

## AFTER THE SMART FELLOWS

Now and then the destructive higher critics get what is coming to them. Dr. Sullivan is after them with a sharp pen. In a recent issue of the *Literary Digest* is found the following article under the title, "Debunking the Debunkers," that is worthy of special consideration:

A lancer for the Lord pricks some bubbles blown up by the materialists and others of that ilk who laugh at the idea of God and reduce man to a little bit of lewdness living on a cinder, soaring between chaos and oblivion.

They have given wings to the lizard, he notes, but for man, in spite of their own agility in leaping obstacles in the vast field of theory, they have not reserved even a brace of feathers.

These aristocrats of erudition, the Rev. Wm. L. Sullivan tells us in an article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, summon reason to their aid in building up their theories concerning man's muddy origin and desolate destiny, but leave reason behind when they enter the region of religion and discuss the probability of God's existence. "Whatever the cause is, whether it is due to the spiritual exhaustion which has brought on our famine in philosophic minds; whether it is the disparagement of intellect and the exalting of the infantile which are the current fashion in psychology; whether it is the lurch to immorality which now is receiving a benediction from erudition; or whether it is the disposition to go where bedlam is loudest, which is observable in obsequious academies and pulpits alike—we can not but notice," says Mr. Sullivan, "the incoherence and even the intolerance of the great warfare against the divine."

Mr. Sullivan, who is introduced to us as a minister in Pennsylvania, consecrates a paragraph to that eminent scientist, Dr. Robert A. Millikan, known everywhere to be a believer in God, but notes that a writer in a learned periodical declares that Dr. Millikan's spiritual convictions are probably due to atavistic emotionalism. Mr. Sullivan thereupon sharpens his own pugnacious wit for the fray.

It is permissible, he observes, to believe that an infant sucking its thumb and a boy expressing a desire to be a locomotive engineer when he grows up, are subtly expressing their libido. One may believe that the flamingo got its pink tints as a protection against the ravenous crocodile, who thought the flamingo was the rising or setting sun and not a tempting meal. One may agree that woman has no whiskers because an ancient ape preferred as spouse an unwhiskered freak, and thus started the rage in apedom for unwhiskered females. One may believe that the lizard got wings and turned into a bird because he ran rapidly on his hind legs and flapped his fore legs—and so on, theory without end.

The modernist may believe all this, but he must not believe in God. That is too insecure a hypothesis. "And we turn away," says Mr. Sullivan, "feeling that it would be too rude to ask whether the billygoat got his beards by the same discriminate selection of esthetic love." And he writes:

"Since, then, we see it permissible to cover creation with a fog of theory, fashionable to entertain conjectures which can never reach to even the lowest grade of knowledge, and praiseworthy to erect learned memorials to absurdity, but censurable to hold a conviction which the greatest minds have held and unnumbered generations have lived by, we can not be blamed if we regard this whole business as confusing and

incoherent. May we not even be pardoned for thinking that the claim to intellectual austerity is humbug? The men who made it seem to have a credulity and to show an intolerance as capacious as may be found in any of the less advanced souls who tremble before them.

"And so in the general method and intellectual climate of our monitors we end with disillusion and the sense of having been pompously fooled."

Three men, we are told, have reduced us to our proper insignificance—Copernicus, Darwin and Freud. Copernicus began the revelation of the vastness of the universe and the consequent triviality of our poor molecule of a planet. Darwin showed man's ancestry reaching not up to the stars and their glory, but down to the mud and its fermentation. And Freud has pushed our humiliation into the last pit by the knowledge that what he thought was the light of spirit is only the sickly gleam of fungi growing rank in the cellars of physiology." Take the Copernican plea, for instance, that man is too insignificant among the unnumbered suns for God to pay any attention to him. Conversely, it would be true that if man was so tall that Betelguese singed his hair, God, if there be a God, would grant him an audience. The conclusion of the matter is, then:

