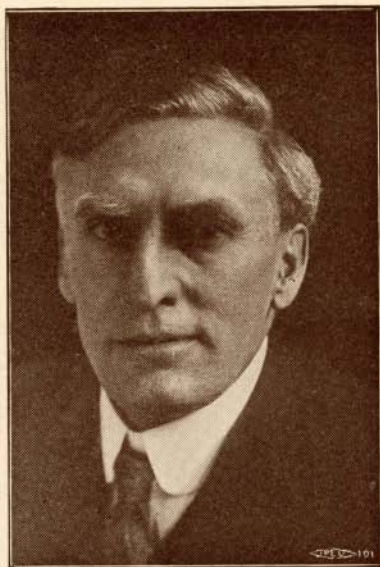
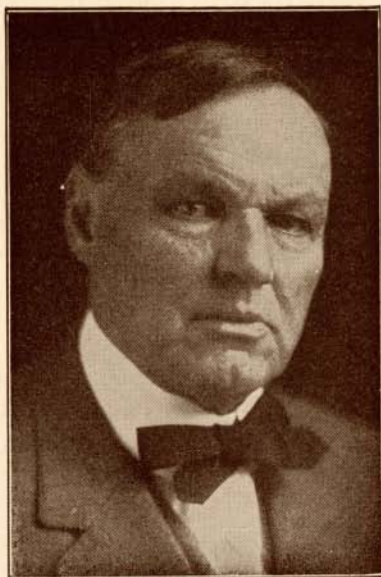


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*Clarence S. Darrow*

*Prof. Geo. B. Foster*

*The  
Darrow - Foster  
Debate*

— on —

*“Is Life Worth Living?”*

# “Is Life Worth Living?”

SECOND EDITION

DEBATE

*Affirmative: Prof. George Burman Foster*  
*Negative: Clarence S. Darrow*

Chairman

ARTHUR M. LEWIS

Held at the Garrick Theatre  
Sunday Afternoon, March 11, 1917



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## **IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?**

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Mr. Arthur M. Lewis: In the modern world, as well as in the medieval period, as most people have observed, there has been a very keen struggle between science and theology. The theologians were divided into two main camps, Protestant and Catholic. Some of the more advanced of the Protestant section approximate so very closely to modern science, that it is in most instances very difficult to differentiate between the two. Europe has produced some very great names, belonging to some very great men who have sought to abolish the struggle between science and religion. In this country we have produced at least one man equal to anything Europe has to show, in the effort to harmonize these conflicting theories, and, if science triumphs, through the gradual concessions of theology, and the bitter struggle is thereby eliminated, this country will have to thank no man more than Professor George Burman Foster.

The subject of the debate—I will leave any discussion as to details to the parties themselves—is on the question: "Is Life Worth Living?" Professor Foster will now take the floor and endeavor to show that it is.

### **DR. FOSTER'S FIRST SPEECH.**

Ladies and Gentlemen: As Mr. Lewis has indicated, we are concerned in this discussion and debate with the problem of the worth of life, the value of man, the appraisal of the world, and, if it seem not too audacious, some estimate of the significance and worth of the universe itself. However, as to this point, unless I am really pushed into it, I think I shall leave the treatment of it mostly to my good friend, Mr. Darrow, to his speculative genius and his constructive imagination.

More briefly, ours is the problem of values, or more specifically still, as a part of that problem, it is the problem of evil. Or, I judge the real question to be the problem as to why we have a problem of evil at all. Now, were this vast world, which I am relegating to Mr. Darrow's attention at the outset, wholly evil, you would obviously have no problem at all. You would take evil as a matter of course, and, in the absence of any data for comparison, it is not clear to me that you would

even know that evil was evil. In the absence of anything which, whether right or wrong, you had judged to be good, you would not say evil. Your very thinking assumes some good, then. But, in a world of goodness, on the other hand, you would have a problem of evil, for, having good, there could be the antithesis to it on account of which you would have something that would cause man unrest and all sorts of discomfort and strain.

But, there is also another possible situation in which you would have a problem of evil, and that is in a life—in a race—in a world—in which good and evil were commingled; you would have a problem of evil in that case.

You observe, then, that it is the old, eternal question of pessimism and optimism which has called us together this afternoon. Being old and inveterate, I could understand that you at once might have the thought in your mind that either the problem is insoluble or else its solutions do not stick; you become dissatisfied with them, abandon them, take some new tack, and try it over again.

Now, at the outset, it will serve my purpose to indicate that both of these thoughts are sound. As a matter of history, the solutions do change from land to land and from century to century. There was the eighteenth century. Is life worth while? was a great question then. Yes, said the superficial optimist, with his easy intellectualism. Then, the nineteenth century raised the same question in large sections of it. Is life worth living? No, was the answer of a despairing pessimist. Life is not worth while. The problem emerges in different situations and is answered according to the impact of the environment and the energy of human life which responds to that environment.

In periods of human originality, where life is elemental, welling up with over-bounding fullness, men are optimists, and they go about shouting how good life is, how fine the world. Theirs is the morning. The lark's on the wing, God's in his heaven and all's right with the world. Then, in periods of great organization, where the discrepancies, the inharmonies, the ugly contrarieties of life have yielded to concentrated harmony—in such a time as that—men again cry life is good, the world is beautiful, the universe is somehow divine. So it goes.

But these periods yield, and in place of the spontaneity and these equilibrium situations there come fatigue, senility,

world-weariness, world-flight. Man's energies are exhausted. He says life is evil and the world in which it is implicated is bad, and the universe which is responsible for it all has evil at the root of it— even that there is a very metaphysical wound itself in the soul of existence; and so men deny the soul of loveliness in the universe and tell you that life is vain.

