

of being merciful, of being pure in heart, [of seeking to live peacefully with all men, refraining from returning evil for evil, loving our enemies, and praying for them that despitefully use us. Has any mortal man the effrontery to declare that such teachings are ethically or religiously wrong. Show me the man whose life stands plumb with the moral law and the Sermon on the mount, and I will show you a character which infidelity can never produce, and to which it never can object. One of the leading skeptics of to-day admits that the teachings of Christ are fitted, if obeyed, to make our earth a paradise, and man only a little lower than the angels. Your own Oliver Mowat has well said that Christianity prohibits vice and inculcates every virtue. And the virtues which Christianity fosters are most healthy and beautiful to behold. A man who is morally sane can no more object to such virtues than he can to the colors of the rainbow, or the beauty and fragrance of living flowers.

What are some of the causes which have led some of our young people to doubt christianity.

1. Some say that the church itself is somewhat responsible. It has made more of a dead creed than a living Christ, more of the human husk than the Divine kernel. We are told that it has attached more importance to historical than to spiritual christianity. It has not distinguished sufficiently between Theology and Religion. Religion was before Theology, just as there were stars before astronomy, or plants before botany.

Are not our tests of orthodoxy wrong. If a person cannot subscribe to a creed formulated a thousand years ago and that has become as lifeless as a mummy, why should he be cut off as a withered branch from the tree of orthodoxy. We are reminded that a person may be intellectually sound in regard to church standards and yet be as far from Christ as hell from heaven. Are there not men in the church to day who are champion supporters of a creed which is just as foreign to their intellectual and spiritual life as a loaf of bread is to you before you eat it.

Now with certain modifications, I believe all this myself and preach it. I hold that no church has a right to suppress thought or obstruct progress in any direction. I also hold, that while every church has a right to formulate its own standards of teaching, every man has a right to construct his own creed. In fact you have no creed at all which is not the product of your own personal experience and thinking. Your creed is formed as the shell of the oyster is formed. And as nature never intended that one big oyster should make shells for all others, but that each oyster should by a vital and individual process produce its own shell, so God never intended that any one man should manufacture a creed for all others. He intended that every thinking man should formulate his own creed, out of his spiritual consciousness and experience, for no creed is his until it has become *him*.

What right have you to brand a man a heretic, just because he does not believe the same as you do, even when his heart and life are right. I thank God for some of those so-called heretics. I am glad the ages produced such a heretic as Luther, who with an unchained Bible in his hand, made the Vatican tremble. I am glad there was such a heretic as John Knox, who had the courage to oppose his Queen and rescue his native land from the grasp of Rome. I am glad there was a John Wesley, who in his eagerness to save souls, brushed aside orthodox forms and usages and lifted up a voice for God which roused a sleeping church and saved a half-damned world. These were called heretics, but to-day we apply to them a more honorable epithet. But now I want to say that I thank God I belong to a church which does not, so long as it follows the spirit of its founder, attach more importance to a creed than Christ, and which does not exact from its membership a formal subscription to any creed and whose condition of membership is such as to admit anyone who has a sincere desire to flee from the wrath to come. And so far as its ministers are concerned, I find its creed broad and large enough for me. It is one which grants me all manner of personal liberty, and one within whose broad and general statements I can develop a creed which is vitally and really my own.

A great deal of modern infidelity is due to intellectual vanity and dishonesty. I know some who imagine it is a mark of originality to disparage the teachings of the Bible. They are such intellectual prodigies that the simple faith of their fathers fails to commend itself to their exalted reason.

A young man said to me this week that even atheism was more satisfactory to his reason than christianity. Well, I said, your brain must be getting soft, because atheism is a flat negation of all reason. Reason says that every effect must have an adequate cause. Atheism says there can be an effect without a cause. It says there can be a creation without a creator, an organism without an organizer, a design without a designer, a law without a law-giver, and a thought in the universe without a thinker. That is atheism, and that is the thing that is more reasonable to you than christianity. I said, young man, your trouble is not too much brain power, but too much conceit.

Rousseau's infidelity was the product of inordinate conceit. Think of a man saying of himself, "No man can go to the bar of God and say I am better than Rousseau."

Dr. Johnson was right when he said, "No honest man can examine the evidences of christianity and remain an atheist." But said one of the company, "is not Hume an honest infidel?" "No," roared the illustrious lexicographer. "Hume confessed he never read the New Testament with attention."

Another cause sometimes is moral obliquity. I would not say that every infidel was immoral, because there are infidels who are exemplary in their behavior, but it is not their infidelity that makes them so. One thing is certain that infidelity leads to immorality, and infidelity itself has often admitted that fact. One day D'Alembert and others were dining with Voltaire. They proposed to talk about atheism. "Hush," said Voltaire, "wait till my servants have left the room, I do not wish to have my throat cut to-night." Infidelity has no faith in infidelity. An infidel talking with me one

day eulogized Paine's Age of Reason above the Bible. I said, "Now sir, you have a family of children, which of those two books would you rather have them read and live by?" "Oh," he said, "I would rather give them the Bible than any infidel book I know."

