

CHAPTER XXII.

ACTIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES — EXPERIENCE NO STANDARD OF RIGHT OR WRONG—SOME OF MR. INGERSOLL'S PLAUSIBLE NONSENSE—HIS CHARACTER IN A FOOCUS—A CHALLENGE TO THE GLIB LITTLE WHIFFETS OF THE INGERSOLL SCHOOL.

INGERSOLL—"If actions had no consequences, they would be neither good nor bad."

COMMENT—Which is the same as saying if actions were not actions they would not be actions. Actions are as inseparable from consequences as they are from their actors. You can no more imagine an act without a consequence than you can an act without an actor. In fact, the consequences of acts are simply the acts themselves continued under new forms. But while every act has consequences, it does not follow, as we have seen, that it takes its quality from those consequences.

INGERSOLL—"Man did not get his knowledge of consequences of actions from God, but from experience and reason."

COMMENT—As man has not an adequate knowledge of all the consequences of actions, it follows that he did not get it from experience and reason; and no Christian ever held that man gets his knowledge of consequences of all acts from God. Our knowledge of results even of physical acts is limited to a very narrow circle. As there are two orders of acts, physical and intellectual, so there are two orders of results, physical and intellectual, or moral. Man cannot tell the ultimate result of the simplest purely physical act. Cast a pebble into the ocean, and what are the consequences? If we apply Newton's law of gravitation to this simple physical act we find that in time it will change the relative positions of every atom of all the waters on the face of the globe. Not only this, it will change the relations of every molecule of matter in the universe, change the course of the moon, which recognises the event by an actual and real, though immeasurable, perturbation. These changes will con-