



Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political.—*Thomas Jefferson.*

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THERE is nothing which so fully illustrates the foolishness, and injustice of a union of Church and State, as this extract from a law enacted by the Puritan Parliament of England: "No person shall be employed but such as the House shall be satisfied of his real godliness." This precluded the employment of any one who was not indorsed by the priests of the State religion.—*Loyal American.*

THE *Ironclad Age* observes that "Archbishop Ryan says he doesn't want any more union of Church and State than there is," and remarks the fact that "Catholicism has got a safe hold upon the public treasury and it is content." Sure enough, so long as they have the game without the name, why should they not be satisfied? Their property is exempt from taxation, the Government supports their mission schools among the Indians; and in some of the States, notably in this State, they have their arm in the public treasury up to the elbow, with every prospect that they will soon be in all over. There is, indeed, little left to be desired.

OUR liberal exchanges don't seem to like our "Lesson from Paine." *Freethought* and the *Truth Seeker* both protest that Paine didn't know what he was talking about. The *Truth Seeker* says: "Paine made his point as a Deist, and made a mistake" We are aware that Paine was a Deist, and that he made many and grievous mistakes, but his estimate of the benign nature of the Christian religion,

and of the origin of Church and State was not one of them. An important difference between Paine and many of his modern disciples, is, that, whereas he conceded to others the same freedom of opinion that he claimed for himself, the average "Free-thinker" of the present day is about as intolerant as a Jesuit.

Religion in the Public Schools.

"SHALL religion be taught in the public schools?" is a question that is receiving more attention, and being more generally discussed in this country than is almost any other subject. The press, the pulpit, and the people generally are more or less occupied with this important query; and while the general sentiment is clearly against what is known as "sectarianism," it is urged by many that the State ought to give "unsectarian instruction in the fundamental truths of Christianity." But even if this proposition were granted the problem would be very far from a satisfactory solution; these questions would still remain as troublers. What is unsectarian instruction? and what are the fundamental principles of Christianity?

It has been urged by some, and the idea has been accepted by many with little or no thought, that the moral law as contained in the ten commandments, and the principles of morality as laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, embody all that is really essential, and should be taught in the public schools. This, we are assured by those who advocate it, would be strictly unsectarian. But let us see if indeed the ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount could be taught without giving sectarian instruction.

To be unsectarian, even in the restricted sense of being common to all Christians, any portion of the Scriptures would have to convey to all claiming to be Christians the same meaning, that is, all Christians must understand such portions of Scripture alike. The question naturally arises, Is this true of the ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount? Take for example

the fourth commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." As between Protestants and Catholics even this rendering of this commandment is sectarian, and the numbering of it is sectarian. In the Douay Bible it reads, "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day;" and in Catholic catechisms it is not the fourth commandment but the third.

But that is not the only, nor indeed the most serious difficulty. All do not understand the fourth commandment alike. Some take it just as it reads: "The seventh day is the Sabbath;" others that it now enjoins the keeping of the first day of the week, while others think that it is now of no binding force whatever. Now suppose that it is read in a school in which "non-sectarian religious instruction" is to be given. A pupil reads: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Ex. 20:8-11. He then asks: What is the Sabbath day? or, What is really required by this commandment? or, Is this commandment now binding upon us just as it was upon those to whom it was given at Sinai? Must the teacher answer, "I am not permitted to tell you?" Well has another remarked, "If anything in the world is calculated to bring both the teacher and the Bible into ridicule, we think that such teaching as this would surely accomplish that result."

Turning to the Sermon on the Mount, we are confronted by difficulties no less serious. Even professed Christians differ widely as to whether this sermon is a divine or only a human utterance. The difficulty is thus stated by a Roman Catholic writer of some prominence:—

The Unitarians, not believing in the divinity of

Christ, only look upon that sermon as a human production, while other Christian denominations accept its every word as the infallible teaching of infinite wisdom; so that the teacher cannot undertake to tell his pupil in the public school, after reading to him that sermon, whether he is to accept it as the word of God or only as the word of a man, without invading the realms of denominational teaching. And all will admit that there is an infinite difference between the weight to be attached to the language of an all-wise God and even the wisest utterances of a mere man when giving expression to the deductions of his own finite and feeble reason. There are many passages in that sermon which are very differently construed by people of different religious denominations. For example, it is there said, "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you, swear not at all." This passage is by many very conscientious people interpreted as prohibiting the taking of an oath as a witness or otherwise, and hence they never swear, even in our courts of justice, but affirm.

"Again," says the same writer, "Christians of some denominations interpret the Sermon on the Mount as authorizing the absolute dissolution, by divorce, of the valid bonds of matrimony for certain causes, so as to allow one of the divorced parties to marry again during the life of the other, while other Christians maintain that all such second marriages during the lives of both the divorced parties are, morally speaking, invalid and wrong."

These examples might be multiplied almost indefinitely, but it is quite unnecessary; the fact is that there is no such thing as "unsectarian teaching of religion" possible. Even the most elementary truths of the Christian religion cannot be taught without teaching things which are sectarian as between different bodies of professed Christians to say nothing of the beliefs of those who are not Christians, but whose rights are just as sacred, and to be just as jealously guarded by the State, as are the rights of Christians.

The State is composed of people of all religions and of no religion. The public schools, are supported by a tax levied upon all property alike, and it is but just that it should be expended in a manner approved by all, or that, at least, men should not be compelled to indirectly contribute to the support and propagation of religious tenets which they do not believe, by being taxed for the support of schools in which religion is taught.

