

type of Christian censure a faithful practical sermon as being "not doctrinal," and sometimes those who know the objects best are not surprised that he likes sermons which tell him to "only believe" rather than those which bid him "show his *faith* by his *works*." And because too many Christian teachers have been unfaithful to the duty of showing that belief is nothing if it is not preached, and have failed to show the vital connection of morality with religion as its natural fruit, it is not greatly to be wondered at if Turkish Effendis should run away with the idea that popular Christianity is simply a spiritualised selfishness, and that modern sceptics should try to divorce religion from morality altogether, and tell us that the former has been really only a hindrance to the latter!

Here however, is the Effendi's testimony to the moral value of Christianity as taught by Christ Himself. "After a careful study of the teaching of the great founder of this religion, I am amazed at the distorted character it has assumed under the influence of the three great sects into which it has become divided to wit, the Greek, Catholic and Protestant Christians. There is no teaching so thoroughly altruistic in its character, and which, if it could be literally applied would I believe exercise so direct and beneficial an influence on the human race, as the teaching of Christ; but as there is no religious teacher whose moral standard, in regard to the duties of men towards each other in this world, was so lofty, so there is none it seems to me, as an impartial student, the spirit of whose revelation has been more perverted and degraded by His followers of all denominations. The Buddhist, the Hindoo, and the Mohammedan, though they have all more or less lost the influence of the *afflatus* which pervades their sacred writings, have not actually constructed a theology based upon the inversion of the original principles of their religion. Their light, never so bright as that which illumined the teachings of Christ has died away till but a faint flicker remains; but Christians have developed their social and political morality out of the very blackness of the shadow thrown by 'The Light of the World.' Words which, whether true or not, certainly recall the solemn warning addressed by Christ to his disciples,—'If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness.'

When this "inverted Christianity"—which the Effendi styles *anti-Christendom*, or anti-Christianity—comes into contact with the races who live under the dim religious light of their respective revelations, "the feeble rays of the latter become extinguished by the gross darkness of this anti-Christendom, and they be crushed and mangled under the iron heel of its organised and sanctified selfishness. The real God of anti-Christendom is Mammon: in Catholic anti-Christendom, tempered by a bust of spiritual and temporal power; in Greek anti-Christendom, tempered by a lust of race aggrandisement; but in Protestant anti-Christendom reigning supreme:

Of course we can all see the exaggeration in this unflattering picture, but is there not, in our average social and political life,—far too much to give it *vraisemblance*? Of course the reason is simply that so many so-called Christians are merely nominal Christians who are but civilised heathens,—though worse, in that they reject a clearer light; while even among those with whom Christianity is more than a name, the Christian character is so imperfectly formed, the principles of Christ are really so *inverted* that it is no wonder if they give to the "Jews Turks and Infidels" for when they pray an utterly mistaken idea of what true Christianity is. And so long as they do so,—so long must they become in no small degree responsible for the natural results.

We can hardly follow the Effendi gravely through his theory that the inverted Christianity of which he complains,—in other words the cultivation of the selfish instinct,—in its stimulation of the intellectual at the expense of the moral has been the "mother of invention,"—the promoter of railroads, mechanical inventions, political institutions, and the Western force of character which the languid Oriental is unable to resist. These ideas are probably thrown in for the sake of completing the *vraisemblance*. Yet one cannot read a sentence like this without feeling how much ground there is for the satire:—

"Countries in which there are no gigantic swindling corporations, no financial crises by which millions are ruined or Gatling guns by which they may be slain, are said to be in a state of barbarism. When the civilisation of anti-Christendom comes into contact with barbarism of this sort, instead of lifting it out of its moral error, which would be the case if it were true Christendom, it almost invariably shivers it to pieces. The consequence of the arrival of the so-called Christian in a heathen country is, not to bring immortal life, but physical and moral death."

