

## 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. 27, E. M. 298

### The Sixth Psalm.

To the Freethinkers called Secularists.

O Lord, what a fuss old David made  
When he thought his god was mad;  
But secular gods don't murder folks,  
E'en when they're very bad.

And so, not being a heathen king,  
And having one wife only;  
And knowing naught of David's fears,  
Alone, we'd not be lonely.

But we are vexed because of wrong.  
How long, oh, friends, how long  
Will myths, and fears, and creeds control?  
Let's change the tears to song!

To us there is no heaven beyond;  
In the grave no one can hear;  
So let us work for others now—  
Good works make heaven here.

The cause of truth still groans and weeps,  
As David did of old;  
It's bound by ancient fetters, made  
By priests and gods of gold.

But thinking people hear its cry;  
The weeping voice shall cease:  
The popes and priests of error fly  
Before the hosts of peace.

We do not pray to heathen gods,  
White blackbirds perched on high,  
But saviors who will fight the foe  
And smite them hip and thigh.

### Opinions and Comment.

This week our business manager, while in Portland, made the Morning Tribune, the new, newsy daily of that city, a call. He was very courteously received, and after examining our TORCH OF REASON, the manager of the Tribune placed us on the exchange list at once. On turning to the editorial page of the first copy that we receive, we find that the editor is interested in the question of orthodoxy, and we are very much pleased with some of his excellent sayings which follow under the heading:

#### CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

"Why more people do not attend church," is a subject much dis-

cussed of late, especially by the interested clergymen. Some assign as the chief reason the alleged lapse of the churches from the old orthodox doctrines into easier and fairer channels of liberality and free thought, and dangerous approaches in many instances to the sans souci realm of agnosticism. Others, on the contrary, claim that the pulpit is generally behind the times, and does not recognize and acknowledge with sufficient readiness and candor the alleged fact that the old religious fortresses and bulwarks are in a state of demolition and decay, due to scientific, historical, and archaeological investigation; that, in short, the pulpit is either too ignorant or too insincere to attract and influence humanity.

"There is some truth in both these theories; some people, though a decreasing number, will be satisfied with nothing less than the pure, strict, rigorous, old-fashioned orthodoxy; while an increasing number would cast aside the old theories, doctrines and dogmas entirely, and give the freest possible rein to investigation and speculation. Between the two classes the modern preacher is sometimes placed in an embarrassing position.

"Yet while the light of science and the softening, refining influence of toleration and religious liberty have changed somewhat the scope and purpose of the churches, and modified the thought and tone of the pulpit, it would be a mistake to jump to the conclusion that churches are needless, or the pulpit powerless for good. Though the direct, positive, compelling power of the church within certain limits may not be so strong or manifest as in former times, though its influence may be milder and less noticeable in its immediate results, it is still a mighty force in the world, mainly for good, for the uplifting and betterment of humanity. Its influence is more refined diversified, and expansive; yet in multitudinous avenues it serves 'for correction, for reproof, and for judgment.' It is no longer the tornado or the lightning shock, but the 'still small voice,' whispering in all the ways and walks of civilized and cultivated life.

"Perhaps the main reason why church attendance is comparatively less than formerly is because there are so many other things to attract, entertain, and instruct the people. The churches have really grown, but a multitude of other attractions have sprung up to interest the yearning minds of ephemeral mortals—societies without number, libraries, easy traveling facilities, cheap magazines and great newspapers, and numberless places and ways of amusement or information. All these are to some extent rivals of the churches, yet the churches grow and reasonably thrive.

"It would indeed be better if more people attended our churches. They would be benefitted thereby, even if they could not subscribe to all they heard. Dogma and hard-cast doctrine aside, true, sincere, reverent, religious feeling, the contemplation of things which the human soul naturally considers as sacred and divine, is purifying, elevating, ennobling and thus becomes one of the best, highest, and most efficiently helpful forces among those which are, we hope, moving humanity slowly but surely up into a purer air and a broader, fairer plane of life—nearer, in short, to heaven and to God."

Of course we take no stock in our brother editor's "nearer, in short, to heaven and to God" ideas, but we think he doesn't really mean anything bad when he uses those bad terms. Perhaps he just means nearer to the heaven that can be made here and to what is good. It would indeed be better if the churches were more fit for the people to attend, but the number attending will grow less and less until the churches are purged of their blighting, narrowing superstitions. If the churches would "cut loose" from their belief in gods, devils, snake and angel stories, and go to work on a truthful, scientific basis, they would move humanity RAPIDLY "up into a purer air and a broader, fairer plane of life." But these churches cannot "cut loose". They will die as civilization advances and better institutions are organized to furnish the people with scientific, ethical teachings. We are very glad indeed that the TORCH OF REASON is free, and that we do not have to cater to the popular superstitions of the times. We like the Tribune, however, and we believe it will become a great paper, and we hope when the "tornado or lightning shock" of orthodoxy, which is now reduced to a "still, small voice," will have passed over to heathen lands, never to return to our land of progress, the TORCHES and the Tribunes will vie with one another in carrying truth, unmixed with meaningless words and phrases; and that the ministers of the Gospel of Humanity will speak to crowded Secular Churches of free, eager, happy listeners.

### New Declaration of Independence.

The communication of Mr. P. C. Mosier, which may be found on another page of this issue, certainly contains a great truth.

When the little colonies of America rebelled against the great, powerful British lion, it was indeed a great step toward political liberty, and the men who dared to sign the Declaration of Independence did that which will be remembered by

our progeny for ages and ages yet to come, as a brave, noble act. But in order to have and to hold political liberty, a people must have mental liberty. And while it is true that the great father of his country and his co-workers caused, for the time, a wonderful wave of mental liberty to sweep over our then little country, and thus established more political freedom, yet today, with our seventy millions of people, largely made up of immigrants from superstitious, priest-ridden countries, and the offspring of such immigrants, we are, as far as mental liberty is concerned, in a dangerous position, and if this nation is not careful it will lapse into deplorable mental and political slavery. We who dare, in the face of official and cowardly popular sanction of mental bondage, come out and declare ourselves free and independent, are certainly doing that of which we should be proud. And in what way can we better declare this declaration, than by building a school that will turn out students who will be continual advocates of our glorious cause, long after the original signers have been laid beside the brave men of 1776?

In order to make this plan of declaring our principles to the world effective, we should do as Mr. Mosier says, make it "GO WITH A RUSH". With only one subscriber each week, it will take nearly two years. We are all growing old, and if we do very much we should do it now. We should have the five thousand dollars raised inside of three months. Can't we do it? Every one who adds his or her name will help some one else to do the same. If you CAN, will you be one of the one hundred who dare sign this declaration of independence and seal it with a sacrifice of fifty dollars to bear the expense of the first Continental Congress of young American Freethinkers?

Let our cry be, "Down with ignorance, superstition and hypocrisy!"

### A Happy Time.

Perhaps those who have never been at Silverton would like to make us a visit in spirit. If you would, kind reader, unchain that part of your anatomy and come with us and we will show you a scene that interests us very much. Do you see that two story brick building with "Universal Mental Liberty" painted in large letters across the front? The upper story of that building is Liberal Hall, and the Y. P. S. S. C. it holding its Friday evening meeting. Let's go up. . . . Well, now we're up, what do you think of it? Quite a band of young Freethinkers? I think so, and isn't it a shame that some people think that these bright, intelligent young men and women are children of the