

of the great majority. Now, it appears to me that that is a very narrow interpretation of the meaning of that Amendment to the Constitution. It appears to us, as it must to the great bulk of the people of the country—the sovereign people—that without any constitutional amendment, or the passage of any law, people everywhere are of themselves free to believe. We do not think a law can interfere with belief, even if one were passed for the purpose of interfering with it. A man's belief cannot be controlled by any Act of Congress or of Parliament. No edict of a government or any other lawmaking body can interfere with my freedom of belief. When a proposition is placed before my mind, and I reflect upon it, and it appears to be correct, my mind receives it and I believe it. Sometimes persons believe in spite of themselves. Sometimes a man will believe a thing in spite of his own desires not to believe. Then this faith cannot be controlled by any person outside of the man himself, and sometimes he cannot control it himself. No edict or law, or any power of man on the earth can alter a man's belief, or prevent him from believing. A law can be enacted to prevent the carrying of that belief into practice; but it cannot interfere with belief, and it needs no amendment to the Constitution, no enactment of Congress or of any lawmaking body on earth, to protect a man in mere belief. Then it is clear to us that the intention was, that a man should have not only the right to believe, but that he should be protected in the free exercise of that belief. As the language states, Congress is not to pass any law respecting an establishment of religion, nor prohibit the free exercise thereof. What is the exercise of

belief in religion? Why, it is certain acts men perform prompted by their belief, prompted by their religion. Suppose a man believes it is right to be baptized in water—buried in water for the remission of sins—how can he evidence his belief in that principle? He can only do it in the way specified by the Apostle James. He says: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" That is the only way in which faith can be truly shown—by works. If I believe that baptism is right I evidence my belief by being baptized, and if I am not baptized it either shows that my faith is very weak or that it does not exist: that I have not the courage of my faith, or else that I do not believe at all.

Now, we consider that we have a perfect right under the Constitution of our country to believe what seems right to us, and then to carry it out. "Well," someone may say, "do you think there should be no restriction to this? Are people to be protected in any kind of religion they may have? Suppose a man were to come here from India who believed it a religious duty, under some circumstances, to strangle a man, would he have the right under the Constitution of the United States, to strangle? Again, there are people who believe it is right, in India, to burn a widow on the funeral pile, that her spirit may be sent to keep company with her husband in the other world. Would that person, or those persons have the right, under the Constitution of the United States, to carry out their belief in this country?" We say no. We say that the Thug has no right here to practice his faith. We say the Suttee could not be established in