

An Estimate of Ingersoll.

By Prof. John Moore.

R. G. Ingersoll, who was a prominent figure before the public, has lately passed away. He was noted as an infidel or agnostic of the most intense kind. He is viewed from somewhat different standpoints in published articles in the newspapers. Having myself most decided convictions in regard to him and his teachings for years, I wish briefly to add my estimate of him.

It is a familiar Latin maxim,—"Nil de mortuis nisi bonum," nothing should be said about the dead but what is good. I would modify this—nothing should be said in regard to the dead but what is true. Truth is due to the living. Ingersoll was the avowed enemy of Christianity, and spent years in trying to destroy it. He professed to be an agnostic, that is, a know-nothing; but he was as positive in his utterances as if he knew a great deal. To have been consistent, he should have kept silent, but that he did not do. He was an infidel of the worst sort, being in advance of Voltaire and Paine. The latter positively expressed his belief in one God and a future state of existence, but opposed Christianity as a divine system. When he wrote the first part of his "Age of Reason," he sent the manuscript to Dr. Franklin, requesting him to read it and give his opinion of it. Franklin returned it with a letter in which is this passage: "I would advise you not to attempt unchaining the tiger (infidelity), but burn this piece before it is seen by any other person; for if men are so bad with religion, what would they be without it."

But Ingersoll was zealous in trying to let loose even a worse tiger than Paine. Voltaire said that if there were no God, there ought to be one invented. At Ferney he built a church and over the door put the inscription,—"Voltaire exoritur Deus,"—that is, Voltaire built this church for God.

I often said, while Mr. Ingersoll was living, that he was a public corrupter of morals, and I say the same now, after he is dead. He did all he could to weaken and sever the bonds of morality. He declared that he recognized no God, or moral law, which meant, of course, that there was no such thing as moral obligation. He denied that man would live hereafter, and that therefore when he dies that is the last of him. He would stand on a platform and utter blasphemies and crack jokes, at the terms of fifty cents and a dollar a head. When he faced an audience of human beings, who would live a few years and perish like brutes, he might have felt sad and solemn in view of their present condition and wretched fate. For, if man is not to live hereafter, he is the most miserable failure in the universe. If human beings derive a little comfort from what he regarded as fiction, why deprive them of even that if it made their state more comfortable during their short animal existence?

But we are often told that he was a kind husband and father, and tried to make home happy. But what of that? King Charles I. of England and some other men had the same reputation, while in the public life they could violate solemn oaths and perpetrate crimes of murder and cruelty. Ingersoll labored to destroy the religion of humanity and love, which is directly the producer of happy homes. I have heard of whiskey-sellers who did not drink themselves, while they dealt out the poisonous stuff to others for gain. Such are too shrewd to drink the vile fluid themselves, which is rather against than in their favor. If Ingersoll did not swallow his poison himself in private life, he did all he could to diffuse it among others.

He went so far as to justify suicide, though he did not apply it to himself. Rev. Dr. Buckley, in an editorial in the Christian Advocate, in alluding to this stated that a dozen of persons who committed suicide within a certain area left evidence behind them of the

influence of his teaching over their minds in this direction.

What a sad spectacle his home presented after his death. Darkness and black despair reigned, according to authentic accounts! Not the faintest gleam of hope and consolation, such as Christianity inspires, broke the darkness. Such was the natural fruit of the teachings and influence of the head of the disconsolate and hopeless family. The tree is known by its fruit. In view of the facts, I have thus written, as I believe in calling a spade a spade, and a fig a fig, as John Knox used to say.

Are The Heathen Lost.

By James M. Gray, D.D.

"Are the heathen lost?" is a question very often asked even by professing Christians, among whom a secret skepticism existed as to whether they were really true that they were lost. The argument presented is something like this: There are hundreds of millions of heathen who do not know the Gospel and have never heard of Jesus Christ, but it is not their fault that this is the case, and God, who is just and loving, will not punish them for that for which they are not to blame.

We might sympathize with this feeling so far as it is born of a spirit of compassion for the heathen and a desire to sustain the honor and integrity of God, but there are certain fallacies in the argument which ought to be exposed.

