

The Coming Religion

by Gerald Massey

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Our "friends the enemy" cheerily assure us that certain things are settled once for all in favour of Historical Christianity, and any further kicking against the fact is all in vain. If you show them that the Mosaic Writings do not contain an original revelation to mankind, but are a Mosaic of Persian and Egyptian mythology, that the foundations of their creed are destroyed if the Fall of Man is a fable, they will tell you that does not in the least invalidate the authority of the Bible, nor imperil the Christian revelation. Oh, no! The Church has never committed itself to any particular interpretation. Let us throw up the sponge and continue the battle. Some of the Apologists (as they call themselves, without meaning it ironically) pretend to think they are so secure that they can denounce any discussion of the Mosaic legends as *intolerably tiresome*. They affect to consider the matter past discussion. But those same "certain things" were never more uncertain or unsettled than at the present time; and when they do get settled the occupation of those who preach them as God's truth to-day will be gone forever! If *they* have closed the controversy, we have just begun to open it! We have not done with the note of interrogation yet. If they have made and tied up their little bundle of old dried sticks, ours are beginning to grow, and put forth a new leaf; ours are yet green and lusty with the sap of a new life.

These people have a vision of their own, and as it was bequeathed to them they will not part with it, even though they have to close their eyes to see! They will die in the "good old faith." But that is what others of us cannot do. We have but just begun to ascertain the meaning of the good old facts that preceded the good old faith. We are finding out that names the most hallowed are spurious counterfeits of the ancient gods. We are learning that the literary fortunes of the Bible were made by Mythology, and filched from the peoples who have been spoiled as Pagans, and accursed as the spawn of Satan. There is a spirit within us that wants to see, with our eyes wide open, and will see, and must tear the bandages and blinkers off the eyes to see, each for himself, whether the traditional vision be false or true. Nature gave us eyes to see with; it was men who added the blinkers. Nature intended us to be led by our own eyes; it was men who substituted the system of leading by the nose the mass of dough-faced humanity which church and state have tried so hard and so long to knuckle and mould for the purpose of leading it by the nose. *We have found out now-a-days that even the horses pull better without than with the use of blinkers.* So ignorant are many of these men of what is being thought outside their own little world, they do not even know how the battle is going against them. They are in possession of a few crumbling out-works, and do not appear to understand that the enemy is already in the heart of the citadel itself, with the sappers and miners depositing their mental dynamite; nor care greatly, so long as the commissariat remains intact, and they can draw the usual rations! for their attitude is, "deprive us of what you please doctrinally, and resolve all our mysteries into myth, so long as you do not disestablish and disendow the Church!" So long as the out-works are standing with them inside they will not recognise defeat! And orthodox Christianity is mainly built up of out-works or scaffolding. It is not the scaffolding, however, with which the institution was built, but one that conceals the true nature of the real building inside. The ordinary

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worshipper stands outside and mistakes the scaffolding for the real building, and looks upon it as it rises tier above tier like so many landing-stages and resting-places on the upward way to heaven. It has been my aim to penetrate beyond this scaffolding, discover the secrets of the hiding-place, and contradict the false report concerning the builders. And what we do find is that the so-called "Revealed Religion" is simply *unrevealed mythology*, and that a spurious system of salvation was proffered to those who would accept the ancient mythology transmogrified into Historic Christianity, and be bribed into changing their old lamps for new ones! Orthodox preachers will go on asserting Sunday after Sunday, in the name of God, any number of things which their hearers do not believe, only they have heard them repeated so often — past all power of impinging or impugning — until the sense is too out-wearied to rebel; things which they themselves do not believe, if they could once afford to question their own souls. The *Pall Mall Gazette* has lately asked the question, if you had £100,000 to spare what do you think would be the greatest charity to give it to? I should like to have replied, "Pension off a few of those poor slaves of the pulpit, who are forced to earn their living by preaching what they no longer believe." How little the orthodox world dreams of the new dawn that is rolling up the sky, glorious with its promise of the brighter, better day! Nay, it is already flaming through the cob-webbed windows, and trying to look in at the shut eyes of the sleepers, which are fast closed, or blinking at the splendour shining on their faces! They are still dreaming how to roll the world back the other way once more into the night of the past, even while they are passing, face upwards, beneath the radiant arch over their heads, alight with the dawn of a day that is not theirs; blind to the glory of its coming, deaf to the birds that soar and prophesy in song, senseless to an amazing apparition of the Eternal growing visibly present in this our world of time! Now and again the sleepers start, and you hear a troubled moan from those that dream, and know they dream, but are afraid to wake. And when they do wake they will begin shouting for the fire-engines to come and put out the flame of dawn, now reddening the sky as with a conflagration and the end of all things for them.

If these men had truly cared for religion instead of their Anthropomorphic theology, they would not have gnashed their teeth and shaken the fist at the alleged phenomena of modern Spiritualism, as they have done. They would have embraced Spiritualism as if it had held out to them the strong right hand of salvation itself. For just when scientific research is undermining and exploding the ancient beliefs that have been falsely founded on mythology — just when the Materialists think they have discovered the great secret of life in protoplasm, and we are on the verge of finding the mechanical equivalent for consciousness — just when some are assuming that force comes from the visible side of phenomena, that mind is but a property of matter, an effect rather than a cause, and thought is nothing more than a result of molecular motion — just when the scientific report is that the deeper we dive physically, the farther off recedes the heart-beat of eternal life, in breaks this revelation from a world unknown, and, as it was assumed, unknowable. And these alleged phenomena contain the sole possible, palpable, natural evidence of a future life, that men have, or ever did have, or ever can have, to go upon. But no! what they care for are the old wives' fables and the figments which have become their hereditary stock in trade; the facts may go to the devil, to whom, indeed, they generally consign them. For, if it be God himself who tries to speak with them in this way from behind the mask of matter to prove the fact, they say it cannot be our God. He is dead, and buried in a book. This must be the devil. It *is* the devil. They had succeeded in substituting the non-natural for the natural, making men believe that this sham was the supernatural. They have taught us to look for God in the wrong way. They have based religion on erroneous grounds. They have made us the victims of false beliefs, and a false belief will make despicable cowards of men who would otherwise have looked facts in the face, and been true to themselves and honest to others. They have evolved our respect and reverence by means of the whip. And now when the stick and scourge, the knout and whip, have lost their terrors, have done their worst, and had their day, it is found that religious reverence has vanished also, and the young are becoming utterly sceptical in most things,

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before they are old enough to be in earnest about anything; for which the false teaching is responsible. The young have been disgusted with the ancient object of reverence, the grim and gory ghost of an anthropomorphic God.

We are constantly hearing complaints respecting the want of reverence on the part of the young for the old. But if they are *old fools*, and "old women" of the wrong sex, why should they be revered? It is said the children of this generation have no reverence for God or man. But if the reverence was evoked by the stick, and the reign of the stick is over, what are you going to do? It is of no use complaining, and probably it is too late to think of getting a new stick.

Before condemning, however, let us look a little deeper. Why should we expect reverence for such a God as we have allowed to be set before the children? Such a God as that of the Hebrews, who cursed all mankind because one of them, and the first one, ate an apple: a God for whom David was a man after his own heart; a God who revealed himself to Moses *a posteriori*. Reverence for such a deity used to be inspired by hell-fire; and now the fires of hell are going out — in fact, as Horace Greeley said, there are not half the people damned now-a-days that ought to be, only we want these to be the proper sort. What right, what reason have we to expect intellectual reverence for the parents themselves, who pretend to believe and permit such teachings as have been imposed on their children? They are most likely to be looked upon as old fogies, hypocrites, and fools by the younger generation, as it rises up to sit in judgment on them. Reverence must ultimately depend on the object presented for reverence. The first necessity is that it shall be a reality and not a sham, not a swindle, not an imposition to be found out, whether as a father in heaven, a father in the Church, or a father in the family. Possibly the pious pretences and the pious pretenders are being found out by the younger generation. But, the veriest larrikin has no lack of respect for the cricketer Grace, the sculler Beach, or the fighter Gordon, because these, in their way and range, are living realities. And if you want to have filial respect or religious reverence, the object must be a living reality that is worthy of it! Neither men, nor women, nor children will much longer bow down to false authority, or believe blindly as they have done hitherto perforce.

