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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CROSS AND CROWN ***

T H E
C R O S S
A N D
C R O W N

BY T. D. CURTIS.

Evil is wrought
From want of thought
As well as want of heart.—[HOOD.]

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1886.

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PROLOGUE.

I.

He who offends the public will
And thus excites the populace
With a vindictive wish to kill
And sink his name in deep disgrace,
Is hung or burned in effigy;
But none would think of worshipping
The instrument of cruelty
That should a friend's sad exit bring;
Yet when the Christ was crucified,
By order of the crazy throng,
The bloody cross on which he died—
The tool of deep and ghastly wrong—
Derisively was raised on high,
By the decree of hell's dark prince,
And human souls, not thinking why,
Hell's sign have worshiped ever since!
Could more complete subversion be
Of reason, taste and decency?

II.

Through all the past historic days,
Tyrants have gloried in the crown;
And base and bloody are the ways
By which men have been trampled down.
That royalty may thrive and tax
The toilers for its vain support;
Cities and towns it often sacks,
And of men's birthrights makes a sport;
Yet men submit to the command
Of him who wears a crown, and join
Oppression's hosts, on sea and land,
As loyal subjects, or for coin;
And so delusive is the glare
Of crowns to the deluded slave
That he lifts up an earnest prayer
To wear a crown beyond the grave,
And in imagination reigns
O'er souls submissive to his chains!



The Cross and Crown.

THE CROSS.

Emblem of Ignorance and Cruelty,
Ensign of Superstition's brutal reign,
Banner of Despotism's foul career,
Signal of Reason laid upon its bier,
Image of dark and gross Idolatry,
Object of worship since the Christ was slain!

The sign of the impostor and the fool,
By which they conquer and command the throng,
The cross is lifted upward everywhere
Man will submissive bow and mutter prayer,
The minion meek, or church's thoughtless tool,
Or worse, the cunning priest who knows the wrong.

When Satan tempted Christ upon the Mount,
He said: "But worship me, the world is thine!"
But Christ refused the service and reward,
And said: "Get thee behind; worship thy Lord!"
And thus called Satan to a quick account,
For his attempt to humble the divine.

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Christ taught no worship and believed in none;
His teaching was of equal Brotherhood;
But, if there must be worship, it was meet
That he who claimed it should bow at the feet
Of him of whom 'twas claimed; the evil one
So claiming should bow down before the good.

Christ did not ask for worship, nor it seek;
This he abhorred in every form and phase;
He was resolved to ever upright stand;
'Twas to rebuke he gave that stern command;
And he who claims the homage of the weak
His low condition to the wise betrays.

Satan still tempts all greedy human kind
With his rewards of selfishness and lust;
He would their minds in superstition steep,
And mercilessly every soul would keep
Forever to the lower realms confined,
Where all is turned to ashes and to dust.

Oh! what a world of malice Christ awoke
In Satan when he bade him "get behind!"
Then all the fury of the fiends of hell
Around his earthly way exhaled their spell;
Beset by every snare hell could evoke,
He suffered hellish tortures of the mind.

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He lived alone; he was not understood
By those with whom he most communed and taught;
His sole support was love and faith in truth
And principles he'd pondered from his youth;
He saw right living and the doing good
Must bring a future life with gladness fraught.

But hell would not consent to tolerate
The presence here on earth of one who chose
To be so independent of its sway;
It would not do to longer let him stay,
And so the vicious tools of hell and hate
Were set to work his teachings here to close.

He long had seen or guessed how it would end;
But faith in principle in him was strong,
And he would not consent to change his course
Nor to retract, nor turn to such resource
As would the purpose of his foes unbend,
And thus his labors on the earth prolong.

But he resolved to carry on the fight
Beyond the grave, and to contend for power
And freedom to reject the homage base
Which Satan claimed, and meet him face to face
In his own realms of cruelty and night,
And try his title there to freedom's dower.

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It was a faith sublime that thus could nerve
The Nazarene to face the death they chose;
But patiently he met his fate alone,
Without complaint, and scarcely gave a groan,
So sure was he that Freedom he could serve
And in the end could conquer all his foes.

It was not long before the end was reached,
So far as earth could end his grand career;
His body lifeless hung upon the cross;
Yet still his deadly foes were at a loss
How to annul the doctrines he had preached
Lest they forever should torment them here.

So they resolved upon a double course—
They would pervert what they could not destroy;
Their earthly agents were induced to choose
The bloody cross as symbol of their views,
Which they proclaimed were Christ's, and were the source
Of all their power—His name made a decoy.

The banner of the cross they raised aloft,
To conquer by this sign of all that's vile;
"Christians" they called themselves, and fiends in glee
Must have rejoiced their bloody course to see,
As with brute force, or threats, or pleadings soft,
They coupled hell's dark doings with its guile.

