

Moulding the Minds of Children.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Yesterday your correspondent visited the orthodox Sunday school picnic held here, and listened to the address of welcome.

The speaker was secular part of the time (unconsciously, no doubt) and eulogized education and the public school incidentally, and Sunday schools especially, claiming that the latter is one of the greatest powers of the day, moulding the minds of children for action during their future lives. He said that the Sunday school has great influence; that it is instrumental in modifying governmental institutions, laws, etc. What the children are made today will be the men and women of tomorrow. All of which is hard to controvert, even if one was disposed to do so, and so far I accepted the speaker's position cheerfully. And when he advocated the teaching of facts to children, I was at perfect oneness with him.

But when he talked of the truths of inspiration, of God's holy scriptures, the truths of christianity and its Jesus, etc., I got farther away from him. These pious humbugs must be instilled into the minds (christians say the hearts) of people when they are young or not at all. The evangelist who preached here awhile ago said that about the age of fifteen was the most susceptible age, and argued that if a child was piously raised—i. e., kept from learning otherwise—until that age it might be expected to bring forth fruit for righteousness (join the church) if a proper amount of pressure was used.

After that soft age, the heart (mind) gradually hardened (matured) until at about the age of forty-five it would be so tough and unreachable that the subject must be given over to the devil, and become a lost and ruined soul—i. e., lost for the preacher's use, and ruined as a pillar of the church.

Is it not infinitely better that children be taught scientific facts, instead of superstitious humbug? That instead of being taught a blind and unreasoning faith in the unseen and unknowable, that which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither has it entered into the heart (mind) of man to know, that they be taught to think, to examine, to investigate, to aspire to know those things which the eye can see, which the ear can hear, and which it does enter into the hearts (minds) of men, and women, too, to know and understand? They should be taught to accept facts as they find them, and wherein they don't know to be honest and courageous enough to say so. Teach them honesty, and not hypocrisy.

Who will deny that such teaching of the coming men and women of the future is infinitely for the better?

Better for the individual, better for the family, better for the community, better for society, better for the state, the nation, and the whole of the Homo race. It would be better even for the orthodox. What a blessing it would be to every superstition-bound "son" within the "pale of the visible church" if every church house in the land could be changed from a pagoda of superstition into a temple of true knowledge, with every priest a teacher of facts, and learned in the knowledge of the useful, the beautiful, and the true.

To be sure, there would be a lot of preachers loose soft jobs, but even they would be benefited by forcing them into more suitable, if less congenial, occupations. And even if that were not the case, they should be sacrificed for the benefit of others, on the same grounds that we justify the surgeon or the naturalist in sacrificing other animals for the advancement of human knowledge and the benefit of mankind.

Therefore, let Secularists take courage and hold their grip. Half as much sacrifice as is made by Christians will suffice for Secular work. "With malice toward none and charity for all," we shall in due time "reap if we faint not."

Fraternally yours,
F. S. MATTESON,
Turner, Oregon.

A Good Offer.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Enclosed find draft on Chicago for \$10, which please apply on the College fund, and if you need to have it repeated, in order to get the College completed, I may come to the rescue for I would certainly regret to have you fail. Resp't.,

Illinois. P. C. MOSIER.

Steiner's Lecture Dates.

Mr. Franklin Steiner is on his way to the coast. His dates are as follows:

Spokane, Washington	July 31, August 1.
Reardon, "	Aug. 2, 3, 4
Davenport, "	" 6, 7, 8
Wilbur, "	" 9, 10
Shermar, "	" 11, 12, 13
Waterville, "	" 15, 16

Mr. Steiner will arrive in Oregon about Sept. 1. The Liberals of Silverton, McMinnville, Wamic, Rufus, Wasco, Dayville, Highland, Canby, Cottage Grove, and North Powder are making arrangements for lectures. It is to be hoped that other places will do so. Write to Mr. Steiner at Silverton, care "TORCH OF REASON."

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