The world is waking from its phantom dreams,
To make out that which is from that which seems.

People now demand the verification of all that is taught as true. They must see for themselves that which is set forth as the truth. They must touch it and test it to learn whether it has the ring of reality. The demand of the present is that that which is asserted by the teacher shall be verifiable by the learner in every domain of thought, all the range of nature —all that exists, being ready to supply the means of practical experiment for attaining the sure foothold of a scientific basis. It is true that we are still compelled to battle vigorously, and spend life freely in fighting against the shadows and phantoms of to-day that are thinning out, and will be seen through to-morrow —compelled to fight them and to expose their false pretensions, because so many still mistake them for solid realities. But the people, men and women, aye and little children, will ere long arise and say to these our purblind spiritual teachers —

Begone, you foolish preachers!
Howlers, snufflers, screechers!
You miserable teachers!
You God-of-blood beseechers

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You forgers of God's features!
Who make us the devil's creatures;
Shut up, you foolish preachers!
Get out, you hell-fire screechers,
Go home, you played-out preachers!

and the cry will come in sterner tones, — let the war-drums of the workers roll out with their battle-thunders now, and drown the gabble of all this foolish, fruitless war of words.

Eighteen centuries since the religion of faith, the "good old faith", began to take the place of knowledge. Its history is one long and gory record of the battles of Belief versus Knowledge, of Faith at war with Facts. What is there that men have not found compatible with faith that was all the while at war with facts? Have they not cut each other's throats, believing it to be for the glory of God? Have they not burned bodies by the thousand, believing it to be the sure way of saving souls from hell-fire? Have they not made the Cross into the hilt of the sword to give them the better grip-hold of it whilst slaughtering myriads for the faith? Men have believed that they should find God if they un-sexed themselves, and got sufficiently removed from humanity, and so have gone out as hermits into the wilderness of monkey — which was like going into pitch darkness on purpose to see your face in a looking-glass! Men have believed that their God was the natural author of the diseases and evils which they created and fostered for ages, or permitted, and are responsible for before God and man today. They have believed that in the field of human souls Satan was the great harvester, and God only the gleaner.

Do but think what Woman has suffered from the belief, — the foul and foolish calumny, — that *she* was the cause of the fall of the human race! She ought never to forgive it. She ought to wake up and work, and sleep no more, until that lying libel is dead and damned, and the whole system of false teaching to which it belongs is swept out of the world for ever.

Men have believed in a God who was an omnipotent fiend, and demon quite unknown to the devil-worship of the past — a curse that sat enthroned amid the universe, breathing horror all abroad, and brooding down in blackness on the souls of men. And the ascending smoke of torment was to magnify the features of his monstrous majesty. And if you were one of the chosen, elected to a front seat in the kingdom of this dreadful God, the daintiest part of your enjoyment was to be a full and perfect view of the poor tortured souls, including those of your own wee babes, a span long — the mites and midgets of hell. The inspired Mr. Spurgeon will tell you what a delectable entertainment you may expect, for he says, — "*All their veins are roads for the feet of pain to travel on, and every nerve is a string on which the devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament!*" Then, as the song of the ransomed was being sung, word would come that your father was among the damned, and you would sing all the louder, — or that several of your little ones were in hell, and your hallelujahs would be redoubled. And orthodox hearts have been warmed and hands exultingly rubbed over these pictures in the fire, which have been enjoyed with an infernal relish.

Moody, the ranter, tells a story of his God. A poor, foolish, fond mother, in Illinois, had a little child that was sick and ailing unto death. When thinking it was dying, she could not bring her rebellious mind to say "*Thy will be done!*" she called on God to spare her babe, she cried to him, — "*Oh! God! I cannot give up my little one.*" And the Lord heard her prayer, and *answered* it too! He snatched the child from death, and gave it back to her — turned into *an idiot for life!* That was a smart specimen of the divine derision that is

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promised in the Bible, — *"The Lord shall have ye in derision!"* He had her there.

Such was the "good old faith!" Under such a creed the fathers were rendered unfit to beget a race of free and fearless men. Under such a creed the mother's womb has been turned into a prison-house of fear and trembling for the embryo that was wrapped and swathed in a pall of gloom before it was born, and the divine spark of soul almost extinguished by the maternal deposit of Calvinistic cloud!

The Christian scheme, if true, could only lead to eternal wretchedness all round, torments in heaven far worse than all the miseries of hell. Who could be selfishly happy in heaven with a knowledge of everlasting hell? A Hindu commentator on this creed remarks: — *"One of their teachers said to me lately that all my people, about 800,000,000 every fifty years, must assuredly go to hell; and at the same time placed before me a picture of their heaven, asking me to 'flee from the wrath to come!' and escape the horrible vindictiveness of their 'God of Love!'"* The profoundest appeal made by the Christian creed has ever been made to fear. The bogies of the human childhood have been continued by it and applied to prevent our growing up into women and men. Fear of eating of the Tree of Knowledge. Fear of hell-fire, or the flames of earthly martyrdom. It is fear still even when it has dwindled down to fear of *Mrs. Grundy!* From first to last the appeal has always been to fear. Whereas all the fear in the world could never get from human beings any more than the affection of a dog that licks the hand of its tyrant at feeding time, when there is no whip to be seen! Religion, for ages, has been a reign of terror, under the oppression of which it was impossible for so tender a flower as love to flourish. It did not dare to breathe forth its natural sweetness to its own maker. The deepest religious sense that myriads have ever developed all through life has been a mortal dread of death. The burden of religion in the past has been — "Prepare to die." And this is preached with damnable iteration to those who have never yet lived, have not yet begun to live, and do not know how to begin to realise the glorious possibilities of living. And what is the spiritual result of all this fearful teaching, according to the good old faith? Is it such a sense of another life, and a better world that the concerns of this world are dwarfed and rebuked in its majestic presence? Not at all! The mass of people who are called religious do not want to believe in a spirit-world, save in the abstract, as a necessary article in their creed. They are mortally afraid of the other world. Their foremost feeling is to draw down the blinds against any light breaking in on the subject from another world. They accept a second-hand belief in it on authority as a grim necessity! It's best to believe, in case it does exist after all. As the old woman said — *"Ah, Sir! it's best to be polite, for you may go to the devil."* But you must know that a great deal of Belief on the subject is like that of the Scotch woman who was asked how she felt when the horse ran away with her cart. She said she "put her trust in Providence till the breechin' broke, and then she gave up." She relied upon the visible and tangible link of connection. Her Providence was the breechin'; when that was gone, her faith collapsed altogether. For eighteen hundred years they have pretended to teach men how to die. But the first duty of men who have to die is to learn how to live, so as to leave the world, or something in it, a little better than we found it. Our future life must be the natural outcome of this; the root of the whole matter is in *this* life. The founders of Historic Christianity began with an utterly false theory of life. They mistook the anti-physical for the spiritual; the anti-natural for the divine. Life was a disease, and death the only cure. Worldly blessings were curses in disguise. Belief would work miracles, and Doubt ensure damnation. Sense was the natural enemy of the soul, and had to be suppressed. The most beautiful human body was a dungeon of sin and death in the prison-house of a doomed world. More spirit than common manifested by the youngster was the very devil in revolt against authority, and had to be put into manacles; all nature was un-hallowed, all flesh defiled, until they had pawed it over with priestly rites of regeneration. The Christian scheme of salvation is a false method of dodging the devil at last. People will no longer believe in the lying delusion when once they learn that there is nothing to be got out of it; no good to be gained by it. Its success hitherto has depended on the

