

## Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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J. E. Hosmer,..... Editor  
P. W. Geer,..... Manager

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### Prophecies.

The prophets of old tried hard to make their prophecies come true, and after their death their followers, and especially the priests, whose support and power depended on the belief of the people, were very careful to see to it "that the prophecies might be fulfilled". Among the ranks of the infidels are a few who are unfaithful even to their infidelity, and go about prophesying evil of our work, and then, of course, trying to make their prophecies come true, so as to be able to say, "I told you so." This class of Infidels are more to be pitied than blamed, for they know no better; but the mischief they do is hard to estimate. Surrounded as we are by an orthodox world, ready to shout for joy at any misfortune that might come to our institution, those who wish the old religions to give way to the religion of humanity and right living, should be very careful about joining the ranks of the evil prophets or repeating their false prophecies to the detriment of the very cause in which they profess to be interested. Our workers all have weak points, to be sure, but unless they are immoral, thus misrepresenting our great principles, we ought to be very careful, for we must remember that the work of moral, constructive Secularism is very young and cannot stand the storms that it can after a few years of successful growth.

And again, some people, even among skeptics, seem to be very credulous in some matters. We must learn not to believe without proof.

There are those who are over-sensitive, and many times just an idle word, spoken in jest perhaps, so offends a good worker that his or her work and the good it might do is entirely ruined, and the worst of it is that those of a coarser nature delight in thus wounding the sensitive ones.

But by these facts on the debtor side of our account as progress-workers, stand, opposing them, many things in our favor. We have many workers whose experience have taught them just the conditions of things and on whom

no amount of false prophecy, sneers of the enemy or withdrawals of the sensitive will ever turn aside from the main object. And if, as we believe, these have better living and growing qualities than even the most devout worshipper of Christian or Pagan gods, then Secularism will flourish after the weaker species have become extinct, for the great law of natural selection holds good in the mental and moral as well as the physical. Yes, the "survival of the fittest" will at last conquer, and if Secularism, as now represented, has more characteristics which fit it to exist than Christianity, it will live after Christianity has been "gathered to its fathers"; if not, it will be crowded out and the next highest, i. e., the type whose summed-up characteristics come nearest to perfection, will survive.

What does this teach us if it is not that we should reach out toward our perfect ideals? Let us bend every effort to reduce the evil in our ranks to the minimum. Let us be good prophets or not prophesy. Let us not be over-sensitive nor over-credulous, and above all things, let us be moral and progressive workers in our high calling for humanity.

### Songs with No Meaning or Worse.

Many songs which are sung by Christians to please their imaginary God have as little sense in them as the most heathenish heathen's powwow to appease the wrath of imaginary devils. These meaningless songs have more effect for evil on our people, and especially on the young than a person might at first think.

Place songs of patriotism, songs of love, songs of virtue and songs of truth in a community—let the young people learn them, and what an inspiration—what an incentive to higher, nobler thoughts and actions. But suppose instead of these we place in their hands songs that mean nothing to them, what is the effect? The music is good, and for a time, for the music's sake, the words may be sung, but the good that might have been done is cut in two in the middle and even the taste for music is hampered and hindered, for those who have an acute sense, dislike to repeat senseless words over and over again.

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe on his gentle breast,  
There by his love o'ershadowed,  
Sweetly my soul shall rest."

This stanza means simply nothing to a philosophic mind. A mind that is capable of analysis, judgment and reason will at first endeavor to get something out of it for future use, but how can one get useful timber from such trash as most of the gospel hymns? Just think of being in the arms of a man

who died nearly two thousand years ago! But many ladies who would be frightened at a skeleton open their mouths wide and sing about being in the arms of one whose skeleton, if he ever had one, must be pretty badly decomposed. As far as his breast being gentle is concerned, it seems to us there are many that are gentle enough, without trying to call up, or sing up, the breast of a god, or the son of a god. It looks selfish, ladies, and, dear Christian brother, you don't need that kind of a gentle breast to rest on. Be a man, and see what kind of devilish nonsense you have been led into. The word "soul" means one thing to one and another thing to another. It thus causes confusion, and better be dropped from our vocabulary or used in such a way as to exclude all doubt in regard to its meaning.

