

GREAT AND GOOD MEN IN HELL.

BY COLONEL INGERSOLL.

"God so loved the world" he is going to damn most everybody, and, if this Christian religion be true, some of the greatest and grandest and best who ever lived upon this earth are suffering its torments to-night! It don't appear to make much difference, however, with this church. They go right on enjoying themselves as well as ever. If their doctrine is true, Benjamin Franklin, one of the wisest and best of men, who did so much to give us here a free government, is suffering the tyranny of God to-night, while he endeavored to establish freedom among men. If the churches were honest their preachers would tell their hearers,—“Benjamin Franklin is in hell, and we warn any and all the youth not to imitate Benjamin Franklin.—Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, with its self-evident truths, has been damned these many years.” That is what all the ministers ought to have the courage to say. Talk as you believe. Stand by your creed or change it. I want to impress it upon your mind, because the thing I wish to do in this world is to put out the fires of hell. I want to keep at it just as long as there is one little coal red in the bottomless pit. As long as the ashes are warm I shall denounce this infamous doctrine. I want you to know that the men who founded this great and glorious government are there. The most of the men who fought in the Revolutionary war and wrestled from the clutch of Great Britain this continent, have been rewarded by the eternal wrath of God. The old Revolutionary soldiers are in hell by the thousands. Let the preachers have the courage to say so. The men who fought in 1812 and gave to the United States the freedom of the seas, nearly all of them have been damned since 1815—all that were killed. The greatest of heroes, they are there. The greatest of poets, the greatest of scientists, the men who have made the world beautiful and grand, they are all, I tell you, among the damned if this creed is true. Humboldt, who shed light, and who added to the intellectual wealth of mankind; Goethe, and Schiller, and Lessing, all gone! All suffering the wrath of God to-night, and every time an angel thinks of one of those men he gives his harp an extra twang. Laplace, who read the heavens like an open book—he is there. Robert Burns, the poet of human love—he is there because he wrote the “Prayer of Holy Willie,” because he fastened upon the cross the Presbyterian creed, and made it a lingering crucifixion. And yet that man added to the tenderness of the human heart. Dickens, who put a shield of pity before the flesh of childhood—God is getting even with him. Our own Ralph Waldo Emerson, although he had a thousand opportunities to hear Methodist clergymen, scorned the means of grace, and the Holy Ghost is delighted that he is in hell to-night.

Longfellow refined hundreds and thousands of homes, but he did not believe in the miraculous origin of the Saviour. No Sir! he doubted the report of Gabriel. He loved his fellow men he did what he could to free his slaves; he did what he could to make mankind happy; but God was waiting for him. He had his constable right there. Thomas Paine the author of “The Rights of Man,” offering his life in both hemispheres for the freedom of the human race, and one of the founders of the Republic—it often seemed to me that if we could get God's attention long enough to point him to the American flag he would let him out. Comte the author of the “Positive Philosophy,” who loved his fellow men to that degree that he made of humanity a god, who wrote his great work in poverty, with his face covered in tears—they are getting their revenge on him now. Voltaire, who abolished torture in France; who did more for human liberty than any other man, living or dead; who was the assassin of superstition, and whose dagger still rusts in the heart of Catholicism—all the priests who have been translated, have their happiness increased by looking at Voltaire. Glorious country, where the principal occupation is watching the miseries of the lost!—Giordano Bruno, Benedict Spinoza, Diderot, the encyclopedist who endeavored to get all knowledge in a small compass, so that he could put the peasant on an equality with the prince intellectually,—the man who wished to sow all over the world the seeds of knowledge; who loved to labour for mankind. While the priests wanted to burn, he did all he could to put out the fire—he has been lost long, long ago. His cry for water has become so common that his voice is now recognized

through the realms of hell, and they say to one another “That is Diderot.” David Hume the Philosopher he is also there with the rest. Beethoven, the Shakespeare of music, he has been lost; and Wagner, the master of melody, and who has made the air of this world rich forever, he is there; and they have better music in hell than in heaven. Shelley whose soul, like his own “Skylark,” was a winged joy—he has been damned for many, many years; and Shakespeare, the greatest of the human race, who has done more to elevate mankind than all the priests who ever lived and died, he is there; and all the founders of the Inquisitions, the builders of dungeons, the makers of chains, the inventors of instruments of torture, teachers and burners and branders of human flesh, stealers of babes, and sellers of husbands and wives and children, the drawers of the swords of persecution, and they who kept the horizon lurid with the fagot's flame for a thousand years—they are in heaven to-night! Well, I wish heaven joy in such company.

THE BISHOPS IN THE LORDS

“The notion that English Christianity would suffer damage if the Bishops were withdrawn from the House of Lords appears to me entirely devoid of foundation.” That was written by Canon Ryle; but the canon has since become a bishop, and, as he is the junior bishop in the House of Lords, he had to tell a company of Episcopalians at Liverpool lately that “to his own great inconvenience, he was now obliged to be absent from his diocese a considerable portion of the year. He had every day to read prayers in the House of Lords. He did not read them to a very large audience. He thought perhaps half-a-dozen made up the whole number; the prayers were over in about five minutes.” It has been suggested that the Lords might, like the Commons, have a chaplain; but mark Bishop Ryle's reply to that suggestion: “Some one had suggested that a chaplain should take that place, but he could not help remembering that it would be one more step towards taking the bishops out of the House of Lords altogether, and if once that was done people would ask what was the use of the Church of England being connected with the state at all.” So that the bishop has completely turned his back upon the vicars. But, as we know, “circumstances alter cases.”—“The Liberator.”

TRUTH AND ERROR.

O, Heav'n-born Truth let all adore,
Naught else in Universe immense, deserves the praise,
And since to mighty eminence the Truth aspires,
Such aspiration man doth joyously and freely give;
Let this then of all things be man's chief end—
To expose the Truth, result of which brings joy to all.
Alone on Truth man's happiness depends,
And when Truth dawns and plainly realised
Our duty's plain: let each assimilate
This high Heav'n-born deity to themselves.
In bygone times this god was weak,
Was fighting feebly; in those days of yore
Vile error, rampant, shewed its teeth,
Invented witches, demons, principalities, powers,
And cloth'd them all in flesh and bone.
Its beak and claw, red hot with blood
Of noble men, whose lives were freely giv'n,
Who sacrificed them for the Truth.
In later on to latest times, a timid deity
Has stronger grown—now lifts its head
With proud pre-eminence; day by day
It's onslaught on this vile enfeshing error's felt.
This demon, error, now in abject places cowers,
It finds its place alone in weakly minds, held fast
By sophistry, naught else besides.
Oh! matchless Truth, to thee we humbly pray;
Now since thou shewest thy strength, command
This worshipp'd deity by some; Oh! send it hence,
And cause such hell-born error flee away,
Consign to that vile place from whence it came.

A.

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The Rev. J. J. Blissdale, D.D., formerly of the diocese of Melbourne, died in San Francisco at a German hospital, after much suffering. He was compelled to eke out a meagre subsistence by newspaper work, which he did chiefly on Marriott's News Letter. He was seventy-two years of age when he died. Some scientific friends paid all his expenses in a reserved room at the hospital, and gave his remains respectable interment. Where were the Christians?