

than could be done without associative endeavor, for the regeneration of mankind, its laws, customs, and institutions, from the tyrannic grips of barbaric and mediæval superstition, in which they are one and all strongly entrenched.

In connection with *unity in free diversity*, we find *charity* posited as the crowning principle permeating and engirding all our efforts, aims, endeavors; for, without charity,—that charity which “thinketh no evil,” that “beareth all things; hopeth all things,” and that “covereth a multitude of sins,”—we should verily be “as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal;”—indeed, the practical exercise of charity is a necessary corollary from the recognition and actualization of free diversity of opinion and action.

The practical utilization of this all-important principle of charity more largely among Liberal thinkers, would be productive of great good to our common cause. Our Christian foes prate of charity as a pre-eminently Christian virtue,—Freethinkers even talking at times of *Christian* charity,—as if charity were not existent in the world long ere the Nazarene enthusiast trod the desert sands of Syria; and as if, of all religions and peoples, the purely Christian have not in all ages demonstrated, probably, the greatest lack of that vital principle of ethical observance. True charity, in the matter of those with opinions opposite to, or with different codes of action from, our own, is rarely found among the advocates and disseminators of antipodal religious creeds,—dogmatic sectarists intent on proselyting propagandism, all to the glory of God—and of their respective petty sects!

This benign virtue, almost totally banished from ecclesiastical circles,—from among the bickering schismatics of our time and day,—is seeking refuge with those whose very name—Freethinker, Liberal—is significant of the presence of charity, good will, liberty of thought and expression, free diversity in unity. Let us, then, be worthy of the name we bear: let us be liberal to all, whether their views coincide with, or are antagonistic to, those held dear by us: let us not only be Freethinkers ourselves, but let us extend to every human being the same inviolate, inherent right,—the right not only of freedom to think different from ourselves, but liberty to advance that thought, and freedom to actualize it in deed and act; provided, that, in so doing, no infringement of like right in others be effected.

Probably the most extensive differences among us may be found upon the questions of the existence of Deity and of a future life. The truth upon these two points not being regarded as things demonstrated, are, according to the foregoing standard of action, included in the (second) category of things doubtful; and, in the advocacy of opposing views on these two questions, let us ever keep charity at the helm,—learn to respect the deeply-cherished opinions of those contrary in sentiment to ourselves. Let us remember, that, however firmly established we may be in our convictions of truth, that even though no doubt thereof may exist in our minds, those opposed to us in idea and conclusion are as thoroughly convinced, and as sanguine of the ultimate truth, of their conceptions, as we of ours; each thus exercising the broadest charity in reference to those of different belief.

By no means, however, should either party cease to battle vigorously and determinedly for that which appeals to their consciousness as right and true. Though both be in unity as regards the value and importance of emancipation from theological error and credal myth, though both be valiant workers in Freethought's sacred cause, yet, upon those points where differences appear, each should, of course, endeavor, by all legitimate means, to advance the truth as it is perceived by them, attacking resolutely and unsparingly what is deemed erroneous in the opposing party; this, however, in perfect charity and love to them individually, as brothers in the common cause of human disenfranchisement and religious freedom, and also as brothers in the still wider sense of being members of the same human family,—children of our common mother, Nature.

Attack erroneous ideas, not in personal bitterness or partisan spite, but with the view solely to the discovery, application, and impartation of truths. Show no mercy to what is considered untruth and error, and therefore injurious to mankind, no matter

by whom held, whether dearest friend or bitterest foe; yet all in love and charity for those holding the erroneous views. Let the Atheist endeavor to demonstrate the absurdity and futility of Theistic conceptions and speculations; so let the Theist seek to establish the being of an Omnipotent Power in the universe, and its presumed mode of action. Let the Materialist prove, if he can, the supremacy of Matter in all things, physical, mental, psychological; likewise, let the Spiritualist prove, if he can, the existence of a spiritual universe coincident with the Material, and the possibility of communion between the two: and, in every case, let each give due respect to those of differing ways of thinking, each endeavoring, *in kindness* though with energy and zeal, to uproot what is deemed fallacious in the other, inculcating in its stead his own (as he esteems) higher and better impressions of the truth.

Let not the Atheist scornfully condemn the Theist; neither let the Theist look contemptuously upon the Atheist; no doubt both have portions of the truth unregarded by the other. In like manner, let not the Materialist despise the teachings and “phenomena” of the Spiritualists; nor let the Spiritualist ignore the reasonings and deductions of the Materialists: for, in their case also, neither perceives the whole truth most likely, and each can learn of the other.

With these feelings animating the great body of the untrammelled thinkers of America and Europe; with the principle of unity in free diversity permeated by boundless charity infilling all our hearts and minds, characterizing our conduct ever; with united effort and combined endeavor in the advancement of truth as it is in Freethought and mental liberty,—how much may be accomplished in a few years—comparatively, how vast a debt of gratitude for our fruitful labors will we entail on future generations,—our children and our children's children, who, arising and calling us blessed, will rejoice to know themselves the descendants of such worthy sires, who, knowing their duty, that duty nobly did, fearless, undaunted, *free!* “And now abideth” unity, free diversity, “and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is CHARITY!”

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, U. S. A., September, 1878.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL BOOK.

The other day, while taking a walk in the country, I was overtaken by a shower, from which I sought refuge in a wayside inn. While enjoying my pipe and a glass of lager beer—I seldom take anything else—saw now—a blooming girl of thirteen summers or so, entered, with a book in her hand. On requesting the maiden to let me look at it, I saw it was from the Sunday-school library of the neighboring village. It bore the title of “The Governess; or the missing Pencil Case,” by the Rev. J. T. Barr, etc., etc., a gentleman that I have never heard of, and that I never wish to hear of again. The book was throughout—as I fully expected—utter twaddle and trash, but as it contained only 39 pages, I had read it through before the storm passed over. I remembered what Milton said, that there was no book so bad but some good might be extracted out of it, and, after going through the tiny volume, I made up my mind that this was the only true sentence in it, which I cheerfully make a present of to any good little boy or girl that may venture to peep into such a “naughty” work as the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL. The sentence is as follows: “It is a mournful proof of the degeneracy of human nature that thousands who bear the Christian name are ever envious at the prosperity of others. While they

Sicken at another's joy,
And hate the excellence they cannot reach;

They will labor to cast a shadow over their merits and study to darken, with the deepest clouds, the character of their unsuspecting victims.” These “Christians” seem to know one another, thought I, so I advise my young friends to give them a wide berth, and pass them by. It would, I imagine, be impossible to follow Hamlet's advice, and “reform them altogether.”

VIATOR IGNOTUS.