C. P. B.

THE *Christian Union*, an influential journal, would like to see the Bible used in the public schools simply as a text book of literature and history, but adds that "if our Catholic, Jewish or Agnostic brethren object to opening schools with acts of worship, such worship should in our judgment be discontinued." We can speak in behalf of Jewish-American citizens who, without exception, are unalterably opposed to teaching sectarian doctrines of any kind in our public schools. We are for an absolute divorce of Church and State in every sense of the term.—*Jewish Times and Observer*.

"Just As the Chinese."

THE following paragraph is from a recent editorial in the *Mail and Express*, of this city, whose editor and proprietor is President of the American Sabbath Union. It reflects the intolerance of the man, and, indirectly, of the organization at whose head he stands:—

Let Mormons be prevented from entering our country, just as are the Chinese, and for the same reason, that they are heathen. The Mormons worship Adam as God, they have laid our Lord Jesus Christ on the shelf, they have lords many and gods many, they sing praises to Joseph Smith in Christian songs stolen from our hymn books, substituting Smith's name for Christ's; they blaspheme the true God. Thus the main reason that reconciled the Christian sentiment of this country to the exclusion of the Chinese, that they are heathen, should also operate to secure from Congress a law to prohibit the importation of Mormons. Then the miserable "elders" and "bishops" and "high priests" of Joe Smith, Bacchus, and Lewdness could not arrive here with harems of Scandinavians or other deluded foreigners. We earnestly commend this suggestion to the powerful support of Mormon-preventing Senator Edmunds, of Vermont.

In our opinion Mormonism is very far from the truth; and we have spoken in no uncertain tones on the question of the suppression of polygamy; but we dissent from the proposition to exclude any man from this country on account of his religion. The Mormon has no right to practice polygamy, and the Government has a perfect right to demand that he shall obey the marriage laws of the country; but with the "worship of Adam," and their "praise to Joseph Smith in Christian songs stolen from our hymn books," the Government can have nothing whatever to do, any more than it can with the Roman Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary.

C. P. B.

Dishonorable and Dangerous.

IN 1784 a bill was introduced into the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, entitled, "A bill establishing a provision for the teachers of the Christian religion." About a century later, in 1889, Senator Blair introduced into the Senate of the United States a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the national Constitution *establishing a provision for the teaching of the principles of the Christian religion*. The former, if passed, as Madison said, would have been "a dangerous abuse of power."* Is the latter any less so? The former, Madison wrote to Jefferson, was "chiefly obnoxious on account of its dishonorable principle and dangerous policy."* This is equally true of the latter. The former was defeated because it was an infringement of our religious equality and thus subversive of American principles. The latter, with slight modifications, is re-introduced into Congress from year to year, and is now before the American people.

The similarity of the principles under-

lying the two bills and the objects sought to be accomplished, bring them both under the same condemnation. There is one point in comparing them, however, that is in favor of the Virginia bill; it allowed the tax to be paid to whatever society the individual taxed might desire; or, if he did not desire it to go to any it would "be applied to the maintenance of a school in the country."† The Blair educational amendment makes no such liberal provision; but the taxes of the Jew, Mahomedan, Infidel and Atheist, are all to be used to teach the "unsectarian principles of Christianity," and if people do not want their children taught what the Government says is Christianity, they can suffer the consequences. And there is no telling how severe the consequences will be, for these very same persons at the same time are intending to pass compulsory educational laws that will *compel everybody to attend a school, be taught the Christian religion, and, what is more, pay for it out of the public treasury!* It is thus evident that the former bill was more liberal, more nearly just, and far less extensive in its consequences, than is the latter.

Both make provision for the use of money raised by the Government for the propagation of the Christian religion—the religion of the dominant cult. Both virtually say that the religious rights of the minority need not be respected by the majority. Both try to avoid opposition by making certain concessions;—the former by allowing each person to name the religious teacher to which his money is to go, and the latter by providing that the "unsectarian principles of Christianity" shall be taught (although the truth is, there is not a single unsectarian principle in the whole system of belief peculiar to Christians). Both violate the principles of religious equality by favoring Christianity above all other religions. The Virginia bill, Madison says, was supported by "many petitions;" so is the Blair educational amendment. The former was favored by certain sects and clergy; so is the latter. Some denominations are putting forth all the energy at their command to crowd petitions onto Congress for the passage of this and other religious measures.

The Virginia bill was defeated only by the untiring efforts of Madison, Colonel Nicholas, Colonel George Mason (drafter of the Virginia Declarations of Rights), and Jefferson, who labored faithfully during the year 1785 to circulate their adverse "Memorial and Remonstrance." In that memorial written by the future "Father of the Constitution," are stated the true principles of the American political system; and in that memorial we find the true interpretation of American institutions as established by the great statesmen of the eighteenth century. Those were the principles that were incorporated

* Quoted in "American State Papers," (1890), page 27, et seq.

† Quoted in "American State Papers," (1890), page 27, et seq.

into the Federal Constitution two years later.

In criticising this species of legislation Madison says "we are bound as faithful members of a free State to remonstrate against it." In declaring the reasons why such legislation is "a dangerous abuse of power," he says:—

We hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth, "that religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence."* The religion, then, of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and *it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate.* This right is in its nature an unalienable right. It is unalienable, because the opinions of men, depending only on the evidence contemplated in their own minds, cannot follow the dictates of other men. It is unalienable, also, because what is here a right towards men is a duty towards the Creator. It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage, *and such only,* as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of civil society.

. . . We maintain, therefore, that in matters of religion no man's right is abridged by the institution of civil society, and that religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance.

