

Torch of Reason

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

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A Shot at the Burning Bush.

Some Christians' excuse for not debating with Infidels is that an Infidel will not take the Bible for authority. This is as unfair as it would be for Infidels to refuse to debate unless Christians would take the Infidel writers as authority, and this, of course, would be unreasonable and absurd. The fair way to debate the questions of religion and freedom of thought is to "search the scriptures", histories, works of science and the great open book of nature itself, and by induction draw the conclusions of reason. Taking this fair and honorable position, the Liberal University throws down the gauntlet to the whole orthodox world, the only necessary qualification of the Christian debater being that he or she must be an ordained or representative man or woman, of good moral character. We would be very much pleased to hold a series of well regulated debates here at Silverton on subjects calculated to lead us to the truth which lies somewhere between the two extremes. We have but little hopes, however, of bringing the "army of the Lord" to a fair, open fight, and so if we wish to fight "the good fight against faith" we will be obliged to fire at them as they skulk in their "burning bush"; so here goes.

Say, over there, you pious son of Jehovah, take off your belows-tongued moccasins, for the mud we are about to enter is hol(e)y ground! In other words, we are going to quote scripture. In the last chapter of Mark it gives an account of your Jesus after he "got back" from his little trip to hell.

(You remember that the Apostles' Creed states that "he descended into hell" and that "the third day he rose from the dead".) Well, it was just after he "got back" that he appeared unto the eleven (one, poor Peter, had trouble with his bowels and had gone on a trip to the same place) and scolded them because they didn't believe those who professed to have seen him after he "got back". But these unbelieving eleven—these unfaithful (infidel) apostles were all poor Jesus had, and so he made up his mind to entrust these skeptical fishermen with the great message of salvation to the whole world. "And he said unto them, (Matt. xvi. 15.) Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name

your whole weight on the side of truth. Help us save the world, not for Jesus, but for humanity.

To Those Who Have Suffered.

There are many millions who have suffered untold mental and physical pain on account of the old lies of orthodoxy. Are you one, dear reader? If so, let us not forget that there are millions who are now in the very midst of the same, and perhaps worse, suffering. Let us not be so overjoyed at our release, nor so inhuman as to forget our duty to those who are going down in the awful flood that we have escaped. Let us not forget the many millions of future generations who will go down the same "dark valley" unless we turn the tide into the murmuring streams and crystal fountains of Freethought.

We have escaped the mad torrent, and although we may be cold,

them without money and "without price." Their hell is a curse, while what we offer them will help rid the world of its greatest evil and save it for righteousness. Come on, thinkers, "gird up your loins;" let's give it to 'em!

A Few Pieces of Silver.

We entered the work of building the Liberal University, believing that if we would do our part, other Freethinkers would do theirs, and that the institution would prosper and become a great power in freeing the world from ignorance and superstition.

We have done our part, and our friends all say that we have done well, but we have reached a point where others must do their part or our work can not be a success. We are not idly waiting; we are putting forth every effort in our power, but the work demands more than we can give. We appreciate the help we have had, and realize as no one else can what it has been, but true Secularists are always "taking thought for the morrow." It matters not how hard we have worked nor how much help we have received unless we build on the foundation we have thus secured. We have a fine foundation for a future school. It is excellent in every way. The students are workers and are learning what education really means. We have none of those little wars between teachers and pupils that exist in most schools. All is harmonious, and this, too, without any cast iron rules.

Our building is all ready to go up. The lumber is on the ground. Students are coming from far and near, and we ought not to be crowded and cramped, but we are obliged to wait. Everything is all ready to go on, yet we do not move. Why? OUR LUMBER IS NOT PAID FOR, AND WE DARE NOT USE IT UNTIL IT IS. Today, if we had Five Hundred Dollars, the building would be moving right along.

We do not want to cramp anybody, and if we thought that anyone, or anyone's family, was to be robbed to build this institution, we would refuse to receive such help, and our advice to those who are fighting hard to make both ends meet, is to keep their money, or so expend it that they will the sooner be able to be independent, but Freethinkers, you who are not cramped, we want you to help us. The work demands it, and we have no way of seeing you personally, so the Torch of Reason must do the work for us. Now can't we raise the five hundred dollars right away? We had great hopes of the Five Thousand Dollar Fund, but that is moving too slowly for our present needs. It is all right and we hope our friends will keep it going. If it comes in ten years it will be needed, but just

The Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth:

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell. The third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Secular John's Creed.

I believe in Truth, the Almighty principle, Maker of Heaven on Earth:

And in Science its offspring our Savior; which has been conceived by the great minds of our race, born of virgin love; suffered under the priests of Superstition, was crucified, dead and buried in the dark ages; its absence made an earthly hell, but it finally rose again from the dead; it ascended to make an earthly heaven, and now takes a high place in the minds of all good men and women; by it shall be judged the living, and not the dead.

I believe in liberty of thought; the establishment of churches of humanity; the brotherhood of mankind; universal education that will eradicate sin; the indestructibility of matter, and an eternal effect for good or evil of every life. Amen.

shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Then the good(?) book goes on to say that this being that "spake as no man ever spake" ascended upwards and sat by God. Now, Earnest Christian, you contend that the Bible is your guide. Let us look at this part of the word a moment. Is it true? Can those who believe cast out devils? Now, honor bright. Don't dodge. Are there any devils such as were believed in in those days? Can believers drink strychnine and no harm come to them? Do you believe the gospel, and can your little hands heal the sick? If they can heal either physical or spiritual sickness, come and lay them on the sick among us, and we will pay you well for your trouble.

Can't you see now that your supernatural religion is false? Come, give it up, as we have, and throw

almost exhausted and weary with over-exertion, yet it is our duty—it is what our lives are worth to "throw out the life line" of the Religion of Humanity and rescue our perishing brothers and sisters from the dark waters of Ignorance.

Up And At It!

One would almost think that some infidels are "asleep in Jesus," the same as the Christians are, judging from the amount of work they do for the cause. If everyone will take hold now, we can knock the old rotten dogmas into a "cocked hat." We have the enemy scared already and will soon have them on the run if every one will DO SOMETHING. Go to church. Talk to the preacher. Ask questions. Help us build the University. Do as Luther did when he made a break from the Catholic church. Come to Silverton if you can and help us. They have given us hell for many years, and the hell they have given us has been unlike what we offer to