For what fellowship hath Christ with Belial? Hence we have alienations, discords, and enmities in families, in neighborhoods, and states. Hence, too, the most fearful persecutions. Hence the inquisition—an institution of which humanity had no idea till the Bible came to be regarded as divine, as the perfect and infallible law of God. I say that the Bible doctrines, when regarded as divine, give birth to persecution—that persecution is a duty if the Bible be God's word. If it is true, that an unbeliever is in danger of hell; and if I can, by punishing his body, cure him of his unbelief, and so save him from hell-fire, I shall be doing him the greatest kindness possible by punishing his body. Besides, every infidel or

unbeliever is in danger of making others unbelievers. A man cannot be a skeptic without spreading skepticism around him. As one sinner destroys much good, so may one disbeliever ruin millions of souls. And are we to have millions of souls condemned to hell through one man? Ought we not rather to put the man who avows destructive notions where he will be prevented from doing so much mischief? Is it not a duty to lodge him in prison, or put him out of the way? What is the imprisonment or death of one man to the salvation of numbers of souls?

More than that; the doctrine of the Bible gives birth to cruelty in other forms. It seems to be wisdom to the Catholic mother to poison Protestant children to secure to them the kingdom of heaven. I once heard a Methodist preacher, who was as good a soul as I ever knew, utter what will seem incredible to many of you. He had been thinking about those passages which say, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; while strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." He at the same time believed that all little children went to heaven. "Oh," said he, "if God would only give me permission, and endow me with the power, how glad I should be to go through the world and kill every babe on earth, and thus secure them all from damnation." It was a horrible sentiment; but, on orthodox principles, it was a just and kind one. If we believed the common doctrine of the Bible worshippers, and had twenty children, we should prefer to have them all killed in childhood rather than one of them should run the risk of eternal torments in hell. It would be kindness to kill our children.

Again; the Bible is foolishly austere in places. It teaches that we must give account for every idle word. We must not jest. Every word must be grave and solemn. Those little follies which are often the greatest marks of a man's wisdom, must all be carefully avoided. We must pull as long a face,

and look as black and dismal as if we had a "spiritual halter" round our necks, and as if the devil had already dragged us by it to the smoky brink of the burning pit. (Laughter).

We have also ridiculous injunctions in the Bible about selling our houses and land, and giving the proceeds to the poor. If it is a bad thing to have houses and land, it is a bad thing for people to buy them; and if every body should be as pious as we were, how should we sell our houses and land? There is no selling without buyers.

We have many unnatural, cruel, partial, and unjust laws in the Bible. You may find them in multitudes in Leviticus, Deuteronomy, etc. There are other laws which are indecent, not fit to be read; and others which may be read, but ought not to be obeyed or tolerated. Some of these partial laws sound strange.

The Jews were not allowed to lend money to their brethren upon usury, but they might do so to strangers. The law which forbade the Jews to sell bad meat to each other, but allowed them to sell it to the Gentiles, has already been noticed. The explanation made by Mr. Storrs was forced and false. It was not that the Gentiles preferred bad meat, but because the Jews, who made these laws, and ignorantly or wickedly fathered them upon God, were proud and selfish, and believed that their God was not much wiser or better than themselves.

Then we have laws against judging, as if people could avoid judging; and laws against taking thought for the morrow, as though men could help taking thought for to-morrow. "Well," says one, "it means *anxious* thought." Why, then, not *say* anxious thought? But what is meant by anxious thought? How much thought can we have about to-morrow without being anxious? But the Gospel says, "take no thought;" and to show that it means no thought, it refers us to the fowls of the air, which neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns; and to the lilies of the field, which neither toil nor spin; and when it tells us that our heavenly Father notwithstanding feedeth the

fowls and clothes the lilies, it plainly inculcates absolute thoughtlessness as to the morrow.

We are next forbidden to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth. We must not lay by a little in youth and health for age and sickness; but give all away as we get it, and trust in God for ourselves. The sermon before us seems to despise trade, and agriculture, and all providential or forelooking labor. It would have the Christians all absolutely poor, if not idle also. It allows no accumulation of capital—no regard for to-morrow.

In accordance with these injunctions it commands us to give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of us, not to turn away. It commands us to lend, hoping for nothing again. The Bible believers have, generally, more sense than to obey these commands. Try them. Go ask them for a few thousands, either as a gift or a gospel loan. You will find them as wise as the children of the world—wiser than their sacred books and heavenly teachers. Take their cloak, and see if they will give you their coat to keep it company. Compel them to go with you a mile, and see if they will quietly go with you two. Humanity will prove too strong for divinity. Reason or common sense is too strong for revelation—where self-interest is concerned.

Our friend Storrs says, in his resolution, that the Bible only needs to be rightly interpreted and legitimately applied. Does the Bible say any thing about rightly interpreting and legitimately applying it? What is the right interpretation and legitimate application? George Storrs' application. If all the world were to interpret or apply it in some other way, he would say that it was wrong. But is any human interpretation the right one? We think not. The Gospel is the rule, not man's interpretation of it. The true interpretation means any thing but the Gospel, which itself is without interpretation.

Then there are those malicious prayers which I have read

to you; and those passages which sanction slavery—the greatest of all crimes—the sum of all villainies; and then the bad examples offered to us by persons of whom God is represented as speaking in the highest terms—such as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Sarah, David, and the like.

Then there are a hundred important subjects about which the Bible says not a word. Common sense says that cleanliness is important, and that it is not only *next* to godliness, but godliness itself in part; but the Bible has nothing in favor of cleanliness. It seems rather to sanction dirt than cleanliness. The influence of the Bible has been to make people indifferent to the body, and to lead to dirt and uncleanness in millions of men.

Not a word is said about the use of alcoholic liquors as beverages; or if there is any thing said, nine words are said in favor of their use, for one against; and some passages strongly recommend us to give strong drinks. "Give strong drinks to him that is ready to perish; and wine to those that be of heavy hearts. Let them drink, and forget his poverty; and remember his misery no more! You remember the marriage of Cana." When the guests had well drunk, Jesus is said to have made them from a hundred and eight to a hundred and sixty-two gallons more.

Then, again, there is not a word against gambling—not a word against dancing, that horrible crime in the eyes of the Church. There is not a word against putting a tombstone at the head of a dead man; against which the Quakers are legislating so solemnly. Not a word against using tobacco or taking snuff or opium—three of the filthiest and most injurious practices known. There is not a word against suicide; nor a word about a thousand things infinitely more mischievous than many of those things against which damnation is threatened in the Bible.

Again, we find in the Bible a number of indelicate, obscene, revolting passages. I will not read them; because, if I should,

the ladies would feel that they had done wrong in coming here. There is the story of Lot's offering his virgin daughters to the filthy Sodomites. The best thing concerning this story is, that it can not be true. It is impossible. The father that could do such a deed never lived. Then there is the horrible story respecting the origin of the people of Moab and the people of Ammon, which story is demonstrated by physiology to be false. Then there are numbers of laws about tests of virginity, the treatment of wives suspected of unfaithfulness, etc. We need not quote them, you may read them, and judge for yourselves whether a book containing such laws can be from God. We have, in prophetic allusions to filthy rags, etc., new-born babes, and other figures and outrageous exaggerations, the most disgusting and astounding indelicacies to be found in any book I ever read in any language. We have also the tale about Onan—the account of the birth of Jacob and Esau, and the account of miraculous conceptions. We may also notice Paul's talk about marriage—the story of Abraham and Abimelech—the tale of Joseph and his mistress; together with the celebrated Song of Solomon, all represented as the word of God. Can men really say they regard these things as special revelations from God, and keep a grave countenance? I can hardly think it. I can hardly believe that those persons who call it the Word of God have ever read the book attentively. I am sorry to have to speak on these matters; but if I am not sufficiently delicate in my allusions to passages, charge it on my familiarity with the Bible. When a child I had to listen to it daily, while my father read it through from beginning to end, missing nothing. It is said that a man can not touch pitch without being defiled; you must judge then what we must be, who had to sit by and have bucketsful poured upon our head from day to day for nearly twenty years. (Laughter.)

We have a number of other passages equally conclusive against the pretensions made in favor of the Bible. We have

in the New Testament a number of misquotations, misinterpretations, and misapplications of Old Testament prophecies, or passages regarded as prophecies. There are passages misapplied respecting the birth of Christ and the flight into Egypt; the place of his birth, the name he received, the slaughter of the infants, his entrance into Jerusalem, his death and resurrection.

Again, there is, in the Bible, a quantity of false, foolish reasoning. There are the false and foolish arguments of Paul already noticed in regard to the relationship of husband and wife, and man and woman. Then there is the false and foolish reasoning of Jesus respecting Providence, and of Peter about baptism, comparing it to the flood of Noah.

Then there runs through every part of the Bible a mixture of falsehood about God, about Providence, about heaven, about hell, about rewards and punishments, about man, about the earth, about the air, and about meteors; even in the Lord's prayer, in Christ's discourses, in the ten commandments, and in the Apostolic sermons, we have all the marks of fallibility to be found in the writings and discourses of other men. Erroneous notions, false reasonings, mis-statements of matters of fact, digressions, inconsistencies run through all. The whole forms as perfect a mixture, thoroughly human, of folly and wisdom, truth and error, beauty and deformity, good and evil, as you will find in any book on the face of the earth.

There is, next, the greatest uncertainty about the book in various respects. There is uncertainty as to what should form its contents. Christians can not settle among themselves what shall form part of the Bible, and what shall not. Three-fourths of the Christian world take fourteen books which the rest of the Christian world reject. Then, among the Protestants, some take Revelations, and others reject them; and Mr. Danforth has told you that it is the only book in the Bible that is inspired. And thus they differ among themselves. The early Councils differed among themselves—some receiv-

ing a book and others rejecting it. Some, in our day, reject Solomon's Song, Ecclesiastes, and the book of Esther; while others receive them all. You can not find out which books are canonical. You can not tell which parts are original, and which are interpolations. You can not tell what translations of the Bible are correct and what translations are incorrect. You may find out that none are correct, none trustworthy. If you could settle these points, you would still be at a loss to know what things are temporary, and what permanent; which parts are of universal application, and which parts of local application; which was intended for one part of the world, and which for every part; what was designed for particular classes, and what for all classes. You are further at a loss to tell which parts are figurative, and which are literal; which are allegorical, and which are historical; what is the primary meaning, and what is the secondary meaning of those passages which have a twofold meaning, if such there be. You can not tell what God spoke after the manner of men, and what after the manner of God; what was spoken according to truth, and what according to appearances.

You can not tell how to use Scripture examples; how much of the examples to take, and how much to reject. In the examples of Jesus, you can not tell what things to follow, and what to shun. If Jesus was a perfect example, to be followed in all things, a man must not get married, have children, or a home. You can not tell how to use any Bible examples. You can not tell how to use the facts of Bible history; for the Bible does not always tell you which deeds are bad and which are good. You can not tell how far God, Christ, and the Apostles are examples, either to yourselves or others; for God is represented in Scripture sometimes as doing one thing, and at other times another directly opposite. Some passages represent him as doing very bad things, and some passages say that you must imitate God; and yet if you should imitate some of his deeds as recorded in the

Bible, you would be denounced as a monster, turned out of society, or hung by the neck till you were dead.

So with regard to the interpretation of the book; there are a thousand interpretations, and you can not tell which interpretation is best; you can do as others do, and say, "*My* interpretation is the best," but this is all. You can not tell with absolute certainty whether any interpretation is right or not. You know that all interpretations of the Bible are fallible. You may know that some one of them is wrong, but you can not tell with certainty that any one is right. In our opinion none are right. The Bible can not be expected to be interpreted correctly throughout. It is an old book in dead languages, written by many persons of different views, different tastes, different modes of expression, in different ages, different countries, among an endless diversity of customs, manners, theologies, morals, and politics. We have no other books in the same languages. These books have been altered and corrupted without end. Parts have been left out, parts put in, parts altered, parts transposed, till the meaning of the author is often entirely lost. The helps to interpret the Bible are books written by prejudiced and often interested men, who have rendered the book more obscure. The rules of interpretation are very numerous, but often very foolish. The best of them are often hard of application. What can you do?

You do not know what rules are to be adopted in translating and fixing the meaning of Chaldaic words and Hebrew words. You can not tell what Greek or Hebrew grammars are the best. You can not tell what lexicons are the best. You can not say what rules should be adopted for interpreting the history of the Bible—what rules in interpreting prophecy—what in interpreting poetry—what in interpreting parables—what in interpreting allegories—what in interpreting types—what in interpreting metaphors—and what in interpreting the literal portions of the Bible.

Then, again, you can not tell which *is* metaphorical, and

which is literal, which is prophecy, which history, and which prayer. One says that the parable of Dives and Lazarus is a matter-of-fact story—others say that it is a parable. Some take the words, “this is my body, and this is my blood” literally, and others figuratively. Protestants say that it is figurative, but Catholics say that it is literal, and Jesus does not say that it was not literal; and who is to decide? Both can not be right; but both may be wrong. You do not know whether there are in the Bible any types or not, according to the orthodox sense of the word. I believe there are none. But if there are, you can not tell which things are types, nor what the types typify. You can not distinguish the metaphorical portions from the literal, nor what is the meaning of either. You are in a world of uncertainty. Nothing is beyond mistake or dispute. A thousand sects interpret the book a thousand ways. They make it favor a thousand different doctrines, and who shall say which is right? All are fallible. Infallible interpretations of the Bible can not be had. Each one’s fallible mind must guess for itself, and no one, in thousands of cases, can do more than guess. And every one’s guesses are influenced by his prejudices, his temperament, and his interests. All use the book to build up their sects and their systems, and interpret it accordingly. If one interpretation does not answer his purpose, he finds or forges another. Thus the mists of ignorance and error are ever thickening under the influence of bigotry, piety, and sin. When the literal meaning goes against a man he always says “it is figurative;” and when the figurative goes against him, he says “it is literal;” and when both the literal and the figurative go against him, he says “it is mystical.” (Laughter.)

I said you can not distinguish between prophecy and history—between prediction and poetry—or between prediction and prayer. Some say that the passages which I read over to you from the Psalms, which sound so wickedly as prayers, were not prayers, but only predictions of God uttered in that form.

They say they are threatenings of punishment against the enemies of God and Christ, and not the evil wishes of David against his personal enemies, and so they may go on forever. The Bible gives you no key, no rules, by which to decide the innumerable questions, or settle the countless disputes on these points. After the sects and priests have done their utmost, they will have to say, "Come down, O Lord, and decide these questions thyself." And even if God should come and make an explanation, they would quarrel about what he meant by his explanation. (Applause and laughter.) Yet this is the Protestant's perfect rule of faith and practice.

Our opponents have talked about the *law*—the law—and the law by which to try the Bible, until their speeches have become as dull as an English winter's day. We can not, it seems, find them a law to their liking. It is doubtful whether they can find such a law for themselves. What is their law for judging of the character of the book? They have one, I suppose. They say they have tried the Bible, and found it to be true and good; I would like to know by what law they have tried it. Why do they not bring it forward? Have they tried the Bible without a law? If so, what is their verdict worth? If not, why keep the law to themselves? Have we not reason to fear that this ceaseless and wearisome call for a law is but a clumsy device to impose on the audience and evade the question under consideration? But to proceed.

We have shown that the Bible can not be the word of God—or a book of Divine authority—or a perfect rule of faith or practice. Our remarks have shown it to be impossible. Let us now notice the pretended evidences of the common notion. They sound big in the ears of the ignorant, but they are nothing when examined. They are based on ignorancē or fraud, from first to last. They prove nothing but the blindness or dishonesty of those who employ them.

The evidences usually adduced in favor of the Bible are divided into internal and external evidences. The external

evidences are miracles and prophecies. Now mark, first, they do not know—they are not agreed—what a miracle is. One says it is something which takes place in accordance with a natural law that is not yet understood; while others say a miracle is a violation or suspension of the laws of nature, by the special agency of God. They do not, however, pretend to understand all the laws of nature. Yet how can they tell when the laws of nature are suspended or violated if they know not what those laws are? Some say that the word “miracle” is Latin, and means “a little wonder;” and I *wonder* what kind of “a little wonder” it would be to prove the truth of all that is written in the book that I am talking about. (Laughter.) But how will you prove that miracles ever were wrought? Will you prove the *truth* of the miracle by the Bible, before you prove that the Bible itself is true? You have no other proof. But this is all a begging of the question. Leslie’s argument is one of the most ridiculous things I know of for the nineteenth century. Yet there is nothing better on that side the question. I have read, I think, a hundred books about this external evidence, but I never could see much force in them, and now I see none.

But there are prophecies which form a portion of the external evidence of the truthfulness of the Bible. But you have not yet ascertained what *are* prophecies. There are contradictory opinions as to what are prophecies. I have read what has been written on this branch of the subject as far as I have had opportunities. I have shown that the argument from miracles is a begging of the question—that Leslie’s argument, and the arguments of all others who have written on the same side of the question, consist in a mere play upon words and ignorant declamation, or willful imposition.

The evidence derived from prophecy is no better; it is, if possible, sometimes worse. Writers on this subject often take for prophecies what are not prophecies. They also fail to prove the genuineness of the prophecies on which they build their

arguments. They give no proof that the prophecies built upon were written at the time and by the persons alleged. Then they overlook the conditionality of all prophecies. Jeremiah teaches us that no prophecy of any blessing or calamity is to be expected to be fulfilled positively or unconditionally. His words are :

“ At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it ; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it ; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.”—*Jer.* xviii. 7-10.

So that no prophecy is to be expected to be fulfilled without reference to the conditions. There was a prophecy concerning the house of Eli, that they should be God's priests forever, but when the Lord found out that Eli and his sons were not such men as he expected, he revoked his promise of good things to Eli, and declared that he should no longer be priest. These conditions in effect render prophecy of no avail ; for people can not tell whether a prophecy *ought* to be fulfilled or not, if they do not know whether its conditions, expressed or unexpressed, have been fulfilled or not. The prophecy respecting the destruction of Nineveh had no condition *expressed* ; yet it was revoked. Jonah thought he was badly used by God, but there was no remedy. God had repented when he saw the penitence of the Ninevites. Then, again, there is no infallible interpretation of any prophecy. The language of prophecy is unusually obscure ; filled with the darkest symbols, which none but the prophets themselves could understand without a miracle. The prophets themselves did not always understand their own prophecies, according to the Scriptures. The probability is, that some of them were never understood at all by any man. This is the opinion of many divines. They say the events alone

can reveal the meaning of prophecy. And if the prophecies are all conditional, the events may never happen. The prophecies, therefore, may never be explained on earth. It is possible some of them never had a meaning.

Again ; words are not used in their ordinary sense in prophecies. We are told that in prophecy a day signifies a thousand years. We are not, however, told this in the Bible. It is one of man's discoveries. When God speaks to us, he ought, as we think, if he wishes to be understood, to speak in a language that we can understand. But he does not, if the Bible be his word. This renders the difficulty of interpreting prophecy still greater. The disputes about the meaning of prophecy are endless. Some have been interpreted in as many different ways as there are days in a year. This is the case with the book of Revelations. Almost every commentator, critic, or fanatic has a different interpretation of the book. Not one of these interpretations of prophecy are infallible. They are probably all false. And the fallible interpretation and application of a prophecy can never form a foundation for an infallible argument that a book is Divine.

Again. To understand whether a prophecy has been fulfilled, we must have good, true history, and understand it well. But ancient history is proverbially false. The ancient historians did not pretend to write exact truth. They put into the mouths of their heroes speeches which they never made. The historians themselves made them ; and they sometimes made portions of the story too. They took up the floating traditions of their day and recorded them as facts. All ancient history contains fables. Ancient historians resembled the old poets and bards whom they succeeded, and tried, like them, to please and thrill their readers, rather than to give a true account of events.

Then history is generally written by one or the other of two political or religious parties. It was thus with the histories referred to by interpreters of prophecy. The Pagan historians

speak of the early Christians as a pest; as an overflowing of filth and fanaticism running everywhere. The Christian historians talk in a similar manner of the Pagans. None of them tell you the truth. There are but few things in their accounts of each other that you can know for a certainty to be true. Their statements are often notoriously false. Their histories are never complete.

Then the writers on prophecy can not always understand history when they have it. They dispute about what history means. They complain of the historians themselves. Some find fault with Rollin, others with Psalmanazar, and almost all of them with everybody but themselves; and they get paid back—for everybody finds fault with them.

If they understand the history, they do not know how to apply the prophecy to it. They dispute as to whether a prophecy should be applied to Napoleon or to Alexander, to the Pope or to Mohammed, to Antiochus or to Nero; or to our friend Danforth's mice and frogs. They agree in nothing but in differing from one another, and from everybody else. Then, again, those writers on the evidences often falsify, misquote, pervert, and alter prophecy. Bring me Keith, one of the most popular writers on prophecy, and I will prove to you that instead of *quoting* prophecy he *makes* it. The crafty Dr. Nelson does the same. We have shown you that he is a willful deceiver. When he quotes a passage truly, and represents it correctly, if he wishes you to read it he tells you where it is; but when he wishes to falsify, he hopes you will be content without reading, and so he does not tell you where it may be found. You have had an instance of Dr. Nelson's tricks in the passage quoted in reference to Voltaire. Keith is no better; and I question whether you can find a better among all the orthodox evidence-manufacturers that have written on the Bible. They misquote both prophecy and history, they misrepresent them, and they misapply them. They pervert every thing.

The great prophecies most frequently dwelt upon by any

writers on the evidences are the prophecies about Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, and Tyre, those respecting the Jews and Jesus, and the destruction of Jerusalem, and those pretended prophecies in Revelations, respecting the seven churches. Now, I undertake to prove that none of these prophecies have been fulfilled. I have examined every prophecy. I have found that Keith and Nelson have never taken any notice of more than one tenth or one fifth part of these prophecies. Then they generally alter and misquote those which they do notice; and even then they often contradict one another, and give a prophecy different meanings from beginning to end. I examined these prophecies lately, and copied them out from the Bible with my own hand, and then compared them with those in the writings of Keith and Nelson, and I found that these writers had frequently perverted them and made them into quite different things from what they are in the Bible. Their books are lies; their arguments are frauds. And these are your evidences!

And so it has ever been. I am prepared to prove that the history of the Church is a history of fraud from the earliest ages to the present hour. That the priests of every nation on earth have been liars, wholesale, unconscionable, eternal liars—*makers* of lies. The ancient Jewish and the early Christian priests were liars. Even the Bible itself represents them as liars—great liars. Their successors in every age have been the same. They are so to this hour. The world is full of proofs. No confidence can be put in the testimony of any priest. If you believe the Gospel, the priests and theologians of Christ's day were a set of vipers—whited sepulchers, fair without, but within full of rottenness and dead men's bones. "Ye are of your father, the devil," said Jesus, "and his works ye do." The devil has two grand characters in the Bible—that of a liar and that of a murderer; and Christ gives the same black characters to the priests; and if they are not still given to them in our day, they *ought* to be. (Applause and hisses).

Mr. Barker, in making this speech, took up his forty minutes' time, when, by motion, he was allowed to take sufficient additional time to finish his remarks, of which proceeding

Rev. Mr. TURNER complained, and said that their proportion of time was not allowed to them—that of the morning session they had had but twenty-one minutes, and that all the afternoon had been taken up by their opponents; and he would offer the following resolution:

Resolved, That the course pursued by the managers of this Convention, since last evening, has been contrary to the pledges made in the published call for the Convention—contrary to the rules established by the Convention to govern the disputants—unjust, uncourteous, unparliamentary, and an outrage upon the confidence of the citizens of this city, composing in part this audience.

The reading of the resolution was attended by loud and boisterous applause, and cries of "Hear, hear," "true," etc.

Mr. GARRISON, after making a keen rebuke of certain disturbances in the galleries, said: I deny that this afternoon the other side of the question was not fully heard. I do not understand that in suspending the rule to allow Mr. Barker to finish his remarks, they are precluded from occupying as much time as he has occupied, should they wish. Last evening, in my case, it was kindly provided that I should have time to finish my remarks, and it was provided that the other side should have just as much time as I occupied. This was done that the continuity of the argument might not be broken up; therefore, if they wish to occupy as much time as my friend Barker has, I hope they will be permitted to have that time.

Mr. BARKER—They decided, last night, that they would take their extra time for the extra time occupied by Mr. Garrison, not in the morning session, but this evening; or they might have had nearly all the morning session. If they are allowed to occupy extra time to-morrow they will have had *more* than justice. If any have a right to complain it is our friends.

Mrs. ERNESTINE L. ROSE—It seems to me that if any one has had any reason to find fault with regard to time, and has a right to claim the rest of the time during which this Convention shall sit, it is woman. (Hear.) I think you ought to leave us, out of four days, at least *one*.

On the motion of Mr. Garrison, it was decided that the other side of the question should occupy as much time as had been occupied by Mr. Barker.

The Convention then adjourned to half-past seven o'clock, P.M.

THIRD DAY—EVENING SESSION.

Saturday, June 4.

AT half-past seven o'clock the Convention was called to order by Mr. Barker, when

Mr. S. J. FINNEY, of Ohio, offered the following resolutions :

Resolved, That the spirit and genius of Bible religion, as a great system, both as found in itself, and as generally understood by all popular orthodox sects in Christendom, is not a system of salvation from sin or its effects, but a system of damnation into sin and its effects—not a system of human redemption from the bondage of religious error and moral corruption, but a system of enslaving into the bondage of religious error and moral corruption. That it is a system of theological, religious, and spiritual piracy, carried on by a bigoted priesthood against the truths and laws of man's moral and spiritual nature. Therefore,

Resolved, That, as a system, it is the friend of moral and spiritual slavery, and that it is therefore the foe of human, mental, and spiritual liberty, and, consequently, the foe of human progress.

The reading of Mr. Finney's resolutions was attended with much applause and loud hisses.

Mr. S. B. BRITTAN, of New York, then offered the following resolutions :

Resolved, That inasmuch as the essential principles of life, and sense, and thought, and the ultimate causes of all things in being, whether visible or invisible, are forever imperceptible by the physical senses, we may, without violating the highest prerogatives of reason, believe in the actual occurrence of such occult and spiritual phenomena as are alleged to have occurred in different ages of the world, provided always that such accounts are supported by the concurrent testimony of several disinterested witnesses of known integrity and sagacity.

Resolved, That we believe that Deity exists *in* His universe—that the life of God flows out through all his creations, and hence that the life-principle or the Divine Spirit pervades and ~~infects~~ all His creatures, in the precise degree which may best secure the sublime objects and issues of His government.

Resolved, That in our judgment God is visible in all things, in proportion as they approximate to the standard of Divine Perfection—that we perceive His likeness in the human intelligence more distinctly than we trace it elsewhere in the inferior objects of creation—that the nature and powers of the human mind, no less than the testimony of the Scriptures, indicate that man was fashioned in the Divine image, and that his spirit is, when its attributes are duly harmonized, the temple of the living God.

Resolved, Consistently with the views expressed in the foregoing resolutions, that we must conclude the relations subsisting between the human and the Divine are immutable and eternal; that **INSPIRATION IS A PERPETUAL FACT**, and that no written communications purporting to be the records of ancient revelations, however true these records may be, can supply to the individual soul, and hence to the world, the place of a living and present inspiration.

Resolved, That, in our humble opinion, the ancient prophets, Jesus Christ, and some of his apostles, and others in different ages of the world were, through their susceptibility to spiritual influences, inspired—not in violation of the laws of mind, but consistently with those laws—but that the records of what they experienced should be tried by the highest ordeal which modern science and enlightened reason are competent to institute.

Resolved, That we have confidence in the innate integrity of human nature, much as it is perverted, and that we believe that most men of all classes, not excepting the clergy, are disposed—as far as the imperfection of original constitution, the force of a perverted or false education, and the dominion of existing institutions and customs will allow—to honor the Truth and to respect the Right, and hence that dogmatism

and denunciation are essentially unbecoming the Reformer, whose true mission is to inquire, to reason, and to teach

Rev. Mr. TURNER then said: I propose, in the first place, to notice some of the points made prominent last evening by our friend Garrison, so far as I was able to take them down.

