

“And the truth shall make you free.” A speech on the principles of social freedom, delivered in Steinway hall, Nov. 20, 1871, by Victoria C. Woodhull...

“And the Truth shall make your Free.”

A SPEECH on The Principles of Social Freedom, DELIVERED IN Steinway Hall, Monday, Nov. 20, 1871, BY VICTORIA C. WOODHULL, To an audience of 3,000 people, to which hundreds found it impossible to obtain admission; which, in consideration of the dreuching rain of the evening, is the best evidence of what subject lies nearest the hearts of the people.

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1871.

THE PRESENT CRISIS.

When a deed is done for Freedom, through the broad earth's aching breast
Runs a thrill of joy prophetic, trembling on from East to West,
And the slave, where'er he cowers, feels the soul within
him climb To the awful verge of manhood, as the energy sublime
Of a century bursts full-blossomed on the thorny stem of Time.

Through the walls of hut and palace shoots the instantaneous three
When the travail of the Ages wrings earth's systems to and fro;
At the birth of each new Era, with a recognizing start, Nation wildly
at nation, standing with mute lips apart, And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child
leaps beneath the Future's heart.

For mankind are one in spirit and an instinct bears along,
Round the earth's electric circle, the swift flash of right and wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame;—
In the gain or loss of race all the rest have equal claim.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the lift hand and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and the light.

Careless seems the great avenged; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,— Yet

the scaffold sways the Future, and behind the dim unknown, Standeth God within the shadow,
keeping waten above his own.

We see dimly in the Present what is small and what is great, Slow of faith, how weak an arm turn the
iron helm of fate, But the soul is still oracular; amid the market's din, List the ominous stern whisper
from the Debbie cave within— "They enlave their children's children who make compromise with
sin."

Then to side with Truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust, Ere her cause bring fame and
profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just; When it is the above man chooses, while the coward stands
aside, Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified, And the multitude make virtue of the fifth
they had denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—they were some that stood alone While the men they
agonized for hurled the contumelious tone Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden
beam incline To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine, By one man's plain truth to
manhood and to God's supreme design.

For Humanity sweeps onward; where to-day the martyr stands, On the morrow crouches Judas with
the silver in his hands; Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn, While the
booting mob of yesterday in silent awe return To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden
urn.

They have rights who dare maintain them; we are traitors to our sires, Smothering in their holy ashes
Freedom's new-lit altar fires: Shall we make their creed our jailor? Shall we, in our haste to slay, From
the tombs of the old prophets steal the funeral lamps away To light up the martyr-fagots round the
prophets of to-day.

New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth; They must upward still, and
onward, who would keep abreast of Truth; So, before us gleam her camp-fires! we ourselves must
Pilgrim be, Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea, Nor attempt
the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

December, 1845 James Russel Lowell.

The Principles of Social Freedom.

It has been said by a very wise person that there is a *trinity* in all things, the perfect *unity* of the trinity or a tri-unity being necessary to make a complete objective realization. Thus we have the theological Trinity: The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; or Cause, Effect and the Process of Evolution. Also the *political* Trinity: Freedom, Equality, Justice or *Individuality, Unity, Adjustment*; the first term of which is also resolvable into these parts, thus: Religious freedom, political freedom and social freedom, while Religion, Politics and Socialism are the Tri-unity of Humanity. There are also the beginning, the end and the intermediate space, time and motion, to all experiences of space, time and motion, and the diameter, circumference and area, or length, breadth and depth to all form.

Attention has been called to these scientific facts, for the purpose of showing that for any tri-unity to lack one of its terms is for it to be incomplete; and that in the order of natural evolution, if two terms exist, the third must also exist.

Religious freedom does, in a measure, exist in this country, but not yet perfectly; that is to say, a person is not entirely independent of public opinion regarding matters of conscience. Though since Political freedom has existed in theory, every person has the *right* to entertain any religious theory he or she may conceive to be true, and government can take no cognizance thereof—he is *only* amenable to *society* -despotism. The necessary corollary to Religious and Political freedom is Social freedom, which is the third term of the trinity; that is to say, if Religious and Political freedom exist, *perfected*, Social freedom is at that very moment guaranteed, since Social freedom is the fruit of that condition.

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We find the principle of Individual freedom was quite dormant until it began to speak against the right of religious despots, to determine what views should be advocated regarding the relations of the creature to the Creator. Persons began to find ideas creeping into their souls at variance with the teachings of the clergy; which ideas became so *strongly* fixed that they were compelled to protest against Religious Despotism. Thus, in the sixteenth century, was begun the battle for Individual freedom. The claim that rulers had *no right* to control the consciences of the people was boldly made, and right nobly did the fight continue until the *absolute* right to individual opinion was wrung from the despots, and even the *common* people found themselves entitled to not only entertain but also to promulgate *any* belief or theory of which they could conceive.

With yielding the control over the *consciences* of individuals, the despots had no thought of giving up any right to their *persons*. But Religious freedom naturally led the people to question the right of this control, and in the eighteenth century a new protest found expression in the French Revolution, and it was baptized by a deluge of blood yielded by thousands of lives. But not until an enlightened

people freed themselves from English tyranny was the right to self-government acknowledged in theory, and *not yet* even is it fully accorded in practice, as a legitimate result of that theory.

It may seem to be a *strange* proposition to make, that there is no such thing yet existent in the world as self-government, in its political aspects. But such is the fact. If self-government be the rule, every self must be its subject. If a person govern, not only *himself* but others, that is despotic government, and it matters not if that control be over one or over a thousand individuals, or over a nation; in *each* case it, would be the *same* principle of power exerted outside of self and over others, and *this* is despotism, whether it is exercised by *one* person over his subjects, or by *twenty* persons over a nation, or by *one-half* the people of a nation over the other half thereof. There is no escaping the fact that the principle by which the *male* citizens of these United States assume to rule the *female* citizens is *not* that of self-government, but that of despotism; and so the fact is that poets have sung songs of freedom, and anthems of liberty have resounded for an empty shadow.

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King George III, and his Parliament denied our forefathers the right to make their own laws; they rebelled, and being successful, inaugurated this government. But men do not seem to comprehend that they are now pursuing toward *women* the *same* despotic course that King George pursued toward the American colonies.

But what is freedom? The press and our male governors are *very much* exercised about this question, since a certain set of resolutions were launched upon the public by Paulina Wright Davis at Apollo Hall, May 12, 1871. They are as follows:

Resolved, That the basis of order is freedom from bondage; not, indeed, of such "order" as resigned in Warsaw, which grew out of the bondage; but of such order as reigns in Heaven, which grows out of that developed manhood and womanhood in which each becomes "a law unto himself."

Resolved, That freedom is a principle, and that as such it may be trusted to ultimate in harmonious social results, as in America, it has resulted in harmonious and beneficent political results; that it has not hitherto been adequately trusted in the social domain, and that the woman's movement means no less than the complete social as well as the political enfranchisement of mankind.

Resolved, That the evils, sufferings and disabilities of women, as well as of men, are social still more than they are political, and that a statement of woman's rights which ignores the rights of self-ownership as the first of all rights is insufficient to meet the demand, and is ceasing to enlist the enthusiasm and even the common interest of the most intelligent portion of the community.

Resolved, That the principle of freedom is one principle, and not a collection of many different and unrelated principles; that there is not at bottom one principle of freedom of conscience as in Protestantism, and another principle of freedom from slavery as in Abolitionism, another of freedom of locomotion as in our dispensing in America with the passport system of Europe, another of the freedom of the press as in Great Britain and America, and still another of social freedom at large; but that freedom is one and indivisible; and that slavery is so also; that freedom and bondage or restriction is the alternative and the issue, alike, in every case; and that if freedom is good in one case it is good in all; that we in America have builded on freedom, politically, and that we cannot consistently recoil from that expansion of freedom which shall make it the basis of all our institutions; and finally, that so far as we have trusted it, it has proved, in the main, safe and profitable.

Now, is there anything so terrible in the language of these resolutions as to threaten the foundations of society? They assert that every individual has a *better* right to herself or himself than any other person *can have*. No living soul, who does not desire to have control over, or ownership in, another person, can have any *valid* objection to *anything* expressed in these resolutions. Those who are not willing to give up control over others; who desire to *own* somebody beside themselves; who are constitutionally predisposed against self-government and the giving of the same freedom to others that they demand for themselves, will of course object to them, and such are the people with whom we shall have to contend in this new struggle for a greater liberty

Now, the individual *is* either self-owned and self-possessed or *is not* so self-possessed. If he be self-owned, he is so because he has an *inherent* right to self, which right cannot be delegated to any second person; a right—as the American Declaration of Independence has it—which is “inalienable.” The individual must be responsible to self and God for his acts. If he be owned and possessed by some second person, then there is *no such thing* as individuality: and that for which the world has been striving these thousands of years is the merest myth.

But against this irrational, illogical, inconsequent and irreverent theory I boldly oppose the spirit of the age—that spirit which will *not* admit all civilization to be a failure, and all past experience to count for nothing; against that demagogism, I oppose the plain principle of freedom in its *fullest, purest, broadest, deepest* application and significance—the freedom which we see exemplified in the starry firmament, where whirl innumerable worlds, and never one of which is made to lose its individuality, but each performs its part in the grand economy of the universe, giving and receiving its natural repulsions and attractions; we also see it exemplified in every department of nature about us: in the sunbeam and the dewdrop; in the storm-cloud and the spring shower; in the driving

snow and the congealing rain—all of which speak more eloquently than can human tongue of the heavenly *beauty, symmetry* and *purity* of the spirit of freedom which in them reigns untrammelled.

