

Church History S 8

the students looked upon it as something that was utterly unthinkable that any professor would publicly say anything against the Bible, yet among the students there were large groups which called themselves, "The Paine Society", "The Tom Paine Society", the "Voltaire Society" and other societies named after the name of leading infidels and agnostics, deniers of the Word and the attitude of the students of Yale College was almost wholly contrary to the Word of God, and Timothy Dwight began directing a series of debates among the students in which the students would take the different sides on questions and discuss them and then he would give them a discussion of their way in which they had handled themselves in these debates and he asked them to present a series of subjects from which he might pick one for their next debate, one time, and they presented the subject, "That the Bible is not a True Book", that it is full of errors and quite a fraud. Now they presented that as one of seven or eight subjects the rest of which were political or literary, entirely harmless; they simply inserted this in the midst of them and never dreamed that the president would allow any discussion of such a subject as this and to their surprise they picked this one and asked them to pick out teams for both sides of it and all of them wanted to be on the side attacking the Bible and there was no one there who was ready to take the side defending the Bible and so he appointed some to defend the Bible and they made a sorry job of it and they had the debate and the attackers of the Bible were keen and alert and full of quick thinking and the others were very evidently doing a very disagreeable chore in trying to defend something in which they did not believe, and then after they finished President Dwight complimented those who attacked the Bible on the acuteness of their reasoning and on the splendid way in which they had marshalled their arguments but criticized those who had defended the Bible for failing to make the best of the situation and to really get into the matter and then proceeded to show what they might have done and so he gave them a lecture on the evidences of the accuracy of the Bible showing what might have been done in the debate and the students were