

[It is quite possible that *both* statements may have been true. Evidently the Radicals want to make the Education question the main question of this Parliament. Perhaps some of the ultra-Conservatives may wish it also.—Ed. *Spectator*.]

### A CORRECTION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—I beg you to allow me to correct a mistake in the *Spectator* of January 30th in reference to myself. I am not "recognised as a member of the Unitarian body," nor have I at any time desired or asked to be so recognised. It is true that a son of mine, Rev. Ellison Annesley Voysey, did apply for a post in the Unitarian Church, but only with the expressed refusal on his part to call himself a Christian. We are Theists, holding some beliefs in common with Unitarians, but in other beliefs are strongly opposed to them.—I am, Sir, &c.,

CHARLES VOYSEY.

*St. Valery, Finchley Road, Hampstead, N.W., February 1st.*

### THE VALUE AND THE DANGER OF RITUAL.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—I have read with much interest the article on this subject in the *Spectator* of January 30th, and in its general conclusions I cordially concur. But the first sentences, which refer to my proposal to open the doors of the Synagogue to persons who are not Jews, repeats a misapprehension which I shall be obliged to you if you will allow me to correct. It is assumed that I have proposed to present the Jewish faith "without its historical clothing." I have nowhere made such a proposal. Quite the contrary. One of the grounds upon which I have stated that Theism taught by a Jew would have a stronger attraction for many minds than it has when taught by those who have seceded from Christianity is that it would be supported by a great historic backbone and a ritual of three thousand years' continuity. In a place of worship specially intended to convey the faith and the worship of Israel beyond the limits of the race, it would be necessary, I have said, to reduce in some measure only the number of observances which are at present incumbent upon orthodox Jews. And my reason, if not quite obvious, is not far to seek. The Jewish people—that is to say, the hereditary group of families directly descended from those who produced the Bible, and to whom Revelation was first given—are in a special and unique sense a band of priests so far as concerns their religious relations with the outer world. As a priesthood we have duties peculiar to our order, just in the same sense as the priesthood of the Catholic Church has certain rites special to their order which are not obligatory upon the laity. No human circumstance can alter the fiat by which the race of Israel has been consecrated as a priesthood to minister to mankind. But so far from abrogating the Jewish ritual, I have stated in all that I have written on this subject, that those observances which are adaptable to ordinary men and which the Jews have preserved should be maintained. In the Church of Rome every priest is required to repeat the 119th Psalm every day. But no ordinary Catholic is required to do so, and likewise the priest must say Mass every day; but the laity are only required to attend Mass on days of obligation and Sundays. The rite of unleavened bread for seven days in Passover is incumbent upon the Israelite, but the manner of observing the Passover would not be quite the same for some Jews; and so with regard to other rites. I should always maintain that every Jew is bound to know Hebrew to some extent, but knowledge of Hebrew would not be indispensable for any person who might desire to embrace the faith of Israel. The most important detail of the Jewish ritual is the annual Day of Atonement. And this is one which I should strongly recommend to everybody. I am sure all Christians would benefit by observing it, if they could realise the genius of the religious idea which it conveys. But I doubt whether any but a born Jew would abstain from food and water for twenty-six hours once a year.

Many of the observances which the Jews retain were designed in all probability to test their power of endurance in order to preserve their permanent presence as the enduring human witness of certain divine truths. It is quite certain that the most ardent Christian of our day does not dream of

observing all the Jewish ceremonials, which it is equally sure the founders of Christianity, who were Jews, did observe. And yet they are not less Christian on that account. Ritual within reasonable limits is of enormous value, and no Jewish missionary could ignore it.—I am, Sir, &c.,

OSWALD JOHN SIMON.

### THE QUEEN'S COMMEMORATION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—It is but a small thing that I propose, one that costs nothing, which, though it will seem to many as only a scrap of sentiment, is at least perfectly appropriate. Namely, to insert a new clause in the Litany of the Established Church "to bless and protect the Colonies and Dependencies of this Realm." The Britain beyond seas is become too vast and populous to be longer ignored in our liturgy. On the other hand, it has grown into vigour during her Majesty's reign.—I am, Sir, &c.,

F. G.

### POETRY.

DENNY.

DENNY mine, I contemplate,  
Half alarmed and half elate,  
Half amused and half beguiled,  
Such a decorative child:

It is true

There are plenty of the others,  
You have sisters and you've brothers:  
Some are pretty, some are not,  
But there is in all the lot  
None like you.

And though, when some noisy fun  
By the others is begun,  
You can shout and jump and frisk  
As befits a cheerful, brisk

Little chap,

You are likest some rare pet,  
Squirrel, lemur, marmoset,  
That with soft and wavy fur  
Would curl up and never stir  
In my lap.

Prettier than a little girl's  
Are your amber-coloured curls,—  
Curls that cluster, somewhat slack,  
"Gold upon a ground of black;"

And your eyes

Are as black as black can be,  
Eyes you never got from me,  
And I think that something queer  
Must be surely lodging here  
In disguise.

Most discreet is your delight;  
And your tiny mouth, shut tight,  
Never laughs, but at odd whiles  
Dimples into quiet smiles

For a joke.

If I tied you, hands and feet,  
Held you over burning peat,  
Crying "Fairies all we banish,"  
Would you shrivel up and vanish  
In the smoke?

Are your queer, uncanny ways,  
And your serious, solemn plays  
Signs of something old and small—  
Not a little boy at all,

But an elf?

Or is all that fluffy hair,  
All your fashions and that air  
Prim, precise, demure, and quaint,  
Like a little prince in paint,  
Just yourself?

STEPHEN GWYNN.