

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, JULY 8, E. M. 297

All Should Sacrifice.

Comparatively speaking we are young in the freethought work, but we hope to merit the confidence of the older workers by industry, faithfulness and strict adherence to the principles we preach and finally gain a hearing.

We hold that Secularists can not be too good. If all will become just as pure and clean morally as they can make themselves, we will knock the old blood remedy for sin out in the "first round."

We believe that many Freethinkers do not appreciate the work that is being done by the Freethought journals of our day. No one who is not acquainted with the work can understand the sacrifice necessary in publishing these papers and magazines. Every Freethought family in the United States ought to read them and pass them on to others.

In many cases one tenth of the sacrifice which has been necessary to establish these papers would put them in the homes, and a little thought and systematic work will convert many of your neighbors to Secularism. Organizations will follow and we will have accomplished more in one year, than, battling alone, we could have done in twenty-five.

"But how can we afford to take these papers?" says some poor Secularist who has a large family to support and a small income. Well, there are no doubt many cases where it is impossible, for many families haven't enough bread for their bodies let alone bread for their minds, but we are well satisfied that there are thousands who think they can't afford these journals that could, by sacrificing just a little, take them all and be much better off than they are now.

Throw away that old pipe! It costs you more than ten dollars a year, and you can get nearly all of these papers and Susan Wixon's Right Living for the young people for less than that.

Sacrifice a little; it will make you happy. Go without tea and coffee if necessary.

Perhaps there is enough old iron around your place to pay for these papers. Pick it up; take it to town and don't get on a drunk with the money but use it for something that will live after you are gone. Look around you and if you have the will you will probably find the way to secure some of these papers and help the University. These are as critical times in the world's history as ever existed, and if we are not careful, we will be gone before we have left our little impression for good, or hung up our little sign that the weary travelers who are to come after us may be encouraged to press onward and gain the great prize that will be awarded to those who live in the world when it has become free from the priests and the ghosts of the gods.

Honest men and women who believe in happy homes here, who wish to see the boys and girls become good, moral, useful, happy, citizens, must unite their strength, for, with careless licentiousness on the one side, and the fanatical belief-worship on the other, the struggle will be long enough at best; but if we will unite our forces, many who are now in the toils of evil practices and many who are under the influence of the priest will be purified by the sacred fires of reason and common sense and join our happy band of workers.

Atheism and Agnosticism.

We believe that atheism and agnosticism are both right.

If we were asked the question, "do you believe there is a god?" we could truthfully answer "no," and this belief makes one an atheist. If, however, we were asked the question, "do you know there is no god?" we would answer, "no, we do not positively know," and this lack of absolute knowledge makes one an agnostic.

This lack of absolute knowledge of ours must be of very little consolation to the believer, for he would be obliged to answer the same if questioned as to the existence of any of the heathen gods.

If we should ask a Christian if he believes that such gods as Jupiter, Mars, or Thor exist, he would of course say "no;" but, if we should ask him if he knows no such gods exist, he would have no more right to say yes, than we have to say that no such god as Jehovah exists.

In one sense, i. e., in the sense that as far as our knowledge can extend, our Christian friends know

that such things as the heathen gods do not exist, and so it is with agnostics and atheists who have been redeemed by common sense. We are fully satisfied that all the gods are myths. What there may be, beyond the horizon of man's limited mental vision, no one knows and therefore all men are agnostics, although many will not own it, even to themselves. To help men and women to become honest with themselves and thus become honest with others is one of the great objects of Secularism, and there is nothing better to accomplish this purpose than the ability to show people that they do not know that there is such a being as Jehovah is said to be, and that as far as human knowledge can go, it proves that all gods are imaginary.

When all men become free from these old relics of the past, and from the power that these old beliefs give the priest and preacher, they will cease wasting their affections on non-responsive, imaginary gods and saviors, and devote their time and talents in helping themselves and each other to be happy while here; then, if there should be such a peculiar development, creation or self-existent, non-progressive, all-wise, omnipotent, personal yet omnipresent creature or creator as Jehovah is said to be, honest men and women—men and women who are not afraid to die, or live forever if necessary—will gladly meet him; and if he should prove to be, as many think, a kind and loving father, all will be well and nobody could place themselves in harmony with him quicker or more completely than an honest, true atheist or agnostic.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter then. It is against all reason to suppose that there are such beings as gods, even Jehovah the god of the Christians, but, even if we have been created and placed here by such a being we should attend to our business, i. e., make happy conditions here, and not attend to the business of the gods until we know that they exist and need our help.

Don't Want Money.

Money is not what we want; what we do want is lumber, nails, windows, paint, labor etc. etc. Now if it is more convenient for you to send us the money, and let us buy these things as they are needed in building our school, of course we will be very glad to have you do so; but, if you can send us material, it will please us fully as well. Parties living on the railroad who have building material, or who can get it on a debt, send us a car load, more or less. Americans ship lumber way over to China. Why not send a load to Silverton to help build a school which is to be a bulwark

against the tyranny of priests and their gods and devils.

Champions of Freethought, this is as much a part of the great battle for liberty and right as any event in the history of the world. Let us gather our mental forces together and do what we can. What better monument can we build to the heroes who have suffered and died for liberty?

Diseased.

It seems that highly organized bodies are fully as apt to become diseased as more simple forms. This appears to be the case with governments, and as we become more and more highly civilized it is to be hoped that we will recognize this fact and be ready to combat the diseases which are apt to destroy us as other nations have been destroyed.

Secularists are very apt to think of the disease of priestcraft, and surely this is a horrible blight and weakness that prevents our highest development, but we must not forget that priestcraft is not the only evil.

There are many who are sailing under the flag of Freethought today that are mere pirates and do more harm to civilization than the preachers, for they are pointed out as examples and this keeps many an honest man and woman in the belief that freedom of thought is bad and so they allow the preacher to tie them down.

It has been our conviction ever since we entered the work that in order to be of service in purging our country from the diseases that threaten its life, that Secularism must first be purged and purified, and now that the Oregon State Secular Union has taken the initiatory step we hope that other Freethought societies will follow. The operation may be a somewhat painful one, but, as the physician is sometimes obliged to use the knife, in order to save a patient's life, so we were obliged to cut away the diseased parts in order to have the healthy growth necessary to do the work for which we were organized. And now as we gain strength after the operation, let every one who understands the case, and who loves the great principles for which our organization stands help in every way to insure a healthy, steady growth and we will soon become a mighty power not only in freeing our land from the curse of ignorant worship and the spendthrift manner in which people spend their time and money working for another world, but save it from the other evils which are making a hell of what might be a heaven.