

One Cause of Unbelief

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The Signs of the Times : October 15, 1885

A long letter has just been received at this office, from a man in the State of New York. We have not read the letter, and do not know that we shall find time to read it before the holiday vacation, but we have read a part of the first page. We gather from what we have read, that the writer has some views on the Bible, which differ from those of his brethren. Now we do not wish to discourage investigation, or to shut out new light, yet we consider ourselves justified in condemning this writer's views without reading them. Perhaps if we quote a part only of what we have read it, the reader will not charge us with making a hasty decision. Here it is: —

“I will first try and tell you the reason why I have not exactly agreed with the church; I shall by the Lord's help try to tell the truth: 1. Because most of them, and especially the rulers, have, as I have thought, slighted me,” etc.

We have no need to read further. We have heard his story dozens of times. “My brethren have slighted me, therefore I cannot agree with them in points of faith.” We meet a man whom we used to know as a brother, and learn that he has left the church, and renounced his profession. What is the reason? “Well, brother — did not use me well, and the rest of them got to thinking that they were better than I; so I left.” Brother A or Elder B has slighted me, therefore I do not believe that “the seventh day is the Sabbath.” I think my brethren feel above me, therefore it is evident to my mind that the Bible is not true. Is not that profound logic? Yet it is the only basis there is for a large portion of the turning away from the faith.

The first case of an apostasy for such a cause was that of Satan. He felt slighted, and therefore he would not accept the fundamental truth that God is Supreme Governor. And whenever we hear people preface their objections with the statement, “I have been slighted,” we naturally think that they are actuated by some of the same spirit which caused the great rebellion in heaven. Such persons have cause to tremble lest their case becomes as hopeless as that of the first grumbler.

When people begin to imagine that they are slighted, and are not rated according to their abilities, they may be sure that they are thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think. Their brethren, no doubt, have not changed their behavior toward them, and rate them at their true worth. It is very seldom that a man's opinion of himself is more correct than that of all his brethren. But whether the slight be real or fancied, it is certainly the lamest excuse for unbelief that was ever invented; and when any man wants us to give a hearing to his new ideas, he must not make, as a cause for holding them, the statement that he has been slighted by the church.