"Neither in method nor in detail have our captains in the assault on high heaven given us any illustrious performance. Nor should we, I believe, find this conclusion greatly modified if, in addition to the Copernican argument, we had time to examine the negation based upon the word of Darwin and Freud. The whole anti-religious effort, especially as we observe it in America, is abrupt and slipshod. It does not go to the heart of things. Like most of the rest of our philosophy, it does not descend to first principles; and, like a good part of our philosophy, it is declamatory, and more suggestive of the proceedings of a caucus than of the reticent sobriety of a search for truth. If the thing is to be done at all, it could be better done. But it will not be better done until there is an abatement of the grosser symptoms of theophobia."

If we look into the latest development of it, the shabbiness is seen to be moral as well as intellectual. Says Mr. Sullivan:

"We are now having morality defined as conduct that best serves the human physiological organism. We hear from an eminent philosopher in England that infidelity in marriage is not a thing to take offense at, but to expect and condone. From another student of social *mores* we learn that the revered mother-image and wife-image are coming to be regarded as suffocating to man's erotic life, and that they are on the way to be replaced by the mistress-image and the courtesan-image which will be so little revered and so subject to casual change that they will relieve eroticism of danger from suffocation forevermore. Another scholar tells us that libidinousness, whoever commits it, need give us no concern if only it is attended with 'artistry.' Still others admit frankly that in sex habits we are reverting to the level of savages, and that it is right we should. And so civilization arrives at its final splendid term."

All this, says this churchly philosopher, is but the last step in a crooked course, for—

"Mutilate the human spirit in the manner now so fiercely pursued; make man a trivial biped, his reason a comic incident accessory to his belly, his conscience an echo of the stupidities of the

jungle, his aspiration a by-product of sexuality, his life an animal episode in the midst of chaos and the lightless bosom of death, and his universe a brazen solicitation to delusion—and you will one day see unfolded the ruin that is implicit in these germs of desperation and collapse. We do not see them unfolded yet, for we are still living on the spiritual nourishment stored for us by those who aspired and adored. Mighty souls have led forth our migration from the sky, and the shining remembrance of them lingers with us still. It will remain with us, we hope, forever. And perhaps one of the reasons why we shall not cast the memory away is the plain sight of the results of deserting it.

"Perhaps, however, the learned men who propose all this do not expect us to adopt it. It may be that in their inmost hearts they hope, and for all we know pray, that we shall continue to believe in God, and in our stumbling way try to do His will. Possibly even they might confess to us in secret that after all God is the only refuge of sanity from the lunatic asylum which certain of the erudite are so busy in building."—*The Free Methodist*.

## WHAT MIRROR DO WE USE?

We enjoy the short, practical notes which are generally found on the first page of the *Sunday School Times*. Here is one that is to the point:

Mirrors are more popular today than ever. Two girls were sitting opposite each other in the train. One took out her vanity case, gazed into the mirror, carefully powdered her face, used her lip stick and rouge, penciled her eyebrows, and then sat back with a self-satisfied air. The other girl held in her hand a much-used pocket Testament. She glanced at it reverently and attentively, then looked away out of the window at the flying landscape; occasionally her eyes would close and an almost imperceptible movement of the lips indicated that her heart was in the presence of the King. Both girls were using mirrors. One did so to beautify her outward appearance, and to congratulate herself, no doubt, on the reflection it revealed. The other girl was using the mirror of God's Word. God says, "For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." God's Word reveals the very thoughts and intents of the heart. It reveals our needs and shows us ourselves as we really are. It does not flatter us, but it shows us how to become different. There is a blessing in looking into God's mirror. "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." In this day when so many are openly using mirrors in public places for beautifying the outward man that perisheth, is there not a challenge to the children of God to use their mirrors, the Word of God, more faithfully and effectively for the beautifying of the inward man which is to be conformed to the image of His Son?—*Free Methodist*.

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.—*George Muller*.

"Christ is a light to show lost men the way out of the woods where they have been wandering."