It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment upon our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of citizens, and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The freemen of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise, and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by the denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it. *Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity, in exclusion of all other religions, may establish, with the same ease, any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other sects? that the same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment in all cases whatsoever?*

Because the bill violates that equality which ought to be the basis of every law, and which is more indispensable in proportion as the validity or expediency of any law is more liable to be impeached. If "all men are by nature *equally* free and independent," † all men are to be considered as entering into society on *equal* conditions; *as relinquishing no more, and, therefore, retaining no less, one than another, of their natural rights.* Above all, are they to be considered as retaining an "*equal* title to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience." ‡ Whilst we assert for ourselves a freedom to embrace, to profess, and to observe, the religion which we believe to be of divine origin, *we cannot deny an equal freedom to them whose minds have not yet yielded to the evidence which has convinced us.* If this freedom be abused, it is an offense against God, not against man. To God, therefore, not to man, must an account of it be rendered.

The bill implies either that the civil magistrate is a competent judge of religious truths, or that he may employ religion as an engine of civil policy. The first is an arrogant pretension, falsified by the contradictory opinions of rulers in all ages and throughout the world; the second an unhallowed perversion of the means of salvation.

Because the establishment proposed by the bill is not requisite for the support of the Christian religion, to say that it is, is a contradiction of the Christian religion itself; for every page of it dis-

avows a dependence on the powers of this world. It is a contradiction to fact, for it is known that this religion both existed and flourished, not only without the support of human laws, but in spite of every opposition from them; and not only during the period of miraculous aid, but long after it had been left to its own evidence and the ordinary care of Providence. Nay, it is a contradiction in terms; for a religion not invented by human policy must have pre-existed and been supported before it was established by human policy. It is, moreover, to weaken in those who profess this religion a pious confidence in its innate excellence and the patronage of its author; and to foster in those who still reject it a suspicion that its friends are too conscious of its fallacies to trust it to its own merits.

These are some of the reasons why every Christian in the land should oppose any bill whatever of the nature of the Blair educational amendment, or any other bill favoring Christianity or any other religion. It is both a usurpation of power on the part of the Government and detrimental to the religion it pretends to aid. Further on in the memorial Madison said "Either, then, we must say that the will of the legislature is the only measure of their authority, and that in the plenitude of that authority they may sweep away all our fundamental rights, or that *they are bound to leave this particular right untouched and sacred.*"

Madison saw the continual tendency of public men to endeavor to legislate, in one way or another, in favor of the Christian religion. So he, in his friendliness toward the Christianity in which he believed, always used his influence against such a pernicious movement in this country. In a letter later in his life, he said that notwithstanding the general progress made by some toward religious liberty, "there remains in others a strong bias towards the old error, that without some sort of alliance or coalition between government and religion, neither can be duly supported. Such, indeed, is the tendency to such a coalition, and such its corrupting influence on both the parties, that the danger cannot be too carefully guarded against."

Yet, notwithstanding his grand work in framing the national Constitution in accordance with these principles, we find would-be reformers to-day trying to tear down this work and amend that very same document by inserting in it provisions for teaching the "unsectarian principles of the Christian religion" in our public schools! The Christian people of America who venerate the names of the noble men who obtained for us our liberties should hesitate before they give their voices and votes to eradicate the institutions which were so difficult to establish. Better, far better, will it be to throw our influence on the side of pure Christianity, by not allowing the State to have anything to do with prescribing or teaching its doctrines. Madison truly declared: "We are teaching the world the great truth that governments do better without kings than with them. The merit will be doubled by

the other lesson: *that religion flourishes in greater purity without, than with, the aid of Government.*" W. A. BLAKELY.

University of Michigan.

The School Question.

"WHY, my friends, the free school-house was established and in full operation long before the Republican party was born. Schools will be in successful operation all over this country long after it is dead. It was utterly impossible to maintain a republican government without education, as it would be impossible for a bird to hang in the air with all the feathers plucked from its wings. It is a part, and an essential part, of the existence of any republican government. It has got to stand in the intelligence and virtue of the people. It cannot stand any other way. The power comes from them; they must know how to exercise it wisely and well. They must have the virtue to do what they know is right, and have the virtue to shun what they know to be wrong. The school-house is the place, and provisions were made for it at the very foundation of the Government, and made by the men that ordained and established the Government. What we oppose is the prostitution of the school-house, just as Christ opposed the prostitution of the temple. The temple at Jerusalem had been a house of prayer, dedicated to the pure worship of God, but had been defiled by the money-changers and thieves, and when he entered it with a scourge of plaited cords, he whipped away the thieves and said it should not be a den of thieves but a house of prayer. We stand by the school-house, and in it and around it, and we are going to stand under it and support it, but we don't intend, if there is intelligence and virtue enough left in the hearts of the people, that the school-house shall be made an instrumentality for proscribing any class of our people. We don't intend that the school-house shall be an instrumentality for invading the sanctuary of the homes of the people and compelling one class of people to send to one school in preference to another, if they prefer that other. . . . And if the Church and State were united, it would be impossible to preserve liberty to the people. Hence we believe in liberty; we believe in a man sending his children to whatever school he pleases. He is the guardian of that child during non-age. God has appointed him, and the mother, and we will stand guard over that right. We don't propose that a Methodist, if he wants to send his child to a Methodist school, shall be compelled to send it to a Catholic school. He has a right to have it educated in that faith if he wants to do it. We are all governed by our faith. Why should the Government be substituted for the father and mother, and compel the Methodist family to send their child

* "Declaration of Rights," Article 16.

† Declaration of Rights of the State of Virginia, Article 1.

