

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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

THURSDAY, JAN. 20, E. M. 298

The Fifth Psalm.

To the Freethinkers called Secularists.

Give ear to our words, O ye people;
List to the voice of our cry.
Unto thee we will pray; thou canst hear us,
And answer at once if thou'lt try.

As long as we've breath we will pray thee,
For we're sure you've no pleasure in sin,
And will help us to spread the glad tidings
Of freedom from wrongs that have been.

The foolish old dogmas and errors,
We know that thou hatest them all;
But we would redeem, not destroy them
Who're drinking life's bitterest gall.

We'll build for thee, houses of science
Where the youth will learn truth without fear.
Oh, help us to do this, ye people,—
To enemies turn a deaf ear.

To the cause, some cannot prove faithful;
Their minds are unable to clasp
Any thought except that of destruction:
Construction they never can grasp.

We would not condemn them, O people,
But show them the truth and the right,
And help Freethought children be builders
To work against orthodox blight.

Then soon we'll rejoice all together;
Humanity'll all shout for joy,
Because we will all be as brothers;
No creeds to molest nor destroy.

And if with thy shield thou'lt protect us,
And help us in righteousness build;
Spite the Davids of old and the lovers of gold,
Sec'lar prophesies will be fulfilled.

Not Open to All.

It seems to be the paramount boast of some Liberal papers and societies that they are open and free to all for the expression of every honest thought. This is not the boast of the TORCH OF REASON, and we believe that it is not for the interest of our cause nor our patrons to endeavor to publish everything. We haven't space nor time to publish half what we want to on the subject of constructive, moral

Secularism, and how can any reasonable person expect us to print all the old re-hashes of god and spirit mysticisms that real Secularists are tired of? There are many honest people with many honest thoughts, and we respect them for their honesty and would fight for their right to express such thoughts, but we are not able to assist them in publishing all their thoughts, even if we wished to, and some people have thoughts that seem so illogical to us that we think their publication a waste of time and a detriment to the world. This does not signify that we do not want our friends to write articles for the TORCH. The truth is, for this very reason, we need more help than those who print everything for everybody.

Our idea is not to print anything that will mystify the minds of even the children. Of course we might see fit to publish a regular spook or other unscientific or illogical article, but if we should it would be immediately followed with our ideas of its absurdities. In this way we hope to appeal to the common sense of our readers, and when they see that their children and friends are not to be stuffed with absurdities from the pens of mystery mongers and unprincipled mongrel ministers they will appreciate the change. Every periodical is a teacher, and for a teacher to teach that which tends to mystify, his pupils is stultifying, destroying, criminal. And yet here are periodicals—teachers that are full of mystery. They are not satisfied with printing, but the picture of a mythical savior with glory shining all about his tangled hair, angels with feathered wings and doves supposed to be holy ghosts, etc., etc., are dished up to the poor children who ought to be learning the truth. Don't you think, dear reader, that it is about time to have one little Torch of Reason? We can make an excellent teacher and friend out of our paper if those who love common sense will help make it so.

What do we want? We want more subscribers; we want money enough so we can have the paper illustrated each week; we want a larger correspondence; we want friends who will write good, short Secular stories and other articles, and we want the very best you can "scare up" in the way of Secular poems and gems of thought. Pure Secular literature suitable for our work is scarce, and as we are busy, very busy, with our school work, it oftentimes overworks our force to keep everything going.

Secular friends, help us keep the TORCH OF REASON Secular; help us make it better in every way possible; help us to give it a wider circulation, and the seeds of good we may thus sow working together will spring up in after years and bear the precious fruits of happiness.

Liberty to Do Wrong.

In that excellent Freethought journal, the Boston Investigator, of December 25th, is an article by Mr. Cyrus W. Coolidge, in which this gentleman calls to account a statement we made in the TORCH some weeks ago. The statement is as follows: "No one should have the liberty to do wrong."

We are open to conviction and without regard to who is right or wrong in his ideas of this important question, let us investigate it.

Mr. Coolidge asks us to tell who is to decide what is right and what is wrong. Well, friend Cyrus, your reason should decide for you, and if you disobey its decisions it will punish you. If, in actions affecting others, your reason leads you to do what is contrary to the reason of the majority of those with whom you associate, and they consider your actions wrong or detrimental to the society, then the majority should decide. The majority may make a mistake, but its decision is the highest standard we have—the best guide that can be found—the best and nearest to an infallible regulator of our actions toward others, and without obedience to this regulator, which the world has been so long in learning to obey, we can have no free men and women.

Surely our friend would not advocate the idea that one should have the liberty to commit murder. "Murder is wrong", says Mr. Coolidge's reason. "Murder is wrong," says the majority, and laws are made to prevent murder. Our friend makes some statements which we believe to be true, but they have but little bearing on the subject. It may be hard—it is very hard to decide what is for the good of humanity, i. e., what is right. The TORCH OF REASON believes that it is not wrong to work on Sunday and the Christian Advocate believes that it is, but this does not argue that anyone should have the liberty to do wrong. Infidels with a majority of the Christians of this country have decided that it is right for man to think as he chooses, and that he can express that thought, being only accountable for the abuse of the right, therefore we have the right to think and advocate what is thought to be wrong by others, and they have the same privilege, but certainly no one should have the liberty to do wrong. It may be hard to decide, we repeat, what is wrong, but no one should have the liberty to do wrong when it is decided by the best ability of the majority. If we contradict this and say that all should have the liberty to do wrong, or as Mr. Coolidge seems to advocate, that all should do as they think is right whether it is or not, then if one thinks it right to "enjoy himself at the expense of

another man", he should have the liberty to do so. If we should have the liberty to do one wrong we certainly should have the liberty to do all wrong. Now where are we? Should I have the right to murder? Should Mr. Coolidge have the right to steal? Should we have the liberty to do any wrong? Jefferson, Paine, and Washington were not murderers, Mr. Coolidge; they fought in self defense and for the defense of their friends. If they didn't, if they were murderers, they should not have had the liberty to kill their fellow men.

In regard to using the U. S. mails for all kinds of pictures, we are of the opinion that the majority of the people of the United States should decide this question, and if they see fit to delegate the power to regulate this matter to some one man or set of men we see nothing in this, whether it is thought to be right or wrong, to prove that anyone should have the liberty to do wrong.

The TORCH OF REASON thinks it can see the fallacy of Mr. Coolidge's reasoning(?). He says that our statement that "no one should have the liberty to do wrong", is the motto of the Catholic Church and all haters of progress. The Catholics may have misconstrued its meaning and used it thus to further its cause, and so we think our friend has misconstrued its meaning as his next statement shows. He says, "Every man should have the right not only to think but also to do wrong—that is to say, what other people consider wrong—so long as he does not infringe upon the rights of other people." Why, of course, Mr. Coolidge, a man should have the liberty to do what others CONSIDER wrong, and they should have the liberty to do what he considers wrong. No one disputes this, but, poor fellow, can you not see that you, in your blind endeavor to pick a little flaw in the TORCH OF REASON, just because you have some ideas that you know seem very ridiculous to us, have proven that in one instance at least your judgment is poor and your reason lacking?

A man should have the liberty to do wrong provided he does right, i. e., provided "he does not infringe upon the rights of others". You see, when a man does a thing thinking it is right and it does not infringe upon the rights of others, it is right even if it is wrong. The trouble lies in the meaning of the words right and wrong. Pope said, "Whatever is is right." If this be true, and we think there is some truth in it if we are careful to understand what he means by right, no one CAN have the liberty to do wrong.

We do not pretend, and did not pretend, to tell what is right and wrong, although we are willing to