

moral and physical. When prosperity is at its zenith, decay is at the door; when the tree is in full bloom there is but one step to the sere and yellow leaf. Prosperity has evil consequences; and if, as you say, consequences determine the quality of actions, how can prosperity be good?

Again. Prosperity, aside from those who prosper, is an abstraction, nothing, and therefore the good you assert of it is equally an abstraction, a delusion and a snare.

INGERSOLL—"God or no God, murder is a crime."

COMMENT—It is a bad thing for one to forget one's own principles. You have said that "consequences determine the quality of actions." How then can you assert that murder is a crime until you know the consequences of it? Murder in the abstract is at best only a crime in the abstract, which is no crime at all. Murder, to exist, must be the act of A., B. or C. But how can you assert that the act of A., B. or C. is murder or a crime, until you know its consequences? According to the new standard of right and wrong set up by you, I have the same right to assert that murder is a virtue as you have to assert it is a crime, until all the consequences of the so-called murderous act are known, since these consequences must determine the nature of the act.

INGERSOLL—"There has always been a law against larceny."

COMMENT—Yes, but the law is unjust if larceny be a virtue. And you cannot assert it is not, as long as all the consequences of the larceny are not known, since they are, according to you, the standard by which the act is to be judged. If there is no God the law against larceny has no moral or binding obligations, for if made by man it must have been made by those who had, against those who had not.

But those who have not are in the majority in the world, and a minority have no right to impose laws on the majority. If there is no God, the real thieves are those who have and hold the goods of this world from the great majority who have not. This is in fact the doctrine of your infidel conferees, the communists of France. Proudhon, a prophet of infidelity, lays it down as a maxim that "property is robbery." The difference between you and Proudhon is this: he denies God and carries that denial