

# Torch of Reason

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## Notice!

A pencil mark here denotes that your subscription will expire with the next number. You are earnestly requested to renew so that you may receive the paper without interruption. We have decided that it is best for all concerned that we do not send papers longer than the time paid for unless so ordered. This will prevent any loss on the part of the Union and we will know just where we stand. We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

THURSDAY, JUNE 17, E. M. 297

## Factions.

We hope that everyone who does not believe in spooks nor superstitions of any kind and who believes in morality will do everything in his power to firmly establish the O. S. S. U. on the ethical basis. Until we do this there can be but very little constructive work done by us as an organization. Methodists are Methodists and can build Universities and so it is with Catholics and other societies but at present the contending, opposite factions in the O. S. S. U. make it impossible to do the constructive work that can be done as soon as our organization is really secular and the factions that do not belong to the Secular ranks have contented themselves with their own societies, or until we firmly settle upon our ethical basis. This is our great future work and must be our thought by day and our dreams at night.

In a communication from our co-worker Mr. W. J. Dean of Talent the following is quoted: "You see years ago we materialists went in with the spiritualists and built a hall. It was soon discovered that the two isms didn't mix well and the result was that our hall was "to let" for several years. A few months ago we bought out the spook element and are now bending all our efforts to get out of debt and improve the hall. We have now a fine prosperous Sunday school."

In the city of Portland the same thing i. e., the mixing has been tried and the result has been very unsatisfactory. The result in Forest Grove is well known and the American Secular Union is another excellent example of the

result of foolishly trying to mix elements that cannot possibly affiliate.

Now Secularists it is time we have learned the lesson. We should profit by the past and if every one who understands the situation will take right hold of the work of firmly establishing Sunday schools and churches on our by-laws as they now stand we will soon have the most prosperous and progressive organizations in the world.

## Rally!

Our friends should remember that our work here is an entirely new enterprise and that our success depends largely upon the number of subscribers we get for our paper, for, wherever our paper goes there will be a chance of getting someone interested in constructive Secularism. Everyone then should rally at once and help us get a big list of subscribers. Make a grand charge all along the line! Do all you can and keep it up and we will do the same.

## Alive!

Last week we were somewhat pessimistic but this week we feel very optimistic and there are good reasons for it. Last week our enemies were doing all in their power to stop our work and they have succeeded in delaying and hindering us to quite an extent but, whatever be our other faults, we are not at all "weak in the knees" and we will use the enemies' work as stepping stones and cross the raging torrent of opposition. We are very sorry for the delay in the building, but it will be only for a short time and when we do go on we will be in better shape than ever. Friends of purity and common sense, we must not let this educational work be crowded out by our enemies, for it stands for the complete overthrow of superstition and its kindred evils. Come to our aid in this grand work and the children of coming generations will "rise up and call us blessed."

We must remember that this is not a local affair, neither is it for a few years only; but the University is to be a fort, erected by the united efforts of the freethinkers of the world, and is to be a base of supplies for freemens' sons and daughters as long as this war against ignorance, superstition and crime is waged.

## The Work Goes On.

At the meeting last Tuesday evening the Executive Board, in order to save our work from further interruption and final capture by the enemy passed the following resolution:

Resolved, that we, the Executive

Board of the Oregon State Secular Union do hereby sell to Pearl W. Geer, the paper known as the TORCH OF REASON together with all the machinery, type, stock and material belonging thereto; also the Liberal University together with all property, books subscriptions, donations and accounts belonging thereto; in and for the consideration that Pearl W. Geer assumes all the indebtedness of the said Oregon State Secular Union contracted since October 15 1897 amounting to Three Hundred and Twenty One Dollars (\$321.)

Immediately after the adoption of this resolution a company was formed to be known as the Liberal University Company. This company will have full control of the TORCH OF REASON and University. It consists of P. W. Geer, Pres. of O. S. S. U., M. P. Hosmer, Sec. Vice Pres., and J. E. Hosmer Pres. of the University.

We feel that a great victory has been won for purity, justice and truth and that there is positively no danger of our work ever going into the hands of the enemies of Secularism. Let us work with a will and get our building ready as soon as possible.

## Our Best Thoughts.

In order to give to the world our best thoughts we must be free.

If a teacher has enemies and is afraid of being injured by their influence, this fear will detract from her work, and the world will be robbed of the good that might come from her being free to think and act her very best.

Now, just as soon as it is known that a teacher is not orthodox that instant she has enemies who will not rest until her position is filled with some good sister who is more credulous; so we see that there is a premium placed upon superstition, indifference and hypocrisy. What is the effect?

The schools are filled with Christian fanatics, indifferent people who grow indifferent to other things and only work for pay, and the hypocrites, who perhaps do more harm than either of the other classes. O, how the poor children suffer on account of the mental slavery of our teachers!

We hope that our Liberal University will be a great factor in freeing the world from this horrible octopus of superstition.

## A Miracle of Modern Days.

Rev. P. S. Henson a prominent Chicago preacher, spends considerable time in trying to prove that the bible agrees with science. Here is a sample of his profound reasoning: "The speaker used the arc light—a break in the natural order of things—as a parallel for miracles. He cited the case of a man who reeled into his church one day intoxicated, but, hearing the music, was sobered to the point where the

speaking appealed to him and now is a stanch Christian. This, he said, was a miracle of modern days."

At what point did the "Miracle" come in? When the man drank the whiskey under the influence of which he reels into the church, or when he heard the music which helped to sober him, or when he had completely recovered from the condition produced by liquor, when "the speaking appealed to him," or afterwards when there had been time for him to consider more fully the folly of his cause?

Mr. Henson is very indefinite. What reason is there for believing that the change in the conduct or associations of the man from the time he became a "stanch Christian" had any other than natural antecedents?

It looks as though Mr. Henson, in order to get rid of objections to miracles which he cannot answer would have people regard a miracle as a natural event but one of exceptional character or unusual occurrence. But the alleged miracles of the bible, to which theologians have appealed as evidence of the divine character of their religion were events, like the miraculous birth and resurrection of Jesus, which involved, if they occurred, supernatural interposition in the natural order. The birth of a child who had no father, and his coming to life after his death could not have occurred, theologians have said without special exertion of divine power in ways different from the operations of nature.

This argument has led many who believed that the events recorded in the New Testament true, to accept Christianity as a supernatural religion. But if theologians now, when miracles have been chased out of the known world, claim that a miracle is an event as natural as any other, only unusual, such as a drunken man going to church listening to the music and to the preaching and becoming converted, with what consistency or force can they continue to appeal to alleged miracles as evidences of the supernatural origin and character of their system?

In the past the clergy has too often used their influence to imprison, torture and destroy those who have had the temerity to criticize their teachings. Now they show readiness and facility in revising and interpreting their doctrines so as to harmonize them with the facts of science and to escape the force of the critics' objections. Anything in this age of doubt and disbelief, to get a new lease of life for their theology and a prologation of their influence as teachers of the true faith and guardians of the peoples' morals. Meanwhile the decay of creeds goes on, and the sunlight of science and freethought is dispelling the darkness of superstition and enlightening the priests as well as the people.  
B. F. U.