

Torch of Reason

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Success Brings Happiness.

We are happy to announce that our work begins to move forward in a better way than it ever has before. Several things have conspired to give us this new life. Our lecturers in Eastern Oregon are having success not only in receiving large audiences and a hearty welcome everywhere, but financially their work is succeeding far beyond our expectations. And this is not all; new workers are flocking to our standard in large numbers. At one place there were twenty eight that joined, many subscribing for the TORCH OF REASON and LITTLE CANDLE.

Our workers now begin to realize the beauties of having a good moral basis to work on and the great benefits of our new financial plan. You see these members from this one place put seven dollars into the treasury of the O. S. S. U. and will do so every three months. This each quarter, will give our society a fund with which it can help local organizations, distribute literature and in fact make the work a success, whereas before it was a failure. Then the work on our buildings has begun. The much needed money begins to come in from friends everywhere.

To be sure this aid is in small amounts but many of us doing a little, is going to make this one of the grandest works that Freethinkers ever accomplished.

There is absolutely nothing now in the way of a glorious victory over the old serpent-devil superstition; and we are sure if our friends could have stood where we have stood this beautiful summer day and have feasted their eyes on the lovely view from our college grounds, they would have felt the University spirit as we did.

The brilliant, shining, snow-covered mountain peaks in the distance, the lovely valley with acres upon acres of wheat, and hops, and orchards of luscious fruit, all spoke to us of a happiness that no priest nor creed, nor holy book could ever give. O, friends of truth and fraternal love, share with us the lesson we have learned to-day from nature's loveliness. If human beings could only learn to harmonize, what beautiful pictures of happiness are in store for us and the future men and women of this lovely earth.

To be sure our natures are not the same, but sameness is not wanted—only harmony, only the privilege of being loved and respected and yet the privilege of being one's real self, to think and act out one's own nature and not be condemned any more than the hops for not being wheat, nor the mountains for not being valleys.

Can we bring about this harmony of the race? Can we crush the evils of greed, and avarice, and wantonness, and superstition, and hypocrisy? Can we establish the religion of love, and purity, and wisdom? Yes, it is coming and every one who reads these lines is either hastening or hindering the gladsome day.

Capital Punishment.

Believing that all wrong doing is simply a mistake on the part of the wrong-doer, caused by ignorance or lack of knowledge of the whole truth relating to himself and his evil deed, we cannot think that it is right or best for society to take a brother's life even for the worst crime that can be committed.

If we could be taught to feel sorrow for one's mental weakness as we do for his physical deformities the world would soon reject all vindictive punishment and also the damaging idea that to take the life of one poor unfortunate will reform his brother.

The small amount of good that might come from the fear of capital punishment is far overbalanced by the evil that follows in its wake.

One result alone seems to us to more than counteract any good that may come from the state deliberately committing murder because some poor mis-born or misguided brother, in a state of excited or cunning insanity, takes his victim's life. This result is the hate and revenge that is generated against the state. If all men were perfect this would not result, but our laws should be made for people as they are and all know that humanity is faulty.

Then the effect on the unborn is simply appalling. The sensational accounts of the life and death struggles in courts, the details of executions and the hate, latent and expressed, that is of necessity engendered on both sides, produces an effect just opposite that which a better civ-

ilization demands. Then again the question of the right or wrong of taking one's life because he has done wrong. The man who defrauds his fellowmen to gain wealth, regardless of the misery he causes by his deception, may be as much of a detriment to society as a man who commits one or many murders. The slow miserable dying life that many lead who are compelled by the cunning manipulators of stocks, commodities and labor is often worse than death, and the danger from these may be as great as the danger from the red-handed assassin. But who would advocate taking a man who has acquired great wealth by what all considered foul means and hanging him by the neck till he is dead? The ability that he has shown in his illegal schemes for gaining wealth, would, if guided by wisdom, be of great advantage, a benefit to all; and so with murderers; the strength of body and mind necessary to commit a murder should be and can be utilized by the state for its advancement and hasten the time when criminals will be almost if not quite unknown.

Whenever there is a crime committed, the wrong that has been done by the criminal is not the only wrong. Before the poor wretch was born and when in childhood he was receiving the impressions that have made him what he is, individuals and society in general have been wronging him. Think of the wrong that is necessary to make a man a murderer, and think you that it is right to still further wrong the poor wretch by taking away his life? No, let us as a civilized people undo as far as lies in our power, the wrongs that we have ignorantly done, and try to bring our unfortunate brothers and sisters into right relations with their fellowmen instead of murdering them for revenge, or thinking it will reform others.

If we look at the question from a purely economic stand point we are also forced to believe that there is a better way than to destroy what has cost so much if there is any way by which the outlay can be made to return a benefit to the state. What does it cost to raise a full grown man? The exact average cost might be given but our object now is only to show that the cost is too much to be lightly sacrificed without an effort for the state to secure interest on the investment, and surely all will agree that it is perfectly right to take usury when it comes to paying the state good citizenship for the protection, education and other loans it has made us. Every member of our government should be a worker in order for our land to have the highest degree of prosperity, and the time taken for the mother to produce the offspring and to nourish it, the time taken by the father with the help of the shoemakers, tailors, merchants, farmers, and teachers to feed, clothe and educate a child to manhood or womanhood is not to be

looked upon as nothing. The economic question then resolves itself into this: Are we wise enough to take the criminal that we have produced and so use him that he will pay back the principal or at least the interest on our investment?

Each case may require different treatment. Most of them have been neglected in moral training and this defect might be remedied; some may be beyond this and can only do mechanical work; some may become entirely cured and finally given their liberty, and, although mistakes may be made, it appears to us that such mistakes would be no more numerous nor damaging and far more humane than the mistakes that are now made in executing innocent men.

We hope and believe that the time will come when the correction of evil-doers will be for their benefit; for the benefit of the state and when taking one's life for a fault, by those who are faulty, will be looked upon with as much contempt as is now the thumbscrew and the rack.

Difficulties.

Our work can not be stopped although many difficulties must be overcome in order to have that degree of success that is necessary to gain the respect and help of those who are conservative in regard to our cause. We have the land and will build, but whether we build as we should or not, depends upon whether we are able to easily surmount the difficulties.

Some, (not true Secularists) who have never done any good to our cause themselves, will persist in lying to others and thus prevent them from helping. The question every Secularist should ask himself is, Do I want the University built or not, and if he does he should help what he can or at least he should not listen to every busy-body who on account of some petty jealousy, or lack of comprehension goes about tearing down what others try to build up.

Why, do you know that some who have no reasons for trying to stop our work and whose own personal interest would have been better served by silence, purposely started an absolutely false report that we were going to sell the Liberal Hall of this city and put the funds into the University.

Another went around to our friends and did everything in his power to get them to withdraw their support, not even hesitating to tell things that are absolutely false. Now friends this is not a pleasant subject, but in order that you may be on your guard and give us a chance for self defence, do we write this; and now we hope that every friend of Secularism will remember one thing, and that is, that we are going to build a university in Silverton and that we are doing just what we think is for the best interests of the cause.

Do you want us to succeed in our work or not?

We do not want our friends outside of this city to think that we have no friends here, for we have and they are doing just all they can to help along the grand work, but we feel it our duty to defend ourselves against those who either through lack of character or lack of understanding, are trying to do us and the cause for which we are laboring an unjust and unnecessary injury.