

Torch of Reason

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

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Fear.

One of the biggest devils that ever entered the world is Fear. Go back as far as we have any history, and we find that fear has been the one blighting, damning, dwarfing thing. Born of ignorance it, like its parent, prevents the human family from even KNOWING the beauties of the sunshine of truth.

The awful slavery of the millions of human beings who toiled for their kings and priests for years and years in old Egypt, the history of the feudal system, the sad stories of witchcraft, of the Inquisition, of our modern cringing and cowering to wealth and priest and popular opinion, all tell the same sad tale of the awful thing we call fear. In the old time—in the dark days of jealous, divine power, when a man was found who dared to stand erect and fear not, he was put to death by those who had power but "feared" they would lose it; but brave men—men who were not even afraid to die for the truth have given us all our freedom of thought—all the things that make life, for modern men and women, worth the living. But let us turn from the past. Let us think of the present and of the future.

There are two factors in our present civilization which play very important parts in keeping this dread devil in the world. These are, the Christian dogmas and the methods of governing or controlling the children during their school days. The story of Christianity

from start to finish is one of FEAR, and the priests and preachers have taught themselves and others too well the dreadful lesson. The highest civilized people of the world still creep and cringe and cry in fear.

Take it away, Oh, take away this horrible monster that still blights the earth! Take away the fear of a god and the fear of missing his heaven! Take away the Lord's devil, and the fear of his hell! Take away ALL fear and let the world be free!

But how can we drive the monster from the world? Our only hope is with the children; but oh, what cowards many of them are forced to be. Brute teachers who follow the example of those who beat, threatened and frightened them into obedience, still beat the tender flesh, impress the tender minds with awful threats and stamp there forever the brand of the coward.

Teachers and parents, the quickening of new and better thoughts in the world, the opening of new and higher ideals of life, the ushering in of a higher civilization is in our hands.

Let us not make cowards of the children if we value the thought of a higher and better future. Let us learn how to gain their respect and love, and thus give them a good—a noble—a true incentive for doing right and thus rid them and future generations of the arch enemy of the world, Fear.

Say you that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"? Let us see. Who fear the Lord and other supposed beings most, the wise or the ignorant? All know that the wisest fear nothing and that the weak, ignorant, barbarous mind fears most. Who said that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom? Not very good authority: A heathen of a heathen, god-believing age. Inspired? No. One who could make one mistake could certainly be mistaken in supposing that he was inspired.

The love of the truth is the beginning of wisdom, but fear cramps and stunts the intellect. The only real, the only true inspiration is the love of the truth. This leads men to study the past, to study the present, and with the lamp of intellect thus trimmed and burning, to peer into the future with much more certainty than the old priests of the temples of Ignorance.

Have we this lamp? Let us not put it under a bushel. Let us throw beautiful pictures of a grander, freer future upon the screen of public thought until all will learn to so love them that the scene will be made real, and a heaven of confidence and love will have entered our secular home.

Prayer as a Last Resort.

Perhaps the very best joke we ever heard was one that was cracked last week at our County Teachers' Institute.

After a discussion on the subject of whipping, one who advocated no whipping was asked what he would do if a boy disobeyed and continued to disobey after the teacher had tried to show him his error and persuade him to do better. Some explanations followed and all was still. At last one Jim Buff, an eccentric school master, and one who is known far and wide as an Infidel, jumped to his feet and in his comical way said, "Dear friends, I'll tell you what I'd do. After I had exhausted all my powers of argument, all my powers of kindness, all my powers of eloquence and persuasion, I'd—I'd PRAY for the little fellow!"

It came so unexpectedly, when no one was thinking of the religious question, and it was said in such a funny tone of voice, making the idea of prayer seem so little and ridiculous, it made every one, even the Christians, laugh, and it so touched the wicked editor of the Torch that he laughed till he cried. After the laughter had subsided, a "good" teacher reminded the "dear brother" that "the prayers of the wicked availeth naught"; but our modern St. James was not caught napping, and quickly replied, "Ah, dear brother, I would call in the elders."

The beauty of the joke is that it is true. Prayer is not even thought of as a real remedy for anything, even by the Christians themselves, and to them it is a ridiculous thing only in theory and impractical practice, when nothing is really expected of it. But we believe that neither prayers nor whippings are necessary, and if a teacher or parent should read these lines who has thrown over one barbarous practice and not the other, let us beg of him, for the sake of the tender flesh and plastic minds of the little ones, to study better methods of leading them to the tree of knowledge—into the true path of life.

Secular Home.

Last week we started our work of securing the Twenty Forerunners, and from time to time we will publish, below the contract, the names of those who are brave enough to stand in the front ranks.

This is no small movement. It has been known for a long time that the work of saving the world from fear and superstition is prevented by our workers being scattered all over the world. Let us once concentrate and we will carry everything before us.

We have selected a country for Secular Home that is just right in every respect. We have an excellent climate, fine fruit and grain,

good water, soil that never wears out, and the most liberal people in the world. What is to hinder us from making a grand success? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! Now the Liberal University Company has a limited option on this beautiful tract of land, and those who can ought to step forward at once and MAKE the movement a success.

There are thousands of good people all over the world who have not as yet heard of our great educational Freethought movement, but let twenty dwelling houses start to be built all at once, each on an acre of fine land, beautifully laid out, and the whole world will hear of our work. Many will come and not a few be chosen to help start a city whose streets may be paved with something better than gold. We will then boost our University onto its feet. We will have a large hall for entertainments, a Secular church and Sunday school. In fact, we will do as one of our enthusiastic friends said, "raise hell and put a chunk under it". Since we started, a number have expressed a desire to be among the twenty and we hope soon to report that number so we can go right ahead, but in order to succeed one must not wait for another. We MUST ALL ENTHUSE in order to make the work a success. Every foot of the land is excellent. There is no waste land whatever. People can live here as cheaply as anywhere on earth and much cheaper than in countries where everything freezes up in winter and melts in summer. We are working for Secularism and Secularism alone. Do not think that we are trying to deceive any one. We have been in the Freethought work too long and sacrificed too much to be accused of fraud and refer all concerned to those who know us best. We have carefully estimated the cost and the results of our undertaking and we know it would not pay us to have people come here and then be dissatisfied. It would hurt our institution as nothing else would, but although some who are easily discouraged and of a pessimistic nature might be dissatisfied, we feel sure that nearly all will be well pleased and our plan will help the cause more than anything else that we can do. Those who wish to build better houses than the four hundred dollars will build, may have the privilege, but it must be remembered that four hundred dollars here will build a fine little finished home, and especially when we buy the material as cheaply as we can when buying in such large quantities. If we fail in getting the twenty Secularists to take hold, of course we have the embarrassment of a failure, but this will not check our enthusiasm nor cause us to give up trying. On the other hand we have everything to gain, and if the twenty are found our work will move as it never has before. We are satisfied that it is a GOOD THING FOR ALL CONCERNED.

Let us try it. HELP!