

For the Torch of Reason.

The Licensed Preacher.

[REV. OLD MORTALITY.]

My Little Ones:

While it pleases me very greatly to see so many of you assembled here at the tabernacle this beautiful spring morning, I am sorry to say to you that I am sad; very sad. And judging by the signs on the zodiac, circumstances that will soon come upon this country are destined to cause such a revolution among us sky pilots that the writers of the inspired Jew bible will turn in their sepulchres and gnash their teeth in horror.

Skepticism and infidelity will soon spread its direful influence to every part of this country. This direful calamity we can charge to the account of the school teacher and the newspapers, who, of late years, have become so independent and viscious that they have lost faith, not alone in us pulpiteers, but they have lost all faith in our divinely inspired bible.

The things that I will say to you this morning I wish you would try hard to remember, so you will be able to repeat them to your good parents. It will soon become necessary for us divines to raise a vast sum of money in order to buy Col. R. G. Ingersoll and some of these vile newspaper editors that are brave enough to tell what they call the truth. It was once thought that faith and truth were a kind of Siamese twins, but it appears now that this idea has been somewhat shattered.

ABOUNDING IN FAITH.

Speaking of faith reminds me of a story I once heard told about a Methodist minister and a Campbellite preacher that happened to meet on the banks of a beautiful lake for the purpose of whiling away a few hours at fishing.

It appears that the Methodist had provided himself with a small canvas boat, which he set up, and was soon anchored in the deepest part of the lake, and hauling in the fish at an astonishing rate.

The Campbellite preacher fished from the bank, but not a bite rewarded his efforts. At length, becoming tired of the monotony of the sport, he retired to the shade of a sycamore tree, where he could see the Methodist steadily hauling in the scaly denizens of the lake. This sight made the good Campbellite green with envy. In order to drown his envious feelings he took from his breast-pocket a small bible. Opening it at random his eyes rested upon the following passage:

"And the Lord said: 'If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.'"—Luke, 17:6.

Instantly the good Campbellite fell upon his knees, and he besought the Lord to pluck up the sycamore tree and cast it into the lake. No sooner said than up in the air went the tree, and down it came upon the Methodist minister's boat, swamping it in far less time than I can tell it.

The fisherman swam to the shore, and when he had learned the cause of his misfortune he, in turn fell upon his knees, and besought the Lord to cause the tree to emerge from the lake and descend upon the jealous and wicked Campbellite preacher. Up came the tree, and after it had sailed around above the head of the Campbellite for a moment or two it swooped down on him, and felled him to the earth.

Crawling out from under the tree the two men fell to and smote each other hip and jole, and no doubt would have killed each other if they had not been separated by a couple of tramps who had had their eyes upon the Campbellite's lunch basket, which contained a jug of Jersey lightning.

My little ones, we learn from this story that faith will accomplish wonders; in fact it will remove a mountain without the assistance of either pick or spade. So the bible informs us, and there is no one doubts this declaration but skeptics, infidels, and a few other people who have not faith enough to remove a red wart off of the end of their fool noses.

I once heard a worldly woman say that one pound of investigation was worth five tons of faith and credulity. That very evening while she was milking her cows one of them kicked her and broke her left leg as a punishment for her want of faith. How this cow had learned what this woman said about faith has always remained a mystery to me. This story should stand as a warning to all women who are lacking in faith.

Faith is a mysterious something that has kept the various religions of the world intact. The want of faith has been the death of not a few styles of religion. In these days of free schools and newspapers, faith is now losing its old time hold upon the educated and intelligent classes.

The 113,000 pulpiteers who now fill their churches by the power of faith, are trembling in their pulpits at the increasing lack of faith shown by a truly intelligent American congregation. Faith is a something that was brewed on foreign soil, and will not mix well with American investigation. The well balanced American will try to prove all things and hold on to that which is proven to be good and true.

Faith in the Mormon bible has brought a following of 100,000 poor unfortunate, ignorant people to sacrifice their freedom and individ-

uality. Faith in the Mohammedan bible has been the cause of many millions of poor deluded men and women to forsake all that should be above other blessings: Freedom! No finer or better word was ever coined by the intelligent mind of man. Faith in the so-called bibles and sacred books has reddened the earth with the warm blood of countless millions.