And if the Effendi had been a little broader in his politics, instead of restricting his remarks to the sufferings of "the Moslem," we might admit, freely enough, that "between the upper and the nether millstone of Russian greed for territory and of British greed for money," (might he not have added "and territory" also?) hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children have either perished by violence or starvation, or, driven from their homes, are now struggling to keep body and soul together as best they can in misery and desolation." These are heavy charges against "Christian" nations, and we can hardly hope for a verdict even if "not proven." But instead of proving anything against Christianity itself it only proves the perverseness of human nature, and the futility of attempting to prove the human origin of a religion which average humanity so soon distorts, into its own image. The supposed "Effendi" says, with far more just appreciation, than many

philosophers nearer home,—that "it is in the nature of the religious idea" that just in proportion as it was originally penetrated with a divine truth, which has become perverted, does it engender hypocrisy. This was so true of Judaism that when the founder of Christianity came, though himself a Jew, he scorchingly denounced the class which most loudly professed the religion which they profaned. I have now carefully examined into many religions, but *as none of them demanded so high a standard from its followers as Christianity*, there has not been any development of hypocrisy out of them at all corresponding to that which is peculiar to "anti-Christianity." If this is true and who can doubt it—the "Meliorists" who claim Christianity as the fruit of a natural progressive development of humanity will find this a rather inconvenient fact to get into their philosophy.

Fidelis.

INGERSOLL ON CONVERSION, HEAVEN, AND HELL.

A discourse delivered in Zion Church, Montreal, by Rev. Alfred J. Bray, April 11th, 1880.

"If the truth shall make you free, then are ye free indeed." I suppose no one will deny that the sentiment contained in that passage is great, is grand, is sublime. There is a freedom known to men which truth does not put its seal upon. Men may hold themselves free to think evil thoughts and do evil works, but that is the abuse, and not the right use of freedom. When truth comes to set men free—from bondage to tradition, from an enervating conventionalism, from false schools of teaching, false modes of thinking, false systems of operation, false sentiments and affections—*then* are they free indeed. You will have noticed, of course, how many people declare themselves on the side of truth. I suppose every enquirer and non-enquirer, as to religious matters, would claim that on his own behalf. Some confidently affirm that they have found truth, while others deny the assertion, and say that they are truth-seekers; some declare that they are exercising the freedom of truth in holding truth as expressed in a certain set of creeds; and others say that they are holding on to a palpable falsehood and not to truth at all. Col. Ingersoll says he has found Truth, and is set free by it from many a degrading error; he rejoices in his own thoughts, laughs at his own wit, and is proud of his freedom from those errors to which many of his fellow mortals are enslaved. On the other hand, here are men of good character, of sound culture, of earnest thought and purpose, who worship a Being whom he abhors the idea of, and live by, and would die for religious tenets for which he can only find words of most bitter scoffing. We know that truth is many-sided, but we are sure that truth is not many-faced. Truth has many notes, but no discord—many voices, but one teaching. Then, some of the contending parties must be wrong. Nay, it is quite and well within the range of possibilities that they are both partially right and partially wrong—or that they may have gone off from the centre in opposite directions. It may be that they stand at the opposite poles, even while they claim to be at the centre. One thing is certain, men often declare that they have found truth when they have not—and do often shout the gladness of their freedom when they are in prison-houses and cheated with forms of liberty painted on the walls. What is to be done then? Put them all to the test of a sound reason, say I. I am not of those who think that the reason of man should be belittled and outraged, and that a man will be damned if he does not believe what his reason tells him is unbelievable and unreasonable. I am not going to say that I will only accept facts which my reason can verify; for I am accepting things as facts every day which I do not and cannot make plain to myself. They are too subtle for any analysis known to me—they are so light and airy that I have no scales delicate enough to weigh them—or they are so dense that my logical faculties cannot penetrate them. But, then, I believe in them—that they are and do exist, precisely because my reason tells me that they are not unreasonable. I cannot complete the arc by sight perhaps, but I can see enough to make it not difficult for me to believe that the arc is completed, out of sight. Still, reason is the first and final court of appeal, and in reality, those who profess to give it a low place in life, and little or nothing to say about matters of the Bible and religious belief, use and trust to their reason just as much as those who talk great swelling words about Reason being placed upon the throne of the world's brain. Gentlemen, reason is on the throne, but it rules in a mad way.

It is to your sober reason I am going to do my best to appeal to-night, for I think I have some reasonable things to say. I do not dogmatically declare that they are truth, and exactly true to truth. I am not a prophet. I have received no supernatural message. I utterly repudiate all connection with an infallible church, and I need not tell you that I am not infallible; you are quite sure of that. And, good folks and friends, let me assure you that *you* are not infallible; you may have been well and carefully taught; you may be much given to a form of sound doctrine; you may have thought out your creed with anxious earnestness, but for all that you are not infallible. I have the pulpit, and custom denies you the right of reply, but you can exercise your right of judgment all the time; accept what you can accept, reject the rest. Respect your own reason and love the truth more than any preacher and all creeds.

When I invited Mr. Ingersoll to discuss with me the main points of his