

Torch of Reason

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Deception.

What a grand world this would be if the people could all be converted to simple honesty, and it is the duty of every parent and teacher (all are teachers) to inculcate into the minds of the young the great importance of learning to be honest, frank and open in all their doings.

At times we almost think that the world is dying of selfishness and deceit but a ray of light has entered our lives and we can see that, although the advance is slow and often impeded, yet gradually the world is rising to a higher ideal of life.

Deception is one of our greatest enemies, and, through long years of suppressed and blighted thought, we have dragged this dead inheritance from our heathen ancestors. But compare for one moment the freedom that we have now with that of a few decades ago, and then let us ask ourselves what is to be the effect on coming generations.

Already we can see the superior intelligence of children born of freethought parents and with what hatred they view deceit and hypocrisy. They will, if given a chance to gain the knowledge necessary, do wonderful things to eradicate deception and fraud from the world and to hasten the time when men will be governed by reason and love instead of deceit and greed.

All Wrong-Doing a Mistake.

Who can tell what might have been if individuals and nations had made no mistakes? Our mistakes hold us back, prevent us from enjoying the happiness that we are capable of enjoying and ruin the fairest and purest of life.

We hold that what christians call sins are simply mistakes. If Eve ate the apple, she made a mistake, provided it caused the unhappiness that is claimed, and the being who created a creature so weak as to make such a mistake, made a mistake that clearly shows a lack

of omnipotence, and after repenting he certainly made another mistake by drowning the poor people who had made mistakes, instead of converting them to Secularism. To one who has been redeemed by honest research, this story of the origin of sin is one of the worst mistakes that man has ever made, for, instead of making our relations to wrong doing and wrong doers plain and clear, it has made a mystery out of it and caused us through our ignorance to imagine things to be wrong that are not wrong at all, and things that are very bad we have been taught to consider the height of holiness.

After a person has reached an adult age he or she is very apt to continue in the same habits, good or bad that were contracted in youth, and so the period of life which should be guarded most is while boys and girls are forming their habits. Freethought people teach their children the principles of mental freedom and if well taught the youth goes forth with noble ideas and aspirations, but he finds that his highest ideals are ridiculed and considered by people who claim to be good, as very, very sinful, and that a high premium is placed upon silence or hypocrisy.

The poor youth without congenial companionship, so necessary to happiness, and being confused and goaded to desperation by friends claiming to have a great desire to save him, when he knows he hasn't been lost, often makes mistakes, the effects of which will live as long as the human race exists. The mistake may be in either direction. The reason may be silenced and the victim be one more added to the long list of hypocrites or he may become reckless and add one more to the long procession that is forever moving onward toward the bottomless pit of a wasted life.

As long as the enemies of Secularism can keep the conditions as they have been in the past and can induce sons and daughters of Freethought to join their churches, and point with scorn to those who have been driven to crime by the unwholesome conditions brought about by their preaching, just so long have they little to fear; but let us once give our children a chance to develop their high ideals, let us once furnish them a congenial society where they can meet others who like themselves have been taught the folly of blind faith and the beauties of nature, let us once train them to work in the broad field that is now ready for a rich harvest for humanity, and the old tenement of orthodoxy will tremble to its very foundations.

In order to help those, who have made the mistake of playing the hypocrite or recklessly indulging in other evil pursuits, to correct these mistakes as best they can and become champions of truth and right;

and in order to save others from falling into the same errors and make of them messengers of good tidings to the world, do we labor.

The importance of this work of establishing and maintaining our Liberal University can not be over estimated. Our enemies realize this perhaps better than many in our own ranks, and as we succeed we must continually keep in mind that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Surrounded on all sides by trained soldiers of the cross who will resort to any mode of warfare in the name of their mythical gods, and, lacking in that cohesive force which comes from an organization having one central idea, our battle may be a hard one, but there is no weapon so effective as the sword of truth and if we will but place this sword in the hands of a few, and give them the strength of a trained reason to wield it, and the opportunity of marching and fighting together we can surely say as we realize the great work we have done for humanity, "we have met the enemy and they are ours." During the great Rebellion the government, through its agent, called for volunteers, and the result was that a brazen wrong—a cruel slavery was abolished and our Union preserved.

Today humanity calls aloud for volunteers to help abolish a far greater slavery and to unite mankind into one grand brotherhood.

Come brother; come sister, "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us," and fight for our own and our children's emancipation from the slavery of ignorance and superstition.

Elements Affecting Our Progress.

Ever since men commenced their onward march toward civilization, ever since they banded themselves together for mutual protection against wild beast, not much wilder than themselves, there have been two elements at work which have affected our progress. These elements may be called the elements of construction and the elements of destruction. They have been continually at war with each other, the one gaining a victory here and the other there, and the fight has been as fierce and the victories and defeats as rapid as human thought itself; but a comparison of our present civilization with that of the most ancient, shows that the elements of construction have gradually gained ground, and that although in the past it has been but little at a time today we find that a great movement is on foot toward the emancipation of mankind from the powers of destruction. This movement is not like a spontaneous combustion, rapid or noisy, but is more like the growth of a great tree, slow

but powerful. There have been many victories for the elements of construction. When we read of the past civilization of Greece and Rome and realize what a great benefit their works of art, of literature and oratory have been to the world, we feel that that has been a victory for civilization. When we read of the people of England compelling King John to grant them Magna Charta, giving them a more liberal government, we say that that was a great victory for the constructive element of human progress. When we think of Columbus and his untiring energy, when we think, that in spite of the snubs of kings and ridicule of the people, he succeeded, helping to prove the rotundity of the earth and discovering this great western continent we again say that victory perched upon the banner of human progress.

After the establishment of the colonies along the eastern coast, and when, after the sacrifice of many noble lives in the bloody revolution against the tyranny of King George, we established a republican form of government which has proven to be far better than a monarchy, we hear again the shouts of victory from the lovers of humanity. When the great blot upon the face of our more modern civilization was erased, when the curse which caused children to be torn from the bosoms of their mothers and sold into bondage and separated husbands and wives forever to toil for cruel masters, when this blot was washed away by the awful war of the Rebellion, again the shout of victory! victory! was heard from millions of the lovers of liberty, justice and truth. The great discoveries of the laws of nature, the circulation of the blood, the law of gravitation, the application of steam and electricity and the writing and printing of books so that we may all think over again and again the great thoughts of the great men who lived before us, and the establishment of free public schools, all have been great victories for the construction of a high state of civilization.

But ah, the elements of destruction have also had victories. The destruction of the great Alexandrian library where for six months thousands of valuable books furnished fuel for the four thousand baths of the city, was a victory of ruthless destruction through the hands of the Mohammedan fanatics. The inquisition which caused thousands of intelligent men and women to be burned to death for opinions sake was a cruel, an awful victory for the enemies of mental liberty. Nor are these battles confined to past ages. Right here in this city, every where in our fair land the victories and defeat follow each other in rapid succession.

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