In the first place, the heathen are not lost because they do not know the Gospel or believe in Jesus Christ, but because they are sinners like all the rest of the world. The proof of their sin is borne witness to by history, by the reports of missionaries, and by their own confession, and especially by the unmistakable evidence that they are idolaters, and idolatry is really the basal sin.

The second point is that the heathen are not only sinners, but accountable for their sin. This is shown very clearly from Rom. i. 18-25, which indicates that God had revealed Himself to them in the work of creation, that the heathen world had once known Him but failed to glorify Him, and became vain in their reasonings and voluntarily changed the glory of the incorruptible God for that of images, and it was for this reason that God in punishment upon them had given them over to the condition in which they are now found. The Word of God distinctly says they are without excuse. Moreover, missionaries bear witness that this is as true to-day as ever, and that the heathen possess a conscience, a moral sense and apprehension of a Supreme God which only needs the touch of the Holy Spirit to be awakened into active exercise.

The third point is that the hope of heathenism is not in itself. It is not only true that their breach is great like the sea, but that the Lord only can heal them. Some philosophers have claimed that various religious systems of heathenism are only so many steps in the development of the religious instinct of man. That they who had begun as open deniers of God, and by and by came to worship material objects, then spiritual beings such as demons, etc., would finally by a natural process of evolution come to acknowledge of their own accord the one true and only God. But this theory is denied first of all by the Bible, which teaches unmistakably that man began with the knowledge of God, lost it by sin and has been wandering further away ever since. It is denied also by the facts of history, for the nearer we trace nations to their origin the purer is their religion and vice versa. Current facts also substantiate this, since we have yet to hear from the missionary who had discovered any heathen nation making progress toward God of itself.

The fourth point is that we have no right to believe, as some imagine, that the heathen will have another chance after death. The idea of a second probation, as some call it, is rendered inadmissible by the fact that there is no first probation at present extended to man. The only probation man ever had was in the Garden of Eden before the fall, and when he fell he lost that forever. "The world is lost in the darkness of sin." There is no Scriptural evidence of another opportunity to find Christ after death, upon which a man can base a reasonable probability that it will be so. If any individual heathen is now living up to the light he already has, and we may hope that there are such, God in mercy and love will undoubtedly give him more light. In this sense we may understand perhaps, those words of Peter, "that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." That is, some way or some how that man will be brought to know Jesus Christ and be saved. But it is very seldom or never that our missionaries report the discovery of such men.

Under these circumstances, what is the duty of the Christian toward the heathen? The former might say, "We have more than a fair chance, for mercy has been brought to our door and laid at our feet." But the answer to this is that this mercy has been given us not to selfishly hoard for ourselves, but for the very purpose of carrying it to those who are in deeper need. It is sometimes asked, why does not God give the Gospel to the heathen world as well as to us? But is it not reasonable to reply that God could in no simpler or better way give the Gospel to the heathen than through us? Did not Jesus die to make it possible for the whole world to be saved, and did he not give us the commission to carry the knowledge of that salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth? Before we charge God with unfairness or inequality, should we not first of all lay a still more serious charge at our own doors? The heathen will never have to answer for not believing on Jesus Christ if they have not heard of Him, but we will have to answer for not giving them an opportunity to hear.

The Rest of Christ was in giving fullness of delight unto the Father; ought not ours to be the same?

When widows in India are no longer able to serve they are permitted to die like beasts of burden.

In India the refusal of the Government to make Sunday a legal holiday is a serious hindrance to missionary work.

Christianity proves itself as the sun is seen, by its own light. Its evidence is involved in its existence.—Coleridge.

How much trouble he avoids who does not look to see what his neighbor says or does or thinks, but only to what he does himself, that it may be just and pure.—Marcus Aurelius.

"The Arya Messenger," a Hindu paper, says: "Every Hindu community is being vigorously assailed by the missionary in ways diverse. What are we going to do to neutralize this effort? is the question. Hinduism is indeed inert, and can do nothing."

No people can maintain an independent and stable government until they have been trained to habits of intelligent cleanliness. Even from the body's purity the soul receives a secret sympathetic aid.—Ida M. Gardner.

A man may be wise in worldly learning, and yet ignorant of the rudiments of spiritual life. Many an untutored man knows many times more about religion and God than the most learned sage who has never bowed before the throne of grace.