Our government is based upon the proposition that: All men and women are born free and equal and entitled to certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the *pursuit* of happiness. Now what we, who demand social freedom, ask, is simply that the government of this country shall be administered in accordance with the spirit of this proposition. *Nothing* more, *nothing* less. If that proposition mean *anything*, it means *just what* it says, without qualification, limitation or *equivocation*. It means that *every* person who comes into the world of outward existence is of *equal* right as an individual, and is free as an individual, and that he or she is entitled to pursue *happiness* in whatever direction he or she may choose. Now this is absolutely true of all men and all women. But just here the wise-acres stop and tell us that *everybody* must *not* pursue happiness in his or her own way; since to do so absolutely, would be to have no protection against the action of individual. These good and well-meaning people only see *one-half* of what is involved in the proposition. They look at a single individual and for the time lose sight of all others. They do not take into their consideration that every other individual beside the one whom they contemplate is *equally* with him entitled to the *same* freedom; and that each is free within the area of his or her individual sphere; and *not* free within the sphere of any other individual whatever. They do not seem to recognize the fact that the moment one person gets out of *his* sphere into the sphere of *another*, that other must protect him or herself against such invasion of rights. They do not seem to be able to comprehend that the moment one person encroaches upon another person's rights he or she ceases to be a *free* man or woman and becomes a *despot*. To all such persons we assert: that it is *freedom* and *not* despotism which we advocate and demand; and we will as rigorously demand that individuals be restricted to *their* freedom as any person dare to demand; and as rigorously demand that people who are predisposed to be *tyrants* instead of free men or women shall, by the government, be so restrained as to make the exercise of their proclivities impossible.

If life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are *inalienable* rights in the individual, and government is based upon that inalienability, then it *must follow* as a *legitimate* sequence that the *functions* of that government are to *guard* and *protect* the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, to the end that *every* person may have the most *perfect* exercise of them. And the most perfect exercise of such rights is *only* attained when every individual is not only fully *protected* in his rights, but also *strictly restrained* to the exercise of them within his *own* sphere, and *positively* prevented from proceeding beyond its limits, so as to encroach upon the sphere of another: unless that other first *agree* thereto.

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From these generalizations certain specializations are deducible, by which all questions of rights must be determined:

1. Every living person has certain rights of which no law can rightfully deprive him.
2. Aggregates of persons form communities, who erect governments to secure regularity and order.
3. Order and harmony can alone be secured in a community where every individual of whom it is composed is fully protected in the exercise of all individual rights.
4. Any government which enacts laws to deprive individuals of the free exercise of their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is despotic, and such laws are not binding upon the people who protest against them, whether they be a majority or a minority.
5. When every individual is secure in the possession and exercise of all his rights, then every one is also secure from the interference of all other parties.
6. All inharmony and disorder arise from the attempts of individuals to interfere with the rights of other individuals, or from the protests of individuals against governments for depriving them of their inalienable rights.

These propositions are all self-evident, and must be accepted by every person who subscribes to our theory of government, based upon the sovereignty of the individual; consequently any law in force which conflicts with any of them is not in accord with that theory and is therefore unconstitutional.

A fatal error into which most people fall, is, that rights are conceded to governments, while they are only possessed of the right to perform duties, as a farther analysis will show:

In the absence of any arrangement by the members of a community to secure order, *each* individual is a law unto himself, so far as he is capable of maintaining it against all other individuals; but at the mercy of all such who are bent on conquest. Such a condition is anarchy.

But if in individual freedom the *whole* number of individuals unite to secure *equality* and protection to themselves, they thereby surrender *no* individual rights to the community, but they simply *invest* the community with the power to perform certain specified *duties*, which are set forth in the law of their combination. Hence a government erected by the people is invested, *not* with the *rights* of the people, but with the *duty* of *protecting* and maintaining their rights *intact*; and any government is a *failure* or a *success* just so far as it fails or succeeds in this duty; and these are the legitimate functions of government.

I have before said that every person has the right to, and can, determine for himself what he will do, even to taking the life of another. But it is *equally* true that the attacked person has the right to defend his life against such assault. If the person succeed in taking the life, he thereby demonstrates that he is a *tyrant* who is at all times liable to invade the right to life, and that every individual of the community is put in jeopardy by the freedom of this person. Hence it is the *duty* of the government to so restrict the freedom of this person as to make it *impossible* for him to ever again practice such tyranny. Here the duty of the community ceases. It has *no* right to take the life of the individual. That is his own, *inalienably* vested in him, both by *God* and the *Constitution*.

A person may also appropriate the property of another if he so choose, and there is no way to prevent it; but once having thus invaded the rights of another, the whole community is in danger from the propensity of this person. It is therefore the duty of government to so restrain the liberty of the person as to prevent him from invading the spheres of other persons in a manner against which he himself demands, and is entitled to, protection.

The same rule applies to that class of persons who have a propensity to steal or to destroy the character of others. This class of encroachers upon others' rights, in some senses, are *more* reprehensible than any other, save only those who invade the rights of life; since for persons to be made to appear what they are not may, perhaps, be to place them in such relations with third persons as to destroy their means of pursuing happiness. Those who thus invade the pursuit of happiness by others, should be held to be the *worst* enemies of society; proportionably worse than the common burglar or thief, as what they destroy is more valuable than is that which the burglar or thief can appropriate. For robbery there may be *some* excuse, since what is stolen may be required to contribute to actual needs; but that which the assassin of character appropriates does *neither* good to himself nor to *any one else*, and makes the loser poor indeed. Such persons are the worst enemies of society.

I have been thus explicit in the analysis of the principles of freedom in their application to the common affairs of life, because I desired, before approaching the main subject, to have it *well settled* as to what may justly be considered the rights of individuals; or in other words what individual sovereignty implies.

It would be considered a very unjust and arbitrary, as well as an unwise thing, if the government of the United States were to pass a law compelling persons to adhere during life to everything they should to-day accept as their religion, their politics and their vocations. It would *manifestly* be a departure from the true functions of government. The apology for what I claim to be an invasion of the rights of the individual is found in the law to enforce contracts. While the enforcement of

contracts in which *pecuniary* considerations are involved is a matter distinct and different from that of the enforcement of contracts involving the happiness of individuals, *even in them* the governments has *no* legitimate right to interfere. The logical deduction of the right of two people to *make* a contract without consulting the government, or any third party, is the right of *either or both* of the parties to *withdraw* without consulting any third party, either in reference to its enforcement or as to damages.

As has been stated, such an arrangement is the result of the exercise of the right of two or more individuals to unite their rights, perfectly independent of every outside party. There is neither right nor duty beyond the uniting—the contracting—individuals. So neither can there be an appeal to a third party to settle any difference which may arise between such parties. All such contracts have their legitimate basis and security in the honor and purposes of the contracting parties. It seems to me that, admitting our theory of government, no proposition can be plainer than is this, notwithstanding the practice is entirely different. But I am now discussing the abstract principles of the rights of freedom, which no practice that may be in vogue must be permitted to deter us from following to legitimate conclusions.

In all general contracts, people have the protection of government 11 in contracting for an hour, a day, a week, a year, a decade, or a life, and *neither* the government nor *any other third party or persons*, or *aggregates* of persons ever *think* of making a scale of respectability, graduated by the length of time for which the contracts are made and maintained. *Least of all* does the government require that any of these contracts shall be entered into for life. Why should the social relations of the sexes be made subject to a different theory? All enacted laws that are for the purpose of perpetuating conditions which are themselves the results of evolution are so many obstructions in the path of progress; since if an effect attained to-day is made the ultimate, progress stops. “Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,” is *not* the adage of a progressive age like the present. Besides, there can be no general law made to determine what individual cases demand, since a variety of conditions cannot be subject to one and the same rule of operation. Here we arrive at the most important of all facts relating to human needs and experiences: That while every human being has a distinct individuality, and is entitled to all the rights of a sovereign over it, it is not taken into the consideration that *no* two of these individualities are made up of the self-same powers and experiences, and therefore cannot be governed by the *same* law to the *same* purposes.

I would recall the attention of all objecting egotists, Pharisees and would-be regulators of society to the true functions of government—to protect the complete exercise of individual rights, and what they are no living soul except the individual has any business to determine or to meddle with, in *any* way whatever, unless his own rights are first infringed.

If a person believe that a certain theory is a truth, and consequently the right thing to advocate and practice, but from its being unpopular or against established public opinion does not have the moral courage to advocate or practice it, *that* person is a *moral coward* and *traitor* to his own conscience, which God gave for a guide and guard.

What I believe to be the truth I endeavor to practice, and, in advocating it, permit me to say I shall *speak so plainly* that *none* may complain that I did not make myself understood.

The world has come up to the present time through the outworking of religious, political, philosophical and scientific principles, and 12 today we stand upon the *threshold* of *greater* in more *important* things than have ever interested the intellect of man. We have arrived where the very *foundation* of all that *has* been must be analyzed and understood—and this foundation is the relation of the sexes. These are the bases of society—the very last to secure attention, because the most comprehensive of subjects.

All other departments of inquiry which have their fountain in society have been formulated into *special* sciences, and made legitimate and popular subjects for investigation; but the science of *society itself* has been, and still is, held to be too sacred a thing for science to lay its rude hands upon. But of the relations of science to society we may say the same that has been said of the relations of science to religion: "That religion has always wanted to do good, and now science is going to tell it how to do it."

Over the sexual relations, marriages have endeavored to preserve sway and to hold the people in subjection to what has been considered a standard of moral purity. Whether this has been successful or not may be determined from the fact that there are *scores of thousand* of women who are denominated prostitutes, and who are supported by *hundreds of thousands* of men who should, for like reasons, also be denominated prostitutes, since what will change a woman into a prostitute must also necessarily change a man into the same.

This condition, called prostitution, seems to be the *great evil* at which religion and public morality hurl their *special* weapons of condemnation, as the sum total of all diabolism; since for a woman to be a prostitute is to deny her not only all Christian, but also all humanitarian rights.

But let us inquire into this matter, to see just what it is; not in the vulgar or popular, or even legal sense, but in a purely *scientific* and *truly moral* sense.

It must be remembered that we are seeking after such for the *sake* of the truth, and in utter disregard of *everything* except the truth; that is to say, we are seeking for the truth, "let it be what

it may and lead where it may." To illustrate, I would say the extremest thing possible. If blank materialism were true, it would be best for the world to know it.