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appeal to selfishness. Next to fear, the chief appeal has been made to the desire for gain. What are considered to be the supreme expressions of Christliness in the Gospels too often denote a low and vulgar type of morality, or they become immoral in their appeal to selfishness. *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."* *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* Blessed are the poor who are content to give up this world, their's is the promise of felicity forever in the world to come. He that giveth to the poor is making a safe investment, because he is lending to the Lord. "Be ye good bankers" is one of the most significant sayings. The appeal is continually made to the sense of personal gain, none the less selfish because it is applied to the next world instead of this; on the contrary, it is increased because the promised gain is to be eternal. You are invited to invest your capital in a bank above that offers you an eternal interest, and like all bankrupt concerns deludes the gullible by promising too much profit. Your alms are to be given secretly, and he that seeth in secret will recompense you. Isn't that calculated to fix one eye on the reward with a leer of cunning in it, as of knowing a good thing when you do see it? One almost expects to see an image of the winking Christ as well as the winking virgin. Such a promise is security for at least a profit of cent. per cent. as the *rate* of eternal interest. But we shall not catch a whale by merely offering a sprat in that way; nor receive a hundred-fold in heaven for all that we may have consciously given up and forgone on earth. All that is but a survival of primitive teachings — the doctrines of the human childhood — an inducement for the individual not to be at war with society or the Church, no matter what laws of nature may have to be sacrificed and violated. And the fact remains to be faced that the teaching is not *true*. The meek do not inherit the earth, and are not going to. We are not forgiven because we are forgiving. Nature does not keep her books of account in that way. Nor are we allowed to cook the accounts in any such fashion. Our false teachers have been monstrously mistaken. The Lord of all does not carry on the business of the Universe as an advertised system of Bribes and Fines. We cannot outset on one line of conduct that which we have done on another. No death of Jesus can save us from ourselves. It was taught that he came to abrogate certain Jewish laws, but no Jesus can upset the natural law of development. What we are now is the result of what we have been, and what we are hereafter will be an evolution from what we are here. There is no dodging the devil of cause and effect. Belief can work no cataclysmal change in death for all the false teaching in the world. No blood of the Lamb will wash out one single internal blot; no tear of pity can make the stained record white. Nothing but life can work any transformation of character here or hereafter; death does not, cannot do it.

All such teaching is entirely false. An old Scotsman, known to me, used to say, *"I like Paul! puir soul, I do like Paul. But I dinna like Jesus Christ; I canna like Jesus Christ; they are aye casting it in your teeth that he dee'd for ye; and I dinna want to be dee'd for!"* The old fellow's manhood rose in revolt against this salvation of the savage mind by means of blood shed in a vicarious atonement. And he was in the right. We do not want to be died for, and if we did, it would be unavailing. We can no more be died for for another life than the law will allow us to be died for in this.

Men like Jesus, or Jehoshua ben Pandira, the Jewish political and social reformer, or Bruno, or Garibaldi, or Gordon, or Garfield, are in a sense Saviours of the world. They set before us an illuminated image of immortal love. They pull down on themselves, and bear for us, the heavy burden of martyrdom, because of the wolfish selfishness of the world! But there is no salvation possible for us out of the mere act of their suffering. The only salvation is for those who range themselves on the side of these martyrs, and reformers, and forerunners, against the selfishness of the world, to work and change the crude conditions of things, which forever demand the sacrifice of the best and dearest of women and men. When Arnold von Winklereid took the double armful of the enemies' spears into his own breast, it was to make a way for his fellow-countrymen to pass on and widen the gap he had made — *not* for them to stay behind and

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pat him on the back, or merely subscribe to erect a statue to his memory. That the innocent *are* continually offered up on account of the besotted selfishness of the many is a fact. That they must continue to be thus offered up, until the world awakes to see this shameful sacrifice of others to save its own selfishness, is likewise a fact. But to erect this into a religious dogma, and call it the divine means of saving men, who wilfully continue and necessitate the conditions of society which cause and demand the martyrdom, is about the most immoral and damnable doctrine ever offered to humanity. Why, this doctrine of atonement is so unmanly, so cowardly, and curish, that, if put in its naked truth, the lowest rough in Whitechapel, if unperturbed by orthodoxy, would be too manly to accept such an immoral mode of salvation. Any one who would consent to be saved at the expense of another, and an innocent person, ought only to escape, if at all, because he would not be worth the damning. Far nobler was the teaching of Captain George W. Pendleton of the *Cleopatra*, of Gloucester, Mass. His vessel was doomed and sinking fast, when the boat put off from the "Lord Gough" with a crew that volunteered to try and rescue the shipwrecked man. But with salvation in sight the American captain, by agreement with his men, hauled down his own flag of distress. He thought the boat could live in such a sea. "*I said to my men, shall we let those brave fellows risk their lives to save ours? and they said 'No.'* Then I hauled down the flag." And so they deliberately elected to die first. That was the gospel according to George Pendleton! But this sacrifice of the innocent to save the guilty — of others instead of self — is the religion of savages; it belongs to the most benighted conditions of the human race, and as such is doomed to die out of any state of true civilisation. The doom of Historic Christianity is sealed, because it was based upon Dogmas against which the highest instincts of the race will forever rise in insurrection, and Doctrines that are certain to be rejected by the growing moral sense of enfranchised humanity.

From what I have learned of the interior operations of natural law, such selfishness defeats its own end and aim. The only way of helping oneself is by helping others. The only true way of receiving is by giving. The fear of being lost never yet saved the soul of any man. Put aside the fable, and the foolish fraud that has been founded on it, and we are face to face with the fact that man has no power to lose his own soul or damn himself for all eternity. If man be immortal by nature, continuity is not based on morality — however much he may retard development by limiting his life to the lower self, which may be a hell to think of and struggle out of hereafter. Nor is the hereafter a heaven provided on purpose to make up for the man-made sufferings to those who have been deluded and cheated and starved out of their life in this world. If it were so, then Providence would not only be responsible for all the mal-arrangement and the misery, through not simply allowing it, but for permitting it, and *providing for* it! Whereas we see the wrong is remediable, the sufferings are unnecessary, and the Christian way out of it is a misleading *cul de sac*. It is like some of the squirrel tracks in the forest with the trail ending up a tree.