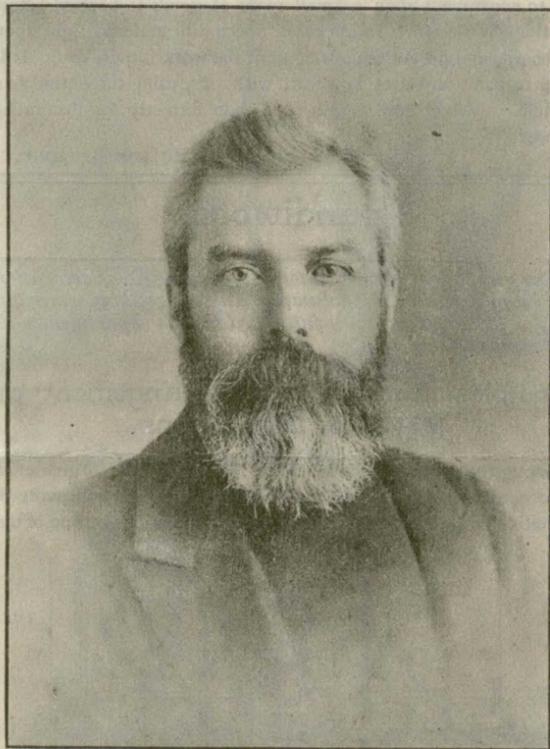
Infidelity at heart has more faith in the moralizing effects of christianity than those of itself.

Have you not often heard infidels find fault with the lives of christians when the latter were not what they ought to be. But did you ever hear one infidel deplore the immorality of another. I never did. Does not this mean that infidelity expects the christian to be a better man morally, than he who is an infidel, and does not that mean that infidelity at heart believes christianity to be better than itself.

I repeat that infidelity either is the cause or the effect of moral obliquity. Remember that what a man is in his creed depends upon what he is in his character. It is the man who lives as if there was no God, that comes to believe there is no God. It is the man who lives as if there was no eternity, that comes to believe in secularism. It is the man who lives as if he had no soul, that comes to believe in materialism. The life shapes our belief as much as belief shapes the life. Many a man finds it necessary to renounce christianity because such are the secret immoralities of his life that christianity must place upon him the brand of its disapproval.

If you want to know whether the Bible is true first read it. Barker the infidel said, that it was the reading of the gospel that converted him to christianity. Paine would never have been the infidel he was, if he had *sympathetically* studied the Bible. His biographer confesses that he wrote the most of his "Age of Reason," without a thorough knowledge of the Bible as he could not procure one.

Again, if you wish to test the truths of christianity, live them. Obedience is the organ of spiritual knowledge. "If any man will do



James Henderson

His will, he shall know of the doctrine." If you want to test the reality of God's existence, live a godly life, then you will develop a capacity to see God.

If you want to test the reality of prayer, live a life of prayer. If you want to know whether Christ has power on earth to forgive sins, come to him now and plead forgiveness, and there will come into your consciousness a sense of pardon and you will receive the powers of an endless life. You cannot live without Christ. He alone can give joy in sorrow, strength in weakness, comfort in distress and hope in despair.

Rev. Jas. Henderson.

The subject of this sketch, Rev. James Henderson, M.A., pastor of Carlton street Methodist Church in this city, is yet a comparatively young man. He was brought up in the Presbyterian faith, and received his education in Glasgow. Coming to Canada, he entered the ministry of the Methodist Church, and was ordained in Quebec in 1876, and has been in the Montreal Conference since it was organized. He has been successively stationed at Sherbrooke, South Quebec, Cookshire, Huntingdon, Prescott, and Montreal, where he has been in three different pastorates, Dominion Square, Sherbrooke street, and New St. James'. His career from the day he entered the ministry has been a brilliant one, and in all his pastorates he has been singularly and uniformly successful. While in Huntingdon he built the present church, the most commodious and costly in the district; while in Prescott he extinguished the debt upon the church and placed it upon a prosperous footing; while in the Dominion square he renovated and refurnished the church, procuring a new organ, the finest in the city; while in Sherbrooke street church he saved it from the bankruptcy that threatened its existence, renovated and beautified the whole interior of the building, increased every source of revenue, and the membership filled the church; while in St. James' he more than doubled the pew