"The question," said he, "is, Is the Bible in its every word Divine inspiration?" Now I do not understand that that is the question before this Convention. It may be one of the questions, and, with my friend, doubtless is *the question*. But the question is, What is the origin, the authority, and influence of the Bible? Is it true that the question is, "Is every word of the Bible Divine inspiration?" We have not come here to defend the doctrine that every word in the Bible is given by Divine inspiration. We come here to defend the Bible as a record of divine revelations made to man, together with truthful narrations of facts connected with those revelations—I mean to say connected with them in their length and breadth. We do not pretend to say, for instance, that the words used by the serpent in the garden of Eden are Divine inspiration, although we believe the narration to be true. We do not claim for another text that it is inspiration, where it is said of God, "the heavens are not pure in his sight, and he charges his angels with folly." We read in the same book where this is recorded, that one of the three friends who had the argument with Job made these remarks, and those three friends are said to be wrong, while Job is justified, being in the right. I might quote other texts, but these are sufficient to show you my meaning. I simply regard such as matters of record of what has transpired. We do not claim for them that they are Divine inspiration, but we do claim truthfulness for them when in connection with Divine revelations made to man.

My friend then says, "If it is not all inspired, how much is inspiration?" He intimates a demand for a rule by which to decide what is, and what is not inspiration. All we have

to say in regard to this question is, that it must be decided by the Bible, which our opponents say they will destroy by its own testimony. We are willing to put the book upon its own testimony, and try its own claims to Divine inspiration, and when they will put their hands on points, and state them openly and explicitly, we will answer them; but it is not our intention to meet an harangue of objections which have no more connection than the north and south poles.

But my friend continues, and says "certain portions of the book are not inspired." In this you perceive we agree. I do not believe that there is a single person in all New England who will say that every word of the Bible is inspired. The Bible, however, may properly, as a book, be called the Book of Inspiration, because it contains inspiration; but we do not mean to say that every word of the historical parts are inspired.

Mr. Garrison says, "The various sects"—which he claims have been originated by the Bible—"prove the impossibility of the existence of an infallible law by which to decide what is and what is not inspired—what is true and what is not true." My friend charges upon the Bible the sad effects which appear in the world in the variety of sects. He seems to charge the Bible as having produced this variety of sects. In his remarks he seemed to carry the idea that if there was in the Bible, or somewhere else, an infallible law by which we could decide what in the Bible was inspired, and what was not, then this variety of sects would not exist—that the multitude of churches that have grown up in the land would not be known—in a word, that there would not be so many spires in the city of Hartford.

Mr. GARRISON said: I did not say that the Bible is chargeable with all this variety of sects and opinions, but that with the doctrine that the Bible is the inspired word of God, people come to that book and are found by the ears, in regard to its teachings, showing very plainly that every reader makes it

after his own image, and draws from it the conclusions which are most agreeable to his own ideas of right and truth.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—It does not vary the point in hand. You see that the charge lies against the Bible; namely, it has no infallible law to which the Bible may be brought, and its truth or falsity ascertained, that the people may become united, and constitute one sect instead of many. Then the conclusion is drawn that the Bible did not proceed from God—not all of it at least, and it is to be scanned by human reason alone—that the Bible is to be brought to the standard of private judgment. Do you not see that my friend Garrison, in taking this position, has laid the axe at the foundation of his whole argument? Suppose we turn the tables, and tell them that on account of their differences as to the teachings of the book of nature, that book can not be regarded as possessed of any authority, and therefore of no use in the trial of the Bible. (Applause.) My friend Garrison proceeds under the same head, and says that “some teach that the Bible teaches eternal suffering; others that the Bible teaches the universal salvation of all men. Some say that the Bible teaches the election of some to everlasting life, and the reprobation of others to everlasting suffering, and the like;” and he then says, “Why this difference of opinion?” Do you not see that the same charge lies with equal and ponderous weight against their “book of nature?” The fault is not in the book of nature. So far as they can understand the book of nature it is right. We believe that the God of the Bible is not only the God of the Bible, but the God of the book of nature. So far as men understand the Bible, that book is right; and so far as they understand the book of nature, that is right; and that is the difficulty of men’s arriving at first conclusions. If this objection can be brought against the Bible, it can be brought against the clearest statute that has ever been made in civil law. Is there scarcely a trial where there is not argument and contention upon the meaning of the

plainest law books in New England? And is it to be inferred from that fact that there is not a law? The law is there; but each one argues from the motives which, though he may be honest, blind him. So in reference to the Bible.

But, says Mr. GARRISON, "Have we an infinite or a finite God? Have we a God who will command peace at one time, and at another war?" And this he charges against the Bible. Mr. Chairman, can not an "infinite God," under some circumstances, ordain war, and under other circumstances ordain peace?

Mr. GARRISON—I said that in the nature of things there are antagonisms. For instance, we speak of truth and of falsehood. We speak of right and of wrong; so of peace and war. They never can be identical; and they never can be substituted the one for the other. It is not in the power of God, as he is constituted and made, ever to make the lie a truth, or to make the truth a lie; and so it is not possible for him morally to be a God of peace, and then at another time to be a God of war, any more than he can be a God of veracity, and then at some other time be a God of falsehood.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—I accept the explanation so far as it goes. The idea attempted to be conveyed was, that the Bible was fallible and unreliable, because it represents God as at one time commanding peace, and at another time commanding war. Now, we ask again, if the God of the Bible is infinite, may he not at one time command war, and then at another command peace, without change? Does not the God of nature command war at one time and peace at another? Is not the God of nature the originator of the earthquake, and is not that war to the knife with every thing with which it comes in contact? And when it has spent its fury, and the heavens are calm above, pray, is it not the God of nature that ordains peace? To say the least of it, is it not as reasonable for the God of the Bible, under some circumstances, to command war, and in others, peace? It has been admitted upon this stand

that the God of the Bible might, if the best good of the whole was in view, cut off certain nations. This must be admitted, or else the God of nature must be put on to the stand, and tried, before we can reach the testimony of the Bible in regard to its God. It is said that God is represented as the author of terrible suffering in the coming world, and it is said that some teachers teach that the Bible teaches that he is the author of eternal suffering. Since this teaching has been so often referred to, and charged upon the Bible, I feel it my duty to repel the charge. Sir, that Bible does not teach such a doctrine between its lids. If my time permitted, I would give you my reasons at length for repelling the charge. Nowhere are you taught in the Bible that God has attached to a violation of his laws eternal suffering; and all the long, frightful poem that we have listened to about that hell where infants go, only originated in the frenzied intellect of a feeble man, to whose, or a like intellect, my friend Garrison proposes to bring the Bible to determine whether it is true or not. (Applause.)

Mr. PILLSBURY, in his quotation of the poem, represented by that quotation that the Bible taught that infants would burn forever in hell, and never waste and never die. We repel the charge, and we wish that we could write it on the blue arch of the heavens above us, that the Bible does not teach such a doctrine.

Mr. PILLSBURY—I will correct a little misapprehension. I merely cited the poem. I did not give it as my opinion that the Bible taught such a doctrine. I said that this doctrine had once been held, and that the men of nature had taught a different doctrine, and that now that doctrine was laid aside.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—I do not intend to charge my friend with entertaining these views. I only say that he quoted this poem to show the doctrine formerly entertained by certain individuals, and then he charged it upon the Bible. I put the charge upon the intellect, which is the "God of Nature." (Ap-

plause.) In all these trials of this subject we find that the God of nature has originated the errors, while the Bible frowns them eternally away from its sacred pages. (Applause.)

Another charge brought against the Bible by Mr. Garrison was, that "those who make the loudest professions to faith in the Bible give the greatest evidence of cowardice and corruption." I do not intend to take issue with him in the length and breadth of his charge; for let me say here, if I were to speak in full my sentiments with reference to this position, I should in part sustain my friend Garrison; for it is a lamentable fact, that the history of the profession of religion in this world has given too sad a testimony in favor of the position he has taken. The loudest professions have in too many instances been against the Bible, instead of in favor of it. But what does this prove? It just proves that, if your speaker himself were a hypocrite, the Bible has told you that there would be such, and the Bible points out the distinct difference between a hypocrite and a Christian.

We have been told that "certain religionists in our time have judged that they may have several wives, and if they be filled with the Holy Ghost, they will not complain because their husbands take more wives;" and it is said that "they (the religionists) go to the Bible for authority. They say that it is taught in the Bible." We first claim that the Bible does not teach any such thing—"Good, good," and applause)—nor can any such teaching be pointed out.

We would here remark, the fanatical theory here referred to is a specimen of the decisions of the law of the human intellect—"Good, good"—and if you will give me the heads that countenance this idea, I will demonstrate it before this congregation, or before any other. We say from a knowledge of human intellect, that we know that we can demonstrate this fact by an examination of the cranium.

Mr. PILLSBURY—Would my friend like to have the evidence for the charge produced? I will state to the audience

that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has decided that the Bible does encourage polygamy, and they encourage it, and have a good many polygamists in the Christian churches.

REV. MR. TURNER—We do not doubt what friend Pillsbury states with reference to this matter; but suppose all the missionary societies in the world were to decide that the Bible taught the doctrine of polygamy, are we to believe it? They do not make our Bible. If they did, we should be the worshipers of the God of nature and the God of the intellect. Human nature formed such a Bible.

I desire to make a few more remarks in reference to the charge made by Mr. Garrison, that “those who make the loudest professions of their faith in the Bible, manifest the greatest cowardice and corruption.” We think that it is true on one side of this charge, but not true on the other. It is true, to a certain extent, that many individuals who bow down to what they think the Bible teaches, dare not, if a doctrine they teach is opposed, come out before the public and defend what they teach. Whether they think that it is politic to stand back, and not risk their doctrines in the hands of those who might handle them roughly, I know not—let others decide; but we can not say that all those who make the loudest professions of their faith are full of cowardice and corruption; for there are those who make great professions, upon whom you can not cast a blot, but their whole lives have been lives of virtue, their enemies being judges.

Mr. Garrison denies that the apologists for the Bible believe it, else believing it, they would follow its commands; but when they are commanded to take care of the poor, they are not ready to do it; and though they may give sums of their money for some purposes, they would not give any considerable sum to build a place to keep the poor fugitive slave in. Suppose there are some who in words are apologists for the Bible, who do not follow the precepts of that blessed book,

does that prove that the Bible is not a book of truth and morality? Does not the same Bible that they have advocated condemn the advocate? If it does not, how can my friend Garrison reason from their inconsistency with the doctrines or teachings of the book they profess to believe?

Mr. GARRISON—My friend misapprehends the point entirely. I do not say that believing the Bible, they would always obey the Bible. My declaration that I did not think that they really believed the Bible, was made to relieve them from the awful criminality which otherwise would be chargeable upon them in keeping the book, by express statute, away from three millions of this country, under the lash of the slave-driver, and thus consigning them to everlasting damnation. While professing that the Bible, as the Word of God, is necessary to make men wise unto salvation, they ought to let men have it, and not let them, as they profess to believe, perish everlastingly for the want of it. So to relieve them from precipitating these men into hell about which they talk, I chose to say that they themselves had no faith in the doctrines which they professed to believe.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—Here, then, is the charge that they do not carry out their Bible. He argues that if they believe their Bible, they ought to do as it commands. I say so. He charges them with unbelief in the Bible, because they do not obey its requirements. After all, the charge is, because that such do not act according to the laws of that Bible by which he finds them guilty. Then, what does this prove against the Bible? I contend that it is an argument in favor of the Bible. It is an argument that if that Bible was believed, was cherished, was loved, the poor would be fed, the naked would be clothed, and the hungry would be fed, and the destitute would be sheltered. Instead of that Bible justifying slavery, ever particle of its contents is in favor of letting the slave go free, and making him truly a man. One text has often been quoted here, to show that our Bible sanctions slavery; but I refer

you simply to the explanation of last evening by brother Storrs, and we call it perfectly satisfactory in regard to that point. For the trials and labors through which Mr. Garrison has gone, in the cause of freedom and in his warfare against slavery, I honor him; but I must defend the Bible. (Applause.) That Bible I believe to be in all its parts totally and forever opposed to American slavery. It is far from countenancing it in the least. We wipe the charge off, and we venture its being fastened there again. This argument to which I have just referred was not made by my friend Garrison; for I believe that he could not well make such an argument, for he learned his first principles of anti-slavery from the Bible. When he launched his ship upon the sea of human redemption, he took the Bible as his compass, and made it the man of his counsel. Do I say too much, when I say that, after all, he may be indebted to the Bible for his best feelings upon the subject of anti-slavery?

Mr. GARRISON—Just allow me to say, by way of explanation, that there is no book in the world that I have used so much against slavery as the Bible—none so effectively as the Bible; and yet I do not believe in the plenary inspiration of the volume.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—Mr. Garrison continued his remarks, and said, when these apologists for the Bible find that public sentiment favors such a course, then they will throw the Bible away; that is, as a book of plenary inspiration. Now, if this be an inspired prophecy, it will prove true. But I question whether it is inspired or not. I doubt it; and the reason why I doubt it, is because in so many instances we have found the revelations of "the God of nature," which come from the intellect alone, have proved untrue. There are men who would feel like turning the world upside down, if they could, and we suspect friend Garrison to be one such; and that spirit is admirable; but we must be careful how we indulge a spirit of

this kind not to go a little too far. The Bible is the standard of our ambition.

The clergy have resolved to let this Convention pass by in dignified and lofty silence ; but they may depend upon it that they have got to meet this question eventually. (Applause.) The stone is rolling ; and although with my present views I regret to find these friends taking the position they do, I think that this question will continue to be agitated—that the stone will continue to roll—and I am ready to meet it with its heaviest shock first, that when it comes to the *champions of truth*, it will have spent half of its force. (Applause.)

I consider that no valid argument has as yet been made against the Bible. Objections are not arguments. Suppose that I get up and say that the Bible teaches thus and so, and it contradicts itself again and again, do you infer that I have made any arguments at all? If the God of your reason is not asleep, you will see that the man who merely throws out objections has not given you an argument. They are merely the assertions of a fallible individual.

Our opponents say that the God of the Bible is changeable, because he commands war at one time, and then peace at another. You might as well say that the cars are not on the track, because they stopped at Hartford and they stopped at Springfield. It is admitted that the God of nature may even cut off infants and human beings for the good of the whole. —[Mr. WRIGHT—No]—and yet they complain because the God of the Bible may have exterminated one people for the good of another. (Applause.)

Mrs. ERNESTINE L. ROSE then made the following speech : My friends, I rise under peculiar disadvantages : one is that it is so late, and another that the ground has been most ably, eloquently, and masterly occupied by the various speakers who preceded me. Under these circumstances I would prefer not to speak at all, were it not for the fact that this movement

seems to me to be one of the highest and greatest importance that has taken place in our age—(Applause)—of more importance even than the one that has so long lain at my heart, the rights of woman—(Applause)—for it is closely connected with it; and as woman has not been represented here, I feel it my duty to raise my voice and protest against the Bible, or, as it is called, the Word of God; for if a line of demarkation could be drawn of the injurious effects produced by the errors of that book on man or woman, I would say most emphatically, that on account of the inferior education and experience of woman, the errors of the Bible which have been palmed off upon society as emanations from some superior wisdom and power, have had a far more pernicious effect on the mind of woman than of man; for knowledge and experience are the only safeguards against superstition; and as woman has received less of the light of knowledge, superstition has had a stronger hold on her mind, and has enslaved her far more than man. (Applause, hisses, and cries of “Shame, shame.”)

Mrs. Rose, on looking around at the confusion, said—My conviction is, that man always acts as well as he can; and if I see my poor unfortunate fellow-being act as it appears to me inconsistent and irrational, I can but pity him for it. (Applause.)

The question under consideration, I believe, is the origin, influence, and authority of the Bible, or, Is the Bible an emanation from, or inspiration of, God. It seems to me that it would have been more in order had we commenced by inquiring what is meant by the term God, or divine; but here again a difficulty presents itself, Where shall we commence to make the inquiry? If we go back to past ages, to the very infancy of the race, and from thence come up to the present time and hour, and ask the definition of God, the answer would be that, just what any age or people considered their *beau-ideal* of greatness, of wisdom, of virtue, and of perfection, they embodied in one grand idea, and called it God. (Renewed and

long-continued disturbance in the gallery.) I will wait till I can be heard. (Renewed confusion.) This confusion is an evidence of the influence of the Bible. (Hissing.) The Bible tells them that woman "should not speak in public." Oh, no, she must not raise her voice in behalf of truth and humanity, and if she does, she is met with confusion and riot by the believers in that doctrine; but after all, that is the best argument that can be brought in support of the Bible. With the sword it has been promulgated, with riot and confusion it must be supported. (Applause and hisses.) Yes! if we go back to the past, we find that men in all ages, all countries, conditions, and states, have always embodied what to them appeared the acme of perfection, and worshiped it. In those ages wherein the warrior, the conqueror, the hunter has been considered the most perfect and noble beings in the conception of men, they have cut out images of stone, wood, silver, and gold, to embody the various attributes, and knelt down and worshiped them; and as we came up from the long past, through all ages, without mentioning the various gradations, for time is short, to the present time, we still behold the same. The opinions only as to what constitutes greatness, goodness, and perfection have changed; the tastes have become more refined, the feelings more humanized, the minds more enlightened and consistent. Man, in fact, has become more civilized; therefore the *beau-ideal* of his conception, or the idol of his imagination, is so too. Thus, instead of cutting out an image of the grosser materials, or painting it on the canvas, and then kneeling down to worship it, he shuts his eyes and beholds the embodiment of what appears to him to be the greatest, best, and noblest of human attributes, on the retina of his imagination, and bows down his head and pays homage to it; but however gross or refined, it is ever a likeness of himself, or what he would wish to be. It has been a great mistake to say that God has made man in his image, for man in all ages and times has made his god in his image, and hence we have

as great a variety of religions and gods as we have stages and gradations of man's perception of the true, the beautiful, and the noble, from the darkest ignorance and barbarity to the present comparative state of knowledge and civilization. (Prolonged applause, hissing, and hooting.) Hiss on, if it does you any good. I give utterance to these convictions to aid in man's emancipation from the superstition and ignorance from which he has so long suffered. I know but too well what it is to go against the long-cherished and time-honored prejudices and superstitions. It is no pleasant task to go against the current, but there is a sense of duty that balances all unpleasantness, even hissing and hooting, and all, that is more potent than all persecutions, that brings a peace of mind, content, and happiness that none can feel but the mentally free. (Applause.) But to the subject. The Rev. Mr. Turner denied the objections brought against the Bible, saying that objections were not arguments; but I would respectfully remind him, that denials are no arguments, and it would have been better to confute the arguments that were brought against the Bible, than to do nothing but constantly deny them. (Applause.) To judge of the inspiration of the Bible we must examine the Bible itself, and as its contents will appear consistent or inconsistent, so we must pronounce it based upon truth or error, for truth is always consistent with itself, and with every other truth, while error is always inconsistent. Now, when we examine the Bible in its commencement, we find its account of creation is perfectly inconsistent with, and contrary to, the sciences of geology, astronomy, physiology, and all well-ascertained facts based upon science and truth; and therefore we are justified in saying that whosoever wrote or inspired that part of the book must have been utterly ignorant of all these sciences; and as we proceed, we find so many inconsistencies, vices, and cruelties, that it is impossible to ascribe them to a wise or kind and benevolent power or being. (Hissing, stamping of feet, and whistling in the gallery, and cries

of "Go on, go on.") My friends, there was once a time when I had a voice strong enough to speak against all opposition, and be heard, but that time is past. My constitution has been somewhat broken, and mainly broken in the great conflict against error. I had hoped that whatever our opponents might think of my opinions, they would behave like gentlemen, though believers and defenders of the Bible. (Cries of "Hear, hear.") [A lady said—"If you have a heart to speak, speak on."] (Great applause.) I thank my sister for saying so. I have a heart to speak, and I will speak. (Tremendous applause.) My friends, you who do not know how long and how ardently I have wished for such a movement—can have no idea how I rejoice in this Convention, even hissing and all. (Applause.) The time was, some twenty-five years ago, when I stood alone on a platform—(Voice, "Where?")—for precisely the same noble cause, to defend the rights of humanity against the assumptions, superstitions, and errors of the Bible, without knowing that there was another human being in the wide world who thought as I did, and there and then I bore testimony against the same errors that I do now. (Applause and hissing.)

[The Rev. Mr. Turner expressed his hopes that Mrs. Rose would not be interrupted.]

As we proceed in our investigation of the Bible we find it inculcates war, slavery, incest, rapine, murder, and all the vices and crimes that blind selfishness and corruption could suggest; many have been enumerated here to-day, but it is utterly impossible to enumerate all. That book has been a two-edged sword to men; it has united them in nothing but persecution; to woman it has been like a millstone tied to her neck to keep her down; it has subjected her to the entire control and arbitrary will of man. It has libeled human nature, and libeled the very God of whom it speaks—it represents him as having created man in utter ignorance of consequences, as having created one sex, and pronounced it all to be very good, but found out that "it was not good for man to be alone," there-

fore he created woman—not for the same aims and objects of life that he created man—oh, no! but because he found, contrary to his expectation, that it was not well for him to be alone. So, after he had finished his work, and rested, he had to go to work again and make woman. This might be sublime if it were not ridiculous. And yet, do you know, my sisters, that most of the subjugation of woman, the tyranny and insult heaped upon her, sprung directly or indirectly from that absurd and false assumption. It is an insult to the supposed Creator to say he created one half of the race for the mere purpose of subjecting it to the other, as well as a libel on the nature and powers of woman, to say that there is no other aim nor destiny in her existence except to be a mere plaything or a drudge to man, as the circumstances may require. The writers of all such parts of the Bible, where it libels her nature and powers, and therefore restricts her rights more than man's, were alike devoid of a knowledge of her nature and destiny, as of wisdom, justice, and humanity.

Yes, in reading that book understandingly, and judging it by its own contents, it tells us in language not to be misunderstood, that instead of being an emanation from some exalted wisdom and goodness, it is simply the work of different minds, existing in different ages, possessing different degrees of knowledge and principle; and in accordance with their state of progress, their knowledge, and feelings, so did they write—they could do no better. I have charity and forbearance for the writers of the Bible. Had they had loftier conceptions, juster ideas, kinder feelings, and a more accurate knowledge of nature in general, and human nature in particular, they would have written quite a different Bible. As it is, it seems to me to be a concoction of incongruities, absurdities, and falsehoods almost impossible to conceive. It is true we find some excellent sentiments in it, such as “love thy neighbor as thyself,” “do unto others as you would others should do unto you,” and some others equally good; and though they are not original

with the Bible, they are still beautiful sentiments ; but as arbitrary commands they never can be carried out, for man is a being that requires a reason and a motive for his actions. Give him the reason and motive to love his neighbor as himself, in the knowledge of human nature and the relation he sustains to his fellow-man ; convince him that he can find happiness only in proportion as he endeavors to promote the happiness of others—not only of those immediately connected with him, but of the race, for the race is but the great family of man, of which every individual is a member ; and depend upon it, there will be no necessity for arbitrary commands with promised bribes and artificial rewards for the observance, and threats of penalties and artificial punishments for the non-observance of the great moral law nature has implanted in man for his rule of action, but which ignorance and error, called religion, has stifled by making mere belief of more consequence than works. A blind faith in things unseen and unknown is upheld as the greatest virtue in man.

The idea that “he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,” has caused more mischief to man than all the rest of the Bible could ever have benefited him, for it has produced all the persecution and ill-will on account of belief ; and it is evident to my mind that the writer of this passage was utterly ignorant of the nature and formation of belief, or he would have known that there can be no merit in belief, nor demerit in disbelief, for it is not in our power to believe or disbelieve by a mere effort of the will. In childhood, belief is given to us the same as our food ; we can make a child believe that what we call black is white ; and if we tell it that it is of the highest importance, that its happiness here and hereafter depends upon its being called white instead of black, and any one who dares to call it by any other name is a bad man, an enemy to the power who wished it to be called white, and an enemy to man, whose safety here and hereafter depends upon its being called white, that child, if

grown up, and possessed of an ardent, sincere, and conscientious temperament, would lay down his life, or sacrifice the lives of others, in support of black being white; and yet it would be black for all that. Thus we can make a child believe error to be truth, and it may die or sacrifice the lives of others in maintenance of it, and yet the error is not truth, but error.

[Here Mrs. Rose was interrupted by hissing, hooting, and stamping. Some gentleman asked if such disturbances were the kind of arguments by which they expected to sustain the Bible? He hoped not. Mr. Barker said, "As we can not do the Bible justice without their assistance, they, the disturbers, are willing to assist us." At this point, some one having gained access to the gas-meter, turned off the gas, and for some minutes a continual hissing, shrieking, stamping, drumming of canes, and whistling was kept up by the rioters, mainly occupying the gallery, the body of the church having been occupied almost entirely during the Convention by peaceable and well-disposed auditors, who during the enactment of this scene mostly sat in silence. The utter confusion made it impossible to hear any voice that might have appealed to any sense of decency and propriety perhaps yet existing in the minds of the rioters. The lights being restored, Mrs. Rose proceeded with her remarks, and said:]

When the lights were extinguished, it reminded me of one of the true things we find in the Bible, that some there are "who love darkness better than light." (Laughter and applause.) Just before that demonstration I endeavored to impress upon your minds how easily a child may be made to believe a falsehood and die in support of it, and therefore there can be no merit in a belief. We find in the various sects in Christendom, among the Jews, Mohammedans, Hindoos, in fact, throughout the entire world, that children are made to believe in the creed in which they are brought up. The children of the sect called the Thugs are made to believe in their creed, their bible—for they, too, have a bible, and priests to in-

terpret it, and bibles are always written so obscure as to require priestly interpreters—which tells them they are governed by a goddess; they seem to favor the rights of woman. (Applause.) Their means of salvation is to strangle every one they come in contact with who does not believe as they do; and the more infidels and heretics they strangle the surer their reward in heaven, and the most pious and conscientious among them try to bring the most human sacrifices; and as humanity is not quite dead even among them, so they have quite a refined way to dispatch their victims: they have a silken cord made into a lasso, and when they come in contact with an unbeliever, they throw it adroitly over his head, and by a quick pull strangle him without the shedding of blood, and almost without a struggle. So strongly is humanity engrafted in man, that in spite of all the errors and superstitions called religion, it has not entirely been destroyed. (Applause.)

Referring to some loafer in the gallery with his boots hanging over the railing, Mrs. Rose said: I do not know but exhibiting the boots over the railing may be a part of the defense of the Bible, but whether it is so or not, we live in an enlightened age, in the free United States of America, where every one may do as he pleases, so long as he does not interfere with the rights of others, even to exhibit his boots or discourse in favor of the Bible. (Applause and hissing.)

Thus we see that children acquire their belief as they acquire any other habit. In after life, when we are more capable of reasoning, comparing, and reflecting, belief depends on the amount of evidence. If the evidence is strong enough to convince the mind, an assent is elicited; if the evidence is not strong enough to convince the mind, we can not believe; and the amount of evidence sufficient to convince one mind may not be enough to convince another; but whether the evidence is convincing or not, there can be no particle of merit in belief, or demerit in disbelief. No one within the reach of my voice can persuade himself that he hears me not, nor any one out of

it that he hears me, any more than he can believe that two and two make five, after he has been made to know that they make four. Yet in spite of this truth in connection with the formation of belief, all religions have been based on the false supposition that we can believe as we please, or as the priest wishes us to, and therefore we were promised rewards for believing, and punishment for disbelieving, the fashionable superstitions called religion.

Christianity is based on this error, my friends. I say it not in anger, but in sadness of heart, that all cruelties, persecutions, and uncharitableness, from the time of the Inquisition to the present hissing, have been in consequence of that irrational and pernicious sentence, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." (Hissing.) That is perfectly consistent with your belief. But convinced as I am of the truth of the formation of human character, and of the inconsistencies, errors, and falsehoods of the Bible, in teaching a doctrine contrary to truth and to nature, I must come to the conclusion, that no very good, wise, exalted power or being could have been the author of it.