The orthodox teachings are so false that they have made the utterance of truth a blasphemy, and all the proclaimers of truth blasphemers! Oppose their savage theology, and you are denounced as an Atheist. Expose the folly of their faith, and you are an Infidel all round. Deny their miracles, and they damn your morals. *The Christian Rock*, not knowing what to say against me that was *good enough*, charged me with having published a volume of *indecent* poetry. It was a malicious lie! — a real instance of *original sin*. But that was what the ignoramus said — mistaking me, as I suppose, for Mr. Swinburne. There was something grand in the ancient martyrdom suffered by the heralds of free thought; whereas the modern reformer has to endure the prolonged torture and ignominy of being kicked to death by butterflies, or gnawed to death by gnats. The religion, founded on misunderstood and perverted mythology, has made everything wrong, and nothing short of an utter reversal, with all Nature for our guide and on our side, can set us right. Its apotheosis of sorrow, of suffering and sacrifice is entirely false, because these are on account of that which, like the "Fall of Man," never really occurred — and weeping over that which is not

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real is nothing more than a waste of water. Nature offers no evidence that man was meant to moan as a miserable animal. It is true that sorrow and suffering may purge and purify the life, and add a precious seeing to our sight. That which gives the wound may deposit the pearl. The iron of a steadfast soul has frequently been forged in purgatorial fires of pain. The greater the pressure from without, the more has it evoked and evolved the rebounding spirit from within. But that is because there is a power which can turn all experience to account if our life be right in its root-relationship. And human life will always have its full share of sorrow and suffering. But nothing can be falser than to try and found a religion on sorrow and suffering, by the representation of this world as *destined* to be a vale of tears, which we are bound to grow anxious to get out of as soon as we recognise that we are in it. No! *it is not in sorrow, but in joy, that we can attain the greatest unconsciousness of self, and live the larger objective life for others.* We learn as we come to a knowledge of joy, that all sorrow and suffering are but the passing shadows of things mortal, and not the enduring or eternal reality. When no longer darkened or eclipsed by the false creed which has benighted our minds and totally obscured so many natural truths, we can see to the end of these shadows — we can overlook them — in the larger intellectual light of a truer interpretation of the necessities of evolution and of the human environment. If nature has one revelation of truth to make more plainly apparent than another, it is that her creature, man, is intended for health and happiness here, in this life, and not merely hereafter — on condition of suffering here! Pleasure is the natural accompaniment of our creative and productive activities, and the human likeness of life itself is conceived and imaged in delight. Health, physical or mental, means happiness. And everywhere the pull of the natural forces and elements are on the side of health, and, therefore, of consequent or premeditated happiness; children of the blind who never saw, being born to see, and the children of the deaf mutes being born to talk. That delight in life was intended by means of health and happiness may likewise be read in the stern punishment administered by nature for every breach of natural law by which we injure our health and destroy our happiness; and, lest the personal memory of the fact for *one* generation should be too short-lived, the results and effects of the violated law are kept before us, in some cases from generation to generation, *not as gibbets* for mere vengeance, but as sign-posts pointing to the way of reformation. Health is intended, and happiness is the result. It is the happy who will be moral; not the miserable. Now, the Christian scheme would make us miserable, in order that we may be moral here and happy hereafter! Whereas Nature says, be happy here and now, by learning the laws of health — individual, social, political, universal; by getting rid of all opposing falsehood, and establishing the true conditions for evolving health and happiness everywhere for all.

"But," it has actually been urged in reply to me, and in arrest of judgment, "*supposing the Christian Narrative to be entirely mythical, is not this supreme legend of divinest pity a beautiful and touching story?*" Yes, and the more beautiful the deceit, the deeper the delusion. If it were only a dramatic representation, the plea would apply. But this thing has no meaning if it is not humanly true. The supreme legend of divine pity! That is pity for a fallen race on the part of a supposed deity who damned mankind for ever for the stealing of an apple! Why, our own unpaid magistracy — who are not over-lenient — would not have made more of it than a matter of fourteen days, or a month at most. Suppose you do touch the heart of the world upon false pretences, even to the extent of drawing a tear from John Morley, or getting a perfumed pastille offered up as a sweet savour in sacrificial smoke by Renan, where is the gain when once the falsehood is found out? As soon as the theological Scotsman discovers that his foundations of belief in the fall of man, in predestination, hell-fire, and eternal damnation are false, he naturally takes to whisky, and maybe for the rest of his life cannot find *a brand that is quite fiery enough!* The illusion of false ideals is always at war with reality. The Christ of the Gnostics was a true ideal, possible to all men. But an *Historic* Christ is a false ideal! Where is the sense of supposing a God sliding down to earth on a ladder with no steps to it, and then asking us to walk up minus the foothold? Also, it is in vain we set up an objective ideal for outer worship of that which can only be a reality within the soul.

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The god-man of the Gnostics was not a man-god, but the god or divine nature in man, which represented the spiritual image of the Invisible God, the formless in our human form; not in *our* human form of individual personality as an historical Christ, or Horus, or Buddha. That was but the symbolical presentment of the matter. The historical realisation was meant for all men and women, not for one man Jesus, or one female Sophia. We do not want to be beguiled, or to have our children deceived any longer with the most beautiful biography of the man in the moon, who came down too soon, and whose second coming has been looked for so vainly during 1800 years. We are in search and in need of some truer illumination than moonshine. Having discovered that these beautiful legends are mythical and non-human, we do not want the little ones to be misled for life by false teachings before ever they have learned to think. The illusion of false ideals is the magical glamour with which Mephistopheles seduces the soul of Faust! A woman who sent to the lending library for a book that would make her cry, was in search of a false ideal in a world brimming over with bitter reality. A minister of the gospel had been telling his little boy a tale that was full of human interest, and the child had been deeply affected by it, but looking up, with tears in his eyes, he asked, — "*Is that true, papa, or is it only preaching?*" Poor child! he had heard so much from the same source that he had looked upon it as being not necessarily true, but "only preaching!" That child's position is ours. By all we know, the story is untrue. And we have done for ever with the old wives' fables and romances of mythology as a foundation for religion. We have done with a "Word of God" that is in fatal opposition to his Truth as manifested in Nature! We have done with the very God himself who, when traced to his origin, is found to be chief one of the seven devils or elementals of mythology; and who is quite worthy of that origin in many aspects of his character. We have lost the power to make believe and deceive ourselves further in this matter! It cannot be too often repeated that the foundations of the Christian faith were laid in falsehood and ignorance. The Fall of man in the beginning was *not* a fact, and consequently there could be no *curse*. It is but a fable misinterpreted; and the redemption of the New Testament is based upon a fable in the Old. There *is* no virtue nor efficacy in a vicarious atonement, and no priesthood ever had or will have the power to forgive sin, to break the sequence between cause and effect, or to evade the Nemesis of Natural law. When the great delusion comes to an end its true epitaph would be, — "*This was a fraud founded on a fable.*" Meanwhile, the Church that continues to put forth this scheme of salvation and impose it on the public at the expense of the nation (some eight or ten millions annually!) ought not only to be disestablished and disendowed, it ought to be prosecuted for obtaining money on demonstrably false pretences!

We are often told that our civilisation is infinitely indebted to Christianity; but on the other hand it could be shown that Christianity has been infinitely indebted to civilisation, because it became the adopted religion, the official religion, of the races that happened to be in the swim and current of European progress. Indeed, our European progress has been in exact proportion as the civil law and pre-extant common law have got the upper hand of the ecclesiastical usurpation. What did Christianity do for Italy, its birthplace? If it was such a renovator of the ancient worn-out world, why did it not renew old Rome when its salvation *had been* adopted? What did it do for Greece? for Egypt? for the Mexicans? for any of the ancient races or civilisations? As Jerrold said truly, "*We owe much to the Jews,*" but what do the Jews owe to Christianity? Its success has been as a parasite fed on the life of the recent races. The line of renewal was that of the races, whereas all the good results have been claimed for the Christian Creed. Thackeray was once attracted to an elderly gentleman at table who was in the habit of maintaining that everything really good or great in modern literature came directly or indirectly from Pindar. "*At all events,*" said one of the guests, "*Pindar did not write 'Vanity Fair!'*", "*Yes, sir,*" said the old gentleman with his customary assurance, "*Yes, sir, he did; in the highest and noblest sense, Pindar did write 'Vanity Fair!'*" In like manner it has been the custom to label every virtue as Christian that had been evolved as human, ages and ages before our own era, at which time every good thing was re-dated, christened, and re-named, as if it were the result of an historical Christ! Indeed, one expects to hear of the elements of pure

