

Torch of Reason

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THURSDAY, NOV. 25, E. M. 297

We Pray.

It has been predicted by high Christian authority, Rev. Thomas Dixon Jr., that in less than 200 years there will not be a single church in existence.

"He contended that church organization was a failure, and that it must change with the development of man. Churches must re-organize or perish, and those that were not re-organizing were perishing rapidly. Creed was but a question of inherited ideas, and there was no virtue in the stones and mortar of church edifices.

"The evolution of a human conscience," he said, "the object of which shall be the destiny of man, is what we are aiming at. The evolution of Christian civilization has the earmarks of a social organism that shall be a redeemed community."

We believe that our Christian brother is right in thinking that the churches will soon be gone, and that in their place will be found such organizations as the Oregon State Secular Union and its auxiliaries, for the teaching of science, liberty, and morality; but we need not wait 200 years if every Liberal could realize the importance of our work here at Silverton, and be induced to take hold of it in dead earnest. Are we to die without seeing this "great reformation"?

We feel sure that the grandchildren, their children, or, at least, their grand-children will not be taught the absurd superstitions and evil principles that are still dished up to us by "God's anointed" and the Christian literature of our day, but isn't there some way that we can make things move faster,

and enjoy some of the good things that will come when old Orthodoxy is dead? We think there is a way, and we are working at it. The plan is this: All people who believe that the true religion is "to do good" and by good we mean everything that increases our happiness and develops us physically, mentally, and morally, should at once unite and educate each other in the work of "Secular Salvation", then we will be able to strike a blow that will tell. Now, if we all go at this work AT ONCE, in a very short time, we who are in good health will probably see the great change right in our day; and, friends of truth, don't you know that you will be far happier, yes, and far healthier if you take a real interest in this great work of raising humanity out of the slimy mire of ignorance and fear.

The one great hindrance to our work is the little prejudices that many Freethinkers have. There is no individual or organization that can just suit everybody, and see here, Freethinker, do you realize that the work we have undertaken is the very best there is in the world? It is the only school of the kind in existence of which we have knowledge, and all that is required to make its establishment the grandest thing of the nineteenth century, is the hearty support of the friends of truth and right, before the century goes the way of all the earth. We are now in a position to know just what we can do, and it is a fact that if we had the money to finish our buildings and get the necessary apparatus we could soon have the largest and most prosperous school in the whole world and oh, you lovers of mental liberty, can you estimate the grand and rapid results?

Come, help us; we are doing all we can. We realize that there are others who might do the work better than we, but they will not and it must be done. If you are liberal prove your liberality by sacrificing at least one-tenth as much as the Christians are commanded to give to the Lord. One-tenth of one-tenth is one-hundredth. Some have given their all to the work, but they are few and need more than they possess to make the work what it should be. We need work in your locality; we need a kind word; we need money and we need students. The Christian people are noted for begging and praying, and with the exception of the object to which they pray and the object for which they beg, we think they are all right. Instead of begging for money to pay a preacher's salary to preach myths or to build a costly god-house, we beg of you to help us build this school, but perhaps we would do better to pray, and we will, but, instead of praying to a deaf and dumb Nothing, we pray to the

highest being of which we have knowledge, an Infidelic, Free-thought, Liberal, Secularist.

O, great and wise being, thou who understandeth the great evils in the world, thou who knowest that Science is the true savior and that Ignorance, Superstition, and fear form the triune Devil that is destroying our happiness, we pray you to help us in our great undertaking. Come right now and bless us as thou seest we need, and Humanity will have all the praise, and the glory, and the honor forever. Amen.

A Nucleus.

If we do not let our friends know what we want, how can we expect them to help us? We have managed at last to pay for the printing outfit, but our expenses for printing the two papers, etc., are quite heavy, and we are still in debt a little. Now this worries us some, and we could do better work if we were free. Then we want to raise money to finish the new building next spring. Of course there is some inside work that could be done this winter, but perhaps it is as well to wait until we commence work on the main building. This will be just as soon as the good weather comes.

Now how had we better go at the business of raising the money? We think that it would be a good plan for some one who expects to help, to deposit, say \$100, more or less, in Coolidge & McClaine's bank, subject to our order when a certain amount, say \$3000, is there deposited for the building. This would furnish a nucleus and we could add to it as fast as possible, and by spring we would probably have the money raised.

Do you think it a good plan? Who will start the ball rolling?

Scientific Wisdom.

Helps Toward Tract No. 2: "Has Christianity or Science Most Promoted Civilization?"

BY JOEL M. BERRY.

Scientific wisdom, or the bible — which shall it be? The disciples of Christ received grace from him and wrought miracles, cast out devils, had visions, prophesied of future events, healed the sick, and raised the dead. But how is this — are there no true disciples of Christ today, or has Christ lost his power, that none of these wonderful things are done now? Not even one poor prophet in all the world! No devils to cast out! Physicians do not depend on the gift of Christ as a remedy! Nobody would bury a friend if it were possible to raise the dead. What I want to get into the minds of bible-believers is this: The laws of nature are either changeable or they are not. All Science and all history, except the bible and similar records of the su-

pernatural in other religions, go to prove that nature's laws have not changed the thousandth part of a midget in six thousand years. Then those miracles are just as possible today as they ever were, and no sound, sensible person should try to believe that such wonderful, unreasonable events ever transpired. Science finds no proof that any child could be born of a virgin with a supernatural being for its father, as we are told Jesus was; or that a person, dead long enough for decomposition, could be raised to life, like Lazarus; or that two days were ever turned into one to give one of Jehovah's war generals, Joshua, a chance to do a little more murdering.

Every system of religion has its miracles and its wonderful men, but as people investigate more into the real and natural, faith in the supernatural declines. Human good will yet be the object of all, and scientific wisdom the only means of grace. There were plenty of disturbances and wars before Christ lived. Some of his teachings were good and far ahead of his time; but others were so bad that soon after the introduction of Christianity disturbances and wars increased tenfold. See Matt. x, 34: "I come not to send peace, but a sword." Morality is injured by prescribing to it duties that are impossible to perform, like "Love your enemies". If such were possible it would be productive of evil, offering a premium for crime.

We know that Christianity has filled the world with bloody wars and persecutions. It has opposed learning, science and liberty, thwarted justice and destroyed equality.

The bible seems to indicate that God wanted to teach some science, as well as law, to the Jews; but its science is that in use when the bible was written. When the great scientists, Galileo and Bruno opposed those bible theories, they and a great many others had to sueffr at the hands of bible-believers. The bible taught that the earth was flat and had four corners, with great pillars upon which the foundation rested. It don't tell upon what the pillars rested. If God or his prophets wanted to prolong a day, all they had to do was to command the sun to stand still. The scientists stuck to it that the earth was round, and they had to suffer persecutions, till finally a man sailed west and by going straight ahead came back home from the east. Then the Christians claimed that the bible in scientific matters only spoke the language of appearances, and adapted itself to the understanding of the people. But if an all-wise god undertook to teach anything about science he would have taught them the truth so they could understand it. But men have found out this and all other scien-