But it is not alone the meaninglessness of these songs that does harm. Many of them teach wrong principles that noiselessly creep over a people and, without their knowledge, stultify and damn them. For example, take the following stanza, which is set to most beautiful music:

"Then ask me not to linger long  
Among this gay and thoughtless throng,  
For I am only waiting here  
To hear the summons, Child, come home."

This teaches people to be slack about secular things. It underestimates the good in humanity and instead of having a tendency to elevate mankind and inspire them to noble action, it tends to keep them in a state of waiting—a condition which is degenerating and unfits men and women for this life or any other, even for wearing wings, playing on golden harps or wearing golden crowns. Man needs to be taught that the earth is his home, and then he will begin to fix it up as it should be.

Another song that contains wrong sentiment is:

"Just as I am, without one plea  
But that thy blood was shed for me."

This throwing oneself onto someone else and not trying to get rid of the dark blot of sin in an honest way, is accountable for much of the evil that remains in civilized countries. It is heathenish, and the sooner we try to reach a higher ideal, and not remain "just as I am", the sooner will we reach a happy state of progression to higher things.

Then there is the song "Eternity," calculated to frighten people into believing the nonsense that the preachers pretend to know about. The mind cannot grasp the idea of eternity, and the way the word is sung—"E-t-e-r-n-i-t-y! e-t-e-r-n-i-t-y!"—is absolutely wicked, for it worries the weak, imperfectly developed minds of the young, and drives even to madness those who are unevenly balanced.

As we write, the best music we

ever heard is softly playing and it inspires us with the hope that we may in some way, before our ears cease to hear music, and before our eyes cease to read the printed page or the lessons found in nature's open book, and before our mind ceases to catch the thought of the noble minded men and women who have labored for truth and right, that we may in some way, we repeat, help to deprive the robbers of the loveliest and best things of earth, of their nefarious use of the beautiful robes of music with which they have clothed their dead skeletons of ancient myths and their putrifying corpse of a false philosophy. O brothers and sisters of a common humanity, let us open our eyes to the beauties that we now enjoy—beauties that are now possible for even freethinkers, and remembering what the thinkers of the past have done for us, do what we can to help future men and women to enjoy the good things of this life without danger of being duped, gagged, bled, robbed and left to die by the advocates of the super(sub)-natural panacea, known as the Christian Faith.

### Now's the Time.

We are undertaking a great work and just at this time, when we are bending every effort to get our building ready, we need the help and co-operation of every loyal Secularist.

What can you do now? We have been delayed so much on account of not getting lumber that the time in which to do our work is very short, and we must hire a large force of men in order to get through in time. This will cost no more than it would to hire a few men for a longer time; the only thing is that it takes more ready cash, and as this is a very busy time of the year, men are scarce and it takes money to get them; so, friend, if you intend to help, dig it up as soon as you can, and we'll have the building enclosed in less than a month. When we get the roof on we will be working at a great advantage, for we can then work nights, Sundays and rainy days on the inside. Every dollar that comes in now is most welcome, for the out go is heavy.

We are very much encouraged, however, and if help keeps coming we will be in our new building Oct. 3. According to announcement last week, we commenced on the frame work last Monday. We have a good foreman, who is as thorough a Secularist as we ever met.

His name has appeared in the Torch many times, and it is familiar to all our readers. It stands for a man who is a worker. H.E. Klein, the ex-Catholic, who has donated money, time and produce and sent his children to the "Infidel" school, will now bless us further with his knowledge of architecture by overseeing the work of erecting the only Freethought University in the world. Now let us all help what we can so that Mr. Klein will not lack for men and material and we'll soon have the stars and stripes floating from the tower of a Liberal University.