And it is so, viewed in a more distributive way. I mean, from man to man. A man whose impulses, desires, instincts are normally sound, a man whose nerves are not exhausted, either by overwork or by over-indulgence, is a man that does not give way to resignation, to quietism, but he is a man who feels strength for achievement, he is conscious of the hope that life is worth while. And he says to you, even when the odds are against him, that life is good, life is desirable. But the other man, who has been broken and blasted by bad habits, who has been exhausted until his energies are inadequate to his situation, is apt to sink down in pessimistic despair and withdraw from active response to the world, and to say life is not worth while.

So it is then. The solution of the problem changes from era to era, from situation to situation, from man to man. And no solution definitely satisfies, because the situation in which it was made and the people for whom it was made, change, pass away, and new situations and new men come, and old solutions retire in favor of working out a new accommodation.

But, if the solution changes, is it true that the problem always remains? It seems to me that such is the case. Why? Because human life, my friends, takes the fundamental form of problem. If you will excuse the barbarism of the statement, life is made up of problemizing and de-problemizing and re-problemizing. That is the case whether our lives be pitiful or joyous. Life is everlastingly passing, and the question of evil is ever with us. But, there is another consideration. What do you find as a fact of experience in this whole question?

There are three possibilities for us. We pass through all of them. You find yourself, for example, in a situation where, for the time being, your energy is equal to the stimulus from the environment. Then there is harmony, and there is peace, and the problem does not appear. I suppose that is what an optimist would like to have. But it does not last long. Some item occurs that upsets this equilibrium and the adjustment is

gone, and the need of a new adjustment arises. And then you have either one of two situations.

You may have a situation in which your energy is in excess of your stimulus. You have got more strength than you have task. And you are unhappy in that situation, because, as a little child would say to its mother: "Mamma, mamma, I have nothing to do." You are all the while in a state of ennui or boredom because of pent-up energies that are not at all used, and somehow you could easily drop into pessimism unless you have a task for your energy. You should have to have a task equal to your energies, and you would be pessimistic instead of optimistic until you could look about and gain some object upon which your activity could be expended, and in the satisfaction of your motor forces and impulses you would be buoyant again.

Or the other alternative is true: The environmental stimulus that comes in upon you is in excess of your energies and you feel yourself, therefore, unequal to the situation, and in that case, with the overpowering of an environmental pressure which seems to hem you in, there comes a certain sense of helplessness which passes on to an abyss of darkness at times, and there is again your pessimistic mood. Now, unless you can originate agencies which you can summon to your help, unless you can resort to coefficients, you cannot then achieve a superior dominion over your environment, and in this better achievement, rejoice once more in the possession of power and in outlook upon the world.

It is in this last situation most of us find ourselves. And because we do, we have, for one thing, originated science: for what is science? It is simply an intellectual technique by which we facilitate purposive action. Or, we have recourse to art. Somehow or other art can serve to render us oblivious to the evil of our particular lot. In the contemplation of art we forget the tragedy involved in the supremacy of external powers over us. Or, finally, as is, indeed, more universally the case than even with art or science, men have recourse to religion, and they have conceived the existence of spiritual powers upon which they can lean, from which they can draw power and wisdom and guidance, and on this account, in collaboration with these higher powers, can say, "Since the Gods are for us, who can be against us?" Consequently, men triumph over a situation which otherwise would lead them to pessimism.

Now, this vast audience would have no difficulty in invoking art as anodyne in your weakness. You would have no

hesitation to call in the technique of science as a coefficient by which you can master your lot. But, the day has come when that which the race has most commonly appealed to in the long human story, i. e., some superhuman agency, some reservoir of power not our own, which we can tap, and from which we can draw living waters of strength and courage and hope is what is most in doubt on the part of needy souls. If I mistake not, many men, in their religious beliefs, are in a tight place. They think the environmental odds, in the absence of the gods, are too much for them. It only takes Darrow to assure them that this is so, and life is not only o'ercast with the pale hue of thought, but sinks into abysmal darkness, and men ask what is the good.

I said that this decay of religious faith is a cause of this pessimist movement. If I have an opportunity a little later, since it may be that Mr. Darrow has in mind to show how true that is, and since he may venture to do that, I have an idea that there may be some things which may be said that decisively reinforce religious faith, and I think I will undertake to say them, but there is no use to say them if he is going to dodge this point entirely. I don't know—I haven't the least idea—what Darrow has got up his sleeve. I don't know the way the cards are shuffled at all. I simply know that I like the game and want to play, anyhow.

But, there is another item in this religion problem still. Men have said, "I can endure my situation now with resignation, fortitude, in view of the sure and certain hope of immortality where the scales will be turned and the environment will be plastic and malleable in my hands and there will be nothing in it that does not lead to facile organization into those verities and values and virtues which I may enjoy in an eternity of unruffled bliss, and, in view of that fact, my hope of the immortal life encourages me, so that I can at least endure now if I cannot triumph." I do not know what Darrow is going to do with that, but we shall see.

Meantime, as a matter of fact, this two-fold belief has obtained in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred—no, I think I could go further and say that in the history of the human race, this two-fold belief has obtained in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of every thousand up to the present time. And, although I admit that in certain forms of it, it is under decay today, yet, up to the present, in view of the strength it has given to men, in view of the satisfaction and cheerfulness and fortitude it has brought to the human heart in all kinds of



trying and despairing situations, in view of these things up to the present time, I say the vast majority of the human race has had an adequate basis for a consistent opposition to a fundamental pessimistic judgment of the worth of life, of the value of man, and of the appraisal of the universe. Up to this time that is true. But there is some corrosive that is undermining these beliefs. Yet I do not say if they are corroded and undermined that I have no chance to make out a case against pessimism, for I have.

