

TORCH OF REASON.



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The World's Need.

THE world is weary with its pain and care.
The world is weary with its children sad
With hunger of the body and the mind.
The world is weary in a land so fair,
Where joy should reign, there sorrow
walks beside,
And silenced is song by tears of grief.
The world is waiting for all guiding
minds
To lead to nobler heights all those who
strive.
The world is waiting for all helpful
words
To soothe, and cheer, and comfort all
who mourn,
Unsatisfied, amid the ills of life.
The world is waiting for all noble hearts
Which yearn with aspirations for the
true.
Ye workers, come! the world has need
of you.

The Naked Truth.

TEACH the people how to live,
Ye who knowledge have to give;
Nature, wisdom will supply,
Teach her children how to die.

Show the people how to walk,
Ye whose tendons never balk;
Wings, if needed bye and bye;
With them cometh skill to fly.

Tell the people what you know,
Ye whose fountains overflow;
What you know not how to reach,
Investigation's sure to teach.

Investigation.

BY W. H. BACH.

Search the scriptures; for in them
ye think ye have eternal life;
and they are they which testify of me.—
John v. 39.

FOR some time I have been following the above injunction. In my humble opinion the greatest question before the human race today is the question of immortality. What are the few years we spend upon this earth, even if we live our allotted "three score years and ten", compared to the vast ages of eternity, if it so happens that death does not end all?

We have been told that the great God of the universe produced a book which is to be unto us inspiration and guide, leading us through the darkness and vicissitudes of this life and onward into another. Such being the case, in its presence each idle tongue should be hushed, each ear strained to catch the slightest sound; each eye opened to its widest extent and all contained therein should be received. Remember it is God who speaks.

If this was told to humanity for the first time, what hopes would be aroused in our breasts! What wisdom we would expect to receive! But, alas, how great the disappointment! History and bible do not agree; Genesis and geology are directly in contradiction; scientific astronomy contradicts all.

But we are told that the bible was not given for the purpose of teaching man history, geology or astronomy, and our hopes rise again; we open the book, our eyes light upon the passage, "Search the scriptures," and we begin our task. If the bible is true, no amount of investigation can harm it. The more a truth is investigated the brighter it shines. The more error is exposed to the searching light, the more cloudy it becomes. If the bible is the work of God, the Omnipotent, it will bear all investigation. If it is the work of ignorant men, that fact should be shown to the world.

"God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent." (Numbers xxiii. 19). That being the case, we can investigate without danger.—[Big Bible Stories.

Popular Objections to Infidelity.

BY EDGAR C. BEALL.

IT is frequently asserted that Freethinkers manifest quite as much illiberality and aggressiveness as the Christians in whom they so strongly condemn these qualities. Nothing, however, could be farther from the truth. Is it "illiberal" to struggle for liberty? Is it "aggressive" to strike in self-defense? It will be said, perhaps, that the church no longer persecutes. True, her fagots have gone to ashes; her thumbscrews have rusted; her racks are worm-eaten, and her blood-besmirched hands are too feeble to wield the sword. But from pulpit and press, by tongue and pen, the venom of her enmity has never ceased to flow. In the past, Christians always persecuted in exact proportion to their power, and they do the same today. With the mass of the orthodox people, Infidelity is still a synonym for immorality and crime. A disbeliever in God and the inspiration of the bible, is regarded a priori, as one who knows no law but his own evil heart; one who is devoid of both honor and reason; a wretch who would pollute the innocence of youth; a creature to be shunned as a "moral leper".

Christians are taught that the fear of God is not only the "beginning of wisdom", but also the basis of all moral principle; and with such a distorted view of human nature, how can they regard the Atheist in any other light than that of an enemy to all that is good? But should we be called

"illiberal" because we cry out against this injustice? Are we "aggressive" because we desire to be recognized for the manhood and womanhood we possess irrespective of creed? "The liberty of one man ends only where that of another begins." But does the Infidel enjoy such a liberty? Do Christians admit that he has a right to his unbelief? How can they admit it when they teach that he thereby not only loses his own soul, but by his influence drags others to perdition with him? What says the Romish church as the rights of Infidels? In her papal encyclicals, and in all her official utterances, she breathes the most deadly hatred to the principles of religious tolerance, and denounces every form of heresy as punishable crime. Therefore, we deny that we should be called "aggressive" so long as our rights are thus trampled under the heel of ignorance and superstition.

Moreover, if we do enjoy a comparative freedom today, we think also of the coming generations, to whom we owe a sacred duty. The splendid liberties of the American nation are still threatened by oath-bound zealots of foreign birth and bias, who, in the name of Jesus, would but too gladly betray our all-protecting flag, and above the stars and stripes erect the bloody symbol of the cross. Until this danger is averted; until Infidels are allowed to testify in all courts of justice; until they are no longer regarded as disqualified for holding positions in the government; until the money they pay into the public treasury is no longer plundered for the maintenance of superstition; until they are allowed to spend seven-sevenths of their time as they choose; until they are no longer looked upon as criminals before God and the church; in a word, until they are recognized for their merits simply as men and women, the cry of "Illiberal Liberalism" should be repeated no more.—[The Brain and the Bible.

If we were unconscious like plants are supposed to be, we could neither suffer nor enjoy life; at any rate, both our pleasure and paid pain are result of knowledge. If the evils of life balance the good of existence, then life is equivalent to nothing. If the evils exceeds the good, then life is worse than nothing. But if the good exceeds the evil, then life is worth living.—[Independent Pulpit.

The Safe Side.

OURS is the safe side," says the Christian; "for if Infidelity be true then both Infidel and Christian have the same destiny, namely, to die and end all, but if Christianity be true, what will become of the Infidel?" In reply to this we say, that although at death both believer and unbeliever fall asleep side by side upon the bosom of mother earth, yet it does not make yours the safe side; because if Christianity be true then the most of the human race go into eternal torment. Orthodoxy has always taught that "many are called but few are chosen." Now if nine-tenths of the race are going to suffer endless pain I do not see how those who are going to constitute a large part of that number and are to be eternally lost can call it the safe side. For it should not be forgotten that the vast majority of those who are going to suffer the wrath of God, are professed Christians. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them—I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 22-23.)

No, no, it will not do to trust that side as the "safe side" where "many are called but few are chosen." We need something safer than that.

Again, we do not see how it can be the "safe side" to despise this life in hopes of another that we know nothing of. If Infidelity be true, all Christians are superstitious idolators. If Infidelity be true, Christians are deceived and are corrupting the minds of millions of children with superstition that will render them bigoted, cruel and unhappy. And this is about the size of it. How, then, can it be the safe side? The safe side is always to be fair and honorable. It is safe always to examine both sides. It is safe to be on the alert for more truth. It is safe to accept the truth, even when it cuts away old prejudices and old beliefs. It is safe not to be sectarian. It is not safe to be a partisan, but it is safe to be free, courageous and honest in all things. It is not safe for you to cling to myths, fables and superstitions, and to leave them as a blighting inheritance to your children.—[Selected.

There is always mist between the mind and mystery.