

Torch of Reason

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From Known to Unknown.

It is claimed by many that people like to be humbugged i. e., that any doctrine or creed will be accepted more readily if it contains a large element of mystery and theories which can not be proven.

This may be true of ignorant people, but we Secularists believe that we are ready for the solid nutritious food of truth which when properly digested and assimilated will give us more symmetrical and well balanced minds.

We should be very careful in teaching things as facts which are only theories. We should always state that our unproven theories are merely our ideas and not fall into the beastly error of stating theories as the truth; but there are some theories which can not be actually demonstrated which nevertheless explain certain phenomena so well that they are generally accepted by that grand body of benefactors called scientists. Nearly all facts known to science were once in this state and have been proven and accepted, not by the help of the mystery teachers called theologians, but in spite of them, and when some great discovery has been made by some noble sacrificing philosopher, the holy dealers in mysteries have always, like Betsy's husband when Betsy killed the bear, shouted from the top of the house i. e., their pulpit, Oh yes, Betsy and I killed the bear!

These holy men have taught that the powers controlling the universe are gods, angels, devils, spirits, ghosts, and witches and in the past, whenever they could, they have forced the freethinkers or philosophers to keep silent, and, in many cases they have silenced them by force, and today every discovery of science which tends to weaken the

old belief is fought with all the power and venom that can possibly be used. Experience teaches us that if the worshippers of the meek and lowly one who called the Scribes and Pharisees such vile names as serpents and vipers could get the power they so much desire but are so rapidly loosing, that all philosophers would meet the same fate as Bruno, but, thanks to the development of the human mind and the bravery of such men, we can express our opinions freely if we are willing to suffer the small inconveniences of ridicule, boycott and ostracism which are about the only weapons left to the holy warriors, and so we can, like the writer of old, sing our little song of the beginning of the world, of the advent of life, its growth, and its departure into the great unknown. If we claim to know more than Moses did, we ought not to be condemned too hastily, for it must be remembered that thousands of years have passed since his time and the children of earth have improved their school days and are not only possessed of much more knowledge than was possible for Moses to possess, but we have developed morally and we will be honest and not give our ideas as infallible, but will simply state that they are our present conception of things. Another great difference between holy Moses and ourselves is, that we will not be obliged to make up our story of nothing, but we will try to reason from the known to the related unknown.

It is a well known fact of science that the three states of matter i. e., the solid, the liquid and the gaseous are caused by the different degrees of heat and pressure to which matter is subjected and it is believed that the different degrees of heat are caused by the rates of motion of the molecules or particles of which all matter is composed. Now if this be true, and we believe it is, the earth and probably all planets, suns and satellites—the whole universe—was all in a gaseous state at one time and this is the more reasonable when we find that the earth is slowly growing cooler. Now if this tendency of the earth applies to all bodies alike, it brings us back to a time when mercury, venus, mars, jupiter, saturn, uranus and neptune with all their moons the sun and all suns, in fact everything was in the form of gas. This gas may have been united in a compound or like our atmosphere, it may have been simply a mixture. Our minds can not grasp the idea of endless space so we'll not mention it, but we can think of all the matter being in the form of gas and we must be satisfied with that. The material of which we are composed must have been there if this is true. Was it dark? There were no eyes to see and nothing that eyes like

ous could see. Where did this gas come from? Let us be honest and say we do not know.

Scientists say that matter can not be destroyed and so the elements of which this was composed may be eternal, if you know what that means. We do not for we can not think of something without a beginning and if we think of a beginning we can't help thinking of a time before the beginning and when we think of a time before the beginning that spoils our idea of the beginning. There is one thing certain however, that it is more logical to think of matter as being eternal than to think of a God who created all things out of nothing and who was not created himself. It is impossible to imagine such a being for the material of which he would be composed must have been created if other matter was or else some matter was eternal, and in this case the creator did not create all things, and, if it is claimed that the creator is a spirit and not composed of matter at all, this leaves us in a worse dilemma for our minds cannot grasp the idea of immaterial things; in fact immaterial simply means nothing to us. And so we believe as the Presbyterians do that God is without form parts or passion. That which is without form, parts or passion is nothing at all. Therefore there is no God according to this christian definition.

Misunderstood.

In order for those who have been biased by orthodoxy to understand Secularism, it seems that a regular course of training is necessary, either in practical work or diligent inquiry and conversation with those who do understand it.

This seems like a weak statement to one who understands Secularism, for it is so easy of comprehension that way-faring men though fools need not have as many different notions (creeds) about it as the wise(?) christians do about their religion. In order to show how Secularism is misunderstood we will quote the following from a christian mother's letter. Her son, who is a Secularist, is in the far West. We believe that this will clearly show that Secularists ought to organize and let the world know what Secularism is. Here is the quotation: "John, I cannot circulate those papers ("Torches") because I cannot think as you do and I do not see anyone that does. The Christian Science comes the nearest, but there are only a few of them and they do not mingle with others and do not seem to advance. I wish you had Rev. Wood by you always. He was a good man and I think such a man could do you lots of good. The last we heard of him he was in bad health."

"It does seem hard, only one boy and he is so far away, but you are

happier away as long as you think so differently from us all."

Isn't it sad to think that a son who loves his mother must either play the hypocrite or be looked upon as one who needs the divine arm of an orthodox preacher to lean upon. This mother knows that her son is as moral as Rev. Wood.

Why should not Rev. Wood have her son by him to help him in his weakness?

Her son believes in everything that is good, honest, moral and true—in everything that will make us better and happier, and is putting in his whole time in trying to make this world what it ought to be—in working for humanity.

Rev. Wood believes in working for a future life, in working for the glory of a supposed Creator, in angels, in miracles and a holy ghost. O, mothers, should the Rev. Woods be thought more of than your own sons? Isn't honesty of thought better than deception?

How do you know that your sons are not right and the Rev. Woods either mistaken or playing the hypocrite? Look around you. Do you not see good people who do not believe in orthodoxy, or any ancient religion?

They are Secularists. They may not be organized in your locality on account of the power of superstition, but there are many of them, and although it may be after you and the son that you do not now understand nor appreciate is gone, this same Secularism, this Religion of Humanity, will be universally accepted and practiced.

Fear of Death.

Death has been a great bugbear in the past, and we have inherited a great dread for what has been called the cold icy hand of death, but when we have become thoroughly acquainted with the laws of nature, and religious teachers cease to scare people by holding up vivid and awful pictures of death-bed scenes and the lost souls writhing in hell we will learn that it's not such an awful thing as we have been made to think. If we had been taught for years and years that death is perfect rest, no pain, no worry, no care, we could now look upon it as some do with no more dread than we have for going to rest at night, after our day's work is done. The present conditions of society cause us to feel sorry to leave our loved ones in the world to battle against their enemies, but when society has reached a more perfect state, much, if not all of this sorrow will be taken away, for in a perfect state of society all would be as brothers and sisters and the danger of our loved ones suffring from want of care or protection would be gone and our only grief would be for the sorrow of those who would miss us.