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THE TIMES.

The visit of Mr. Ingersoll to Canada was by no means an unmixed evil. It has stirred the religious community to earnest thoughtfulness and enquiry, and that must result in good. The only thing to regret about it is the mean manner in which the lecturer was treated by some portion of the Press. One paper refused to insert his name in the list of visitors even, would not report a word of his lectures, but abused him after he was gone. As a set off to that, and in full assurance that we need not fear discussion upon these great and important matters, I publish in this issue of the SPECTATOR a letter from one of Mr. Ingersoll's own school. It is in defence of the lecturer's theory, but I am bound to say that I think my critic has not carefully read my discourse on that subject, for he passes my arguments over very lightly, and, in the main, contents himself with repeating the arguments or statements advanced by Mr. Ingersoll. As to "an intelligent theory of life," from the standpoint of the infidel, I am looking for it yet.

Other answers have been given to Mr. Ingersoll, which show that men are trying to work out this great problem of God and life, and that while a few rough witticisms directed against the Bible may make the thoughtless laugh, the more sober among us will not be caught by such wiles. A pamphlet has just been put into my hands, called "A Refutation of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll's Lectures," by "A Rationalist," which is well worth reading. The writer is thoroughly in earnest, thoughtful, and evidently well read in religious literature, but "a Rationalist" he is not. His arguments in proof of the Being of a God are far stronger than Col. Ingersoll's arguments in destruction of that proof, but the knowledge of metaphysics is somewhat limited. The manner in which he tries to save some passages of the Old Testament by the method known as "spiritualising" is clever enough, but it is not rational. At any rate, the pamphlet is well and thoughtfully written, and will amply repay a perusal, but if the writer would be truly "a Rationalist," he should cultivate—say Mansell and Sir W. Hamilton more, and Swedenborg a great deal less.

SIR,—I sometimes see the SPECTATOR, and have just read your sermon on Ingersoll. Let me say that while I cannot agree with all you write, I can say Amen most heartily to the manner in which you deal with so-called orthodoxy. Surely the infidelity of to-day finds its most powerful ally in the misconceptions and misrepresentations of Christians. If ever there was a time when these things needed wise and bold handling, that time has arrived. You will not, I trust, think me rude for writing this.

Very truly yours,

W. J. Rainsford.

Toronto.

Mr. Rainsford is right, perhaps, when he says, "I do not agree with all you write," for he does not specify; but he is certainly right in saying, "The infidelity of to-day finds its most powerful ally in the misconceptions and misrepresentations of Christians." They are yet demanding faith, not simply in mysteries, but in the absurd and grotesque. One of our city preachers has just declared against "any concession whatever" to the sceptics or free thinkers, and stakes everything upon the story of Jonah and the whale. Another, a visitor, tells a story about a remarkable answer to prayer which is ridiculous to begin with and unsubstantiated to end with. The leader of a

revival tells a youth, in answer to a query, that conversion is like the taste of candy in the mouth, only it lasts longer. Such men—good and sincere, doubtless—make infidelity possible and strong. That "no concession" and "candy in the mouth" form of faith is working most fearful havoc in our churches and keeping thoughtful men outside. The revival that we want is a quickening of common sense which shall teach men to be reasonable in the matter of religious beliefs and pious in all matters of working.

SIR,—We cannot but acknowledge, at any rate, the liberty of discussion you have inaugurated in Montreal. Your second discourse on Ingersoll and his views seems to me not analytical enough to clear the grounds of controversy. I would respectfully desire from you as full definitions as the case admits of, of the following principles as elements of life, and of the general order under the Creator of all:—

Justice,	Forgiveness of sins,	Faith,	The Heart,
Mercy,	Redemption,	Hope,	The Life (in the world),
Sacrifice,	Reconciliation,	Love,	The Soul, Peace,

Also, as you incline to reject part of the Old Testament, to know whether you accept the New Testament in its entirety; and, if not, which portions you reject. It would be desirable to illustrate by the words of Christ, including the parables; also by the teachings of the Apostles. These provided, we shall be better enabled to begin to treat the great theme of salvation and the future life, hoping the issue may be that some will believe, with our Shakespeare, that—

"All the souls that were were perfect once,
And He that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy."

Yours faithfully,

Disciple.

I have a great respect for "Disciple"—although I am not quite sure as to whom he claims as his master; but surely he expects too much. No one, up to this year of grace, has been "analytical enough to clear the grounds of controversy," so he ought not to complain if I have not wrought a new wonder in the world. As to the "definitions" asked for, they cover a great deal of ground and would involve a series of essays or sermons, so that I cannot give them here. Then as to the statement that I "reject part of the Old Testament," &c.; it is one of these vague expressions to which many well-meaning people commit themselves and do a great amount of harm thereby. In what sense am I held to "reject part of the Old Testament"? And what is meant by accepting "the New Testament in its entirety"? Let me beg "Disciple" to be careful and clear in statements of this kind, and also to give us his theory of inspiration.

Justice has not much dignity in the Province of Quebec, but it has a little, and it is a pity that the remaining shred of it should be put at risk by a lack of discipline in the Police Magistrate's Court. The office M. Dugas fills is not of the highest, and the rooms in which he has to carry on his investigations are not very inspiring; still, we want all the show of British solemnity we can get out of it, and we want to see that criminals are dealt with as criminals. In the McNamee robbery case now under investigation, the newspaper reporters' charge that M. Dugas was "sitting with one leg crossed over the other" amounts to nothing at all, but, that he was surrounded by clerks "who helped him to joke about the loss of the money, and the capture of the thieves," is a very different affair. We want decorum even in a Police Magistrate. And, if it is true that the criminals "were constantly together in the cells of the Police Court and in the gaol," and that "they were allowed cigars to smoke in the cells," and "to procure luxuries for Sunday in gaol," I can only say that this should never have happened, for the High Constable or Sheriff should see that gaol regulations are strictly carried out, and the Police Magistrate should have a more dignified bearing, and see that more respect for law and order is maintained in his Court.