

## GIBBONS ON INGERSOLL.

THE CARDINAL SCORES THE AG-  
NOSTIC.

DOUBTS DO NOT DESTROY FACTS—CLOUDS DO NOT BLOT OUT THE SUN AND 'TIS EASY FOR A GLIB MAN TO ASK QUESTIONS HARD TO ANSWER.

Cardinal Gibbons, on Sunday, Jan. 6, preached a sermon in the Baltimore Cathedral, which is believed by those who heard it to have been aimed at Col. Robert Ingersoll, though His Eminence did not mention the name of the eloquent agnostic. It was Epiphany Sunday, and the knowledge that the Cardinal would preach caused the Cathedral to be crowded. The text was the first verse of the sixteenth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." In part the Cardinal said: "It is fashionable, as well as profitable, to cast odium as well as ridicule on Christianity and the Sacred Scriptures, which are the basis of the Christian religion. A man of limited capacity, but of fluency of speech and shafts of wit, can propose objections and difficulties in a half hour which may take a learned man a month to answer.

"I would ask you, my brethren, to have three answers ready in your mind when you are confronted by any difficulties against Christianity:

"First—Ten thousand difficulties do not make a single doubt, and ten thousand doubts do not destroy a single fact of Revelation; ten thousand layers of fog and cloud do not blot out the sun in the heavens nor diminish its splendor.

"Second—The Christian religion has been in possession for two thousand years, and has been cherished by the wisest and best of men in every age and country, and it is stronger to-day than it was ever before.

"Third—All the civilizations of the past and all existing civilizations to-day worthy of the name have been based on the doctrinal and moral principles of the Bible.

"It is time enough to surrender our Christianity when some better system is brought forward to supplant it.

"Let us transport ourselves in spirit to the dawn of the Christian era, and let us stand in imagination on one of pagan Rome's seven hills. We see at our feet that immense city teeming with a population of about three million inhabitants. We observe that city dotted here and there with idolatrous temples, and niches to false gods are erected at the corners of the streets. In the words of the apostle of the Gentiles, 'they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image and likeness of corruptible man and of birds and beasts and creeping things, and they worship the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for evermore.'

"Such was the condition of society when our Lord appeared on the theatre of public life. He called around Him twelve insignificant men—men without wealth, men without human learning, men without the prestige of fame, men without any of those elements which are considered essential for the success of any great enterprise. He commands them to effect the most mighty moral revolution which has ever taken place in the history of the world. He commands them to uproot idolatry from the face of the earth and to establish instead of this the worship of the one true and living God and to dispel the most cherished and inveterate passions from the heart of man, and to plant in their stead the peaceful reign of Jesus Christ.

"No thoughtful man can fail to admire the wisdom of God in employing such inadequate means (humanly speaking) in the propagation of the Gospel. For if he had appeared as a temporal sovereign with all the pomp and majesty of royalty, if he had used the influence of the Cæsars and if he had impressed into his service the imperial armies they would justly exclaim: 'There is no miracle here, for it is not by the finger of God but by the arm of the flesh that Christianity was propagated.' For, if the Gospel had been advocated by the orators, philosophers, statesmen and poets of ancient Rome, the world would again cry out: 'There is no miracle here, for Christianity was developed not by the folly of the cross but by the persuasive words of human wisdom.' For, if men were induced to embrace the church by bribes and emoluments, the world would justly

say: 'There is no miracle here, for men were drawn to the church not by the pearl of great price, but by the gold that glitters;' but when they contrasted the weakness of the instruments with the marvelous work performed they were forced to exclaim: 'The finger of God is here.'

"It may be interesting and instructive to us to consider some of the principal causes which (under the irresistible influence of God's grace) operated so powerfully in the rapid diffusion of the Christian religion.

"First, the Christian religion gave the Pagan world a rational idea of God. It proclaimed a God essentially one and self-existing, of a God existing from eternity unto eternity. It spoke of a God who created all things by His wisdom, and whose superintending providence watches over the affairs of nations as well as of men. It spoke of a God infinitely just and merciful, infinitely holy, infinitely wise.

Second, the Christian religion not only gave man a sublime idea of his Creator, but gave him also a rational idea about himself. Hitherto man was a mystery and a riddle to himself. He knew not whence he came or whither he was going. The Christian religion gave not only life to his understanding but peace as well to his heart. It brought him that peace of God which passeth all understanding and which springs from a conscious possession of the truth. It brought him a triple peace—peace with God, by teaching him to keep the commandments; peace with his neighbor, by enjoying the virtues of justice and charity; peace with himself, by instructing him to keep his passions subject to reason, and reason subject to the law of God.

"But it will profit us nothing to be enrolled in the army of the Lord, in the church militant, unless we are personally clothed in the panoply of Christian righteousness. The only victories to be put to our credit are those that we personally achieve.

"All the works of God have one striking characteristic, they all bear the divine stamp of individuality. There are no two stars alike in magnitude and splendor; there are no two leaves of the forest alike; there are no two grains of sand absolutely identical; there are no two human faces alike. In this vast congregation before me there are no two dispositions in all respects identical. Every one of you is a world in yourself.

"God loves each one of you personally. He does not contemplate the human family in the mass as we regard a heap of sand. He has loved each of you with an eternal love. I always admire the remarkable utterance of St. Paul: 'Christ loved me and delivered Himself up for me.' He does not say Christ loved us, but me, as if to remind us that Christ's love for Paul himself was as strong as it concentrated on himself and not upon the whole human race. And as God's love is centred on us so should we centre our love on God. We know where Christ is to be found. Let us ask Him to come and reign over our souls—intellect, will, memory."—*Catholic Union and Times.*

## OBITUARY.

MRS. SARAH ANN GREATA.

On January 16th, Mrs. Greata, a lady of no common antecedents and talents, expired this life at the Hotel Dieu. Born in London, Eng., of Protestant parents, she became a convert to our holy faith during her residence in France, a period that covered twenty years. For nearly three years she has been an invalid in the Hotel Dieu, and the intervals of peace that she enjoyed in the midst of her intense sufferings were employed in spreading the seeds of happiness in her immediate and remote surroundings. A poetess of excellent taste and choice diction she limited herself in her contributions to the columns of The Orphans' Bouquet, of Boston, the readers of which little magazine are quite familiar with her name and her writings. Sustained by her fervent faith and fortified by the sacraments her charitable life on earth was ended peacefully and calmly, surrounded by the good sisters of the Hotel Dieu, whose tender attentions had won her most sincere attachment.

Forty missionaries of the order of Dom Bosco have left the sanctuary of Maria Ausiliatrice at Turin for foreign missions. The sermon of adieu, which elicited copious tears from the congregation, was preached by D. Domenico Tomatis, who has returned from America after nineteen years of apostolic fatigue.

Mayor Strong has returned Superintendent Byrnes' resignation and asked him to remain at the head of the New York police department.

Archduke Albrecht, an uncle of Emperor Francis Joseph, is said to be dying.

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