

Torch of Reason

The Only Secular Paper Published on the Pacific Coast.

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THURSDAY... FEBRUARY 4, E. M. 297.

Hit Us Again.

In the city of Silverton, Oregon, last Sunday, at an orthodox church which was built largely by the use of infidels' money, the Rev. expounder of the truth (?) talked along the same line as Dr. Locke of Portland did some weeks ago, when he gave us poor, lazy infidels such a raking.

These poor mistaken brothers are peculiar creatures to be sure. They are bound to be behind in everything. In getting up a sermon as close to Portland as this, a country pastor should copy from some of the later issues of the Oregonian; but we will admit that Dr. Locke's aforesaid sermon was a big hit. But leaving all jokes aside, it does astonish people to hear a full-grown man say that infidels have never built schools, churches etc. when at the same time there is a free reading-room within a few yards of his church in active work, which was instituted and is controlled entirely by infidels. In this same city an infidelic school has been instituted and is prospering. In this same city the most prosperous business men are infidels. The city is lighted by an infidelic electrician. Whenever our Rev. friend has an audience, it is about three fourth infidelic. The builders of his church were infidel carpenters and infidels' money paid for the most of it.

It is when we look at his statements in a broader light however, that we see the enormity of their falsity. The Chinese, the Japanese, the Mohammedans, the ancient Greeks, the Romans, the Buddhists etc. are all considered infidels. Have they built no schools? Have they established no libraries? What do we owe to the Arabian philosophers? What do we owe to the Greeks and Romans?.

But there is another way of looking at this question. While Christians have been putting in their time building churches and god schools trying to make people be-

lieve in Jesus and worrying about hell, infidels have been building railroads, steamboats and inventing all manners of things for our help and comfort. And now they have turned their attention to building schools, churches and Sunday schools of their own, we prophesy that orthodoxy will be left in the shade.

Our new school-building at Silverton will be built soon, but it would help us very much if the Christians could give as much toward this enterprise as infidels have given in the past to help build orthodox churches.

An Ethical Basis.

We think that our friend Mr. Underwood in his excellent article, Character the Test of Worth, which appeared in the "Torch" January 28, expressed the sentiments of every true Secularist on the Pacific coast. Yes, our Union should be established on an ethical basis and because we have had no definite standard we have been the butt of ridicule of societies that have.

We believe that now we have a University started and young people are coming to us for help to make their lives a blessing to themselves and the world, we should hesitate no longer and as soon as we can do the work well, we should plainly define our position.

We know that some will oppose this but it is by discussion that we get at the truth and we should not handle this question with gloved hands.

We are perfectly satisfied that the work of the O. S. S. U. has seen but very little success compared with what it would have seen provided it had had some definite purpose in view. So long as we shout liberty! liberty! and do nothing more, what good does it do? It is about as productive of good as the religious fanatic shouting, "I see Jesus" and falling over in a swoon. Some call this "the power" but we call it great weakness.

We want less short lived enthusiasm and more good common sense. We have great respect for everyone's private opinions and we would never ask a person to change his ideas without being able to give good reason for doing so but it is evident that it is best for those who have radically different views on vital questions to be in separate organizations, and especially when the success of one faction is sure to destroy the original organization. Take for example the question mentioned in the editorial of the Free Thought Magazine for this month i.e., the subject of free love. We are of the same opinion as Mr. Green, that free love is one of the most deadly and seductive enemies of the human family. Now the question is, is it for the best interest of our society for those who are so radically opposed

to each other as free lovers and those of our opinion, to try to work together? We think not, for if free lovers belong to our organization many of our very best citizens who otherwise would gladly put their shoulder to the wheel and be a great power in working for humanity, will hold themselves aloof and finally our society is nothing but a free love affair. But on the other hand if we adopt a moral code and have some definite guide and the free lovers have their own society, there will be no misunderstanding and when we get a worker he will fully understand his duties and privileges. Our society has suffered very much from this very cause not only on account of what to us is one of the most ruinous doctrines yet devised, free love, but also from other so-called reforms.

It is time Secularists understand that in order to succeed, we must work more harmoniously, and in order to do this we must step out upon a distinct platform and adopt a definite plan of action. Dear friends, if we can do this, we will have the best and brightest organization in the world; but as long as we countenance doctrines that are so offensive to the nostrils of the best people in the world, just so long will our work drag. Of course it is not for us to say just what our ethical standard should be, we must leave this with the members of the O. S. S. U. and if it doesn't suit us, there is plenty of room outside; but in our estimation there is no danger of placing it too high.

Those, who for a purpose or ignorantly would destroy us will shout, "Oh, you will rob us of our liberty!" Do not let such deceive you. Some people don't know what liberty is; they think it means license, some to do this and some to do that. We must not be afraid of being too good. Let us adopt the very best moral code we can and then advance from that and the world will respect us and we will do more in one year than during any previous ten.

Do Not Wait.

It may appear strange to some how we can talk of starting our building as soon as the weather is good, when our building fund only shows a little over \$500 subscribed. It would be well for our anxious friends to remember that the people of Silverton have not been called upon yet. When the time is ready, it will not take long for our friends here to raise the \$5000, or even more if necessary. We ought to have more outside help, for this school is of interest to Liberals everywhere; but we must not expect too much until we demonstrate the fact that it is possible to build a school, then our friends from afar will lift all they can.

After the building is completed we will need very much help in obtaining apparatus, books etc. and we will surely get it for every true Secularist will do a little and many littles make much. We hope no one will stand back and let a few kill themselves lifting, but now while the work lacks that momentum which it will gain when once fully started, everyone should take right hold and with a he! aw! he! lift—for God's sake? No, for Humanity's sake.

Brother H. L. Green, of the Free Thought Magazine, speaks of us and the work in Oregon in the following friendly terms, through the editorial columns of his magazine:

"The TORCH OF REASON, the new Silverton, Oregon, Liberal paper, appears to improve with every issue. Mr. J. E. Hosmer, the editor, evidently understands how to make a good paper and all that is needed now is for the Liberals through the country to give it a generous support. We earnestly request each of our readers to send fifty cents for a six months' trial of the paper."

"The Liberals of Oregon in organizing Secular churches and Sunday schools seem to understand the demand of the times. Liberals of other states should follow their example."

"At first we discouraged our Liberal friends of Silverton, Oregon, in their attempt to establish a Free Thought university, because we thought they could not succeed, but we notice they are bound to establish a school at once, and so we now advise Liberals everywhere to aid them all they can. The Western Liberals do not seem to have in their dictionary any such word as "failure." If we were to give any advice in the matter we would say for the present call the school a "Liberal Academy." A university is a very big thing."

We appreciate the kind notice given us by Mr. Green, and are pleased to note that we have surprised him by accomplishing more than he thought possible.

The management will still adhere to the name "University," however, for our school is no small thing. We invite brother Green to pay it a visit and see for himself.

Now.

In all kinds of work there comes a time when if the right thing is done it will lead to success, and we firmly believe that in the work of Secularism the time has arrived to construct, build up, organize and systematize.

Now is the time, and if we do not grasp the opportunity to make the Liberal University what it should be—what it can be easily made if we all do our duty, we ought to join the Catholics and go to counting our little beads.