And now at this late date Rev. James Buckley, editor of the Christian Advocate, says publicly, that the holy bible is not infallible. Brother Buckley you certainly have been a long time in discovering what nearly every educated and intelligent person that read this book of ancient myths has long ago ascertained. The millennium will not sail into port until us sky pilots stop lying about God. When education and the printing press has weeded out the last vestage of ignorant faith, then this old world will be worth holding on to. Then will I, and my dear brothers, be compelled to vacate our pulpits, roll up our sleeves, and scratch gravel or go to the poorhouse—or to the devil.

Oh! what a trial this will be for many of us, for we know comparatively nothing about the practical business of this world, as our work has been in telling foolish old men, and silly old women, how to die; when perhaps we should have told them how to live happily in this matter of fact world. By faith we have given this world a pretty long squeeze and in consequence it has fed and clothed us most liberally, and I thank it heartily for its benevolent simplicity. Sometimes faith is a good thing to have, e.g.: the married ladies of this congregation would do well to have faith in their husbands; they are so good, true and noble. A woman who has no faith in her husband is most miserable.

FRIGHTFUL IMPUDENCE.

Now, along comes Col. R. G. Ingersoll, and with his usual impudence he assails the good book from which we gain our livelihood, in a most inhuman manner. In order, my little ones, to show you the vain conceit of this poor misguided man, I will read for your benefit a few extracts from a recent epistle which he had published in a late number of the New York Journal.

"WHEN MOSES WROTE AFTER."

"All these ministers ought to know that the books ascribed to Moses were not written until hundreds of years after his death, and they ought to know that Deuteronomy contradicts Leviticus and Numbers. They ought to know that these books were being produced during several centuries and by many authors.

"It does not seem possible that intelligent men believe all that is recorded in the Old Testament.

Does any sane human being believe that Elijah was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire? Where is heaven? How far or how high did Elijah go? Does any sane man believe that a river was divided because it had been struck with a cloak? Can anything be more childish?

"Does Dr. Hall believe that the day was lengthened by stopping the rotary motion of the earth for the purpose of giving Joshua more time to kill his enemies? What a waste of force!

"Does he believe that the earth was not only stopped, but made to turn the other way, until the shadow went back ten degrees on the dial, to convince a little Jewish king that he would recover from a boil? Can any sensible man believe such a story?

"Does any minister believe that David raised five thousand million dollars in gold and silver to build the temple?

"Is it necessary to believe such a story to be saved?

"Is it necessary to believe the story of Jonah in order that you may become an angel?

A LIST OF "MISTAKES."

"Most of the ministers, who have been interviewed, admit that there are mistakes—at least, in the translation. What are these mistakes? I should say that the unreasonable, the impossible, the absurd, the cruel, and all the miracles should be called mistakes. Throw away your Eden, your dust man, your rib woman, your apple, your talking snakes, your flood, your Babel, your plagues, your quails, manna and fiery serpents, your horns that level the walls of cities, your witches that raise the dead, your suns that pause, your moons that rest, your bears that destroy children, your prophets that kill innocent men by calling the lightnings from heaven, your soothsayers who interpret dreams, the people who walk in fire without getting warm, your wandering jugglers who raise the dead and cause pots to exude oil, your ravens that keep hotels and feed prophets, your axes that float in water, your bushes that burn without being consumed, your clothes that refuse to wear out. Throw all these falsehoods away. Throw away the supernatural and cling to common sense."

My little ones, thus has this so-called silver-tongued Ingersoll spoken to the world through the press. He is trying to starve us out by holding up the truthful and beautiful miracles of the bible to the ridicule of an over-skeptical world, that has long been noted for its lack of faith. What will the harvest be if these scoundrels are permitted to continue much longer? Surely our churches will be transformed into temples of learning; yes, learning; and this so-called learning will compel us sky pilots to scratch gravel or go to the poorhouse. Oh, my heart is sad; very sad. Amen.