I think that I can surrender both of these beliefs and yet make out a case against pessimism in this world. But I am not going to surrender them until I have to. Meantime, I am to urge upon you and upon my friend Mr. Darrow that up to this date, in view of the persistence of these two beliefs with nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the human race, there has been a consistent basis for hope, for encouragement, that can rob life of its terror and the grave of its gloom. So life in all the past has had a good basis for rejecting the deadening influence of a pessimistic unfaith. But what of the future? Even now there are those who are so sure that they have experienced the direct intervention of God in their own lives that they are on that account safe from pessimistic doubt. Others find the essence of faith in the will, and are willing to will a reality whose existence cannot be proved or refuted. These believe along the line of their deepest needs. I think I must belong to this class. Others still believe only what can be scientifically verified. To them religion is a dead issue, and by them pessimism is sometimes espoused. Mr. Darrow's task is to make out a case for scientific pessimism, and I shall retire and let him do so.

Mr. Lewis: We have listened to a magnificent opening of the discussion.

In regard to the next part of this program, I just want, without interjecting myself into the discussion at all, to say that I have been interested for the eleven years I have been in Chicago in observing the next speaker. The more I see of him, the more I come to the conclusion that of all the men who occupy positions on the American radical platform, Clarence Darrow comes nearest to possessing that subtle something that defies definition, which the psychologists call genius. I am rather sorry that the profession of the law got him. For I think whilst the Bar got a great lawyer, American literature lost a Turgenieff or a Gorki.

The debate will now be continued by Clarence S. Darrow.

## MR. DARROW'S FIRST SPEECH.

Mr. Darrow: I would really like to discuss this question with an optimist—some time, if we can find one. Some one who has both religion and intelligence. Then we might get up a real debate.

I was reading a little poem the other day that put this question from the standpoint of the fishes, and I would like to read it to you. The moral will be obvious as I go along. It was written by a brilliant young man who lost his life in the war, Rupert Brooke. He entitles it "Heaven". I am going to re-christen it "The Optimist". It is about fishes and optimism.

## HEAVEN.

"Fish (fly-replete, in depth of June,  
 Dawdling away their wat'ry noon)  
 Ponder deep wisdom, dark or clear,  
 Each secret fishy hope or fear.  
 Fish say, they have their Stream and Pond;  
 But is there anything Beyond?  
 This life cannot be All, they swear,  
 For how unpleasant, if it were!  
 One may not doubt that, somehow, Good  
 Shall come of Water and of Mud;  
 And, sure, the reverent eye must see  
 A Purpose in Liquidity.  
 We darkly know, by Faith we cry,  
 The future is not Wholly Dry.  
 Mud unto mud!—death eddies near—  
 No here the appointed End, not here!  
 But somewhere, beyond Space and Time,  
 Is wetter water, slimier slime!  
 And there (they trust) there swimmeth One  
 Who swam ere rivers were begun,  
 Immense, of fishy form and mind,  
 Squamous, omnipotent, and kind;  
 And under that Almighty Fin,  
 The littlest fish may enter in.  
 Oh! never fly conceals a hook,  
 Fish say, in the Eternal Brook,  
 But more than mundane weeds are there,  
 And mud, celestially fair;  
 Fat caterpillars drift around,  
 And Paradisal grubs are found;  
 Unfading moths, immortal flies,

And the worm that never dies,  
And in that Heaven of all their wish,  
There shall be no more land, say fish."

Now, to my mind, the paradise of the fish, as given us by Rupert Brooke, is built on the same lines as the paradise of man.

I am going to admit, from Professor Foster's statement, that he has almost proven his case. Perhaps up to the present there have been more men to whom life was worth while than to whom it was not. The cheerful idiot has been plentiful in the past. But when I admit that, he also suggests that the foundations of faith are tottering and the world is waking up, and when it loses its heaven and its god, there will be pessimists, or we must get hold of some new delusion.

I think that no one can be an optimist unless he believes in a future life, and a future life which must be an improvement on this one. Every religion I am familiar with—and religion is my long suit—every one of them is practically based upon the idea that life is not worth while unless God is in heaven and all is well with the world. He is going to pay us for what he has done to us here. Now, that does not satisfy for two reasons: First, there is no proof of either God or Heaven, and, second, if you assume it, you have no reason to assume that the Lord will do better in the next world than he did in this! Without those two propositions, I can see nothing to be cheerful over—except temporarily when indulging in excessive drink or something of the sort, giving a delusion of optimism, seeing things as things are not. Optimism is really seeing things. And I do not object to anybody seeing things if they can. But, if they point me to some wonderful thing and I cannot see it, then I cannot be an optimist on that account.

It seems to me that this question is fairly simple. The animal gradually awoke to consciousness long before consciousness was born in man or the animal beneath him, he swam around, or moved around in an automatic way. The animals lived as the plant lived. They lived because they lived; and they died because they died. They did not know they were living, and still less know they were dying. The plant is perhaps an optimist, at least in the springtime. The lower order of animals who live unconsciously, eat whatever touches them, preserve their life for a while, no doubt, and live an optimistic life. But, finally consciousness came. Con-

sciousness was born in pain and struggle. If the machine had been running easily and automatically, everything would have been all right, and there would have been no consciousness. But, it was born because something was wrong. And it lives through pain and struggle, and it dies in the end; and that is all; death is the only relief from pain and struggle.