Now a few words as to its influence. As the Bible is based on error, what can its influence be but pernicious? For as truth is always beneficial, so is error always injurious. If we examine the history of Christianity, we will find that every step of its progress has been made in blood, and every atrocity committed has found authority in the Bible. When the tyrant of Russia and his despotic coadjutor of Austria subjugated poor, bleeding Hungary, they brought authority from the Bible. They told them that all power was of God—kings, priests, and emperors reign by the grace of God. "Oppose not those in authority; submit to the powers that be, for they are of God," has been the motto of every tyrant and every usurper; and when the burden has become too heavy to bear, the yoke too severe, and man could bear the oppression no longer, and tried to cast it off, he has ever been met with the cry of Babel to God's

authority, which must be enforced with the point of the bayonet. The Pope has oppressed and all but destroyed poor Italy with the authority of the Bible. When the tyrant of Russia held his iron heel on the neck of my own poor, prostrate native land, Poland, he brought the same authority. When with the iron rod, that terrible thing called a scepter, said to have been given from heaven, the usurper sways the liberties and lives of millions, he brings good authority from the Bible. (Loud hissing.) Do you hiss the Bible, or Russia? (Applause.) My friends, a most terrible outrage has been perpetrated on poor humanity; there never has been a heart broken, a tear drawn from the eye, a drop of blood from the human heart, nor a sigh of agony from the expiring victim, but the perpetrators of these horrid inhumanities have found authorities for it in the Bible. It is a sad reflection on man, that he could be so enslaved by the authority of a book. No one knows its origin, in itself the most unintelligible, unreasonable, and inconsistent that could ever have been concocted by the mind of man. (Disturbance.)

It is to be regretted that disorder takes the place of order; but this confusion of acts proceeds from the confusion of mind, in consequence of the confusion of ideas taught by the Bible; here is its source and its influence. The disorder of this book has filled man's mind with disorder, and when the mind is a chaos, how can his actions be order? What do we claim in this Protestant republic? Why, only what it professes to guarantee to every one, namely, freedom of speech; and look at the conduct of the believers and defenders of the Bible; but their disorder and riot is the best argument they can bring in support of it. Martin Luther once received the same argument from the Church of Rome. (Hisses.) Do you hiss Luther, or the Pope? (Applause.) Luther protested against the Church of Rome and her Bible; he called her a harlot, a falsehood, a libel upon human nature, religion, and God; he claimed the right of conscience and of private judgment; we,

too, claim it here. Since his time, Protestantism has gone on constantly protesting; we, too, protest against the right to shackle the mind and prevent private judgment and freedom of speech; our protest here is in consequence of the protest of Luther; do you dislike it? Throw your minds back to that time and hiss him to your hearts' content. (Applause and hissing, and drumming of feet and canes.)

According to the Bible in the hands of the Pope, there is no freedom of opinion, no variety of sects, no private judgment; his Bible tells him only to subject human rights, and judgment to his despotic rule. (Applause and hisses.) Protestantism professes to give freedom of conscience and of speech. Make your choice between the Church of Rome and Protestantism, and abide by it. (Tremendous applause and hissing.) And yet the Bible, as a history of the past—as reminiscences of other times and people—would be interesting enough, provided it was not palmed upon us as a guide for our age and time; as well might you force a man, at forty, to wear his swaddling clothes, because they were once fit for him. The time I trust will come—is already at hand—when the Bible, like any other book, will be subjected to the test of reason, the light of knowledge and of truth, and by that test either stand or fall, and every man will adopt what appears to him good, and reject what appears to him bad and inconsistent. But on account of its having been forced on man as an infallible rule of life, it has been more instrumental to keep him in ignorance, degradation, and vice, to prevent his elevation and development, to produce war, slavery, intemperance, and all the evils that afflict the race, than any and all the books that have ever been concocted by man. (Renewed hissing, indecent expressions, and disturbance.) All this does not disturb me nor ruffle my temper; it is only an additional evidence to me of the pernicious influence of the Bible. This is a practical illustration of it. I have stood more than this in opposing error, and I can stand this. It inspires me with no

other feeling than pity and commiseration for such irrationality; but it is late, and I had better save my voice; it may be wanted to be raised in the same holy cause at some other time. (Applause and hissing in the gallery.) To you, my sisters, I would but say, that the defenders of the Bible have given you a most practical evidence of the rights and liberties Christianity has conferred upon you. The Bible has enslaved you, the churches have been built on your subjugated necks; do you wish to be free? Then you must trample the Bible, the church, and the priests under your feet.

Mrs. Rose took her place amidst deafening applause, hisses, and confusion. The Convention then adjourned to half-past ten o'clock, Sunday morning, June 5th.

While the audience were retiring, Miss Mandock sang and played a beautiful air, "God Speed the Right," which sentiment seemed to be a profanity to the disturbers, for taking their places in the gallery above the singers, they groaned out music that would have disgraced Bedlam, or some nether regions with which they seemed to be so familiar.

FOURTH DAY—MORNING SESSION.

Sunday, June 5.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Convention was called to order at half-past ten o'clock, by the President, Mr. BARKER, of Ohio, when—

Rev. Mr. TURNER and Mr. CUMMINGS, of Boston, both claiming the floor at once, the President decided that Mr. Cummings should have the floor; when—

Rev. Mr. TURNER appealed from the decision of the President, whose decision was sustained by the Convention.

Mr. CUMMINGS then made a few remarks, whose irrelevancy forbids their insertion.

Mr. ANDREW J. DAVIS then made the following speech :

The subject before this Convention has as yet only been broached. The people begin to see that there is much honesty, good-will, and fine spirit invested on both sides, the traditional and the natural, the supernatural and the rational. Both sides have talented men—honest men and women ; both sides have honest men and women as recipients. This has been fairly enough indicated in this meeting, and this Convention has but served the purpose to show simply the fulcrum on which will be placed the lever by which the future generations shall be moved, and by which the great work of reform shall go forward.

In this discourse I will try to bring forward, as much as possible, what seems to me to be objections to the supernatural origin of the Bible. I can assure you, in conscience, that I am speaking of that I know, speaking up to the light and knowledge which is within, and I am determined to get all the knowledge I can. I will not promise to believe to-morrow what I believe to-day, for I may know more. I shall simply state to you what I have thus far learned. I may know more, and when I have an opportunity I will tell you that also.

All True Religion is immutable. I wonder that any one can for a moment imagine the possibility of its overthrow. Is truth a mere circumstance? Do clouds and storms extinguish the sun? Is true religion dependent for its existence upon belief or disbelief—upon forms and organizations?

O ye of little faith! Go by the ocean's side, and behold far away the *rock of ages*. The storm-king sends his servants to battle. The clouds assemble, thunder answers thunder, from the four corners of heaven the elements rush to one center, and the fierce tempest descends with all the pageantry of contending deities. The ocean groans with the voice of anger,

mountainous waves roll forward with a mighty power; but amid all, and above all, stands yon noble Rock, erect, unmoved, and unchanged. Ten thousand times ten thousand storms may rage beneath, around, above—ages upon ages may roll away—empires may rise and kingdoms fall—millions of human beings may come and go—the terrestrial ball may pursue its pathway about the parent orb; yet, unshaken and immovable stands the True Religion—firm as the universe—beautiful as Deity.

You who fear or hope that religion will be extinguished, need wisdom; go, study the constitution of the world. Contemplate the rock in the ocean, which no storms nor contention can disturb. Gaze at the sun, whose life-giving glories no clouds nor tempests can ever diminish!

But where shall we find this religion which changes not? Ah! here is the question. And when we become acquainted with its locality, how shall we *know* that it is the “true religion?” What is the rock? The answer may be found in the New Testament: “The kingdom of Heaven is WITHIN you.” That is to say, the law and the spirit—the way, truth, and life—are natural to the soul of man. Yea, religion has a rock in the soul. In its elements and essences, in its inextinguishable instincts and unfolding faculties, which are true prophets and true apostles—in these find we the true religion. If this position be not tenable—if the mind of man is not the basis of true religion—then is God a respecter of persons, partial in his dealings, and the New Testament answer must be a fallacy.

We hear much lamentation concerning the fate of the Bible. In most minds, religion and the book are *one* and inseparable. “They must stand or fall together!” But I can not think so. Can not a man exist without a shadow? Are symbols essential to the existence of thought? Surely the letter and the spirit are not indissoluble! If they are, then well may we lament and deplore any examination of the Bible.

The idea that the Bible is the infallible word of God—that *it* is the Rock of Ages, that in *it* is only to be found the *true religion*—is fatal to itself. There is a prevailing *superstition*, generated by commentators, that the Old and New Testaments are intrinsically and extrinsically harmonious. When the whole volume is *correctly* understood (they assert), the beauty and stupendous unity of the system is clear as the sun in the heavens. But this assumption is made by persons who have the presumption to suppose that *they have seen the harmonies* of the Scriptures.

Let us reflect on this. The assumption is that the Bible is the word of God—a supernaturally-originated and a supernaturally-inspired volume—given to man for his enlightenment and salvation. And yet, according to the Protestant system of *private* judgment and liberty of conscience, each mind, though uninspired and in no manner supernaturally-endowed, is left to read and find out the *meaning* of God in this word. While one man finds the Bible infallible, another finds it fallible—one discovers it to be harmonious, another inharmonious; and so comes contention and criticism. I can not but admire, in bold contrast, the beautiful logical consistency of the Roman Catholic Church. It never was guilty of trusting *religion* to the people—never committed a deed so fatal to priestly despotism as that of permitting an *unsupernatural* laity to read and interpret a supernatural book! The *reading of the book is fatal* to the idea of its supernatural origin, also to its so-called infallible principles of religion and truth. When will Protestants fully realize their present situation?

Protestants must certainly see, sooner or later, that the door which Martin Luther opened can *never be shut against* the onward march of the free-born soul! The infallibility of the Pope is but a continuation of the Protestant idea of the infallibility of Moses, John, or Paul. If you admit the supposition of the possibility of *Isaiah's* infallible inspiration, you have then granted the premises upon which Pope-and-Priest

infallibility is predicated. If God saw proper ever to inspire *supernaturally* a Jew or a dweller of Palestine, how do you know but he also sees it proper to *supernaturally inspire* a Cardinal or a Pope? If God has ever inspired a paper and pasteboard book, how do you know but that he now inspires the Roman Catholic Church? If you admit the one, there is no escape from the other. As believers in the supernatural inspiration of the Bible writers, you are, according to every principle of logical deduction, constrained to admit the possibility of all which the Catholic Church claims for itself.

But Luther, I say, in protesting against the authority of the Pope, opened a door for the final rejection of the *book-authority* upon which the first is based. Pio Nono is as likely to be a chosen vessel of God now, as Paul was in the beginning of the Christian era. The superiority of the character of one man over that of another is of no account where supernatural transactions are involved in the premises. Therefore I affirm that the Protestant idea of *an infallible Bible writer* is the firm foundation of Popish despotism, and of all the absurdities of the Catholic institution.

Persuade me that the *paper and pasteboard Bible* is the infallible word of God, and I will at once accept the *brick-and-mortar church* as the recipient and emporium of his divine favors. Persuade me that Moses, Joshua, Solomon, David, Isaiah, Matthew, John, and Paul were in very truth the chosen vessels or penmen of the Supreme Being, and I promise you that I will at once accept, and would demonstrate conclusively from your principles, that the unbroken chain of cardinals and popes, extending from Peter the First to the kingdom of heaven, are as certainly the attorneys of Jehovah, and as being indispensable to all temporal and spiritual government and civilization. If Moses and Joshua and Paul are to be my *masters* in those sacred principles which bind my soul to its Author, then why may I not accept *Pio Nono* as my *master* and father in spiritual things? You, who are Protestant be-

lievers in Bible infallibility, *can not* deny me this logical inference. But you reply that I should not allow a *mere man* to rule over my conscience—that it is yielding my liberty to the jurisdiction of despots, and placing my soul in the keeping of mere priests and teachers of religion. Verily; but what are you Protestants doing, when you take Moses and Paul for your masters? Surely these were mere men also—manifesting all the attributes and characteristics of humankind—and so, why should they, any more than Clement or Alexander, be my *masters* in the affairs of my soul?

Dr. Orestes A. Brownson, editor of a Catholic Quarterly Review, a man of much learning and independence, is a very consistent and faithful exponent of religious aims and tendencies. He has traveled from Egypt, through the wilderness of skepticism, into the promised land of belief, which he is now preparing to rid of all Protestants by logical weapons. Protestants advocate the supreme authority of the Bible, but tolerate to each man the liberty of reading its pages to suit himself. Brownson, on the other hand, advocates the absolute supremacy of the Pope, and denies to man any rights. God only has rights. Man has *duties*. The Church is God's representative, and society is under its exclusive dominion. The Church grants *privileges* to governments, and governments owe allegiance and obedience to the Church. Now, this is nothing less than theological or Protestant DESPOTISM, logically and legitimately carried into practice. But how much better than this is the Popery or clerical dogmas of Protestants! The Bible is God's representative or word, they affirm. The individual has *no* rights, but *duties*; mind is *not* the master, but the *subject* of its teachings. The Pope regards all as *heretics* who reject his authority! The Protestant denounces all as *infidels* who reject the authority of Moses! The idea is simply this: Protestantism is but a *child* of Catholicism. By a law of hereditary descent, the parent transmits its character to the offspring; but, as evidence of a

law of progress, the child is not so wicked and degraded as its venerable progenitor.

Catholics make no more *opposition* to Free Schools, whereby *education* may be extended to all people, than do Protestants to the *free discussion* of the Bible, whereby *truth* may be elicited and transmitted to posterity. In regard to Free Schools, we quote from Dr. Brownson :

“ Our enemies rely upon Godless schools—State education—as a means of checking the progress of Catholicity. We must admit they have laid their plans with *infernal* skill. The result will *not* meet their anticipations, however! The attention of the Catholic world has been directed to this subject by those whom God has sent to rule over us, and a *struggle*, which will end in victory for the Church, has begun between Catholicity and the State, to see who shall have the child.”

So speaks O. A. Brownson concerning Free Schools. But observe, when you read Protestant notices of this Bible Convention, that, by substituting the word “convention” for schools, with one or two other alterations, you will see the same spirit manifested toward us. Indeed, it is hard to determine which is the worst enemy of freedom and humanity. The party that would make *the Church* our master, or those who would give to us the Bible as a sovereign, with only *feeble reason* to comprehend and harmonize its multifarious inconsistencies. Reason is *feeble only* after having been for a lifetime subject to bondage. Protestant denunciation of Reason is paralleled by Catholic defamation of Protestantism; the opinions of the two parties are equally valueless.

Father Gavazzi comes to our country, and lifts up his eloquent voice against the despotisms and abominations of the Romish Church. But he is in bondage, and can do nothing more than delight a Protestant audience. He can not do the “work of destruction,” because he stands intrenched in *Protestantism*, which deserves the same fate. He cries out against

the *ignorance*, the *idolatry*, the *slavery* of Catholicity; but against *Protestant* ignorance, idolatry, and slavery his voice can not be raised, because the receivers of his messages are composed of the latter party. He affirms that *Catholicism is too narrow* for his soul. With a soul so expanded beyond the circumscribed confines of Pius the Ninth, I wonder how he can breathe the confined air of Protestant bigotry and superstition! I can see *no difference* between the *infallibility* of the Pope and the infallibility of Paul. But we have *political* freedom under Protestantism, which the Church of Rome denies to its subjects. Very true; but how came this blessing? It was first established through the instrumentality of the greatest despot, *Henry VIII.*, that ever ruled over mankind. But in our blessed land let us raise the hymn of gratitude to Thomas Paine, Jefferson, Franklin, and many others, who were the sworn friends of liberty and of free principles. Let it be remembered that the *political* and *other* blessings of America are not owing to any exertions on the part of priests, nor to any logical application of the doctrine of *Bible infallibility*, upon which Protestantism rests.

In a recent letter to *the clergy of all denominations* I affirmed that the Battle of the Evidences of Christianity is to be fought on the broad field of scientific and positive principles. The old metaphysical ground of idealistic impossibilities—such as what and where is God? what and where is spirit? what and where is heaven? are now scarcely admitted into the arena. But the mountain torrent of civilization has dashed along regardless of religious and mythical obstructions, and with each succeeding wave there comes to our land a *new discovery* in some department of creation. The progress of scientific discovery, in one brilliant day, is carrying the war into the very *heart* of biblical authority. The positive and unavoidable deductions of astronomy, of ethnology, of archæology, of hie-
rology, of physiology, stand in startling opposition to nearly all the assumptions of popular theology pertaining to Bible

infallibility. I will presently bring this fact more distinctly before the reader.

The scientific education of the Protestant clergy is so utterly neglected, while preparing for the ministry, that they usually enter the field of labor without the proper implements of spiritual husbandry. Consequently, having read the standard works on theology, and one or two books in reply to "infidel objections," the young minister is apt to entertain several inflated notions respecting the perfection of biblical wisdom. Sometimes we hear them preach thus: "The Bible has stood the test of ages. No closeness of inspection, keenness of investigation, or stricture of criticism has been able to defeat its claims. Moses' account of creation is simple and sublime. The volume of destiny is suddenly thrown open; time is proclaimed; creation arises; and a new race of intelligence appears on the scene. Nothing can shake the plain narrative of Moses. The Bible is perfect in all its parts—full of excellences—and, taken as a whole, is without contradiction or inconsistency."

Most congregations accept this as a tenable doctrine. Children grow up with this conviction, and so the Protestant notion of *Bible infallibility* is kept alive and before the people. But now is the time to investigate these positions, because never before was the world so full of scientific discovery.

In the light of the nineteenth century, the Mosaic account is notoriously unsound and fallible. We have a vast number of cogent reasons for rejecting the divine authority of Genesis. Let me ask your attention to a few of them.

First. "In the beginning God *created* heaven and earth." There are several philosophical objections to the truth of this statement. It is found that matter, though changeable, is *indestructible*—not a particle can be put out of existence. Chemists have tried the experiment in vain. Hence Nature declares that matter is *eternal* substance, and could not have sprung from nothing. The *creation* of matter implies the

bringing of *something* into existence from *nothing*, which proposition no healthy mind can for a moment entertain. Here is one reason why we object to the Mosaic account.

Second. "And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." Aside from the supernatural operation here implied, there are very strong scientific objections to this statement. But first let us notice the *internal* contradiction. You will observe that there were three days and three nights *before* God put "*lights* in the firmament of the heaven to *divide the day from the night.*" Before the creation of a "greater light to rule the night," how, let me ask, could there have been "evenings and mornings." But this objection is trivial in comparison to the following:

It is asserted that "darkness was upon the face of the deep"—that God said, "Let there be light, and there was light"—implying the absence at first of *all* light from the universe. This is in direct *antagonism to all the positive* discoveries of the age. "The celebrated speculation of La Place, now very generally received as probable by astronomers, concerning the origin of the earth and planets, participates essentially in the strictly inductive character of modern theory. The speculation is, that the *atmosphere of the sun* originally extended to the present limits of the solar system; from which, by the process of cooling, it has *contracted* to its present dimensions. There is in La Place's theory," says Mill, in his system of Logic, "*nothing* hypothetical; it is an example of legitimate reasoning from a present effect to a past cause, according to the known laws of that cause." Science demonstrates that first, heat, *light*, and electricity were in existence *before* the earth was formed; but Genesis makes the earth to exist *previous* to light! Nature and the Old Testament are here at war with each other. Which shall we believe?

Third. The Mosaic account is unsound, because it teaches that the heavens and earth, and all that in them is, were made

all *perfect* at once. "The Almighty voice is addressed to chaos. Confusion hears it, and wild uproar stands ruled. The waters subside; the verdant landscape is seen; songs burst from every grove; and stars, bright, rolling, and silent-beaming, are hurled forth from the Almighty hand." And Genesis also affirms that man was more pure, perfect, and wise—more in unity with heaven and its Author—than the race is to day!

In absolute refutation of all this, how explicit are the positive declarations of universal nature! The *first* types of vegetation, the *first* indications of animal life, the *first* things performed or invented by mankind, were rough, crude, incomplete, and in every respect *inferior* to after developments. All things—trees, fish, birds, animals—grow from incompleteness to perfection, from rudeness to refinement, from the imperfect to the beautiful. And must all the declarations of Nature be overruled by the authority of a book whose origin is Eastern and mythical!

Fourth. We object to Genesis because of another *internal* contradiction. The book asserts that "God saw *every thing* that he had made, and, behold, it was *very good*." If God saw *every thing*, and pronounced every thing *good*, let me ask: Who made the *wicked serpent* that tempted Eve? If this animal was more subtle than any beast of the field—having the devil in him—who created them? Who was it that made and pronounced every thing *good*?

Fifth. Genesis can not be a true report of creation, because instead of coinciding with the revelations of universal nature, which prove the *gradual* formation of the globe by a cooling-off process, the progressive introduction or development of plants and animals on its surface by a natural method of growth, the account teaches the particular, the sudden, the miraculous, the incomprehensible creation of every thing in six literal days.

Sixth. Genesis *can not* be a true report, because it contra-

dicts the positive declarations of Astronomy. According to our system of chronological calculation, Moses makes the heavens and the earth about six thousand years old. But astronomy declares that *light* requires *three hundred thousand years to travel* from one of the fixed stars to our earth! This one fact alone proves that those orbs have been in existence three hundred thousand years! But you answer, "that all things are possible with God." Paul denies this (Heb. vi. 18), and affirms by two *immutable* things it is possible for God to lie. In this I believe with the apostle; for I can not think that the Spirit of this beautiful universe is *capable* of an inconsistency!

Seventh. Genesis can not be a true report, because it belittles our ideas of God. The extent and grandeur of the universe, the resplendent objects and countless assemblages which people the empire of being, cleanse and purify the mind of all contracted notions of the Deity and his government. But Moses destroys all consistent ideas of an omnipresent energizing Spirit, by describing him as a man making the universe in six days, and, being fatigued, as *resting* on the seventh; and not only so, but as "walking in the garden in the cool of the day"—as any common Egyptian god would be supposed to do—with hands and feet, and a limited power of vision. "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of an *omnipresent*, omnipotent, omniscient Spirit. And an *omniscient* Being, unable to find the guilty pair among the trees of the garden, began to call unto Adam: "Where art thou?" And after the creation was getting along altogether too fast and wickedly for the Creator, then, again, like an Egyptian god (Gen. vi. 6), "it *repented* the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Now all this is vastly too human and insignificant to be applied to the omniscient Spirit of this Universe. Every man, Christian or Pagan, when in his right mind, totally rejects the narrow and cramping idea of God advocated in the book of

Genesis, and elsewhere. "A universe," says Rev. Thomas Dick, "vast, boundless, and incomprehensible, is just such as we ought *naturally* to expect from a Being who is infinite, eternal, and omnipresent; whose *power* is uncontrollable, whose *wisdom* is unsearchable, and whose *goodness* is boundless and diffusive. All his plans and operations must be, like himself, vast, boundless, and inconceivable by mortals." Now I submit *that this idea* is not applicable to the Mosaic God of creation!

Eighth. The most advanced thinkers among the supporters of the Mosaic theory have, as I am fully aware, made a virtue of necessity, by abandoning the idea of *six literal days* of creation, and accepting, instead, the geological interpretation of epochs or "ages." The most learned of modern Christian writers say, that the term "evening and the morning" must be accepted *figuratively* to mean the "ending and beginning" of indefinite stages of creative development. Very well; there can be no objection to putting a little *new wine* in an *old* bottle, if therefore the wine will but be more acceptable to creatures of habit. But here comes a trouble of inconsistency. If we are now to receive the six days as *figurative*, how shall we regard the *seventh day*, on which the Lord rested? If the six days signify "ages," what does the seventh day mean? Why are we inconsistently and hypocritically keeping *one day* in each common week as the day hallowed by the repose of Deity, while, in our theory, we are compelled to accept the *six days* as uncertain, immeasurable, indefinite strides of creative development? Here, again, the *positive* principles and deductions of a philosophical theology stand in direct antagonism to the accounts of Moses.

There are before my mind *eighteen* other reasons, all equally cogent, going to invalidate the divine authority and intrinsic correctness of the very first chapters in King James' Bible. But we will let them pass, and ask attention to the *origin* of those chapters.

It is a singular and significant fact, that there is not a line in Egyptian history alluding to the existence or prodigies of Moses. The Egyptians were a cultivated people. Like a chain of mountains, their wonderful pyramids extend far behind the period set to Noah's *flood*, without so much as *mentioning* such a marvelous catastrophe or event. Recent ethnological discoveries carry us into the remote past, or *eight thousand years* from the present time, making the Egyptian nation, with signs of the existence of a still *riper* civilization previously, two thousand years older than Moses sets to the creation of man. The hierologist is sustained by Chinese records, and the later of geologic sciences.

And, what is still more remarkable, the thrilling, mythic, and simple orphic sayings and verses of Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece are, in conception and mostly in phraseology, *identical* with the *first part* of the book of Genesis. And when the hieroglyphic characters of Egypt, Tartary, and Africa shall have been perfectly deciphered, it will be found, I think, that the cosmologic and demonologic relations of Moses were in existence nearly *two thousand years* before such a people as the Jews had begun to be. These discoveries, however, will be tardily introduced, because every traveler and antiquarian knows that he is writing books to be read by Protestant and sectarian readers.

Richard, in his work on Egyptian mythology, repudiates the idea that Moses was inspired to write the Pentateuch. He says: "The five books of Moses carry with them *internal* evidence, *not* of one sole, connected, original composition, but they bear evidence of being a *compilation from earlier annals*. The genealogical tables and family records of various tribes, that are found embodied in the Pentateuch, bear the appearance of documents *copied from written* archives. They display no trait which might lead us to ascribe their production to the dictates of immediate revelation." The first ten chapters of Genesis, which contain an account of creation, are nearly

two thousand years older than the Jewish nation. The pyramids and obelisks of Egypt, and the hieroglyphic records on the land of Tartary, will, when fairly brought to the light, reveal the Oriental parentage of the books of Moses.

Perhaps you think me too far in advance of discovery. The celebrated Mr. Gliddon, in his carefully written work on "Ancient Egypt," says, "There is no reason for supposing that other cotemporary nations* did not possess, in those earlier times, similar records; nor is there any reason why other cotemporary nations should not have chronicled all great events, and handed down, as far as ourselves, some of the annals of *those events* on which the Bible, during an interval of *four hundred years*, is strictly silent." Two books, one entitled the "Wars of Jehovah," and the other "Sepher-Hajasher," have been found, which our Bible does not contain. How came these omissions?

Intelligent Christians acknowledge that the present antiquated mode of biblical interpretation can not withstand the positive deductions of all the sciences and discoveries of the age. Regarded as a record of physical events, the Mosaic history can not be sustained. Hence many minds are driven into spiritual or symbolic interpretation. The creation of the world, the garden of Eden, the temptation and fall, the deluge and tower of Babel, are received by many as symbolic relations—as types of spiritual experience and events—referring equally to nations and individuals. Swedenborg, distinguished for his historic and scientific knowledge, declares, in his commentary on the Jewish Testament, that these events and accounts can be understood and supported only in a *figurative* or spiritual sense—implying that a literal view of them, as entertained by New England clergy and laity, is at once absurd, untenable, and unsupportable by nature, reason, intuition, and history. It would consume our time to present

* That is, nations existing at the time of the Israelites.

Swedenborg's science of correspondences—but enough is adduced to show what reasonable men and scholars think of the Mosaic account. Swedenborg affirms that the early Scriptures were written in correspondential language, of which the hieroglyphic scriptures of earth are vestiges. Every figure *symbolized* some particular idea. Thus, as some writer remarks, a *beetle* did not stand for a beetle only, but also for the *world*; an *asp* corresponded to *royalty*; the *eagle*, to *courage*; the *lion*, to *strength*; a *ram's head*, to *intellect*; a *duck*, to a *doctor of medicine*; and a *goose*, to a *doctor of divinity*.

The idea that the Bible is a connected whole—without contradiction or inconsistency—is a superstition of the Protestant priesthood. The intelligent and accomplished Jesuit entertains no such untenable opinion. He depends upon the external despotisms of organization, and upon the attractions of a well-regulated and venerable ecclesiasticism, for the success of his design upon the religious liberties of humanity. Protestantism and Catholicism deserve the same condemnation. They differ, not in the character of their notions respecting infallibility, but in *degree* only.

The Catholic idea of Pope and Church infallibility is simply an elongation or extension of the Protestant idea of Old and New Testament infallibility.

The two parties are, in theory and theology, equally *foes* to the interests and liberties of the world. And I have shown, I think, that *one* should not be allowed to impose any more restrictions on the soul of man than the other—that is to say, neither is good enough to merit the support of intelligent, benevolent, free, and conscientious minds.

