Rev. Francis H. Rowley:

My Dear Sir: I have your letter of the 9th inst. I do not know that I have any "printed matter" that would be of any value to you.

I often feel averse to regarding that I have such more than the general instinct to procure and circulate the things pertaining to my self; but I have always been to busy to give much attention to such matters and have besides an inherent abhorrence to the autobiographical literature of all sort.

My life has been a very simple one. Born a farmer's son in Northern Ohio; a graduate of Rochester University; a soldier enlisting on the first call; suffering some wounds six months a confederate prisoner; removing to North Carolina in the fall of 1865; living in that State until 1880; going to the Southern Loyalist Convention in

Philadelphia in 1866, and there preparing the first report ever made in favor of "Universal Suffrage"; chosen a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1868 and through one of its youngest members so closely connected with its work, that the enemies of equal rights for a long time and perhaps yet style it "Jones's Constitution". — I send you a copy of the address I put out to the voters of my county when a candidate. I believe I managed to plant all them in the Constitution where they will sometime bear fruit. The document is in curiosity now and I know

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of best now copy in existence.

~~In 1868 I assumed the Work~~

I was elected Judge of the Supreme Court in 1868 and Code Commissioner & ~~administered justice~~ the ~~jurisdiction~~ ally district embraced eight counties and I had a ~~half~~ half dozen busy years in shaping the law to new conditions as Code Commissioner and administering it as judge. In 1875 was again chosen a member of the Constitutional Convention ~~of that~~ called that year in the hope of overthrowing the Constitution

of 1868, — a hope I may say I was active in defeating.

While on the bench my district was one of the worst ~~of~~ Ku Klux centers of the South. I believe it is admitted that I did more than any other person in destroying the formal organization. "A Fool's Errand" is fiction based upon the most literal facts. All that is there related, in their essentials I either saw or knew, by that most certain of all knowledge the revelations of judicial inquiry.

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In the meantime I wrote — wrote — wrote. I do not know why: certainly, not for fame, nor for self-advantage. Of any formally published works you know, I suppose, the scope and character. I suppose the artistic sense impelled me to take the medium of fiction: though as a fact that is the most effective form of presenting truth, just as much even as in Christ's time. I was anxious men should feel and know and do — well what seemed to me just and right and in accordance with the

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teachings of Christ and the purpose
of "the kingdom of God on earth."

I have always been an "outside
Christian;" that is, the Church and its
restriction to so ~~good~~ great an ex-
tent, of Christianity to salvation
and ~~to~~ prayer and holiness, has
chilled, and wearied me. Not
that I object to the Church: indeed having
been a Member of the Methodist
Church since I was fifteen years old
I could not have such feeling:
but it seems to me that in its
expenses to human souls it

has overlooked the or grossly neg-
lected what seems to me the
primal duty of every man
— to give of his thought and
strength as he may for the
betterment of earthly conditions.
This has cut me off from some
sympathy which other men less
sincere and earnest have found.
I have no quarrel with the church, but I have
no relish for, that form or worship &
~~which is the chief object of~~ which
occupies so large a part of its attention.
It seems to me that the chief function
of Christianity is to make the earthly

conditions better, rather than to speculate upon or anticipate the heavenly.

Believing that collective relations ~~and~~ than individual in self-government especially ~~government~~ — are the most potent factors in the betterment of human life on earth and that these are dependent wholly on individual motive, purpose and endeavor, I am inexpressibly shocked and grieved at the provocation given to praise and speculation in regard to the eternal estate.

For I suppose this quality has kept me from being comprehended or appreciated by many simply because it is not as usually understood

as its converse. But in truth, I have been long under a great burden because "christian" civilization, as we call it seems to take so kindly to the devil's notions and because the church seems so unconscious of the gulf that is opening between it and this out-side "christianity," which if it gives little need to salvation, loves the Master but cares little for his brethren" and desires to see the primal law of his Kingdom made the rule of human government and the test of collective relation.

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But I did not mean to write in this way. I would not indeed have done so, did it not seem to me that this thought is about all there is of my life that is either distinction or consequence enough for another to consider. I have merely labored to secure justice to all, equal opportunity, better conditions, and a keener sense of individual responsibility for col-

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lecture evils and a former condition that the misuse or non-user of political power is the very work of sins.

Now, let me bury the dust which ~~can not go to the future~~ cannot be amended, and say one word of the future where hope lies. What shall be done? I have found in the past that my own misfortunes often opened the way to a richer field of endeavor. Of course, the cutting off of the Postmaster was a serious blow to one who finds his bread day

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by day, at the low point. But may it not be an advantage to come of self-government, justice and equality of right?

I have no money and times are hard times; but so good a cause ought not to be without some stated and reliable medium of expression. If there are $5.00 people who believe in liberty and justice to the extent of $1.50 I will arrange to publish "The National Citizen", a 12 page weekly devoted to this subject.

What think you of it?

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If it cannot be done, of course, I must seek other engagements and may very probably be compelled by the mere necessity of bread-winning, to forego further work in this field. Of course, I do not mean to intimate that I am running it — no man is running to any good cause, — but there does not seem to be any other ready to go on with this just now.

Yours truly