Wherever you find consciousness, you must find pain and suffering. Then, perhaps we balance up—is there more pain or more pleasure? This question is not an easy one, perhaps to prove. It can scarcely be proven by my friend Foster,

Take all the good things in this world that bring joy, and figure out all the horrible things that bring suffering. Perhaps there is a broader basis to place it on than that. It is hard to find a single place, save for the moment, where suffering is not present with consciousness and it is hard to find a chance to get out of the suffering until you lose consciousness forever and forever.

What is life? Pleasant moments? Yes. But from the time the infant is twisted with his first stomach-ache, up to the time of the death agony, pain is always present, and pretty much the only time you are happy is when you are released from pain; then you soon get bored.

Pain, says Schopenhauer, is positive. Happiness is negative. Happiness is the absence of pain. I am not quite certain that I can prove it, but I am certain that if one is suffering deep bodily pain, there are no pleasant sensations that can make up for it. If you are in great mental or bodily anguish, candy does not taste good; literature loses its appeal to please; friends are not worth while. Pain is the positive thing which is ever present. And when you are happy it means that you have no pain, except the brief transitory moments of positive happiness in the gratification of the senses.

Consciousness was born very low down in animal life. Then by some of those wonderful rules of Nature or Nature's god, it was provided that the most sensitive things should live the longest. The sensitive being who scented pain, could run away. The sensitive organism that felt pain and trouble would know of its suffering and do something to save its life. But the stolid, complacent, optimistic thing with no pain would die. Sensitiveness to pain means life. And Nature is ever preserving the sensitive, that feels not only its own pain but the pain of all mankind, until the earth becomes a nightmare and you can find only consolation in some sort of dope.

When man woke up and found the horrors of life—pain

from birth to death, fear, poverty, suffering, he turned himself to religion. There must somewhere be more compensation for it all. And so, he said, there is somewhere in the universe a god. This god is just. This god is all-wise. And up there, beyond time and space is heaven. And the world has lived on that hope and possibly been happy, for many, many years.

Man invented heaven so that life might be good; so that life might be better than non-existence. Take the whole Christian world. Tell them for a moment so they will understand it and believe it, that there is no future, that the grave ends all. How many optimists would be left? Then they would ask the question, what is their religion for? It is a crutch to lean on. And when it ceases to be a crutch, that is the end of it.

Practically all real optimism rests upon the idea that there is something good in the universe, which neither the eye nor the reason of man can take hold of. Somewhere we will get paid for what we suffer. Now, if you believe it, you can be an optimist. The world that has believed it, perhaps is optimistic. But, we are growing intelligent. We are increasing knowledge, until one can no longer pin his faith to a heaven that cannot be proven, to something that cannot stand the investigation of science,—in fact, to a lie.

It may be pleasant to believe it, but if you cannot believe it, you cannot believe it. From the lowest religion to the highest, the everlasting effort has been to bribe man into goodness. The goodness as seen by the preachers. Promise of heaven somewhere, at some time, and all these religions have fashioned heaven upon their own conception of what is pleasant and fine.

Here is a Christian heaven, where you can sit on a cloud and sing psalms forever and be happy. The Mohammedan heaven, where you can be surrounded with houris and be happy. Every heaven made to appeal to the people that the priests are talking to, to make life worth living, to make them optimistic. And in these latter days, when so many people are losing faith in the crude and crass religious ideas of the time, when they cannot believe in the great Jehovah and the immaculate conception, and other fundamental ideas that are necessary to be a good optimist, then they have to find other religions. Some of them turn to spiritualism. I have to confess I have tried that myself. But I couldn't do it. Sorry I could not, but I couldn't. And, some of them turn to Christian Science. I tried that, too. I have read more than half a page of Mary Baker Eddy. I read that God is love and love is God.

Then I couldn't help asking myself what was the use of the two words. And it wouldn't work. If the Christian Scientist who has lost faith in the crass heaven of the ordinary Christian, can get a hallucination by reading that God is love and love is God, I wouldn't take it away from him.

Men have turned to every delusion in the world to satisfy their desire to find something better, to keep on living, to find life worth while. Why, they even turn to socialism! And Single Tax!

Dr. Foster: And prohibition.

Mr. Darrow: Yes, and prohibition, the Professor says But I can get more optimism without prohibition than I can with it. The Socialist says sometime we will have an ideal state, where everybody will be rich and happy, and won't have to work—I have tried that—and I got over that, too. In the first place, the ideal state was too far away to create any emotion in me, and, in the second place, I know you cannot get happy by getting rich. I have tried that, too.

If you make everybody equally rich or equally poor, it does not bring happiness, for that is mostly within you, and the reason it is within you is because you must find some sort of dope within you to square yourself with life. It is a mental attitude, believing something. If I am not an optimist, it does not mean that I haven't tried. I am willing to try any new scheme or old. Of course there are many kinds of dope that will work on some people that will not work on others. All I contend for is to let each person take his individual dope and see if it will work. Once in a while a glass of whisky will make me an optimist. Sometimes making a speech will make me fairly optimistic. Morphine will do it. Smoking any kind of a pipe will do it, more or less, mental or physical. But I never could find anything that would do it except smoking a pipe, nothing else, for any length of time.

Now, if I were called upon to look over all the inventions and appliances of the past hundred years, and there have been many, of all the discoveries of science that have been handed to the world, and I were asked to pick out the one that had been the greatest boon to mankind, I would say, unqualifiedly, opium. Without a moment's hesitation, I would say opium, in its various forms. And, if I were asked to give them up, one thing after another, that learning, genius and industry had given to the world, the last thing I would give up would be opium, the very last. It has done more to alleviate human suffering than anything else. The soldier in the field, and the

patient in the hospital, are deadened by opium. It prevents the excruciating sufferings of the damned, and it furnishes a dope where nothing else will do.