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To blind belief they added blinder faith,
And relegated reason to the shades;
Dark superstition ruled the bloody hour,
The world bowed down before religion's pow'r,
And truthfully the page of history saith
Mankind gave up to riots and to raids.

It was a very pandemonium here,
A hell on earth, a night without a star;
Good manners and good morals passed away,
Corruption and pollution ruled the day,
And Pity left the earth without a tear,
While pallid Justice trembling stood afar.

Contending sects and creeds each other tore;
A word or syllable gave cause for war,
And e'en a single letter made men tear
Each other and profane the decent air
With angry words, and drench their hands in gore,
Performing all that Heaven must abhor.

Men lost all reason, women lost all shame,
And gross indecency ruled day and night;
Fortunes were given to the rotten priests,
Who rated virtue lower than the beasts;
Pollution of the maiden or the dame
Alike was holy in the priestly sight.

At first, it was a struggle mild between
The pagan doctrines and the newer creeds,
Whose crazy devotees quite often sought
The crown of martyrdom, and therefore wrought
Insultingly to taunt and rouse the spleen
That oft in furious wrath its victim bleeds.

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But paganism was a placid rill
Beside the roaring torrent of the new
And wild religion that its ruin sought;
And most of all its cruelty was taught
Unto it by the men of bloody will
Who did the work of the infernal crew.

When Satan's agents found no pagan foe,
They tore each other with tenfold delight;
There was no epithet too harsh to use,
There was no instrument of brute abuse
Severe enough to add unto the woe
Of brothers now grown hateful in their sight.

Such scenes the world had never known before,
So fierce did angry passion's billows toss;
Hell seemed let loose, and scarce a Heavenly ray
Shone in the hearts of men to light the way;
All virtue gone, or rotten to the core,
O'er all there rose the dark and bloody cross.

But brutal passion cannot always rule;
Reaction comes with renovating sway;
The violence that may at first succeed
Quite soon returns to make its victims bleed;
Coercion is a sharp and treacherous tool—
A two-edged sword that cutteth either way.

Pg 11

For centuries the nations struggled on,
While reason scarcely gave a glimmering ray;
The rack, the faggot, and anon the sword,
Each played its part to teach the "Holy Word;"
While hated Science, pallid, weary, wan,
Amid the hosts of darkness skulked away.

Not idle was the Nazarene the while;
He marshaled on the other side of life
The hosts of gentle truth and reason mild,
Swaying with love the heart of man and child
To long for freedom and the rights that guile
Had trampled down amid intolerant strife.

The work was one of love, the progress slow,
For hell contended every inch of ground,
And, through the church, assaulted every thing
That wrought for good, and cat-like watched to spring
Upon whoever rose to strike a blow
To break the chains with which men's souls were bound.

Bearing the cross before them, hell's dark crowd
Rushed wildly on to crush each rising thought
That in the freedom-loving soul sought vent
In deed of daring, or, in speech intent
On firing other minds, was heard aloud;
In fear and hate the hosts of fury wrought.

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Christ poured his consolation in the ear
Of every suffering soul, and fired the heart
To meet with resignation calm the fate
Imposed upon it by the powers of hate;
And every body slain let loose, to cheer,
A spirit nerved to play a noble part.

Thus, one by one, upon the spirit side,
An army gathered that defied defeat;
It filled with love of freedom every mind
Of willing mould on earth that it could find,
Till right of private judgment, long denied,
Walked boldly forth from its enforced retreat.

Then history and science both combined
To shed their light and make the error plain;
And one by one the church was forced to yield
The subjugated ground which it had sealed
With blood of martyrs, till it was confined
To work by subtle means its ends to gain.

Now Knowledge roams at large, and he who will
May sup from the eternal founts of truth;
As hell recedes, the church enfeebled grows,
And fast approach the last expiring throes;
It now may curse and rave, but dare not kill,
And views with anguish Freedom's lusty youth.

The present church is a continuance
Of the abomination that held sway
When Christ was on the earth; the change it made
Was but in form, not spirit; it essayed
To make the world believe that no advance
Could e'er be made for which it did not pray.

It fought all progress of the human race,
And sought to limit human thought and speech;
Dead books or living bodies, each in turn
It ready stood to torture or to burn;
It squid-like tried its slimy arms to place
On every thing of worth within its reach.

Its claims were boundless, and its vicious aim
Would subjugate all things from pole to pole;
Whate'er of good might triumph in despite
Of all its wiles to crush, this fiend of night
Set up the claim that the advancement came
Through its kind care and fostering control!

And to this day it makes the bold pretense
That all of human progress has been made
Beneath its banner; yet it ever warred
On science as a thing to be abhorred,
And still would banish thought and reason hence,
And of them seeks to make mankind afraid!