‡ Declaration of Rights of the State of Virginia, Article 16.

to the Catholic school or who take the Catholic child and send it to the Methodist school; or why take anybody's child and send it to the infidel school? We stand on the right of family government. We stand believing that the father and mother have the right to superintend and supervise the education of their children; to select the teacher and select the school; and it is the right of the State, and the duty of the State, to provide the means of educating all the children in the State, but the parents have the right to select the school; and if they don't want to avail themselves of the opportunities that have been afforded by the State, and they want to incur the additional expense, and thousands and hundreds of thousands of good people do it every day, and have the right to do it—let them send their children to their church schools."—*From Speech of Hon. Roger Q. Mills.*

Church Talks and City Tangles.

JUST now a very singular phase of public sentiment is to be observed in this metropolitan community [New York City]. Several of the more prominent clergymen are openly engaged in a political movement, the object of which is to overturn one of the two great parties bodily and cast it out of power. One makes a speech in a public convention on a prayer-meeting night, which is openly ridiculed by an editor who did not hear it. Another is [was] mentioned as a prominent candidate for the office of mayor and has his "interviews" like a boss. A third writes a letter in which he represents Divine Providence as throwing its (no "her") watery arms around this island—which is really quite good for a Baptist—and the political newspapers are gibing to their hearts' content.

On the other hand the great secular journals are engaged in a determinate onslaught upon the Rev. Dr. C. A. Briggs, as a professor in the Union Theological Seminary, for laxness in doctrine, injury to the interests of the institution on one of the foundations of which he stands, departing from the teaching he promised when he was elected, and without moral or legal right to his chair. One of them, in two very plain editorials, calls upon him peremptorily to "abdicate" his position, to resign his charge, and cease his "underhanded course of polishing up his crude unscriptural theories to classes of unsuspecting young men, locked in his class-rooms." Another continues in the same strain, and reaches the cheerful conclusion that, as the great majority of Presbyterians have declared themselves in favor of revising their old creed, and some of the most noted and most popular of the Presbyterian pastors in New York and other great towns have thoroughly indorsed the movement, the ministers of the denomination "do not know themselves what they believe," and are in the frame

of mind of "the agnostic who has no faith to propagate;" and a third gives as the reason for the reluctance of the clergy to "move against" Professor Briggs, "the dissension that would follow such a step;" and it adds also that, if a charge of heresy were brought against him, "the presbytery would be the scene of a fierce battle."

It becomes a question of interesting consideration whether matters would be bettered in such a state of things if the ministers would just take on themselves the management of politics, and the editors of the secular journals would assume the care of the orthodoxy represented in the Seminary and the pulpits.—*Every Thursday.*

Sunday-Law Contest in Washington.

THE emissaries of the American Sabbath Union having been thwarted in their efforts to have enacted in Seattle a municipal ordinance closing barber shops on Sundays, have fallen back upon the State Sunday law to gain their end. That statute is as follows:—

SECTION 2,067. It shall be unlawful for any person or persons of this Territory, to open on Sunday for the purposes of trade, or sale of goods, wares or merchandise, any shop, store, or building, or place of business whatever: Provided, That this chapter shall apply to hotels only in so far as the sales of intoxicating liquors are concerned, and shall not apply to drug stores, livery stables, and undertakers.

SEC. 2,068. Any person or persons violating the foregoing section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof be fined in any sum not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars.

The history of the movement is told substantially as follows, by a contemporary in this city:—

They propose however to make some exceptions in enforcing the law upon barbers. At one of the meetings, after considerable discussion, it was decided not to interfere with the proprietors of barber shops who should keep their bath open on Sunday. That is to say, they propose to dictate to business men as to who shall and who shall not violate the Sunday laws. The possibilities of blackmail in such a scheme are large, and if they are allowed to carry out their programme, their organization, or at least the executive officers, will probably wax rich. The absurdity of the distinction is well depicted by the *Seattle Morning Journal*. "It seems," it says, "that the carefully balanced moralists who want to reform things in this neighborhood have made a review of the barbor-shop controversy, and they decree that it will not be wise to make war on such shops as have a bathroom annex. These can open on Sunday with perfect propriety, because cleanliness is next to godliness, and it will never do to crush any agency that will put a man in a more moral frame of mind. To a personage up a tree, however, it looks as if this thing has reduced itself to a ques-

tion of anatomy. If a man's piety is to be encouraged on Sunday by a bath—if he can take a dip without offending the religious sense of the community, he certainly should have the right to clean his nails, cut his hair, and keep his chin in repair, for all these things contribute to good citizenship and prepare him for communion with his Christian brethren. The right to have the stomach keyed up to concert pitch on Sunday keeps the restaurants sacred from the pious crusade of reformers, but this delicate distinction between the sinful qualities of a bath-tub and a razor is rather too rich for our Liberal blood." The *Journal* adds: "If this sort of cross-eyed reform is to be the watchword of the hour, the *Journal* desires to say that it would like to see the authority by which these hair-splitting distinctions are drawn. Who gave it? Where did it come from? Does the Constitution of the State of Washington vest the power in any clique or faction to declare that a Sunday bath in a public house is a moral institution, while a Sunday shave in the same shop is an agency of the devil? Such ridiculous and arbitrary and fanatical decrees are as much out of place in Seattle to-day as a polar bear in the orange groves of Florida. We believe in law and order, and a decent respect to the honest convictions of every class, but the disposition of some folks to recognize no class as honest and conscientious but themselves is a species of slavery which no liberal citizen can indorse."

The Washington Secular Union announces its determination to have something to say about this style of enforcing laws. Two sections of the Sunday law read as follows:—

SEC. 2,069. And it shall be the duty of any and all public officers in this Territory, knowing of any violation of this chapter, to make complaint under oath, to the nearest justice of peace from where the offense was committed.