What does it do? Why, it takes us out of the horrible existence—gives a little space in which we are dead—for a little time you are dead, and cannot suffer. And there is no other boon that has been discovered that seems to me has done as much to alleviate pain as this. No hospital could get along without it. Many are born by its use, and die through its use, and live through its use. And at the best it means death, and nothing else.

What is life, anyway? For that is a practical question. What is it that we should prize it so highly? Do any of you dare tell the truth to yourselves? There is not a person in this audience that dares tell himself the truth about life. Do you remember the story—I believe it came from Homer—about some shipwrecked mariners who were cast upon an island. And, in that island was a great giant with one eye, and that eye had been put out. But, somehow or other, he managed to get all these people into an iron cage, and, every morning he would come out for breakfast, run his arms into the iron cage and feel this one and that one to see which was the fattest, take him off and cook him for breakfast. No one knew whose turn would come next. Each one knew that his time was near, that he might be next.

That is life, isn't it? A great insane, purposeless, uncontrolled, uncontrollable, hand, reaching down, without thought or design or pity, taking this and that, as the case may be, inevitable, unfailingly, and yet we are optimists! Do you want to live your lives over, any of you? Would I want to? Would anybody want to? There might be vagrant parts of my life, strong sensations, pleasant memories. But barring those, the time I would want to live over, would be the time I was asleep—that is the time I was dead—that is all. And every weary person comes home at night happy in the thought that he can sleep. And if he cannot sleep without it, he takes dope to make him sleep, because forgetfulness is the best of all.

Let me give you one more thought. I am a pessimist, but I am a cheerful pessimist. I sometimes think that pessimism is my dope. I would hate to live without it. I don't know what I would do.

Is it all black? Why, it is the only good philosophy of life; it prepares you for the worst. I am never disappointed

unless I am happy. Nothing can come out any worse than I expect.

Suppose you were suddenly told, in full health, that you were going to die tonight. You can imagine consternation amongst you. I do not know why you would feel badly. Then you turn to a consoling thought. Well, the Professor might think of God. I don't know, or immortality, which to me would not help it because I would consider the present when I was thinking of the future—or religion. And that wouldn't affect me. There would be one thought only, that would give me any consolation if I were told that I would die tonight, and that thought would be that I was not losing anything. You take that from man and life would be an everlasting nightmare.

Suppose you lived with nothing but pleasant sensations. Suppose all was joy and peace and happiness; that you never had the toothache, or corns, or debts, and you knew you must die, that you had to give up all the beauty and glory and love of life and go down to the silent grave forever, would not this alone rob life of joy and make a hell of earth? Life is an unpleasant interruption of a peaceful nothingness—and when the interruption is over, you are at peace. It is a pleasant thought!



## DR. FOSTER'S LAST SPEECH.

The Chairman: I will now ask Doctor Foster to take the floor again.

Dr. Foster: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is as I expected! I now know what a pessimist is. A pessimist is a man who, when he has to choose between two evils, takes both! I really expected that you would be led into an inclement, dismal region of pessimism where there are fifty-seven varieties of weather, at least,—all bad! Bad, did I say? All the worst possible! Then, too, there is an iron hand of ruthless irrevocability that has determined the weather. It is as it is on account of the currents of air, and the conformation of the earth, and the existence of Medicine Hat, the revolutions of the earth and the rotations of the season—back deterministically to the primordial commotion of atoms. The weather is what it is by forces over which we have no control. And he says, this pessimist, and Mr. Darrow in his talk intimates, therefore, since the weather is what it is by forces over which we have no control, we have no control over the weather! And yet, it is always fair weather when good fellows get together! That is Darrow's dope, that he talks about. But you can control the weather by that dope if you can tell stories, swap anecdotes, crack your jokes, and tak' a cup o' kindness yet for auld lang syne, and the terrible storm is forgotten without, in the presence of the fair weather of good fellowship within!

Besides, man has controlled the weather. You are comfortable. You build houses; you weave garments. The fixedness of the forces that make the weather are not so fixed but that you can achieve adequate control over them to make life worth while so far as the weather is concerned. Besides that, on pushing the matter back to the prehistoric—Darrow likes to go back there, I see—do you know that as long as man lived where it was all tropical, and everything supplied, there was no progress? But, when, by the aggregation of population, he was pushed out amid the snows of mountains, where there was winter, then, but not till then, he arrived at the notion of time? For, he had to prepare for a future and he had to have the idea of time, of a future time, that he might do so. The very valuable notion of time is due to the weather. The activities by which man has expressed himself, the products which he has made—all this has been due in a large degree to the fact of

inclemency and chill and has evoked dynamic within him for their control.

So, bad weather of the pessimist can give a reasonable basis, not for optimism, that is an impossible faith, second only to pessimism itself—it might give a reasonable basis for what I might choose to call meliorism, i. e., the faith in the improvability of the world and of life. And a man has to give up faith in this improvability, or else surrender his pessimism, one to the other.

I think Darrow was wrong in making out his case. Using my analogy, he as good as said, that weather is all bad weather. But there are other seasons besides those you call bad. Life is not all winter, much as it is true that a wintry life is a good life. Mr. Darrow started out with both pleasure and pain, passed to preponderance of pain over pleasure, and ended by eliminating the pleasure and leaving us pain only!

I want to call your attention in this connection to a fact characteristic of his entire speech, and characteristic of all pessimism wherever you find it. Pessimism cannot make out its case save upon the basis of a reduction, an impoverishment, a mutilation of human nature as we know it in actual experience. It has to leave out and be blind to whole regions of us. Darrow did it. He reduced us to the pleasure or pain ingredient. And then he was blind to the pleasure. And, by that process of decimation, he got us down to a content of pain, and said, what's the good? But human nature, as we know it, has pleasure and pain, not as its essential content at all. We are greater than that. There are other sides to us than that. There is the content of moral worth. So surely is this true that we sacrifice our pleasure and suffer pain to achieve ends that we set ourselves, whether God sets them or not—ends that we think are worth while. Pleasure is no more than Nature's bribe to keep the race going. Joy is far higher, pointing out the direction in which the driving force of life is urging. Every creative act brings joy.