It points to the advancement of the world
As evidence of its benignant power;
Yet it has sought, with all its will and might,
To keep the children of the earth in night!
And this same course it will pursue till hurled
From power, and Truth and Justice rule the hour.

Let men no longer be deceived, for hell
Brought forth the church and fosters it to-day;
Let them cast off the shackles of the mind,
Which this same church continues still to bind
Upon them with Satanic art and spell,
And keep, oh! keep the children from its sway!

Thro' Mammon and the Church hell rules to-day,
And flaunts the cruel cross before our eyes;
Losing its hold on State, the church demands
All privileges which our thoughtless hands
Will grant unto its agents, who would slay
The Nazarene again as sacrifice.

Hell still is tempting men with wealth and power,
And finds of Judases a fearful host;
Free thought and speech it everywhere assails,
Religion's sure decay loudly bewails,
But while it reads the tokens of the hour,
It still persists in threat and empty boast.

It mumbles prayers in legislative halls,
And in our courts of justice utters oaths;
It clutches every thing within its reach,
And hangs tenacious as the sucking leech;
Where'er we go its mocking presence palls,
And every thinking mind its workings loathes.

Its ministers assume superior airs,
And claim to compensate all earthly loss;
They help to rob the unsuspecting mass,
And for their sorrows, with a cheek of brass,
They give them rich rewards of empty prayers,
And impudently point unto the cross!

As if an instrument of torture could
Be grateful to the sight of suffering man!
Or he should willingly be crucified
Because good men upon the cross have died!
But hell adopts this horrid thing of wood
And bears the bloody symbol in the van.

It is a cruel mockery of all
That Christ has taught to an unthinking world—
A gross perversion of the living light
With which he sought to open human sight;
'Tis Satan's beacon, leading to enthrall—
Banner of night, by Satan's hosts unfurled.

All progress made has been despite the power
That marshaled all its forces 'neath the cross;
The hosts of light, led on by Christ, have fought
And slowly won the field in spite of aught
The foe beneath the symbol of the hour
Could treacherously do to bring them loss.

Pg 16

And Christ will overwhelmingly, at last,
Defeat the hosts of darkness and of death;
For Truth and Justice surely will bear sway,
To usher in the bright millennial day,
And Satan's hosts from power on earth to cast
And fill each longing soul with vital breath.

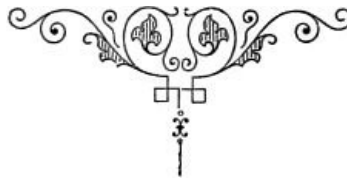
But just so long as men will give support
And countenance unto the wily church,
They may expect the fiends of wrong and wrath
To scatter want and woe along their path,
For by such act they gross injustice court
And will that on its banner victory perch.

Let all men, then, ignore the church and strive
For Justice, Truth, and true Fraternal Love;
Let them resolve to be forever free,
And walk in reason's light, so all may see
They tread the straight and narrow path, alive
To good and peace, as symbolized by the dove.

Thus may a bloodless victory be won,
And Satan's hosts cast out forevermore;
The cross of hell from earth will disappear
Before the symbol of a higher sphere;
Thus may the reign of reason be begun,
And earth become to Heaven an open door.

Pg 17

Oh! let the scales fall from the eyes of men,
And all the horrors of the cross appear;
Then Satan's reign on earth will have an end,
And men no more the craven knee will bend;
But Justice, Freedom, Love, and Truth, will then
Bring in the prophesied millennial year.



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THE CROWN.

Symbol of all that's mean and base in man—
Of pompous pride and cringing cowardice,
Of titled folly and of plodding slaves,
Of groaning labor robbed by cunning knaves,
Of priests and lordlings, an infernal clan,
Who live by force, and fraud, and artifice.

The crown, associated with the cross,
Is held up by the church as the reward
Of souls that blindly follow in the lead
Of priests who advocate a stupid creed!
"A crown of gold," and nothing else, for loss
Of common sense, full payment can accord!

"No cross, no crown"—self-evidently true,
But not in the delusive sense implied;
If men beneath the cross would not bow down,
No devil, pope, or king, could wear a crown;
But they will wear it all the ages through
That men are willing to be crucified.

A crown denotes that some usurper rules,
And subjects, weak and ignorant, submit;
But in a realm where all are equal, free,
No one can rule, none can submissive be;
But hell and tyrants love to torture fools,
And only fools will long consent to it.

The weak in mind, abused and plundered here,
Have silly hopes that they will all be kings,
Because the sons of Mammon tell them so;
While to the yoke they bow their necks below,
They praise a tyrant in another sphere
Who is to crown them over underlings!

