and revolving around the great planets of religious organization in that country. And then as this so-called religious liberty increased in spirit, skepticism began to grow in the minds of many in regard to religious doctrines. There were thousands of people that had no more faith in Methodism than in the Established Church, or in Catholicism. They had more faith in Tom Paine, and Voltaire, and Rosseau, and such men as Ingersoll, and their liberty made it appear plausible to them that there was no necessity to go to any church, or seek the aid of any minister, or have any religious ceremony in connection with their own marriage or the marriage of their families. So provision was made for this ever increasing host of skeptics, and finally it was decreed that marriage was nothing but a civil contract, not needing the service of a minister, or the sanction of religion, but requiring simply that it could be entered into after due notion was given, in a public place and not before a worshiping assembly. In such cases marriage was entered into as "a civil contract," and when this stage was reached, inasmuch as it was but a civil contract, "only this and nothing more," the next step of necessity was, that it could be dissolved. Where is there a contract of this nature that cannot be dissolved? If I am engaged by an employer we can dissolve the engagement whenever either of us is dissatisfied. And so this feature was applied to marriage; the laws of divorce were introduced, and that which was once considered disgraceful, difficult and expensive, and would have been sounded from one end of the land to the other as such, became common and unworthy of remark.

Thus the bonds of society are