

Torch of Reason

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Mind Murder.

Our correspondent from Washington, D. C., says that the committee of ministers and laymen which held its meeting in Washington, has just completed the work of preparing the international Sunday School lessons (Christian) to be used for six years from January 1, 1900. When these letters are approved by the representatives of the European Christian churches they will be officially announced. The lessons provide for three and one-half year's study of New Testament characters and two and one-half years devoted to Old Testament characters. The course will open with a study of the life of Christ, which will continue for eighteen months and the Old Testament series will open with the story of creation.

When we think of this committee of sixteen men deliberately planning the mind murder of millions of innocent boys and girls, it makes us sick, and our sympathy goes out to the poor little fellows, who will be compelled to go Sunday after Sunday and be bothered and worried almost if not quite to the verge of insanity, trying to believe the absurd miracle and mystery stories of the old and new spook-books of the Christian fanatics. It makes no difference whether this committee believes in the lessons or not, the effect on the children will be to arrest their mental and moral growth and we will still have with us mental weaklings, insane advocates of bloody rites and the hypocritical money changers. O, friends, can't we have more help to save these boys and girls from the clutches of this black devil of Superstition? The

establishment of every Secular Sunday School, the delivery of every scientific and moral lecture, the printing of every Secular essay or song book, the honest faithful work of Secularists everywhere will in time accomplish wonders, but men and women of thought and action, what a mighty power for good will the Liberal University be. When once we have the building completed hundreds of students will come and graduate, and what a power these young champions of Science will have in overthrowing the false and pernicious doctrines of theology. When the grand liberal minded Washington, Jefferson, Paine, Madison, and their colleagues, founded this government and framed our constitution, they left a precious boon to be protected and improved upon by their descendants, but religionists have been at work, and in the name of their god practically united church and state, until today millions of dollars of the people's money is tied up in costly god-houses that are used to still further rob the people and make fools of their children. Shall we forever submit to the high-handed robbery of paying billions of dollars to chaplains of Army, Navy, United States and State Legislatures, while the people are too poor to pay the public school teacher half what she earns? Must the little homes of the working men be sold continually for taxes while the grand church and parsonage go untaxed? And all this that the children and childish men and women may be taught the damnable lies of old Moses and the silly miracles of the "latter day saints". We have the power in our own hands to stop this accursed fraud in a very short time, and the longer we let it run the firmer it will be fortified behind Christian-made laws until nothing but the "shedding of innocent blood" will redeem the world from its corruption. For the sake of the children, for ourselves, and for the coming men and women who are to carry on the ever brightening light of civilization, we should build now, and build on a firm and lasting foundation.

Frauds.

The Christians' supernatural doctrines are not the only popular frauds of our time, and sometimes those who are free from the religious superstitions are sadly "taken in" by other fakes that are fully as false if not quite as injurious. There are people who can calmly look on and knowingly see both young and old children led into believing all manners of silly things that arrest the growth of the mind, without crying out against it, but we are not able to hold our peace. We are "doubting Thomases" and even when we feel

the "nail holes" we are obliged to investigate still further and find out for certain the cause of the holes and the incentive that led to the foolish mutilation. All frauds whether political, religious, or social should be at once stamped out of existence, and every one who cries out against deceit should be encouraged rather than condemned. There has often been too much "blow" about nothing, we will admit, and things of minor importance have received attention that should have been directed to other things, but it is safe, yes better than safe, for every Freethinker to cry out against all and every fraud that he discovers, even if it be in his own household or in his own character. Mistakes may be made, but we should use the best judgment we have and go ahead.

Now one of the greatest frauds outside of the supernatural religions, that the editor of the TORCH OF REASON sees with the eye of his best judgment, is Spiritualism, but for all this every Spiritualist should be our friend and we should be every Spiritualist's friend as we certainly are. The one thing that the world needs most is freedom of thought and when men can extend to each other the warm hand of friendship, no matter what their beliefs are, then will the world begin to develop. It is only the narrow minded who condemn others for their opinions or for their mistakes, and if this be a mistake we hope you'll think none the less of us for we are honest in thinking that it is right. Of course theosophy, in our opinion, is another foolish thing, and then come many things under the names of mesmerism, hypnotism, etc. Volumes could be written in support of our ideas, but we can only just touch this subject this week. When we read the account of mesmerism and hypnotism in the Encyclopedia Britannica and see what the Standard dictionary says and add to this our own experiences; then apply all the reason we are capable of at present, and then pass judgment according to all the witnesses we can summons, we conclude that if one person is idiot enough to do just as some determined operator tells him to, why he'll shut his eyes when told and dance around or anything else, of course.

One of the quotations in the Standard dictionary says, that one must be a neuratic i. e., a person with an unstable equilibrium, in order to be hypnotised and we think that this is only a very polite way of saying that only fools will do just as they are told. But ignorance on this subject is taken advantage of, and people sit with wide open mouths and swallow the foolish antics of a faker's confederates, and think what great power

God has given to some people. We recently watched such a performance until we became sick with disgust. Three persons who answered to the call of the operator were honest investigators, but they were dismissed from the stage after being grossly insulted, and left the operator to fake the people with his class of confederates. One of the very interesting(?) tricks performed by this "great" hypnotiser was to place one of his men with his shoulders on one chair and his feet on another and then break a large rock which was placed lengthwise of his body. Of course the usual ceremony was gone through, the cataleptic being warned in deep tones of thunder to keep his muscles "as hard as iron—a-s-h-a-r-d a-s i-r-o-n!" etc. and to many it appeared like a wonderful thing, but after the show was over one of the "doubting Thomases" demonstrated that anyone could do the same thing in a perfectly normal condition. We hold that the people and especially children should not be led into error by these charlatans for it only befogs and arrests the growth of the mind. The wrong ideas impressed on the minds of children, in regard to the nature and phenomena of the mind in silly, unexplained, so-called mind reading is very injurious and hinders the onward march of truth. Every Secularist, who wishes to be considered a reformer, "should put his foot down" on such nonsense and not allow himself to take it away until his good common sense says "all right". Now, no matter whether we are right or wrong in this, we are your friends, reader, for we are trying to do good and if we make mistakes it's no more than you do in some things, and if we all do our best we will soon get at the truth of these important questions and the world will grow better and better.

Jottings from Jefferson.

"No man has a natural right to commit aggressions on the equal rights of another."

"The idea is quite unfounded that on entering into society we give up any natural right."

"Our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, more than opinions in physics or geometry."

"The impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed domination over the faith of others, setting their own opinions and modes of thinking as only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world, and through all time."— [Sentinel.]