Ladies and gentlemen, no greater slander can be perpetrated upon any one of you than to say that you would not assume a situation that was painful to you in order to encompass the achievement of values which were otherwise worth while from your point of view. The artist starves that he may achieve some statue or painting that will express bigger things in him than his pleasure-pain feeling. The soldier in the trenches will face death out of such impulses as loyalty to a

Kaiser or a King even, to say nothing of loyalty to liberty and justice, and that conviction of loyalty is the true dignity of man.

And, moreover, the case for pessimism cannot be made out with reference to this universe save by a like reduction and impoverishment of its possible content. If you reduce the universe to only that which can be expressed by your poor categories of cause and effect, number and measure—if you do that, you know from individual experience of the universe, from your appreciations of it, that there is more to it than such explanations can give. There can be no pessimism save upon the basis of doing violence to life, to man and to the universe, by cutting out elements in them which are integral parts, according to the facts of our experience.

Now, this matter of making pleasure and pain the issue, reminds me of an incident which used to go the round of the biological laboratories. It is a terrible question, but I am willing to hold a brief for it. It is like this: What conceivably could induce a dog to acquiesce in its own vivisection? Why a dog would say that is torture and it must be something terrible—it must be something terrible. What is it that could induce a dog to submit? Is there any conceivable thing that could do it? Now, I am raising this question to point you to what is the real thing in human nature. It is not this pleasure-pain business. The dog is doing this in utter blindness to big things, but, suppose it could be said to him and he could understand the point: "Why, Fido, through this pain you are suffering, millions of dogs in the future will have a better chance in their lives; the whole world of dogs will live on a higher plane, having a better content to their lives, if you will do this. You endure this pain, and the whole dog race—think of the future—and the whole human race besides will have something in it on account of which their existence will be far more worth while than it is." You say that to a dog, and I venture that even a dog would say, "Strap me to the block and go to it!"

And we are the kind of people, all through our lives that say: "I see that task, I see that duty, I dream of that elevation of the race, I feel this elevation of my own soul; it will cost me more than a twist of the stomach-ache over which Darrow laments. It will cost me lifelong suffering, but I am the kind of man that will accept the suffering in the interest

of the achievement! In a word, my friends, life is worth living so long as there is anything worth dying for.

That is human nature. Not reduced to shrinking from pain or resignation to it. And I again repeat that pessimism has no case at all, save by the reduction of human nature; its decimation; its impoverishment; its reduction to its pettiest content.

But then you cannot make out a case for pessimism even granting that pleasure-pain is the standard of value. And I urge upon you that what I am concerned with in this debate is not to prove optimism. I am not an optimist. What I am concerned with is to show that the facts of life do not require pessimism as a theory of life. I simply deny that there is a theoretical basis for pessimism however much there may be in the case of some men a temperamental, and emotional basis for pessimism.

I deny that there is a theoretical basis for pessimism. Let me look into this a little more closely.

Now, add up your column of pain and your column of pleasure. Take a single day. The pleasure side would run this way: Today: Had a good night's sleep. Enjoyed ham and eggs at breakfast. Read a chapter out of the Bible. Had a nice special delivery letter from a friend. Debated with Darrow. And so forth.

Then, on the pain side: Coffee was scorched. Read horrible murder story in the newspaper. Had to listen to the neighbor across the way play the piano. Debated with Darrow. And so forth.

Now, my friends, add up the columns. Draw the balance. Draw up a calculus of pleasures and pains, and show that in the balance the pains exceed the pleasures. The thing can't be done. It can't be done for a single day, much less for a whole life. How is it possible to fix a standard or unit of pleasure-value? There is no common measure. Besides, pleasures are different in quality. How can I say which is ten, which twenty, or five, or six per cent? Here is Darrow's stomach-ache; here is the death of my friend. You see that when this matter is reduced, as Mr. Darrow did it, to a calculus of pleasure-pain, he can get nowhere. You cannot affirm, demonstrably, pessimism—for it is utterly impossible for you

to get a standard or unit of measure of pleasure or pain by which you can solve the problem.

That is what I have got to say to his pleasure-pain proposition.

Now, underlying his entire discussion there is a view of life and of the world which is bad, as it seems to me, but I can understand how even such a genius as Mr. Darrow might be led to such conclusions, starting as he did. The statement, is life worth living, is a false statement of the case. Take an illustration: You could ask if the apple is worth eating because the apple is already there! Or, whether the girl was worth kissing if the girl was already there—I am assuming that. But, you cannot ask is the journey worth making, for the journey is not there until you make it. You cannot ask is life worth living, for life is not there until you live it! And the real question is, is living worth living. And the old newspaper saw had it entirely right: That depends upon the liver! This is not a finished world; it is not a completed universe. Life is not a finished thing. The universe is characterized by discontinuity as well as by continuity; by indeterminism as well as by determinism; and life is not predetermined and foredoomed, to automatic activities. On the contrary, there is for most of us an open and a free chance in an open world in any situation to have a task and do it, and it is having a task and doing it, that makes life worth while, not pleasure and not pain. It is not the victory, it is the fight that counts! You talk about the Bible. Listen to Job even—"I know that he will slay me; I have no hope. Nevertheless, I will maintain my integrity."

