

For the Torch of Reason.
National Military Home.

I am at the present time serving my 19th year locked up here in the Military Hospital. It is an awful life to live, but it is the best I can do. We have plenty of the very best to eat and wear, with nice warm rooms and beds to sleep in, but that is not the point: you take a man who has a little life in him and especially a Freethinker, and deprive him of all home, social and family relations and his life will be miserable. I have a wife still living with whom I have lived over 40 years, also a son and daughter. I get to see them occasionally for a few days. They are all liberals and respect me the more if possible for teaching them so. I give what little pension I draw to the support of my wife and live in the home. There are at the present time about six thousand on the role, but during the last year the cemetery has gotten the better of them, there being more under the ground than on top, and from this on, it will gain very fast. There are other liberals in the house besides myself. But for various reasons they keep quiet, don't let the people know what they do believe; that is one reason why I say that we would certainly meet with better success if we were organized. There would be a class that we would catch, and they would come out and let people know who and what they were.

I got my Liberalism from reading and studying the Bible alone—that is, I read it and took it as it read; that was enough for me when I allowed truth and reason a little show. I never read a Liberal book or heard a Liberal lecture delivered until long after I had discarded the Bible as the inspired word of God, and its teachings of heaven and hell as fabulous. When it told me that at some period of time no one knows when, that an infinite, all-wise God went to work and out of nothing created a beautiful world like this, then peopled and replenished it with man and beast, then in a short time became grieved at his heart for doing such a foolish thing, repented of his doings, went to work and destroy the whole business and then make it over again—could I believe such teaching as that to be the inspired word of God and true in every chapter and verse? I took it just as it read and that was the very reason that I could not believe there was a word of truth in it. No infinite, all-wise God was ever guilty of such work as that. Then it told me that on the sixth day the Lord made both man and woman and blessed them and sent them forth to multiply and replenish the earth, then in a short time it tells us that he took the man he had made and put him in the Garden of Eden to keep it and after he had

been there a long time he got lonesome being by himself, so the Lord put him to sleep, took one of his ribs, and made another woman for him, but it doesn't tell us whatever became of the first woman nor why he did not put her in the garden along with the man. If he had done that it would have saved some one the trouble of telling two different accounts about the creation of woman; then it would not have disputed that the work of creation was complete on the sixth day. But this denies it in toto, and says that the Lord rested just a little too soon. Then when it tells me that light and darkness, evening and morning, were created on the first day, and that the sun, moon and stars were not created until the fourth day, what am I to do? Did we have three whole days and nights without the light of either sun or moon? Did the earth stand still those three days? There would have been no sense in its revolving as it would have been just as light without it. Then if we could get along three days without any sun, why not all the time? In that case there would have been no difference in age between the earth and sun; but the way it is now, the earth is three days the oldest. Who do you think, Bible believer, inspired such teachings as that?

I see by the papers that another New York minister goes back on the bible miracles. The Rev. William Lloyd of the Congregational church has declared that he did not honestly believe that any such miracle as Joshua making the sun and moon stand still ever happened. Then if he don't honestly believe that, we know what he thinks about the rest. He might as well come to the front like a man and discard the whole business. Twenty years ago Henry Ward Beecher came out and declared his disbelief in hell. Vituperation was heaped upon him by the thousands, but to-day no sensible, intelligent, unprejudiced person believes a word more in it than he did, and he is receiving the compliments of all honest people for his veracity.

JOEL M. BERRY.

Switzerland is the only country in Europe which has the sense to spend more per head on education than on preparation for warfare. Of course it has no navy, but it has bad neighbors, and every man has to learn to use his own rifle. Denmark comes next, spending the most per head of any nation in Europe; but it has a navy to maintain. Holland spends double as much on war preparations as Denmark, and in this is only second to England and France, the last named spending most on education. Russia spends least of all on education, and most in proportion on war.—Exchange.

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