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air, fresh water, and clear sunlight being christened under this name, in the same way that the well-known healing by means of Mental Medicine, which was practised by the pre-Christian races, has been designated "Christian Healing". We shall probably have Christian Lunacy or Christian Idiocy! Yet the fact remains that the direst, bloodiest enemies of the human race in Europe have been the most besotted supporters of the doctrines called Christian. On the other hand if it were possible to eliminate from the factors in European civilisation the direct worth and hereditary influence of those free-thinkers who have not accepted the Historical Christian creed, what, think you, would remain of the progress that was made during many centuries? The only hold the system has ever obtained on the most intellectual of men has been the hold of the rack! the death-grip of the stake! and the embracing fires of martyrdom! Has it ever struck you how little the great minds of the past — the Shakspeares and Goëthes, those "*serene creators of immortal things*" — troubled themselves about Christianity? How loftily they tower and overtook it. What preacher from the pulpit ever thinks of arraigning the present social conditions as based on the rights of the stronger and the wrongs of the weaker? On the contrary, it has been accepted as a divine arrangement that suffering humanity was the cheapest thing — with a never-ending supply — for manuring the soil, for the greasing of wheels, for coining money out of. They never question whether this is the right basis of the national life. They rejoice in the scriptural assurance that the poor ye have always with you, on purpose to keep down the price of labour; or, we may add, keep up the supply of children to the brothels of the rich, at the lowest possible figure! Christian civilisation to-day is compatible with such a state of Society as was recently revealed by the *Pall Mall Gazette*. We have been assured that the one great sacrifice of the Son of God did put an end to individual human sacrifice! But Christianity has been compatible with the masses of the people of Europe being offered up for ever in one great sacrifice. And what matters the mode, if you *are* sacrificed?

Honey and milk are sacrifice to thee,
Kind Hermes, inexpensive Deity!
But Heracles demands a lamb each day,
For keeping, as he says, the wolves away.
What matters it, meek browsers of the sod,
Whether a *wolf* devour you or a *God*?

The pretended stewards of the mysteries of God have left it for the future to create the very consciousness of wrong in a myriad ways, that their religion has never yet taken into account. As the dogs of Dives, they have now and again given a lick to the sores of Lazarus, and promised him the healing hereafter. But when have they banded together and fought against the social system that dooms the many to poverty — that creates Lazarus as well as his sores?

When they have made large fortunes, and grown very rich, and death is drawing near, some Christians do wax charitable and grow liberal of alms. They do build large and comfortable houses for broken-down paupers to die in; they do supply hospitals for the refuge of those who are ailing and afflicted. But a good deal of the money has been donated for hell-fire insurance, and perhaps these paupers were left all through their working-life to pig together in hovels and slums, the breeding-places of pestilence, which were sure to create the diseases you treat so generously when too late. They starved, and suffered, and sickened, that wealth might accumulate for others! Peabody bequests are all very well in their way; but if the Peabody wealth had been spread in preventing the poverty and crime of the nation, instead of being wrung out of labour, and accumulating to cause these evils, how much better and more blessed would have been the prevention than the late attempt to cure, or rather to help bolster up a state of things which

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is relief of its running sores! We do not want to become paupers, as we must ever be if we are to be forever pauperised. On reading lately that Belgravia had turned out to carry its broken victuals round in scrap-carts to the starving poor, I declare it struck a glow of shame into my face as if I had received the insult of a blow, to think of the *unnecessary necessity!* You need not wonder if the poor should damn the charity that is offered to them in the name of religion, as a bribe for them not to ask for justice; or that they should turn a deaf ear to all talk about the bread of heaven when they lack the bread of earth; or the milk of human kindness when their babes are perishing for lack of a little morning-milk from the cow! It is here that Christianity, after 1800 years, is an utter failure, and these are some of the things the Coming religion must go to the root of to be of any use for this world or any other. I know a poor old man in England who, for 40 years, worked for one firm and its three generations of proprietors. He began at a wage of 16s. per week, and worked his way, as he grew older and older, and many necessities of life grew dearer and dearer, down to six shillings a week, and still he kept on working, and would not give up. At six shillings a week he broke a limb, and left work at last, being pensioned off by the firm with a four-penny piece! I know whereof I speak, for that man was my father. At the same time, as you are well aware, during those 40 years any possessor of capital might have put it out to usury, and without lifting a finger himself it would have been quadrupled. Such are two of our naturalised laws of capital and labour. The one is the complement of the other; you cannot have the one without the other, and any religion that is not directed to help revolutionise this state of society is damned already, under whatsoever name!

We never can attain the stature of true manhood, or be man, so long as we will un-man ourselves by taking so unmanly an advantage as we do of our more ignorant and hitherto helpless fellow-men. No one class of men can hold another with their faces to the ground, or noses to the grindstone, without also stooping over them in a manner that for ever hinders from attaining the perfect stature of genuine manhood. The degradation, though different, is shared in common! And, mark you, these things are done as effectually by aid of our social system, and laws of supply and demand, as if one man stood over another with the whip of the slave-driver, or sword of the executioner, in his hand. The wrong and the responsibility, the cruelty and the cowardliness are none the less because they are warranted by custom, sustained by legal enactments, and defended by the press. After the recent utterances of the Archbishop of York, who spoke of our continual doubling of the pile of the rich by halving the wages of the poor, we shall doubtless hear more from the echoists. But the redemption preached for 1800 years has failed to save the world, and it must now give way for other workers with other methods, applied to such matters as the problems of poverty, the distribution of wealth, and the ownership of land. In vain will they claim and Christen every good work of Co-operation, Communism, or Socialism, as Christian by name. The "*good Lord Jesus*" as an objective saviour and historical Christ *has "had his day."* Our science, applied to civilisation, will part company more and more with the found-out fraud, and will help to carry it no further! Its triumphs will not be made or allowed to support the Christian delusion in the future any more than in the past. And what is the chief cause of this novel interest in the churches on behalf of the poor today? Is it not fear that the new electorate will reject the orthodox system, and that their political influence will prove fatal to the Church?

And now the question is being asked, — What is going to take the place of the cast-out faith? for it is already cast out from the minds of the men who will assuredly mould the freer thought of the future. It is not going to be re-established by law; nor by the blood and fire of the salvation army — nor by presenting our cast-off clothes to the aborigines! Nor by teaching blind Chinamen to read the Bible. Not going to be re-established even though more Bibles have been printed during the last ten years than in all the preceding centuries. *It is being rejected at home faster than you can give it away abroad!* We have had our religion based on belief — on belief in a God who cared an infinite deal more for a few apples than