When hell's dark agents nailed the Nazarene
Upon the cross they, mocking, hailed him king;
Since then the mockery they have kept up,
And all his friends have drank the bitter cup,
And worn the crown of thorns, and felt the keen
Thrust of the spear, and heard the taunting fling.

All seekers after truth, and right, and fact,
The men of science and the thinkers bold,
Are friends of Christ, and seek to do his work,
By letting in the light mid darkness murk,
That shrouds the cross and crown; but every act
Is met by hell's dark minions, as of old.

With faggot and the prison's loathsome cell,
They've done their worst to stifle human thought
And stop research amid the fields of lore,
Their plea that it is impious to explore
The realms of Nature's secrets, or to tell
Aught to the mass of men by priests not taught.

Hell to the world holds up a God of wrath—
Omniscient tyrant, sitting on a throne,
Wearing a royal diadem of gold,
While fawn around and praise him throngs untold
In numbers, who by adoration hath
Secured his special favors as their own!

All who refuse this homage are cast out
From Heaven and happiness forevermore,
Their souls to burn in torments without end
Or hope that they can ever make amend
For harboring on earth an honest doubt,
And failing their "creator" to adore!

And the offense is in the disbelief,
For no good thoughts or deeds can help the soul;
Nor good intentions, or most honest aims
Can save it from the everlasting flames;
But blind consent alone can banish grief
From one submissive to the priest's control!

This God is arbitrary, full of freaks,
Damns without reason, without worth rewards;
An upright life with him no favor finds;
He fettered sinners with delight unbinds,
And sets them free, but on the upright wreaks
His vengeance—them his special hate accords!

Pg 21

To those who ask for bread he giveth stone,
Or empty promises he may fulfill
In realms of future life—sometime, somewhere,
And thus the soul feeds on deceit and air
As long as flesh hangs to the aching bone—
Till all is sacrificed that earth can kill.

This is no teaching of the Nazarene;
It is a scheme of hell to chain the mind
And keep mankind subjected to its sway,
And to its priests and tools an easy prey—
A plot the souls of men to make unclean
And toward perdition willingly inclined.

Who cannot see that hell set up this God
For purpose foul, and crowned him King of All?—
A model of the human lord and king
Who rule below and make their subjects bring
Homage and pelf to buy approving nod,
While in their train the meaner creatures crawl.

His favorites, the meanest of mankind,
Are quite content the people should believe
That they will win a crown beyond the grave,
If they will only be content to slave
And bow to robber rule, nor seek to find
The light which might their faith here undeceive.

Pg 22

To make the picture more like earth and real,
As kings on earth have rivals to the throne,
So God must have a rival dark and proud
Who, like himself, can never fill a shroud;
But, fiercely overthrown in the ideal,
This rival has no mercy to him shown.

'Tis all infernal—a delusive spell
Thrown o'er the minds of men to keep them down;
In fear the Nazarene, with teachings pure,
The mental blindness of the world should cure,
And break the hoary reign of brutal hell,
It mockingly presented him a crown.

True, 'twas a crown of thorns; but, mocking still,
It gave a spirit crown, and made him Son
And equal of the tyrant it had made,
And in fantastic glory had arrayed,
To rule the saints submissive to the will
Of those who church and state in secret run.

Priests granted to him supernatural powers,
And then assumed to wield those powers themselves;
By treachery, and trick, and sophistry,
They made the multitude believe that he
Claimed worship for himself in gilded towers
Or churches; so the mass submits and delves.

The world is told that men should bear the cross
Of robbery, oppression, want and woe,
On earth, that they a crown above may wear,
And ease their souls in everlasting prayer
Unto a God who shall repay all loss
By special gifts to those who bow most low!

Pg 23

The church has always taught submission here,
Not to the laws of being, but of state;
Hell calls for "stronger governments" to rob
And hold in terror the uprising mob
Which it provokes and seeks to rule thro' fear—
A horrid rule of wrong, and force, and hate.

As Christ's pure teachings were so true and plain
That reason must accept them, to obscure
Their meaning hell and earth conspired
And made confusion, while their minions fired
With mad ambition and the love of gain
All hearts that Mammon's bribes could buy or lure.

And with success they carried out their scheme,
And made the world do homage unto hell;
With God to threaten vengeance unto all,
And Devil to affright them at their call,
With blood of God's own Son—a horrid stream—
To wash men's souls, they have succeeded well!

To further aid their scheme, the "Holy Ghost"
Came down to work with its mysterious spell,
And fill with frenzy every heart and brain
That thoughtlessly would join Delusion's train,
Until the fire of zeal was hot to roast
The sinner here and endlessly in hell!

