

that civilization be, where the practice of referring human actions to the standard of God's law is either unknown or held in discredit. It is the only authoritative standard of moral truth, and quite sufficient, when its *broadness* is unfolded, for the guidance of human conduct. A departure from it in the way of irreligion and scepticism, or a perversion of it by any form of fanaticism, is pernicious to the social, as well as the eternal interests of men. Consider what a "place of skulls" that land would be, where knowledge should be universal and greatly increased, yet unaccompanied by the knowledge and fear of God. Let such a state of society be supposed to exist. Let it be supposed that the love and fear of God leave every human heart to the dark working of its own passions, that the notion of a day of judgment be declared absurd, that all the revelations of God be expunged in open council, from the authentic history of the world, and men proclaim themselves the sovereigns of the universe, the only intelligent existencies that ever were or shall be — this is all perfectly impossible, but it is only the spirit of ungodliness carried out to its proper measure of enormity, and what are the conclusions that may not justly be inferred? Is not every wickedness that man can invent, every crime which it is possible to conceive and perpetrate, thereby sanctioned and made sacred as anything else? Nothing, in that case, must be looked upon with reproach or with shame. The foundation of all righteousness, the principle of all morals is torn up and destroyed, and what other law is there left for the conduct and guidance of men? Utility alone. Wherever crime can be committed unseen, that must be reckoned no crime at all. "Tis only day light that makes sin." The most guilty act, if it could escape detection, might then be a most useful and praiseworthy performance. The murderer having slain his victim in secret, might "wipe his mouth and say, I have done no wrong," and have nothing to regard and nothing to alarm him, but lest a drop of blood or the print of his foot might afterwards betray his part in the transaction. It is true, that, since he who slays one man unjustly, threatens the death of all men, a common sense of insecurity and danger might induce them to visit the crime with pains and penalties; but it is also true, that human laws could reach but a small number of the enormities for the prevention and punishment of which they are framed, if these enormities were divested of the dark horror that surrounds them, by a public and legalized profession of ungodliness. Where men acknowledge