

in civilization. Hence it is inferred that God is merely a human idea. But a child's notion of its parents grows higher with the growth of its mind, and it does not hence follow that its parents are merely the creatures of its imagination. We do not wish to press the analogy too far, but it proves, at all events, that a conception need not be stationary to be founded in reality. Progress, and progress by effort, or at least by activity, appears to be the general law of our being; it is the law of affection among the rest; the feeling grows higher as those who feel grow worthier, and their intercourse is increased: it may be so with our religious affection as well as with our affection for each other. Assuming that there is a God, this revelation of Himself to man may be through human nature, and if it is through human nature, it must be gradual and progressive. Moreover, when advance in civilization is spoken of, the question arises whether religion is not itself the basis of civilization and the mainspring of advancement in it. In the past, at all events, the great systems of civilization, or what is much the same thing, of morality, have appeared in a religious form. So far, instead of saying that man has made the conception of God, it would be more correct to say that the conception of God has made man. If this conception flows from no reality, from what does it flow? It is a phenomenon of which, as of other phenomena, there must be some explanation; and we have not yet chanced to see in the writings of any Agnostic an explanation which seemed at all satisfactory. Religion cannot have been the invention of priests, for the obvious reason that there could have been no priests without religion. There is ground at least for hesitation, and insolence as yet is out of place.

On the other hand let the guardians of religion note the popularity of Mr. Ingersoll, who had large audiences on both his nights. It is a warning to set the Church in order. Religion is carrying a weight which it cannot bear. The tribal, primæval, and oriental morality of the Old Testament is not fit now to be presented as a revelation of the Divine character and a rule of life to congregations too unlearned to under-