

Torch of Reason

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We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

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Are You Washed?

When men who are prominent in any work turn out bad, it hurts the cause for which they have been laboring, for those who are not thoroughly grounded in the principles will let go and perhaps never be induced to take hold again; but we should be so thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of the principles of Secularism by this time, that no individual could become a stumbling block to us. When one proves himself weak we should become all the stronger and remember that it is principle we are working for and not individuals. If all others forsake what to us is right it is no excuse for us to hypocritically work for what we think is wrong or put ourselves in the detestable state of doing nothing.

When the soldiers of a brave army see another regiment of the enemy swinging into place for action they do not break ranks and run nor throw down their arms and prepare to go to sleep, but they strengthen their works and get everything in order for a desperate struggle; and there never yet was a battle won by those who give up because a comrade weakens or proves traitor.

We must expect some to fall in this struggle against the brazen wrong of the age, but let us close up the ranks and never think of defeat. Victory is certain! We can not fail! Circumstances are such that every thing we say and do in this cause of Liberty is a victory and a series of these victories is as sure to bring a final triumph as the law of evolution is to produce higher forms of life.

There is one very important fact that we should always keep in mind however, and that is that the length of time to bring about this

triumph is owing, in a large measure to what the Secularists of to-day accomplish. A great change might, under proper conditions, be brought about at once. Perhaps some are waiting for some one man, some modern Napoleon to spring up and lead us to victory, but no general, no matter how wise, can conquer a host without trained soldiers. What we need is organization—a solid, perfectly understood organization—"known and read of all men" and that is what the Oregon State Secular Union is trying to perfect. When we were in the Christian ranks, we could get a letter of introduction from our local minister and, presenting this to the pastor of any protestant church in the United States, or perhaps in the world, we could immediately receive friendly greeting and any help or advice the man of God could give. Now we find that among true Secularists this same brotherhood exists, only it is very limited on account of the lack of organization. We can see in the future the gradual displacement of the Christian denominations by the more cosmopolitan brotherhood, free from all superstition and hypocrisy and uniting in its loving embrace all good men and women; and finally as it displaces these old forms it grows larger and larger until the old weaknesses have become extinct and the Eutopian prophesies of the poets have been fulfilled. Will you be one to help this rapid growth to a higher life? Are you capable? Can you make yourself capable? Are you washed from the filth of selfishness, superstition and hypocrisy?

Secularism vs Christianity.

Let us examine an ideal Christian and an ideal Secularist and see which is the better and then live up to the ideal we choose.

The ideal Christian believes that the bible is the infallible word of God; he therefore believes in eternal punishment and eternal reward. He looks upon men who do not believe, as lost—a great detriment to the world and and not to be given even a hearing, no matter how honest or sincere they are. His concern is more for the eternal home beyond this life than the life here and now. He does not lie, steal, murder, nor work on the Sabbath. He is a good, kind-hearted man, a good husband, a tender father, a noble citizen. Much of his time is used in reading the bible to understand what God's will is concerning his life-work; much taken up by prayer and singing songs of praise to his maker, and a goodly portion of the fruits of his labor is given to support the church and God's representatives here on earth. He is a good man.

The Secularist believes that his whole time should be used in working for things pertaining to

this life. He believes that no book is infallible and is on his guard lest he be led into error by what he reads. He believes that eternal punishments and rewards are unjust and unnecessary and without foundation. He looks upon the Christian as a brother who is simply making a great mistake, but to be given a hearing and only to be met, reasoned with, but never silenced by force.

He does not lie, steal nor murder but he holds one day as sacred or as holy as another. He is a kind-hearted man, a good husband, a tender father and a noble citizen.

Much of his time is used in studying the natural sciences and the great economic questions of our day, and he gives liberally of the fruits of his labor to support what to him seems the true principles of justice and right. He is a good man.

Now if this were the whole story we might say as some do, "Let every one believe as he chooses; as long as people don't bother me I will let them alone;" but no honest Christian nor honest Secularist can do this, for the ultimate effect of one's life-work on this and coming generations, for good or for evil, is simply beyond our computation, and conscientious men and women, be they Christian or Infidel, can not be happy without trying to do all the good they can. And so the battle goes on; the Christian working to get the Infidel to believe, and the Infidel working to get the Christian to reason.

The ideal Christian by his practice and precept points the young aspirant for successful living, to the bible. If the youth is superficial, he reads but little, and only those good parts to which his attention is specially called. He becomes one of the happy, unconscious stumbling blocks to others; but, if he is a thinker, he reads much more, and doubts such stories as the following: "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulcher of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood upon his feet."

Then our young friend asks questions but is soon silenced by being told that it is very wrong to question the word of God, and is instructed to pray, and is prayed over; but this does not settle the question and if the Christian influence is strong enough the poor, misguided youth becomes hypocritical or defiant, a slave or a brigand.

Isn't this the truth? Look at the world after nineteen hundred years of Christian teachings. Isn't it full of hypocrites and slaves and brigands? There are men and women who are true and noble, but alas, there are millions who are not, and they are these grown-up misguided youths.

Instead of pointing to the bible as authority the Secularist points to the great books of science and says, "these are the opinions of men who have studied; study these, compare, reason." If he does not know the answer to a problem he says so frankly, but will search with the youth and thus lead him into fields of pleasure and usefulness. The fittest will survive.

Money For Lumber.

The lumber for the dining hall is being hauled now, the carpenters are again at work and we expect that the excavation for the University building will be done this week. The masons will soon begin on the basement, but what we want next is the lumber for the main building. The bill for the 110,000 feet has not been ordered yet because we did not feel justified in ordering it sawed until we were sure we could pay for it. Now what we want is at least five hundred dollars in the bank before we order. We should order at once. It is only a question of time when we will have the money, but time is precious and as the summer is almost gone we ought not to delay another week. Secularists, can we get the five hundred?

Great Encouragements.

Dr. Franklin says in his autobiography, "I soon after obtained, through my friend Hamilton, the printing of the Newcastle paper money, another profitable job, as I then thought it; small things appearing great to those in small circumstances, and these to me were really great advantages, as they were great encouragements."

Every one who has ever tried to do work for the public knows just how the then, young, struggling fellow felt and what great encouragement even a kind letter or a small job of work gives one when just starting in. The old philosopher is dead, but his experiences come to us as messages of advice and love from a kind and noble friend.

Christian Authority.

As paradoxical as it may seem, we have good Christian authority that there is not a real Christian in the United States. The Methodists and others with whom we have conversed claim that the Catholics are not real Christians and the Catholics claim that the protestants are children of the devil. Adventists, Unitarians and Universalists are called infidels by most other Christian denominations, and we know of no Christian sect that is not far from being Christian according to some good Christian authority. Brothers and sisters of earth, there is too much to do here to bother about the old dogmas any longer. Let us all help each other to become good, honest, wise men and women. Let us all be Secularists.