

integral part of the Westminster Confession, which is the standard of devotion of the Presbyterian Church, and which is held by many Congregationalists as expressing the substance of Christian doctrine." (Washington Gladden.)

Against this teaching, with its concomitant of infant damnation, Ingersoll directed all the forces of his wit, his satire, his logic. The debate between himself and Dr. Field, which took place in the pages of the *Review* in '88 and '89, showed his gift of logical eloquence to the best advantage. These articles must have been read by many of the elect as well as the non-elect. They cannot fail to impress every one with the fact that the old doctrines, at which he struck such fearful blows, are cruel and illogical, and this whether the reader be orthodox or liberal, bond or free.

"Admit these things frankly," said Rev. Geo. Dowling, rector of Trinity Church, Toledo, in a Sunday morning sermon two years ago last December. "Admit these things frankly and honestly, as the great Biblical scholars with scarcely an exception are admitting them, and Robert Ingersoll and his ilk have lost their weapons. Deny them, and you simply fill the quivers with arrows." Here is a frank, manly acknowledgment from a man so broad for a Toledo pulpit, that Ingersoll was justified in attacking the teaching of the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

But the heaven is spreading. The *New York Sun*, less than a year ago, printed an article on the "Decline of Faith," in which it enumerated the various Presbyterian and Methodist churches in New York that were then torn by internal disquietude over their creeds. The article closes with the statement of Dr. Cadman, pastor of the Metropolitan Temple of New York, made before a great company of Methodist ministers, that "the absolute inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible are no longer possible of belief among reasoning men." The general opinion among the Methodist preachers to whom Dr. Cadman made the address was that the Bible needed editing. He was heartily applauded when he finished speaking.

It is only two years since Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) was accused, tried and acquitted of heresy in a Presbyterian Synod in London, because, instead of the Westminster Confession of Faith, he offered the following, calling it a creed:

"I believe in the Fatherhood of God.

"I believe in the words of Jesus.

"I believe in the clean heart.

"I believe in the service of love.

"I believe in the unworldly life.

"I believe in the Beatitudes.

"I promise to trust God and follow Christ, to forgive my enemies and to follow after the righteousness of God."

Many Presbyterian divines in England and the United States were interviewed as to their opinion of this creed, and nearly all agreed that it was quite inadequate. Lyman Abbott (Congregationalist), Dr. Harrower (Methodist), Dr. Faunce, (Baptist), were among the few who approved it. Pres. Eliot, of Harvard, said it would "do very well to use in connection with historical creeds." A sort of theological appetizer, to give zest to the strong meat of infant damnation and original sin!

And not many years ago, at a meeting of the Presbytery in Cincinnati, at which revision of the Confession was discussed, protracted and solemn arguments were exchanged on the subject of whether infants dying in infancy are ever elect. One minister, Dr. Chidlaw, wanted the section relating to the damnation of infants revised so that mothers need not worry about

it. To this Dr. Scott replied that he did not want a creed that was a mother's comfort; he wanted a historical monument, and gave notice that he should vote against all motions to amend or revise. By a vote of 29 to 13, the amendment finally carried, and in that Presbytery they were committed to favoring the concession that "All infants dying in infancy, and other elect persons are saved."

Unfortunately, they have left us in doubt as to what becomes of infants in other Presbyteries, as well as of those in their own who died before this revision. It is a sweetly consoling thought, however, that parents who want their infants saved can move to Cincinnati.

In all this discussion there was constantly and apparently conscientious effort to determine what had been the intent of the original framers of the Confession, but no reference whatever to any possible opinion God might have on the subject. The deliberations and conclusions of this august body called forth a little rhyme, which went the rounds of the papers. It was called:

"JOHN CALVIN AND THE UNSELECTED INFANT.

"An unselected infant sighed out its little breath,
And wandered in the darkness along the shores of death,
Until the gates of heaven gleamed with pearls it spied—
And ran to them—and clung—and would not be denied!
But still from earth rose mutterings, 'You cannot enter in!
Depart into Gehenna, you child of wrath and sin!
At last the gates were opened. A man with features mild
Stooped down and raised the weeping, unselected child.
Immortal light thrilled down the avenues of bliss,
And on the infant's forehead the spirit gleamed a kiss.
'Who are you—thus to hallow my unselected brow?'
'Dear child, my name was Calvin, but I see things better now!'"

Yet one need not look far to discover the fact that even with the more favorable conditions now accompanying church membership, it is necessary to offer attendants a premium on the pure and unadulterated Gospel. In connection with a Y.M.C.A. prayer service in a certain church in an Ohio city not long since, there was displayed on the outer wall an alluring placard, bearing the legend:

"Good music!

Ice cool lemonade!

Electric fans!"

And now comes Dr. John Watson, whose creed, two years ago, was too broad for the rank and file of orthodoxy, and protests in a recent article against what he calls the "Candypull system in the churches." He suggests that if this state of things continues another kind of a minister will be needed—not an expounder of the Bible, or a trainer of human souls, but a "manager." "But," he says, "the church should pause before it decides to give over the pulpit to managers."

To what, then, is due the very great change in public opinion in the last twenty years? Probably to no one force and influence so much as that of Robert G. Ingersoll. "Followers" of Ingersoll would be hard to find, if that means persons who endorse all he ever said and did. Yet it would be equally hard to find any one who has in no way felt his influence. The man or woman who could read his speech on the Chinese Immigration bill or his lecture on the Liberty of Man, Woman and Child, or his contribution to the Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, or his lecture on Shakespeare, or his tribute to his dead brother, and not be quickened to higher and nobler thought and aspiration, must indeed be difficult to arouse! And who, having recognized in him the "Great Companion," struggling with tireless energy to bring freedom to his fellow men, can feel for one moment that with his death his influence