

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

Published Weekly by the Liberal University Company, in the Interests of Constructive, Moral Secularism.

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

Entered at the postoffice at Silverton, Oregon, as second-class mail matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

One year, in advance.....	\$1 00
Six months, in advance.....	50
Three months, in advance.....	25
In clubs of five or more, one year, in advance.....	75

Money should be sent by registered letter or money order.

Notice!

A pencil mark here denotes that your subscription will expire with the next number. You are earnestly requested to renew so that you may receive the paper without interruption. We have decided that it is best for all concerned that we do not send papers longer than the time paid for unless so ordered. This will prevent any loss and we will know just where we stand.

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

THURSDAY, NOV. 17, E. M. 298

Earnest Christian vs. the Devil Hater.

In reply to an article entitled "An Open Letter", which appeared in the Torch of Oct. 13, the following letter was received:

ORANGE CITY, Iowa,
Nov. 7, 1898.

J. E. HOSMER, Ed.,
Silverton, Ore.,

MY DEAR SIR:—Having received a copy of the Torch of Reason and wishing to test the merit of its depth in the purpose avowed in its pages, I have written an answer to an open letter signed by Secular John, The Devil Hater.

Certainly the subject is worthy of discussion. I am not one to believe these things should no be discussed, but to test your sincerity of purpose before I send you a list of Sioux Co. teachers, I have furnished a reply signed Earnest Christian.

I would be willing to send you a list of teachers for sample copies, provided you demonstrate fully your position by publishing my reply, or giving good and sufficient reasons for not doing so.

'Tis not my desire to foist myself upon you or your readers. I appreciate sincerity of purpose quite as much in unbelievers as I do in those who profess themselves to be Christians. They are equally as responsible in every way for their every act as other people.

Awaiting your reply, I am

Yours truly,

E. D. BROWN,
Co. Supt.

For the convenience of the reader we will reprint the Devil Hater's

Open Letter and follow it with the Christian's reply. The subject is most worthy of discussion. TRUTH is what we want and we are VERY much pleased to find an earnest Christian who is willing to read our ideas and give us a chance to place them before the Christian educators of Iowa. The fittest will survive, and with this we are content.

AN OPEN LETTER.

SILVERTON, Oregon,
Oct. 10, 1898, After Christ.

DEAR CHRISTIAN:—

You said in yours of the 1st inst. that you do not believe in witches, and you ridiculed the idea, but do you not know that the unholy book you call the holy bible is the only one in use in civilized countries that teaches that there are such beings, and also commands that people shall not suffer a witch to live? Think of the terrible mental and physical suffering that this one unholy statement from your dream book of witches and ghosts has caused.

You say you believe in angels. Well, perhaps the belief in angels does less harm than the belief in witches, but it does great harm, nevertheless. It is a great, black lie. There are no such things as angels, and besides the great harm that all such superstitious ideas do, it has the tendency of keeping people from investigating the real causes of things.

You believe that angels have wings. Now think hard for a few minutes. If they have wings they must be attached to a body and this body must be in the shape of a human being, for of course it would be absurd to think of them attached to nothing, or to any other than a human body—such as a dog, or a cat or a monkey. This body must be dressed or undressed, and either way you take it, it is very absurd; an angel (other than a purely human one without wings) in pants, bloomers or petticoats is enough to drive an artist wild, and one without any clothing is enough to shock even a Methodist preacher.

Then think of the wings. Are they attached to the body with a ball-and-socket joint? Have the wings the humerus, the ulna, the radius and phalanges the same as a bird's wing? Have they veins, and would they bleed if punctured? Have these wings feathers, or are they like bats' wings? I think I hear you say, "I don't know." No, you do not know, because there is no such animal in existence, except in the minds of the ignorant. Yes, ignorant. You may be informed on some subjects, but if you believe in angels you are as ignorant of the truth as that old Irish Catholic lady we met over on the coast, who still believes in witches and ghosts. It is not your fault, but now your attention has been called to it, you

will act wisely to drive all the spooks out of your mind and be free. We are your friends and will help you all we can, and when you are free, we want you to help us drive all the witches and angels and ghosts from the minds of men and women and innocent children. Science is calling. It says, "Come, learn of me." It will teach you to say, "Depart from me, ye accursed of our fathers, into everlasting darkness to a place prepared by Secularism for the devil and his angels."

