

The man of straw is now looking around at the Rev. Mr. Haynes. In a little while he will have a few words with him. The Rev. Mr. Haynes admits that man has not fallen, that he was not made perfect, but says that for years man has been rising, has been advancing, that he has come from the depths to the heights where he now stands.

The man of straw will attend to his case. If he is right there was no fall of man, and if there was no fall of man, no atonement. No atonement, no salvation by faith. No salvation, no hell. No hell, no preach. No preach, no contribution box—and the man of straw is looking out for that box.

The man of straw should look out for the Rev. Mr. Cadman. He says that we don't know the authors of half the books in the Bible—a preacher, too, full of the holy ghost, a man that has been set apart, yes, sir, and he doesn't believe the flood; he doesn't believe that God drowned the whole world, because his mercy was over all his works. No! He has doubts about Lot's wife being changed into salt, really, and he has some doubts about Jonah taking cabin passage in that fish. Of course, he believes lots of other miracles just as idiotic, but not those. The man of straw is waiting for him, I can tell him.

So Prof. Gilbert, he has a few doubts whether the apostles understood Christ. Yes. There they were for three years wandering about the country, not attending to any particular business, but wandering around the country, sleeping beneath the stars—no bedclothes but clouds; and he thinks they didn't understand him. The man of straw will attend to him; it won't be long.

These men are giving up the geology and astronomy of the Bible; they are retreating; they are admitting the history is untrue; retreating, giving up a little of the inspiration, throwing away ghosts and wizards. Now they are throwing away some of the miracles and they have killed lots of the little devils. In a little while they will murder the Devil himself.

In only a few years the pulpit will take the Bible for what it is worth. The good and true will be treasured in the heart; the foolish, the absurd and infamous will be thrown away. When that happens the man of straw will be dead, but not until then.

Of course the real old petrified orthodox, mossback orthodox, will cling to the Devil. He expects to have all of his sins charged to the Devil, and at the same time he is going to be credited with all the virtues of Christ. Upon this showing on the books, upon this balance, he will be entitled to his harp and his halo. Yes. What a glorious, what an equitable inspiration! The sorcerer Superstition changes debt to credit. He waves his wand, and he who deserves the tortures of hell receives the eternal reward. But if a man lacks faith then the scheme is reversed. While in one case the soul is rewarded for the virtues of another, in the other case the soul is damned for the sins of another. This is justice when it blossoms into mercy. Beyond this even idiocy cannot go without crutches.

The devils are going and the man of straw is going—not dead yet, but he is going.