

CORRESPONDENCE.

Death or Reform?

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

When I was soliciting signatures on the Liberal University petition a few days ago, I approached a young citizen who strenuously objected to signing, and after a little talk he demanded to know if I believed the Bible. Knowing what was meant, I replied, "Yes, I do." He was dumb with astonishment for a moment, and then demanded to know what I was doing this for, then. I replied that I believe the Bible, but that I do not believe what the preachers say about it. He replied, "You could if you wanted to." I then proceeded in the usual way to corner the young man in regard to a person's ability to control belief, and when he was non-plussed he finally blurted out: "Well, you people are trying to destroy Christianity, any way."

Is Secularism trying to destroy Christianity? I hope not, but I find that idea in the "Little Points" in the Torch of the 16th ult., thus:

"The death of the Christian church is only a question of time."

Is it the death of Christianity we are striving for, or its reform? I hope it is the latter. That there is good in Christianity I think no well informed person will deny. Although this good was borrowed from paganism and was not original with Christianity, it has been brought to us in a measure by Christianity and has become so interwoven in the thought of the people of today as to be regarded as a part of Christianity. This good we accept, and in this sense we do not seek Christianity's destruction. The evils of Christianity we seek to destroy. We are missionaries who seek Christianity's best good. We would elevate Christianity in moral ethics and civilization up to the standard of the present time. We "believe", and have use for, the Christian compiled and translated Bible—about as much as the Christian has but in our way. And if the lopping off of the evil priest bearing branches from the Christian tree, and the preservation of those branches which bear "good fruit," kills the tree, so much the worse for the tree.

Secularism has come to stay. It is the beginning of another reformation; it is another protestation. It is the advance guard of the higher civilization. It comes "not to destroy, but to fulfill". The exorcised devil we are casting out of Christianity may tear the body in its going, and if the wounds will not heal, "the death of the Christian church is only a question of time". Its tail may "live till sun-

down", but its fangs will be harmless.

F. S. MATTESON.

Turner, Ore.

Brother Matteson wants to know if Secularism is trying to destroy Christianity, and further on in his communication he seems to answer the question himself in the affirmative.

Yes, and No, brother. If Christianity is orthodoxy, or if belief in gods, etc., is essential to it, then Yes. But if true Christianity is Secularism, then No.

We do not like the double meaning of words, and to most people Christianity means belief in a god, in Jesus as his divine son and in the Bible as his holy word; so we think, Yes, Christianity should be destroyed at once. There is much good in many who are called Christians, but this good is Secular. There is no good in Christianity. Let us kill it!—Ed.

Prescott on the Divinity School.

It is possible that the favors extended to the Eugene divinity school do not increase the expenses of the state university, but it is unquestionable that if the university admits divinity students to twelve of its classes there must be a loss of time or an increase of expense. But whether that be true or not, it is wrong in principle to permit even the slightest connection between a state institution and a sectarian institution for whatever purpose. If this manner of conducting affairs be continued it would not be long till every denomination of the Christian church would be compelled to establish a divinity school at Eugene in order to profit by the advantages of the state school. We might perhaps look on with approval until the Roman Catholic church began to move its school to Eugene; then all would be up in arms to defend our liberties from the encroachments of a foreign potentate.

The separation of church and state is one of the characteristics of our government, and any semblance of a union between the two deserves immediate condemnation. I do not wish to be understood as saying that the management of the Eugene divinity school has any intention of doing anything more than secure the benefits of the state university without paying therefor. I wish the facts to be known, and if the people approve of the relations which exist between the schools, well and good. We have come to believe that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."—[A. W. Prescott, in Oregonian.

Saturday evening, March 18, is the date set for the drama, "The Heart of a Hero." The members of the troupe are busy practicing, and will give a good entertainment.

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