

INGERSOLL ANSWERED.

Lecture by Rev. Father Fulton, S. J., at Boston.

Ladies and gentlemen.—Once upon a time there was a person named Schlasticus who suffered by death the loss of his child, to whose obsequies came the people in great throngs. But our friend, instead of receiving their expressions of condolence hid himself, blushing, in a corner, and on being expostulated with and asked why he was ashamed replied. "To bury so small a child before so large an assembly." This lecture is the child and the discourse is the audience before me. I have been engaged on matters foreign to literary and scientific affairs, and have no time to prepare a regular lecture, but I think it will not take much time to demolish Mr. Ingersoll.

I will take his book on Orthodoxy, in which he declares that "he knows that the clergy know that they know nothing." Mr. Ingersoll is not a philosopher nor a theologian, though he may be as we hear, an orator of matchless voice and gesticulation. He is witty, as any one may be who attacks what we most revere. Let us look at his scholarship. He has no arguments whatever, except the old objections brought up in the schools. In the whole book there have been no references nor authorities cited. His only method of reasoning is that by interrogation, why? why? why? Suppose I answer I do not know. The proper test of an argument is to put it in a syllogistic form which is impossible with Mr. Ingersoll's arguments.

Again, the very importance of the subject demands a respectful and reverential treatment which Mr. Ingersoll denies it. I will try to make a synopsis of the work. Mr. Ingersoll declares himself sincere in his belief, thereby insinuating that those who believe in Christianity are hypocrites. Then follows an examination of the Congregational and Presbyterian creeds under the supposition absurdly false, "ex unodiace omnes." Infidelity, says Mr. Ingersoll, will prevail over Christianity. This does not prove that it is not the true religion; for infidelity may triumph only because of the contributions of some men." Would these men have supported it, had they not firmly believed in it? Again, he says that the Christian religion was destroyed by Mahomet, and yet no one knows it. Nor were the crusades unjust and destructive wars, for the land which they fought for was one that was dearest to them; their Savior had died there. Was it not a just war? And this war saved all Europe, for the power of Mahomet was rising rapidly, and was about to inundate all Europe. The war was carried into the enemy's country, and the attack saved all Europe. Again we were freed from the ignorance of the dark ages (dark, as I may say, only because we have not light on them) by the introduction into Italy of some few manuscripts, according to Mr. Ingersoll. But the truth is all the leaning of that period was centered in the church, and by her alone were erected seats of learning. It was from the barbarism that this ignorance arose. Nor has the church been inimical to the sciences, more particularly to astronomy and its promoters, for among the most able astronomers of Europe are to be found the Catholic priests.

Now, Mr. Ingersoll comes to the creed "I believe in one God, creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." "But," says Mr. Ingersoll, "there is no one God. And what did He make the earth of? Suppose I answer I don't know, then what happens? But I do know. He made the world out of nothing. Mr. Ingersoll's creed reminds me forcibly of a story told of the eminent Greek scholar Porson, who was told by a young fellow-traveler in a coach that he (the young man) believed only what he could understand. In that case, replied Porson, you will have the shortest creed of any man that I know of.

Mr. Ingersoll says he cannot understand God. For we are told, says he, that God has no body, no heart, no passions, and yet we are also told that he appeared in the Garden of Eden and on Mount Sinai, and that He was angry. But a child could answer these arguments. If we could understand God's perfection then would we be equal to him. Mr. Ingersoll says we cannot love God. O, my friends, can you not love God? Mr. Ingersoll does not understand that there is a rational love—a love springing from a knowledge of God's perfection.

Passing over many other fragile arguments, we come to Mr. Ingersoll's statement that he cannot believe that our Lord was of a Divine nature, but was only the legitimate offspring of the union of Mary and Joseph, for neither Matthew, Mark, nor John knew of his Divine origin. Not till 150 years after his death

was this idea circulated. Yet St. Matthew, chapter i, verses 18 to 22, beginning, "Now the generation," contains these words, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is the Holy Ghost." And St. Luke chapter i, verses 31 to 36, declares, "And the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." And St. John, chapter i, tells us "In beginning was the word and the word was God," etc. Yet not till 150 years after was His heavenly nature suspected.

Another point about the immortality of the soul which Mr. Ingersoll says is not contained in the Bible. I admit it; for man was conscious of his immortality long before the Old Testament came into existence for in the book of Wisdom, chapter v, verse 16. "But the just shall live forever, etc., and again chapter iii, from verse 1 to 9, beginning, "But the souls of the just are in the hands of God, etc." do we find arguments to the contrary?

