

# THE CHRISTIAN.

“FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.”—Paul.

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## The Christian.

### THE SPRINGS OF INFIDELITY.

No one need ever fear the spread of infidelity from well written and thoughtful books. If these were averse to Christianity still the number of those who would read them and thereby come to adopt infidel views would be very small. Out of the whole number of unbelievers in the United States perhaps not one in a thousand has imbibed sceptical views in that way. I have never met but one man who seemed to imagine that unbelief could be advanced by argument. After one has adopted infidelity he may even read the most thoughtful productions of infidels, but he does this in self-defence. The “Age of Reason,” written by Mr. Paine, has had a very limited sale. I have met thoughtful Christians who were afraid of the works of infidel scientists. But this is a needless fear. Those who can read them understandingly are perfectly competent to separate their guesses or the facts which they have been able to present. And those who are not thus learned and thoughtful will never read their books, nor would they understand them if they did. Morissa said he cared nothing for all that might be written and printed about him for his constituents could not read, but that the cartoons might ruin him as they were read and laughed at by every one. So it is with the great mass of “free (?) thinkers;” they are influenced by the cartoons, the grimaces, the contortions, of those whose minds are like their own. I have never yet met an infidel who was familiar with the Bible or history.

It is said that as Germany became learned her people receded from faith in Christ and the Bible. This may be true, and yet there may be no connection between their learning and their unbelief. If this were found true everywhere then it would contain the legitimate argument. But such is not the case. Hence, as learning has not increased infidelity in other lands, it is not legitimate to argue that it has been the cause of German unbelief. We must look for this flow of doubt elsewhere. In my opinion it came from two sources.

1. The secularization of their schools. The professors, even in the chairs of theology, were appointed by the government. Hence they were open to political barter. The result was all the chairs in their colleges came to be filled by men who would angle for them. This left them to be occupied by men of political shrewdness rather than of Christian conscience. In this way unbelief has been as much taught as history and science. Even the teachers of theology were as infidel as the rest. In this way the best mind of Germany has been trained to infidelity for two hundred years. These persons being leaders in society have moulded public sentiment.

2. The sale and use of lager beer has contributed more to unbelief than have the German schools. The effect of that beverage is the excitement of the animal and the paralysis of the human. Lust is developed and conscience blunted, and the whole nature made to seek for some apology for iniquity or divorce from restraint. A sodden soul takes to infidelity as a fish to water.

If we take a view of our own country we shall not find unbelievers the equals of their neighbours in point of general information. And in the large majority of cases a bad heart and a bad life are the secret springs of unbelief. The saloons and brothals of this country contribute more to the cause of infidelity than all the lectures and books that ever have been written against the Bible.

With all the iniquity producing forces in the land it is not strange that an infidel lecturer can easily ignite this combustible material, and by so doing create the impression that he has turned the people away from God by his arguments. And yet by setting on fire this course of nature he spreads destruction to others who are caught away in the whirl and blaze thus kindled and thus maintained. Those who read and enjoy the speeches of the great high priest of blather-skites, only appreciate his wit and ridicule. They do not know whether he is telling a lie or the truth. Nor have they much interest in such fine questions.

But what are we to do in order to remove this infidel power and prevent it from ruining the young men of the land? I would recommend:

1. Increase the intelligence of the people, respecting Christian evidences as much as possible.

2. Sometimes it is absolutely necessary to hold up the leaders of infidelity to the contempt of a reading, thinking world. I do not mean that we should ever try to make the people laugh at “Bob” as he makes them laugh at the Bible by mere dint of buffoonery, but that we are compelled to take his statements and arguments and exhibit their weakness and their senselessness. Thousands and tens of thousands of his followers will not know the difference between his arguments and ours. But they can tell on which side the people laugh, and that is more to them than all facts and arguments.

3. I would put down the saloon and brothal business. To these stagnant putrid pools young men are led and made to saturate their souls with the abomination that fits them for infidelity here and hell hereafter.—*D. R. Dungan, in the Disciple.*

The sale of Bibles, religious books and magazines through the colporteurs of Mr. Spurgeon's church amounted during the last year to nearly \$45,000. Seventy-eight men were employed in the work, and fifteen hundred towns and villages were visited.

### PATIENCE AND PERFECTION.

Not long ago I visited one of the temples of music which our metropolis contains, and as in pursuit of duty, I soberly climbed the dusty staircase which led to one of its business rooms, my ears were ravished with the most entrancing strains. The air seemed full of music. It streamed from the walls on every side. It assailed my ears like some bright army of merry sprites, dancing, gleaming, flashing in the light, storming the fortress of my weariness as with the laughter of children, or the merriment of boys at play. It poured in cascades of melody through every crack and crevice of the passage-way. It rolled and tumbled in billowy waves of most exultant harmony, as though some ocean of music were being tossed by heaven's breath, and touched by heaven's light. It dashed against the ear as though it were determined that its will should win. The rapture with which the unseen player seemed to thrill the instrument was the glad reflection of his own exultant thought and joyous fancies. His hands swept music into life. It quivered beneath his touch upon the ivory keys as though his very spirit had inbreathed itself into their cold, dead forms, and all their dullness was indistinct with emotion.

And then I thought upon the patient hours of long-continued, plodding toil, when the fingers stumbled, and the nerves were dull, and the muscles slow to answer to their call, through which the great musician must have struggled upwards towards his high attainment in his heart. How much self-mastery he must have known! What strong suppression of all tendencies to ease! How earnestly and eagerly and perseveringly through unseen days and years of painful efforts to achieve his end he must have disciplined each nerve and finger of his hands! And now, at last, he wins the laurels he deserves, for he has gained distinction by self-discipline. Patience has had its perfect work.

And no distinction anywhere is gained without self-discipline. The heights of holiness cannot be reached without a toilsome effort up along the climbing path. In heaven at last each one who has been faithful unto death shall join the choir invisible which stands forever near God's throne, and hymns his praises through eternity. The bliss which shall be there no human heart has known. The rapture and the purity, the ripe perfection and the rest, are of that store of goodness which God has laid up for them that trust in him. But all that happiness must be the fruit of stern self-discipline and culture here on earth. We cannot have the highest things for naught. And if some self-denial tests our faith, let us remember that the faith in Christ which will not bear this test is spurious. No man can believe in him at all who does not believe in him enough to admire his character, to love his will, and to follow in his steps. He himself has said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny