

INGERSOLL TO GLADSTONE

A Criticism by J. M. S.

Col. Ingersoll's Reply to Mr. Gladstone in *The North American Review* for June, 1888, is in several respects a remarkable composition. Over fields where the wisest and most competent men the world ever saw, have moved but slowly, feeling that this was the only safe way of reaching correct conclusions, the Colonel moves, like a modern locomotive, with a speed of 60 miles an hour, regardless whether he follows the track or not. In a short article, forty pages, leading long primer, we are expected to follow the Colonel through the most winding passages of theology in its various branches: philology, criticism, hermeneutics, archaeology and doctrine.

The reply is as good as a miracle, although the Col. denies the possibility of miracles. He has, however, crowded everything so closely together that it may be doubted whether the different subjects treated can be separated from each other in the mind of the reader.

Another peculiarity is that the Reply mostly consists of questions. I counted 269 on the forty pages. The Reply may be said to consist of questions, the balance of it being unproved assertions. This is a very easy way of disposing of opponents. When you have nothing to say, ask questions. Even a fool—as the saying goes—can ask more questions than a wise man can answer. But it is not generally thought the best way in an honest discussion of important subjects to bombard each other with more or less ingenious interrogatives. This may do in a court, for the purpose of confusing and intimidating an unwelcome witness, but can hardly be defended in a discussion of this kind. At least, it will produce no impression on any mind of ordinary cultivation, even. It will easily be seen that this way of "replying" is nothing more than a trick. The water is shallow and no stirring of it can make it deeper. Muddier it may, indeed, become, and the bottom hid from view, but none will mistake muddiness for depth, if he has any experience to be guided by. Only a child would be misled in this way.

But, leaving the Colonel's mode of arguing—if this term can be applied to his aphorisms—I will proceed to examine a little closer a few of his questions and assertions.

CIVILIZATION OR BARBARISM FIRST?

In his Reply, page 602, the Col. takes the ground, of course, that the first men who lived upon the earth were savages. They had no language; they lived in caves, naked, "crunching the bones of wild beasts." "If history proves anything—he says—it establishes the fact that civilization was not first, and savagery afterwards."

"If history proves anything." Of course, history proves something, but nothing in the point at issue. How can it? History, it is well known, does not go far enough back to relate anything about our "naked" ancestors. That is if we reject the sacred history. No nation, says Dr. Angus, has any intelligible records extending earlier than the flood. The dynasties of Egypt, Champoillon traces to 2200 B. C. The first Chinese emperor, mentioned by Confucius, Yoa, can not be earlier than 2500 B. C. Nor is there any historical certainty, till the year B. C. 782. The celebrated chronology of India reaches no higher than B. C. 2256, commencing with Buddha, probably the Noah of Moses. Bearing these facts in mind, it is clear that history will not help infidelity to establish the savage origin of man. For from the time history commences, civilization is already an established fact. Of course, without a high grade of civilization, there can be no recorded history at all.

But one truth history does teach. It teaches us, that no savage tribe, no savage people, as far as we know, ever civilized themselves without aid from somebody else. Archbishop Whately has clearly proved this. On the contrary, the tendency among the savages is to become more savage. Implications and arts, mentioned by Captain Cook as found among the savage tribes he visited, had been lost when the same people were visited 100 years afterwards. If, therefore, the naked, savage ancestors of Col. Ingersoll have been able to civilize themselves, they have been that much smarter than any savage tribe now found on the earth. But this the Col. does not suppose, for he makes them more destitute, intellectually, than any savages now living, thus opposing his theory entirely to what history actually teaches.

Experience also teaches us, that whatever is not continually under practice will soon be forgotten. Cardinal Mezzofanti used to say that he had to spend one half of his time in retaining what he had already learnt, so as not to forget it. And this may be said of civilized nations also. They have to spend half of their time in retaining what they have acquired. If they do not for some reason or other, they will soon forget it. And this may reasonably be supposed to have been the case with all savages now living. They have sprung from a civilized common origin. But when circumstances compelled them to separate themselves from the centre of civilization, they had to employ all their energy in securing food or defending themselves against wild animals, and the consequence was that civilization was forgotten and a state of barbarism followed. Oar own experience, observation among nations, history as far as it goes, and sa-

cred records combine to prove that civilization is prior to savagery on earth, notwithstanding the Colonel's assertion to the contrary.

INGERSOLL'S SAVIORS.

The Colonel, after having disposed of Jesus and the atonement, has the following, page 604: "Intelligence, the development of the mind, the discoveries of science, the inventions of genius, the cultivation of the imagination through art and music, and the practice of virtue, will redeem the human race. These are the saviors of mankind." And it must be remembered that the Colonel means an intelligence free from any idea of God, for religion is, according to his view, synonymous with superstition. He means a development of the mind contrary to religion, art and science without reference to anything that is eternal. These are his "saviors."

I had an idea that mankind had been given sufficient time to test these saviors thoroughly long ago. There was no lack of intelligence, of development, of art and sciences in those ancient states, Babylonia, Egypt, Greece and Rome. On the contrary they seem to have contained intelligence, the products of which in arts and sciences have never been surpassed. The saviors of the Col. had free hands to redeem those nations. But did they do it? No. A contemporary describes the nations he was acquainted with in the beginning of our era, in the following terms: "Filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despisers, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable." (Paul.) This was the condition of the most intelligent people that ever lived on earth. Their intelligence could not redeem them, but may be the Colonel's saviors have improved and grown stronger in the nineteenth century than they were before. This is to be hoped, at least for the gentleman's own sake. For one that dares to contemptuously trample under his feet God's plan of redemption, will one day be in need of a strong Savior, if one is to be found.

JEHOVAH.

The almost blasphemous sentences which the Colonel writes about Jehovah, a name once so sacred that even true worshippers never dared to pronounce it, would perhaps be best to ignore altogether. They hardly need a reply.

The great objection of the Colonel to the God of Israel is, that He is cruel. "A God of Blood," Reply, page 611. And this because in His dealings with those ancient peoples He did not follow the rules of conduct which the Col. thinks He ought to have been guided by, nor treat them according to the international laws now existing, thousands of years after. This is an objection that bears its stupidity on the surface. For, although I am willing to admit the great advancement of Colonel Ingersoll, yet I venture the statement that God knew exactly what He was doing and that His mode of treating the nations was anciently and is now infinitely superior to anything that the lofty genius of man can suggest.

It ought to be self-apparent that God could not treat those ancient nations in the same way as He would deal with the nations now. God, a rational being, deals with everybody as circumstances require. If the Col. would try he might perhaps be able to see the necessity of this. Nations as well as individuals possess different degrees of intelligence, think and feel differently on the same subjects and live under different conditions. These must be recognized or else all intercourse would be a failure. Suppose, for instance, that H. M. Stanley should have traveled through the "Dark Continent" as he used to travel through the United States and that he had expected to get along with the savages as he used to get along with the waiters in the hotels of America. The consequence would have been that he, instead of coming through all right, would finally have found himself on the supper table of some chief. He had to adapt himself to circumstances and show his gun as his recommendation, although this would hardly have been taken kindly here, in a civilized country. A God would be he, who should try to go through a savage nation on the strength of a passport from a consul, or through a civilized country on the strength of his gun. And yet, this is exactly what the Colonel wishes to make of God. He would have Him treat nations 3,000 years ago according to conditions under which we live, to-day. And this is the Colonel's great wisdom.

EXTERMINATION OF THE CANANITES.

God cruel! It is impossible within the limits of this article to answer all the charges made against God in order to prove His cruelty. I will therefore confine myself to that which in my judgment is the gravest—the extermination of the Canaanites.

"How did Jehovah command his people to treat their neighbors? He commanded his generals to destroy all men, women and babes." This is the objection. Reply, page 613.

Let the reader bear the following facts in mind: (1) The Canaanites were so debased that the lowest kinds of brutal sins were common among them. Compare Leviticus 18, 20-25, and Deuteronomy 18, 10-12. Their

atheism had, as atheism always does, augmented licentiousness and cruelty. (2) They had known the Divine will, but rejected God. They were the descendants of Noah and had for centuries had the light of revelation lingering among them. Melchisedek, king of Salem and the priest of the most High God had been among them. Gen. 14. (3) They had been warned by the deluge, by the fate of Sodom, by the destruction of Pharaoh, the overthrow of their eastern neighbors, the Amorites, the passage of Jordan and the capture of Jericho. But notwithstanding all these warnings, they preferred to war against God's people. (4) They had the alternative of enigrating, as in fact many of them did who sailed to the shores of the Mediterranean and founded flourishing colonies. (5) As their removal from the land, that was not theirs, but belonged to Israel, was necessary in order to preserve the people from the contamination of idolatry, there seems to have been no course open but exterminating those that would not move, nor repent and join Israel as one of their number.

When all these facts are considered and also the conditions under which those ancient nations were raised, I think any honest man will in his heart acquit Jehovah of the charge made against Him. Certain it is, that the reverend theologian and philosopher, the Apostle John, and thousands of others, who were better acquainted with God and had reflected upon his works more than the Colonel, do not hesitate in declaring that "God is Love," not a God of "blood."

JEPHTHAH.

In treating of the history of Jephthah, the Col. tries to make out that this judge of Israel sacrificed his own daughter on Jehovah's altar, and that God was well pleased with this human or inhuman sacrifice. Reply, p. 611. In this instance the Colonel shows plainly how superficial he is in his observation of facts and unreliable in his statements. He simply assumes his whole position on the strength of his exegesis of King James' English translation of the passage. He does not even care what the true reading and meaning of the passage is. This carelessness for truth is not new among infidels. It has been remarked that most of the objections or famous Voltaire were coined against the wrong translations of the Latin version, the *Vulgate*, instead of against the Bible, and if the Colonel follows in the steps of Voltaire, we must perhaps not think that strange. However, the assertion that Jephthah sacrificed his own daughter to God, is as false as it is ridiculous. Not one word in the Bible supports it.

Let us see. The verses containing Jephthah's vow (Judges 11; 30, 31) can be rendered thus: "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon (who had engaged in an unjust war against Israel) into my hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever comes out of the doors of my house, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall be for Jehovah, and I will offer him a burnt offering." That whatsoever met Jephthah on his return should be for the Lord, that is, devoted to the Lord exclusively, as Hannah devoted Samuel, this was what the judge promised. The narrative proceeds, stating that the daughter of Jephthah was the first to meet her father, and upon learning his vow, she said: "Do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth." "Let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my play-sisters." The words in italics show wherein the sacrifice consisted. The girl was to be devoted entirely to the Lord's service, and could no more engage in any secular employments, not even marriage. Further, "And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed. And she knew no man." Observe this, for this was the vow. "And it was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to comfort or rather to make presents (thanot, gift, reward. See Psalm 68.18, where the word is rendered so) to the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite four days in a year," showing, I should think, beyond a doubt that the girl was not sacrificed at all, as the Col. insists.

According to the Mosaic law, no human sacrifice could be offered. See Deut. 12. 30, 31; Lev. 20. 2. Even touching a dead human body rendered a person unclean for a certain length of time. Jephthah could not sacrifice anything, for he was not a priest, and there was no priest in Israel who could be induced to slay a human sacrifice, thereby defiling the altar of God and making himself liable to capital punishment. Under such circumstances to assert that Jephthah sacrificed his daughter, and to rave against the Bible on that account, shows an ignorance too great to be pardonable in a writer like the Colonel.

Indeed, he has in this instance as in so many others, like a veritable Don Quixote, been fighting against wind in his instead of giants.

MISTAKES.

All the Bible quotations of the Col. are more or less distorted. God's altar was "adorned with the horns of a beast." Page 611. No, Colonel! You are mistaken. The adornments were made of wood, overlaid with gold, and were not horns at all. "Ev-

ery temple was a slaughter house." Same page. No, Colonel! Not a thing was slaughtered in the temples, but outside in the yard, and God never had more than one temple at a time; in the old dispensation. These are fair examples of the reliability of the statements of the Colonel. And of such almost every page abounds.

SLAVERY.

In order not to trespass too long upon the patience of my readers, I will only notice one more of the Colonel's assertions: "Christ said nothing against slavery." Reply, page 626.

This objection against Christianity is somewhat common. But it is a great mistake. It is true, Christ did not say, as far as we know, Thou shalt keep no slaves, anymore than he said, Thou shalt keep no saloons; or, Thou shalt eat no human flesh. But the whole tenor of the teaching of Christ goes to prohibit all that is wrong in every age, and among every people, slavery among the rest. A man who believes the teachings of Christ can keep no "slaves," for he is bound by that teaching to love his slaves as himself, and this very fact would abolish "slavery" as such.

The Apostle Paul, I presume, understood the teachings of Christ a good deal better than does the Colonel. Now, we happen to have a private letter written by Paul to Philemon illustrating this very question.

It appears that Philemon, a convert to Christianity, residing in Colossae in Phrygia, had a slave, Onesimus, who had stolen something and run away from his master. This poor run-away happened to come to Rome and became converted through the preaching of Paul. The Apostle then sends him back to Philemon and gives him the letter in question, entreating Philemon for the liberty and forgiveness of Onesimus. And this is the language of the great Apostle in behalf of the slave: "I beseech thee for my son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds. I send him back to thee, and entreat thee to take him into thy favor, for in giving him I am giving my own heart. For perhaps he therefore departed from thee for a season, that thou mightest regain him forever; not now as a slave but a beloved brother. This indeed he is to me most of all. If therefore thou regardest me as a friend and companion, take him to thee, as if he were myself. And if he has wronged thee, or is indebted to thee, set it down to my account. Here is my signature—Paul—in my own handwriting. I will repay thee." The above is a somewhat free but faithful rendering of the Greek text of a portion of the letter to Philemon. I think it is a crime to say that Christianity favors slavery, or says nothing against it, as long as the above letter exists. For it is clear that when slaves are treated in the way recommended by Paul, they are no longer slaves, but sons, and brethren, and freemen.

The slavery that was tolerated among the ancient heathen nations was simply fearful. J. B. Lightfoot, (Epistle to Philemon, page 320) gives the following description: "In our enthusiastic eulogies of free, enlightened, democratic Athens, we are apt to forget that the interests of the many were ruthlessly sacrificed to the selfishness of the few. The slaves of Attica on the most probable computation were about four times as numerous as the citizens, and about three times as numerous as the whole free population of the state, including the resident aliens (Boeck estimates the slaves at 400,000 to 21,000 citizens). They were consigned for the most part to labor in gangs in the fields, or in the mines or the factories, without any hope of bettering their condition. We are told that wealthy Roman landowners sometimes possessed as many as ten or twenty thousand slaves or even more. One Claudius Isidorus left by will more than four thousand slaves, though he had incurred serious losses by the civil war."

"And these vast masses of human beings had no protection from Roman law. The slave had no relationships, no conjugal rights. Cohabitation was allowed to him at his owner's pleasure, but not marriage. His companion was sometimes consigned to him by lot. The slave was absolutely at his master's disposal; for the smallest offense he might be scourged, mutilated, crucified, thrown to the wild beasts."

True, we also find slavery among Israel. But though the name is the same, the thing is as different as can be. The Hebrew was enjoined to always remember that he had himself been a slave in Egypt and consequently treat the slaves with kindness. The Hebrew "slaves" were members of his family and also of the Holy Congregation. They had religious as well as social rights and should be liberated after six years' service, unless they preferred to continue "slaves." This kind of slavery hardly deserves the name comparatively. Certain it is, considering the conditions of ancient society, and particularly ancient warfare, this "slavery" was a blessing instead of a curse, saving a great deal of human misery that would otherwise have darkened the pages of history.

And yet even this comparatively mild form of servitude is done away with by the teaching of Christ, which tells us that "In Christ there is neither bond nor free, but they are all one." "Meanwhile a principle is boldly enunciated, which must in the end prove fatal to slavery. When the Gos-

pel taught that God had made all men and women upon earth of one family; that all alike were his sons and his daughters; that whatever conventional distinctions human society might set up, the supreme King of heaven refused to acknowledge any; that the slave notwithstanding his slavery was Christ's freedman, and the freeman notwithstanding his liberty was Christ's slave; when the church carried out this principle by admitting the slave to the highest privileges, inviting him to kneel side by side with his master at the same holy table; when in short the Apostolic precept that "in Christ Jesus is neither bond nor free" was not only recognized but acted upon, then slavery was doomed." J. B. Lightfoot, Ep. to Phil., p. 325.

A GREAT MISTAKE.

Col. Ingersoll in his reply to Gladstone commits a great many mistakes. But the great mistake, the one on which most of the others depend, is this: he confounds things that have no connection whatever. His acquaintance with the Bible seems to be very superficial. He knows nothing at all about the true religion of Christ, it appears. But he knows something about the churches of the world, like liars and traitors have killed the martyrs of Jesus and assumed their authority. He knows something about the false and insane teachings of these pseudo churches. And he confounds these things together, charging God, the Bible and the Church of Christ with doctrines and actions which originated in hell instead of with God. This is really what he does.

Instead of attacking God, and the word of God, who are far out of the reach of a man like Ingersoll, he builds a castle out of the fragments he can pick up on the religious arena of the world, and then attacks this castle, which he has built, with tremendous valor, pretending that it is God he is conquering, when he is pulling his own work to pieces. The Colonel is engaged in the same kind of work as the boys who build castles or citadels of snow, afterwards bombarding them with snowballs, playing that they are full of enemies to be overcome, although there is nothing at all behind the walls. Thus the ingenious author is building his own arguments and pulling them down afterwards. And he actually intimates that Christianity by this time, owing to his puerile efforts is nothing more than a "dead horse."

I feel to say, in view of the great work God is performing in these last days through his servants, that anyone who thinks that God is no more, or that Christianity is a "dead horse" must himself be either blind or liable to the rebuke of the Royal Poet: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 53, 1.

THE SNOWVILLE RAID.

A Correspondent Furnishes Details.

Editor Deseret News:

Snowville was visited between three and four a. m., Sunday, by Deputy Marshal Eggleston or Eggleston, (I understand he is called both). His first place was Bishop Goodliffe's which he searched to find the Bishop, but did not. About six o'clock he repaired to the residence of Wm. Bunderson who, seeing strangers coming prepared to leave. To this the deputy objected and ordered a halt. Finding his command not obeyed he fired at the fleeing man; a chase ensued, the marshal on foot, going across lots to head off the man, he being on horseback, the marshal shouting for his assistant Nichols to "go and get a horse," which he did. They went out as far as the fields out did not find anyone.

The firing frightened Brother Bunderson's wife, who stood looking on. She screamed piteously, running down the street perfectly frantic.

Snowville has never witnessed such a scene before and hopes never to again. The officer departed, stating he would soon return with a posse, to take every man in the valley, dead or alive. Deputy Eggleston had papers which he wished the men he was after to sign, stating that in so doing it would free them from their present case. The paper was to the effect that what their families had testified to before the grand jury was true and that they would voluntarily appear at the may term of court in Ogden. It was the may or November term I am not sure which, and their cases would be thrown out of court, by doing as they requested, as they had not evidence to convict. Do you know anything of this new move and its purport?

They (the marshals) could not find any one willing to present the papers to the parties.

Snowville, July 30, 1888.

The correspondent asks a question in relation to the "new departure" papers which the officers are anxious to have signed by persons convicted for unlawful cohabitation and who are at large. It may be that the officers are solicitous to obtain a confession from the parties. A statement of the kind in question would be of that nature. It certainly could not legally be of any advantage to the defendants. It may be that one object is to render certain that the men wanted are in the neighborhood, and in any event to secure their custody. It may be taken as a tolerable certainty that in this