SEC. 2,070. Any public officer who shall refuse or willfully neglect to inform against and prosecute offenders against this chapter shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars nor more than one hundred dollars, and the court before which such officer shall be tried shall declare the office or appointment held by such officer vacant for the balance of his term.

After a test in the courts as to the constitutionality of the Sunday law, if the decision shall be adverse to the Secular Union's claim, the Union will see that the law is impartially enforced, with a view to its repeal. Mr. Reynolds, the Secretary, declares: "Since the best way to insure the repeal of a bad law is to rigidly enforce it—let it be known there can be no more open stores, no more sales by the publishers of newspapers on Sunday, nor can the necessary work be done on Sunday to get out the Monday morning edition—no more business of any kind that comes within the scope of this law."

The statute (§2,070) provides a means of doing this, for any officer refusing to in-

form and prosecute is liable to fine and deposition from office, and the Washington Secular Union can put the machinery of law into motion. The statute was made for the use of the "Sabbath" fanatics, but it cuts both ways. Let everybody observe the law or none.

The first man singled out by the Sunday people for prosecution is a member of the Secular Union, which promptly retained counsel to defend him.

Is the Bible Sectarian?

EX-PRESIDENT JOHN BASCOM, in a recent address before the graduating law class of the Wisconsin University, took occasion to criticise the decision of the Supreme Court of that State, which excludes the Bible from the public schools. In the course of his remarks, Dr. Bascom said:—

The Court excluded religious instruction in order to get rid of sectarian instruction. Under a direct interpretation, the Bible is not a sectarian book. All Christian sects assign it distinctly a central position.

A division of the people, cut off and separated from the rest of mankind by reason of the religious doctrines which they hold, constitutes a religious sect, and the doctrines of a sect are sectarian. Anything, therefore, which is accepted by a part of the people, and not by the whole people, is sectarian in its character. If a religious doctrine was received with favor by every one in the world, of course there would be no one to oppose it, and such a doctrine would be non-sectarian. On the other hand, if there is any opposition to a doctrine, that very fact shows that it is not acceptable to the whole people, but that it is indorsed by only a part of the people, a sect, and is therefore sectarian. The fact that the Catholics of Wisconsin made complaint against the religious instruction which was formerly given in the public schools of that State, is all the evidence that is needed to show that such instruction was sectarian, and was not acceptable to the whole people.

And further, it is an undeniable fact that no religious instruction could be given which would be indorsed by the whole people. And as surely as it was accepted by only a part of the people, a sect, so surely would it be sectarian in its character. Hence, the only way to exclude sectarian instruction, is to exclude religious instruction of every description.

Dr. Bascom says of the Bible, "All Christian sects assign it distinctly a central position." Suppose this were true of the King James version, does he not know that there is the most wide-spread difference of opinion as to how it should be interpreted? Another important question which the Doctor seems to have overlooked, is this: Are Christians the only people in the world? Is it not a fact that a majority of the people in this country do not even profess to be Christians? Do

non-believers assign the Bible "distinctly a central position"? If they do not, then, according to the Doctor's own argument, the Bible is a sectarian book. For to prove that it is not sectarian, he offers the statement, that "all Christian sects assign it distinctly a central position." Consequently, if there were any sects which do not assign it a central position, he would have to admit that it is sectarian. But the Bible is just as sectarian to all who do not believe in Christianity, as it would be to any professed Christian sect if they rejected it. A sect is a division of the people, and not necessarily a division of Christians; and unbelievers are people the same as Christians are. It may be convenient to ignore people and their rights, when they do not agree with us, but it does not show a love of honesty and justice to do this. But such is the only process by which religious instruction can ever be maintained in schools controlled by the State, and supported by public taxation.

No one will deny that the Catholics are a sect, yet they do not assign the King James version of the Bible a central position, or any position at all.

The fact is, all Christians taken together constitute a sect, a division of the people, distinct and separate from the rest of mankind. And this is right. God's people have always been sectarian in their belief and practice, and it is by the command of God that they are so. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," saith the Lord, "and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." As Christians are a sect, and Christianity sectarian, the Bible, which is the exponent of Christianity, must also be distinctly sectarian in its character.

A. DELOS WESTCOTT.

"Covenanter War."

A PITTSBURG paper, of the 18th ult., contains, under the above heading, a two-column account of the trouble which, owing to the efforts of the Covenanter Church to control the political action of its members, has, for some months past, been causing its leaders not a little anxiety. The following statement of the facts is abridged from the *Pittsburg Gazette*:—

One evening in last July, several ministers of the Reformed Church,—Presbyterian, or Covenanter Church,—held a meeting to formulate their views on certain topics connected with church matters. The result of that meeting was a circular denominated a "Platform of the Friends of Christian Union in the Reformed Presbyterian Church." The platform is as follows:—

The platform adopted by the recent Conference of the friends of Christian Union in the Reformed Presbyterian Church on July 22, 1890. We, the undersigned, agree together in maintenance of the following principles:—

1. That while we hold it to be the duty of the church to maintain the most advanced testimony in behalf of truth and against error, yet the terms of the communion ought to be limited to the plain requirements of the Scriptures—namely, faith in Christ and obedience to his revealed will.

2. That persons who make a credible profession of Christ should be received into church membership, on their acceptance of our testimony and the testimony of communion,

without binding them to any explanation in the matter of political dissent, or any other questions.

3. That restricted communion, and not close communion nor open communion, is the teaching of the Bible and of our standards.