Pg 24

Christ taught utmost fulfillment of the law,
Which special favors could not set aside;
His was no kingdom of this world, no scheme
Of courtiers or of crown; no idle dream
Of weak and wicked selfishness, to awe
The mass and rear a structure based on pride.

He founded on the rock of truth and fact,
And everlasting principles of good;
He bade men love each other and be just
In all their dealings, to avoid all lust,
And be sincere and true in every act,
Rememb'ring all are of one Brotherhood.

No lead or following of the blind he taught,
Nor a self-immolating flag unfurled;
His enemies, with subtlety most keen,
By torturing his language make it mean
The very opposite of what he sought
To teach unto a blind, unthinking world.

He wanted men to use their reason here,
In all things of this world and world to come—
To seek for truth, for truth would make them free,
Nor bend to any power known the knee;
And he abhorred the rule of coward fear,
That's born of hell, and strikes the reason dumb.

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Quickly the Nazarene refused the bribe
Proffered by Satan's hand upon the Mount;
He turned indignantly from world and crown,
Rebuking with a stern and honest frown
The tempter and his cunning; but the tribe
Of Mammon since has grown beyond all count.

If all men saw, like Christ, through Satan's wiles,
And promptly gave rebuke to his demand,
The crown would crumble and the cross decay,
And Mammon's bribes be counted worthless clay;
A world redeemed would roll in Heaven's smiles,
With plenty, peace and joy on every hand.

What shall it profit man the world to gain
And yield his soul thereby to hell's control?
To give is far more blest than to receive—
For giving to the needy doth relieve
The giver of a surplus that would pain,
If not bestowed, by clogging of the soul.

We channels of transmission are; the flow
Of life is measured by what we transmit;
If we doth freely give, in reason's bound,
What we receive, and pass the blessings
We gather strength and joy as on we go,
Receiving more, the more the benefit.

Pg 26

When men shall rise above the plane of clowns,
And look upon this life with vision clear,
With reason seeking for the better way
That leads to Justice and to Freedom's sway,
Then dupes and priests, then kings, and gods, and crowns,
At last, will from this planet disappear.

To worship an imaginary king,
Makes subjects for the monarchs here on earth;
The mind accustomed to submissive moods
Is ready to receive the mental foods
Which priests and parasites may choose to bring—
Messes of potage for its rights of birth.

Our God is light, intelligence, and love—
Is reason, freedom, justice, and the truth;
He does not rule through blind belief in creeds,
But fact and judgment—good expressed in deeds
Of brotherly assistance, and above
All aims to subjugate the minds of youth.

The God of orthodoxy doth delight
In ways of darkness, superstition, fear;
He bids all men their reason set aside
And take, like birds with mouths spread open wide,
Whatever priests, those messengers of night,
See fit to drop into the gaping ear.

He bids us bow to creeds and servile forms,
And walk submissive under Mammon's reign;
Before him all must bend the cringing knee,
And shout his praise in fulsome minstrelsy;
His followers no love of freedom warms;
He rules them, all through penalty and pain.

Pg 27

With ceremonies, rites, and cunning tricks,
He seeks to captivate the human will;
Thus far his agents have, alas! too well
Succeeded in their wicked work of hell,
Which at no subterfuge or falsehood sticks;
They fill their mission with Satanic skill.

They claim to represent the Nazarene
And teach his doctrines, while they grossly lie
In word and deed, and all his views pervert;
He aimed to help the world; they aim to hurt;
His yoke is easy and his path serene,
While wearing theirs the soul must surely die.

While he would have the world live out the law
Of being as engraved in each true heart,
And seen with vision clear by every mind
That is to justice, truth and good inclined,
They would subdue it, by a sense of awe,
To arbitrary rule and selfish art.

When men shall cease to worship wealth and might,
And turn their backs on superstition's door;
When reason lights her lamp, and equity
Becomes the portion of the truly free;
When Christ shall reign on earth through love and light,
The rule of man and Mammon will be o'er.

Pg 28

Then all machinery of Church and state
Will drop aside as rubbish of the past;
Then social harmony will take the place
That human governments so much disgrace;
The cruel reign of discord, born of hate,
Will be reversed, and order reign at last.

Then each will work for all instead of self,
As faithful parents for their children toil;
All will be educated in the right,
All will by birth inherit living light;
None will from duty turn for sordid pelf,
And none will seek his neighbor to despoil.

And there will be abundance everywhere,
With want and fear of want forever gone;
No more will men indulge in worldly lust;
The aims of life will be above the dust;
Then men the spirit life will seek and share,
Their souls aglow with rays of Heaven's dawn.

Oh! why has Christ been so misunderstood?
Why will not men receive the light and live?
The path is straight and plain unto the view,
And by the light within each can pursue
And reap its fruits of everlasting good,
Which loving hands along the way will give.

