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I. THE LATEST INFIDELITY.

A REPLY TO INGERSOLL'S POSITIONS.

THE phase of infidelity most current among those who do not profess to accept the gospel is marked by two qualities: It is aggressive, and it is extreme. It refuses to stop short of that last result, blank atheism, or, at least, blank agnosticism, from which even the skepticism of previous ages recoiled with abhorrence. This ultraism of the present adversaries is in one aspect very shocking; but in another it is promising. They are practically teaching the world that conclusion, on which James Mills justified his atheism, that when once a man's sense rejects the gospel theory, he finds no stopping place between that rejection and atheism; because, as Bishop Butler has forever established, every difficulty which besets the old gospel plan equally embarrasses the deistic plan. This disclosure is useful. Our atheists are teaching people that there is no decent middle ground for them to stand on; but the voice of nature and conscience never permits decent people to stand long on the ground of atheism. This outrages both head and heart too horribly. Were a son to insist, contrary to sufficient evidence of the fact, upon denying and discarding the very existence of his father, we see plainly enough how his position involves every phase of filial transgression, because it involves the absolute neglect of every filial duty. The position may involve, in the form of a sin of omission, the crime of parricide. The atheist discards the very existence of his heavenly Father; so, unless he has justified his denial by sound evidence, he includes in that

to be tested. We are not disposed to be critical, because he follows distinguished leaders and because of his intense loyalty to truth in all its manifestations.

In the second section he outlines the only safe method in the pursuit of truth, guarding his hearers against being misled by mere words and phrases. A careful, painstaking and *honest* analysis of terms and their corresponding facts is the *sine qua non* in the pursuit of truth.

In the next three sections he takes three words or phrases from the departments of politics, physical science, and religion for illustration. Taking first "wealth," he shows how a partial analysis leads to false definitions, and then to mischievous heresies, which threaten to overturn civil and social order, whilst accurate analysis gives safe definitions and goes far to solve some of the most vexatious problems of the day. In the same manner he takes up the terms "natural selection" and the "supernatural," and shows how a loose and fallacious use of them sometimes undermines the whole of truth, natural and revealed.

In conclusion he emphasizes the fact that the "physical sciences are becoming more and more metaphysical in all their concepts and in all their corresponding forms of speech." The danger is that the analysis which proves the relativity and subjectivity of knowledge once thought to be absolute and objective will lead us to doubt the reality of that knowledge. Our author presses his illustrations here so far as to raise the suspicion that he holds to a sensualistic philosophy, and saves himself from the breakers on which it might land him by clinging to his definition, "Harmony between the external and the internal order."

J. B. SHEARER.

HAYS' "MAY WOMEN SPEAK?" ETC.

MAY WOMEN SPEAK? A Bible Study by a Presbyterian Minister. *Rev. George P. Hays, D. D., LL. D.* Woman's Temperance Publication Association, 161 La Salle Street, Chicago. 1889.

WOMAN IN THE PULPIT. *By Francis E. Willard. Ibidem.*

The distinguished name appended to the first of the works mentioned above challenges attention, and will doubtless secure a wider reading than would otherwise be accorded to the pamphlet. It will be a surprise to many to find a man so deservedly eminent as Dr. Hays becoming sponsor to so doubtful a movement.

The title of the tract is misleading; the whole tenor of the treatise looks towards the admission of woman to the functions of the ordained ministry, so much so that it was with real surprise that we lighted, almost at the close of the essay, upon the following paragraph:

"The question of the admission to ordination and official preaching is entirely distinct from the question of admission to all such work (suitable to women) as may be done by unordained men. THE ARGUMENT OF THIS PAPER IS SPECIFICALLY FOR THAT PRIVILEGE FOR WOMEN AS THEIR SCRIPTURAL PRIVILEGE AND DUTY."

If this be all, we must consider the argument a very needless one. This may be the ostensible aim of the tract, but the real purport appears a few paragraphs further on:

"The Presbyterian Church authorizes Presbyteries to make exceptions of uneducated men, and if they are specially useful and blessed of God, they may be licensed and ordained, no matter how they may murder grammar, dictionary,

rhetoric, and good sense. In the presence of the conspicuous blessing of God in their labors, who dares to object to their ordination? Many a scholarly minister would gladly exchange his learning for the usefulness of some of his less learned brethren. But there must be no exception ever made for a woman, no matter how educated, eloquent, or blessed of God. The only inflexible, infallible test is sex. God's blessing and success can make up for every other defect; but if a person's gender is wrong, no endorsement of the Holy Ghost and no favor of Christian people can atone for that in the eyes of the Presbyterian Church, nor indeed in any other evangelical church except the Quakers."

This paragraph reveals what the argument of the paper "is specifically for," and its title should have been, "May Women *Preach*?" Had such been announced formally as his topic, the argument must have been different, or else it must have lost much of its apparent force. For if he is avowedly contending for woman's place in the pulpit as a scriptural privilege and duty, what force or pertinence is there in citing circumstance after circumstance and incident upon incident to establish simply the general prominence of woman in the civic, social, and religious life of the Scriptures? Yet this is just what the major portion of his discussion is devoted to.

