

## Torch of Reason

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### Religious War.

On our way to the convention we stopped at Portland, and Sunday evening attended the Taylor Street M. E. church. This is a very stylish church. The music is furnished by a large pipe organ and a choir of sixteen "pieces", which are curtailed off so as not to be seen only when standing, and then only their bust is visible. The collection was taken up by eight men who, evidently, are well trained, for they were all done about the same time and marched back to their places in perfect step, two by two. The sermon was one of the best we ever heard, and with the exception of occasional references to "Almighty God" and heaven and the idea that it is the superior faith of Protestants, instead of the lack of faith and superior secular knowledge, that makes non-Catholic countries more progressive, it was a splendid Freethought lecture.

The text, or the words which were explained as not being a text, were, "By their fruits ye shall know them", and if ever the Catholics got a roasting, they got it from this Methodist grandson. One idea advanced was that now at last the cry of the innocent and helpless, meaning the Cubans, has reached the ear of the Almighty, that he has been looking about for a high policeman to make Catholic Spain behave herself, and he has not made a mistake in selecting the United States. This idea was expressed in such a forcible, patriotic way that the audience broke into applause. Yes, applause, right in the house of God, and on the holy sabbath!

A high Catholic authority says that the war between Spain and the United States is a religious war,

and that the Protestant countries are trying to drive the Catholics out of existence. The priest (or preacher) has always been the mouthpiece of kings (or rulers), and when we heard this representative Protestant showing up the evils that have followed in the wake of Catholicism, dwelling on the awful evils of the Inquisition, the horrible conquest of Mexico and Peru, the ignorant, superstitious condition of Italy and Spain and the bloody butchery of the Cubans, we began to think that perhaps it is the old, old story of history repeating itself and that we are again in the midst of another religious war. What do the Catholics of this country think about it? We would naturally suppose those who are loyal to their religion must side in with Spain. A friend who is well known to us as a reformer, is employed in the car shops, where many Catholics are also at work. He ought to know what these Catholics think in regard to the war, and he says they nearly all sympathize with Spain and hope she will get help enough to whip this country. Of course there are many liberalized Catholics who have learned to love their country and its citizens, and if their church officers call for help to protect their holy religion, they will find many with the flag waving above the cross; but when the infallible pope says fight, the great majority will fly to arms.

We believe that this war will be productive of much good, and a means by which humanity will be raised to a higher plane of civilization. War is bad, but there are conditions that are worse, and as the knife is used in surgery, so will war be used until the old eruptions caused by inherited errors are at last removed and humanity stands forth cleansed of its cancerous superstitions.

It may be that the world is to witness another great struggle between the Catholic church and her infidel daughters, and while it is sad if true, yet if the follies of the mother cause her offspring to rebel, and in their excitement and disgust at her absurdities and cruelties, strangle the old lady, they must not forget that they are parents themselves and that the baby girl Secularism may some day require its parents to advance or give up the ghost. We never doubt for a moment that either with war or without war the old wrongs will be crushed by the wheels of progress and all men at last reap the benefits of a secularized government, entirely freed from the parasites of ancient faiths.

The best thing that our brother of the big salary said was that he did not want to force people to believe as he did. "Truth", said he, "will take care of itself. Educate the people and even if they make mistakes they will learn to correct

them." This is excellent Freethought doctrine, and we Freethinkers should congratulate ourselves that we are forcing such words from the orthodox pulpit. If the lay members of these churches only knew how liberal their ministers are they would turn them out of church, but once in awhile, a little at a time, these poor leaders dare to tell their followers the truth, but the people pay the salaries and with the preacher it is act the part of priest or act not at all, and so the farce goes on. The people like liberty of thought, and if it is given a little at a time—a very little at a time—they will accept, but some of the great divines have given too large doses and have been turned down. We predict that unless the pastor of Taylor Street church is careful he will lose his position and be punished as a heretic. How awful it would be for him to lose his life, i. e., his living, i. e., his salary.

But on with the play! Let Secularists be honest and scatter the golden grains of truth everywhere, and a rich harvest for the world will be the result.

Oh, the bright golden age when the gods are all slain,  
And the devils have all gone to rest,  
When the angels and saints and chosen of gods  
Have flown to the land of the blessed.  
Then men will be gods, making heaven below;  
The white flag of peace be unfurled;  
The dark clouds of hate forever be past,  
Leaving sunshine of love in the world.

### Good is Good.

The Christian church has done some good, but it is not the good that Secularists combat. It is the height of folly for any one to claim that all the moral teachings which have come from the clergy are bad and that the social and mental training that both young and old have received have not been a great benefit. Happiness is a good thing, and the church, while it has caused much sorrow, disunion, insanity and crime by its diabolical dogmas, has at the same time by its strong fraternal organizations made much happiness. Give the devil his due, and because the ungodly lies have driven you into a dark corner and made the moss of chronic pessimism grow on your mental back, don't think that everything a preacher or church-member does is bad. These people are human, and we should only wish to do them good. The good they have done has been in spite of their religion or belief in spooks, but it is also true that the good that we have done (and it makes us very modest when we speak of it) has been in spite of our mistakes. What we must fight if we wish to win is the evil thoughts, habits and principles of the Christian. A man who habitually commits murder may at times give all he has to the poor; he may be a good speaker and move

many to tears and laughter; he may teach some good moral doctrines; he may be free from the use of intoxicants, tobacco, tea and coffee, and even gum; but all the good he does cannot make murder right, and his awful crimes should be arrested. So it is with those who are murdering the minds of the innocent with the poison of superstition. The good they do is good, but we should endeavor, in the name of go(o)d, to arrest its administration; and no better or quicker way can possibly be found than to supplant their churches and Sunday schools, which are founded on the decaying remains of old Jewish fables, by Secular churches and Sunday schools, which can contain as much or more good, and be built on the solid foundation of Scientific Truth.

### Abroad.

After a pleasant stay in Portland with the Baileys and Feustels, I left on the boat Friday morning (June 23) for a trip up the Columbia river to The Dalles. The weather was clear, and had it not been for the heavy wind the trip would have been a very pleasant one. One will never tire of viewing the scenery on the "old Columbia" as it rolls on its way through the Cascades to the ocean. The water is so high at this season of the year, on account of the melting snow, that the locks at the cascades cannot be operated, and it necessitates a transfer and a trip of two or three miles by land. The bicycle came in good play here, and we were the first to reach the upper river boat anchored above the locks. The rest of the trip was without incident, except stopping occasionally to take on passengers. At Hood River we got quite a load of Indians who had been picking strawberries and were on their way to the Warm Springs reservation. The study of the life and habits of the semi-civilized Indians is very interesting. They are no longer what they used to be in their happy state when our forefathers first settled America, or even in the early '40's when the brave pioneers led the way to the West.

We arrived in The Dalles at 9 o'clock at night, and the next morning I realized that I was no longer in "Webfoot", but had crossed the mountains and was breathing the dryer, lighter atmosphere of Eastern Oregon. There is a great difference between the two localities, and one can hardly realize that he is in the same state. West of the Cascade mountains we encountered the rains and the balmy breezes from the Pacific, which cause luxuriant vegetation and cover rocks and trees with moss. But the frequent rains and balmy breezes do not extend over the lofty heights of the Cascade mountains, and a great barren