

From Chicago.

BY J. B. BEATTIE.

The amount of untaxed business property in this city that owes its exemption to religion has become so great that citizens have started an investigation, simply as a matter of self-protection. In the business center alone there is more than \$7,000,000 worth of business property that pays no tax; and nearly all of this vast property is given, free of charge, police and fire protection and all other benefits that the taxpayer can claim for his, because the rents go to the service of God. Among the most notorious examples are the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank property, valued at \$2,000,000; the Young Men's Christian Association office building, valued at \$1,700,000, and many others of less value, but in most instances running into hundreds of thousands.

If a man is robbed, it is of little consequence to him whether he is robbed according to law or in violation of it, so long as he has no redress, but our Christian friends do both. While the law gives them the right to withdraw property to any amount from the tax list on condition that they use it for religious purposes, it does not allow then to devote it to legitimate commercial use without paying tax.

If the citizens' movement continues, a good many more millions' worth of exempt property is likely to be found; but the great trouble with movements of this kind is that they have a habit of dying and dropping out of sight, for some unexplained reason, before much of real value is accomplished. I hope the movement will result in compelling the church to show a more decent respect for the rights of others.

Looking Back 300 Years.

Roger Williams was born of humble parents in Wales about 1599. He became a resolute dissenter from ecclesiastical establishment. He sailed with his wife Dec. 1, 1630, to this country, and arrived at Nantucket Feb. 5, 1631. Not many years afterward he was accused of "embracing principles which tended to anabaptism." He was "hunted like a partridge upon the mountains," and was at length driven from the colony. He sought and found among the Indians, of what is now called Rhode Island, the rest denied to him by Christians. He, with ten others, in 1639 formed the first Baptist church at Providence. The inscription on the bell of this church edifice is as follows:

"For freedom of conscience the town was first planted;
Persuasion, not force, was used by the people;
This church is the oldest and has not recanted,
Enjoying, and granting, bell, temple and steeple."

How sorrowful, how sorrowful!
Thou freedom's foremost friend,
That they who toiled with thee for truth,
Thy bleeding heart could rend.

How terrible, how terrible!
When exiled from thy home,
Thy co-exiles could drive thee forth,
'Mid savages to roam.

How cruelly, how cruelly
Thy persecutors plied
The stabs of slander to thy heart,
Nerved by a bigot pride.

How dolefully, how dolefully
The tale breaks on the ear,
When the long sorrow of thy life
Impartially we hear.

But gloriously, but gloriously,
The victory was wrought,
When trusty time took up the sword,
And thy own battle fought.

Yes, gloriously! yes, gloriously!
For now throughout our land,
None dare the sacred conscience touch
With sacrilegious hand.

Yes, gloriously! yes, gloriously!
For lo! throughout the world,
The truth is pushing on the war,
With banners high unfurled.

—[Copied from Religious Domination, by Joseph Belcher, published in 1856.

Why?

Will some kindly disposed Spiritualist please tell me why the spirits of those persons who lost their lives on the steamer Portland last year have not returned to inform their friends and relatives where, when and how the accident occurred to the boat, and who is, or was, responsible for the loss of one hundred and sixty-five, more or less, lives on that awful night?

If the spirits of people who die here in our midst on terra firma can, and do, return and communicate with us, as is claimed by Spiritualists and others, why cannot those who die at sea do the same? What is there to hinder? It is strange, indeed, that out of that number of persons, who went down to a cold and watery grave, not one, as yet, has been back to enlighten us in regard to the catastrophe.

I don't care a rap what Spiritualists may think or believe about it, I want to know what they know.

How absurd, how utterly foolish, is the assertion that "guardian angels are hovering around and over us day and night, protecting(?) us from all harm," etc. What mockery! What rot!

For nearly forty years I have been quietly investigating so-called "modern Spiritualism." My experience has been varied and extensive, having witnessed every phase of mediumship, from raps and table tipping to full form materializations; and today finds me more skeptical than ever before.

Glendower is made to say, by Shakespeare, "I can call spirits from their vasty deep!" To which Hotspur very ironically replies: "Why, so can I, or so can any man, but will they come when you do call for them?"

Belief in a hereafter is not, and never was, universal. The Sadducees did not believe it. The numerous tribes of Indians in North America, when first discovered, did not. Belief is not knowledge.—[Investigator.

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