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If there be any who are not in harmony with this desire, then such have nothing to do with what I have to say, for it will be said regardless of antiquate forms or fossilized dogmas, but in the *simplest* and *least* offending language that I can choose.

If there is *anything* in the whole universe that should enlist the *earnest* attention of *everybody*, and their support and advocacy to secure it, it is that upon which the true Welfare and happiness of everybody depends. Now to what more than to anything else do humanity owe their welfare and happiness? Most clearly to being born into carthly existence with a sound and perfect physical, mental and moral beginning of life, with no taint or disease attaching to them, either mentally, morally or physically. To *be* so born involves the harmony of conditions which will produce such results. To *have* such conditions involves the existence of such relations of the sexes as will in themselves produce them.

Now I will put the question direct. Are not these *eminently* proper subjects for inquiry and discussion, not in that manner of maudlin sentimentality in which it *has been* the habit, but in a *dignified, open, lowest and fearless* way, in which subjects of so great importance should be inquired into and discussed?

An *exhaustive* treatment of these subjects would involve the inquiry what should be the *chief* end to be gained by entering into sexual relations. This I must simply answer by saying, "Good children, who will not need to regenerated," and pass to the consideration of the relations themselves.

All the relations between the sexes that are recognized as *legitimate* are denominated marriage. *But of what does marriage consist?* This very pertinent question requires settlement before any real progress can be made as to what Social Freedom and Prostitution mean. It is admitted by everybody that marriage is a union of the opposite in sex, but is it a principle of nature outside of all law, or is it a law outside of all nature? Where is the point before reaching which it is not marriage, but having reached which it is marriage? Is it where two meet and realize that the love clements of their nature are harmonious, and that they blend into and make *one* purpose of life? or is it where a *soulless form* is pronounced over two who know *no* commingling of life's hopes? 14 Or are *both* these processes required—first, the marriage union *without* the law, to be afterward solemnized *by* the law? If *both* terms are required, does the marriage continue after the *first* departs? or if the *restrictions* of the law are removed and the *love* continues, does *marriage* continue? or if the law unite two who *hate* each other, is that marriage? Thus are presented all the possible aspects of the case.

The *courts* hold if the law solemnly pronounce two married, *that they are married, whether love is present or not. But this really such a marriage as this enlightened age should demand? No! It is a stupidly arbitrary law, which can find no analogies in nature. Nature proclaims in broadest terms, and all her subjects re-echo the same grand truth, that sexual unions, which result in reproduction, are marriage. And sex exists wherever there is reproduction.*

By analogy, the same law ascends into the sphere of and applies among men and women; for are not they a part and parcel of nature in which this law exists as a principle? This law of nature by which men and women are united by love is God's marriage law, the enactments of men to the contrary notwithstanding. And the precise results of this marriage will be determined by the character of those united; all the experiences evolved from the marriage being the legitimate sequences thereof.

marriage must consist either of love or of law, since it *may* exist in form with either term absent; that is to say, people may be married by *law* and all love be lacking; and they may also be married by *love* and lack all sanction of law. True marriage must in reality consist entirely either of law or love, since there can be *no* compromise between the law of nature and *statute* law by which the former shall yield to the latter.

Law cannot change what nature has already determined. Neither will love obey if law command. Law cannot compel two to love. It has nothing to do either *with* love or with its absence. Love is superior to all law, and so also is hate, indifference, disgust and all other human sentiments which are evoked in the relations of the sexes. It legitimately and logically follows, if *love* have *anything* to do with marriage, that *law* has *nothing* to do with it. And on the contrary, if *law* have anything to do with marriage, that *love* has nothing to do with it. And there is no escaping the deduction.

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If the test of the rights of the individual be applied to determine which of these propositions is the true one, what will be the result?

Two persons, a male and a female, meet, and are drawn together by a *mutual* attraction—a *natural* feeling unconsciously arising within their natures of which *neither* has any control—which is denominated love. This a matter that concerns *these two*, and *no* other living soul has *any human* right to say aye, yes or no, since it is a matter in which none except the two have any right to be involved, and from which it is the duty of these two to exclude every other person, since no one can love for another or determine why another loves.

If true, mutual, natural attraction be sufficiently strong to be the *dominant* power, then it decides marriage; and if it be so decided, no law which may be in force can *any more* prevent the union than a *human* law could prevent the transformation of water into vapor, or the confluence of two streams; and for *precisely* the same reasons: that it is a *natural* law which is obeyed; which law is as *high above human law* as perfection is high above imperfection. They marry and obey this higher law than man can make—a law as old as the universe and as immortal as the elements, and for which there is no substitute.

They are sexually united, to be which is to be married by nature, and to be thus married is to be united by God. This marriage is performed without special mental volition upon the part of either, although the intellect *may* approve what the affections determine; thus is to say, they marry because they love, and they love because they can neither *prevent* nor *assist* it. Suppose after this marriage has continued an indefinite time, the *unity* between them departs, could they any more prevent it than they can prevent the love? It *came* without their bidding, may it not also *go* without their bidding? And if it *go*, does not the marriage cease, and should any third persons or parties, either as *individuals* or *government*, attempt to compel the *continuance* of a unity wherein *none* of the elements of the union remain?

At no point in the process designated has there been *any* other than an exercise of the right of the two individuals to pursue happiness in their *own* way, *which* may has neither *crossed* nor interfered with *any one else's* right to the *same* pursuit; therefore, there is *no* call for a law to change, modify, protect or punish this exercise. It must be 16 concluded, then, if individuals have the Constitutional right to pursue happiness in their *own* way, that all compelling laws of marriage and divorce are despotic, being *remnants* of the barbaric ages in which they were originated, and *utterly unfitted* for an age so *advanced* upon that, and so *enlightened* in the general principles of freedom and equality, as is this.

It must be remembered that it is the sphere of government to perform the *duties* which are required of it by the people, and that it has, in itself, no rights to exercise. These belong *exclusively* to the people whom it represents. It is *one* of the rights of a citizen to have a voice in determining what the duties of government shall be, and also provide how that right may be exercised; but government should not *prohibit* any right.

To love is a right *higher* than Constitutions or laws. It is a right which Constitutions and laws can *neither give* nor take, and with which they have nothing whatever to do, since in its *very* nature it is forever independent of both Constitutions and laws, and exists—comes and goes—in *spite* of them. Governments might just as well assume to determine how people shall exercise their right to *think* or

to say that they shall not think at all, as to assume to determine that they shall not love, or how they may love, or that they shall love.

The proper sphere of government in regard to the relations of the sexes, is to enact such laws as in the present conditions of society are necessary to *protect each* individual in the *free* exercise of his or her *right* to love, and also to protect each individual from the forced interference of *every other* person, that would compel him or her to submit to *any* action which is against their *wish* and *will*. If the law do this it fulfills its duty. If the law do not afford this protection, *and worse still*, if it *sanction* this *interference* with the rights of an individual, then it is *infamous* law and worthy only of the *old-time* despotism; since individual tyranny forms *no* part of the guarantee of, or the right to, individual freedom.

It is therefore a strictly legitimate conclusion that where there is *no* love as a basis of marriage there should be *no* marriage, and if that which was the *basis* of a marriage is taken away that the *marriage* also ceases from the time, statute laws to the contrary notwithstanding.

17

Such is the character of the law that permeates nature from simplest organic forms—units of nucleated protoplasm to the most complex aggregation thereof—the human form. Having determined that marriage consists of a union resulting from love, without any regard whatever to the sanction of law, and consequently that the sexual relations resulting therefrom are strictly legitimate and natural, it is a very simple matter to determine what part of the sexual relations which are maintained are prostitutions of the relations.

It is certain by this Higher Law, that marriages of convenience, and, still more, marriages characterized by mutual or partial repugnance, are adulterous. And it does not matter whether the repugnance arises before or subsequently to the marriage ceremony. Compulsion, whether of the law or of a false public opinion, is detestable, as an element even, in the regulation of the most tender and important of all human relations.

I do not care where it is that sexual commerce results from the dominant power of *one sex* over *the other*, compelling him or her to submission against the *instincts of love*, and where hate or disgust is present, whether it be in the gilded palaces of Fifth avenue or in the lowest purlieu of Greene street, *there* is prostitution, and *all* the law that a *thousand* State Assemblies may pass cannot make it otherwise.

I know whereof I speak; I have seen the most *damning* misery resulting from legalized prostitution. Misery such as the most degraded of those against whom society has shut her doors never know.

Thousands of poor, weak, unresisting wives are yearly murdered, who stand in spirit-life looking down upon the sickly, half made-up children left behind, imploring humanity for the sake of honor and virtue to look into this matter, to look into it to the very bottom, and bring out into the fair daylight all the blackened, sickening deformities that have so long been hidden by the screen of public opinion and a sham morality.

It does not matter how much it may still be attempted to *gloss* these things over and to *label* them sound and pure; you, each and every one of you, *know* that what I say is truth, and if you question your own souls you *dare* not reply: it is not so. If these things 18 to which I refer, but of which I shudder to think, are not abuses of the sexual relations, what are?

You may or may not think there is help for them, but I say Heaven help us if *such* barbarism cannot be cured.

I would not be understood to say that there are no good conditions in the present marriage state. By no means do I say this; on the contrary, a very large proportion of present social relations are commendable—are as good as the present status of society makes possible. But what I *do* assert, and, that most *positively*, is, that *all* which *is* good and commendable, now existing, would *continue* to exist if all marriage laws were repealed to-morrow. Do you not perceive that law has nothing to do in continuing the relations which are based upon continuous love? These are not results of the law to which, perhaps, their subjects yielded a willing or unwilling obedience. Such relations exist in *spite* of the law; would have existed *had there been* no law, and would continue to exist were the law *annulled*.

