

Practice as Well as Preach.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

As my subscription expires on the 13th, I enclose one dollar for renewal. I am well pleased with the TORCH OF REASON and think it a paper ably conducted.

To preach is one thing; to practice is another, and of the two I am inclined to believe that to practice is more difficult than to preach. To preach Secularism as you are sitting about the country store, or in the club room, is much more easy than to practice it. This is too much the case with Christians. If Christians would practice more of the brotherly love that they are continually preaching about, this world would be much better off.

Now the object is to educate the people into thinking more of this world, and their duty towards their fellow-men. Secularists should remember the lessons taught by Christianity and avoid the erroneous idea that might makes right. If you can convince a man by reasonable argument that he is wrong, you have committed no error, but to try and force him to believe a thing that his reason tells him is not so, is tyranny in its boldest form. Above all things give us liberty of thought.

Fraternally,
M. P. GIFFORD.

The American Church and Slavery.

When abolition was proposed it was Christians who most strenuously resisted it; and in doing so they entrenched themselves in Bible ground, and fought with weapons drawn from Holy Writ. In 1853 the various Protestant ministers and church members held no less than 650,653 slaves in America. No doubt they understood the letter and spirit of the Bible as well as the abolitionists. If not, how and why not? The Rev. James Smylie, A. M., of the Amity Presbytery, Mississippi, is reported to have said: "If slavery be a sin, and advertising and apprehending slaves, with a view to restore them to their masters, is a direct violation of the divine law; and if the buying, selling or holding of a slave, for the sake of gain, is a heinous sin and scandal, then verily three-fourths of all the Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians in eleven states of the Union are of the Devil. They hold, if they do not buy and sell, slaves; and, with few exceptions, they hesitate not to apprehend and restore runaway slaves when in their power."—Agnostic Journal.

Our work will improve as we get a larger number of subscribers. Get up a club of 5 for \$3.75, and thus make \$1.25 and help the cause.

The Faith of The Future.

"The purified faith of the future will be one which, eschewing the supernatural and the miraculously revealed, takes its stand on science. To those who have been wont to find comfort in an attitude of indolent adoration and blind trust toward a mysterious unknown, this will, and must, seem a cheerless outlook; for persons of inactive mind find more satisfaction in the boundless void of mystery, and the unchallenging hopelessness of contradictions presented as facts, than in the clear definiteness of the most assured truth. Such will feel that, bereft of supernatural revelation, they are thrown back into the waste, howling wilderness of paganism, which seems very terrible. But, surely, it is not so sad a thing to be in the position of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, and those other earnest, humble truth-seekers who fearlessly sought to penetrate the riddle of existence, and to lead worthy lives,—lives that shame those of most believers in revelation. And, after all, we are in a much better position for solving the enigma than they were. Between them and us lie two thousand years of human experience, richer than any they knew, two thousand years of philosophic thought and sharpening of the faculties of intelligence, and two thousand years of education of the moral sense. Much that was impossible for them, with all their labor, may be, and certainly is, possible for us. Indeed, it is only distrust, fostered by sycophantic supernaturalism, of "mere human reason," a guide to life, that prevents us from reaching by its means a far deeper insight into the truths that give life its meaning than any that revelation ever offered. * * *

* * * Shall we weep and mourn because there is no unjust omnipotence to snatch us from our cowardly intellectual and moral sloth, and place us in an equally cowardly heaven of eternal, useless dalliance? Virtue will not do so!"

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Profane Jokes.

"I shall be happy to answer the questions of any one with religious difficulties," said the sky-pilot at the close of an al fresco discourse in Hawick Market Place. There appeared to be but one perplexed mind among the listeners, a gentleman of well-known sporting proclivities. He said: "I should like to ask by what means Samson caught the three hundred foxes whose tails he tied together, and sent them adrift among the Philistine's corn, when it took the Duke o' Buccleuch's hounds a hail day to catch ane?" The sky-pilot wilted. He either could not or would not answer, but simply said, "Let us pray!"

A clergyman, who recently called upon a young widow to condole with her upon the loss of her husband, placed considerable emphasis upon the proposition that the separation was merely temporal, and painted in vivid colors the happiness of friends united after death. When he stopped for breath, the sorrowing one heaved a deep sigh, and quietly remarked: "Well, I suppose his first wife has got him again, then."

"Kindly shut the window behind me," said a bishop on one occasion, "and open it behind a curate. The Episcopal bench is limited in numbers; the supply of curates is inexhaustible."

He put a penny in the plate
Each Sunday did this man,
To buy a mansion in the skies
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A "down South" colored philosopher recently remarked: "Life, my breddern, am mos'ly made up of prayin' for rain an then wishin' it would clear off."—The Free-thinker.

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