Ruth, the Moabitess, and Rahab, the Canaanitess, are incorporated into the line of the Messiah; the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon and was royally received; Esther occupied an exalted position; Miriam sang her song; Deborah ruled Israel; Huldah prophesied; "daughters" are mentioned in Joel's prediction; "words of Mary, Elisabeth and Anna" are quoted; Priscilla taught Apollos; Philip's daughters were "prophetesses"; women "ministered of their substance to Christ"; women "labored with Paul"; women are mentioned and commended in the salutations of the Epistles; women were undoubtedly among the followers of Christ; they were most probably with those who were scattered abroad by persecution and who went everywhere preaching the gospel; Christ announced his resurrection to a woman, and by her sent the tidings to others; he drew a reluctant and public testimony from the woman cured of the issue of blood. These things are unquestionably true, and we have the facts elaborated through many pages, but after all what does the whole of it amount to? As thus aggregated in the tract there is some appearance of force in the simple accumulation of incidents; but examine each in turn, and as an argument for the *official preaching* of women its strength will be *nil*; of course the mere multiplication of such instances will avail nothing.

Dr. Hays calls attention to the fact that in the epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews "there is no suggestion of any restraint laid upon any form of womanly proclamation of the gospel," but it would scarcely occur to the writer of these epistles to restrain a custom which had, as we maintain, no existence; in the same connection he says of the conclusion to the Romans, "In all of these practical discussions no warning is made against woman's work, but, on the contrary, great stress is laid upon it in the last chapter." "Woman's work" is a very convenient generality; suppose we substitute woman's *preaching*! So far as woman's work is concerned the Presbyterian Church also lays great stress upon it, gladly and gratefully encourages it; indeed, the prominence accorded it in our age is at least as great as that given it in the New Testament narrative

Our author then proceeds: "This brings our study to the consideration of the two famous passages which are the sole reliance of those who insist on forbidding women to speak." Now this statement is hardly fair in our author. The labored effort he makes through many elaborate pages, the frequency of inference he indul-

ges, the skilful massing and manipulation of scripture incident, his habitual careful avoidance of direct phraseology in interpretation, the necessity of substituting vague general terms when discussing scripture precedents; all this demonstrates most perfectly that *there is not in the whole range of Holy Scripture one single clear unequivocal text or precedent or incident* to support the position his essay undertakes to establish. Suppose now, on the contrary, he had given us a "Bible study" to prove the admission of man to the pulpit as a scriptural privilege and duty; does any one suppose we would have been presented with such an "argument" as this?

We believe that the thoughtful reader of Dr. Hays' tract will lay it aside with the conviction that this "Bible study by a Presbyterian Minister" indirectly but powerfully vindicates the author's church in her position on this subject.

We have no space left for Miss Willard's little book. The greater part of it has appeared before in the Homiletic Review; it is smart, breezy, somewhat sarcastic, and altogether very entertaining.

SAMUEL M. SMITH.

PRATT'S "GIVEN TO CHRIST," ETC.

GIVEN TO CHRIST, AND OTHER SERMONS. *By John W. Pratt, D. D.* With a Biographical Sketch of His Life and Labors. 8vo. Pp. 301. \$2. New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 38 West Twenty-third St. 1889.

Beginning with a brief biographical sketch, containing estimates of Dr. Pratt by eminent, intimate and loving friends, we have a handsome volume in the excellent style of the celebrated house which publishes it, comprising twenty-four discourses, followed by several prayers, given as specimens of the devotional part of service, from one eminent in this department of religious worship.

We cannot bring to the perusal of this work the privilege of a personal acquaintance with its lamented author, and hence we lack the inestimable advantage contributed by the memory of his personal presence, so important an element in preaching. We have a distinct recollection of a sermon from him read by us ten years or more ago, and printed, if we mistake not, as a specimen of his preaching in the Cincinnati Music Hall; it created the impression of decided individuality and unusual vigor of thought. The sermon recalled a conversation had with one who had been a student in Lexington, Va., and as such a regular attendant upon Dr. Pratt's ministry. This student spoke in the highest terms of Dr. Pratt's preaching, the excellence of his elocution, the eloquence of his rhetoric, and the impressiveness of his delivery. Having in mind this report from a regular hearer, we concluded that such matter, with the advantage of such manner, must place a minister far toward the very front of the great preachers of his day. The estimates given in the biographical sketch sustain our inference, and we can easily see how such an impression must be created by the sermons contained in this volume, if delivered in the manner ascribed to their author.

The discourses here published are marked by thoroughness, comprehensiveness, ability and originality; they are eminently thoughtful and rich; suggestive rather than exhaustive; adapted to the thoughtful reader rather than to a popular audience. They evince very thorough and careful preparation, being evidently written sermons, and as such are masterpieces and models of manuscript preaching.

We believe the volume will prove a credit to our Southern Presbyterian Church, and as such we rejoice the more in its publication.

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