It is not of the *good* there is in the present condition of marriage that I complain, but of the *ill*, nearly the *whole* of which is the *direct* result of the law which continues the relations in which it exists. It seems to be the general argument that if the law of marriage were annulled it would follow that *everybody* must necessarily separate, and that all *present family* relations would be sundered, and complete anarchy result therefrom. Now, whoever makes that argument either does so thoughtlessly or else he is dishonest; since if he make it after having given any consideration thereto, he must know it to be false. And if he have given it no consideration then is he no proper judge. I give it as my opinion, founded upon an extensive knowledge of, and intimate acquaintance with, married people, if marriage laws were repealed that less than a *fourth* of those now married would immediately separate, and that *one-half* of these would return to their allegiance *voluntarily* within *one* year; only those who, under every consideration of virtue and good, should be separate, would permanently remain separated. And objectors as well as I know it would be so. I assert that it is *false* to assume that chaos would result from the abrogation of marriage laws, and on the contrary affirm that *from that very hour* the chaos was 19 existing would *begin* to turn into order and harmony. What

then creates social disorder? Very clearly, the attempt to exercise powers over human rights which are not warrantable upon the hypothesis of the existence of human rights which are inalienable in, and sacred to, the individual.

It is true there is no *enacted* law compelling people to marry, and it is therefore *argued* that if they *do* marry they should always be compelled to abide thereby. But there is a law *higher* than any human enactments which does compel marriage—the law of nature—the law of God. There being this law in the constitution of humanity, which, operating freely, guarantees marriage, why should men enforce arbitrary rules and forms? These, though having no virtue in themselves, if not complied with by men and women, they in the meantime obeying the law of their nature, bring down upon them the condemnations of an interfering community. Should people, then, voluntarily entering legal marriage be held thereby “till death do them part?” Most *emphatically* no, if the desire to do so do not remain. How can people who enter upon marriage in utter *ignorance* of that which is to render the union happy or miserable be able to say that they will always “love and live together.” They may take these vows upon them in perfect good faith and repent of them in sackcloth and ashes within a twelve-month.

I think it will be generally conceded that without love there should be no marriage. In the constitution of things *nothing* can be more certain. This basic fact is fatal to the theory of marriage for life: since if love is what *determines* marriage, so, also, should it determine its continuance. If it be primarily right of men and women to take on the marriage relation of their own free will and accord, so, too, does it remain their right to determine *how* long it shall continue and when it shall cease. But to be respectable (?) people must comply with the law, and thousands do comply therewith, while in their hearts they protest against it as an unwarrantable interference and proscription of their rights. Marriage laws that would be consistent with the theory of individual rights would be such as would *regulate* these relations, such as regulate *all other* associations of people. They should only be obliged to file marriage articles, containing whatever provisions may be agreed upon, as to their personal rights, rights of property, of children, or whatever else they may deem proper for them to agree upon. And whatever these articles might be, they should in all cases be equally entitled to public respect and protection. Should separation afterward come, nothing more should be required than the simple filing of counter articles.

There are hundreds of lawyers who subsist by inventing schemes by which people may *obtain* divorces, and the people *desiring* divorces resort to *all sorts* of tricks and crimes to get them. And *all this* exists because there are laws which would *compel* the *oneness* of those to whom *unity* is beyond the realm of possibility. There are another class of persons who, while virtually divorced, endeavor to maintain a respectable position in society, by *agreeing to disagree*, each following his and her

individual ways, behind the cloak of legal marriage. Thus there are *hundreds* of men and women who to *external* appearances are husband and wife, but in reality are husband or wife to quite different persons.

If the conditions of society were completely analyzed, it would be found that *all* persons whom the law holds married against their wishes find *some* way to *evade* the law and to live the life they desire. Of what use, then, is the law except to make *hypocrites* and *pretenders* of a sham respectability?

But, exclaims a very fastidious person, then you would have all women become prostitutes! By *no means* would I have *any* woman become a prostitute. But if by nature women *are* so, *all* the *virtue* they possess being of the *legal* kind, and not that which should exist with or without law, *then* I say they will not become prostitutes because the law is repealed, since at heart they are already so. If there is no virtue, no honesty, no purity, no trust among women except as created by the *law*, I say heaven help our morality, for nothing human can help it.

It seems to me that no grosser insult could be offered to woman than to insinuate that she is honest and virtuous only because the law compels her to be so; and little do men and women realize the obloquy thus cast upon society, and still less do women realize what they admit of their sex by such assertions. I honor and worship that purity which exists in the soul of every noble man or woman, while I pity the woman who is virtuous simply because a law compels her.

21

But, says another objector, though the repeal of marriage laws might operate well enough in all those cases where a *mutual* love or hate would determine *continuous* marriage or *immediate* divorce, how can a third class of cases be justified, in which but *one* of the parties desire the separation, while the other clings to the unity?

I assume, in the first place, when there is not mutual love there is no union to continue and nothing to justify, and it has already been determined that, as marriage should have love as a basis, if love depart marriage also departs. But laying this aside, see if there can any real good or happiness possibly result from an enforced continuance of marriage upon the part of one party thereto. Let all persons take this question home to their own souls, and there determine if they could find happiness in holding unwilling hearts in bondage. It is *against* the *nature of things* that any satisfaction can result from such a state of things except it be the satisfaction of knowing that you have succeeded in virtually imprisoning the person whom you *profess* to love, and that would be demoniacal.

Again. It must be remembered that the individual affairs of two persons are not the subject of interference by any third party, and if one of them chose to separate, there is no power outside of the two which can rightly interfere to prevent. Beside, who is to determine whether there will be more happiness sacrificed by a *continuation* or a *separation*. If a person is *fully* determined to separate, it is proof positive that another feeling *stronger* than all his or her sentiments of duty determine it. And here, again, *who* but the individual is to determine which course will secure the most good? Suppose that a separation is desired because one of the two loves and is loved elsewhere. In this case, if the union be maintained by force, at least *two* of three, and, probably, *all three* persons will be made unhappy thereby; whereas if separation come and the other union be consummated, there will be but one, unhappy. So even here, if the greatest good of the greatest number is to rule, separation is not only legitimate, *but* desirable. In all other things except marriage it is always held to be the right thing to do to *break a bad bargain or promise* just as soon as possible, and I hold that of *all things* in which this rule should apply, it should *first* apply to marriages.

22

Now, let me ask, would it not rather be the *Christian* way, in such cases, to say to the disaffected party: "Since you no longer love me, go your way and be happy, and make those to whom you go happy also." I know of no higher, holier love than that described, and of no more beautiful expression of it than was given in the columns of the *Woman's Journal*, of Boston, whose conductors have felt called upon to endeavor to convince the people that it has no affiliation with those who hold to no more radical doctrine of Free Love than they proclaim as follows:

"The love that I cannot command is not mine; let me not disturb myself about it, nor attempt to filch it from its rightful owner. A heart that I supposed mine has drifted and gone. Shall I go in pursuit? Shall I forcibly capture the truant and transfix it with the barb of my selfish affections, pin it to the wall of my chamber? God forbid! Rather let me leave my doors and windows open, intent only on living so nobly that the best cannot fail to be drawn to me by an irresistible attraction."

To me it is impossible to frame words into sentences *more holy, pure* and true than are these. I would ever carry them in my soul as my guide and guard, feeling that in *living* by them happiness would certainly be mine. To the loving wife who mourns a lost heart, let me recommend them as a panacea. To the loving husband whose soul is desolate, let me offer these as words of healing balm. They will live in history, to make their writer the *loved* and *revered* of unborn generations.

The tenth commandment of the Decalogue says: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." And Jesus, in the beautiful parable of the Samaritan who fell among thieves, asks: "Who is thy neighbor?" and answers his own question in a way to lift the conception wholly out of the category of mere

local proximity into a sublime spiritual conception. In other words, he spiritualizes the word and sublimates the morality of the commandment. In the same spirit I ask now, Who is a *wife*? And I answer, not the woman who, ignorant of her own feelings, or with lying lips, has promised, in hollow ceremonial, and before the law, to love, but *she who really loves most*, and *most truly*, the man who commands her affections, and who in turn loves her, with or without the ceremony of marriage; and the man who holds the 23 heart of such a woman in such a relation is "*thy neighbor*," and *that woman is "thy neighbor's wife" meant in the commandment*; and whosoever, though he should have been a hundred times married to her by the law, shall claim, or *covet* even, the possession of that woman as against her true lover and husband in the spirit, sins against the commandment.

We know positively that Jesus would have answered in that way. He has defined for us "*the neighbor*," not in the paltry and commonplace sense, but spiritually. He has said. "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." So, therefore, he spiritualized the idea of adultery. In the kingdom of heaven, to be prayed for daily, to come on earth, there is to be no "*marrying or giving in marriage*," that is to say, formally and legally; but spiritual marriage must always exist, and had Jesus been called on to define a wife, can anybody doubt that he would, in the same spirit, the spiritualizing tendency and character of all his doctrine, have spiritualized the marriage relation as absolutely as he did the breach of it? that he would, in other words, have said in meaning precisely what I now say? And when Christian ministers are no longer afraid or ashamed *to be Christians* they will embrace this doctrine. Free Love will be an integral part of the religion of the future.

It can now be asked: What is the legitimate sequence of Social Freedom? To which I unhesitatingly reply: Free Love, or freedom of the affections. "And are you a Free Lover? is the almost incredulous query.

I repeat a frequent reply: "I am; and I can honestly, in the fullness of my soul, raise on my voice to my Maker, and thank Him that *I am*, and that I have had the strength and the devotion to truth to stand before this traducing and vilifying community in a manner representative of that which shall come with healing on its wings for the bruised hearts and crushed affections of humanity."

And to those who denounce me for this I reply: "Yes, I am a Free Lover. I have an *inalienable, constitutional and natural* right to love whom I may, to love *as long* or *as short* a period as I can; to *change* that love *every day* if I please, and with *that* right neither *you* nor any *law* you can frame have *any* right to interfere. And I have 24 the *further* right to demand a free and unrestricted exercise of that right, and it is *your duty* not only to *accord* it, but, as a community, to see that I am protected in it. I trust that I am fully understood, for I mean *just* that, and nothing less!

