

Christian Unity in 1898.

The New York Independent gives the following statement of church members in the United States:

DENOMINATION	MEMBERS NET GAIN	
	1898	1898
Adventist, 6 bodies	84,454	2,508
Armenian	3,924	5,589
Baptist, 13 bodies	4,364,427	131,495
Brethren, River	4,739	—
Brethren, Plymouth	6,722	—
Catholic, 4 bodies	8,395,178	219,791
Catholic, Apostolic	1,491	—
Christadelphians	1,277	—
Christians, 2 bodies	124,398	2,868
Christian Catholic	14,000	9,000
Christian Missionary Association	754	—
Christian Scientist	70,000	30,000
Christian Union	18,214	—
Church of God	38,000	—
Church Triumphant	384	—
Church of the New Jerusalem	6,702	dec. 972
Communitic Soc., 6	3,930	—
Congregationalist	625,864	10,669
Disciples of Christ	1,085,615	34,536
Dunkard, 4 bodies	109,194	8,000
Evangelical, 2 bodies	175,904	24,134
Friends, 4 bodies	118,626	1,152
Friends of the Temple	340	—
German Evangelical Protestant	36,500	—
German Evangelical Synod	199,234	4,616
Greek, 2 bodies	48,030	34,236
Jews	1,200,000	—
Latter Day Saints	340,639	43,289
Lutherans, 29 bodies	1,526,562	36,678
Waldenstromians	20,000	—
Mennonite, 12 bodies	56,318	1,774
Methodist, 17 bodies	5,898,094	162,196
Moravian	14,553	333
Presbyterian, 12 bod.	1,542,401	52,289
Protestant Episcopal Reformed, 3 bodies	689,347	13,056
Salvationist	370,277	21,344
Schwenkfeldian	40,000	—
Social Brethren	306	—
Society for Ethical Culture	913	—
Spiritualist	1,300	236
Theosophist	45,030	—
United Brethren	3,000	—
Unitarians	285,940	5,823
Universalists	75,000	5,000
Volunteers	48,856	2,169
Independent Congregations	2,000	—
Total	27,714,523	862,800

This would seem to show that nearly two-thirds of the people of the United States are either not sufficiently interested in their "eternal" welfare to become church members, or are opponents of ecclesiasticism. In either case, the outlook for Christianity does not seem over bright. The chief difficulty in the circumstances lies in the fact that orthodoxy has such a hold upon the "respectable" classes, that men are afraid to announce their real opinions for fear of Mother Grundy; and the rising generation are being trained by interested sectarians in religious views and opinions which lead them to treat with respect dogmas and persons utterly undeserving of it. No radical improvement is likely to take place in the field of social amelioration, until the debasing doctrine of dependence upon superior or supernatural powers is kept out of all teaching; and children are taught to respect only those persons whose actions are good and virtuous without regard to their beliefs, and those opinions which can be shown to be of benefit both to individuals and to society at large.—[Secular Thought.

Best Way to Spend Big Sums.

Let us not overlook the fact that these men of wealth on both sides of the ocean who make the interna-

tional yacht races possible are distinct public benefactors—greater benefactors, perhaps, than if they gave the money they are spending to educational, charitable or religious institutions. To say nothing of the value of the experiments in yacht construction to the builders of merchant vessels and passenger boats, the races themselves turn the thoughts of millions of people into wholesome directions and give them an active interest in a healthful sport that is good for the mind and soul of man. In perhaps no other way could the expenditure of equal sums of money bring beneficial pleasure directly to so many people.—[Providence Journal.

That last sentence may be true except for the existence of the Liberal University, of which probably the Providence Journal never heard. It will be better known later.

J. P. G.

The Agnostic a Faithist?

An article in the Torch of Nov. 9, places the Agnostic in a new light—that of the faithist. We are soberly assured that the Agnostic has faith, and that if certain other faithists would follow their doctrine to a logical issue they would land in the Freethought camp. The idea is new. I have never before heard it said that one could become a Freethinker by faith. I have always understood that that was the only road to the Christian camp; failure to follow which was certain to land one, not only in the "Infidel" camp, but ultimately in a warmer place. But now an Agnostic wants to rob the Christians of their shibboleth. This is the unkindest cut of all!

And this faith of the Agnostic—upon what does it rest? Evidently upon the same basis as that of the Christian—ignorance. For we are told the Agnostic has faith that if there should happen to be a god in the skies he would be found to be a gentleman. But by his own admission the Agnostic knows nothing about a god, and consequently has nothing upon which to base a belief as to his or its characteristics. If there should "happen" to be a god anywhere, I know of no reason to suppose him or it to be a gentleman rather than a billy goat. Those who claim to know about God, say he has neither body, parts nor passions—certainly no gentleman as we understand the term—and I see no reason why those who admittedly do not know should try to correct the Christian's estimate of him. It seems rational to let those who claim to "know" represent their God as they imagine they find him; for, evidently, faith is as irrational in the fellow who "don't know" as in the one who does know. There is no room for "faith" anywhere in rationalism.

J. H. M.

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