

THE DRIFT.

The pastor of ALL SAINTS MEMORIAL CHURCH, New York City, is reported by the public press to have preached as follows on Sunday, Jan. 18th, 1885:--

"It is a remarkable phenomenon, which our country has witnessed during the last few days, the brilliant and eloquent lecturer going through the length and breadth of the land lecturing in your churches and halls on Sunday evenings to crowded audiences, with a sweeping attack upon all that is understood to constitute the Christian religion. No one questions his rare ability. All confess that whatever destructive work he does he is constructive in this at least--that he would build up happy homes, and plant within them men and women living sanely and nobly. Let us be thankful for this. I count it a signal illustration of the advance which has been made in the so-called infidelity, that the spirit is clean and pure.

"Further than this, let me frankly own to you that I believe Mr. Ingersoll in his rough attacks on religion is doing a real service to the cause of enlightened religion. It does not look so to the devout believer; but he who knows the extent and depth of the obscurantism which prevails within the churches will be forced to admit that even such coarse attacks upon the faith of Christendom, have their part in forcing forward the growth of reasonable religion. One may long for a wiser, calmer and more reverential mode of doing this needful work, as I, for one, do most deeply, but none the less must one, who sees the fact of our situation to-day, admit that there is a work for even such an audacious iconoclast. Nature is not even nice in picking her instruments when she sees a great job of demolition before her. Out of such stinging attacks there must come a deeper conviction on the part of the Church that there is that in the body of its beliefs which lays it open to such trenchant blows. Consider what is meant by such a system of thought as Calvinism. Consider what awful blasphemy the doctrine of hell really is. Consider what a fetich men have made out of the Bible. Having admitted all this in simple justice to the man and in simple truth to the facts of our situation, I may speak more frankly of the bad side of Mr. Ingersoll's work. The essential defect of his work is, that while doing a very needful work of destruction, he is decidedly overdoing it. That which more than anything else shocks me in the work of our eloquent lecturer is, that he seems to leave no feeling of reverence unsmirched by the hand of coarse humor. The brilliant lecturer gives the Christian Church and Christianity itself hard thrusts. Let us admit that in the Church are manifold and serious defects; grave and shameful faults. Let us be glad that so doughty a foe as this great Goliath of the Philistines walks up and down before the armies of Jehovah, ridiculing their feebleness, for we may thus be aroused to make civilization the Christian society which it is in name, but which it is not in fact. Before we cast away rashly our Christianity let us consider well what it has done for humanity."

The above is not unreasonably expressed. It illustrates what we have frequently claimed, that the world in general is beginning to think. The great danger with all who will use reason at all, on religious subjects, seems to be that they speedily incline not only to throw away the falsities and absurdities of the faith of Christendom, but supposing that these falsities of the Church are correctly based on Scripture, the general tendency is to discard everything in the Bible which does not square with their reasoning ability. The effect of this is to leave such reasoners without Chart or Compass. Their reasoning *ability* gauges their faith and will soon destroy it, for as soon as the Inspiration of the Bible is denied, the reasoner is an Infidel whatever he may call himself.

This is perhaps the chief curse of all "Church creeds and confessions"; they draw attention from the Bible to themselves as the sense and teaching of the Bible, hence when a church creed is convicted of errors and inconsistency all of the worldly and nearly all of the church-members are led to suppose that the Bible is the authority for the errors and inconsistencies. And the Bible like a telescope is not so constructed as to be

looked *into* from the wrong end. Its beauties and value cannot be appreciated by any other than the guided and trained eye of faith.

As a result of seeing the inconsistency of Creeds supposed to represent the Bible, and then looking at the Bible from the skeptical standpoint, some of the brightest intellects in the Nominal Church are being lead into what is called "Rational Christianity," and leads the gentleman quoted above, to remark, "Consider what a *fetich* [object of adoration and reverence] men have made out of the Bible." Doubtless the celebrated M.E. minister of the same city who recently characterized the Old Testament as a batch of "Old wive's fables" reached his conclusions by a similar process of reasoning.

But a true reasoner looking from the standpoint of faith, will own that the entire book is so hinged and bound together that it stands or falls together. Either Christianity and the Bible, its basis, is a great fraud and deception, or else it is what it claims to be, a Revelation from God to man of some of his plans and purposes relating to him. Jesus was either a great teacher and the Son of God as he claimed, or he was a false teacher, deceiver and blasphemer as the Jews who crucified him claimed; hence we must reject all or none of his teachings.

So with Jesus' disciples, they were either good men who declared the truth when they recorded the ministry, death, and *resurrection* of Jesus and taught under the direction and by special revelations from the Lord, or else they were deceivers who foolishly wasted life and talents to teach untruths; and few who can appreciate the logical reasoning of the apostle to the Gentiles, could reasonably consider him, who was more abundant in revelations and stripes and imprisonments, and who witnessed his reasonable faith by a reasonable service, could either doubt his sincerity or suppose him a fool. [R728 : page 7]

To those whose eyes are anointed with eyesalve, to see the truth of Scriptures and to realize the intricate, but harmonious and sublime plan therein traced, in its past, present and future accomplishment, it would be as impossible to deny the Bible as to deny the Sun at noonday because clouds were visible.

There are features such as Isaac on the Altar, Isaac and Rebecca, Noah and the Ark, Jonah and the great fish, Moses and Aaron with the Magicians of Egypt, Elijah, Samson, etc., which to the masses seem devoid of teaching and much like *fables*. Such let us guard against a hasty rejection of these, by reminding them that all of the above are vouched for by Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament repeatedly. Hence to hold the one is to hold the other, to reject the one is to deny the other. Already, we are seeing from the TOWER with the Telescope of faith great and important lessons in these things, which while actual occurrences were specially valuable as lessons and types of doctrines to the Gospel Church, and in the Age to follow, when the knowledge of the Lord and an appreciation of His plans shall fill the whole earth and none need say unto his neighbor, know thou the Lord, for all shall know Him.

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