

Shooting Love from a Gun.

I was lately in a Freewill Baptist meeting where the British-born preacher criticised our constitution for not mentioning God, Christ and the bible, saying that no government could long succeed which did not recognize these. I made this reply:

I like that religion best which has the least law in it. There is a story that once a man named Jesus wandered up and down little Judea trying to make people better by teaching them to love each other. The people there, both native and foreign, did not take to that sort of religion. There was no money in it, so those of his own race, the Jews, accused him of blasphemy against the god of their ancestor, Abraham, and those from another land, the Romans, charged him with treason against their king, Caesar, and between the two factions of politicians he was killed. The governments of both Jews and Romans had a god in their constitutions, Jehovah and Jupiter, and a church and priesthood established and regulated by law, and they have both been wiped off the face of the earth. The little band whom Jesus was trying to teach the higher law of love and human brotherhood, organized themselves into a church, this church spread all over Europe and became established by law of all its nations, but few of the people accepted the teachings of Jesus, whom they, however, called Christ the Lord and put in their constitutions.

John Chinaman, the heathen, invented an explosive and used it to amuse his children with. A Christian doctor found out how to make it, and ever since then the nations which had Christ and his bible in their constitutions have put the heathen plaything into a gun behind a ball and so shot the love of God and the Holy Ghost into each other—or tried to. Today, Spain, with more Christ in its constitution and cussedness in its disposition than any other land on the globe, is trying to shoot the love of God into the poor people of Cuba, who have a mind to be free from foreign rule, and the chances are they will all be blown into the ocean before they get much religion into them that way.

The United States' constitution guarantees equal freedom to people of all religions and of no religion; it does not seek to support God by gunpowder and the police-billy. There are, however, too many who think their religion can't stand alone and want to put their christ, god and bible into our constitution. They will do well to consider first how that style of thing has worked heretofore. We had Christ, God and bible in the constitution of Massachusetts once; then Quakers were hung on Boston Common and

witches strangled on Salem's Gallows-Hill; then Roger Williams was banished to the wilderness for wanting the ministers to keep their hands off the scales of civil justice. He established a state where priests had no political power, and his disciples, the Baptists of every stripe, should be the last to seek to put the chains across the door of American citizenship. When Christ and the bible are put into the constitution, the question will arise, What christ? what bible is it—a Baptist's, a Methodist's, a Presbyterian's, a Catholic's, or whose interpretation is intended? And before that doubt is settled by bayonet and bullet there may be but few people left. Jesus said, "Love one another"; "The truth shall make you free". He who loves another does not enslave him. Truth and love are alike—you cannot drive either into men and women with ramrods. Religion and science are worthless except as they are voluntary. You can control conduct in some measure, but you cannot make moral character by constitutions and the military. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and we don't need a kingdom in this or any other world.

JOHN P. GUILD.

Running Behind.

It was but a few weeks ago that the American Bible Society was compelled to make public the fact that they were in such sore financial straits that they had offered the bible house in this city for sale. The reasons given by themselves were that the rents of the building had fallen off as well as the sales of bibles. So heavily had their business in wholesale superstition decreased that the concern had been running behind on expenses at the rate of about \$150,000 per year for several years. Wealthy as the corporation is, it is unable to stand this enormous deficit.

This with the announcement that about 170 religious newspapers of the country have been forced to suspend publication during the past year or so, added to the dismay of the gods.

Now in this morning's "World" is an article by Rev. H. K. Carroll, D. D., one of the "Independent" editors, and who was superintendent of the religious department of the United States census for 1890. Dr. Carroll gives the cold figures of the sums of money raised for church building for each of the past four years. The figures make a startling showing. Here they are:

YEAR.	AM'T RAISED.
1893.....	\$5,384,680
1894.....	5,859,292
1895.....	4,379,302
1896.....	4,171,306

These figures of Dr. Carroll's show one thing: that the sum of money raised annually for church

erection in this country has fallen off \$1,215,480 in the past four years. The horizon is aflame with evidences that this nation is becoming weary of theology and superstition.

W. E. JOHNSON.

New York City, Dec. 12.

Let the Good Work Go On.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

For fear that on account of not hearing from us for so long, you might think we had all joined the church or committed some other equally foolish act, and thereby severed our connection with reason, I thought I would write to you and let you know that the Malheur County Secular Union is still in line and doing its best to help carry the banner of Universal Mental Liberty on to victory. At the annual meeting of the M. C. S. U. the old officers were all re-elected; the offices of secretary and librarian being united, the secretary holding both. We are holding literary meetings in the evenings of the first and third Saturdays of each month and Sunday school on the second and fourth Sundays.

Freethought is surely making headway in this part of the country, while lawlessness is decreasing, I believe, in the same ratio. Religious revivals here are usually dismal failures, the preachers considering themselves lucky if they get one or two converts during a revival. I know of few sadder spectacles than that presented by one of God's veterans bombarding a congregation of soulless sinners with all the godly abuse that he can think of, and receiving nothing but grim silence in return. It must indeed be discouraging.

Wishing the University unbounded success, and hoping to be with you ere another year rolls by, I remain, yours for the enlightenment of superstition-cursed humanity.

J. EDWIN JOHNSON,
Sec'y M. C. S. U.

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