Pg 29

The growth is slow but sure, in strict accord
With laws of our condition and our deeds;
No miracles will help us in our task;
If we would gain advancement, we must ask
Through honest work, and upright thought and word,
And not through cross or crown, beliefs or creeds.

Dethrone all gods and send them down to hell,
Banish all worship to the realms of night,
Give freedom unto human thought and speech,
Let every soul be its own church and teach
The truths that from its inmost depths may well
To aid in lifting up all souls to light.

In that bright realm where all is fair and free
The law is written in each beating heart;
There each one does as seems good in his sight,
And every one aspires to do the right;
But no one there in worship bends the knee,
Or acts through fear a superstitious part.

Supreme desire for concord fills each breast,
And every word and act with love is blest;
No thought of wrong or self can enter there,
But each with each and all desires to share;
And he that shares his blessing with the rest
Is richer made in joy and sweet content.

Pg 30

There are no rulers there—no king to frown;
No sacrifices are required or made;
A sense of right and justice rules the realm,
With love to prompt and reason at the helm;
Harmonious thoughts and acts all discord drown
With none to dictate, none to make afraid.

No royal God there sits in pomp and state;
No jeweled throne of gold can there be seen;
No priest nor trembling devotee can raise
An everlasting song of flatt'ring praise;
No cross no crown; no courtier vain, elate;
No slave with bending knee and cringing mien.

No streets all paved with gold doth there appear;
No harps of gold cloth twang an endless air;
No trumpet-blast, by saint or angel blown,
Doth split the ear with its commanding tone;
No worshiping of God, or saint, or seer,
No church, no priest, no pope, no king, no prayer.

But all is love and harmony divine,
With peace and happiness, and joy supreme;
With endless progress and increasing light,
And ever-widening freedom, while the right
And truth, and good, and justice burn and shine
In every brain and heart—a sacred gleam.

Pg 31

Oh! blest abode, where each himself must rule
And none e'er think of ruling others, while
The light from higher sources ever beams,
In gentle, life-invigorating streams,
Upon the soul which, never out of school,
Must ever bask in Wisdom's winning smile.

Oh! let it come, this concord of the blest,
And speedily, upon this earth of ours—
That Mammon's throne may be at once o'erthrown,
And all his idols broken—every one;
That every soul upon the law may rest,
Defying all the arts of wicked powers.

And it will come, must come, or soon or late,
And every heart will feel the quickening thrill;
The hosts of night around the earth must fly
To lower depths, the righteous mount on high;
And then will end this reign of selfish will,
Amid the blaze of the Harmonial Day.



Idolatry.

Idolatry is born of Ignorance;

Its sire is Fear, and cruel are its bands;
Cunning and Greed come forward to advance
Its many claims; the tyrant understands
It gives him consequence when he commands,
And helps to keep his subjects dull and weak;
The priest upholds it with his crafty hands,
And by it keeps himself both fat and sleek,
With conscience tenfold harder than his brassy cheek.

Idolatry has human thought defiled,
And filled the heart of man with groundless fear;
It likens God unto the chieftain wild,
Whose will is absolute and rule austere—
Who scatters curses with a hand severe
On all who do not choose to bow and praise,
Bestowing gifts on those who may appear
By word or deed, or both, his power to raise,
Regardless of their merits or their wicked ways.

Pg 33

The poor idolator expects to gain
In special favors from the god he owns;
He mouths his prayers expecting to obtain
Some kind of blessing through his pleading tones,
While bowing low upon his marrow-bones,
And has no thought of principle or law;
He thinks his very abjectness atones
For all offenses, and he stands in awe
Lest he offend the priest who smites him with his jaw.

Idolatry but feeds the soul on stones,
And makes it fear the living and the dead;
It worships arbitrary power in bones
From which all power to harm or bless has fled;
It puts a halo round some dead man's head
And worships him as one whose blood atones
For all the sins the human race hath bred;
It fills the air with hideous wails and groans,
With genuflexions that the most abjectness owns.

The gods are many which the world adores;
They may be stocks and stones, or creeds and books,
Or saints or heroes; there are many scores
Of idols, both of good and evil looks,
To which the idol-serving worldling crooks
The favor-seeking hinges of the knee;
And then audaciously he freely brooks
Disfavor of the many gods, that he
May serve at Mammon's shrine and roll in luxury!

Pg 34

The known and unknown gods are set aside
When Mammon's glitt'ring chariot rolls along;
The churches all adore the pomp and pride
Of Mammon's blazing cortege; weak and strong
Join in his train, unconscious of a wrong,
And all the gods are chained unto his car;
The "Unknown God" may get their Sunday song—
On other days he's worshiped from afar!
But, next to Mammon, men adore the god of war.