Have I said any thing against true religion? Because I reject the infallibility of Paul and the Pope—the infallibility of a book and a church—am I therefore irreligious? The Old Testament is a statement of the ideas and events of the Patriarchal Age—the era of Force; the New Testament is a statement of the ideas and events of the Transitional Age—the era

of Love; the two, combined, formed King James' Bible. But let me ask—why should the statement of one age *remain* the statement of all ages?

Can religion be based on a book? This idea has obtained among Christians; hence they imagine the heathen to be benighted, and *without* religion! Is God a respecter of persons or nations? Far from it. True religion, like true anatomy and physiology, is *older* than books? There must be a religion *older* than the Bible; a God *better* than it declares.

Did Newton learn astronomy in books? Did Jesus learn intuition and love of all human kind from the prophets? Is there no inexhaustible fountain from whose flowing rivulets each soul may freely drink? Does the same God not always inspire and nourish? What would ye think of a man who does all his *farming, plowing, and planting, by reading books* on Egyptian and Roman agriculture? The land before his eyes would meanwhile grow *thorns* and unwholesome vegetation. What, then, do ye think of Christians who bid their followers to *read and believe* King James' version of the Testaments, to the end that they may be *religious* and acceptable unto God? He who would not "be wise above what is written" (in any book) is a miserable pagan, engaged in blindly loving his ideals, and needs philosophic culture. For is there not a law, a science, a principle of justice and equity in man's mental economy, *superior* to all writing? Let every son and daughter of nature be developed to the *fullness of the structure of the perfect man*—let society develop the kingdom of Justice and Freedom within each soul and family—then you will see a manifestation of TRUE RELIGION.

Mr. DAVIS' address was listened to throughout with marked attention.

The Convention then adjourned to half-past two o'clock, P.M.

FOURTH DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION.

Sunday, June 5th.

The Convention having been called to order,
Rev. Mr. STORRS came forward and said :

It may be proper for me to state at the outset, that I do not stand here, and have not stood here at any part of this discussion, to plead that every word in the Bible was given by inspiration. No such ground have I taken. I take the Bible to be a record, by faithful and trustworthy witnesses, of revelations that have been made by God to men, and of transactions connected with these revelations, and that the record of these transactions is not a matter of inspiration. The persons who recorded it recorded it in their own language, according to their understanding of it. Now, sir, in regard to the general charge, I, at the outset of this discussion, called for the law by which the Bible was to be judged, and so far at least as it related to my friend Wright and myself, it was settled that natural religion, the religion of Nature, or the God of Nature, was the law by which the Bible was to be tried. Though we might have pressed that point further, we chose to stop at that point, and to meet our friend on that ground—his own ground—and to test the God of the Bible by the God of Nature. Even supposing the God of the Bible sanctioned those dreadful things which he (friend Wright) spoke of—which may be a question of itself—we have, in comparing the God of Nature with the God of the Bible, shown, at any rate, that the God of the Bible is no worse than the God of Nature, and therefore the God of the Bible can not be brought in guilty under the law by which he was to be tried. If it is pleaded that the God of the Bible sometimes acted one way and sometimes another, we say that the God of Nature has acted in the same way. The God of Nature sometimes gives rain, waters

the earth, refreshes it with cheering showers, and causes it to vegetate and bring forth; and at other times the God of Nature withholds the rain, and the earth parches up, and man and beast suffer and languish for the lack of the necessaries of life. Then the God of Nature is equally as deficient in this respect as the God of the Bible, and is equally charged with acting two separate ways at different times.

We might enlarge upon that contrast, but lest we should be charged with traveling over the ground again, we do not enlarge upon it. It has been insinuated, and something more than insinuated, that God—I suppose, of course, meaning the God of the Bible—had no right to take away man's life, except to transform him, as the caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. Now, Mr. Chairman, I have heard of that caterpillar transformation till to me it is worn threadbare. Sir, the caterpillar never did die, the life never was *extinct*; enter into that caterpillar's bed, and I say that he has wound himself for repose; put into that bed something which extinguishes life, and see if a butterfly will ever come out. *Never*. But, sir, our friend should have followed the butterfly a little further, and then the beautiful butterfly, after fluttering in the sun, and from flower to flower, *dies*; and where is it now? Look at it lying in the street! where is he? emerged into some higher life! If it has emerged into some higher life, the God of Nature has failed to reveal it. Yes, sir, and the God of Nature has failed to reveal that a son or daughter of the human family emerges into a higher life when once they die. We call upon you to bring a revelation of Nature that when a man dies he emerges into a higher state. Let us see the testimony, if they have it. Let it be forthcoming. The pagan philosophers, about whom so much has been said, only speculated upon the subject. They never satisfied even their own minds, by their own confessions, only while they were in argument. They thought it expedient to teach the doctrine to the vulgar multitude, because they could hold an influence over

them by it, while they themselves did not believe in this immortality; and Bishop Whately has abundantly shown this in his work on the "Future States."

Why, sir, if the God of Nature has revealed the certainty that man lives after he is dead, I ask why it is that these recent developments, which are called "rapping spirits," have made their appearance? Is that the God of Nature, sir? This very resort to rapping spirits is an acknowledgment that the God of Nature reveals nothing in regard to man's future life.

I shall now proceed to notice some few of the criticisms which have been made upon the Bible or the teachings of the Bible, and which have been urged upon the attention with great pathos, as showing that the Bible was as bad as the resolution says. Perhaps I may as well begin in relation to the attempt to prove from this Bible that the God of Nature has revealed the moral perfections of God. I have taken the ground that nature or natural religion goes no further in regard to the doctrines of God than that there is a God, or that there are Gods, one or many, possessed of great power and intelligence; that the God of Nature does not reveal with any certainty to man's mind the moral perfections or character of that being or of those beings. An appeal has been made to our Bible which gives us to understand that if our Bible is true, my position is not true; and if the Bible has taught a doctrine of that character, we are to conclude that nature does teach the moral perfections of God. We are referred to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 1st chapter: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them," or to them; "for God hath showed it unto them, for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." What invisible things are clearly seen? The moral perfections of God? Are they clearly seen? Paul, what do you mean? "Even his eternal *power* and *Godhead*." That is just what I said.

His being, his existence, his power and intelligence, it is clear, are manifested by natural religion, but beyond that the Apostle does not affirm that it goes, and he specified the very points to which we referred.

Next, sir, we have a criticism on the expression of our Lord in Mark xvi. 10 ; and if I am not mistaken that verse has been quoted uniformly alone, without regard to its context—without regard to any thing that is said in connection with it. The text, as quoted, is this: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; he that believeth not shall be damned.” This is brought as a charge against the Bible, as threatening the most terrible penalty for unbelief, when it is affirmed a man can not believe without evidence. Well, I shall not disagree with any on that point. I do not believe a man can believe without evidence ; nor did the blessed Jesus require that any one should believe without evidence. He expressly declares, as a principle of his religion, that if he had not come and spoken unto them, then they had not had sin. Just look at the connection: “And he said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; he that believeth not shall be damned,” or condemned. Why condemned? Because they did not believe arbitrarily, without evidence? No, sir. He directed his disciples to preach the gospel—good news—glad tidings—the gospel that the God of Nature never preached, and never can—the gospel of a future life by a resurrection from the dead. He told them to go and preach, and the apostles did go and preach that gospel.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the proclamation, the glad tidings to a benighted world, that the God of Nature has failed to enlighten, that there is another life, which may be obtained by the dying children of men ; and that that life is God’s appointment through the Lord Jesus Christ, and by him and through him *alone*. These were the tidings to a dark world, speculating, unable to find out what was beyond the dark

clouds of death. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The God of Nature teaches no such principle of self-revival. It remains for the glad tidings and good news of God to bring to view the possibility of obtaining immortality and eternal life.

To talk, then, about an arbitrary command to believe without evidence, is talking wrongfully against the Bible. No, sir. I am free to admit, if you please, that the God of the Bible does appeal to man's reason; and I am willing to even go a step farther, if my friends on the other side will like it better, and so far as to say that whatever may profess to be a revelation that contradicts palpably, plainly, true reason, is not a subject of belief. (Hear.)

I notice another criticism which we have had on this occasion, which is in the 23d chapter of Matthew: "Then spoke Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." It is said here that our Lord Jesus Christ requires that whatever the Pharisees bid them observe and do, they were to do. Where did they sit? In Moses' seat. Then to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. If the Scribes and Pharisees did not speak according to the law and to the testimony, Jesus never commanded them to obey them—never. There has been something said in the course of these remarks by our friends on the opposite side about the Mosaic priesthood, about the corruptions of the Jewish priesthood, as if that were an argument against the religious institutions of Moses. I beg, right at this point, to be indulged with the privilege of reading a remark of Doctor McCulloh, in his work to which I have before referred. In the 1st volume of his work, page 209, he says: "Though the prophets always

urged the nation in the most earnest manner to a strict observance of the institutions of Moses, it is abundantly evident that they could not have formed any party with the priesthood; for not only have they entirely abstained from *commending* the order, but their writings are full of censures and denunciations against them for transgressing the laws of Jehovah, and for failing in their moral duties toward the nation at large. It is hardly necessary to remark that Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the only two prophets taken from the priestly tribe, are as express in their censures of the priesthood as other prophets." He adds, in a note, "Collins, the Deist, was so much struck with the amount of censure cast by the prophets upon the priesthood, that he terms them,"—these prophets—"free-thinkers, not discerning that though the prophets censured the irreligion or the immorality of the priests when they had thus transgressed, yet they universally sustained the institutions of Moses in the most urgent manner, as being constitutions of Jehovah. However, the observation of this writer is important; for even his superficial examination of the prophetic writings was sufficient to show him that there could be no collusion between the prophets and the priesthood."

These prophets, then, do denounce the corruption and wickedness of the priesthood, and denounce it so severely, that even this intelligent Deist was constrained to acknowledge there could be no collusion between them. But, sir, it has been said here, on this stand, that the Mosaic priesthood was a "contemptible foolery." If I were disposed to retaliate—but I am not—I would say that another criticism that I am about to notice is a most "contemptible" criticism, but I won't use the word only as borrowed.

The remarks which I am about to read, you will find extracted from Dr. McCulloh, in his work, page 240. Dr. McCulloh says: "Lord Bolingbroke, however inimical to the theory of the divine constitution of Christianity, has not hesitated to render the clearest testimony to its excellent

morality, as the following extracts from his writings will abundantly show. And his observations on the subject of theological teaching not only is creditable to his discernment, but does justice to the actual merits of Christianity, which most other Deists have endeavored to confound with the false teachings of men."

That is just what is being attempted here.

Lord Bolingbroke says in his 4th essay, section 5th: "The gospel teaches universal benevolence, recommends the precepts of it, and commends the observance of it in particular instances occasionally, always supposes them, always enforces them, and makes the law of right reason a law in every possible definition of the word beyond all cavil. *I say beyond all cavil*, because a great deal of *silly cavil* has been employed to perplex the plainest things in nature, and the best determined signification of words according to the different occasions on which they were used."

He makes the law of right reason a law in the definition of the word, "*beyond all cavil*." There, sir, I believe in Lord Bolingbroke's right-reason observation.

That is a noble sentiment; I take delight in praising it, coming from a man called a Deist. He was a man that rejected the Bible as a revelation, but was a believer in God.

I will read another extract from the same author. He says: "The gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity."

Is such the testimony we have heard in this place from the followers of Lord Bolingbroke? I hardly dare say followers. No, sir. The Bible has been attacked by "silly cavil." It has been attempted by such a cavil to show that the Lord Jesus condemned even the desire of marriage. We come now to that text as recorded in the 5th chapter of Matthew, on which the cavil or criticism was made: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a

woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." It was said here (by Mr. Wright), that Jesus declared that whosoever looketh on a woman to *desire* her for his *wife* was an adulterer. I call that a "*silly cavil*." We will not call it "a contemptible foolery." It is a perversion of the words of Jesus, as palpable as the shining of the noon-day sun. Turn with me, then, to the 19th chapter and 3d verse: "The Pharisees also came unto Jesus, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he who made them at the beginning, made them male and female? For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh; wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh; what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." I ask any intelligent man or woman in this congregation if we are not right in applying Lord Bolingbroke's expression, "*silly cavil*," to such an interpretation of these words of Jesus as was given by persons on the opposite side of the question?

If I were defending a cause that needed such a cavil, I should certainly be led to believe that it was a doubtful one. (Applause.)

Rev. Mr. TURNER—I would call the attention of the audience, Mr. Chairman, to some of the so-called arguments that have been brought against the Bible. We have only, at best, what may be deemed objections stated; but objections are not proofs. I do not make this remark with reference to every thing that is urged against the Bible, but as a whole. The character of the objections raised against the Bible is before the audience. I need not advise you of their fallacy. The remarks of the lady, Mrs. Rose, last evening, and the remarks of my friend Davis to-day, were but a repetition of what has been stated before from this stand, hence I shall not devote much time to the argument. It is true neither of

these, nor yet both together, have covered all the ground ; for my friend the Chairman has covered more than twice as much ground as both those, so that it may not be expected that even in all the day we could take up all the objections that have been raised ; but by taking up the few, and the more important ones, we intend to show the character of all those objections, and we expect to make the impression on this audience, that as these objections are found sound or unsound, so the others will be considered.

The reason why I would not attack the remarks of Mrs. Rose, is not because she is a woman, but because I do not think she had a fair chance to speak. The lady stepped upon the same ground with the other speakers, repeating the points of the call, and then advanced to speak of the influence of the Scriptures, as bearing against the inspiration of the same, affirming that the things which she charged upon their influence formed a reason, in her estimation and the estimation of others, why it should be rejected, and made remarks which I shall not now attempt to answer, for they have been answered ; and I pass to her main position, which has also been answered by another. After several minor charges, the lady preferred the charge of injustice against the Bible, in the fact that the Bible, she contends, teaches the subjugation of woman. I am a friend to woman's rights, and I would not to-day stand before this audience to make the remarks that I am here in duty bound to make, but for the fact that the supposed "subjugation," as it has been called, "unjust and wicked subjugation of woman to man" by the Bible, is brought against the Bible, and against its sacred influence.

It has been said that the Bible subjugates the woman to the man, even if he were a drunkard, and even if he were a novice. The other side of this matter was not only by the lady, but by the other speakers, left out of the question. The Bible does present—does set before you a husband. You heard thus much read from the sacred text. You heard the

duty and character of a husband and his position defined in the Bible. The Bible first defines the social position and duty of a husband—mark that—and then the same Bible requires a reciprocation of affection between the husband and the wife. The Bible requires that the husband and the wife, though twain in the beginning, shall become one flesh. Further, the Bible requires of the husband that he should love his wife as himself. Now in how far does the Bible subjugate the woman to that man? That she shall love her husband. Said one speaker, “It is more than this: it requires that she should obey her husband;” and the lady, Mrs. Rose, seemed to think it a very cruel matter for a woman thus to be subjugated to obey such a husband. How much injury will such husbands do their wives if they obey them, and if they obey especially as directed, “even as Sarah obeyed Abraham?” Now turn to the book and see how Sarah obeyed Abraham, and note if you can find any thing in the obedience rendered by Sarah to Abraham so wretched that a woman can not endure it any how.

Mrs. ROSE—Would you like to be placed in the same position as Sarah was when she had to obey her husband, when he took her maid-servant unto him for a second wife? (Applause.)

Rev. Mr. TURNER—If I was a woman I would answer it. Where did the lady find that Sarah obeyed her husband in any thing of this kind? In the affair to which the lady refers, Abraham obeyed Sarah, and she prayed him to obey her. Abraham was in turn subjugated to the will of Sarah.

I said that I was not only the friend of woman, but entirely the friend of woman's rights. I speak just as I mean; I say *woman's rights*, but when woman becomes a man I will treat her as a man, but now I speak of her as a woman.

Before passing from the question of the lady, I will simply say, that the record says that Sarah gave her servant to Abraham. What does the lady intend by her question? Does

she hope that we shall argue that it was right to do thus? Does the lady, or do my friends here wish to enter upon a discussion of the *why* and *wherefore* that these things were so done in that time? If they want to do this, we will let the record speak for itself on these matters, and tell why they were done. But if not, we will keep to the question in debate.

I said, when woman becomes man she will have no charms for me, unless I can turn around and become woman; woman is lovely only in her true sphere—she charms because she is woman. I go for the rights of woman, and the Bible goes for the rights of woman. The Bible has assigned woman her place in the most tender department of human life, and instead of putting her forth to breast the storms, dangers, sufferings, and turmoil of busy life in this lone world, the Bible has made her the bosom-companion of the man, to share his sorrows, double his joys, to be cherished in his heart, and protected and provided for by his more hardy body.

Where are woman's rights defined? We were told that the Bible was inconsistent, because it enslaved woman, and one plea made on this point was, that woman, from her position in life, had become tender and delicate, and therefore was not able to endure what she might otherwise endure; but are there not those here who know that the very physiology of the female puts her sphere of action where the Bible places her? We know this as well as we know any other fact in the science of physiology. We know that the woman has had to be, of necessity, a *woman*, and not a man. Look at her frame, look at the proportions of that organism, and you will see that the Bible has assigned her her proper place; it secures her from the storms of life.

Where in the book of nature do we find any evidence against the Bible on account of the position in which the Bible has placed woman? Does the Bible make a drudge a slave of her? It assigns the woman a sphere just as we

have represented, and the Bible does not know her in any other relation; and if she has fallen into other hands, and becomes ill-treated, the Bible is not responsible for the ill-treatment. Does the natural religion of that man's head guide him right when he abuses the woman? The Bible forbids abuses of all kinds. You will find the mother in the same relation in the family of ants, as you will find her in, in the family of human beings. Bring to your minds the various feathered tribes, and what does the book of nature teach you by an observation of them? Do you not see the same relation there that you see sustained, and urged, and ordered in the Book of God? I am surprised somewhat at the remarks that have been made in regard to the subjugation of woman in the Bible. "Oh!" said one upon this stand, "the Bible is the enemy of woman, because it has subjugated her." It is compared with the Koran, with the Shaster—has actually been held up in contempt when compared with the unwritten book of the red man of the forest. Let us go among these heathen tribes, and see how woman fares among the people where the Bible has never gone. How is it with the red men? Do they enslave their women? How is it where the Koran has its influence? How are women treated there? One single fact and I must pass. It is on record, though the writer's name I can not repeat. He states, that as he passed on his journey, he saw a man plowing. Under the influence of the Koran he had his jack hitched upon the plow on one side, and his wife holding the other end of the yoke. Would the lady like to be there, where the Holy Scriptures have not shed their divine light? That is the way women are treated where the Bible has not come.

Mrs. ROSE—How are they treated in the South?

Rev. Mr. TURNER—The Bible does not come there; but let the Bible come to the South, among the slaves, and woman will be exalted to her proper situation, and every bond of the slave will be knocked off. The Gospel is a universal law

of charity and benevolence, revealed to the children of men. But look among those who are governed by the Shaster, and what is the picture there? Are not women enslaved there? Are they not trampled down and degraded? Are they not made servants, worse, in many instances, than the most down-trodden Southern slave; whipped, parted, stoned, turned out of doors, and ill-treated in every way, because the man that has a woman, has a *thing* under the influence of the Shaster, and he may do as he pleases with her? But the Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives as your own selves." Would the Turk, under such an influence, yoke up his wife? Sir, it is a blot on the wisdom of the nineteenth century certainly, to hear a woman crying down the influence of the Bible, because it don't give woman her rights, or make her a man. Woman is indebted to the Bible for all she is in America above the wives of the red men of the forest.

But I must pass. "The Bible," the lady said, "was certainly made by imperfect men, and therefore must be imperfect." Now I do not charge this remark upon this lady alone. I refer to her because others have heard her. Others have, upon this floor, made this remark. Please remember, it is argued by some, that the Bible must be brought to the standard of human intellect alone—to the law of natural religion; and when we press the question home and ask, "Where is it?" some have said, It is in here. (Laying his hand on his breast.) They strike a little too low, that is all. A man does not think with his heart, he only feels the blood rush there when it comes back from the brain. But it has been said here, that the law is in the intellect of man. Now, if the Bible was written by imperfect men, and is therefore imperfect—if natural religion is in the intellect of an *imperfect man*, how do we know about this God of Nature, what he is, and what he will do or be? Can he give a better revelation now than the same God could away back when our Bible was written? Was the God of Nature then imperfect in the ema-

nations through the human intellect; and has he been growing wise? The question would then be a question of importance. When will he become a perfect God? When will he become unchangeable? It is said here, by the lady and others, that we can teach children any thing we please. "You can," said she, "teach the child that black is white, and that white is black." Now, if we take her meaning, it is true, but in the abstract language it is untrue; for when you have given a child to understand what is black and what is white, you can not teach that white is black and black is white. The only reason why we can not call black white is, because the law of colors has been established. As soon as you make the child familiar with the law, you can not make him believe that black is white and white is black. But suppose you can thus teach the child, what does it prove? It proves that the God you find in the intellect can be bent any way, and you can shape the God to any form you please, so that the God of Nature, you see, would be formed by your own will and wishes. If all the human family were to be trained up in that manner, we would have a God *pulling himself all to pieces*; for the mind, as of the mass, is running in every variety of direction.

Another charge was made, viz., that "all the miseries and persecutions in times past have been originated by the Bible. There has not been a tear shed, not a sigh drawn, not a drop of blood shed, but that the authority for it has been found in the Bible." Well, now, it has been acknowledged upon this stand, and by my friend Wright, that the spirit of Christ was good; not the principles, but the spirit of Christ was good, and that the first Christians were good and true; though it is claimed that they were imperfect on the other side. Now is it true that the Bible, which formed the characters of those men, and formed them well, is to be chargeable for any departures from their course of life? Shall we look back upon the path the Church has traveled, marked with the foot-prints

of Christians, and those foot-prints set in blood, and charge it upon the Bible? No, sir; we confidently say, and are ready to prove it, that the whole of this was in consequence of departing from the Bible. Why, had that monster (Poper) that has put to death three millions of the Church, opened the Bible and found her own character written there, do you think she would have been found murdering the saints? The law of the Lord was always before them, but have the Roman world taken the Bible as the man of their counsel? Had they understood it, read, and digested it, do you think you would have found them putting the saints to death?

Is the Bible chargeable for the tears that I have shed over the loss of friends, the tears that I have poured out at the graves of the companions of my youth, and my three little ones? Have those tears been drawn by the Bible? Has the Bible thus lacerated this heart, and opened it no more to be closed in this state of things? Prove that, and I will spurn the Bible as I spurn death now! But the trouble is here; theology has made the Bible into death, and death into the Bible. It has made death the gate to endless joy, and the Bible the murderer of men. Is it true that the Bible originates any miseries that come in consequence of sickness, and death, and devastation spread by pestilence in the earth? Have there been no tears shed, has there been no blood shed, but that the Bible has given authority for it? Such a charge ought to be passed by in silence; yet it has as good a foundation in truth as nine tenths of the charges brought against the Bible on this floor, and yet we know this has not the least foundation to rest upon. Instead of drawing the tear from the mother's eye, while weeping over the infants dear to the mother's heart, it is the only consolation she can know this side of the resurrection. Does the Bible draw the tear from the eye of the child weeping over the death of a father or a mother, or both? "Tell it not in Gath, nor in the streets of Askalon," that such a charge in the nineteenth century should be made

against the Bible. Why, sir, it has not the slightest foundation to save it from infinite and unbounded perdition. It must go to *nothing*, from whence it originated.

Another charge was brought last evening. Martin Luther, it is said, spoke of the Bible as a harlot—called it a harlot. Well, now, this must have been some new communication from the spheres; I wonder what source it came from. Did it come from any of Martin Luther's writings? I should like to see that book. Is it any where to be found? No, sir; Martin Luther raised his war against the Papal Church on the foundation of the Bible, and he carried the war to the very knife. I do not mean a literal knife, but to the very death against that Church, all the while standing upon the foundation of the Bible, publishing to the world the very faith that has been proclaimed upon this stand, and emancipated the world by introducing that faith among the common people.

And it was said, as another charge against the Bible, that we have to interpret the Bible according to our ideas of truth. I say that we must admit that here lies the great difficulty with us, and here, sir, I am willing to admit, lies the difficulty between me and my brothers. If we disagree, it is because we judge differently, and our disagreement is according to our various ideas of truth.

We will try this principle. The joiner is doing a piece of work, and makes up his mind that a certain piece of lumber will fill up a certain unfinished place. He must do his work according to his own ideas of truth (right), must he? He has a standard by which to determine right, and must draw it from his pocket, and then his work will come right. It will be according to the law of his business. If we interpret the Scriptures according to our own ideas of truth, without some standard, we may be off the track as often as on it. The differences in the human judgment shows this in all matters, the world all over—this God of Nature is a fallible God.

I pass to make a few remarks in regard to the speech of

my friend Mr. Davis this morning. Mr. Davis, as remarked before, has repeated (I do not mean to say quoted from others, understand me, but he has repeated) the same charges that have been made from this stand before against the Bible. It is true these charges were most elegantly dressed. They were a dish served up in the best style; and really, if we could sit down and eat safely, we would like to sit at such a dish; but then we see near its bottom a fatal sediment, which we would avoid. Mr. Davis asked, "Can religion be destroyed?" We answer, No. *Religion* destroyed? No, *never*, without you can destroy its Author. The question is, What is religion? My friend Davis, though he spoke something about it, did not define that religion so that I could understand it. I, however, understand that he spoke of the religion of Nature. This was nearly Mr. Davis' remark, but I am not positive.

Mr. DAVIS—I spoke of the religion of science.

Mr. TURNER—It is the religion of science and the enlightened intellect. That can certainly be destroyed. If that is the religion that my friend thinks can not be destroyed, then we are at issue; for if it is the intellect, however refined and instructed, we know it can be destroyed. If we are told it survives the grave, I know better. Do you know that in this organism there is any such thing as can survive death? We search all over this system, and dissect its every part and portion, and where is the man that dare claim that he can find any thing that will survive the outside of death? Is it in the head? In what part of the brain is that peculiar immortal principle that will survive the ruin of this body? There is no such principle there. "Oh, it has escaped." Where did it lodge in the system while here? When the butterfly goes, you can find the place it went out of its former house, but can you find the place where such an immortal spirit ever went out of a human body? We say that this doctrine is not derived from the Bible. You have no right to charge the Bible with it. "Oh, we learn this doctrine from natural religion."

Where, where, where did the heathen philosopher originate the idea? Did he find it in the laws of nature? What are the laws of natural religion in regard to man's immortality? This law is in his construction. Here are the laws that govern the man, so far as his physical and mortal construction and being are concerned; and what are they? We dissect the man in all his parts as before stated, and we find no such principle as can exist beyond the dissolution of the body. This undying principle is very much like the "*beau-ideal* God" of which the lady spoke last evening—it exists only in the imagination, a mere chimera. And did the imagination ever overleap the tomb, and hold converse with spirits there? "Oh, no, they come back here." They come not back here, and they never will come here until the resurrection; they know not any thing; their soul perished.

But my friend Davis asked another question: "What is the rock on which religion rests? Is it the Bible?" He then said, It is founded on the rock of natural science.

Mr. A. J. DAVIS—I said it had its firm foundation in the rock of the human soul, and in its unfolding faculties. The true and correct manifestation of practical religion will be when the man by external or internal influences has arrived at the fullness of the stature of a perfect man.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—The rock, then, is the constitution, properly, of the human soul; in the human mind we are to find the rock of religion. Oh, how changing! oh, how wasting is the rock on which religion rests! The human mind will change to-day, aye, and to-morrow; for my friend said, "I will not bind myself to believe to-morrow what I believe to-day. I hope to learn more." And is that the rock on which religion rests? We could show a law of nature that may decree that he may know much less to-morrow than he knows to-day; the senses may be impaired to-morrow, the balance of mind destroyed. Poor rock, then! I was glad to hear the remarks of my friend Davis in regard to the poverty of the

Bible. I was glad to hear him quote the text, "The kingdom of Heaven is within you," and said, "if it is not here, where is it?" He quoted the text as it is. He does not quote the marginal reading. Does it mean the kingdom is within the human heart? The farthest from it possible. The kingdom was *among* that people.

He says that "the scientific discoveries of this century are in open and startling opposition to the claims of the Bible to infallibility." He instances geology, astronomy, physiology. "The results of these sciences—the discoveries these sciences have made," he says, "stand out in open and startling opposition to the claims of the Bible to infallibility." I will not argue here. It is not proper; he did not argue, he only asserted. I will not attempt to argue upon the general sciences of geology, astronomy, nor physiology; but in a proper time, I here say that I am ready to meet with the Bible either or all these sciences, and defend the Bible.