4. That interchange of pulpits should be allowed among those who preach the evangelical doctrine of the gospel.

5. That there should be organic union of the whole Christian Church upon the basis of the plain teaching of the Scriptures.

6. That free discussion should be allowed of our subordinate standards and of deliverance of synod, testing them by the Bible, which is the only rule of faith and manners.

This was signed by the following named ministers: J. T. Carson, N. M. Johnston, S. D. Johnston, A. U. McClurkin, H. P. McClurkin, J. K. McClurkin, J. C. K. Milligan, J. R. J. Milligan, J. S. T. Milligan, O. B. Milligan, E. M. Milligan, Hugh W. Reed, H. W. Temple, S. G. Shaw, J. R. Thompson. Elders: S. R. Mitchell, J. McCullough, and A. Ennis.

In a few days, the matter had become known by the radical elements in the church, and the progressive clergymen were at once marked for official censure. Professor D. B. Wilson, D. D., R. J. George, D. D., and Moderator David McAllister, D. D., were the recognized leaders of the unchangeable element.

When the presbytery met, Professor Wilson presented papers designated as a "form of libel" against Rev. Henry W. Temple and Rev. Hugh W. Reed. Professor Wilson charged in his paper that the ministers named had been guilty of heresy and political teachings; of a violation of the vows of their ordination and the breaking of the church's solemn covenant. These offenses were because they had circulated and caused to be printed the platform given above. The charges were about to be referred to a committee when Rev. O. B. Milligan objected to them being received by the presbytery, as they were unsigned and therefore ineligible as libels in the court. After some discussion it was decided before formally proceeding against the accused to hear them in their own defense. Rev. J. R. J. Milligan, who spoke first, stated that his remarks would be few. Said he:—

Of this whole affair there seems to be more misapprehension than anything else. Individually I want a speedy action. I want this matter settled at once, as a matter of justice to myself and my congregation. All this distrust must be removed. I was at the East End Conference. I helped to adopt the platform and send it out, but since that time it has been misunderstood if not misrepresented. If these charges of covenant breaking, heresy, and apostasy are true then I am unfit to be a minister in the Covenanter Church, or in any church.

On these matters my views are set, and if I cannot keep them within the church I will take the other alternative and get out.

Rev. E. M. Milligan said that there was nothing in all their course of which he was ashamed. He denied that either at that meeting or at any other time he had been guilty of insubordination, covenant breaking, or apostasy. Mr. Milligan traced the church history since 1833, and declared that the church herself had been inconsistent, in that she had in 1871 admitted to be right what in 1833 was condemned as wrong and sinful, and caused the split in the Presbyterian Church. In 1871 the legitimacy of the United States Government was recognized by the Covenanter Church. If this is true, then they were bound to support and defend this Government, he said. In regard to the incorporation of the church with an immoral government, Mr. Milligan said that if voting on amendments was one of those things, then very few members of the church believed it. At this utterance, Rev. Dr. Thomas Sproull, one of the presbytery fathers, who had been listening intently, jumped to his feet and demanded that it stop.

"Mr. Moderator, when will this stop? How long must I listen to it?" He was ruled out by the Moderator under the terms by which the offenders were allowed the fullest explanations. Continuing, Mr. Milligan said that on that point and on others he defended his privilege of holding a private opinion, "And I will stick to it," said he.

Rev. A. W. McClurkin also denied his guilt as charged. Said he, "If we refuse to advance, to go higher in the development of the truth, then we shall be false to our teachings, and until we do move higher we shall be false to the trust that God hath given unto us."

Rev. O. B. Milligan indorsed the sentiments of the preceding speakers, and declared that instead of the meeting in his church being to disorganize or disintegrate the Covenanter Church, it was for the purpose of promoting church unity.

Rev. W. L. C. Thompson took up the platform, and after a strict comparison with the church laws showed that in his opinion they were in harmony.

I have always held private opinions on church unity and on other church affairs and they have not been questioned until now. If guilty of heresy I will stand the censure, but, understand me, my private opinions must not be governed by the private opinions of other men. I have not preached these doctrines, nor have I spoken of them in private unless they were first broached to me. My views are known and plain and there I stand, and I cannot do otherwise.

Rev. H. W. Temple, who was mentioned as the leading spirit of "the seventeen," next took the platform, and picking up the circular, said:—

For my connection with this I am branded as an apostate, as a breaker of covenants, as a violator of my sacred vows of ordination as a minister of the gospel; as a heretic and a teacher of wrong. Is it possible, is it possible that a minister of this church or any other is cited for crimes because he subscribed to these doctrines? I do not deny anything; I do not defend myself, and I have nothing to explain. The invitation of this committee to have a free and frank discussion is very open, but it may have been intended to draw us out with the intention of using our own language as testimony against us. I believe it to be so. Nevertheless, with the expectation that what I say will be used against me, I repeat that there is nothing that I have to defend. It is true that I did have this platform printed.

Mr. Temple concluded with a few remarks that were rather defiant in tone and which moved several of the members of the court to interrupt him.

Rev. Dr. R. J. George, Rev. Dr. McAllister, Rev. Dr. Thomas Sproull, and Prof. Wilson then took the floor successively and endeavored to convince the young men of their errors. After a hearing of both sides without getting near a satisfactory conclusion, Rev. Dr. McAllister offered the following as a basis of settlement:—

The undersigned members of the Pittsburg Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, with a view to the restoration of brotherly harmony and confidence, agree to the following declarations concerning the position and duty of the Reformed Presbyterian Church:

1. While the word of God is the only supreme standard of faith and practice, the authoritative interpretation of that word by the church must be accepted as the rule to be practically applied for the regulation and conduct of her members as well as the statement of their profession.