To speak thus plainly and pointedly is a *duty I owe* to myself. The press have stigmatized me to the world as an advocate, theoretically and practically, of the doctrine of Free Love, upon which they have placed their stamp of moral deformity; the vulgar and inconsequent definition which they hold makes the theory an abomination. And though this conclusion is a no more legitimate and reasonable one than that would be which should call the Golden Rule a general license to all sorts of debauch, since Free Love bears the *same* relations to the moral deformities of which it stands accused as does the Golden Rule to the Law of the Despot, yet it obtains among many intelligent people. But they claim, in the language of one of these exponents, that "Words belong to the people; they are the common property of the mob. Now the common use, among the mob, of the term Free Love, is a synonym for promiscuity." Against this absurd proposition I oppose the assertion that words *do not* belong to the mob, but to that which they represent. Words are the exponents and interpretations of ideas. If I use a word which exactly interprets and represents what I would be understood to mean, shall I go to the *mob* and *ask of them* what interpretation *they* choose to place upon it? If lexicographers, when they prepare their dictionaries, were to go to the mob for the rendition of words, what kind of language would we have?

I claim that freedom means *to be free*, let the mob claim to the contrary as strenuously as they may. And I claim that love means an exhibition of the affections, let the mob claim what they may. And therefore, in compounding these words into Free Love, I claim that united they mean, and should be used to convey, their united definitions, the mob to the contrary notwithstanding. And when the term Free Love finds a place in dictionaries, it will prove my claim to have been correct, and that the mob have not received the attention of the lexicographers, since it will not be set down to signify sexual debauchery, and that only, or in any governing sense.

It is not only usual but also just, when people adopt a new theory, or promulgate a new doctrine, that they give it a name significant of its character. There are, however, exceptional cases to be found in all ages. The Jews coined the name of Christians, and, with withering contempt, hurled it upon the early followers of Christ. It was the most opprobrious epithet they could invent to express their detestation of those humble but honest and brave people. That name has now come to be considered as a synonym of all that is good, true and beautiful in the highest departments of our natures, and is revered in all civilized nations.

In precisely the same manner the Pharisees of to-day, who hold themselves to be representative of all there is that is good and pure, as did the Pharisees of old, have coined the word Free-Love, and flung it upon all who believe not alone in Religious and Political Freedom, but in that larger Freedom, which includes both these, Social Freedom.

For my part, I am extremely obliged to our thoughtful Pharisaical neighbors for the kindness shown us in the invention of so appropriate a name. If there is a more beautiful word in the English language than *love*, that word is *freedom*, and that *these two* words, which, with us, attach or belong to *everything* that is pure and good, should have been *joined* by our enemies, and *handed* over to us *already* coined, is certainly a high consideration, for which we should never cease to be thankful. And when we shall be accused of all sorts of wickedness and vileness by our enemies, who in this have been so just, may I not hope that, remembering how much they have done for us, we may be able to say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and to forgive them ourselves with our whole hearts.

Of the love that says: "Bless *me*, darling;" of the love so called, which is nothing but selfishness, the appropriation of another soul as the means of one's own happiness merely, there is abundance in the world; and the still more animal, the mere desire for temporary gratification, with little worthy the name of love, also abounds. Even these are best left free, since as evils they will thus be best cured; but of that celestial love which say: "Bless *you*, darling," and which strives continually to confer blessing; of that genuine love whose office it is to bless others or another, there cannot be too much in the world, and when it shall be fully understood that this is the love which we mean and commend there will be no objection to the term Free Love, and none to the thing signified.

We not only *accept* our name, but we contend that *none* other could so well signify the *real* character of that which it designates—to be free and to love. But our enemies must be reminded that the fact of the existence and advocacy of such a doctrine cannot immediately elevate to high condition the great number who have been kept in degradation and misery by previous false systems. They must *not expect* at this early day of the new doctrine, that all debauchery has been cleaned out of men and women. In the haunts where it retreats, the benign influence of its magic presence has not yet penetrated. They must *not expect* that brutish men and debased women have as yet been touched by its wand of hope, and that they have already obeyed the bidding to come up higher. They must *not expect* that ignorance and fleshly lust have already been lifted to the region of intellect and moral purity. They must *not expect* that Free Love, before it is more than barely announced to the world, can perform what Christianity in eighteen hundred years has failed to do.

They must *not expect any* of these things have already been accomplished, but I will *tell* you what they *may* expect. They may expect *more* good to result from the perfect freedom which we advocate in *one century* than has resulted in a hundred centuries from all other causes, since the results will be in exact proportion to the extended application of the freedom. We have a legitimate right to predicate such results, since *all* freedom that has been practiced in *all* ages of the world has been beneficial *just* in proportion to the extent of human nature it covered.

Will any of you dare to stand up and assert that Religious Freedom ever produced a *single bad* result? or that Political Freedom *ever* injured a *single* soul who embraced and practiced it? If you can do so, then you may legitimately assert that Social Freedom *may* also produce *equally* bad results, but you cannot do otherwise, and be either conscientious or honest.

It is *too late* in the age for intelligent people to cry out *thief*, unless they have first been robbed, and it is equally late for them to succeed 27 in crying down *anything* as of the devil to which name attaches that angels love. It may be very proper and legitimate, and withal perfectly consistent, for philosophers of the *Tribune* school to bundle all the murderers, robbers and rascals together, and hand them over to our camp, labeled as Free Lovers. We will only object that they ought to hand the whole of humanity over, good, bad and indifferent, and not assort its worst representatives.

Mr friends, you see this thing we call Freedom is large word, implying a deal more than people have ever yet been able to recognize. It reaches out its all-embracing arms, and while encircling our good friends and neighbors, does not neglect to also include their less worthy brothers and sisters, every one of whom is just as much entitled to the use of this freedom as is either one of us.

But objectors tell us that freedom is a dangerous thing to have, and that they must be its conservators, dealing it out to such people, and upon such matters, as they shall appoint. Having coined our name, they straightway proceed to define it, and to give force to their definition, set about citing illustrations to prove not only their definition to be a true one, but also that its application is just.

Among the cases cited as evidences of the evil tendencies of Free Love are those of Richardson and Crittenden. The celebrated McFarland-Richardson case was heralded world-wide as a case of this sort. So far as Richardson and Mrs. McFarland were concerned, I have every reason to believe it was a genuine one, in so far as the preventing obstacles framed by the "conservators" would permit. But when they assert that the murder of Richardson by McFarland was the *legitimate result* of Free Love, then I deny it *in toto*. McFarland murdered Richardson because he believed that the law had sold Abby Sage *soul* and *body* to him, and, consequently, that he *owned* her, and that *no* other person had any right to her favor, and that she had no right to bestow her love upon any other person, unless *that ownership* was first satisfied. The murder of Richardson, then, is not chargeable to his love or her love, but to the fact of the supposed ownership, which right of possession the law of marriage conferred on McFarland.

If anything further is needed to make the reputation of that charge 28 clear, I will give it by illustration. Suppose that a pagan should be converted to Christianity through the efforts of some

Christian minister, and that the remaining pagans should *kill* that minister for what he had done, would the crime be chargeable upon the Christian religion? Will any of you make that assertion? If not, neither can you charge that the death of Richardson should be charged to Free Love. But a more *recent* case is still *clearer* proof of the correctness of my position. Mrs. Fair killed Crittenden. Why? Because she believed in the spirit of the marriage law; that she had a *better right* to him than had Mrs. Crittenden, to whom the law had granted him; and rather than to give him up to her, to whom he evidently desired to go, and where, following his right to freedom, he did go, she killed him. Could a more *perfect* case of the *spirit* of the marriage law be formulate? Most assuredly, no!

Now, from the standpoint of marriage, reverse this case to that of Free Love, and see what would have been the result had all those parties been believers in and practicers of that theory. When Mr. Crittenden evinced a desire to return to Mrs. Crittenden, Mrs. Fair, in practicing the doctrine of Free Love, would have said, "I have no right to you, other than you freely give; you loved me and exercised your right of freedom in so doing. You now desire to return to Mrs. Crittenden, which is equally your right, and which I must respect. Go, and in peace, and my blessing shall follow, and if it can return you to happiness, then will you be happy."

Would not that have been the *better* the *Christian* course, and would not every soul in the broad land capable of a noble impulse, and having knowledge of all the relevant facts, have *honored* Mrs. Fair for it? Instead of a murder, with the probability of another to complement it, would not all parties have been *happy* in having done right? Would not Mrs. Crittenden have even *loved* Mrs. Fair for such an example of nobility, and could she not *safely* have received her even into her own heart and home, and have been a *sister* to her, instead of the means of her conviction of murder?

I tell you, my friends and my foes, that you have taken hold of the *wrong* end of this business. You are shouldering upon Free Love the results that flow from precisely its antithesis, which is the spirit, if 29 not the letter, of your marriage theory, which is slavery, and not freedom.

I have a better right to speak, as one having authority in this matter, than most of you have, since it has been my province to study it in all its various lights and shades. When I practiced clairvoyance, *hundreds*, aye thousands, of desolate, heart-broken men, as well as women, came to me for advice. And they were from all walks of life, from the humblest daily laborer to the haughtiest dame of wealth. The tales of horror, of wrongs in inflicted and endured, which were poured into my ears, first awakened me to a realization of the hollowness and the rottenness of society, and compelled me to consider whether laws which were prolific of so *much* crime and misery as I found to exist should be continued; and to ask the question whether it were not *better* to let the bond go free. In time I was fully convinced that marriage laws were productive of precisely the *reverse* of that for which they are supposed to have been framed, and I came to recommend the grant of entire freedom to those who

were complained of an inconstant; and the frank asking for it by those who desired it. My *invariable* advice was: "Withdraw lovingly, but completely, all claim and all complaint as an injured and deserted husband or wife. You need not perhaps disguise the fact that you suffer keenly from it, but take on yourself all the fault that you have not been able to command a more continuous love; that you have not proved to be *all* that you once seemed to be. Show magnanimity, and in order to *show* it, try to *feel* it. Cultivate that kind of love which loves the happiness and well-being of your partner *most*, his or her person next, and yourself last. Be kind to, and sympathize with, the new attraction rather than waspish and indignant. Know for a certainty that love *cannot* be clutched or gained by being *fought* for; while it is not *impossible* that it may be won back by the nobility of one's own deportment. If it cannot be, then it is gone forever, and you must make the best of it and reconcile yourself to it, and do the next thing—you may perhaps continue to *hold on* to a slave, but you have *lost* a lover."