In my remarks on Friday afternoon I challenged them for the first well and thoroughly-defined and well-established law of geology that conflicted with the record. I know what I said, though my friend the Chairman thought I did not know. I know that all beyond a given point backward in geology is mere conjecture and assumption; and I know that geology is but in its infancy, and that one half of its head is paralyzed, one half of its assumptions never can be proved. In regard to astronomy, we do not speak of the conjectures of the multitude, which are as various as the number of astronomers; but, sir, we speak of laws well defined—laws in astronomy that can not be disputed; no such law is in opposition to the Bible. When we come to that law which contradicts the Bible, then we are ready to join issue against that point; but this is not the place to discuss that question, and if it is not to be discussed, why throw out the claims of science as against the Bible, with an assurance that many of the audience can not master, and therefore will be a thunderbolt against it?

I say that I am ready to meet any of these questions in a proper place. The Bible is the only book that can be found that gives you the true physiology of a man. It is the only book that reads you God's creation right. We will consider on man while he is alive; we will watch him until life's taper goes out; and we will see if in the outside of death any thing escapes from him that looks like a spirit-vapor. Follow him to the tomb, and put him into his long resting-place, and both the Bible and physiology leave him there till made anew. The Bible, we repeat, is the only book that speaks of man according to true physiology—that physiology which is never thoroughly established. The Bible, as it regards physiology and phrenology, has been one of my best text-books; it speaks of man as both these sciences demonstrate him to be.

My friend Davis says, "there has been an age of force and an age of love, and may there not be an age of wisdom." He speaks of force in one sense, and I would look upon it in another. "There is an age of love, and may there not be an age of wisdom?" Is this all the perfection that man can come to? Is the highest point to which he can arrive the age of wisdom? Is there not something more than that? If not, well may we say with Paul, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, truly we are of all men most miserable." Has this thought of those ages originated in the book of nature? It may have been original with friend Davis, but whether it originated with the book of nature or not, I am certain that it originated with my Bible.

Says the Apostle Peter, referring to olden time, the antediluvian world and flood, "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men; nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Here are three ages (worlds), the world which

then was, that which is now, and that which is to come. Then take the book and read these portions which apply to this state, and it will tell you that there is to be an age of wisdom; but it utters you another fact: immediately after the resurrection there will be an age of wisdom, an eternal age.

A. J. DAVIS—My book of nature makes me think very strongly that there will be an age of wisdom in this world that will succeed the age of love, as a natural development, very much as nature tells me that after she has produced thorn and all the interior developments, she produces fruit.

Rev. Mr. TURNER—The Bible does not tell you of a heaven beyond the bounds of time and space; but it tells you of a redeemed earth as well as a redeemed man, so the place of the wisdom of man is to be on this earth, the fruit and perfection of the two previous ages, but in immortality. Mr. Davis says, "He who would not be wise above what is written in any book is a miserable pagan." If this is true, then I must fall under the charge of paganism; for though I would be wise above all the books of mere men, and of natural religion, I dare not be wise above the books that were written for men by the agency of the Holy Ghost, that portion of the books we call the Bible. That is the record, the faithful record of divine inspiration. Now we will travel into some of those lands where they have claimed to be wise above what is written in any book. Will you take a look at France? Did they not, in France, try to be wise above what is written? Did they not bring together the Bibles, and cause them to be burned? What is the picture of France in a short time after this is done? Let ladies who look upon the picture of France after the Bible has been burned in the public square, see the condition of woman where the Bible is condemned, where reason, wise above what is written in the Bible, is deified and enthroned.

What was France when she had no Bible? She was full of blood, of murder, of rapine, of incest, of every kind of crime,

and the government of France was obliged to bring back the Bible to settle the difficulty, and to control the "God of Nature," who had become *unreasonable*.

What is the character of any people who claim to be wise above what is written in any book? I will not say to any man who comes forward to argue that the Bible is not a book of divine origin, that he is going to be guilty of any of these various crimes, but I speak of these effects as a warning. All those who have obeyed the Bible will say, that instead of its influence being bad, it has charmed the serpent spirit of man to become docile, and to lie at the foot of the cross perfectly submissive.

MR. JOSEPH BARKER—Mr. Turner states that the husband whom the woman was to obey was the Bible husband. The second statement is that Sarah was never commanded to do by Abraham any thing which she might not do without reluctance. These are two very plain points that have to be decided by reference to two very plain passages of Scripture, and the error into which our friend has fallen in those very two points may show you how strange it is that preachers should blunder so much respecting their statements.

Now, with respect to the first, that the husband whom the wife is called upon to obey is the Bible husband, I read the passage yesterday, so it seems strange how he should forget it. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word they may be, without the word, won by the conversation of the wives." The Christian wives are to obey their own Christian husbands, in order that they may win over their unchristian husbands. Mr. Turner made use of his remarks in order to make answer to what I said, that the wife was to obey her husband, although he was a drunkard. The commands which Abraham gave to Sarah were reasonable commands, and she might obey them without any reluctance. What are the two commands of which the

Scriptures speak of Abraham's giving to Sarah? There are two cases in which Abraham gives command to Sarah, and do you know that in both these cases the command is to tell a lie? And this is the good wife whom Christian women are to imitate. She called her husband lord, and lied whenever he told her to lie. (Applause.)

Mrs. ERNESTINE L. ROSE—It seems to me to be a pitiable condition in the way of argument, when, instead of testing a subject on its own intrinsic value, by its own worth and its own truth, we have to resort to a comparison of it with something else that may be quite as bad. Now to this process our friends, the supporters of the Bible, have to resort. The first speaker, Mr. Storrs, this afternoon, instead of trying to defend the origin, authority, and influence of the Bible by its own intrinsic value and merits, went to comparing it, or the God of the Bible, with what he imagines to be the God of Nature; and therefore, thus comparing the two, they exclaim, "You will say that the God of the Bible is cruel and inhuman—the God of Nature is as cruel; you will say the God of the Bible allowed many evils to exist—we retaliate, and say the God of Nature did the same." But what does all that amount to? To any defense of the God of the Bible? Not in the least. It simply amounts to this, that if there is any such thing as a God behind nature who sends earthquakes, whirlwinds, tempests, and destruction for the purpose of destroying men, he is quite as inconsistent as the God of the Bible. It means no more. But it did not prove it right, nor disprove any of the charges I made against the Bible or the Bible God. (Cries of hear, hear, and applause.) Mr. Turner, after he had thus compared the charges laid to the God of the Bible with the charges he laid against the God of Nature, went to some of my remarks of last evening. He thought it was a most outrageous thing to lay the evils that woman suffers to the Bible. It may appear outrageous to him, I do not doubt; it appears

far more outrageous to me to find that such is the case; and as owing to the confusion last evening he may not have been able to hear what I said on the subject, I will repeat some of it.

I mentioned last evening the passage of Scripture, that after God had created man, and pronounced all to be very good, he found out his mistake, namely, "It was not good for man to be alone," and therefore he created woman. I said, and do say, that it is a libel alike to the power they call God, or Creator, as well as to the nature of woman, to say that he created one half of his children—one half of the whole human race—not for the same great aim and end in life as man, but because it was not well for man to be alone; so he was under the painful necessity to create her as a pastime, a plaything, or a drudge, as the circumstances and the position may require. Upon this irrational foundation has the subjugation of woman in Christendom been based. (Applause.) But Mr. Turner asked, is it such a hardship to obey a husband? and brought Sarah as an example, that she, too, obeyed her husband. I asked him whether, if there was no hardship in obeying, he would like to have been in the position of Sarah, and obey his wife as she had to obey her husband? His answer was, that he was not a woman, and therefore could not say how he would have felt in her position. Yes, so say I, that as he is not a woman, he is utterly incapable of judging for her. How inconsistent then—what an assumption and a farce—for him to stand here and talk about woman's position and woman's sphere, when he is incapable of placing himself for one moment in her position, to judge how she would feel under certain circumstances. The Bible writers were not women, hence they so cruelly libeled her nature; and as they were men as utterly ignorant of her nature and feelings as he is, how could they know what was her proper sphere? and how does Mr. Turner know that the sphere the Bible prescribes to woman is the right and proper sphere for her, when he can not give

the simplest answer to the simplest question, how he would feel were he a woman? (Applause.) Consistency is a jewel which I fear can not be found in his possession. (Applause.) How can she ever be in her proper position and her proper sphere when man prescribes both for her? How can she ever be understood when man defines and interprets for her? How can she ever be rightly governed when man enacts the laws to govern the being whose nature he can not understand, whose feelings he can not realize, whose motives he can not appreciate? How can justice be done to her when he most ignorantly judges and condemns her? Never! No! woman must speak for herself, she must help to enact the laws by which she shall be governed, she must plead her cause, she must judge for woman. (Pointing to Mr. T., Mrs. Rose said, with much feeling and vehemence:) Yonder sits a man who bears testimony that man is incapable of judging for woman. (Great applause.) But we are told Christianity has done a great deal for woman, for "the Bible commands the husband to love his wife." *Indeed!* Husbands before me, can you love your wives by an arbitrary command? [A VOICE—Yes, in some cases.] Wives, can you love your husbands because somebody, somewhere, commanded you to do it? No. [A VOICE—As true as eternity.] (Laughter.) If we are not able to love by an arbitrary command, how irrational then—what a wonderful ignorance in the writers of that command—I care not whether they were from above or below, that gave it. Husbands, love your wives from a painful sense of duty, because the Bible commands you to do so. (Laughter.) Painful, indeed, must such a duty be, both to the giver and receiver. (Applause.) What a prostitution of the very term, love, by affixing a command to it. But suppose it could be done, but some husbands will not do it—at any rate we find not all husbands do it—then would the commander force him to love his wife? For if it is true that husbands can love their wives by an arbitrary command, then

they ought to be made to obey. When any of our laws are violated, the person is held to account for it, unless a law is so bad and inconsistent that no one can or ought to obey it; then we call that law or lawgiver to account to abolish it. Let the supporters of that Bible command force-husbands to do their duty, or abolish all such irrational laws, or at any rate, whatever the laws are—good, bad, or indifferent—let them be alike for both, or not at all. I wish we had fair laws, and we would be much better, wiser, and happier. We have far too much legislation here, and I am sure we require no Bible legislation in addition. (Applause.) Mr. Turner spoke about the happy condition woman was in. Yes, we have a very gratifying picture before us—to my mind more gratifying than any other in nature—to see an assembly of human beings met with a desire to inquire into the nature of a book forced upon mankind as truth; and the condition of my sisters before me, if compared, as Mr. Turner compares the God of the Bible, with something worse, I doubt not is very flattering and happy; but if we compare her present position with what she ought, what she might, and would be, had she her full rights, as a human being, to education and position, then we find a difference almost too great to realize it, but of which Mr. Turner, not being a woman, can know nothing whatever. (Laughter.) But it is asked, what does woman want? Our friend there (pointing to Mr. Turner) insinuated that we desire to become men. Do you, my sisters, wish to become men? [A VOICE—“No.”] (Laughter.) In the general sense of the term, as applying to human beings, *we are* men. (Hear, hear.) As applying to sex, it requires no answer, and I will give it none. (Applause.) But whether man or woman, are we not entitled to the rights of humanity because we are your mothers instead of your fathers? We claim our rights irrespective of sex. We claim them, not only in accordance with the laws of humanity, but also in accordance with the Declaration of Independence. Are we not entitled to life,

liberty, and the pursuits of happiness? (Hear, hear.) And what is life without liberty? (Applause.) Who of you would desire to preserve it an hour without it? and what is liberty without equality of rights? A mockery. And what can be our pursuits of happiness when man has prescribed our sphere of thought and action within the narrowest possible limits—when the needle and the wash-tub are nearly the only avocations he has assigned her for her independence, except getting married. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Tell me we complain, and that we ought to be thankful to Christianity for our condition! Yes, we owe to Christianity our degraded, enslaved position, and let all be thankful for it who can. I ask for woman what you ask for man—the same rights, privileges, and opportunities to educate and develop our beings physically, mentally, and morally, to the fullest extent of her being; throw open to her all the avenues of emolument of honor, and greatness, and she will find her true sphere, for who can find it for her? “Why do I ask for it?” Because it is our right, and because the withholding of our rights has produced incalculable evil and suffering. I suffer, not only individually but as belonging to my sex—as belonging to the race—for man suffers as grievously by it as woman does. We ask to give woman her inalienable rights, and to enable her to become a real and true woman, and not a man; but if by the term, man is meant the capacity to think and reason more, reflect deeper, judge wiser, and act better, then the sooner all of us are men, Mr. Turner included, the better. (Applause.) We ask for knowledge, for knowledge is power. After mother Eve partook of and gave her husband of the tree of knowledge, the gods even became afraid of them, so it must be worth something, and it is worth to woman just as much as to man. The great misfortune was, that poor mother Eve did not eat enough of the tree of knowledge, for we have been hungry after it ever since. She did not know that

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or touch not the halcyon spring.”

(Applause.) The slave ought to be in utter ignorance; the moment you give him any knowledge he will cast off his slavery. We know now too much to be satisfied with our condition; we want more, we want all that can be given; for as knowledge is power, it promotes independence, and we want to be independent, for dependence is degrading, for woman ought to be as independent of man as he is of her. The dependence ought to be mutual and reciprocal—not as master and slave—joined by unjust and mercenary ties, but the dependence on each other's kindness and services; affection ought to be the only bond between man and woman. (Applause.) And would she be any less woman if capable of insuring, if necessary, her own independence? Some wiseacres may tell you so. They will tell you that if she has her rights she will cease to be a woman, forsake her children, and turn recreant to her nature. Common sense will tell you that only then will she be a woman, capable, if needs be, to take care of herself, her children, aye, and her husband too. And why should she not. If it gives you pleasure, and, I doubt not, elevates you and fills your minds with unspeakable gratification when you strive for and succeed in promoting the happiness of those you love, it would be as gratifying to her; the same generous emotions would fill the mind of woman, were she able, if necessity called for it, to show her affection to her husband, not only in letting him maintain her, but when she had to maintain him, by her knowledge and well-directed industry; and there would be just as little degradation in the one case as in the other. (Applause.) Mr. Turner proclaims himself a friend to woman's rights. I don't doubt, according to his understanding of human rights, and according to his knowledge of the nature of woman, he goes for her rights; but as he derives his knowledge from the Bible, ought we to wonder

that it falls so deplorably short? Not in the least. I should wonder if, with his belief in the Bible, he went for woman's perfect equality with man, or for human rights, without distinction of sex, country, or color. Oh, but he told us that in comparison to other countries and ages, woman is treated very kindly. The Mohammedan has been instanced; and we were told that woman was found there holding the plow. Dreadful! I can point you to Christian countries where the husband smokes his pipe while the wife plows the land.

[Mr. TURNER said, in Mohammedan countries the woman has to draw the plow, not hold it.]

Well, I can point you to Christian countries for the same. Go to Christian Germany, and you will find many a wife plow the ground; and where they have no horses she has to do it without, and reap the harvest, and carry it home on her broken back, while her husband sits and smokes his pipe. But where he is not too lazy to work, I don't see any great hardship that the wife should help him, even at the plow, if she can do it, only he ought to be with her if he can. I should prefer to have my husband with me. (Laughter.) But if a husband is not able to do his work, or attend to his business, oh, what delight it would give a true woman, how it would rouse her generous feelings, and fill her with tender emotions, were she able to do the work for him, or to attend to their business, and take the corroding care and anxiety about the business going to wreck and ruin off his mind, and by her own exertion provide the necessaries and comforts for him she loved! Yes, loved, not by arbitrary command, but by the force of the law of attraction and affinity. (Great applause.) Love her husband! I don't think that the wife has any right or any business to love her husband. The Bible does not command the wife to love her husband at all; this command was only given to the husband to love his wife; the wife has only to obey, that is all. Well, though we can not be made to love by force, it is quite clear we may be made to obey by force; any

slave can tell you that, and so can a wife, according to the Bible—Sarah, for instance. (Laughter.)

The Bible husbands Mr. Turner spoke of framed the laws for woman; hence she is so well protected. Blackstone tells us—and he must have taken his ideas of right from the Bible—that the husband and the wife are one, and that one is the husband. (Laughter.) That is according to the common law of England, and *common* enough it is, mercy knows; but from these *common* laws we have our laws regulating marriage; and yet it must be right, for it is according to the Bible; the husband and wife become one, and that one is the husband, and, therefore, whatever the wife possesses becomes the husband's, for they are one, says the Bible and Blackstone, except when the wife violates a law of the land, then they become two again, for instead of hanging the husband, they hang the wife. (Laughter.) But Mr. Turner will tell us that even that is better than something worse. (Laughter.) Is it not so? (Laughter.) Well, I suppose it is. (Applause.) That in more barbarous ages and countries woman was treated more barbarously; and who has a desire to deny it? Not I. But what does that prove? Any thing? Oh, yes, it proves that man is always a child before he is grown to be a man; not only is that true with the individual man, but with the race; that the race was not born civilized any more than *individual man* is ever born in the full maturity of strength and mind, and that in more barbarous ages we acted more barbarously than in more civilized ages (applause), which proves the truth of my position, that man always acts according to the knowledge and civilization he possesses. Last evening we had a full illustration of it (laughter and applause); for it is an unmistakable fact, that just according as man is civilized does he treat woman. (Applause.) And would you know the amount of civilization in a country, look at the position woman occupies, and you will find that in proportion as she has her rights equal with man, so is the nation civilized, and

in proportion as they are denied her, so are they yet in a state of barbarity, no matter by what name they may exist. The position of woman is a living index of the state of civilization; they go hand in hand. And as man becomes more civilized, through the cultivation of the arts and sciences, and has his taste more refined, his sentiments more elevated, is more capable to appreciate the beautiful, better to understand the nature and laws that govern man, the relation he sustains to his fellow-man, human rights and happiness, the aim and end of human existence, so does he act more rational and more consistent, and woman, of course, occupies a more rational and consistent position in the scale of society. But what have we to thank for it? Christianity or the Bible? Then let us see how much Christianity has done to promote civilization, how much it has done for the arts and sciences. Go to the Bible, and you will find it opposed to all the arts, sciences, happiness, and life itself. Worldly wisdom, knowledge, and happiness are called, in Bible language, "the enemies of man." "Life is only a vale of tears," only a gloomy passage to stumble through, fight with the devil, die, and go up to sing hallelujah, or down to roast, for the gratification of those in heaven. What need, then, for arts and sciences? They would not be required there. (Cries of hear, hear.) That is the whole Bible estimate of human life, and hence Christianity has ever opposed every art and science, as the light of knowledge and progress force it upon society. (Cries of hear, hear.) These facts are too well known to require any illustration to confirm the truth of the statement. Astronomy, geology, physiology, chemistry, the art of printing, education, even all has been opposed by the priests, and they found their authority in the Bible to warn the people against innovations, against worldly wisdom, to attach them to this life, and lead them away from heaven, as emanations from the devil. (Cries of hear, hear, and applause.) Reason is held up by the Bible as an enemy to man, a false guide, that will lead him to per-

dition; human virtues are called "filthy rags;" faith, only faith in things unseen and unknown will save him. Yet we have to thank the Bible and Christianity for the little civilization, rights, and happiness we enjoy, when every step we have taken, every inch of ground we have gained, was in direct opposition to it. My very standing here is in opposition to it. (Applause.) But I will leave this subject, though my heart and head are full with it, and go to some other evidence that the Bible must be by divine inspiration; and, as a proof, we are told in the Bible that after God created the world and had pronounced it to be good, he found out he had made a mistake, for not only was it not good, but he found it so bad that it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart, and he swore he would destroy it again. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," and, consequently, he brought the flood to destroy all flesh; but as if afraid lest he might not succeed in making the animal portion over again, he adopted the very prudent plan of preserving a pair of each kind as stock in hand to commence the world anew with. I think the construction of the ark, with its numberless compartments to accommodate the vast number and variety of animals that have existed, from the polar bear, the giraffe, the elephant, through all gradations, down to the mosquito, the flea, and the fly, must be a proof of divine inspiration! As for how they were all brought together, I can see no other way than the angel Gabriel must have called them together with his trumpet. (Laughter.) However, after the flood was all over, and Father Noah built an altar, and brought a nice fat little lamb as a sacrifice, then the Lord smelled the sweet savor, and it repented him that he destroyed the world, and he said in his heart that he would not curse the ground any more for man's sake, "for the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth." Thus the same reason that made him

repent that he had made man, and induced him to destroy the world, namely, that the "imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man being evil continually," induced him, after the flood, to promise Noah that he would never destroy it again, namely, "for the imagination of his heart is evil from his youth." But we must remember that the sweet savor of the freshly-burned offerings of the fowls, and the beasts, and the creeping things was so irresistible to God's nostrils, that it put him in such a good humor, that in spite of the wickedness of man's heart, he resolved not to destroy him again. (Laughter and applause.)

Let no one say that we ridicule the Bible, for it is utterly impossible to ridicule a thing so sublimely ridiculous as the whole account of the flood in the Bible. Just see the position the Bible places its God in. He created man, pronounced him good, found him bad, repented for having created him, resolved to destroy, not only him, but the whole animal and vegetable creation, then repented again of having done it, and resolved never to do it again. Would any of you like to be placed in so ridiculous a position? (Cries of no, and laughter.) Yet this God, the same book tells us, possesses all wisdom, all knowledge, and all goodness. It is almost an insult to common sense to talk about believing in such stuff and nonsense. (Applause.) The head and the heart, or reason and affection, have always been libeled by the Bible; for the writers and priestly interpreters knew but too well if reason and affection were consulted, the Bible would be left alone, for in it there is food neither for head nor heart; it has nearly famished and destroyed both. The wars, the slavery, the intolerance, the vices and crimes it inculcated, are so many plague-spots on human society, and will never be entirely effaced as long as that book is consulted as authority and guide for man. But Mr. Turner said, It was not at all inconsistent that the Lord commanded war, for have not we, as a nation, had war? Yes, we had war, and all the more shame for it; but does our hav-

ing war make it right? But suppose it were right for one nation to make war upon another nation, can that be an excuse for God to make war upon his children? For are not all men his children? We are told he created all men, if so, all must be his children. Oh, yes; but then the impartial Father had chosen a few as his favorites, and commanded them to extirpate all other nations—the Midianites, Canaanites, and all the other ites that existed around them, and take their lands as their possessions. Were these ites, then, not his children? Had not the Lord created the Midianites, Canaanites, and all the rest of the ites the Bible tells us of? And yet the Bible says, “Thus saith the Lord; go and slay and extirpate, and spare not man or woman, old or young,” except such as they could make useful to gratify their brutal passions and appetites. This is said to be the word of God. Well, I care not whose word it is; most emphatically do I protest against it as an outrage on humanity, for my whole heart, mind, and soul revolts against such barbarity. (Applause.) [A VOICE—Amen.] [Another VOICE—When the Egyptian power became corrupt, and oppressed the Israelites, did not God command them to refuse obedience?] Oh, yes; he told his chosen children to refuse obedience to Pharaoh, another child of his. And what did this kind and impartial Father (for God, we are told, is impartial) do to induce his disobedient child Pharaoh to set his favorites free? Why, he sent Moses to tell him to let them go, and at the same time he hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he might not send them out, so that he might have the pleasure to punish him, and send him the plagues for not doing what he would not allow him to do. And yet Pharaoh, I believe, was made of flesh, bone, and muscles, the same as all other men, and therefore the Lord must have made him, for we are told that he created all flesh. Yes, the Father hardened the heart of one child to enslave some of his other children, and they again in turn, to massacre and extirpate some others again. (Laughter.) Is this not a beautiful characteristic of

the God of the Bible? He created all men as his children, but could not manage them, so he chose a few as his favorites—I am sure no one can tell for what particular merits—and set them at loggerheads, to fight and destroy each other. I should be sorry if an earthly parent could not manage his children better than that. Again, the Bible says God created man and woman, and placed them in the garden of Eden, in the midst of which he placed a tree with tempting fruit on it, of which he forbade the man to eat; and he also created a serpent, which he permitted to go and tempt the woman to partake of this very forbidden fruit. Well, did he not know when he placed them there, and placed the tree there, and sent the serpent to tempt them—for the Bible tells us that nothing is done without his permission—that poor mother Eve would partake of it, and as a faithful wife, finding the fruit was so good, that she would induce her husband to partake of it too? If he knew all this—and he must have known, for the Bible tells us that God is omniscient—and he did not wish them to eat of the tree of knowledge, then why did he place it there? or, placing it there, why did he allow the serpent to tempt them? Or why create them so weak, and with such a taste for fruit, or rather for knowledge, so as to be unable to withstand the temptation? If the Bible could only speak, it might give some satisfactory answers to all these important questions, for I am sure no one else can. (Applause.) [A VOICE—Woman is so weak *now* as to be tempted.]

Mrs. ROSE—Very likely; I am sorry he made her so weak, and created a tempter to tempt her. (Laughter.) Yes, she is weak enough, or she would not be so deluded by the Bible and its interpreters the priests. (Applause.) Well, then, poor Adam and Eve did eat the forbidden fruit, as they could do no otherwise under the circumstances. What then? Did their heavenly Father correct them for their first disobedience, the same as any earthly parent would, and induce them to do better after that? Oh no! curses and heavy penalties were

pronounced against them, and not only against them for life, but on the whole unborn race to come after them. (Cries of hear, hear.) This is Bible justice and Bible mercy. [A VOICE from the gallery—Hear, blasphemy.] Blasphemy! oh, yes, blasphemy has ever been the cry against progress, and opposition to superstition. This was the cry of the old Pope against the ancient Luther, and this is the cry of the modern Popes against the modern Luthers. (Applause.) But it has lost its power now, and has become harmless. (Applause.) Yes, only the God of the Bible, mercy and justice, could have pronounced an eternal curse on an unborn race for the first fault committed by the first two children. Is there an imagination black enough to conceive of a more inhuman and atrocious spirit than that? If there were any meaning in the term blasphemy, then it would be the greatest blasphemy to ascribe such revolting deeds to any power or being deserving the name of the most ordinary goodness. (Applause.) But what was the nature of the curse? Why, Adam should have to plow the ground and cultivate the earth. Well, I don't know how it might have been had they remained in their blissful paradistic ignorance, but I doubt very much if corn, potatoes, and all the other good things, would have grown without cultivation. (Laughter.) But perhaps the two inhabitants of Eden might not have required such gross, material food. But it always puzzled me to know, that if Adam and Eve had not sinned by tasting of that unfortunate apple, what would have become of the rest of creation? We are told that every thing was created for man; God gave man dominion over every thing; but if they had not tasted of knowledge they could not have had dominion over any thing, nor made use of any thing; they were too ignorant even to use a fig-leaf (laughter), so that the whole object of creation would have been lost, were it not for mother Eve's desire for knowledge. (Applause.) For knowledge is power, of which even God seemed to be afraid; for as soon as he found that they had tasted of the tree

of knowledge, he drove them out of the garden, lest they should partake of the tree of life, too, "and become like one of us"—us, who? Why, Gods! So there must have been more than one of them. And so jealous was he even of the little knowledge they possessed—knowing that after man once tastes of knowledge, he will not be satisfied till he has more—so he placed angels with fiery swords at all the gates to fight poor man off from the tree of knowledge and of life. Thus poor man has ever since had to fight, step by step, and inch by inch, for the little knowledge, happiness, and life he enjoyed; for everywhere he encountered the sworn enemy of knowledge and of life—the God of the Bible—with his fiery swords. (Applause.) Some of those heavenly guardians must have been here last evening, hence I had to fight pretty hard for my right to utter my convictions; for by freedom of speech only do we arrive at knowledge and truth. (Applause.) Yet Mr. Turner told us that we have to thank the Bible for the rights and privileges we enjoy. *Indeed!* Had your forefathers, before they cast off the British yoke, consulted the Bible on the subject, they would never have revolted at all. The Bible does not allow revolt. Revolutionists have always been considered as unbelievers and infidels by Bible interpreters, whose interest it is to keep man in subjection and ignorance; for the Bible injunction is, "Oppose not those in authority," "Submit to the powers that be, for they are of God." Had the people of Boston, when they converted their harbor into a tea-pot, because the taxation imposed on them was too heavy, gone to the Bible for advice, they would have paid on and groaned on to all eternity, for the Bible would have told them, "Give unto Cæsar the things that belong to Cæsar."