Or saints, or books, or images, or cross,
No matter what the object worshiped be,
'Tis all the same—idolatrous and gross;
It may be done in all sincerity,
Or only done in base hypocrisy,
As is the fancy of the worshiper;
Both classes bend the superstitious knee,
Hoping their god his favors will confer,
Howe'er the supplicant in life and tho't may err!

There is no efficacy in what's done
By way of worship; all is empty show,
External form; in not a single one
Does it inspire a strong desire to go
The straight and narrow path of duty. No,
Not e'en the most benighted devotee—
The most sincere idolater we know—
Conforms his daily conduct so that he
Shall realize the prayer of his idolatry.

Pg 35

All worship is an inconsistent sham—
An echo from the thrones of earthly kings,
Who have the power to either bless or damn
Their subjects of this world in worldly things;
It will be fostered in the church, which brings
A living fat for wily ministers,
As long as folks will wear their leading-strings;
But when the blood of independence stirs
Men's hearts, they'll cease to bow as idol-worshipers.

So long as thoughtless men deceive their souls
With vague conjectures that a wordy prayer
Their destiny beyond the graveyard moulds,
When breathed aloud into the empty air,
To some unknown mysterious being there,
Their conduct will be inconsistent, mad;
Reason and common sense will have no share
In guiding them to action, and the sad
Results will only to the world's confusion add.

How very low and groveling is this,
And reeking with the very fumes of hell!
As if mankind could win immortal bliss
By idle words and forms, in which can dwell
No kind of virtue, no exalting spell!
Let men but reason and they must behold
That righteous living here alone can tell
In raising human destiny. The bold
In thought and action the most rapidly unfold.

Pg 36

But some day men will learn that law supreme,
Unchanging and unerring, rules us all;
That there is neither low nor high extreme
Where special favors unto men may fall,
Or privilege be granted at the call
Of homage-giving beings who desire
To gain advantage, be it great or small;
That selfishness can never raise men higher.
And only deeds of good can aid those who aspire.

Throw creeds and books and churches to the winds,
Save as they furnish food for human thought;
Shun every subtle manacle that binds
The human reason—'tis with evil fraught;
Bow not to books, nor saviors, nor aught
But Truth and Justice and the love of Good;
With these alone can be salvation bought;
It was for these the Nazarene once stood—
In these must every soul find its redemption food.

Let men have faith in principle, and strive
To live in strict accord with equity;
When at the door of truth they always knock,
And deal no more in foolish mystery,
But trim the lamp of reason so they see
The right from wrong, and act the nobler part.
Then will the human race be truly free;
Then the millennium will surely start
With the millennial conditions in the heart.

Pg 37

'Tis not by exaltation of one's self
The prize of real happiness is won;
'Tis not by hoarding piles of worldly pelf
That we can win the plaudit of "well done;"
'Tis not by self abasement we can shun
The painful consequence of evil ways;
'Tis not by wordy prayer to God or Son
We can prolong the measure of our days;
But living right, with duty done, forever pays.

Then break your idols, oh! ye men of might,
If ye would number with the truly strong;
Strike ye for Justice, Freedom and the Right,
If ye would join the ever-happy throng
That sing in unison redemption's song;
Fling out the banner of the Brotherhood,
Bear it before you as ye march along;
Plant it where every idol erst has stood,
Proclaim to all mankind the Universal Good.

If you would follow Christ, or be like God,
You must, like them, be ever doing good;
You must arise above the brutal clod;
You must stand out, as Jesus Christ once stood,
The sturdy friend of God's great multitude—
That helpless mass of wronged and suffering poor,
Who now are trampled on by Mammon's brood;
You must hold up to scorn the evil-doer,
Put down the foul and raise aloft the good and pure.

Pg 38

In no belief or unbelief, nor prayer,
Can men redemption from their errors find;
No worship of the things of earth or air,
Or heaven or hell, or of the human mind,
Can from a single fetter e'er unbind
One sinning brother. Only deeds alone
Done in the love of what is good and kind,
Can for the smallest human wrong atone;
Then worship not at all, but see that good is done.