rent, and his fame as a preacher was such that this, the largest church edifice in the Dominion, was frequently filled to overflowing. Although Mr. Henderson has been but a short time in active connection with his present charge a great impetus has already been given to the life of the church. The congregation has largely increased, the pews are being rapidly taken up, and the ushers find it difficult to accommodate the crowds who flock to the church, especially at evening service. The reason is not far to seek. Of fine presence, above the medium height and size, with black hair and full beard, both generously sprinkled with grey, handsome face, and flashing dark blue eyes, clear ringing voice, and a tongue on which lingers the faintest suggestion of the accent of his native land, such is Rev. Jas. Henderson, a strong, delightful personality, of kindly nature, generous and sympathetic disposition, a zealous Christian, and a preacher of remarkable eloquence and power. Indeed it is doubtful if his equal in this respect is to be found in the Dominion. As a preacher he is logical and incisive, has an unusual command of choice and vigorous English, is rich in metaphor bold and courageous in the expression of his opinions, and frequently rises to flights of genuine eloquence. Should the reverend gentleman's life and health be spared he has beyond doubt a brilliant and useful career before him.

In this series have already appeared:

Dec. 26th, 1891: Rev. Benjamin Thomas, D.D., Toronto.
Jan. 2nd, 1892: Rev. Chas. Mockridge, D.D., Toronto.
" 9th, " : Rev. Hugh Johnston, D.D., Toronto.
" 16th, " : Rev. W. S. Ramsford, D.D., New York.
" 23rd, " : Rev. Joseph Wild, D.D., Toronto.
" 30th, " : Rev. S. M. Milligan, B.A., Toronto.
Feb. 6th, " : Rev. O. C. S. Wallace, Toronto.
" 13th, " : Rev. Prof. Clarke, F.R.S.C., Toronto.
" 20th, " : Rev. S. P. Rose, Montreal.
" 27th, " : Rev. John Walsh, D.D., Toronto.
March 5th, " : Rev. Wm. Cochran, D.D., Brantford, Ont.
" 12th, " : Rev. H. F. Bland, Quebec.
" 19th, " : Rev. James Watson, Huntingdon.
" 26th, " : Rev. Manly Benson, Toronto.
April 2nd, " : Rev. John Burton, M.A., B.D., Toronto.
" 9th, " : Rev. W. T. McMullen, D.D. Woodstock.
" 16th, " : Rev. Septimus Jones, M.A. Toronto.

Under the Earth.

The workmen in the deepest mines swelter in almost intolerable heat, and yet they never penetrate over one seven-thousandth part of the distance from the surface to the centre of the earth.

In the lower levels of some of the Comstock mines the men fought scalding water, and could labor only three or four hours at a time until the Suto tunnel pierced the mines, and drew off some of the terrible heat, which had stood at one hundred and twenty degrees.

The deepest boring ever made, that at Sperenberg, near Berlin, penetrates only four thousand one hundred and seventy-two feet, about one thousand feet deeper than the famous artesian well at St. Louis.

While borings and mines reveal to us only a few secrets relating to the temperature and constitution of the earth for a few thousand feet below the surface, we are able by means of volcanoes to form some notion of what is going on at a greater depth.

There have been many theories about the cause of volcanoes, but it is now generally held that, though they are produced by the intense heat of the interior of the earth, they are not directly connected with the molten mass that lies miles below the immediate sources of the volcanic energy.

Everybody knows that many rocks are formed on the floor of the ocean, and it has been found that twenty to seventy per cent. of their weight is made up of imprisoned water. Now these rocks are buried in time under overlaying strata, which serve as a blanket to keep the enormous heat of the interior.

This heat turns the water into superheated steam, which melts the hardest rock, and when the steam finds a fissure in the strata above it it breaks through to the surface with terrific energy, and we have a volcano.

We find that these outpourings that have lain for countless ages many thousand feet below the surface are well adapted to serve the purpose of man. Many a vineyard flourishes on the volcanic ashes from Vesuvius, and the volcanic mud has clothed the hills of New Zealand with fine forests, and its plains with luxuriant verdure.

The most wonderful display of the results of volcanic energy is seen in the north-western corner of America, a region of lofty forests and great fertility.

The Value of a Comma.

A Prussian school inspector appeared in the office of the burgo-master of a little town, for the purpose of asking him to accompany him on a tour of inspection through the schools. The burgo-master, rather out of sorts, muttered, "Does this donkey come again?" The inspector awaited his time for a proper answer, according to the immortal advice, "Vengeance is a dish that must be eaten cool."

When the inspector was introduced to the teacher, he said he wished to see how well punctuation was taught. The burgo-master, the local supervisory authority, said, "Never mind that; we care not for commas and the like." But the inspector ordered a boy to go to the board, and write, "The burgo-master of R. says, the inspector is a donkey." Then he ordered him to change the comma, by placing it after "R." and inserting one after "inspector." Thus, "The burgo-master of R., says the inspector, is a donkey." It was a cruel lesson; but it is reasonable to suppose that commas rose in the estimation of the "local supervisory authority."