Some may indeed think if I can keep the *semblance* of a husband or wife, even if it be not a lover, *better still* that it be so. Such is not my philosophy or my faith, and for such I have no advice to give. I address *30* myself to such as have *souls*, and whose souls are in question; if you belong to the other sort, take advice of a Tombs lawyer and not of me. I have seen a *few* instances of the most magnanimous action among the persons involved in a knot of love, and with the most angelic results. I believe that the love which goes forth to bless, and if it be to *surrender* in order to bless, is love in the *true* sense, and that it tends greatly to beget love, and that the love which is demanding thinking only of self, is not love.

I have learned that the first *great* error married people commit is in endeavoring to *hide* from each other the little irregularities into which all are liable to fall. *Nothing* is so conducive to continuous happiness as mutual confidence. In *whom*, if not in the husband or the wife, should be one confide? Should they not be each other's *best* friends, *never* failing in time of anxiety, trouble and temptation to give disinterested and unselfish counsel? From such a perfect confidence as I would have men and women cultivate, it is *impossible* that bad or wrong should flow. On the contrary, it is the *only* condition in which love and happiness can go hand in hand. It is the *only* practice that can insure continuous respect, without which love withers and dies out. Can you not see that in mutual confidence and freedom the very *strongest* bonds of love are forged? It is more blessed to grant favors than to demand them, and the blessing is large and prolific of happiness, or small and insignificant in results, just in proportion as the favor granted is large or small. Tried by this rule, the greater the *blessing* or happiness you can confer on your partners, in which your own selfish feelings are not consulted, the greater the satisfaction that will redound to yourself. Think of this mode of adjusting your difficulties, and see what a clear way opens before you. There are none who have once felt the influence of a high order of love, so *callous*, but that they *intuitively* recognize the true grandeur and nobility of such a line of conduct. It must always be remembered that you

can never do *right* until you are first free to do *wrong*; since the doing of a thing under *compulsion* is evidence *neither* of good nor bad intent; and if under compulsion, who shall decide what would be the substituted rule of action under full freedom?

In freedom *alone* is there safety and happiness, and when people 31 learn this great fact, they will have just begun to know how to live. Instead then of being the destroying angel of the household, I would become the angel of purification to purge out all insincerity, all deception, all baseness and all vice, and to replace them by honor, confidence and truth.

I know very well that much of the *material* upon which the work must begin is very bad and far gone in decay. But I would have everybody perfectly free to do either right or wrong according to the highest standard, and if there are those so unfortunate as not to know how to do that which can alone bring happiness, I would treat them as we treat those who are intellectual without culture—who are ignorant and illiterate. There are none so ignorant but they may be taught. So, too, are there none so unfortunate in their understanding of the true and high relation of the sexes as not to be amenable to the right kind of instruction. First of all, however, the would-be teachers of humanity must become truly Christian, meek and lowly in spirit, forgiving and kind in action, and ever ready to do as did Christ to the Magdalen. We are not so greatly different from what the accusing multitude were in that time. But Christians, forgetting the teaching of Christ, condemn and say, “Go on in your sin.” Christians must learn to claim *nothing* for themselves that they are unwilling to accord others. They must remember that *all* people endeavor, so far as lies in their power, and so far as it is possible for them to judge, to exercise their human right, or determine what their action shall be, that will bring them most happiness; and instead of being *condemned* and *cast out* of society therefor, they should be *protected* therein, so long as others' rights are not infringed upon. We think they do not do the *best* thing; it is our duty to endeavor to *show* them the better and the higher, and to induce them to walk therein. But because a person chooses to perform an act that *we* think a *bad* one, we have no right to put the brand of excommunication upon him. It is our Christian and brotherly duty to persuade him instead that it is more to his good to do something better next time, at the same time, however, assuring him he only did what he had a right to do.

If our sisters who inhabit Greene street and other filthy localities 32 *choose* to remain in debauch, and if our brothers *choose* to visit them there, they are only exercising the *same* right that we exercise in remaining away, and we have no *more right* to abuse and condemn *them* for exercising their rights that way, than they have to abuse and condemn us for exercising our rights our way. But we have a *duty*, and that is by our love, kindness and sympathy to endeavor to prevail upon them to desert those ways which we feel are so damaging to all that is high and pure and true in the relations of the sexes.

If these are the *stray sheep* from the fold of truth and purity, should we not go out and gather them in, rather than remain within the fold and hold the door shut, lest they should enter in and defile the fold? Nay, my friends, we have only an assumed right to thus sit in judgment over our unfortunate sisters, which is the same right of which men have made use to prevent women from participation in government.

The sin of all time has been the exercise of assumed powers. This is the essence of tyranny. Liberty is a great lesson to learn. It is a great step to vindicate our own freedom. It is more, far more, to learn to leave others free, and free to do just what we perhaps may deem wholly wrong. We must recognize that others have consciences and judgment and rights as well as we, and religiously abstain from the effort to make them better by the use of any means to which we have no right to resort, and to which we cannot resort without abridging the great doctrine, the charter of all our liberties, the doctrine of Human Rights.

But the public press, either in real or affected ignorance or what they speak, denounce Free Love as the justification of, and apologist for, all manner and kind of sexual debauchery, and thus, instead of being the *teachers* of the people, as they *should* be, are the power which inculcates falsehood and wrong. The teachings of Christ, whom so many now profess to imitate, were *direct* and simple upon this point. He was not too good to acknowledge all men as brothers and all women as sisters; it mattered not whether they were highly advanced in knowledge and morals, or if they were of low intellectual and moral culture.

It is seriously to be doubted if any of Christ's disciples, or men so equally as good as were they, could gain fellowship in *any* of your Fifth avenue church palaces, since they were nothing more than the *humblest* of fishermen, of no social or mental standing. Nevertheless, they were *quite* good enough for *Christ* to associate with, and *fit* to be appointed by Him to be "fishers of men." The Church seems to have forgotten that good *does* sometimes come out of the Nazareths of the world, and that wisdom *may* fall from the mouths of "babes and sucklings." Quite *too much* of the old pharisaical spirit exists in society to-day to warrant its members' claims, that they are the representatives and followers of Christ. For they are the I-am-holier-than-thou kind of people, who affect to, and to a great extent do, prescribe the standards of public opinion, and who ostracise *everybody* who will not bow to their mandates.

Talk of Freedom, of equality, of justice! I tell you there is scarcely a *thought* put in practice that is *worthy* to be the offspring of those noble words. The *veriest systems of despotism* still reign in *all* matters pertaining to social life. Caste stands as boldly out in this country as it does in political life in the kingdoms of Europe.

It is true that we are obliged to accept the situation *just as it is*. If we accord freedom to all persons we must expect them to make their own best use thereof, and, as I have already said, must protect them in such use until they learn to put it to better uses. But in our predication we must be consistent, and now ask who among you would be *worse* men and women *all* social laws repealed?

Would you *necessarily* dissolve your present relations, *desert* your dependent husbands—for there are even some of them—and wives and children simply because you have the *right* so to do? You are all trying to deceive yourselves about this matter. Let me ask of husbands if they think there would be fifty thousand women of the town supported by them if their wives were ambitious to have an *equal* number of men of the town to support, and for the same purposes? I tell you, nay! It is because men are held *innocent* of this support, and all the vengeance is visited upon the *victims*, that they have come to have an immunity in their practices.

Until women come to hold men to equal account as they do the women with whom they consort; or until they regard these women ³⁴ as just as respectable as the men who support them, society will remain in its present scale of moral excellence. A man who is well known to have been the constant visitor to these women is accepted into society, and if he be *rich* is eagerly *sought* both by mothers having marriageable daughters and by the daughters themselves. But the women with whom they have consorted are *too vile* to be even acknowledged as worthy of Christian burial, to say nothing of common Christian treatment. I have heard women reply when this difficulty was pressed upon them, “We cannot ostracise *men* as we are compelled to *women*, since we are *dependent* on them for *support*.” Ah! here's the rub. But do you not see that these *other* sisters are *also* dependent upon men for *their* support, and *mainly* so because you render it next to impossible for them to follow any *legitimate* means of livelihood? And are only those who have been fortunate enough to secure *legal* support entitled to live?

When I hear *that* argument advanced, my heart sinks within me at the degraded condition of my sisters. They submit to a degradation simply because they *see no alternative* except self-support, and they see no means for that. To put on the semblance of holiness they cry out against those who, for like reasons, submit to like degradation; the only difference between the two being in a licensed ceremony, and a slip of printed paper costing twenty-five cents and upward.

The good women of one of the interior cities of New York some two years since organized a movement to put down prostitution. They were, by stratagem, to find out who visited houses of prostitution, and then were to ostracise them. They pushed the matter until they found their own husbands, brothers and sons involved, and then suddenly desisted, and nothing has since been heard of the eradication of prostitution in that city. If the same experiment were to be tried in New

York the result would be the same. The supporters of prostitution would be found to be those whom women cannot ostracise. The same disability excuses the presence of women in the very home, and I need not tell you that Mormonism is practice in *other* places beside Utah. But what is the logic of these things? Why, simply this, A woman, be she wife or mistress, who 35 consorts with a man who consorts with *other* women, is equally, with *them and him*, morally responsible, since the receiver is held to be as culpable as the thief.

