

the hopeless slaves with scarred and bleeding backs, the writhing martyrs clothed in flame, the virtuous stretched on racks, their joints and muscles torn apart, the flayed and bleeding bodies of the just, the extinguished eyes of those who sought for truth, the countless patriots who fought and died in vain, the burdened, beaten, weeping wives, the shrivelled faces of neglected babes, the murdered millions of the vanished years, the victims of the winds and waves, of flood and flame, of imprisoned forces in the earth, of lightning's stroke, of lava's molten stream, of famine, plague and lingering pain, the mouths that drip with blood, the fangs that poison, the beaks that wound and tear, the triumphs of the base, the rule and sway of wrong, the crowns that cruelty has worn and the robed hypocrites with clasped and bloody hands who thanked their God—a phantom fiend—that liberty had been banished from the world, these souvenirs of the dreadful past, these horrors that still exist, these frightful facts deny that any God exists who has the will and power to guard and bless the human race.

III.

Most people cling to the supernatural. If they give up one god they imagine another. Having outgrown Jehovah, they talk about the power that works for righteousness.

What is this power?

Man advances, and necessarily advances through experience. A man wishing to go to a certain place comes to where the road divides. He takes the left hand, believing it to be the right road, and travels until he finds it is the wrong one. He retraces his steps and takes the right hand road and reaches the place desired. The next time he goes to the same place he does not take the left hand road. He has tried that and knows that it is the wrong road. He takes the right road, and thereupon these theologians say, "There is a power that works for righteousness."

A child, charmed by the beauty of the flame, grasps it with its dimpled hand. The hand is burned, and after that the child keeps its hand out of the fire. The power that works for righteousness has taught the child a lesson.

The accumulated experience of the world is a power and force that works for righteousness. This force is not conscious, not intelligent. It has no will, no purpose. It is a result.

So thousands have endeavored to establish the existence of God by the fact that we have what is called the moral sense, that is to say, a conscience.

It is insisted by these theologians, and by many of the so-called philosophers, that this moral sense, this sense of duty, of obligation, was imported and that conscience is an exotic. Taking the ground that it was not produced here, was not produced by man, they then imagine a God from whom it came.

Man is a social being, we live together in families, tribes and nations.

The members of a family, of a tribe, of a nation, who increase the happiness of the family, of the tribe, or of the nation, are considered good members,