

Who is Consistent?

I have received a copy of the Independent Pulpit for December, 1898, with its article, "I Think we Should Try to be Consistent," marked, to which I reply.

I have been much interested in the Liberal University, of Oregon, because, as I understand, it is based on pure science, free from all taint of theological superstition.

W. K. Clifford says: "The organized results of common sense dealing with facts are just science and nothing more. All facts belong to science and are her portion forever.

"To deprive us of the scientific method is practically to deprive us of morals altogether. It is idle to set bounds to the organizing and purifying work of science."

Prof. C. H. Henderson says: "Like the content of Latin and Greek in the Middle Ages, the content of science at the present time is something greatly to be desired in and for itself in adding immeasurably to the wisdom and graciousness of life, while the process of gaining the content is a process which employs every sense and every faculty and from its necessities evolves new senses and new faculties and represents a discipline of the highest possible value."

Ought not the public education of the children of the country to be based on the knowledge of the laws of the universe which science has won by testing, trying, proving and demonstrating, through century after century of struggle with theology? Theology, by persecution and torture, even to the death, checked the progress of science as much as possible. With the energy of the universe at her heart, she has been victorious in many battles, to the great benefit of humanity.

But the fight is not over. There are more than 150 sects, disuniting and disorganizing, which have in the past done bloody execution upon each other, each claiming the Bible as authority. These sects are yet warring with science, excluding her holy light as much as possible, or only letting it into their schools through stained glass. R. Virchow says: "A church which cannot bear the light of science, or has to temper it with stained glass, should be laid with the dead."

Most of the public schools of the country are under the domination of one or another of these sects, who manage to get the public money to carry on their theories about things — theories which cannot be proved "without our ceasing to be men". (The Bible proves(?) anything and everything.) But when a claim for help to found a school in the name of science, and free from theological theories, is made, theology interferes and forbids.

Science is not a sect, nor is science sectarian. It asks credence

for nothing that cannot be proved to the satisfaction of all people and for all time. It looks upon faith as a deadly narcotic to the mind, and says, with W. K. Clifford, "It is wrong in all cases to believe on insufficient evidence; and where it is presumption to doubt and investigate, there it is worse than presumption to believe."

The Liberal University, of Silverton, Oregon, is not a missionary for any sect, but stands for the changeless laws of the universe, and for ordered, organized, united and purified humanity the world over. Science has brought us close to our brother man, wherever he may be, and is teaching us that "the first principle of natural ethics is the sole and supreme allegiance of conscience to the community."

At a meeting of the clergy held in this city recently, the Rev. J. G. Butler (Lutheran) said, "Church union could best be promoted by reducing the number of denominations. There are now 150 denominations."

Rev. Lucian Clark (Methodist) said he thought that "the churches and their pastors could busy themselves in keeping out of each other's way."

Rev. T. S. Hamlin (Presbyterian) proposed a dividing up of the new possessions, "each denomination having a certain section". He thinks this "a great opportunity God has given the Christian people". After 2000 years! A partial god!

Science is the priest at the altar of the universe and the only interperator of its changless laws. She asks no division of the world into sections. She asks no one to accept without sufficient proof.

Obedience to the laws of the universe is the only thing in the universe that can unite the people of the earth.

I was glad that an appropriation for the Liberal University was asked for. That it was not granted should attract the attention of the country to the fact that the "bonds of superstition" are not yet "irretrievably broken", and proves how much the country is in need of institutions devoted to the teaching of science, leading to a broad and deep humanity, true and lofty morals, and a love of truth in its crystal purity.

"Men speak the truth to each other when each reveres the truth in his own mind and in the other's mind." M. M. TURNER.

Washington, D. C.

The article in the Independent Pulpit, above referred to, is an attack on the Liberal University because an appropriation to assist its work was asked of the Oregon legislature. Editor Shaw has always opposed our work, and says there is no need for Liberals to build schools. We are sorry he is so blind.

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