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for the eternal damnation of myriads of immortal souls — a God who played fast and loose with the laws of his own nature and creation! A creed based on the divine truth of every lie that science has exploded — a belief that was in deadly opposition to all and every truth that has been established. A *"good old faith"* which is a fraud — so far as being saved by it goes — founded upon a legend misinterpreted. And at last the old grounds of belief are breaking up rapidly; no matter what fresh efforts may be made to deceive, delude, and secure the ignorant, the infants or the aborigines. The orthodox creed is doomed to reversal, even as a dish is wiped clean, and turned upside down. The foundations of the false, cruel, and gory faith are all afloat. It was built as the Russians reared their palace on the frozen river Neva, and the great thaw has come suddenly upon them; the ominous sounds of the final break-up are in their ears; their anchorage and place of trust is crumbling before their eyes. For they had built on the very things (or condition of things) which had sealed up the running springs, and stayed the stream of progress in its course. They have arrested for the purpose of resting. And here is the hint of Science, of Nature, of Spiritualism, of Theosophy, of Freethought, in every form — that they must move on, and get out of the way, or be moved off for ever. The orthodox religion has been dying in proportion as it lost the power to persecute! People now inquire, *"what next?"* As did the tad-pole when his tail dropped off. What next? as if we were going to straightway put forth a new tail! But that is not the way of Nature. She works by transformation, not by repetition; and her changes imply growth, as the out-come of a new life. It is not possible for us to swap creeds or formulate a new religion. Religion is not a set of precepts, or a mode of worship. It is not a creed that counts in the eternal court. It is not what we believe or profess, but what we are when stripped bare in the balance. Nothing avails but the life lived. Our past deeds must and will make our future state! Some people seem to think that Spiritualism is about to give us a new tail, or at least to put a firmer tag on the old limp stay-lace of Christianity, to bind us up anew with a fresh support! They are wondering when the Spiritualists are going to open their Sunday shop for the purposes of prayer and praise. But I doubt whether that mode of procedure will ever be repeated in this world. When Sydney Smith saw his child tenderly stroking the hard shell of a tortoise to please the tortoise, he said, *"you might just as well stroke the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral with the idea of pleasing the Dean and Chapter."* So when we see people crowding together to worship and praise and flatter the Lord, as if they fancied they could gratify his self-esteem, or excite his benevolence, or keep his destructiveness quiet, it reminds me irresistibly of the child's stroking the tortoise to please it. The offering of words of praise which people make to show their love of God is of no more value than the cheap oblations of sham bank-notes which the Chinese burn to any amount as a sacrifice to their deities! They offer money by millions in *that way*. The only worthy way of showing love to God is in working for humanity. That is the practical test. The Lord does not want your long and loud laudations or offerings of false money!

Hermes says *"there can be no religion more true or just than to know the things that are."* We have had a religion without knowledge, and the Coming religion must be founded on knowledge. And it must be good for this world as its warrant for being good for any other. In knowledge only can we find a common ground of agreement. That which is based upon knowledge, need not be the subject of everlasting diversity and contention amongst innumerable sects. We need a first-hand acquaintanceship with the facts of Nature — not limiting Nature, however, to the little we may know of it at present. Of course, mere facts are not everything. No number of separate vertebral joints will supply a man with a backbone. We have to collect the various joints in our scattered facts derived from a closer acquaintanceship with, and truer interpretation of Nature, but life alone can produce the unity and cohesion that will constitute a back-bone. Amongst these facts we naturally assign a foremost place to those of Spiritualistic phenomena, which the orthodox as good as prohibit to *their* followers in favour of theoretical teachings. Whereas we need a first-hand acquaintanceship here, if anywhere. Present facts are worth all the teachings of the past: by means of these we can test them. The facts in nature are the sole ground to go upon for another life, just as they are for this; facts that are scientific because they are verifiable to-day

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as in the past. We claim that the inner vision or second sight is a fact in nature. Pre-vision is a fact in nature. The spiritual apparition is, and always has been, a fact in nature. But a physical resurrection from the dead is not a fact in nature, and here the Aborigines are far ahead of the orthodox Christian world in a practical knowledge of these phenomena on which the demonstration of our continuity is based. The naturalist Kircher estimated the number of intellectual proofs of the existence of God at 6561. A Spiritualist considers one actual proof of objective spiritual manifestation as worth them all. Better is one real spirit communication than a divinity put together in 6561 pieces; it is a fact that for the first time makes those figures live! — or gives a foothold for taking the first step in the unknown. As evidence of a future life, one single proof in spiritual manifestation is worth the hear-say revelation of the world. The time has not yet come for any thinker to set forth the reign of law and order in this obscure domain of Nature which, for lack of another name, we call "Spiritual," or neo-natural; but Spiritualism is none the less real because orthodox physical science has not yet established it as one of its truths. A sufficient number of competent observers and credible witnesses testify to the occurrence and recurrence of certain phenomenal manifestations, which go to prove that we have found the sole bridge in nature that crosses the unfathomable gulf between the dead and the not-dead; the organic and the inorganic — between mind and matter — which Science has strenuously sought elsewhere, but never yet found. A million of us know that the cable is laid between the two worlds, and the messages prove that there are intelligent operators at the other end of it, who can send us messages in human language. We know that the so-called dead are living still, however difficult it may be, and is, though not impossible, to establish their personal identity! We know they can communicate with us and we with them, objectively as well as subjectively, and that the objective phenomena enable us to comprehend the true nature of the subjective — to accept and to found upon it inferentially. We know they *can* establish a rapport with us more *rare* and potent than we can with each other in the body. Some of us have felt and handled and heard that which was invisible to our sight, in the presence of those who could see and describe the forms and motions of that (or of those) which we only felt and heard. And so we can put our evidence together, and draw the necessary inference. Buckle has said: "*The doctrine of immortality is the doctrine of doctrines. A truth compared with which it is indifferent whether anything else be true!*" Anyway, Spiritualism alone offers the means of establishing it as a fact. Spiritualism *alone* offers a scientific basis for a doctrine of immortality! The Phenomenal Spiritualist stands level-footed on the only ground of fact that is, or ever has been, offered by Nature for human foothold in the Unseen. Spiritualism alone reveals a bridge on which we can get any bit of actual foothold for crossing the gulf of death. The Spiritualist makes connection between the two worlds, and runs his trains of thought right through! Indeed, the two worlds are but one for him — they are not two, any more than the railway runs through another world by night. It is but one world after all, with two aspects. The daylight part of it is but half-revealed by day, and the dark side is but half-concealed by night. The phenomena called Spiritualistic furnish us with a means of interrogating Nature in such a way that it is sure to revolutionise all our mental science — psychology, philosophy, metaphysic, and theosophy. These phenomena show us that we have other and profounder facts to go upon than those hitherto included in our data. Realistic phenomena, not merely idealistic — facts in place of faith. Spiritualism opens up to our vision a Power that operates upon us, and through us, and makes use of us whether we will or no, — whether we are conscious of its presence or not — our recognition being unnecessary to its existence or operations. Spiritualism shows us how the soul of man may be fed with a sustenance drawn from the well of life within us, that is penetrated and replenished from eternal springs. And we maintain that these phenomena, called Spiritualistic (which have no relationship to the miracles of misinterpreted mythology), and these alone, do actually demonstrate the natural nexus for the continuity of life, and the next step upward in human evolution.

Some of our Free-thought Secularist friends seem to suffer from *rabies* on the subject of a future existence. The very idea of it drives them frantic; and that which is as the water of life to others only