Mr. Ingersoll's persistent upholding of his unbelief is destructive only to himself, and reminds me of a story. When railroads and locomotives were quite unknown, an inventor of an engine, which he had submitted for trial before a number of competent men, was asked by some of them. "Supposing, when you have the locomotive ready on the track, and everything seems favorable, a cow should cross the engine path; what then?" "So much the worse for the cow," was the reply. And so I say so much the worse for Mr. Ingersoll, for he certainly will not stop the engine.

There is no hell, according to Mr. Ingersoll. What a delightful time we would have! But on the supposition that there is a hell, Mr. Ingersoll declares that there would be found in it such men as Franklin, who was a patriot; but had that anything to do with his fitness for that place. And Humboldt and Goethe, and Schiller and Burns, the poet of human love. And Dickens, about whose family affairs we know something, and R. W. Emerson, and Longfellow—I am sure I don't know. I was at Wakefield a few years ago, giving a lecture, and in speaking of Charles Sumner, I mentioned that it would have been better had he died with a recommendation of his sinful soul to God than as he did, say: "Take care of the civil rights bill." I was hissed, but they did not crush me. So would it have been well for these poets to have thought of their souls. And Tom Payne will be in hell, too, and Voltaire; where else would you suppose him to go. And Spinoza and Hume, and Beethoven and Wagner, who, I think, well deserves it for all the torture he has inflicted on us. Hell, Mr. Ingersoll asserts, is heartless. Whatever is heartless, so he thinks, does not exist, therefore hell does not exist.

Now, as to what Mr. Ingersoll does believe. There is no God, and therefore there is no hell, for since there is no Providence there can be no law which always presupposes a higher authority. There is no good nor evil, or the two are confounded. This man, worse than a murderer, goes around the country taking away from every man every reason for doing right, depriving us of a God, making unsafe our lives, our property, and our religion.

Catholicity and Labor.

Perhaps nothing is more self-evident to the ordinary Protestant mind than that Protestantism spells prosperity. Catholic countries, as a result of their religion, are always poor; Protestant countries, as a result of theirs, always well-to-do. Possibly a lecture which was recently delivered at Wingham, near Manchester, by a Protestant minister, Professor Lindsay, D. D., of Glasgow, may help to dispel the illusion. Speaking of the condition of the workingman at different times he said that the 15th century—the last Catholic century, he it noted—was his golden age. His prosperity was seen in the facts: 1st, that women were seldom engaged in outdoor labor, 2nd, the working day was about 8 hours; and 3rd, peasants bought land and became peasant proprietors, while artisans became small capitalists.

A change came with the Reformation. Two blows were then struck at the prosperity of the workingman from which he had not yet recovered. These were the confiscation of the guilds and others, and the debasement of the coinage. The glorious Elizabethan age found the workingman in a condition of degradation. During the 17th and 18th centuries—precisely the very centuries, he it also noted, when Protestantism was at its height and had most power over the people—he was kept down by legislative enactments. The right of combination was refused him, his wages were fixed by law, and the poor law tied him to his place of birth almost as much as if he

had been a serf. England grew wealthy while England's working classes were swept into the gulf of pauperism. Macaulay had to admit that the Reformation found all the serfs set free; the facts narrated by the lecturer show that the principles it introduced brought the people to a state differing from serfdom only in the name.

GLEANINGS.

Modesty is a guard to virtue. Richest is he that want least.

Quiet conscience gives quiet sleep.

Not to hear conscience is a way to silence it. Virtue and happiness are mother and daughter.

Wise men make more opportunities than they find. Learning make a man fit company for himself.

Love generally makes a wise man act like a fool, and interest sometimes makes a fool act like a wise man.

Very few men are great enough to bear praise, but a large number of us are just small enough to be found fault with constantly.

Whims are most prevalent among those who lead quiet lives and have little to do with the stern facts, the hurry and bustle of active life.

Many a true heart that would have come back a dove to the ark after its first transgression has been frightened away by the savage cruelty of an unforgiving spirit.

There is no royal road to any study, to achievement or success, anywhere; it is by the old plebeian path of rugged toil that men reach the heights of attainment and the temple of fame.

A woman's friendship borders more closely on love than a man's. Men effect each other in the reflection of noble or friendly acts, while woman asks fewer proofs and more signs and expressions of attachment.

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