This admits of the probability of error in the church's interpretation of God's word and leaves the way open for the most full and candid and at the same time orderly discussion of our doctrines and laws in the light of the only infallible standard, and for the orderly revision of her doctrines and amendment of her laws, to bring them whenever necessary into close harmony with the divine word.

2. The Reformed Presbyterian Church has interpreted officially and authoritatively the divine word as forbidding her members to become parties to the compact of the Constitution of the United States either by accepting office to administer the compacts of Government or by the exercise of the elective franchise in sending men as representatives to administer it, because that compact does not acknowledge the law of Christ as the supreme standard of morals for the Government, but places the people in that place instead of the word of God. This interpretation is the law of the Covenanter Church to-day.

3. That the members of the Covenanter Church have always held this position and still hold it with the purest Christian patriotism, and with most cordial readiness to perform every duty to their country, and to sacrifice in the future, as in the past, not only their property, but, if necessary, their lives for their beloved country's highest good.

The paper presented by Dr. McAllister failed to meet the views of the accused, and it was withdrawn. As a last resort, after several other plans had been proposed and rejected, the report of the Committee on Discipline recommending a judicial committee with full power to try the case was adopted. A committee will be appointed by the Committee on Supplies and confirmed by the presbytery. The presbytery will meet again on the second Tuesday in April, 1891.

THE man who is afraid to do right, is as bad as the man who is not afraid to do wrong.—*San Francisco Weekly Star.*

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION.



DECLARATION of PRINCIPLES.

We believe in the religion taught by Jesus Christ. We believe in temperance, and regard the liquor traffic as a curse to society.

We believe in supporting the civil government, and submitting to its authority.

We deny the right of any civil government to legislate on religious questions.

We believe it is the right, and should be the privilege, of every man to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.

We also believe it to be our duty to use every lawful and honorable means to prevent religious legislation by the civil government; that we and our fellow-citizens may enjoy the inestimable blessings of both religious and civil liberty.

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Stirring the Whole Country.

THE American Sabbath Union, with the National Reform Association, and all their numerous allied organizations, are stirring the whole country to bring to bear such an influence upon the managers of the World's Fair that they will give religious recognition to Sunday, not by permitting the closing of such exhibits as it pleases the exhibitors to close, but to compel the exclusion of the public and the entire cessation of all the business of the Exposition on that day, whether such an arrangement shall coincide with the wishes of the exhibitors and the public, or not.

The effect of the agitation for the Sunday closing of the World's Fair, is evidently to cement the forces of religious nationalism in a more compact body, acquaint them more fully with their own power and numbers, and give them assurance to drop the specious plea for a "civil Sunday" entirely, and concentrate their entire effort openly, and without reserve, upon the securing of the enforcement of a religious observance of Sunday.

The following, from the "Pearl of Days," will show how, as that publication says, "there has never before been such an awakening" of a desire to secure the enforcement of a religious form:—

"The mails are bringing us daily a great number and variety of petitions to be forwarded to the Columbian Commission against opening the World's Fair on Sundays. Some are very short and general, others are longer and more in detail, and others are carefully elaborate in argument but all manifest one and the same earnest, decided and urgent spirit of patriotic, and Christian opposition to the opening of the Exposition on the Lord's day. Many of them are from the Young People's Societies of Christian Endeavor, and from Sunday-school officers, teachers, and scholars, and from county and State Sunday-school conventions. Others come from pastors, officials, members, and adherents

of congregations of nearly all denominations—and often these have been authorized by a rising vote.

"Then follow numerous resolutions, appeals, protests, and petitions, by the unanimous action of ecclesiastical assemblies of all grades, and which represent hundreds of thousands of the best people of the whole country. Temperance organizations, patriotic orders, labor unions, and similar societies also wheel into line. Young Men's Christian Associations are working faithfully for the cause. Outside of all these, we are constantly receiving petitions from citizens of important places without distinction of sect, sex, or race, and covered with hundreds of signatures of reputable persons. The reasons assigned are legal, historical, patriotic, humane, benevolent, moral, and religious. They insist upon the divine institution, the permanent obligation, the blessings and privileges of the Sabbath of God and man. They deprecate the desecration of the Christian Sabbath at the Exposition as an affront to its Lord, as a wrong to the Nation, as a disgrace to the fair name of our country, as a transgression of the laws of Illinois, and of every State that has any Sabbath laws. . . . And finally and supremely, in all these documents, the warm Christian feeling of the country is expressed in ardent love for the hallowed day, in loyal obedience to the fourth commandment, and in deprecation of God's judgments upon this generation for the violation of his law of the rest day."

All this is significant, not indeed of a revival of fervent piety, but of a religious feeling which manifests itself in formal observances while neglecting the weightier matters, judgment, mercy, and faith. Sunday is fast becoming recognized as "the badge of all religion," that is of all form religion, and those who so regard it will never rest till they secure for it formal recognition from the national Government.

W. H. M.

By its persistent appeals for sumptuary laws the *Rocky Mountain News* is inviting its party to defeat. It goes so far as to say that to open barber shops on Sunday is "the violation of a divine law," and "that, if necessary, a city ordinance should be adopted to keep the shops closed on Sunday." Of course on the same principle the *News* would advocate a State and national Sunday law, which is at variance with one of the vital principles of our national Government. . . . If the journeymen barbers desire to rest on Sunday there is no law to prevent them from doing so, and they have a perfect right to refuse to work on that day. Sunday rest is a question which every American citizen should be allowed to determine for himself. He may desire to rest on the seventh day of the week in accordance with his religious belief or from personal choice; or on the second day of the week for like reasons.—*Colorado Graphic.*

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A GENTLEMAN at West Sunbury, Pennsylvania, sends us these encouraging words:—

"I am a Presbyterian, and worship on Sunday, and believe it to be the right day, but would force no one to believe or practice as I do. I have been reading THE AMERICAN SENTINEL for two years. It is doing a good work; God bless it."

