

**MEN, WOMEN, AND  
GODS,  
AND  
OTHER LECTURES**

**By Helen H. Gardener**

## BEGINNING TO THINK.

The past education of woman gave her an outlook which simply embraced a husband or nothing at all, which was often only a choice between two of a kind.

There are a great many women to-day who think that orthodoxy is as great nonsense as I do, but who are afraid to say so.

They whisper it to each other. They are afraid of the slander of the Church.

I want to help make it so that they will dare to speak. I want to do what I can to make it so that a mother won't have to evade the questions of her children about the Bible.

## CREEDS.

I am sometimes asked, "What do you propose to give in place of this comforting faith? It makes people so happy. You take away all this blessing and you give no other in its place. What is your creed?"

It has never seemed to me that a creed was the staff of life. Man cannot live by creeds alone. I should not object, however, to one that should read something like this:

I believe in honesty.

I believe that a Church has no right to teach what it does not know.

I believe that a clean life and a tender heart are worth more to this world than all the faith and all the gods of Time.

I believe that this world needs all our best efforts and earnest endeavors twenty-four hours every day.

I believe that if our labors were needed in another world we should be in another world; so long as we are in this one I believe in making the best and the most of the materials we have on hand.

I believe that fear of a god cripples men's intellects more than any other influence. I believe that Humanity needs and should have all our time, efforts, love, worship, and tenderness.

I believe that one world is all we can deal with at a time.

I believe that, if there is a future life, the best possible preparation for it is to do the very best we can here and now.

I believe that love for our fellow-men is infinitely nobler, better, and more necessary than love for God.

I believe that men, women, and children need our best thoughts, our tenderest consideration, and our earnest sympathy.

I believe that God can get on just as well without any of these as with them. If he wants anything he can get it without our assistance. It is people with limitations, not gods without limitations, who need and should have our aid.

I believe that it is better to build one happy home here than to invest in a thousand churches which deal with a hereafter.

If a life that embraces this line of action does not fit a man for heaven, and if faith in vicarious atonement will, then such a heaven is not worth going to, and its god would be unworthy to make a good man's acquaintance.