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serves to aggravate their symptoms, and make them rage more furiously. The editor of the *Melbourne Liberator* says it is a swindle of the worst description to keep up the farce of a future life. Now, I think we know that there are facts in Nature which warrant the inference of another life; and simply *as facts* I would have them made known. Without the facts we cannot know the truth! Anyway, there is no warrant for those who do not know that man has a soul to dogmatise and teach that men have no souls, or that there *is* no future life. Those who do not know can have no right to pretend to know, and such pretensions of the negational dogmatists constitute a positive imposture. Whosoever owns the head, you cannot quite bring a knowledge of all things pertaining to the ultimate reality under one hat. The Agnostics show more modesty. Professor Huxley says: "*Agnosticism means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know and believe!*" So say we. Only we claim to have scientific grounds for knowing. A crude materialistic interpretation of the Universe bottoms nothing. There is eternal motion; there is eternal life. There is a being beyond appearance. There is a Consciousness that co-ordinates the means to attain the ends, with power to turn to account all that occurs in the sphere of so-called human Free-Will. There is Intelligence involved in all that is intelligible. All who break the laws of nature do so under penalty of punishment. They learn sooner or later that there is a law-maker, whose ministers and agencies will dog the law-breaker; however we may deny the law-maker, we cannot evade the law! False Spiritualism merely begets a craze after another life. But a true Spiritualism will turn our attention to this life, and help on the work of *this* world. Spiritualism enables us to call in the new world in our rectification and adjustment of the wrong done in the old — somewhat like calling in troops from the new world of the Colonies to fight the battle of England in the old. It has come to quicken a keener conscience in the human race; set up a loftier ideal of life and a nobler standard of appeal than fear of punishment and hope of reward. For me, Spiritualism means an aid in the certain overthrow of all false dogmas and lying legends, which have been imposed upon men, and are still imposed upon the children, in the name of God. Science has been driving in its splitting wedge with a mighty ripping and rending of the ancient beliefs. But with Spiritualism the wedge is alive, and takes root just as the seed of the Indian Bo-tree is so vital that when it is sown singly in the cleft of some lofty tower or fortress, and a drop of moisture and a smile of sunshine have caused it to quicken, it will shoot out and lay hold of the stone with its feelers and strike root to make its way down the walls to the earth outside, and laying hold of this it gathers strength and grows mightily, and sends back such force to its birth-place that the walls are rent, and the temporary resting-place betwixt earth and heaven is shattered in favour of the newer rootage and firmer foothold upon this more nutritious and life-giving ground. So will Spiritualism lay hold of the larger substance of reality, and inevitably rend the barren stone walls of the Establishments into fragments, minute enough to be ground down into the new fresh soil in which it is destined to flourish and bear fruit in the freer, larger, loftier life of a nobler human race! Spiritualism will help to break up the sacerdotal ring of priestcraft that has hemmed the people round with terrors and strangled souls with fear. It is rapidly abolishing the tyranny of death, and restoring freedom for life to those whose whole living had been turned into one long dread of death. Spiritualism will have done a great work, if only by destroying that craven dread of dying which has been instilled into us from before birth; the child in embryo having been made to feel and embody the mother's shudderings at the frightful language used by the torturers of souls, who fulminate their cruel formulas from the pulpit. If it sets us free to do our own thinking as rational men and women, who have so long and so profoundly suffered from the pretensions of the sacerdotalists, who continue to peddle, in the name of God, a system of delusion, the foundations of which are to be discovered at last in misinterpreted mythology; against which system of false teaching I, for one, am at war to the death, with any and every weapon I can lay hands on, including this most potent weapon — the sword of Spiritualism. Spiritualism is sure to be terribly iconoclastic! It means a new light of revelation in the world from the old eternal source. And you cannot have new light let in without seeing many old acquaintances with a new face. Many aspects of things will change; and some things that we mistook for live faces will turn into the sheerest masks of mockery, and whiten with the sweat of dissolution running down them. Spiritualism, as I interpret it,

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means a new life in the world, and new life is not brought forth without pain and parting, and the sheddings of old decay. New ideas are not born in the mind without the pangs of parturition; and to get rid of our old ingrained errors of false teaching is like having to tear up by the root the snags of one's own teeth with our own hand. But, by our own hand and will, this has to be done, for nothing else can do it. New light and new life, however, do not come to impoverish, they come to enrich, and no harm can befall the nature of that which is eternally true. It is only falsehood that fears or needs to fear the transfiguring touch of light; *that* must needs shrink and shrink until it shrivels away. Spiritualism will prove a mighty iconoclast, but the fetishes and idols it destroys will yield up their concealed treasures of innermost truth, as did the statue that was destroyed by Mahmoud, the image-breaker. The priestly defenders offered him an enormous sum to spare their God, but he resisted the bribe and smote mightily with his iron mace. Down fell the image, and as it broke there rolled out of it a river of pent-up wealth, which had been hoarded and hidden within.

Evolution, for which no place has been left in the Christian system of thought, is of itself quite capable of being the death of that system; but Spiritualism will undermine it, and dig its grave, and plant it with another nobler life. Spiritualism has already proved itself to be the greatest solvent of ancient dogmas ever known. It has acted, and is acting, like Hannibal's vinegar on the Alps, by crumbling the most stupendous obstacles of mental progress. The Spiritualistic religion is going to conquer because it is not afraid of any new facts that may be dug out of the earth, or drawn down from the heavens. It is bound to conquer, because with it free-thinking is no longer on the side of negation. Our old Free-thinkers were brave men who drew a new breath of freer life through the enlarging lungs of the world, by daring to think freely — braver men than our Spiritualists are, who are sadly in need of a fiery course of persecution to test the metal of their manhood. But on the old material plane they soon came to where their foothold ceased, and they could get no further. The freer thought of the Spiritualist gives him arms to swim the sea, and wings to mount the air, when he comes to where the earth ends, — and to the Materialist there seemed no more solid ground. I have warrant for saying that the only form of Free-thought that is feared as deadly by the Church of Rome is Spiritualistic, which cuts the ground from under it in relation to a future life. We say to them, Call it a superstition if you please. Our superstition will be the death of yours. And whenever or whenever they come fairly to the grapple we shall see, and our enemies will feel, how the old bones will crackle and crumble in the grip of its crushing power. Spiritualism, as I apprehend it, is going to be a mighty agent in carrying on the work of this world, in producing loftier souls for the life of another world, of which it gives us glimpses on the way. Let me tell you that this despised Spiritualism will put a light into the one hand and a sword into the other, that have to be flashed in on many dark places, and through many a dungeon-grating of human kind, in spite of the birds of night that may hoot at the light, and blaspheme against its brilliance.

There is a cry of womankind now going up in search of God! Sometimes accompanied with a clasping of hands — at other times with the clenched fist — and it behooves all men to know what it does really and rightly mean. It may be found to imply more than "woman suffrage," it may signify woman suffering. "*Suffering from what?*" do you reply. "*Do we not keep her, and clothe her, and are we not prohibited, or were under the good old English law, from beating her with a stick that is thicker than your middle finger?*" It may be that the brute ideal of the savage is getting to be a worn-out type here as elsewhere, and that there is a desire for a more refined and intellectual form of manhood in the intimacy of married life! So far from Woman having been the cause of any pretended Fall of man, she has been the true Saviour of humanity; or rather, the main instrument for saving because more open to the Divine influence, which I hold to be for ever working to prevent the propagation of man's worsen moods, and the personification of his baser self. Often has she tried to hinder man when he was devilishly bent on

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defacing the coming image of the divine! And this alone, with her back to the wall, in places where there was no law on her side. How many idiots, think you, are born into the world through drunken fathers? Idiocy is an arrested development. Drunkenness is also an arrest of the soul in its brain action, which means that the idiot child is often a tiny, pitiful image of the father who was in a state of moral idiocy. The spiritual life was arrested; and there is as great a deficiency of soul as there is of blood in the brain when you swoon. It is a moral swoon made visible and permanent in a hidden effigy of Death-in-life. Lucky if the paralysis be so complete that a great criminal is not let loose on the world in active, instead of helpless, idiocy. I only dare hint at the things which are done in the world to the knowledge of women, and you need not wonder if now and again there rises the shrill, protesting shriek.

