

against him. More than that; he induced one-third of the angels to enlist under his flag. He knew he could not succeed.

Why was God so unpopular? What an administration—one-third of the angels went into the rebellion, joined the Devil. How were they so wicked? According to the Christians these angels were spirits. They never had been corrupted by flesh, by the passion of love. No saloons in heaven, no gambling houses and no race track; nothing calculated to stain the heart of the angel. No living to make, no trading to do, no manufacturing, no short weight. How did they fall? I don't know; I don't know.

Why did God create these angels, knowing that they would rebel? Why did infinite wisdom sow the seeds of discord in heaven, knowing that he would cast them into the lake of fire, knowing that for them he would create an eternal prison whose dungeons would echo forever with the sobs and shrieks of endless pain? Why did he do it?

How foolish is infinite wisdom! Wonderful! How malicious is infinite mercy, and how revengeful is boundless love!

Again I say no sensible man in all the world believes in devils.

Why does God allow these devils to enjoy themselves at the expense of his ignorant children? Why does he allow them to leave their prisons? Does he give them furloughs or tickets-of-leave? Why don't he keep them away from us? Does he want his children misled and corrupted so that he can have the pleasure of damning their poor souls? I don't know.

Some of the preachers who have answered me say that I am fighting a man of straw. In this it does not seem to me they are quite candid.

But who is this man of straw? Let me tell you. A man of straw is their master. In every orthodox pulpit stands this man of straw; he stands beside the preacher, stands with a club called a creed in his upraised hand, and the shadow of his club falls athwart the open Bible, falls upon the preacher's brain, darkens the light of his reason and compels him to betray himself.

The man of straw rules every sectarian school and college, every orthodox church. The man of straw is the censor who passes on every sermon. Now and then—not often—some minister puts a little sense into his discourse, tries to take a forward step; down comes the club and the man of straw demands an explanation, a retraction. If the minister meekly takes it back, good. If he does not, he is brought to book. That is the work of the man of straw. This man of straw put the plaster of silence on the lips of Prof. Briggs, and he was forced to leave the church or remain dumb. The man of straw closed the mouth of Prof. Smith and he has not opened it since. The man of straw would not allow the Presbyterian creed to be changed, and yet there is not an intelligent man on the earth who believes the Presbyterian creed. Not one; and yet the man of straw would not allow it to be changed.

The man of straw took Father McGlynn, of New York, by the collar, forced him to his knees, made him take back his words and made him ask forgiveness for having been abused.

The man of straw in your own town pitched Prof. Swing out of the pulpit. The man of straw drove the Rev. Mr. Thomas from the Methodist church.