

tation is—Good-night.

I know as little as anyone else about the "plan" of the universe; and as to the "design," I know just as little. It will not do to say that the universe was designed, and therefore there must be a designer. There must first be proof that it was "designed." It will not do to say that the universe has a "plan," and then assert that there must have been an infinite maker. The idea that a design must have a beginning and that a designer need not, is a simple expression of human ignorance. We find a watch, and we say: "So curious and wonderful a thing must have had a maker." We find the watch-maker, and we say: "So curious and wonderful a thing as man must have had a maker." We find God, and we then say: "He is so wonderful that he must not have had a maker." In other words, all things a little wonderful must have been created, but it is possible for a something to be so wonderful that it always existed. One would suppose that just as the wonder increased the necessity for a creator increased, because it is the wonder of the thing that suggests the idea of creation. Is it possible that a designer exists from all eternity without design? Was there no design in having an infinite designer? For me, it is hard to see the plan or design in earthquakes and pestilences. It is somewhat difficult to discern the design or the benevolence in so making the world that billions of animals live only on the agonies of others. The justice of God is not visible to me in the history of this world. When I think of the suffering and death, of the poverty and crime, of the cruelty and malice, of the heartlessness of this "design" and "plan," where beak and claw and tooth tear and rend the quivering flesh of weakness and despair, I cannot convince myself that it is the result of infinite wisdom, benevolence, and justice.

Most Christians have seen and recognized this difficulty, and have endeavored to avoid it by giving God an opportunity in another world to rectify the seeming mistakes of this. Mr. Black, however, avoids the entire question by saying: "We have neither jurisdiction nor capacity to rejudge the justice of God." In other words, we have no right to think upon this subject, no right to examine the questions most vitally affecting human kind. We are simply to accept the ignorant statements of barbarian dead. This question cannot be settled by saying that "it would be a mere waste of time and space to enumerate the proofs which show that the Universe was created by a pre-existent and self-emergent Being." The time and space should have been "wasted," and the proofs should have been enumerated. These "proofs" are what the wisest and

greatest are trying to find. Logic is not satisfied with assertion. It cares nothing for the opinions of the "great,"—nothing for the prejudices of the many, and least of all for the superstitions of the dead. In the world of Science, a fact is a legal tender. Assertions and miracles are spurious coins. We have the right to rejudge the justice even of a god. No one should throw away his reason—the fruit of all experience. It is the intellectual capital of the soul, the only light, the only guide, and without it the brain becomes the palace of an idiot king, attended by a retinue of thieves and hypocrites.

Of course it is admitted that most of the Ten Commandments are wise and just. In passing, it may be well enough to say, that the commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth," was the absolute death of Art, and that not until after the destruction of Jerusalem was there a Hebrew painter or sculptor. Surely a commandment is not inspired that drives from earth the living canvas and the breathing stone—leaves all walls bare and all the niches desolate. In the Tenth Commandment we find woman placed on an exact equality with other property, which, to say the least of it, has never tended to the amelioration of her condition.

A very curious thing about these Commandments is that their supposed author violated nearly every one. From Sinai, according to the account, he said: "Thou shalt not kill," and yet he ordered the murder of millions; "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and yet he gave captured maidens to gratify the lust of captors; "Thou shalt not steal," and yet he gave to Jewish marauders the flocks and herds of others; "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his wife," and yet he allowed his chosen people to destroy the homes of neighbors and to steal their wives; "Honor thy father and thy mother," and yet this same God had thousands of fathers butchered, and with the sword of war killed children yet unborn; "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," and yet he sent abroad "lying spirits" to deceive his own prophets, and in a hundred ways paid tribute to deceit. So far as we know, Jehovah kept only one of these Commandments—he worshipped no other god.

The religious intolerance of the Old Testament is justified upon the ground that "blasphemy was a breach of political allegiance," that "idolatry was an act of overt treason," and that "to worship the gods of the hostile heathen was deserting to the public enemy, and giving