

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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Ten Thousand Dollars.

One of the Liberal University's friends expects to soon put ten thousand dollars into the only institution that stands for moral scientific, Secular Freethought.

This means the greatest of success, for when we begin to succeed others will see things in the light that success always sheds upon an enterprise and they will come forward, some with larger and some with smaller amounts until we will have what the present generation demands of a great University.

Meanwhile let us show our generous friend that we are willing to labor as well as to wait.

We are thinking of closing our year's work on May 5, in order to get to work on our building so as to have it ready for next year's work. There is much to be done and we hope that every Freethought lover of Science will help all in his or her power.

No Spooks.

The criticism by brother Wettstein, on page 3 of this issue, is excellent. We agree with nearly every word our radical brother says and realize as he does the dangers of Agnosticism. Perhaps in the editorial he criticises we left the subject too soon and was misunderstood by some; but let us say here what most of our friends know, that we have no belief whatever in gods—no first great cause or causes—no spirit acting on matter or anything of the kind. Matter "acting upon mat-

ter" is the alpha and omega of our knowledge, and although we are in the "evolutionary period of our intellectual development" (and who is not?) yet we have come to our "atheistic" views by the use of our reason and the study of the very authors brother Wettstein mentions. But there may be as much danger of one falling into error by claiming to be in possession of ALL TRUTH as in being too careful about saying "I know".

Notice carefully what brother Wettstein says:

"All known phenomena is caused simply by matter acting upon matter, and beyond this all our knowledge ends."

So say we. Beyond this "we do not know." Has matter thus acted without beginning? Our jewel(er) of a philosopher says: "Matter! Matter is the sole cause, the all sufficient, the sole omnipresent cause—the eternal and infinite cause." But one in an "evolutionary state" cannot comprehend what eternal, infinite, etc., mean.

There seems to be a contradiction when one says that matter is the "eternal cause" of matter acting on matter, for anything that never had a beginning (eternal) never could have had a cause.

We are atheistic, that is, we do not believe in gods, but realizing that we are in the "evolutionary period of our intellectual development" and cannot comprehend the universe, either with or without a beginning, perhaps we might be allowed to tell the truth and say that there are some things that "we do not know."

In a very friendly private letter brother Wettstein says: "When your University is ready to endow a chair of Atheistic philosophy at \$2000 a year, I will resign my interest in the old store and give your school my whole time and energy and contribute radical weekly articles to The Torch and come and live in Silverton."

Well, this is a good offer and we wish we were able to pay the \$2000, but when we are, as president of the Liberal University we will instruct brother Wettstein, if we close a bargain with him, to leave all isms out and teach what "we do know." Such men as Spencer, Huxley, Darwin, Tyndall, etc., teach scientific truths and the student is left to draw his own conclusions in regard to questions of theology; and this plan would be better for Prof. Wettstein in his labors in the LIBERAL University.

But the designer of the great agnostic's souvenir spoon must remember that our University is in an "evolutionary" state. We are working hard without endowment or salary to establish this school of Science and Freethought and he should not wait for a \$2000 salary before putting his shoulder squarely to the wheel, making it possible.

for hundreds and thousands of young men and young women to be educated free from the damnable superstition which we so despise.

These liberally educated youths will go forth and liberally educate the world. They are waiting for us to act! Let us not wait for a \$2000 salary brother, but endow the institution with what we can ourselves. Let us pledge to the coming generation all we can of our time, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Robert G. Ingersoll says he "does not know" and we believe he is right, yet Mr. Ingersoll does not believe in any kind of gods or devils for there is no proof. But for Mr. Ingersoll to say that matter is the eternal cause of matter would be making a creator of matter.

Human knowledge only goes so far and then, if we are honest, we must say we do not know. The priests' way is to pretend to know all about it and the world has had enough of priestcraft.

If matter has existed and acted upon itself forever, it had no cause and, as we can't conceive of a beginning, "we don't know" but brother Wettstein is right; but we can't comprehend how matter could have existed forever. We can conceive of a time when all matter existed in a gaseous state and if it ever did, we can conceive of millions and millions of years rolling by while it remained thus but the human mind trying to comprehend the idea of no beginning MUST here give up and say "I do not know." A beginning is equally as impossible of comprehension. "A first great cause" is an absurdity to a scientific mind. There is no foundation for such a thing to stand on.

The fact is, when we have arrived at this point we have reached the present limit of human investigation and the little child knows as much as the wise Wettstein or the talkative Talmage. As we said before we fully agree with most our friend says in his criticism. He only misunderstood our position. In regard to a god or gods, the absence of proof of such things is proof enough to us that they do not exist. In asking the questions, "Is there one supreme cause or are the many powers co-equal? What is the cause of matter? etc.," we did not mean to convey the idea that we believe in any kind of spooks; we were only thinking of the natural powers possessed by matter.

But let us turn our attention to the things of earth (at home) that need fixing, lest in trying to solve the unsolvable we become demented and neglect our duty to our fellow men.

There is suffering, crime, ignorance and superstitions, which enslave and destroy on every hand. The war for Humanity calls for volunteers and the Savior Science

for disciples; and this WE DO KNOW that if enough respond to the call, human life will be lengthened and brightened and the old dark days of pretentious priestcraft will be at an end.

Easter Sunday.

The Easter exercises at the Silverton M. E. church last Sunday evening were what Carlyle calls, "phosphorescent punk and nothingness."

It causes a feeling of sadness as well as a feeling of dizziness to be crowded into an ill-ventilated room, foul with the breath of several hundred people to hear the utterances of little children who have been taught like parrots to sing and speak those things of which they have not the slightest idea as to the meaning. But we pity the children less than we do the older ones who, having been brought up to it, have no pangs of conscience as they sing and repeat the things they must know are dark and false as their imaginary hell. And yet, one who has some sense of humor, is struck at times by the ridiculous side of the high flights of the cracked anthems, the monotonous sing-song of the poorly trained parrot children, the solemn prayer of the good old deacon, the holy-ghost harangue of the saintly pastor, ending with an account of the awful state of the poor heathen and an urgent call to be generous in giving, the contribution, the doxology and the "And now may the blessing of the father, the son and the holy spirit, be and abide with you all ever more, Amen".

Talk about heathens! Where in the world is anything more heathenish than the ideas and actions of Christians in their Easter exercises?

The idea of the resurrection of the body is of heathen origin and was first taught when people knew nothing about our bodies being formed of the chemical elements of the earth and that after death they decompose and go into other forms.

What nonsense, what mental suicide to keep up this old blunder of the resurrection and how wicked it is to teach such things to the little children.

Prof. Kraps, principal of the public schools and a man of more than Methodist understanding, gave the audience a short talk on The Gods of Other Countries, which was instructive and interesting.

In closing, of course, he complimented the Christians' god very highly; and perhaps the modern god is better in some respects. He is about as near nothing as one can think and when he becomes entirely nothing perhaps people will have more time to devote to science and morality.

We believe that every orthodox preacher who talked about Easter told more falsehoods, perhaps un-