And there is no fact in the universe, there is no situation in life, there is no impact of stimulus upon me, and no pain within me, which of necessity can keep me from maintaining my integrity—and, if I maintain my integrity and my self-respect in the face of no matter what odds, whether there be a God or whether there be an immortality, though I believe in both, I can stand upon my feet and say that life is good! With here and there an exception, owing to abnormality, there is no situation in which we are placed in which we may not remain captain of our fate and in which we may not thank whatever gods there be for our unconquerable souls. And the man whose soul is unconquerable by any pessimistic adversity that may be put upon him, that man can look into the abysmal darkness that Darrow dotes upon, and in the face of it, stand

upon his feet and defy the force that would make him hate life.

Yes, there was Schopenhauer, with his intellectless, his wisdomless, his purposeless, blind, will at the root of things. Ladies and gentlemen, is there any scientific evidence of that? That is one of those pessimistic constructions of this speculative imagination of my friend Darrow. And on the ground of that metaphysics, Schopenhauer passes into psychology, and says that this is the worst possible world, while his disciple Von Hartmann said it was the best possible world, but worse than none! And Schopenhauer said it though he had magnificent health, a good fortune, and, perhaps I ought not to say it, more sweethearts than most men could manage.

And there was Friedrich Nietzsche. He said that this world was just as bad a proposition as Schopenhauer said that it was, and he didn't have money, and he didn't have health; he had a lifelong inner agony, that was second in pain only to the crucifixion on Calvary itself! And Friedrich Nietzsche said that a sufferer cannot afford to be a pessimist. Nietzsche said that this outer evil and this inner agony but give me the chance for the greater heroism. And heroism and inner victory are the things that are worth while. And Friedrich Nietzsche is the everlasting monument for all suffering souls, embodying the principle, the fundamental conviction, that however contrary the universe may be, however painful nerves may be, yet, so long as courage is unattacked; so long as their defiance of the forces against them is at work, they can even love life. Nietzsche, for the sake of life endured the struggle and the conflict, and the anguish, like a good pilgrim on a high adventure.

If I might bear my personal testimony as against the position of Mr. Darrow, who would not live his life over again, I stand before this audience as a man that has had not a few of what many a man would call the blind blows of what seem to be a cruel fate—not infrequently have I received these blows—and I declare to you that my soul still believes in the final balance of the best, is not crushed, and in the face of all that has been endured, if I had a chance to live my life over again, I would do it again and again!

## MR. DARROW'S LAST ADDRESS.

The Chairman: I have had a dream in the back of my head that some day we would have a debate on this platform in which Professor Foster would deliver himself as magnificently as he has just done. For the last twenty-five or thirty minutes, I have lived, and I think this audience has, at the highest power that we reach in the course of a lifetime. I would rather have listened to that speech than to have had a new automobile presented to me.

Now, contrary to the usual custom in debates, in which the fashion is for the affirmative to close the discussion,—we have not been hide-bound by the rules here, as you will probably observe if you have been watching your watches—the negative is represented by our friend, Clarence Darrow, who will now deliver the closing speech of the discussion.

Mr. Darrow: My good friend, Professor Foster, if he keeps on debating, will become an orator! The only trouble about oratory is that it is not true. I used to work at it some. Now, I liked his speech. I always like his talks: Almost thou persuadeth me to say that I am an optimist. I would like to be one. Let's see what it amounts to.

Is life worth living? Does that have anything to do with pleasure and pain? I am not at all sure that pleasure and pain are the correct measures of existence. However, I think they come the nearest to it. What else can you test it by as well as pleasure and pain?

Is life worth living to me? To you? Would it have been better for you had you never been born, or is it better for you as it is? That is the question. And I think there is no other test excepting pleasure and pain. Has it been worth while? It is not a question of whether you are master of your soul—which you are not, excepting in rhetoric. In the first place you have no soul, and in the second place, you are not master. The blind forces are master. It is not a question of whether you will be heroic while tied to the stake with a fire built around you for maintaining your convictions. That sounds good, but I cannot imagine there is much fun in it.

Doctor Foster: I should say not.

Mr. Darrow: I imagine you would rather take a good strong dope of opium if you have got to go through it so that you wouldn't know it was done to you. It is not a question of how heroically you may live. We all do the best we can at

that job, and it is not an easy one. Few men meet life heroically, and no men meet it honestly!

It is not a question of how heroically you meet it. Professor Foster is a good bluffer. And I admire him for it. Nietzsche was a good bluffer and I admire him for it. But when a man is tied to a stake with the fagots piled around him, and he cries through the smoke, "Heat the fire hotter," I know he is a bluffer—he is suffering from intoxication of some sort. We may stand it heroically, but do we want it? Why, everything reaches out to avoid pain. It is only by avoiding pain and seeking pleasure that life is preserved.

It is a biological question as well as a question of fact. Life cannot preserve itself except by fleeing from pain, instinctively reaching for pleasure. It is preserved by animals; it is preserved by man, and finally, after all, it is lost.

I know that people will do things which bring pain in the frenzy of religion or of patriotism or of humanity. Are we then even moved by pleasure or by pain? Take Servetus, tied to the stake by John Calvin, offering up his life for the truth as he saw it. He was moved by a feeling, and impelled by an emotion, which would have made it more horrible for him to have lived a lie. Otherwise he would have done as most of the people all around him did—would have lived the lie. But, he could not live it. It was not in the law of his being. So, he died.

Take the artist who lives on a crust to pursue his art. Do you think he would be happier on the Board of Trade? Not at all. He could not live their life on the Board of Trade. He is following the law of his own being and can do nothing else.

You can measure no two people alike. Each must work out the law of his own life. And he is entitled to neither credit nor to blame for working it out. But, does it bring happiness? or does it bring sorrow?