What a fallacy, then, to talk about the freedom that comes from the Bible! The little knowledge and freedom we possess we have in opposition to and in spite of the Bible, and particularly we, my sisters. The Bible and the priests have done enough to keep us down; it is high time to rise above both of

them. My very appearing here to raise my voice in behalf of freedom and humanity is contrary to the Bible; but the desire nature has implanted in me for knowledge and freedom is more powerful than the injunctions of a superstitious book. Humanity is older than the Bible, and human rights are as old as humanity. (Applause.) And therefore I claim for woman equal rights with man. I claim them, not as a grant, or charity, but as our birthright. (Applause.) Humanity has not come into existence with chains and shackles, but free as the breath of heaven (applause), to develop human nature as it ought to be—free to think, feel, and act, always keeping in mind not to interfere with the same rights in others. Human rights include the rights of all, not only man, but woman, not only white, but black; wherever there is a being called human, his rights are as full and expansive as his existence, and ought to be without limits or distinction of sex, country, or color. (Applause.) And only ignorance, superstition, and tyranny—both the basis and influence of the Bible—deprive him of it. Mr. Turner, in alluding to my remark of belief, said I found fault with the Bible because it said, “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,” and that I said the writer of that sentiment was utterly ignorant of the nature of man and the formation of belief. Yes, I did; and I illustrated my position by showing how easy it is to make a child believe that what we call black is white, or any other falsehood as truth, and that he could die in support of it; and black would not be white, nor falsehood truth. “But,” said Mr. Turner, “you could not make a child believe that black was white, if you have told him first that it was black.” No, certainly not, because you have already made him believe it is black, which just proves my position. The child being ignorant of it, will believe whatever you call it first, and if you teach it a falsehood before it had a chance to know any thing about the truth, it will call that falsehood truth. Thus Mohammedans do not teach their children Christianity before

Mohammedanism, nor do Christians teach their children Mohammedanism, or any other ism, before Christianity, so as to give them a chance to judge for themselves. Oh no! each of them teaches his children to believe in his ism only, as truth, and in every other ism as false; and if they never have a chance to examine, compare notes, and judge for themselves, each may die in support of the truth of his ism. And yet one of these isms must be false, or both may be false, and both sincerely defended as truth. And therefore there can be no merit in a belief, nor demerit in disbelief; and he who wrote that irrational sentence, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," was utterly ignorant of the formation of the human mind. Mr. Turner agreed with me that in after-life, when we are able to compare and judge, belief depends on evidence. "But," said he, "evidence of Christianity was given to every one, for Christ told his disciples to go and preach the gospel to every creature. But suppose Moses, Mohammed, Christ, and the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine other Christs that have existed, each had said the same to his disciples, Go and preach *my* gospel, and he that believeth in it shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned, and yet the evidence can at best be in favor only of one, and most probably of none. What, then, must they deem each other all around? (Laughter.) As rational beings, they ought to say, If the evidence brought to bear on any subject is strong enough to convince the mind, it elicits an assent or belief; if it is not strong enough to convince the mind, it elicits no assent, and we can not believe; and the evidence that is strong enough to convince one mind may not be strong enough to convince another, and every one has a right to judge for himself whether an evidence is strong enough or not, and no one has a right to judge for him. (Cries of hear, hear.) How irrational and unjust it is to punish for belief at all, and still more so to punish eternally for a fault of a moment! For what is life to eternity? Who of

you, for the disobedience of a child, who would not believe in something you told him, even if you thought he could believe, but would not, would have the inhumanity to punish it, not only for life, but (had you the power) for all eternity? No, not the lowest and the meanest in the scale of humanity. (Applause.) Yet this is the Bible account of the justice and mercies of its God. (Cries of hear, hear.)

In Revelations we have some glorious accounts of the happiness the saints will enjoy in singing hymns of praise, while the smoke of those in hell will rise up to their nostrils. (A little disturbance in the gallery and—A VOICE—That is correct.) Making some little mistake in pronouncing a word, Mrs. ROSE, in correcting herself, said—I hope you will have charity for any little mistakes I may make in the language, remembering that I speak in a foreign language. (Hissing, and a VOICE called out, “I hope Mrs. Rose will assume the name of Man, for she will be an honor to our sex.”)

My friends, no one can fathom the depths of the pernicious effect, the incalculable mischief of this false, this horrid doctrine, that man can be happy while he sees another man in misery. Nature has indelibly written it on the heart of man, in language not to be misunderstood, “that no man can be happy while he sees another man in misery.” (Applause.) This is a truism that changes not with age, climate, or condition; the idea that man could be happy in heaven while he would be conscious of the torments and miseries his fellow-man was suffering, is a libel on human nature, for man can not be happy while he sees another in misery. The little comparative happiness we enjoy is owing to the fact that we can, in a great measure, shut out the miseries of others by shutting our doors and sitting down by our own comfortable firesides, and for the time being forget every thing connected with others. But place man in a condition here or hereafter where he shall not be able to close his doors and shut misery out—where he shall have constant consciousness of every thing that exists, and see

his brother man—ah! “the flesh of his flesh, and the bone of his bone”—suffering unspeakable torments, and he, with his human feelings and sympathies, unable to help him, and think you he could enjoy happiness? Would he feel like singing hymns of praise? No! it is as false as it is obnoxious to every better feeling—(applause)—and the writer of this sentence, I care not who he was, from above or below, was utterly ignorant of the nature of man, and the principles of humanity. (A VOICE—“True.”)

Upon such a principle is based the system of isolation, and all the evils that man has inflicted on man, and he will have to come back from that false idea—for if happiness is ever to be enjoyed by man, he must endeavor to form a state of society where misery, sin, and suffering shall be done away, where all shall enjoy happiness, or none will; for it is the nature of man, that as long as misery comes within his sight or his hearing so long must he feel it. (Applause.) Could you listen to the recital of the sufferings in Rome and in Hungary—the injustice, and cruelties, and tyranny perpetrated on your fellow-man, in far distant lands, without feeling every nerve stirred within you with indignation against the perpetrators, and a strong desire to assist the poor sufferers? And for the time being could you be happy? No! for the sympathy that unites man to man would not permit it. (Applause.) It did not last long, it is true, for in our isolated state we can shut all these things out, because they are painful to us, and this very fact proves my assertion. But if we had the miseries and sufferings of others all the time before our eyes, life would become a burden, and we would not wish to live. And yet the Bible doctrine is, that the spirit of man—the refined, the purified, the divine part of his nature—can enjoy happiness, while those nearest and dearest to him in life, perhaps his friend, brother, sister, father, mother, husband, wife, or child, will suffer endless torments, and he know it and unable to help them, and yet enjoy happiness. Every principle of

humanity proclaims it a falsehood. In such a position he would be a thousand times more miserable than he is here, unless his nature should be changed, and then he would no longer be man. (Great applause).

There is that horrible parable of Lazarus and Dives. I don't know any particular fault of Dives, for we are told he had not committed any great sin; it is true, he was rich, but all riches, we are told, come from God. (Laughter.) Nor are we told of any great virtues in Lazarus, except that he was poor and sick, and I am sure he would not have been so, if he could have helped it. (Laughter.) Yet Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom—what a bosom Abraham must have, to accommodate all the poor and sick!—while poor Dives was in torments and agony, and when he asked for one drop of water to cool his parched tongue, it was refused him. Nay, he begged to send a message to his brother to induce him to be a better man, so as to avoid a similar fate; but this, too, was refused to him. Oh! what glad tidings the Bible doctrine is to man. (Applause.) To a sensitive human nature such a heaven would be worse than any *hell* that has ever been described—(applause)—and as long as man is deluded into the belief of such a heaven, will we be prevented from forming a real heaven here, for it has all but stifled every kindly feeling and sensation within us. It has cramped and crippled us, mentally and morally; it has prevented us from inquiring into the laws best adapted for the well-training and well-governing of man. The eternal law of kindness should be the only law, sympathy the only bond, the great seal of humanity the only compact, between man and man. No other gospel is required to bind man to his brother. This simple law is deduced directly from the inherent laws of human nature, which some call God. The *Friends* call it the light within; I call it the principle, or law of humanity, which, if man were not perverted by false creeds and doctrines, would teach every man that natural golden rule, Do unto others as you would they should do unto you. (Applause.) This is my faith! Is that

not broad enough? Give me a broader, and I will accept it. (Applause.) Humanity! Oh, that I had words to express my feelings at the contemplation of it! I feel a gushing of love within me beyond the power of utterance, not only for mankind, but for all that are capable of feeling pleasure and pain. Humanity's laws only can ever make man a high and noble being—higher, more elevated, and nobler far than we have ever yet conceived the gods to be. (Great applause.)

The President moved a vote of thanks to Mrs. Rose for her address, when she said,

I thank you for the attention you have paid to my views and feelings, and without a vote of thanks I deem myself richly paid for my coming here, and my efforts in the cause of humanity. In the pleasure I received in being able to speak the thoughts that have pressed upon me for utterance, I am richly paid in being able to do what I deem my highest duty to do. (Applause.)

The President repeated the motion, and a vote of thanks was given to Mrs. Rose.

The Convention adjourned to half-past seven o'clock, P.M.

FOURTH DAY—EVENING SESSION.

Sunday, June 5.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Convention was called to order, at half-past seven o'clock, by the president, Mr. Barker.

Mr. BARKER then stated that the Mayor of Hartford was present, and had requested that there should be no applauding or hissing of speakers, on account of its disturbing a religious assembly in the neighborhood.

Mr. W. L. GARRISON presented the following resolutions, to be added to those laid before the Convention on a former occasion :

Resolved—That it would be as absurd as untrue to deny that the Bible embodies a large amount of truth—vital, precious, eternal ; that some of its requirements are just and obligatory ; some of its warnings salutary and instructive ; some of its promises soul-sustaining and glorious ; some of its commands and precepts rational and righteous ; some of its views of God and Nature elevating and inspiring ; but it is not less absurd and untrue to deny that it also contains many fallacious contradictions, misconceptions, misrepresentations, fabulous stories, incredible assertions, and hurtful errors. Therefore it can not be, as a book, the Word of God (which is pure and unchangeable), nor given by Divine inspiration, nor the only rule of faith and practice, but as a mixture of good and evil, light and darkness, truth and error, is to be read with discrimination, and neither accepted nor rejected in the gross, but only as the individual understanding and conscience shall determine the character of its multifarious and conflicting contents.

Resolved—That the history of the Bible, from century to century, abundantly proves, not only that the interpretations of its letter and spirit by its recognized expounders have been fiercely conflictive and numberless, but that they have been such only as the age would tolerate, and always in accordance with the despotic spirit of the times, whether religious or political ; that any other interpretations thereof, by the individual soul, have been denounced as heretical, or punished as blasphemous or revolutionary ; that all forms of government—autocratic, monarchical, military, and republican—have alike found their sanction and support in its pages, as at this day ; hence, that to be a believer in its authority has been, and still is, simply to be with the majority and to take the side of the strongest.

Resolved—That a profession of faith in the Bible, as a holy book, is no better evidence of moral worth or true piety, in Christendom, than is a profession of faith in the sacredness of the Koran in Asia, because, in both cases, it is to conform to public opinion, or to bow to the scepter of ecclesiastical domination ; and not to do so is to excite malignant persecution, and bring the reputation, safety, and interest of the dissenter into imminent peril.

The reading of Mr. Garrison's resolutions being attended with stamping and hissing,

Rev. Mr. STORRS said, that he hoped the congregation would

regard the reasonable request of the Mayor, and that there would be no more stamping nor hissing. If the request has been understood (said he), it is not very creditable to human nature to continue to perpetrate the outrage.

MAYOR HAMMERSLY then made some very excellent remarks as to the impropriety of disturbing an assemblage on any occasion. If there could be any propriety in it at any time, he thought that the sacredness of the day ought to restrain all boisterousness in which any might be disposed to indulge.

REV. MR. STORRS then made the following speech: I need not again state the position I occupy. It is possible that some of my friends on the opposite side may think that I grant them all they contend for. I have not contended that every word in the Bible is inspired; I have only contended that it contains a history of revelations in certain ages, made by certain instruments, which God has employed; and a history of certain facts and transactions which were connected with those ages in which the revelations were made. I shall go perhaps a step further, for I have hinted at it before—that no man is called upon to receive as a revelation that which plainly and palpably contradicts right reason. If, therefore, I was convinced that there were doctrines in this Bible, claiming to be inspired of God, that contradicted my sense of what was right, when weighed in the balance of right reason, I would not feel myself bound to receive them as a revelation from God; because the God of this same Bible says, “Come, now, let us reason together.” He appeals to our reason, and that very appeal imports that he has nothing to say that will shock right reason. I feel that my friends on the opposite side of the question understand me. I do feel for the position, condition, and situation of many intelligent friends on the other side, who, loving and appreciating virtue, reject *the Bible*, as they suppose, though, in fact, they reject the *traditions* of men and the corruptions of theologians. They suppose, indeed, that the Bible teaches certain doctrines which shock their reason; and they reject the Bible suppos-

ing that these doctrines are contained in it; and if they really think so, I can not blame them for rejecting it. I do not know how they could feel otherwise than they do while they suppose that book contains some of the doctrines attributed to it by theologians.

The most horrible and shocking of all doctrines the last speaker on this stand referred to, and therefore I feel called upon to refer to it myself in my remarks this evening. That speaker came forward with the declaration, that God at the outset threatened us—Adam's posterity—not only with pain here, but an eternity of woe and suffering beyond this life. I deny that the Bible teaches any such doctrine, or that such a threat is made by Jehovah to our first parents.

Mrs. E. L. ROSE—I believe that I did not say that God threatened our first parents with penalties here and hereafter. I have made no such allusions to hereafter at all. I only said that the Bible said that God placed them in the garden with the tree of knowledge, having so organized them that they should not be able to resist the temptation; and also creating the serpent to tempt Eve; and Eve partook of it, and gave it to Adam, and the Lord knowing that they could not resist, pronounced judgment not only on them, but upon all future generations. I made no allusion to a hereafter; but I said that according to the literal sense of the terms in the Bible, the Lord pronounced judgment first on Eve, from her to go down to her daughters—and on Adam, through him to go down to his sons.

Rev. Mr. STORRS—I misunderstood her then, but she did say that the Bible taught the doctrine of *eternal misery*. With that assumption I take issue. I deny it. The Bible teaches no such doctrine—either in the Old or New Testament. I admit that theologians, professing to understand what the Bible teaches, have taught such doctrines; and she may have supposed that theologians ought to know whether the Bible taught it or not. But theologians may, in these last days, be as

mistaken in regard to these things as other men. I take the position that there is not a solitary expression in the Bible that countenances the *theological* notions of hell. What is the theological notion of hell? I will sum it up from the catechism. It is, that there is a dark, bottomless pit, full of fire and brimstone, where the wicked drink in eternal, unmitigated torture—torture continually increasing, and without end. That is the theological notion of hell; and if the last speaker really supposes that the Bible teaches such a doctrine, I can not blame her for rejecting the Bible. She says that the Bible does teach it; and what text does she quote to prove it? She could not tell us exactly; but I will tell you that the first text referred to by her is found in Mark ix. 43, and it relates to the expression by our Lord, “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched,” etc.

Mrs. ROSE—Will the gentleman read this passage (pointing to Matt. xxv. 46)? He says that I charge that the Bible promulgates the idea of hell; and he says that there is no passage that teaches such a doctrine.

Rev. Mr. STORRS—I have said that the Bible does not teach the theological hell; and I repeat that there is not a text in the Bible that teaches the theological hell.

Mrs. E. L. ROSE—I spoke against the Bible hell, and not against the theological hell. Read the passage. Are you afraid to read your own book?

Rev. Mr. STORRS—No; I will attend to that passage in due time. The text which the lady quoted this afternoon—or the woman—for that is the most respectful term after all.

[Mrs. ROSE thanked the speaker for the use of the term; she thought it the best term.]

I have referred to the text where it says, “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell,” etc. This was the text

mainly used by the speaker this afternoon, in proof that the Bible taught *a hell of endless torments*. I maintain that no such doctrine is taught by this declaration as she has assumed. To settle this point, we want to get a clear and scriptural explanation of the term "hell;" and I wish the congregation to mark distinctly that the text says, "It is better to enter into *life* halt, or maimed, than to be cast into hell." The very expression tells you that *life* is what is to be *lost* if the person does not pursue a certain course, and not endless torment to be endured. Now there are in the New Testament three words that are translated in our language "hell:" *Gehenna*, *Hades*, and *Tartaros*; the latter occurring but once, and that in the Second Epistle of Peter, 2d chapter, 4th verse. The term "*Gehenna*" occurs twelve times in the New Testament. The term "*Hades*" occurs eleven times, and ten times out of the eleven is translated "hell," and once, in 1 Cor. xv. 55, is translated "grave." The term "*Gehenna*," and the term "*Hades*," in the original, have entirely different significations, as every one knows who knows any thing about the original. But we are not, on this account, to throw any blame on the Bible; the blame lies on the translators! The *translation* is not inspiration. (Cries of hear, hear.) It is the work of fallible, erring men, and in no place erring more than in translating *Hades*, "hell."

In the Old Testament (Hebrew), the only term that is translated "hell," is *Sheol*, which occurs sixty times, and thirty-one times out of sixty it is translated "hell." It has precisely the meaning of *Hades*, in the New Testament; and yet thirty-one times in the Old Testament it has been translated "hell," and at other times "grave," etc., according to the judgment of the translators.

My time is so limited, of course, that I have to take but a mere glance at this subject. The term *Hades* does not occur in the text quoted this afternoon, but the term *Gehenna*. The translators might better have left it untranslated. We will

give you an explanation of it, as given in "The Polymicrian Greek Lexicon," by Greenfield. "*Gehenna*, properly the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem; *once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterward polluted with every species of filth, as well as the carcasses of animals, and dead bodies of malefactors; to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence which such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning.*"

The term *Gehenna* is compounded of the words, *Ge*, a valley, and *Hinnom*, a man's name. Dr. George Campbell, an eminent divine—and orthodox, by the way—tells you that the term *Gehenna* never occurs in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, nor in any classic author in the world. Then we are shut up to the use of the term among the Jews. What did it mean among the Jews? Place yourself one moment in Jerusalem, where Jesus stood; look outside of that city, and see the Valley of Hinnom, *Gehenna*. That valley, in the days of the ministration of Jesus, was the receptacle of the filth of the city, carcasses of dead animals, and the bodies of malefactors. What purpose did it serve? Was it designed to *preserve* and keep in existence every thing cast into it? Every one knows that whatever was cast into that *Gehenna*, was cast in there to be made an *end of*. When the Saviour says, "It is better to enter into *life* maimed, than to be cast into hell" (*Gehenna*), he only uses an expression equivalent to saying, "It is better for you to possess life, to continue in being, by losing one hand or one eye in the present time, than to be *totally destroyed* at last for your sins." The term, then, in the text, imports a total or entire *destruction*, and not *preservation*, under any circumstances. It has no such signification as theologians put upon it.

The idea that the term *unquenchable* fire imports a fire "never to go out," or that shall "burn eternally," it is easy to show, by its use among the Jewish prophets, has no such meaning, but simply imports *utter destruction* that can not be

resisted. And such is its common-sense meaning always. A gentleman's house is on fire, and the firemen hasten to his assistance; he says, "Effort is useless, it is *unquenchable*." Does he mean the fire will burn *eternally*, or simply that the house will be *totally destroyed*? If the fire could be quenched, some part of the house might be *preserved*; but it is unquenchable, and therefore total destruction is certain. Any school-boy knows that is the common-sense meaning of the term, however theologians may pervert it. The text, then, gives no support to the notion of the "theological hell," or endless torments.

If the term *Hades*, so often translated "hell," had been uniformly translated, we never would have the reason and common sense shocked by the doctrine of endless torture. No, never. Why do the translators sometimes translate, in the Old Testament, the term *Sheol*, "hell," and sometimes "grave?" I will compare two texts—one found in the Old Testament, where the term *Sheol* occurs, and one in the New Testament, where the term *Hades* is used as the proper correspondent of the term *Sheol*. In Psalm xvi. 10, it is said of the Messiah, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (the original is *sheol*), "neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." In Acts ii. 31, Peter, speaking of David, says, "He seeing this before, spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell" (*Hades*, not *Gehenna*), an entirely different word, and having an entirely different meaning; and yet our translators have translated it the same as though it were *Gehenna*. We have shown that the terms *Sheol* and *Hades* are precisely of the same import. Now, when the word *Sheol* is so often translated "the grave," why should they not translate the term *Hades* in the same manner? They did not do so, because they believed in the natural immortality of the soul; and if they had translated, "thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave," they would say that Christ's soul died, as it did. "What, Christ's soul died!" Yes, sir,

Christ's soul died. "You mean Christ's body?" No, sir; whatever constituted Christ went into the grave and died; and had the translators been faithful in translating here, we should never have heard of Christ's going to the theological hell. Rather than give up the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, they would send Christ to *hell*! Yes, to a hell of *endless torments*. But, unfortunately for their theory, he got out of it, and so others may. The fact is, *Sheol* and *Hades* never mean a place of suffering. The terms signify "covered," "out of sight," and are used in the Scriptures almost uniformly to signify the state of the dead—a state which is hidden from our view—and this the testimony of the Bible clearly confirms. It says, Eccl. ix. 10, that "in *Sheol* there is no knowledge," and, consequently, no suffering. [A VOICE—Right.]

I must charge our translators with being warped by the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. In the passage 1 Cor. xv. 55, wherein it says, "O grave, where is thy victory?" the original term is *hades*. Why did they not translate it "hell" here as they did in every other instance where the term occurs? Because if they had done so they would have proved that there is to be a victory over *hell*. In Hosea xiii. 14, it says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Why did they not translate the word *sheol* in this passage "hell" instead of "grave?" Because they would not allow the shadow of the idea that a soul could be delivered from hell to be taught in the translation. The term used here is *sheol*. "I will redeem them from death; O grave—O *sheol*—I will be thy destruction." Had it been translated *hell* instead of *grave*, it would have proved that *hell* is to be destroyed, and consequently all the wicked in it delivered or destroyed with it. The fact is, *sheol* nor *hades* have never any such sense as theologians attach to the term hell. The doctrine of eternal torments, or the theological hell, then, is not a doctrine of the Bible.

Now I will refer to the text which the woman pointed me to. In this portion of Scripture, Christ is represented as pronouncing judgment upon the world, and in pronouncing judgment upon the wicked class he says, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"—and, it is added, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." I have time to make but brief remarks.

It is said that the term which is translated in one part of this text "everlasting," and in the other part "eternal," is the same. I admit it. You see, then, that the reward of the righteous is *life eternal*. What is the opposite of "life eternal?" *Eternal cutting off from life*. Now, sir, who shall decide this question? Shall some modern theologian, or will we let the Apostle Paul decide what is the punishment which Jesus said should be eternal? Jesus and Paul are speaking of the same *time* and of the same *punishment*. Compare Matthew xxv. 31 to 46 with 2 Thess. i. 7 to 10. Saith Jesus, Matt. xxv. 31, "*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then,*" etc.—Paul saith, 2 Thess. i. 7, "*When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*" etc. Thus it is evident both speak of the same period. But what shall happen at that time? Jesus saith, the wicked depart from him into "everlasting fire—into everlasting punishment," and Paul saith the wicked, at that time, "shall be *punished* with everlasting *destruction*." Thus we have an *inspired* exposition of the punishment Jesus spake of; and it is not *preservation* at all, but *destruction*. Now, sir, this apostolic definition is certainly as good as that of any of the modern doctors of divinity.

The figure of *Gehenna*, used in the other text (Mark ix. 43), is the figure of total destruction, and not a preservation under any circumstances; and, besides, the word translated in this text (Matthew xxv. 46) punishment, is *koalasin*; and our Lord never, on another solitary occasion, as recorded, uses that word

but when he is speaking of torment, in various places in the gospel and in the book of Revelations, he uses two other words, the principal of which is *basanois*. If he intended eternal torments, why did he not say eternal *basanois*? *Koalasin* among other significations has that of *cutting off*; and its sense here is clearly that of *cutting off* from life, and is eternal.

Let me illustrate this thought. Most men have it fixed in their minds that protracted torture, or pain, is necessarily connected with punishment; but I know that idea is without any foundation in truth. The highest penalty inflicted by human laws upon men is death. Men commit murder, and the highest penalty is the deprivation of life. Now, I ask if the taking of life is attended with the greatest amount of pain? Every one knows that in the punishment of the gallows, if the individual falling upon the rope feels any pain at all, it is not manifested at the outside of five minutes. It is not the greatest amount of pain that constitutes the punishment. But says one—"There is a dreadful feeling in the mind of the man before he is executed. He feels horribly." Is that any part of the penalty? The law-makers never took into consideration these dreadful feelings. The penalty is simply that he shall *die*, they take away his life; they do not even look to any thing that may follow death, for when the judge pronounces sentence upon the criminal, he adds, "May God have mercy on your soul"—that is, not hurt you afterward. Now what is the punishment? Is it the great pain the man endures, or is it the loss of life? That is the highest punishment known in the law of God—the deprivation of life. It may be attended with pain—torment, or it may not—that does not alter the nature of the punishment at all. The *loss of life*, when inflicted for crime, is a punishment. Let us further illustrate this. See that man in his beautiful dwelling, surrounded by kind friends and in possession of every enjoyment and pleasure. Let him be told he must *die*, and remain dead *one year*, would he not regard it as a punishment of one year's duration? Suppose him restored

to life at the end of the year, and then be told he must die again, and remain dead ten, a hundred, or a thousand years, after which life should be restored—would he regard this as a punishment? and of what length, or duration, would the punishment be? Of course, ten, a hundred, or a thousand years long. Once more. Suppose this man is to be put to death and remain *eternally dead*, would that not be an “*eternal punishment?*” The Scriptures inform us that “The wages of sin is death”—and that “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (see Rom. vi. 23, and Ezek. xviii. 4–20); and both Jesus and Paul declare that is the punishment of sin, and that it is *eternal*—there is no recovery from it. The *Bible* punishment of hell, is to be destroyed—to *cease from life*, and live no more, eternally.

WM. LLOYD GARRISON.—Mr. Chairman, I am not aware that this Convention was called together to settle the meaning of the term *Hades* or *Gehenna*, or to discuss the question whether the “finally impenitent” are doomed to annihilation or to everlasting burnings. The only subject properly under consideration is as to the plenary inspiration and authority of the Bible; whether that volume contains a mixture of truth and error, fact and fiction, light and darkness, or whether it is altogether sacred and infallibly true. Now, how has this been met? First, in regard to our side of the question. We have given a fair and considerate hearing to the opposite side. In the discussion, we have treated our opponents with entire decorum and proper respect. We have raised no clamor; we have hissed no man; we have not, in a single instance, disturbed the quietude and good order of the meeting, but throughout, under great provocation, “in patience have we possessed our souls.” Those who have stood here to defend the popular view of the Bible have been subjected to no rude treatment, no boisterous interruption, but they have been listened to with exemplary endurance, if not always with deep interest.

Again: we have not avoided the issue, but have made definite charges against the book to disprove its infallibility and its plenary inspiration. We have endeavored to make out our case, by quoting chapter and verse, both from the Old and New Testament, and think we have succeeded beyond refutation.

Moreover, the position that we occupy is far from being popular. We stand in a minority, in a very small minority, in the community. It was some evidence of moral courage, therefore, for us to call such a Convention as this, in the very heart of old Connecticut, and to invite the whole body of our opponents to meet us in debate. The chances were overwhelmingly against us, in regard to the order, management, and verdict of the meeting. Well, what has been the result? On our side there has been no lack of speakers. We have yet many here who desire to be heard, and who are able to speak to edification, but for whom there will be neither time nor opportunity. On the other side, where nearly all the public speakers of our country find it politic to stand, how many have made their appearance on this occasion? Strictly speaking, but two or three. Two have occupied, and, in the absence of others, have claimed the right to occupy, half of the time of our four days' meeting. The burden of defense has been rolled upon them by those who might have been here, and I think ought to have been here, to convince us that there is but one side to the question, and that is in favor of the doctrine of plenary inspiration. Now, sir, I honor the men referred to for coming forward to defend what they believe to be the Word of God; it is to their credit. But I will frankly tell you why, in my opinion, they are able to be here. It is because they are "without reputation" in the community. I do not say this reproachfully—far otherwise. I mean, simply, that they do not stand among the popular and well-educated clergy of the land, but are self-taught and humble men, with very few adherents, on account of their peculiar theological opinions.