Good bye. We hope you will take no offense at what we have said for it is our honest opinion.

Yours for Progress,
SECULAR JOHN,
THE DEVIL HATER.

CHRISTIAN'S REPLY TO SECULAR JOHN.

ORANGE CITY, Iowa,
Nov. 17, 1898.

Mr. Secular John, The Devil Hater,

DEAR SIR:—Yours of the 10th ult., via Torch of Reason, at hand and contents noted. Since yours is addressed to nobody in general and everybody in particular, I trust that you will not be greatly surprised to receive a reply to your attack upon the most successful institution doing business to-day, viz.: the Christian Church.

Your article savors too much of that worldly, yet dogmatic, practice of applying to Christians the same images and ideas that you entertain and possess concerning Christianity; yea, you literally put into the Christian's mouth the "proper answer," that is to make Christianity the base monstrosity conceived by your own "secular brain." Christianity, while it deals specifically with everything, leaves a wider range. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." This gives us poor heathen a far better opportunity than the narrow path outlined for us by yourself.

Your analysis of an angel is too superficial for any use, and as to ghosts and witches, it is simply your construction of our views and beliefs. What care we whether angels are dressed or undressed? We never spend time discussing such absurd questions. We are taught, and we teach, that angels are spiritual beings. This is enough. It remains for infidels to clothe innocency with the rags of hypocrisy and superstition.

What do you propose in place of Christianity, with its teachings, its high standard of ethics and Christian living? Reason, cold blooded reason, from a finite standpoint, basely throttles the better emotions, drives them out of the human heart, leaving the affectionate nature of man shorn of the one great element of true character; that which makes human happiness here below, to say nothing of the great hereafter.

From the manner you treat the

broad subject, one would naturally conclude that you are some old human crank, stranded upon the rough rocks of bachelorhood, or some disgruntled "married man," without children, or else, perhaps, it may be still worse, a grass widower, for certainly you evince very little knowledge or understanding of child nature, human nature, much less the true standard of Christian ethics, or what should constitute the moral instruction for children.

Go back to time immemorial. Take any of the ancient, mediæval or modern nations and peoples. What has been their history? What is it to-day? What shall ours be? Yea, what must it be? Are we to disregard all the past? What shall we build on? Are we to take from (rob) "innocent children," say nothing of men and women, those stories, Christian and others, that lift child nature to that ethereal realm which to them is heaven itself?

Shall we deprive "innocent children" of those beautiful visions of pure imagery, which makes childhood happy, middle and old age replete with fond recollections, and thus make stoics, hermits and what not out of God's children?

God forbid! True, "Science is calling, 'Come, learn of me,'" but let us mistake not. Fanaticism is not "science," neither is "science" fanaticism. Science is the unfolding of truth. He that searches the true Christian truth will not mistake "science" for fanaticism, which is the mainspring in the devil's workshop.

We have taken no offense at what you have said. We have simply given our "honest opinion," and trust that it will not give offense.

Yours for Christian Progress,
EARNEST CHRISTIAN.

THE DEVIL HATER'S SECOND LETTER.

SILVERTON, Oregon,
Nov. 17, 1898 After Christ.

DEAR EARNEST CHRISTIAN:—I never expected to hear from you, so imagine my joy when your kind letter of the 7th inst. was received. But enough of this. Defend yourself!

You think the Christian church "is the most successful institution doing business today"; but, if that be true, and we admit that it has made "lots of money and things", does that prove that it is a GOOD thing—that it has not done the world great harm? Robbers often flourish and tyrants have ruled for ages. Its success has been at the expense of education, of invention, of honest thought and of truth. The foundation of its success as a business rests down deep in the slime of ignorance, superstition, persecution and crime.

I have had as good opportunities perhaps of forming true "images