The false and hollow relations of the sexes are thus resolved into the mere question of the *dependence* of women upon men for support, and women, whether married or single, are supported *by* men because they *are* women and their opposites in sex. I can see no moral difference between a woman who marries and lives with a man because he can provide for her wants, and the woman who is *not* married, but who is provided for at the same price. There is a *legal* difference, to be sure, upon one side of which is set the seal of respectability, but there is no virtue in law. In the *fact* of law, however, is the evidence of the lack of virtue, since if the law be *required* to enforce virtue, its real presence is wanting; and women need to comprehend this truth.

The sexual relation, must be rescued from this *insidious* form of slavery. Women must rise from their position as *ministers* to the passions of men to be their equals. Their entire system of education must be changed. They must be trained to be *like* men, permanent and independent individualities, and not their mere appendages or adjuncts, with them forming but one member of society. They must be the companions of men from *choice*, *never* from necessity.

It is a label upon nature and God to say this world is not calculated to make women, equally with men, self-reliant and self-supporting individuals. In present customs, however, this is apparently impossible. There must come a change, and one of the direct steps to it will be found in the newly claimed political equality of women with men. This attained, one degree of subjugation will be removed. Next will come, following equality of right, equality of duty, which includes the duty of self-hood, or independence as an individual. Nature is male and female throughout, and each sex is equally dependent upon nature for sustenance. It is an infamous thing to say a condition of society which requires women to enter into and maintain sexual relations with men is their legitimate method of protecting life. Sexual relations should be the result of entirely different motives that for the purpose of physical support. The *spirit* of the present theory is, that they are entered upon and maintained as 36 a means of physical gratification, regardless of the consequences which may result therefrom, and are administered by the dictum of the husband, which is often in direct opposition to the will and wish of the wife. She has *no* control over her own person, having been taught to "submit herself to her husband."

I protest against this form of slavery, I *protest* against the custom which compels women to give the control of their maternal functions over to anybody. It should be *theirs* to determine *when*, and under what circumstances, the greatest of all constructive processes—the formation of an immoral soul—should be begun. It is a *fearful* responsibility with which women are intrusted by nature, and the very *last* thing that they should be compelled to do is to *perform* the office of that responsibility against their will, under improper conditions or by disgusting means.

What can be more terrible than for a delicate, sensitively organized woman to be compelled to endure the presence of a beast in the shape of a man, who knows nothing beyond the blind passion with which he is filled, and to which is often added to delirium of intoxication? You do not need to be informed that there are many persons who, during the acquaintance preceding marriage, preserve a delicacy, tenderness and regard for womanly sensitiveness and modest refinement which are characteristic of true women, thus winning and drawing out their love-nature to the extreme, but who, when the decree has been pronounced which makes them indissolubly theirs, cast all these aside and reveal themselves in their *true* character, as without regard, human or divine, for aught save their own desires. I know I speak the truth, and you too know I speak the truth, when I say that thousands of the most noble, loving-natured women by whom the world was ever blessed, prepared for, and desirous of pouring their whole life into the bond of union, prophesied by marriage, have had all these generous and warm impulses thrust back upon them by the rude monster into which the previous gentleman developed. To these natures thus frosted and stultified in their fresh youth and vigor, life becomes a burden almost too terrible to be borne, and thousands of pallid checks, sunken eyes, distorted imaginations and diseased functions testify too directly and truly to leave a shade of doubt as to their real cause. Yet women, in the first instance, and men through them as their mothers, with an ignorant persistence worthy only of the most savage despotism, seem determined that it shall not be investigated; and so upon this voluntary ignorance and willful persistence society builds. It is *high* time, however, that they should be investigated, *high* time that your sisters and daughters should no longer be led to the *altar* like sheep to the shambles, in ignorance of the uncertainties they must inevitably encounter. For it is no slight thing to hazard a life's happiness upon a single act.

I deem it a false and perverse modesty that shuts off discussion, and consequently knowledge, upon *these* subjects. They are *vital*, and I never performed a duty which I felt more called upon to perform than I *now* do in denouncing as *barbarous* the ignorance which is allowed to prevail among young women about to enter those relations which, under present customs, as often bring a life-long *misery* as happiness.

Mistakes made in this most important duty of life can never be rectified; a commentary upon the system which of itself is sufficient in the sight of common sense to forever condemn it. In marriage, however, common sense is *dispensed* with, and a *usage* substituted therefor which barbarism has bequeathed us, and which becomes *more* barbarous as the spiritual natures of women gain the ascendancy over the mere material. The former slaves, before realizing that freedom was their God-appointed right, did not feel the *horrors* of their condition. But when, here and there, some among them began to have an *interior* knowledge that they were held in obedience by an *unrighteous power*, they then began to *rebel* in their souls. So, too, is it with women. So long as they knew nothing beyond a blind and servile obedience and perfect self-abnegation to the will and wish of men, they did not rebel; but the time *has* arrived wherein, here and there, a soul is awakened by some terrible ordeal, or some divine inspiration, to the fact that women as much as men are *personalities*, *responsible* to themselves for the use which they permit to be made of themselves, and they rebel demanding freedom, to hold their own lives and bodies from the demoralizing influence of sexual relations that are not founded in and maintained by love. And this rebellion will continue, too, until love, unshackled, shall be free to go to bless the object that can call it forth, and until, when called forth, it shall be respected as holy, 38 pure and true. Every day *farther* and wider does it spread, and *bolder* does it speak. None *too soon* will the yoke fall by which the unwilling are made to render a hypocritical obedience to the despotism of public opinion, which, distorted and blinded by a sham sentimentality, is a false standard of morals and virtue, and which is utterly destructive to true morality and to real virtue, which can only be fostered and cultivated by freedom of the affections.

Free Love, then, is the law by which men and women of all grades and kinds are attracted to or repelled from each other, and does not describe the results accomplished by either; these results depend upon the condition and development of the individual subjects. It is the *natural* operation of the *affectional* motives of the sexes, unbiased by *any* enacted law or *standard* of public opinion. It is the opportunity which gives the opposites in sex the conditions in which the law of chemical affinities raised into the domain of the affections can have unrestricted sway, as it has in *all* departments of nature *except* in enforced sexual relations among men and women.

It is an impossibility to compel incompatible elements of *matter* to unite. So also is it impossible to compel incompatible elements of *human nature* to unite. The sphere of chemical science is to bring together such elements as will produce harmonious compounds. The sphere of social science is to accomplish the same thing in humanity. Anything that stands in the way of this accomplishment in either department is an *obstruction* to the natural order of the universe. There would be just as much common sense for the chemist to write a law *commanding* that two incompatible elements should unite, or that two, once united, should so remain, even if a third, having a stronger affinity for one of them than they have for each other, should be introduced, as it is for chemists of society to attempt

to do the same by individuals; for both are impossible. If in chemistry two properties are united by which the environment is not profited, it is the same law of affinity which operates as where a compound is made that is of the greatest service to society. This law holds in social chemistry; the results obtained from social compounds will be just such as their respective properties determine.

Thus I might go on almost infinitely to illustrate the difference which *must* be recognized between the operations of a law and the *law 39 itself*. Now the whole difficulty in marriage law is that it endeavors to *compel* unity between elements in which it is impossible; consequently there is an attempt made to subvert not only the general order of the universe, but also the special intentions of nature, which are those of God. The results, then, flowing from operations of the law of Free Love will be *high, pure and lasting, or low, debauched and promiscuous, just in the degree* that those loving, are high or low in the scale of sexual progress; while each and all are strictly natural, and therefore legitimate in their respective spheres.

Promiscuity in sexuality is simply the *anarchical stage of development* wherein the passions rule supreme. When spirituality comes in and rescues the real man or woman from the domain of the purely material, promiscuity is simply impossible. As promiscuity is the analogue to anarchy, so is spirituality to scientific selection and adjustment. Therefore I am fully persuaded that the very highest sexual unions are those that are monogamic, and that these are perfect in proportion as they are lasting. Now if to this be added the fact that the highest kind of love is that which is utterly freed from and devoid of *selfishness*, and whose *highest* gratification comes from rendering its object the *greatest* amount of happiness, let that happiness depend upon whatever it may, then you have my ideal of the highest order of love and the most perfect degree of order to which humanity can attain. An affection that does not desire to bless its object, instead of appropriating it by a selfish possession to its own uses, is not worthy the name of love. Love is that which exists to *do good*, not merely to *get good*, which is constantly giving instead of desiring.

A Cæsar is admired by humanity, but a Christ is revered. These persons who have lived and sacrificed themselves most for the good of humanity, without thought of recompense, are held in greatest respect. Christian believes that Christ died to save the world, giving His life as a ransom therefor. That was the greatest gift He could make to show His love for mankind.

The general test of love to-day is entirely different from that which Christ gave. That is now deemed the greatest love which has the strongest and most uncontrollable wish to be made happy, by the 40 appropriation, and if need be the sacrifice, of all the preferences of its objects. It says: "Be mine. Whatever may be your wish, yield it up to me." How different would the world be were this sort of selfishness supplanted by the Christ love, which says: Let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. Were the relations of the sexes thur regulated, misery, crime and vice

would be banished, and the pale, wan face of female humanity replaced by one glowing with radiant delight and healthful bloom, and the heart of humanity beat with a heightened vigor and renewed strength, and its intellect cleared of all shadows, sorrows and blights. Contemplate this, and then denounce me for advocating Freedom if you can, and I will bear your curse with a better resignation.

Oh! my brothers and sisters, let me entreat you to have more faith in the self-regulating efficacy of freedom. Do you not see how beautifully it works among us in other respects? In America everybody is free to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, or even not to worship anything, notwithstanding you or I may think that very wicked or wrong. The respect for freedom we make paramount over our individual opinions, and the result is peace and harmony, when the people of other countries are still throttling and destroying each other to enforce their individual opinions on others. Free Love is only the appreciation of this beautiful principle of freedom. One step further I entreat you to trust it still, and though you may see a thousand dangers, I see peace and happiness and steady improvement as the result.

