

stand the stages through which the education of humanity has necessarily passed. Things which in the light of Science and Criticism can no longer be taken as literally true, ought no longer to be tendered for belief. Alexandrian or Mediæval dogma, such as the startling paradoxes of the creed miscalled Athanasian, ought not to be confounded with the truth that made the world free. The work of expurgation is very difficult, but unless the credible can be separated from the incredible, the reasonable from that which shocks reason, there will be a total eclipse of faith. Mr. Ingersoll is in the right only when he attacks dogmatic orthodoxy; but when he attacks dogmatic orthodoxy he is in the right, and the people cannot be prevented from seeing it, exclude him from your advertising columns and your lecture halls as you may.

On one dogma especially his hits tell with fatal force—that of Eternal Torture,—for doubting which, or hinting that doubt was possible, an eminent preacher of Toronto was not long ago in danger of being cast out of the ministry. Into the exegetical controversy we of course do not pretend to enter: we will only remark that verbal criticism in the interpretation of Christ's sayings is generally of little value, since the words which are recorded in Greek, and only after a considerable interval of time, were originally uttered in Aramaic. But belief in the dogma of Eternal Torture (we speak with all possible deference for the feelings of those who suppose themselves bound to uphold it) is incompatible with a moral conception of the nature of the Deity; and when it is combined with Predestination, its reception can be explained only by the facility with which people will go on repeating a traditional creed, and even arguing metaphysically in support of it, without realizing its moral import. Edwards, who is the great metaphysical reasoner in support of this doctrine, manifestly recoils from his own moral conclusions. He may well do so; and the stone which his unbeneficent genius has helped to tie round the neck of Christianity must be cast off, or it will sink the religion.