Where are the cultivated, learned, and influential occupants of the pulpit, who might bring to the discussion of this subject consummate ability, rare exegetical acumen, and profound argumentation? Wherever else they may be, assuredly they are not here.

Mr. Chairman, in anticipation of this Convention there has been an article published editorially in the *Religious Herald* of this city; and I find in it some reasons urged why this Convention should be allowed to pass unnoticed, on the part of those who claim to be "watchmen on the walls of Zion." The writer says:

"Many imagine that when a challenge or invitation to discuss a question is sent to any individual or class, he or they must of course accept it, or else appear cowardly, betray lack of confidence in the truth, or be guilty of neglecting opportunities to do good and prevent evil. But this is a wrong view, and perfectly unreasonable, although it suits the ends of certain persons to make it current. It is a plain dictate of common sense to compare different means of doing good, and select the best."

Now, sir, I admit that it is not positively incumbent on any man to come here and discuss with us, or discuss with any body, either the Bible question or any other question, unless he thinks proper. I concede the right of every clergyman, and of every layman, too, to determine where he will go, in what he will participate, where he will lift up his voice, or when he will be dumb—to determine his own time, place, and theme for discussion. I make no charge against any man simply because he is not here; but I hold that this attempt to evade the force of our complaint, in regard to the absence of those who profess to be true shepherds of the flock and no hirelings, and who claim to be "set for the defense of the gospel" is clearly disingenuous. Their absence, I aver, is in consequence of a conviction that their dogmas respecting the Bible can not be successfully vindicated IN A FREE MEETING, ON A FREE PLATFORM, BEFORE THE PEOPLE. (Cries of "Hear! hear!") It is not that these men are "found among the missing" here, but

EVERY WHERE, on all occasions where free discussion is allowed, and where they must take their chance with the audience, in regard to the judgment that may be pronounced.

The writer of the article alluded to says that "the Bible question is settled"—therefore all inquiry and all investigation are at an end. That is the dogmatism of Popery; that is the insolence of tyranny; that is the folly of priestly arrogance. How settled—and by whom and for whom settled? While God makes a free mind, nothing is settled, so as to render unlawful or inexpedient further investigation; but now, as in the days of Paul, it is incumbent upon each to "prove all things," while "holding fast that which is good." Rather than stultify the reasoning faculties, doubt and deny every thing that is affirmed, even that there is a God, until the proof seems conclusive. Begin with the beginning; take nothing upon tradition or authority as absolutely final; but judge for yourselves, by an independent research, and according to your own conscientious conviction, even if against the world.

The question of slavery, it is as oracularly declared in other quarters, is settled, and all further agitation of it ought to cease. But it is not settled, and it concerns our country most fearfully; for if there be a God—if there be an eternal law—if man is made in the divine image, and is not a beast—then it is impossible for this nation, prosperous as it now is, strong and enterprising as it now is, to persist in trampling man in the dust as a mere thing, and hope to escape retributive justice. No—it is not a settled question, and therefore the discussion must go on. But how have the clergy, as a body, behaved toward it? For a score of years the anti-slavery platform has been free, and we have constantly invited those, who ought not to have waited for an invitation, to stand upon it, and show why slavery should be any longer continued in the land, and why sentence of death should not be pronounced against it. But they have refused to appear, as in every parallel case which has challenged general consideration. There-

fore it is that we feel authorized to conclude, that their absence from this Convention is another indication of their cowardice, through a consciousness of the unsoundness of their position as to the Bible. Our arraignment of them does not relate to this particular instance, as an isolated fact, but is so comprehensive as to cover their whole official career; so that the excuse of the *Herald* for their non-attendance here is as dishonest as it is worthless.

The writer of the article in the *Herald* says :

“ Then, again, there are some things so well settled, and so long determined, after repeated investigations by the ablest minds, that they are not to be brought into debate by every sciolist who pretends to doubt them. Suppose two or three foreigners, fresh from Europe, were to issue a call for a convention at Hartford to discuss the propriety of republican government, must every civilian of distinction rush to the appointed place to refute the monarchists? If three Mormon leaders and one or two Turks were to issue a similar call to discuss the question of polygamy, must every man, in favor of a single wife, feel under obligation to go in and defend monogamy? Were the radical non-resistance men around Boston to hold a convention to investigate the claims of civil government, must our governors and judges attend to defend their authority? If not, surely after ages of discussion by tongue and pen, and centuries of experiment on every soil and among every variety of people, it may well be supposed that Christianity has long since proved itself to be divine, and that its professors and ministers need feel under no obligation to help furnish an audience and occasion for those who wish to vent their pent-up scoffs and blasphemies.”

Without stopping to comment upon the low and venomous imputation contained in the closing sentence, let us suppose such a meeting were called in this place, in good faith, by “ two or three foreigners fresh from Europe,” and that they should give a general invitation to the citizens to be present, to discuss the nature of our government—that invitation might not be generally heeded, but do you suppose there would be general uneasiness, or a high state of popular inflammation, in consequence thereof—especially on the strange pretext that the question they sought to discuss was settled beyond dispute?

No. But how has this Convention been spoken of and treated? What is the town-talk in regard to it? Are there no symptoms of alarm and indignation?

Again, the *Herald* says:

“If the Bible has triumphed over Bolingbroke, Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Rousseau, and the strong-sensed though vulgar Paine, its defenders need not tremble at Andrew Jackson Davis and his spirit-rapping admirers.”

Is that a manly reference, or a contemptuous fling? I am not here to eulogize any man; but who, among his assailants, exhibits in his own person a more beautiful life to the world than Andrew Jackson Davis? Who can deny the extraordinary phenomena attending his mental development? Who that really knows him doubts his sincerity, his honesty of purpose, his extraordinary enlightenment, or really believes that he is bent on mischief? And what is this opprobrious reference to Hume, and Voltaire, and Bolingbroke, but merely an *ad captandum* appeal to popular prejudice? What have I to do with Hume, Bolingbroke, or Voltaire? I have yet to read the first page that they have written on the subject of divine revelation. I am here to utter my own sentiments, and not those of any other man—to hold myself responsible for my own views, not those of any other individual, whether belonging to a past age or to the present; and I ask no man to give me his indorsement, as I shall certainly indorse no man. “There is no need of trembling,” says the *Herald*. Then why is there so much agitation among those who say they have God and the Bible with them? Why have they, or their representatives, lawlessly interrupted the proceedings of this Convention, and outraged all the proprieties of the place and the occasion? Even on this “holy day,” in the very presence of the Mayor, have we not had exhibited the lowest specimens of rowdiness, on the part of those who have been trained up in the Sabbath schools, and taught to regard the Bible with sacred awe, and some of whom are pursuing a course of studies for the minis-

try? Has it not been found necessary, by the Mayor, again and again, to beseech them to behave themselves decently, to remember that this is the Sabbath day, to have some regard for the rights of a meeting convened for public worship in yonder building, and liable to be interrupted by these disturbances? And has he not made his appeals in vain?

Last evening there stood on this platform a highly estimable, intellectual and gifted woman (Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose), of Polish extraction, educated in the Jewish faith, but emancipated from its yoke of bondage, and also from every sectarian fetter—strong in her own mental independence, and true to her own conscientious convictions. She presented herself, with grace and dignity, before the assembly, and proceeded, with consummate mastery of the art of oratory, and in a calm, philosophical spirit, to show why she was unable to accept the popular views respecting the Bible, and its alleged inspiration; yet throughout her speech she was indecently and constantly interrupted, sneered and hooted at, and saluted with opprobrious epithets, by professed Bible believers. It was not the Rev. Mr. Storrs, or the Rev. Mr. Turner, who was speaking, and who was clamored down by the opposite side, but it was a gifted woman, daring to express her own thoughts, in her own language—daring to dissent from the popular creed, and to be true to herself—insulted and gagged in the most outrageous manner—the scene terminating in the sudden extinguishment of the gas lights, with a view to the dispersion of the meeting in confusion! Now, of what is such conduct significant?

Sir, I am familiar with such manifestations. Twenty years of experience have taught me how to discriminate in a case like this. The anti-slavery cause, though offering them a free platform, has never been able to induce its opponents to occupy it, and to measure weapons in a fair and manly antagonism; but they have resorted to every evil device, and stirred up all the mobocratic elements in the land, to destroy it. It is a confession of weakness or guilt; they can not argue in any

other manner. So I am constrained to regard it in the present case.

See how utterly inexcusable is such conduct. We are here by constitutional right; and, therefore, every man claiming to revere the constitution is bound to stand by it, especially when it recognizes the right of free discussion, for that is a very sacred right. He is a bad citizen and a dangerous man who comes into a meeting of this kind, where it is as free to him as to others, and attempts to put down, by vociferation and violence, the man who differs from him in opinion. It is cowardly and base to substitute for argument the hiss of the snake, and for proof the howl of the wolf.

Now, sir, a word directly on the subject before us. This discussion, after all, has been mainly upon one side; for neither of our opponents has ventured to contend for the plenary inspiration of the Bible. True, they deny that this is the question at issue, but they are mistaken. We deny that it is an inspired volume, as such—that, as a book, it is the word of God—because it contains many things which are absurd, contradictory, inexplicable, fabulous, and some things which are immoral and inhuman. This is our position, and we have repeatedly begged its examination; but in vain. Our friend Mr. Storrs, in his last speech, has conceded every thing. *He* does not believe in the doctrine of plenary inspiration any more than I do. He exercises his liberty as a man to put aside whatever he pleases, and to stamp it as false and erroneous, just as I do. Nay, he has gone beyond any of us, in insisting that the Bible, as translated, is any thing but true to the original, as pertaining to the most important doctrines, namely, the immortality of the soul and the punishment of the wicked. He represented its translators to have been fearfully warped, if not intentionally dishonest, by their religious theories and preconceived opinions. Now, if they were warped in one direction, why may they not have been in another? If the present English version is essentially defective, how is it

“the only rule of faith and practice?”—for it is this version which is under consideration, and the only one that is in the hands of the people. Moreover, our friend very frankly declared, that whatever in the book he found to conflict with “right reason,” or to do violence to his own understanding, he would not hesitate to reject. Here, then, is “the law” that our friend has so frequently called for, with such an air of triumph, by which the Bible is to be judged. It is right reason on the throne—conformity to what the soul apprehends or believes to be the truth. Thus, the whole ground that we claim is conceded to us, and the only difference between us is as to the amount of truth embodied in the volume. How much of it is falsely translated, or incompatible with justice, or worthy of acceptation, every one is to decide for himself. When Martin Luther, of glorious memory, stood forth against papal Rome, and said the right of private judgment in regard to the Scriptures is not to be invaded, he laid the foundation for the elevation of the whole human race from spiritual vassalage, and subordinated the book to the judgment and conscience. But what is of God is not erroneous; what is sacred is not common; what is greater than the soul, it is not for the soul to claim supremacy over it. He, therefore, who believes in the right of private judgment, is thereby precluded from assuming papal infallibility, and excommunicating his brother as a heretic, because he differs from him in his interpretation or his estimate of the Bible. It is not for him to call me an “infidel” or a “blasphemer,” because I am not prepared to accept his views of the book, but to remember his own liability to err, and to believe me to be as sincerely desirous to know the truth as himself. When he begins to rail or to proscribe, he shows that, if he only had the power, he has the disposition to thrust the heretic into a dungeon, or to burn him at the stake, as did the persecutors in the olden time—and all for “the glory of God and the good of souls.” A persecuting religion is not of Christ, but of the devil. The invitation,

“Come, now, let us *reason* together, saith the Lord,” is indeed God-like. He who will not reason, but resorts to brutality or sectarian malevolence, is either a tyrant or a knave. I appeal to those who have come to this meeting, not to listen with candor to what may be advanced, but to create a disturbance, whether they can justify their conduct, even in their own eyes. They knew, before they came, that it was to be a Convention free to all; they knew, too, that they would, in all probability, hear sentiments avowed which would be highly distasteful to them; but how can there be free discussion without this liability? Besides, no one is bound to accept any thing which he deems unsound. There might be some excuse for violent resistance, if there was an attempt to force down your throats what you did not believe to be true; but you are here, by your own choice, with the liberty to receive or reject what may be uttered, just as you please, and to retire from the house whenever you find it too dull or too uncomfortable to remain. What more can you ask or desire? Of what have you to complain? You are not without opinions which are dear to you. But what right have you to entertain and to propagate opinions? They may be popular or unpopular. Suppose you were to call a public meeting for the discussion of a question deemed by you equally interesting and important, and in true manliness of spirit should invite those who dissented from your view to a free participation in the proceedings; and suppose they should come, not to argue, but to break up the meeting in the spirit of rowdyism, what would you think of them? Now, “whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

Mr. Chairman, I turn from a digression which has been excusable, nay, imperatively called for, by the lawless spirit manifested in this Convention. It is important that we all clearly comprehend one thing, and that is, that the test of character which, in one age of the world, is vital and conclusive, is, in a subsequent age, like salt which has lost its savor, worth-

less, and, therefore, it is fatuity to cling to it as fundamentally important after it is worn out. For example: eighteen hundred years ago, the question, "Do you believe in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah?" was a test question to the Jewish nation. It proved all classes, from the chief priests, scribes, and pharisees, to the rabble, as the answer was given; because whoever answered in the affirmative, and became his adherent, did so at the certainty of being regarded as the offscouring of all things, and putting even his life in peril. But of what value is that question now, in our country, or in any part of Christendom, as a test of character? None. Then, it had a definite meaning and a redeeming power; now, nothing is more indefinite, nothing more powerless. It means any thing, every thing, nothing. Then, affirmatively answered, it cost much; now, it is a good worldly speculation. The Christ now recognized and accepted by Christendom is not the Christ who bore the cross, and was crucified between two thieves eighteen centuries ago. No, sir; he is a very different personage. Instead of being buffeted, outlawed, rejected by the rulers and abhorred by the priests, he is exalted to the skies,—yea, evangelically deified. All that is proud, wealthy, ambitious, politic, and reputable—scribes, pharisees, priests, lawyers, judges, governors, presidents, emperors—are foremost to declare their belief in Christ. It is a popular faith. What does it indicate as to love of God or regard for man? Nothing.

Sir, let me give an illustration or two. If an Italian should come here from Rome, I would not give a farthing to know whether he revered Christ. I would not care to ask him the question; because I should be certain that the chances of getting an affirmative answer would be as ninety-nine out of a hundred, accompanied with sundry genuflections of the body, in token of the profoundest respect. But what would it prove? Would it be any evidence of piety? Not in the least degree. For no where in the world is Christ popularly

so honored and revered as at Rome. His image is seen everywhere, painted on canvas, sculptured in marble, erected by the wayside ; and to it the multitude are continually kneeling, with Pope Pius (destitute of all piety) and the cardinals at their head. In spite of all this homage, the Protestant church and clergy do not hesitate to declare that the head-quarters of Antichrist is Rome. Therefore I said, I would not ask him the question I have stated. If I wished to know whether he possessed any true manhood, love of liberty, and readiness of soul to espouse the cause of bleeding humanity—whether he was a man of principle or of expediency, self-sacrificing or time-serving, a brave man or a coward—I would ask him, not what he thought of Christ, but what he thought, in Rome, of Mazzini and the cause of Italian liberty. (Applause.) As he should answer that question, so should I know how to estimate him.

So, if an Austrian should visit Boston, I would not care to inquire, as a test of character, how he regarded the Christian Church ; for, if I should make the inquiry, he would doubtless tell me that he had the greatest respect for that church, and was himself a member of it. So is the Emperor of Austria ; but then it is the Christian Church which goes for the Emperor of Austria ! (Laughter and applause.) I would ask him, “What did you say and do when the struggle was going on between Austria and Hungary—when the Hungarians were striking home for liberty—and on which side were your sympathies and good wishes ?” (Applause.) According to his reply would be my appreciation of the man.

How much did it avail the Jews to say, “We have Abraham for our father ?” Or how much of real piety did it indicate when they declared, “If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets”—pointing to the tombs which they had builded and the sepulchers they had garnished, as evidences of their religious veneration for the memories of the martyred

dead. The scathing reply of Jesus was, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! fill ye up the measure of your fathers!" So, of what value in Christendom is the popular recognition of Jesus as the Christ? To what does it amount that, everywhere, the most profound homage is paid to him, and his "praise is in all the churches?" The boast, whether at Rome or at Hartford, "We have Jesus for our Saviour," is as empty as was that of the Jews in Jerusalem, "We have Abraham for our father."

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
 In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side:
*Some great cause—God's new Messiah—*offering each the bloom
 or blight,
 Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
 And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light."

Thus every test, however searching and infallible at any one period, among any people, becomes powerless and grows obsolete in time. Even in the same age, the test, which, in one section of Christendom, might unmask every face and reveal every heart, in another section would be without adaptation or efficiency. Here is the evidence. In America, the anti-slavery cause is the probe which has the most deeply penetrated to the core of our national corruption—the most vital test of love to God and love to man. God has lifted up the poor slave from his depth of degradation, and, saturated with his blood and with his chains around him, has taken him through the length and breadth of the land, presenting him to every religious sect, knocking at the door of every church, appealing to every pulpit, testing every party, summoning every household, and asking them one and all, "Is he not your brother?" All masks have been thrown off. The liberation of the slave has been as searching a test to this nation as the advent of Jesus was to the Jews eighteen hundred years ago; only the crucifixion of the latter did not manifest so deep de-

pravity as the enslavement of the former. "It shall be more tolerable, in the day of judgment," for those who cried, "Release not this man, but Barabbas," than for our "Christian" traffickers in human flesh.

Now, take this same test over to England, and you will at once discover how little vitality it possesses; for, from Land's End to John O'Groat's House, slavery is regarded as an accursed system, and the stronger the denunciation of it, the more tumultuous will be the applause. But what does all this prove as to a willingness to suffer for righteousness' sake, to "endure the cross and despise the shame," on the part of those who cry out against American oppression? Thank God for the testimonies which are thickening on that subject, and coming over to us by almost every conveyance! They are in accordance with unperverted humanity, and evince a most friendly spirit. But remember that the people of England have not been corrupted by the immediate presence of slavery, and have no interest, real or imaginary, near or remote, in its continuance. With us, it has had a growth of more than two centuries, till it has obtained universal mastery and spread universal corruption, rendering it extremely difficult and dangerous to grapple with it, and requiring the most sublime appreciation of principle and the most absolute reliance on the promises of God in the struggle for its eternal overthrow. Still further, remember that Prince Albert is an abolitionist; Queen Victoria is an abolitionist; the most wealthy and respectable people are abolitionists; every body, popularly speaking, on that side of the Atlantic, is an abolitionist—*i. e.*, they are all agreed in the sentiment, that the existence of slavery in this republic is to our shame and condemnation—and assuredly they are right. Now, in every part of the world, it is so easy to go with the great majority—to say just what every body else is saying—to agree with all that is reputable and exalted! As my words may go over to England from this Convention, I wish to be under-

stood as not speaking reproachfully, nor lacking in grateful appreciation of what is doing abroad, but only as making a clear moral discrimination, when I say that, of a thousand men and women who might cheerfully put their names to an anti-slavery address in England, more than nine tenths, if they should come over here to take up their abode, would, in all probability, bow the knee to the Moloch of slavery almost as soon as they touched our soil, and be unwilling to be identified with the uncompromising abolitionists. This remark is predicated on the experience we have had in these matters during the last twenty years, in regard to English delegates, tourists, and sojourners of every grade. They did not know themselves until they came here—for what is a test here, is none on the other side of the Atlantic. Yet there are those, both men and women, in England, who would unflinchingly “stand fire” among us; who are governed by inflexible principle; who, whether at home or abroad, are ready to sacrifice and be sacrificed for the good of others; but the number of such, in every land, is lamentably small.

If there has ever been a time when it was a perilous thing to acknowledge the sacred character of the Bible, that time has passed away. The cross is now to be found in an opposite direction. He is the victim of persecution who ventures to question the infallibility of the book. If a man wishes to advance his own selfish ends, let him affect the greatest regard for the volume—let him evince a pious horror whenever he hears its plenary inspiration doubted—and he will play a politic part. Some other test is needed, therefore, to reveal the character of the man and the spirit of the age.

“But,” says one, “it is nevertheless true that the Bible is the word of God.” I ask him how he knows it. He replies, “I have carefully examined it, and it commends itself to my conscience and judgment as such.” Very well; he may be right, and he may also be mistaken. I, too, will examine it, and decide for myself. “But the most eminent scholars, di-

vines, and commentators affirm the same thing." Well, are they not all fallible men, all liable to err? Am I to surrender my judgment to theirs, and take their *ipse dixit* as final? Or am I not free to test its claims, precisely as I would any other book, and reject whatever I may regard as fabulous or untrue? Here, for instance, is the Sermon on the Mount, attributed to Jesus. There are those who contend, perhaps some who believe, that such a person never existed—what then? In that sermon I find this injunction: "Whosoever shall smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also." Now I ask, am I bound to obey it because it is ascribed to Jesus, or because he actually gave it? No—it must be right and best, in the nature of things, or it ceases to be obligatory. It matters not from whose lips it came; if compliance with it, not from cowardice, not superstitiously, but in a brave and an enlightened spirit, tends to purify the heart and to subdue evil, then it is of God, and can not be set aside with impunity. [Mr. GARRISON here illustrated the efficacy of the non-resistance principle, by its practical adoption, and concluded as follows:]—

One of my charges against the clergy is, that, with rare exceptions, they do not encourage free inquiry, nor warn their hearers to beware how they pin their faith on any man's sleeve; but they exact a blind reverence for the past, unquestioning submission to what is established, and rigid conformity to a lifeless creed. Professing to revere Christ, and Paul, and Luther, and the noble company of martyrs, for daring to transcend the ideas and practices of their age, with the cross and the stake full in view, they seem to regard it as "the end of the law for righteousness" to pay homage to the sainted dead, but dare not go one step in advance of public sentiment, and are ever ready to raise the malignant cry of "infidel" against every one who refuses to be either hoodwinked or fettered by ghostly authority.

In conclusion, allow me to add, that I have been highly

gratified to perceive so much intelligence, manliness, self-respect, and dignity on the part of those who constitute the Convention. We have not come together in vain: a quickening influence will go out from this meeting that will be widely felt, and an example of manly freedom has been set that will be imitated in other sections, to the furtherance of the great work of human redemption from the power of priestcraft, the reign of superstition, and the guilt of sin.

[Notwithstanding the pointedness and cutting character of many of the remarks of Mr. GARRISON, addressed more particularly to the turbulent, they were listened to with marked attention throughout, demonstrations of any kind being but very few.]—*Rep.*

Rev. Mr. TURNER then said: It is due to the side of the Bible that I should very briefly review some of the positions taken in the discussion. (Applause—clapping of hands.) I suppose now, Mr. Chairman, if I were to turn the table, and say that now we have the clapping of those who take sides against the Bible, you would think me unkind. It was not the Bible, nor the taking the side of the Bible, that made the people clap and hiss last evening; but it was remarks in reference to the Bible. (Applause.) Now, beloved friends, please be quiet, and let me address you a few moments. I was going to say that the position of the argument thus far was not clearly and distinctly stated in all its features by my friend Garrison. It was stated that we had occupied one half of the time. This, Mr. Chairman, is a mistake. We expected half of the time, but have not had it. We have not exceeded more than one third of the time of the sessions of this Convention. Such has been the *fact*; but I do not enter it as a complaint; only as a correction. So far as we have had opportunity, we have been perfectly satisfied. We have had an opportunity to speak, governed by all the conditions under which we have

spoken; and I have felt all the while that we could afford to be very generous.

We are conscious that the Bible is what we have attempted to have it to be, the word of God. We have been accused of avoiding the main question, viz., the inspiration of the Bible. We have defined what we mean by inspiration. We have stated here repeatedly, and have been obliged to do it, that we regard the Bible as a record of revelations from God, together with the history of the matters-of-fact that occurred in connection with those revelations. We do not mean to defend every word of the Bible as divine inspiration.

We knew that certain portions of the Bible were history, and as we have once before said on this stand, we did not know but that every body who read the Bible knew it; and if it is fact that there are clergymen who do believe that every word of the Bible is inspiration, we do not know them, and have never heard them preach, but we doubt if such a clergyman is to be found. I have a word to say in regard to the order of the meeting. The position in which it now stands demands of me, as a citizen of Hartford, and as a friend of right, a few words. I am not willing, under existing circumstances, that a charge should be three times repeated from this stand, that the friends of the Bible have disturbed this Convention, and leave that charge unrebuked. (Applause.) In the estimation of our friend Garrison—for he told me so last evening—the friends of the Bible produced the disturbance; but, sir, I came to this stand last evening, and asked the people to be quiet, and they were quiet—(A VOICE—That is so.)—and it is known that the charges of the woman speaking were repeated, that the friends of the Bible made that noise, before the noise commenced again; and allow me to say, although my friend Garrison seems to feel that he would not strike a man if a man were to strike him—I think he would now, in his way of striking. (Applause.) I certainly think that I never saw a speaker in as many minutes ever take a

more direct course, or do more in the same time to provoke disturbance, than my friend Garrison has this evening. (Applause. A VOICE—Who is exciting it now? Loud applauding, stamping, etc.) Mr. Chairman, I wish to say that I would gladly avoid all remarks calculated to produce such boisterous expressions; and if persons make such expressions of their feelings, whether they are for me or against me, I am not responsible; and I do not make my opponents responsible when they have kept to argument, and have not lately outraged the audience.

Mr. Garrison has spoken a great deal concerning the wickedness of professors of religion. I do not know of any person in the world professing to be a religionist, even though he may be wicked himself, that does not say that we have wicked professors and professed believers in the Bible; but, pray, what has all that to do with the truthfulness of the Bible? Is the Bible responsible, even if there are a thousand hypocrites to one Christian? Indeed, is it not a truth recorded in that Bible, that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Hence so far from such a fact being against the truthfulness of the Bible, it is decidedly in its favor. We will apprise you that the Bible has notified the Church that such things would exist, and actually marking the state of things that should surround the Church in each successive dispensation to the end. The audience will perceive, that many of the charges preferred on the other side are not so much against the Bible, as they are against the professed believers in the Bible; and hence we are carried all over the world to look at the professed believers of the Bible, even at the rulers of the earth; and then, because they profess to believe in the Bible, and don't live the Bible, they would have us understand that the charges against the Bible are sustained. Is this so? Is this logical argument? Is this proving the Bible untrue? Why, if you draw a right conclusion from the argument of my friend Gar-

ri-son, you will decide with me, for I affirm that his argument is in favor of the Bible. These believers that have been referred to do not live out a real faith in the Bible, because they do not live as the Bible teaches, and therefore the Bible remains untouched—a constant, and will be an everlasting, rebuke to their lives and professions.

To show the character of many charges against the Bible, I will refer to the one made by the Chairman, that the Bible subjugated woman to man. I am not now going into the question of woman's rights; I am only going to say that he found a fault in the Bible in this particular, viz., that the New Testament gave as the reason why woman should be subject to the husband, because that "man was first, and the woman was of the man, and not man of the woman." Then (said the Chairman), "here you see is a statement contrary to known fact," for in every case since the first man, man has been of the woman, and not woman of the man. Were it not a subject a little too delicate for this occasion, I would expose the fallacy of this argument. Is not this statement of the Bible, and has it not been an unchanged truth to this time? I only ask you to think—reflect. This statement of the Bible has been introduced as contrary to known fact, and the Bible charged with falsehood. I simply say that it is a fact from the first man till now. "Man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man;" and you have only to think a moment, and every one of you will see that man is always first in the propagation of his race, hence the woman is always of the man. This is one of that kind of obligations which they claim they have raised against the Bible, time after time, and which they say have not been answered. Now we could answer all of them as readily as this, if we only had the time for it; it only takes a quarter of a minute to urge an objection, and about five or ten minutes to answer one. There have indeed been charges made of contradictions in the Bible, and of false statements in the Bible, just like the last we have

noticed, and just as easy to explain and show the truthfulness of the sayings of the Bible. "But, oh! the Bible subjects woman," and on that account the Bible must be removed out of the way, that women may have their rights. (Loud applauding and stamping in the gallery.) I have but little acquaintance in this city, but I believe that this disorder has not affected our women very much that is not past endurance. (Applause.)

I feel that our opponents have treated us respectfully in this discussion, and in this respect I have no fault to find. I rejoice, Mr. Chairman, that I have met this question. (Cries of "Hear, hear.") I rejoice that my children shall remember that their father met the question, "Is the Bible true?" in the city of Hartford. (Applause.) Yes, sir, if the Bible were to be blotted out of the universe to-morrow by a God of some kind, I should still rejoice that I met the question (applause), not because I have been able to handle the subject as others might have done—not that I have the feeling in my breast that justice has been done the subject as it might have been done in other hands, but, oh, sir, the safeguard of our *world* has been attacked, and I have had the privilege of a feeble defense of the Bible. I leave the arguments that have been made on our side of the question with you, kind friends. Carry them home with you, and lay them beside the objections urged against the book, and lay the Bible before you, read it over again and again with care, and you will do as I did the other day. I love my Bible so well, so much better than before this discussion, that I could not refrain from buying me a new one. (Loud applause.)

Mrs. E. L. ROSE then said: I do not intend to take up any argument. (Stamping of feet, drumming of canes, hollaloing, etc.) Who now makes the disturbance? Is it on our side of the question? (Renewed stamping of feet, clapping of hands, drumming of canes, whistling, and ribald speeches in the gallery.)

Mr. BARKER—It is the most infamous proceeding I ever knew. (Ironical cheering.)

Mrs. ROSE—I simply wish to justify myself with regard to some remarks that have been made. (Hissing, and cries of “Down, down.”) I was told to-day that the cause of disturbance last evening was owing to some very irritating language I used. (Renewed disturbance in the gallery, and Mrs. ROSE, in the midst of confusion that rendered it almost impossible for persons sitting on the stand even, to hear her, proceeded.) Can any one point out any irritating language that I have used toward any human being? (Furious yells in the gallery.) As for my views on the Bible, we have here to express our honest opinions on the subjects under discussion. (Hisses, and cries of “Go home.”) If so, I had a perfect right to express mine. (Hisses and stamping.) But we were told by the last speaker that he restored order last evening, and that it remained quiet until I said, and repeated it, that the believers in the Bible were the disturbers. (Continued disturbance.) Yes, I said so, and say so now. Who else were they? Those that stand on my side of the question? Surely not. If not they, who else but those who disagreed with our opinions, and disagreeing with our opinions against the Bible, were in favor of the Bible—were the supporters of it? But I am not here to apologize for any thing that I have said; for I believe firmly, sincerely, and truly that I have spoken the honest convictions of my heart, and I could not be true to myself and my principles to do less. With regard to the disturbance, I have no ill feelings toward any one on account of it. (Renewed disturbance.) It points me always back to the cause. Those who believe, according to the Bible, that woman has no right to lift her voice in public in her own behalf, or in behalf of humanity, can not act better than they do. (Hisses and yells.) Therefore, my friends, wishing you farewell, I will carry with me no unpleasant remembrance on account of it; for my creed tells me to have perfect charity

for the opinions, feelings, and conduct of man, for he always does as well as under the circumstances he is able to do, and if I have uttered the truth, I hope it will bear its fruit, and giving you better knowledge and kindlier feelings, will lead you to act more rational and consistent. (Hisses and applause.)

[The manuscript of Mr. Barker's closing speech has not been received; and in order to avoid further delay in the publication of this work, it is deemed necessary to omit it.]

During the delivery of Mr. Barker's remarks, there was much disturbance in the gallery, which was increased by an attempt to arrest some of the disturbers, one of whom was secured with much difficulty after his having drawn a dirk (as was understood).

There beginning to be loud cries of "Adjourn, adjourn," Mr. GARRISON moved that the Convention adjourn, *sine die*.

Mr. PILLSBURY—I wish to say a word or two. (Loud cries of "Out of order," and "Set down.")

Mr. PILLSBURY—But I will speak.

The MAYOR—A motion has been made to adjourn, sir, and you can not address the meeting. You are out of order, sir. (Applause.)

Mr. PILLSBURY—If people imagine that I am to be put down, all I can say is, that they have mistaken their man. (Yells and hisses, and cries of "Put him out.")

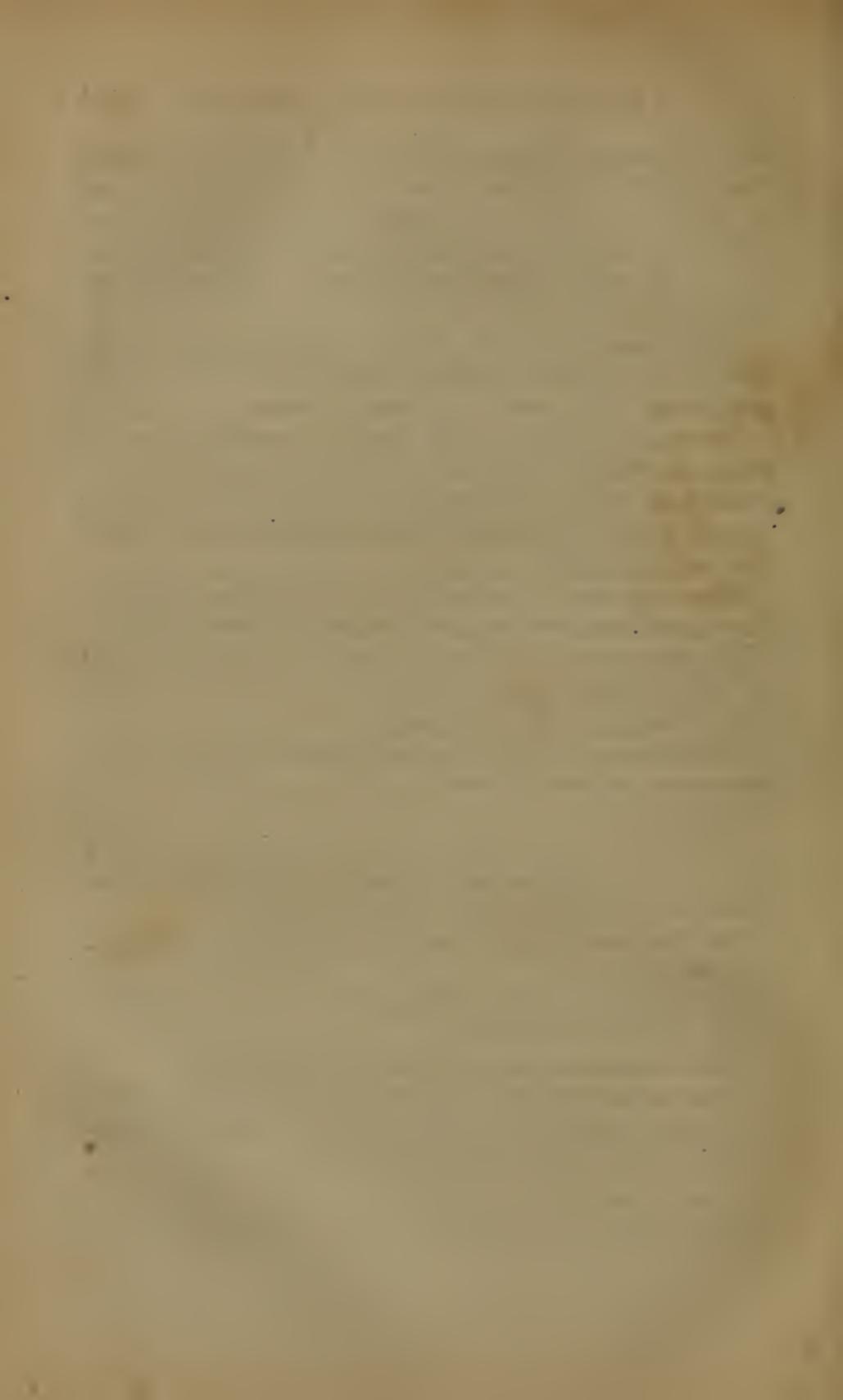
The MAYOR—I tell you a motion has been made to adjourn. (Applause.)

Mr. PILLSBURY—I did not hear it.

Mr. GARRISON—I made it.

Mr. PILLSBURY—Very well, then, I will give way.

After notice being given that preparations would be made for holding another Convention in January, 1854, the motion of adjournment was seconded, and carried.



Appendix.

SYRACUSE, *Aug. 25, 1853.*

GENTLEMEN :

I have the pleasure of but a very slight acquaintance with either of you. I do not know what are your opinions respecting the Bible; much less have I had any revelation of the motives that have induced you to call a Convention at Hartford, to canvass the "origin, authority, and influence of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures." But the avowed object of this proposed Convention is certainly a very fair and very important one; and your invitation to it—both the one which you have published in the newspapers, and the one in manuscript, with which you have honored me personally, is candid, dignified, and apparently sincere. I know not, therefore, by what rule of common courtesy your invitation should be treated with contempt, especially by theologians and ministers of religion. Much less can I see with what fairness you should be suspected and denounced as enemies of the Word of God, by the professed disciples of Him who said, "Why, even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"—and whose chief apostle enjoined it upon those to whom he preached the Gospel, "to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." If, therefore, I were living near Hartford, or were so situated that I could afford the time and the expense of so long a journey as from this to the place of your meeting, I should attend the Convention and do all in my power to bring those I might meet there to what I deem right conclusions upon all the subjects of discussion that might arise.

I know of no questions more important than those you have proposed in your circular. Here is a book—the Bible—which holds a position unlike that occupied by any other book in the world. It is claimed for it, that it contains the history, and the substance of the only two dispensations of religious truth that have ever been sanctioned by God. And yet the larger portion of the so-called Christian world—the Roman Catholics—do not encourage the reading of this book by the peo-

ple generally—because they contend that there are doctrines of essential importance not contained in the Scriptures.” And “even if all the doctrines of religion were actually contained in the Bible, still the rule of Catholic belief would not be the Scriptures explained by private interpretations, but by the teaching of the apostles and their successors,” which successors they claim are the Pope, the Bishops, and Priests of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Protestants, on the contrary, stand up before the world, and with one accord proclaim that “the Bible, the Bible only,” is their religion. They have taken unwearied pains to multiply copies of the sacred volume, and to put it within the reach of all men. Every person who has received any education at all, is expected to know something respecting the Bible; and a copy of it is supposed of course to be in every well-ordered family, if not in the possession of every decent individual. Portions of these Scriptures are read every Lord’s day in all Protestant churches; and all sermons that are preached in them are professedly based upon texts taken from this holy book. The Bible is generally present on all solemn occasions. It is, in this State, if not in yours, carried into courts of law; and the oaths which are administered there are sealed by a kiss imprinted upon some page of this book, or (if the swearer be a Catholic) upon the figure of the cross stamped on the cover of it.

Surely the inquiry which you propose is a very reasonable one to be put by every intelligent being who is required or expected to pay so much deference to a book. What was the origin? what is the authority? and what has been the influence of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures? are questions which every one has a right to ask; and they are questions which every minister of the Christian religion should be able and ready to answer in a clear and satisfactory manner—especially the questions respecting the *origin* and *authority* of these Scriptures ought to be so answered. It has been believed, in times past, that every word within the covers of the Bible, from the first of Genesis to the last of Revelation (excepting the Apocrypha, where that has been inserted between the Old and the New Testaments), was infallible truth; and it has been believed and strenuously insisted on as a matter of vital consequence, that every word of the Bible was written at the explicit dictation of God; so that the men who wrote the different parts of the volume had little more to do with the composition of what they inscribed, than the pens or styles with which they traced the words. This extravagant opinion could not be maintained for various reasons, which I need not mention, and is now, I suppose, abandoned by most intelligent persons.

Well, then, if the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures be not true, what is true on this point? Were they written as other excellent books were written, or under some other influence? If the Spirit of God assisted or directed the sacred writers, to what extent were they so assisted or directed? These certainly are fair questions, and ought to be answered, as far as possible, to the satisfaction of those who put them.

Again, from what source do we derive our information respecting the origin and authorities of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures? Have any of the sacred writers themselves told us what was the kind and degree of inspiration under which they wrote? And then does the little that is said in the Bible on the subject of inspiration apply equally to every book that we now find included in that collection? Who made that collection? who determined which of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures should be accounted canonical, and which apocryphal? And are we sure the selection was a perfectly just one? On what grounds was the choice in each case determined? These certainly are natural and very proper questions, and can be answered, and ought to be answered, to the people, whenever they are asked.

Then, again, if we have no authoritative description of what is to be understood by "inspiration of the Scriptures;" if we have only the declaration that they, or some parts of them, were written by men under the influence of inspiration, are we not obviously left to learn by reading and studying these sacred writings, as best we can, what was the kind of inspiration by which the writers were influenced? And will not our views of the nature of inspiration be qualified by what we find to be the character of these Scriptures themselves? If in any part of the Bible declarations of theological truth are made that shock our reason, or moral precepts are given that outrage our sense of right, must we, can we, accept the one, and should we obey the other, on the authority of the book itself, in which we find these difficulties? Must we prostrate our reason and our moral sense before the words that are inscribed upon these pages, because somewhere in the book itself a claim is set up of its inspiration? Will not the thought come naturally and innocently to our minds when so pressed, that the Bible is a witness in its own case? And, then, can we be so sure of the inspiration of these ancient writings as we are, that it is the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding to men? Once more, can we be so sure that the finger of God wrote those laws of Moses which disgust and horrify us, as we are that God imparted to us those moral sensibilities and intuitions of right by which we are made to revolt at cruelty? These are questions that have arisen, I doubt not, in a great

many good and honest minds. And they deserve to be respectfully considered, and candidly answered. Men have a right to know why they ought to revere the Bible, and to what extent its words should be respected. The Bible will lose nothing by the investigation you propose that it ought to retain. I hope the discussions at your Convention will be kind, candid, able, thorough. I hope the wisest theologians and the best biblical scholars in the land will be there, to help bring the Convention to right conclusions.

For my own part, let me say in conclusion, I have never valued the Bible so highly, nor profited so much from the study of it, as since I have gotten over the mysterious, superstitious veneration I was taught in my childhood to feel for it, and have ventured to examine its contents really to find out for myself what they are.

The cosmogony of Moses may or may not comport with the discoveries of modern geologists, but these last have ascertained nothing so important to be known and believed of all men as that *God made the world*, and all that therein is.

No better account has ever been given, it seems to me, of the origin of sin, than is to be derived from the tradition of the fall of Adam rightly interpreted.

The horrible effects of crime upon the individual could not be, never have been, more truthfully depicted than in the story of the first murderer.

The desolating moral influence of the licentiousness of great men (the sons of God) upon their age, and the fear and loss of confidence in the Most High which general social depravity occasions, is admirably set before us in the tradition of the flood.

So, too, the histories of the patriarchs, and of many persons incidentally introduced into the narratives, are full of lessons we need to learn. Indeed, I value the Bible as a revelation of human nature, as well as a revelation of God, who is to be seen indeed in all his works, but most of all in man.

The government instituted by Moses seems to me vastly superior to that of any one of the ancient lawgivers. Though we may be justly shocked at some of the provisions, yet, as a whole, the laws of the Hebrews were humane and mild compared to those of the cotemporary nations.

The book of Job is to me the sublimest poem extant; and teaches as emphatically as it could be taught, that misfortunes and afflictions of this life are no indications of the Divine displeasure.

In the Psalms (whatever must be thought of the grossly inconsistent and, in some respects, extremely wicked character of David, to

whom many of them were attributed)—in the Psalms, we certainly may find the choicest expressions of devotional and of penitential feeling that are extant in any language.

The prophets I honor as noble, disinterested, self-sacrificing men, who in their day faithfully and fearlessly strove to reform the people. In the greatest moral enterprises of our own time, how many passages are quoted from them as most pertinent and most quickening.

So much for the Old Testament. When we turn to the New, what a revelation do we find of God in man—of the perfection of humanity! The example of Jesus Christ, if we would follow it, would redeem us from all iniquity. The principles of true righteousness which he inculcated are destined, I believe, as they evidently are adapted, to establish the kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

The apostles, although, as subsequent events have shown, they misapprehended Christ in some respects, were yet worthy followers of such a master. Next to Jesus of Nazareth, the world is more indebted to Paul and John than to any men that ever lived.

I close in the words of Edmund Burke: "The Bible is no one summary of doctrine regularly digested, in which a man could not mistake his way; it is a most venerable, but most multifarious collection of the records of Divine economy—a collection of an infinite variety of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislation, ethics, carried through different books by different authors, at different ages, for different ends and purposes. It is necessary to sort out what was intended for example; what only as narrative; what to be understood figuratively; what literally; where one precept is to be controlled and modified by another; what is used directly, and what only as an *argumentum ad hominem*; what is temporary, and what of perpetual obligation; what appropriated to one state and set of men, and what the general duty of all men in all ages."

I do not know of any other description of the Bible so comprehensive, discriminating, and just as this.

With the sincere wish that your Convention may be well attended, and the proceedings of it so ordered as to elicit much truth on this very important subject,

I remain, gentlemen,
Yours, respectfully,

SAMUEL J. MAY

WORCESTER, *May* 26, 1853.

MESSRS. DAVIS, GREEN & DONALDSON:

Dear Sirs—I thank you for your invitation to attend the Bible Convention to be held at Hartford. I shall not probably be able to accept it, but I wish to express my sympathy with the general object of the Convention, although I can not anticipate what precise direction its deliberations will take, or what degree of seriousness or dignity they will exhibit.

Every day makes it plainer to me that nothing can save religion in this age, unless it can be disentangled from this millstone weight of scriptural infallibility. To take any collection of human writings belonging to different periods, different authors, and different subjects—hymns, histories, and love poems—and erect that collection into an infallible oracle, would be dangerous to religion in any age, and is ruinous in an age so bold and critical as this. And I count him the best friend of religion who proclaims boldly to all mankind, what theologians well know already, that the time is come “to distinguish between the divine and human in the sacred writings.” I use here the words of the most eminent of modern orthodox theologians, Neander, whose concession of this point settles the whole question, so far as the denomination he represents can settle it, for they have no other voice so authoritative as his.

I am aware that the clergy of this country are by no means unanimous in indorsing this decision; but I am also aware that very few clergymen have investigated the subject sufficiently to entitle their opinions to much weight. For instance, I never met with twenty ministers who had read Strauss’ “*Life of Jesus*;” and yet to have studied Biblical criticism without having read that book, is like studying chemistry only in books written before the time of Sir Humphrey Davy.

It seems very obvious that to place one single collection of books in a position of infallibility which is denied to all the rest of literature, is a conclusion demanding the most positive and irresistible evidence to sustain it. And yet I am constantly amazed to find how large a proportion of clergymen have abstained from even the slightest independent inquiry on that point, and baptized this abstinence, piety, and this while so many intelligent laymen are deciding the matter for themselves. It does not indeed require theological learning to suggest the most formidable questions on this subject. Let any one read his Bible attentively, and note in the margin the statements which

appear to him either contradictory or incredible, and he will be astonished in a day to see the work his pencil has done. I mean by this to throw no especial discredit on the Bible, for I say only what is true of every other collection of miscellaneous books of equal antiquity. And human reverence has testified for years that no other volume contains an equally large proportion of eloquence, of piety, and of wisdom. The difference, however, is one of degree, not a difference in kind.

Permit me to point out a few of the evils that result from what Cole-ridge called *Bibliolatry* or *Bibledolatry*.

1. It compels us to refer all moral perplexities to a most uncertain tribunal. It is far easier, for instance, to decide whether Slavery, War, Polygamy, and the use of Intoxicating Drinks be *right or wrong*, than to decide whether these things be *scriptural or unscriptural*.

2. It assumes that God governs the world by occasional expedients, not by general laws; that the human race is not now as near to him as in sinful and corrupt Judea; that the age of inspiration is past, and the Inner Light has ceased to shine.

3. It separates us from sympathy with the piety of other races, which should rightly be the greatest stay and comfort of our own. A religious man rejoices to find that, all the world over, there are those who fear God and work righteousness. He loves to observe that every nation has its One Supreme God, no matter how many minor deities be added, two or two million; and that every tribe of man believes in immortality, in however gross a form. He delights to see that the one essential religion, of faith in God and love to man, is an indigenous plant on every soil of the earth. He exults to range from the sublime prayers of the Greek Cleanthes to the beautiful daily petitions of the ignorant Galla-negroes, and find in these the same spirit, and almost the same language with the loftiest Christian petitions. He is glad to know that not a precept of Jesus but finds its parallel in the devotion of those who never heard his name. He feels it a privilege to unite with the untaught Indian in prayer to the Great Spirit; and to learn devotion, patience, temperance, hospitality, and honesty from the Mohammedan. But all this noble sympathy vanishes when any one collection of religious books is made an idol, though it be the best of idols, and when we narrow down our sympathies to a single line of religious development, even though that line be the noblest.

4. I will not dwell on the dangerous influence likely to be exerted by the cruel suggestions and immoral examples which are to be found in the Old Testament, for others will doubtless urge these considerations. I wish rather to point out a peculiarity of the New Testament writers which is only lately beginning to be appreciated. I do not see

how any candid reader of those writings can doubt that their authors entertained the most sincere and undoubting expectation of the visible return of Jesus in the clouds of heaven to judge the earth, during that generation—of an immediate resurrection of the saints, and the preservation of the disciples, without tasting death, to be caught up in the air, and dwell with Jesus. All attempts to explain this as a spiritual return at an indefinite period, appear in the highest degree forced and unsatisfactory. And if we suppose Jesus to have been free from this delusion, we only transfer the responsibility to his biographers, who unequivocally attribute it to him.

Now it is obvious that such an impression must have greatly modified the whole ethical view of the apostles, and we thus understand the else inexplicable fact, that they seem to separate in many respects the province of religion from the affairs of this world; ignore the pursuits of science, art, literature, and statesmanship; recognize the practical avocations of life only as a necessary evil; discourage the sentiment of patriotism, the love of freedom, and even the relations of domestic life. The attempt to apply the simple principles of religion to the organizations and pursuits of a *permanent* state of society, they do not appear to have made; that is left for others to do. The point of view from which they looked at things was simply that occupied by the believers in the second advent now. We may reverence the noble fidelity with which they plead their cause within the very hottest crater of persecution, and the grand incidental statements which they have left of life and duty. But to take a code of morals framed for such an immediate emergency, and apply it unchanged to our state of society, is as if we should take the code of rules adopted by the passengers in some burning ship, in order to promote a noble faith and courage during those last solemn hours, and offer it to our Constitutional Convention as the fundamental law of the State of Massachusetts. No doubt the same moral principles must be the basis of the temporary instrument as of the permanent one, but almost every detail of the application will be different.

But I will not further presume upon the patience of your Convention. The only refuge from these dangers is to speak the absolute truth, without hastiness and without fear. The effort which is now being made to free ourselves from the mythology of the churches, and fall back on a simple religious faith, has no parallel since the days when Christianity itself (as being a simpler faith) triumphed over the mythologies of the Gentiles, and men at one step outgrew the lovely but perishing fancies of an elder world. Like that transition, also, the change will be perilous in the process, but noble in its result.

It may be that Conventions for the frank interchange of opinion upon this subject may be an important means of resolving the doubt and irreligion which the dogma of infallibility creates. And if there be any in the community who regard as a sin the mere discussion of the claims of the Bible, then that fact is a sufficient illustration of the expediency of such a Convention. To protest against bigotry is the first step toward its overthrow.

I am yours, truly,
THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON.

THE BIBLE.

C. HAMMOND, MEDIUM.

THE Bible is a record of events, broken and, in many instances, imperfectly related by the historians. Perfect accuracy ought not to be expected of any record which gives only a partial account of what has transpired. The history of a people who were signalized for their many disturbances, both with external foes and internal dissensions, who were jealous of distant nations and of each other, and written under circumstances of national pride and fear, ought not to be received as impartial in its statements or as infallible in its rules. Inspired though much of it was by spirits of elevated purity and wisdom, yet the omissions are so numerous and important, that indefinite argument may be had without solving the intricacy of the question.

As spirits, we are not disposed to engage in a wrangling disputation with earth's inhabitants concerning the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; but we are disposed to elaborate truth, to enforce by nature and evidence facts within the range of our wisdom, and thereby establish sentiments upon principles which will determine the validity of the history. We are sensible of the inharmonies growing out of theological controversies, and we design to arrest rather than increase the disturbance.

But, inasmuch as theologians claim that the Bible is a *perfect* rule of faith and practice, and that all facts and relations made from the Spirit-world must conform and agree with such standard, it may be well for man to inquire why should the Scriptures be made a test of other revelations? Why should theologians claim that the Bible is a rule to determine the correctness or incorrectness of other revelations from Heaven. The Scriptures, so called, do not give any rule by

which to test any other than its own revelation, nor did any inspired writer ever claim that the revelation made by him would be a standard by which to *test* other revelations. They who urge the Scriptures as a correct rule of faith and practice should be careful lest they exceed their authority in judging of the value of modern revelations. To say that the Bible is a *standard* of faith and practice, and at the same time transcend its provisions, is a lamentable commentary upon the professions and practices of man. In the absence of all warrant to decide what is revealed from Heaven, who can justify the practice of condemning what spirits now reveal ?

The Bible interdicts falsehood as a great evil ; false witnesses as offenders against law, and yet men professing confidence in this law—this *rule* of faith and practice—violate its requirement whenever they charge mediums of revelations with crimes forbidden by that rule, and allege that they are impostors, deceivers, necromancers, and controlled by evil spirits. The rule is not regarded as one of practice, whenever they choose to anathematize a cause they have not the independence to investigate.

Men who practically disregard their own professions, who practically deny a *perfect rule* of faith and practice, complain of others for imitating their example. It is truly a misfortune, that they who are so defective as to repudiate their rules of faith practically, should prosecute others for following in their footsteps. They who profess to have a rule of faith and practice, a Bible which denies the right to bear false witness against another—faithless to such a standard, calumniate, reproach, and judge mediums as cheats, impostors, knaves, necromancers, and possessed of the devil, as though fidelity to God was practical denial of right, and as though treason to his law was a passport to his favor.

The Bible serves a purpose. It is a *test* of human inconsistency. Read its commands, acknowledge its rules, and then *deny*, practically, what you acknowledge to be a *perfect rule* of faith and practice. Is that fidelity to your profession, fidelity to God, fidelity to man ? Tell me, then, what is infidelity ? The Church complain of infidelity ! How can that be, unless the Church is blind to its own condition ? Complain of spirits, because spirits require consistency and harmony between faith and practice !

The Bible has many excellent rules ; war, injustice, wrong, cruelty, revenge, spirits will not approve ; neither do we recommend any harmony, agreement, or practice consonant with injury and ruin. And so far as the record of Jewish history affirms a different doctrine, we are opposed to it. Whatever violates the well-being of a common family, and sets at variance a common fraternity, whether in ancient or mod-

ern history, no matter what may be its *claims* to authority, we shall not respect, nor encourage others to obey. The utility of war, cruelty and wrong will not weaken the enormity of these evils; nor do their appearance in the record of Jewish history commend them to the favorable regard of men who truly love their neighbors as themselves.

The record which cuts asunder the ties of humanity, desolates homes of fathers by encouraging sympathy for war, meets no encouragement from us. We say, Expunge all wrong from your faith and practice, respect no saying, no law, which violates the harmony of minds, or sanctions hate toward any member of the human family. Believe not that your salvations depend upon the adoption and practice of principles that dishonor parental counsel, and seek to undermine the foundation of social order and peace. No matter who may say, Hate father or mother, king or beggar, names are no authority for evils; they change not the principle, because right is right, as truly so when asserted by a wretch as by a saint. Love is love, and no name is authority to reverse the claims of love—vice is vice, and no name can possibly make it otherwise. Were all the angels of this sphere to counsel for war, cruelty, or wrong, it would not abate one jot or tittle the enormity of these evils. Were all the men and women of earth to deny the truth which we here reveal, and the practice which we here recommend, it would not vary the fact, nor change the truth of nature into a lie. Hence neither records ancient or modern, nor faith weak or strong, give authority to do wrong, or establish a rule which is inconsistent with the welfare of man. All rules which are good need no extraneous authority for their support, but those which are evil require what we shall not grant—encouragement.

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