

INFIDELS NOT MARTYRS.

Modern infidelity waxes eloquent over the Romish and sectarian persecutions. We have no objections to this when the transactions are properly located, and duly credited where they belong. But there is a wholesale way of throwing all the iniquity in one direction, and quietly appropriating all the honors of martyrdom, which is not only unjust, but absolutely untruthful.

How quietly, for instance, the French revolution with its unparalleled horrors is slipped over by infidel orators and writers. The evident reason for this is that it was solely the work of infidelity. The infidel legislature of France declared, "There is no God but reason." They wrote upon the church-yard gates, "Death is an eternal sleep," and proclaimed liberty of conscience to all; but, inside of forty-eight hours, with genuine infidel consistency, they began to lead to the rack or the guillotine every man or woman who dared to assert that liberty.

"Infidelity is liberty;" yes, liberty to destroy, liberty to defame, liberty to crush all true religion; and when it holds the reins of power here as it held them in France, the purest blood of the nation will run through our streets as it ran through the streets of Paris in 1792 and 1794. History declares that 2,730 murders were committed in the name and for the sake of infidelity, during the space of sixteen months.

Nero was an infidel, and we commend the history of his reign to the attention of every man and woman. Tacitus tells us that Nero inflicted the most exquisite torture upon the Christians. He says they "died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult. Some were nailed upon crosses, others were sewed up in the skins of wild animals and exposed to the fury of dogs, others again

were smeared over with combustible material and used as torches to illuminate the darkness of night." Says Gibbon, "The most skeptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this most extraordinary fact, and the integrity of this celebrated passage from Tacitus."

Domitian and Caligula were infidels, and every historian is aware of the fact that panoramic views of their reigns are **[R594 : page 8]** horrible companion pieces to the reign of Nero. Says Prof. Tyndall, "The sufferings of the early Christians and the extraordinary exaltation of mind which enabled them to triumph over the diabolical tortures to which they were subjected, must have left traces not easily effaced."

And yet a prominent skeptic declares in the face of an intelligent public, "You have burned us at the stake, roasted us upon slow fires, torn our flesh with irons; you have covered us with chains, you have filled the world with fear, you have taken our wives and children from our arms," etc.

We ask in the name of simple truth and common justice. Who is it that have suffered these things? The answer comes from every page of history, that it is the followers of Christ who have clung to him through the fires of persecution and floods of misfortune. They were believers in the Bible who went to the stake, else why were Bibles burned with them in the flames? Men do not go to the rack, the stake, or the guillotine rather than renounce their faith when they have no faith to renounce. Men and women do not choose to be placed in red hot iron chains, rather than to deny a Lord on whom they have never believed. Men do not submit to have their tongues cut out, to be thrown to wild beasts, or to perish in slow fires, in preference to recanting from a position which they have never assumed.

Celsus was not crucified. Porphyry was not banished. Julian did not suffer, save at the hands of his own conscience. Voltaire was not thrown into a caldron of boiling oil. Paine was not burned at the stake, and modern skeptics are not placed in stocks or whipped in the streets.

It was men, women, yes, and children, who clung to the written word, when fire and flame and irons and lash were the reward for their fidelity. They have been driven to mountains and caverns, to wander in sheep skins and goat skins, they of whom the world is not worthy.

The same hands burned Christians that burned Bibles. They sought to crush the book and its believers by the same means. But the old book lives on unmindful of the waves that beat against the unfailing foundations.

It is still the "pillar of cloud" by day, and the "pillar of fire" in the nighttime of persecution, and thus it will ever be until the weary feet of God's little ones find rest upon the evergreen shores of eternal life.

– Mrs. H. V. Reed.

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BISMARCK has taken many a long step toward practical socialism; France has tried more than one fearful experience to save herself from the dangers of communism; American cities are trembling in the presence of a growling imperative proletaire. We may now close our eyes and ears against the claim of the laboring man, but we cannot do so long. Laborers may be unreasonable, may "strike" and fail as signally as the telegraphers did a few weeks ago, nevertheless they will yet force capital or State to hear them and to hear very thoughtfully, too. The property of the country is passing increasingly into the hands of the few; the voting

power is in control of the many. The time will probably yet come when either the State or the parties themselves will determine that labor shall have a larger share of business profits than it now receives, or the laborers will take it by force!

This is one of the initial problems of the present; it will be the dangerous problem of the future, unless we begin to study it and to solve it at once. The pledge given in the Republican platform to labor that "the American workingmen shall have a fair day's wages for a fair day's work" is as essential as any other in that platform, and it will be as faithfully kept. It is a point of honor and of safety on which there will soon be but a single voice and purpose among the American people. We are now in the period of discussion, we shall soon be in the midst of experiment and of action.

– Sel.