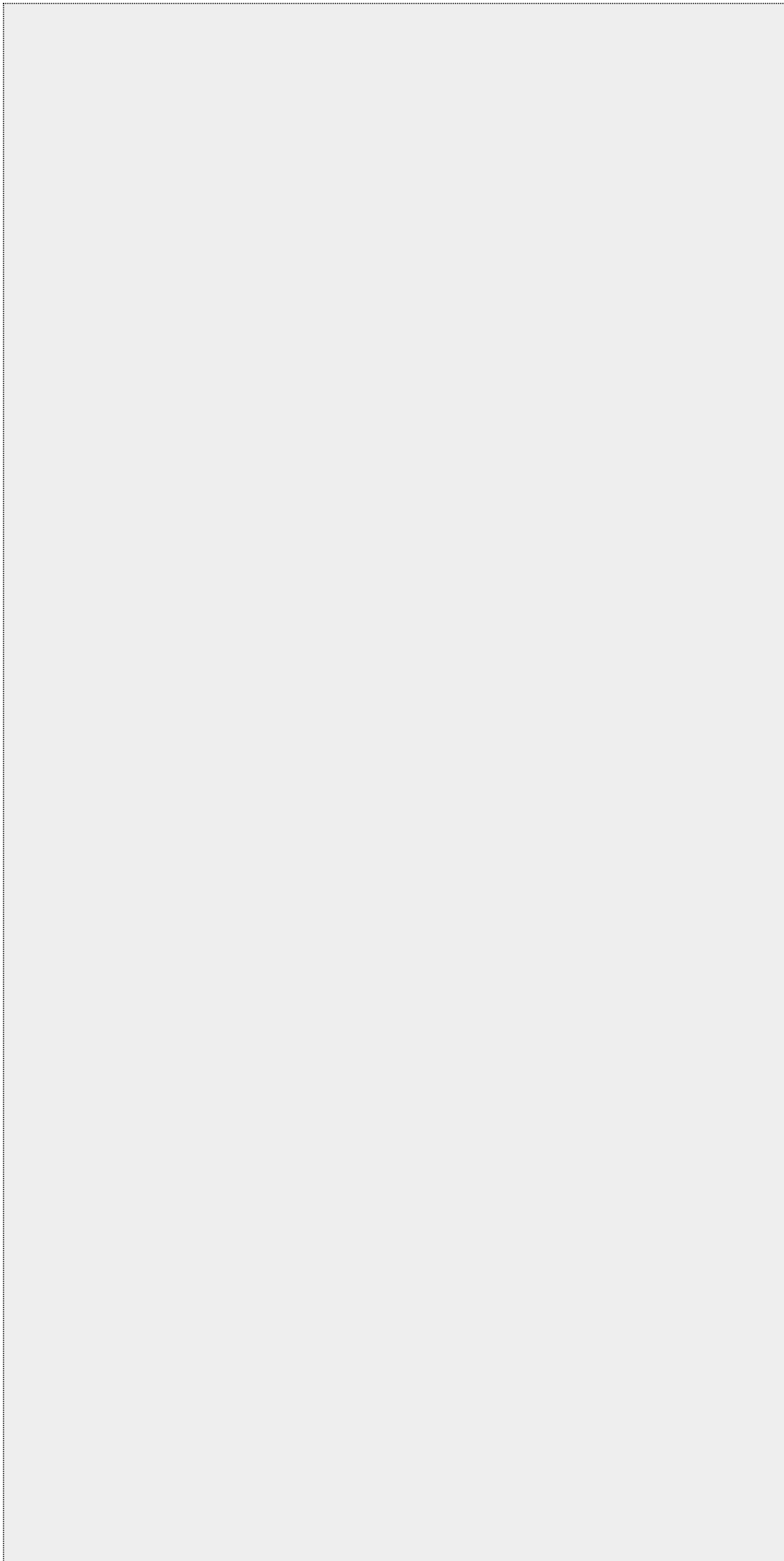
Worship is mockery, but only cheats
The worshiper, who fancies he can guide
The forces of the universe, and beats
The air with empty words; and, worse beside,
It dulls man's intellect and leads him wide
Astray from the true path of duty here;
It seeks for ends through setting laws aside,
When all must be fulfilled. Hence it is clear
The worshiper, through prayer seeketh to rule this sphere.

No jot nor tittle will the law abate
Till all shall be fulfilled; nor can man make
One hair or black or white, howe'er he prate;
Nor add unto his stature, though he take
No end of thought and prayer, nor can he shake
The purpose of any higher power;
But if he could, there would be cause to quake—
For all would come to chaos in an hour
And death and darkness quickly all things would devour.

Pg 39

Then be ye not idolatrous, nor bow
In worship unto things unseen or seen,
But bide your lot with clear, unclouded brow,
And child-like trust the powers that e'er have been;
They're watching o'er us all with vision keen
And love unquenchable forevermore;
In turn, they ask our love, our faith serene,
And wait to welcome us, when earth is o'er,
To homes of peace and bliss on Heaven's eternal shore.





Transcriber's Notes

Punctuation and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected. The following discrepancies have not been changed:

Page 6: "So claiming should bow down before the good." was not indented as were the other last-lines in this section of the book.

Page 10, last line: "Quite soon returns to make its victims bleed;" included a hand-written change that replaced "victims" with "authors".

Page 36: "Bow not to books, nor saviors, nor aught" included a hand-written change that inserted "to" before "aught."

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