"THE work of converting the heathen world goes on apace," says *America*. "One of the latest steamers to leave London for the west coast of Africa had on board four hundred and sixty tons of gunpowder, eleven cases of gin, ten thousand casks of rum, and fourteen missionaries." But, then, England has a National Sunday law, and acknowledges that its sovereigns reign by the grace of God, it is, therefore, according to the National Reform idea, a Christian country, and critics should keep their hands off!

In a speech in the Senate on the 30th ult, Mr. Carlisle denounced the new tariff bill as "an entirely new departure in the application of the principle of protection in this country copied from the paternal governments of Europe." How true this is is not for us to say; but that this country is copying from the paternal governments in many things does not admit of a doubt. The effort seems to be to make the Government everything and individuals and States nothing. And in this aping of European methods of government most of the several States are not one whit behind the general Government; paternalism is in the air.

WE are asked by a correspondent to answer the following question:—

If the seventh-day people who now object to being compelled to keep Sunday were in the majority, would not the fourth commandment, which says, "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates," require them to make laws compelling the Sunday people to keep the seventh day?

Not as we understand the commandment. "Within thy gates," means only upon property under your immediate control; not the whole of any country. It is the duty of every man to see to it that no

work is done on his own premises upon the day that he regards as the Sabbath; but the commandment gives no warrant whatever for Sabbath legislation. Were they in the majority, seventh-day people might, like others have done before them, apostatize from God and appeal to the State, but in so doing they would prove recreant to the very principles which they now maintain.

"THE National Reform Association," says the *Union Signal*, "has started a 'Citizens' and Business Men's Protest,' and requests all citizens, especially those engaged in active business, to write to the Columbian Exposition Committee, Chicago, using preferably their own printed letter heads, and saying simply, 'I join,' or 'This firm joins, in the protest against the proposed opening of the World's Columbian Exposition on the Sabbath.'" It is suggested that there are few towns where such letters cannot be secured from a majority of the business men. This seems very likely, when we remember that the boycott is to be used, if needs be, to secure Sunday closing of the great Fair.

THE following is from the *Christian Advocate*, of this city:—

The religious notices in our Sunday papers quite frequently afford suggestive reading. Some of them are cheap, frivolous advertisements, and better adapted to a Bowery show than a Christian church. But the desire to get a crowd is almost a disease with some men. Success to them is a matter of camp-stools and extra chairs, and a full church an evidence of genius. It is a matter of profound thankfulness that the Methodist ministers of this city are singularly free from blame in this matter. Perhaps they have the crowd already and do not require startling topics and sensational head-lines to fill their churches. But churches filled in this way are soon emptied, and even when filled, they are empty.

We are glad that the *Advocate* can say that the ministers of the denomination which it represents are free from blame in this matter. But there is another matter in which they are not thus free, namely, in the demand for laws which they imagine would drive people to the churches, by depriving them of Sunday papers, and by closing to them the various places of secular resort. It is true that rigid Sunday laws strictly enforced might fill the churches, but it is also true that if filled in this way they would still be empty.

"INTOLERANCE," says *Public Opinion* of San Francisco, "should not manifest itself in any quarter on the day of election. The American people should not proscribe any citizen on account of either his nationality or his creed. Particularly careful should they be not to send a candidate, who is to the manner born, out of their own party because he does not belong to their church. It was broadly hinted at San Jose that the delegates from the interior would have no candidate who

does not belong to the American religion, whatever that may be." We are afraid, however, that the drift is in the direction of a religious test for candidates. The "American religion" may not as yet be very clearly defined, but nobody knows how soon it may be, and how soon men must profess the "American creed" in order to secure votes. It is certain, however, when the time does come every man who is in politics for office will be a Christian after the straightest sect of the "American religion," whatever it happens to be.

THE real dignity and worth of a book are not always indicated by its title; this is true of "Jack the Conqueror," No. 2 of "The Young People's Library." The subtitle, "Overcoming Difficulties," is, however, really descriptive of the book and relieves, in a measure, the somewhat unpleasant impression created by the more sensational appellation.

The book contains three stories, all well calculated to beget worthy ambitions and stimulate to praiseworthy effort. It is probable that none of the narratives are unvarnished recitals of the experiences of a single individual, yet they are exceedingly true to life, and will tend to correct rather than give those false views of life which are so common in story books, and so harmful to the young. Altogether, "Jack the Conqueror, or Overcoming Difficulties" is a very readable and worthy juvenile book which can be safely placed in the hands of the young. "The Young People's Library" deserves, and should have, the support of all who really desire to secure unobjectionable reading for their children. The numbers are of uniform size, style, and price. Each volume contains 160 pages 5 x 7 inches; the cheaper binding is paper, the more expensive, cloth embossed in jet and gold. The volumes sell for 25, and 50 cents, according to binding. Pacific Press, New York, N. Y., and Oakland, California.

THE same cause which restrained the vigor, polluted the character of the Church; for, being unable immediately to repress its own spiritual weapons, the violent animosities of its ministers, and impatient of the gradual influence of time and reason, in a dark and disastrous moment it had recourse to that temporal sword which was not intended for its service, and which it has never yet employed without disgrace or without impunity.—*Waddington*.

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