Some of my readers may have seen specimens in Greek and Italian art of what man has done to gratify the lust of the eye that he might perpetuate the lusts of the soul, and gloat over his own moral deformity, immortalised by the utmost cunning wherewith art could animate the most precious forms of inanimate nature. He has set the image of his own corruption in the shining mirror of a stainless jewel, and figured forth his moral deformity in the lustre of a gem — think of giving the worst kind of human disease to a gem! He has cut the devil of his beastlier self in the diamond, enshrined the libidinous satyr, tongue-lolling and leering from a sapphire's azure heaven, made the innocent emerald flush the face with the reflection of what was enacted in its green coolness, called up spirits of all uncleanness in the purity of a crystal. All this was very bad — very horrible — this corruption of art for the delectation of the beast with a taste in man! But what was such degradation at its wantonest and worst compared with that of a drunken man — no matter with which passion he may be aflame — furiously stamping his own hideous face, and the features of his vice, on that form of humanity which he so darkens and defiles as to well-nigh blast or blot out of it the image of God or man altogether! These jewels of life, these creations of love, to be thus brutally defaced in such a cruel way! It is horrible, most horrible! Enough to make all womankind, all motherhood, nay, all manhood, rise in revolt against it, and sicken, and spew it out. If men go reeling to the marriage-bed, reeking with the foul effluvia of drink, gross with gluttony, and stained through and through with moral disease, if the children are made from the scum of bad blood into an outer likeness of the inner corruption, what can we expect the men and women to be? If you held a tiny little bird's egg in your hand, how tenderly would you touch it! how protectingly would you fence it round and shield it from all danger! and here is an immortal soul in embryo, susceptible to every influence of the father, every feeling of the mother, looking with all its life to them for its environing conditions! Here then, instead of the ancient damnation of the flesh we need a religion of the body as well as of the soul, and a gospel of human physics. Hitherto the utmost that has been aimed at scientifically has been a better breed of horses or cattle; we ought to be at least as careful in the bringing forth of human beings. Make the tree good and its fruit will be good (barring certain "throws back" or "sports" of nature). The work has to be done from the root, and not by late trying to graft the good on a bad stock. Remember that life comes into the world according to conditions, and the first of these conditions are those of the married life. Human embryology has now to be studied religiously in the light of evolution. If I were a woman I doubt whether I should consider a smoker, or chewer of tobacco, quite good enough to father my children! The final effect — the supposed beneficial effect — of nicotine is to arrest the decay of matter that ought to be sloughed off in order that it may be renewed. No smoker is so live a man, all round, as he ought to be, or might be; and you can study them in all the various stages and degrees of dreaming, decaying, dying, poisoning the springs of future life, or bringing death into the world.

The truth is, that woman at her best and noblest must be monarch of the marriage-bed. We must begin in the creatory if we are to benefit the race, and the woman has got to rescue and take possession of herself, and consciously assume all the responsibilities of maternity, on behalf of the children. No woman

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has any right to part with the absolute ownership of her own body, but she has the right to be protected against all forms of brute force. No woman has any business to marry anything that is less than a man. No woman has any right to marry any man who will sow the seeds of hereditary disease in her darlings. Not for all the money in the world! No woman has any right, according to the highest law, to bear a child to a man she does not love. No mother has any right to allow her innocent little ones to be injured mentally for life by orthodox drugs and false nostrums of salvation that are vended from the pulpit by pious impostors. These — and other things as vital — will become practical so soon as womankind cooperate and insist that they shall be practised. "*Women, obey your husbands,*" is a text that, when wrongly applied, has wrought as much human misery as that other relic of barbarism, "*Spare the rod and spoil the child!*" Why, the great and sole incentive with the mass of male hypocrites who support the Churches is because orthodox Christianity encourages the subjection of women, and helps to make them better — that is more spiritless — household slaves. They do not believe for themselves, but they think anything good enough for their wives and daughters to believe.

*"You cannot serve two masters, saith the Word,"
But Satan nudges them and whispers "Gammon;"
"You lend your Wives and Daughters to the Lord,
You give yourselves to love and worship Mammon."*

Our women and children are *bound* to break away from this system of fettered thought. If I could stand where stood the cock when all the world could here him crow, *my* cry would be to the wives and mothers on behalf of the children. The women are bound to rescue the children, and to head their Exodus from the bondage of orthodoxy, even if the men are too unmanly — too cowardly to help them. No doubt, one real crux is, What are we going to teach the children? And here there is so much to be done and lived by the parents in presence of the children, and so little to be said! The life we live with them every day is the teaching that tells; and not the precepts uttered weekly that are continually belied by our own daily practices. Give the children a knowledge of natural law, especially in that domain of physical nature which has hitherto been tabooed. If we break a natural law we suffer pain in consequence, no matter whether we knew the law or not. This result is not an accident, because it always happens, and is obviously intended to happen. Punishments are not to be avoided by ignorance of effects; they can only be warded off by a knowledge of causes. Therefore *nothing but knowledge* can help them. Teach the children to become the soldiers of duty instead of the slaves of selfish desire. Show them how the sins against self reappear in the lives of others. Teach them to think of those others as the means of getting out of self. Teach them how the laws of nature work by heredity. How often has the apparently pious, God-fearing parent produced a child that seemed to the outside world the very opposite of himself, as if the devil had dropped an egg in the good man's nest. And yet this Satan of a son was but the nature of the saintly father turned inside out — only an exposure of that which had been hidden for a time beneath the cloak of hypocrisy; because in the end nature is honest, and will *out* with it. Children have ears like the very spies of nature herself; eyes that penetrate all subterfuge and pretence; and a sense of justice that, if allowed fair-play, would straightway wreck the orthodox gospel. Guide the curiosity of the little ones whilst it is yet innocent, and give them all necessary knowledge fresh and sweet from the lips of the mother and father, Mr. Ruskin notwithstanding. Let the children be well grounded in the doctrine of development, without which we cannot begin to think coherently. Give them the best material, the soundest method; let the spirit-world have a chance as a living influence on them, and then let them do the rest. Never forget that the faculty for seeing is worth all that is to be seen. It is good to set before the youngsters the loftiest and noblest ideals — not those that are mythical and non-natural, but those that have been lived in human reality. The best ideal of all has to be portrayed by the parents in the realities

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of life at home. The teaching that goes deepest will be indirect, and the truth will tell most on them when it is overheard. When you are not watching, and the children *are* — that is when the lessons are learned for life.

Possibly *my* Coming Religion may suggest a coming revolution? I should not wonder if it does. Anyway, we mean to do our own thinking, and to have absolute freedom of thought and expression. We mean to rescue our Sunday from the sacerdotal ring. But we do *not* mean that the day of rest and recreation shall fall into the hands of the capitalists. We mean to try and rescue this world from the clutches of those who profess to have the keys and the keeping of the other — they who hold up the other world in front of that beast of burden, the producer, as a decoying lure, like the bunch of carrots before the donkey's nose, in order that the suggestion of plenty in paradise may induce him to forego his common right to grazing-ground on earth. We mean to have a day of reckoning with the unjust stewards of the earth. We mean to have the national property restored to the people, which the churches and other bodies have withheld from the people. We mean that the land, with its inalienable right of living, its mineral wealth below the soil and its waters above, shall be open to all. We mean to have our banking done by the State, and our railways worked for the benefit of the whole people. We mean to temper the terror of rampant individualism with the principles of co-operation. We mean to show that the wages' system is a relic of barbarism and social serfdom. That under it labour must remain a slave in the prison-house of property. We mean for woman to have perfect equality with man, social, religious, and political, and her fair share in that equity which is of no sex. We mean also that the same standard of morality shall apply to the woman as to the man. In short, we intend that the redress of wrongs and the righting of inequalities, which can only be rectified in this world, shall not be put off and postponed to any future stage of existence. The religion of the future has got to include not only Spiritualism, but the salvation of humanity for this life — any other may be left to follow hereafter. It has to be a sincerity of life, in place of pretended belief. A religion of science, in place of superstition. Of joy, instead of sorrow. Of man's Ascent, instead of his Fall. A religion of fact in the present, and not of mere faith for the future. A religion in which the temple reared to God will be in human form, instead of being built of brick or stone. A religion of work, rather than worship; and, in place of the deathly creeds, with all their hungry parasites of prey, a religion of life — life actual, life here, life now, as well as the promise of life everlasting!