

Morality vs. Dogmas.

Dear friends:—For some time I have been watching the Oregon State Secular Union, and while your program is not exactly what I should have mapped out, yet I believe that you are on the right track and have made a magnificent beginning. You are working in direct line with my convictions and my anxiety is deep for your abundant success. The teaching of common morality and horse sense is worthy of man's highest endeavor. I cannot see what relation morality has to frogs in Egypt or Daniel walking into a furnace and not starting the sweat. I cannot see that a man is a better citizen for believing that the whale swallowed Jonah or that Jonah swallowed the whale. I am convinced that a man can be a good citizen and not believe that a tender hearted God ordered the indiscriminate slaughter of all the men, women and children in Canaan; who urged that all the pretty girls be turned over to brutal soldiers to be enslaved and ravished. It is not in accord with my conscience to tell my boys that whatever such a God tells them to do is right.

Do not make the mistake, however of thinking that the whole duty of the Oregon State Secular Union consists in demolishing the bass-wood gods of the orient or the ghost god of Palestine. I am glad to see that you do not. I am glad that you have taken an advanced stand on humanity's present ills, particularly in regard to the liquor business. We liberals cannot raise our moral standard too high. If we cannot get it any higher than the bible, something is wrong with us. If we cannot take an unwavering stand against the evils and vices which beset the pathway of mankind, we have no business talking about "moral standards." Whatever adds to the misery of the human race is wrong, no matter how many gods say it is right. Whatever adds to humanity's happiness is right seven days in the week. "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," is good gospel, even if Christ and Confucius said it. "Take a little wine for your stomach's sake," is a fraud and a delusion, no matter who said it.

If it should turn out that we run up against a god when we die, he surely will not punish us for something that we have not done, and what square man wants to shirk responsibility for what he has done. If he is a gentleman, he will ask what good things we have done; what man we have helped to a better life; what sorrowing one we have comforted; he will not ask us what particular religious dogma we adhered to.

Let us bend our efforts to making this world better and happier, rather than speculate concerning

what we know nothing about. This earth is so constructed that we can do right. Let us do it.

Cordially,
W. E. JOHNSON,
New York, N. Y.

Chicago.

A few Sundays ago a church was dedicated in this city which cost \$125000. If that was taxed like other property it would pay \$1200 a year. For \$3000 one can buy a lot and build a comfortable home here; forty such houses would not equal in value this church and yet a proposition to exempt forty houses from taxation in a community would no doubt arouse the most violent opposition.

Mayor Harrison rode at the head of 5000 bicyclists in a Sunday parade the other day. I don't know whether he stopped to consider that he was likely keeping a great many nickles away from the churches, but I guess the ministers did.

Two negro murderers were hanged in this city May 29th. Two protestant ministers were present to see them off. The report says: "The Rev. Mr. Ford stepping out on the little balcony before the second tier of cells, went on to the end of the twenty-third psalm, while the deputies pulled the white shrouds around the negroes and when the ropes were over their heads one of them shrank from the touch of the hemp, but the stately measures of the psalm seemed to bring back his courage. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever!" and the white caps hid the ashen faces of the negroes." The report doesn't state where the other one will spend the remainder of eternity.

Seven members of the Salvation Army were arrested in Evanston because they refused to obey the orders of the municipal authorities, confining their out door services to certain parts of the town. The police say the army leaders forced the arrest so they could appear in the martyr roll something after the style of their comrades in New York. They seemed quite willing to be arrested and marched down the street singing "All for Jesus." At the station they almost begged to be locked up. The chief finally told them to go, for as he said afterwards, he thought they were seeking to brand themselves as martyrs.

When released they marched back to the same corner and resumed their singing and shouting. The officers went after them again and this time they were hooked under the ordinance which forbids the playing of musical instruments in the streets during certain hours "either for pay or with the intention of taking pay" for the same. The prisoners were then released on their own recognizance. If they could have induced the officers to lock them up it would have been much better for their business. The charge being true, however, did not benefit them much.

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