Professor Foster says he would live his life again.

Professor Foster: Yes.

Mr. Darrow (continuing): There is in all of us, in all sentient things, the will to live——

Professor Foster: No, no.

Mr. Darrow (continuing)—permeating all the Universe. And until one comes face to face with death he draws back. No doubt about it. Even though we may feel that life is not worth the living, still we instinctively will draw back as death



comes toward us. Would he live it again? He might. I might not. You might. Some one else might not. Perhaps that is not exactly the test.

How do we live? Does anybody live it honestly? Or do we live it by everlastingly deceiving ourselves? Do we live upon facts or do we live upon feelings, emotions, dreams and imaginings? I have not many illusions left. I think I might get a new one, I don't know. Like him, I love clever men and intellectual, interesting women—especially interesting. I love all the good things of life. Have I ever lived the truth? Let me be honest for a moment. I have not lived on today; neither have you; neither has the Professor. I have lived on tomorrow; on next summer; on next year. The man does not live who can open his eyes upon the facts of life and live. He lives upon what is created by his dreams, and he can live in no other way. I try more than most men to look life in the face; to strip it of its illusions and disillusion and live it as it is. But, can I do it?

I talk today about the Christian living his life on the hope of heaven, on a myth and a dream, and making life worth while. He does it. Do I do differently? Do I try to find life as life really is or do I close my eyes to the facts? The more I close my eyes to the facts, the better I like to live.

I will be sixty years old next month. I could turn to the insurance tables and find out just what my expectancy of life is. I have never done it. I don't want to know. I think perhaps I may live forever! I could go to a skillful physician and have him look me over carefully with a microscope, and he could probably tell me just when my physical powers would begin to fail. I haven't done it. I don't want to know. He might tell me that they had already begun! I could find out, if I tried carefully, when my mental powers would begin declining. I don't want to know. Maybe I will never know! Maybe I will pass into the optimistic state of senile dementia and still think I am strong.

Do I want the truth? Do I live on it? Not for a moment. Nobody lives on it. If I suspect that somebody has some nasty criticism to make do I try to hear it? Or do I run away? If the newspapers say something unpleasant, as they generally do, and I see it first, I don't look at it. If, perchance, some friend of mine sneaks something into the papers that is favorable, I read it three or four times. Even if I know it isn't true! Do I live on facts or illusions? Nobody lives on facts; and they cannot live on facts. The trouble with intel-

ligence is that it is hard to keep illusions with intelligence. It is hard for a man as intelligent as I am to be an optimist! I could do like Professor Foster, and like Nietzsche, make a bluff, but I don't like to do that.

What am I living on now? What are you living on? Well, you might have lived the last week on this debate—I don't know. If you did, it is not so good as you expected. Just now, I am rather living on next summer's vacation, when I expect to go up in the mountains, and write a book—pass down some of my wisdom to enlighten the world that is yet to come! Now, that is my emotion. When I turn my intellect on it, I know that if I go into the mountains, there will be mosquitoes—and there will be people, like mosquitoes. And they will come close to me, and I cannot get away from them, and I will be annoyed,—I won't even have the comforts of home—and I probably will not write my book, and if I do, nobody will read it, and it will not be true, anyhow. But, I am living on it.

And beyond that I have another vision of going around the world in a year or so. I am living on that. But, I know that when I get to Bagdad, I will wish I were back in Chicago working. And, wherever I go, I will not be able to get rid of myself! I will not be able to get rid of my everlasting, doubting, inquiring mind, that reaches out into the future, and all about me, and asks these perplexing questions and will not rest. And no man can do it. Ignorance means happiness. The typical optimist is the barnyard hog. He grunts in contentment through his short life; plunges into the scalding water, and it is all over within a moment. But, until he plunges he is always happy.

As we reach out and ask ourselves questions, understand the futility of all of it, feel our own pain and the suffering of our fellowmen, see life as life really is, then we are unhappy and must be unhappy forever.

Is pessimism unpleasant? Professor Foster says that it is discouraging. Maybe. That you will sit down and let things go. But that is not the way I read it, or understand it. Browning says: "God is in Heaven and all is well with the world." He is an optimist. Some of the evolutionists say there is a soul in the universe that makes for good. If there is, what is the use of working? Let George do it! Let him; he can do it—or, let the soul in the universe do it.

I have no such dreams, and no such illusions. I only know that within me is a certain force and a certain restless

spirit that drives me on. I am going nowhere; no compass, and no rudder. But, the everlasting restless force in men, driving them on, optimist or pessimist, the same. I think more of the good work of this world has been done by those who did it in darkness and in blindness, without hope, than by those who thought God was in the universe and all was well with the world.

Would you live your life over?

I would not live mine. And, as lives go, I have no complaint to make of mine. Life is about the same with one and all. Schopenhauer compared it to sitting in the box at the play; the people are the same, you see it, and it is done. I have seen the play, into the fourth act, and I think I will stay to the fifth, though I know it will end with a tragedy. We do not live because we expect to be happy or unhappy. We live because Nature has planted in us the will to live and we cannot die, and however heroically we may live, it does not change the question as to whether life is good or life is bad.

Mr. Lewis: Dr. Foster now closes the debate.

Dr. Foster: I will not detain the audience save to read Jordan's beautiful lines in support of a grand and brilliant affirmism, as against a hopeless resignation and quietism:

"To the thankful in spirit the sweetness of life  
Brings rest and refreshment; its burdens and pains  
With pride they endure; in the midst of affliction  
Unruffled in mind, while remembering ever  
That forth from these woes flow the well-springs of strength:  
And calm on the verge of destruction confessing  
That e'en with its sorrows, Life still is beloved!"