To more specifically define Free Love I would say that I prefer to use the word *love* with *lust* as its antithesis, *love* representing the spiritual and *lust* the animal; the perfect and harmonious interrelations of the two being the perfected human. This use has its justification in other pairs of words; as good and evil; heat and cold; light and dark; up and down; north and south; which in *principle* are the same, but in *practice* we are obliged to judge of them as *relatively* different. The point from which judgment is made is that which we occupy, or are related to, individually, at any given time. Thus what would be up to one person might be down to another differently situated, along the line which up and down described. So 41 also is it of good and evil. What is good to one low down the ladder may not only be, but actually is, evil to one further ascended; nevertheless it is the same ladder up which both climb. It is the comprehension of this scientific fact that guarantees the *best* religion. And it is the *non-comprehension* of it that sets us as judges of our brothers and sisters, who are below us in the scale of development, to whom we should reach down the kind and loving hand of assistance, rather than force them to retreat farther away from us by unkindness, denunciation and hate.

In fine, and to resume: We have found that humanity is composed of men and women of all grades of developments, from the most hideous human monster up to the highest perfected saint: that all of them, under our theory of government, are entitled to worship God after the dictates of their several consciences; that God is worshiped just as essentially in political and social thought and action as He is in religious thought and action; that no second person or persons have any right to interfere with the action of the individual unless he interfere with others' rights, and then only to protect such rights; that the thoughts and actions of all individuals, whether high and pure, or low

and debauched, are equally entitled to the protection of the laws, and, through them, to that of all members of the community. Religious thought and action already receive the equal protection of the laws. Political thought and action are about to secure the equal protection of the laws. What social thought and action demand of the laws and their administrators is the same protection which Religion has, and Politics is about to have.

I know full well how strong is the appeal that can be made in behalf of marriage, an appeal based on the sanctions of usage and inherited respect, and on the sanctions of religion reinforced by the sanctions of law. I know how much can be said, and how forcibly it can be said, on the ground that women, and especially that the children born of the union of the sexes, must be protected, and must, therefore, have the solemn contract of the husband and father to that effect. I know how long and how powerfully the ideality and sentiment of mankind have clustered, as it were in a halo, around this time-honored institution of marriage. And yet I solemnly believe that *42 all that* belongs to a dispensation of force and contract, and of a law and unworthy sense of mutual ownership, which is passing, and which is destined rapidly to pass, completely away; not to leaves us without love, nor without the happiness and beauty of the most tender relation of human souls; nor without security for woman, and ample protection for children; but to lift us to a higher level in the enjoyment of every blessing. I believe in *love with liberty; in protection without slavery; in the care and culture of offspring by new and better methods, and without the tragedy of self-immolation on the part of parents.* I believe in the family, *spiritually constituted*, expanded, amplified, and scientifically and artistically organized, as a unitary home. I believe in the most wonderful transformation of human society as about to come, as even now at the very door, through general progress, science and the influential intervention of the spirit world. I believe in more than all that the millennium has ever signified to the most religious mind; and I believe that in order to prepare minds to contemplate and desire and enact the new and better life, it is necessary that the old and still prevalent superstitious veneration for the legal marriage tie be relaxed and weakened; not to pander to immorality, but as introductory to a nobler manhood and a more glorified womanhood; as, indeed, the veritable gateway to a paradise regained.

Do not criticize me, therefore, from a commonplace point of view. Question me, first, of the grounds of my faith. Conceive, if you can, the outlook for that humanity which comes trooping through the long, bright vista of futurity, as seen by the eyes of a devout spiritualist and a transcendental socialist. My whole nature is prophetic. I do not and cannot live merely in the present. Credit, first, the burden of my prophecy; and from the new standing-ground so projected forth into the future, look back upon our times, and so judge of my doctrine; and if, still, you cannot concede either the premises or the conclusion, you may, perhaps, think more kindly of me personally, as an amiable

enthusiast, than if you deemed me deliberately wicked in seeking to disturb the foundations of our existing social order.

I prize dearly the good opinion of my fellow-beings. I would, *so gladly*, have you think well of me, and not ill. It is because I love 43 you all, and love your well-being still more than I love you, that I tell you my vision of the future, and that I would willingly disturb your confidence, so long cherished, in the old dead or dying-out past. Believe me honest, my dear friends, and so forgive and think of me lovingly in turn, even if you are compelled still to regard me as deceived. I repeat, that I love you all; that I love every human creature, and their well being; and that I believe, with the profoundest conviction, that what I have urged in this discourse is conducive to that end.

Thus have I explained to you what Social Freedom or, as some choose to denominate it, Free Love, is, and what its advocates demand. Society says, to grant it is to precipitate itself into anarchy. I oppose to this arbitrary assumption the logic of general freedom, and aver that order and harmony will be secured where anarchy now reigns. The order of nature will soon determine whether society is or I am right. Let that be as it may, I repeat: "The love that I cannot command is not mine; let me not disturb myself about it, nor attempt to filch it from its rightful owner. A heart that I supposed mine has drifted and gone. Shall I go in pursuit? Shall I forcibly capture the truant and transfix it with the barb of my selfish affection, and pin it to the wall of my character? Rather let me leave my doors and windows open, intent only on living so nobly that the best cannot fail to be drawn to me by an irresistible attraction."

44

THE NEW ERA.

Almost simultaneously with the enunciation of the Principles of Social Freedom, in other words, the Natural Laws which underlie the Social Relations of the Sexes, comes the voice of Alfred Tennyson from beyond the seas. *Harper's Weekly*, the journal of civilization, gives us his last utterance, "The Last Tournament." In the Poet Laureate's melodious lines we find the rhythmical echo of those solemn and all-important truths which we had put forward in ruder but not less earnest prose. That the Harpers should publish truths in poetry which they denounce in prose does not surprise us. The form and manner of the utterance make such a difference; the renown of the prophet insures an audience; publishers are mortal. With them it is not the doctrine, but its pecuniary acceptableness. Does it pay? But we wait with wonder to see what the press shall say of this newest proclamation, "by authority," of self-evident truths. The "bald and bold" pronouncement of Steinway Hall is overlaid by the subtle refinements and pure elegance of the most sentimental and most philosophic poet of the age. We are denounced as wishing to reduce the sexual relation to simple promiscuity, while our

faith and our contention are that perfect freedom would annihilate all temptation to promiscuity. We denounce promiscuity and licentiousness with all our might, and shall protest against them to our latest breath. Let Sir Tristram speak for us: "The vow that binds too strictly snaps itself, We run more counter to the soul thereof Than had we never sworn"—

We shall be glad to hear what our supersanctified, self-approved judges, who condemn us to the lowest Tophet, shall say of Tennyson for his definitions of Freedom without any discrimination of phase or person. What will they say of the good Harpers for publishing such infidelity and immorality — "Good now, what have I broken, fool?" And little Dagonet, skipping, "Arthur, the King's; For when thou playest that air with Queen Isolt, Chou makest broken music with thy bride, Her daintier namesake down in Brittany— And so thou breakest Arthur's music too." "Save for that broken music in thy brains, Sir Fool," said Tristram, "I would break thy head. Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were o'er, The life had flown, we sware but by the shell— I am but a fool to reason with a fool— Come, thou art crabb'd and sour; but lean me down, Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses' ears, And hearken if my music be not true. "*Free love—free field—we love but while we may: The woods are hush'd, their music is no more: The leaf is dead, the yearning past away: New leaf, new life—the days of frost are o'er: New life, new love to suit the newer day: New loves are sweet as those that went before: Free love—free field—we love but while we may.*" "Ye might have moved slow-measure to my tune, No stood stockstill. *I made if in the woods, And found if ring as true as tested gold.*" Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and down, "Vows! did ye keep the vow ye made to Mark More than I mine! Lied, say ye? Nay, but learnt, *The vow that binds too strictly snaps itself*— My knighthood taught me this—ay, being snapt— *We run more counter to the soul thereof Than had we never sworn* . I swear no more. I swore to the great King, and am forsworn. For once—ev'n to the height—I honor'd him. 'Man, is he man at all?' "He seem'd to me no man, But Michael trampling Satan; so I sware, Being amazed: but this went by —the vows! O ay—the wholesome madness of an hour— They served their use; "But then their vows— First mainly thro' that sallying of our Queen— Began to call the knighthood, asking whence 45 Had Arthur right to bind them to himself? To bind them by inviolable vows, Which flesh and blood perforce would violate: Can Arthur make me pure As any maiden child? lock up my tongue From uttering freely what I freely hear? Bindme to one? The great world laughs at it. And worldling of the world am I, and know The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour Wooes his own end; we are not angels here Nor shall be: vows—woodman of the woods, And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale Mock them: my soul, 'we love but while we may, And therefore is my love so large for thee, Seeing it is not bounded save by love." Here ending, he moved toward her, and she said, "Good: and I turn'd away my love for thee To some one thrice as courteous as thyself— For courtesy wins woman all as well As valor may—but he that closes both Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller indeed, Roster and comelier, thou—but say I loved This knightliest of all knights, and cast thee back Thine own small saw, 'We love but while we may,' Well, then, what answer?" He that while she spake Mindful of what

he brought to adorn her with, The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch The warm white apple of her throat, replied, "Press this a little closer, sweet, until— Come, I am hunger'd and half anger'd— meat, Wine, wine—and I will love thee to the death, And out beyond into the dream to come." So then, when both were brought to full accord, She rose, and set before him all he will'd; And after these had comforted the blood With meats and wines, and satiated their hearts— Now talking of their woodland paradise, The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts, the lawns; Now mocking at the much ungainliness, And craven shifts, and long crane legs of Mark— Then Tristram laughing caught the harp, and sang: "Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bend the brier! A star in heaven, a star within the mere! Ay, ay, O ay—a star was my desire; And one was far apart, and one was near: Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that bow the grass! And one was water and one star was fire, And one will ever shine and one will pass— Ay, ay, O ay—the winds that move the mere."