

Skepticism and Crime.

Those of our readers who are acquainted with the contents of the little pamphlet, *The Crimes of Preachers*, or who are familiar with the statistics of religious belief of prisoners, that have been spread before them from time to time by writers for the *Freethought* press, are doubtless aware that all of the crime in the world is not due to the influence of skepticism, even if our clerical friends would have it so understood. As a matter of fact, the influence of *Freethought* is directly in opposition to criminally invasive tendencies, for *Freethought* arises in a religious community when somebody develops the ethical sense so strongly that the ethical unsoundness of supposedly inspired dogmas is perceived. In other words, skepticism is the direct result of the perception of wrong in the face of almost universal testimony that wrong is right. So it is a fair presumption that the unbeliever is one whose tendencies are not toward crime.

Now comes the well known Italian anthropologist, Cesare Lombroso, who has been investigating certain matters concerning the relation between religion and crime, and says that church people are about half honest persons and half knaves, and that sometimes the knaves predominate. On the other hand, skepticism he finds to be almost devoid of criminal predilections, and he quotes Ferri as finding but one skeptic among seven hundred criminals. Lombroso attributes this state of affairs to the predominating ethical sense which exists in communities abounding in skeptics.

Lombroso further finds that the older a religion becomes, the more marked the line of cleavage between the religious and ethical, or moral, natures is displayed, from which it is to be inferred that the antiquity of the Christian religion is not something upon which to lay particular stress, after all. In new religions, the ethical and moral mingle; as time passes the religious begins to predominate to the detriment of the ethical; and at last the religious exists largely at the expense of the ethical.

It is needless to remark that the results of Lombroso's investigations are extremely gratifying to the Liberal world, though the distinguished anthropologist simply expresses in authoritative form what has long been supposed to be true, by well informed persons, for a long time. We understand that anthropology is not taught at theological seminaries, and, indeed, there is no good reason why it should be. A faultless mechanism has no place in a junk shop, and a useful science has no place in a Christian school.—[Boston Investigator.]

Will Help All He Can.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

I received some of your announcements of the Liberal University and have distributed them among my friends. Some of them said that they were going to subscribe for the *Torch*; but I have been absent for some time and just returned, and have scarcely seen anyone yet, but you may count on my getting all to subscribe that I can.

While I am old myself and can not take time now to get the education that I ought to have had in my younger days, I like to see the young brought up under the influence of truth, so that they will be an honor instead of disgraceful slaves to corrupt priestcraft.

To say that I wish you success in your work, does not express my feelings, and I wish that I was only able to give enough to finish the school.

Yours respectfully,

K. B. ANDERSON.

Albany, Ore., Oct. 19, 1899.

We have to accept the fact of death in spite of our "hunger and thirst" for continuous physical life, why not eternal death? Let us be brave! Nothing so bad about it, after all, if Christianity is not true—and we know it is not.—[Otto Wettstein]

We are told that Christian science teaches that the ultimate man is to be god-like. If Christian science will now describe one or two gods, we shall be in a position to get very well acquainted with our descendants.—[Investigator.]

The pope has addressed a letter to the Brazilian bishops, in which he tells them they should interest themselves in public affairs, and that leading priests might well even enter congress, for the benefit of religion and their native land. And this, we may add, is good Catholic doctrine in the United States.—[Sentinel.]

A photograph has been taken of the faculty of the Liberal University, and we have them for sale at fifty cents each, postpaid. This is a splendid picture, 5½x8 inches, mounted on a fine, large card, ready for framing. Every friend of the Liberal University ought to have one of these photographs. The group consists of thirteen persons, and is a splendid showing for our school.

Remember, if you send us the names and addresses of 25 of your Liberal friends and acquaintances, we will make you a present of a copy of the *Torch of Reason* Song Book No. 1. This will only cost you a few minutes' work and a two-cent stamp.

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