

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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

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Notice!

A hand pointing to this notice denotes that your subscription has expired. 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, MAY 4, E. M. 299.

VACATION.

Before this reaches some of our readers, the Liberal University will have closed for the summer vacation. Last fall we were much disappointed in not getting the lumber from the mill in time to finish the main building. So we had no building, but we all went to work, "hammer and tongs," and found a way to carry on our work by "making one". We moved the barn up to the dining hall, finished it like a house, fitted part for living rooms and part as school rooms, and the result is that we have gone right on with our work uninterrupted. To be sure, we have been crowded at times, and the teachers have been nearly worn out by the unavoidable noise from undeadened floors and the interruptions of classes passing through recitation rooms, etc., but we have lived, are all in good health and full of enthusiasm for our next year's labors.

There has been a good, healthy growth of the school this year. Things are beginning to shape themselves into a regular, methodical campaign. We are learning who are the real friends of our educational plan and who are our real enemies, and as experience gives us strength we are fast becoming stronger to cope with the "hosts of Satan" (those opposed to scientific, moral Secularism) on the one hand and the army of the Lord on the other.

Our vacation will be a very busy one. We must raise enough money in some way to finish paying for the lumber, pay up the few

little debts which were unavoidably contracted in order to keep the school and paper going, buy windows, doors, locks, nails, paint, blackboards, school furniture and hire carpenters, painters, etc., and keep the Torch of Reason burning. This must all be done and the building ready to be occupied before the fall term begins. It is a big undertaking, but we are not afraid to "tackle" it, because we believe our friends will all do SOMETHING to help the work along, and if they do, it will be an easy matter.

We must all be alive in order to succeed, for the time is short. The sooner our work of getting the new building ready is an assured success, the better it will be, for there are many students who will come next year if they can have the accommodations that it will afford them. We should have the advantage of knowing right away, on account of advertising it and giving students a chance to plan to come to our school instead of elsewhere; so we hope to soon announce that the completion of the new building for the Liberal University is an assured fact.

Friends of Truth and Progress, let our summer "outings" be short; let us work now and we will soon have our "innings," which we will hold in this our life game against ignorance and superstition.

MISJUDGED.

The idea that many people have of Secularists is that they delight in obscenity, profanity, coarseness, and in fact everything that is evil. Nothing could be further from the truth. A real Secularist, one who is enthused with the idea of making this world a fit place in which to live, dislikes everything that lowers humanity physically, mentally or morally.

The false notion that most Christians have of "having a good time" is one of the worst features of their artificial prop. "What is the use of doing right," said a Christian to us the other day, "if there is to be no reward for it and no punishment for wrong?" This is a very important question. It lies at the root of the controversy between the orthodox and the Secular idea of salvation. If wrong-doing brings happiness, there is certainly no reason for not doing wrong; but it does not bring happiness. The excitement of wrong-doing may bring to a hardened or ignorant mind a short-lived pleasure, but every wrong brings its corresponding evil, and that which brings no punishment of evil is not wrong.

It is quite amusing to watch the effects of a statement of our belief on different individuals. Of course, in conversation one cannot always give a full account of Secularism and is sometimes misunderstood.

Several times in our experience we have noticed that young men of a certain type think that Infidelity is synonymous with recklessness of action and coarseness of speech. This was illustrated the other day, when, after talking with a stranger a short time about our work, he turned to a companion and, talking loud enough so we were sure to hear, he wove into his talk several old-fashioned oaths, such as "Jesus Christ," "God damn," etc. He acted very much as if he thought this would convince us that he was "all right," but the fact is it very much disgusted us, and we feel sorry for the young man's lack of good language and his poverty of judgment.

Infidels who are such just because they are naturally bad are generally the worst of cowards, and before they die are quite apt, in their fear and ignorance, to "fall into the arms of Jesus." From this class the orthodox preachers judge all Infidels, and this accounts for the Christian's idea that Infidels nearly all repent, and that the deathbed scene of those who do not is something horrible.

It is no wonder to us that Secularism and Secularists are misjudged, for they have been very poorly represented. Many people know nothing of Secularism excepting what they have learned from men and women of low moral characters, who are not only infidels to Christianity, but to everything but their own selfish pleasures and dreams of personal renown. Such characters have methods peculiar to themselves. They go on the supposition that "if one does not praise himself or herself no one else will," and so their announcements are full of very flattering recommendations; their conversation is skillfully centered around their own glory in such a way as to completely captivate the uninitiated. Such Freethought workers, and there are plenty of them, have no deep-rooted principles. They have, like thousands of orthodox preachers, the power to fool people and make them think that they are something wonderful, but the time always comes when honest seekers for truth find that mere oratory, flattery and excitement amounts to but little unless backed by well-defined plans and principles. Then follows lack of interest in Secularism and disgust, and the victim "drops out." This is one great reason why our cause is kept at low tide. We are misjudged because we have been misrepresented. A minister of the Gospel of Humanity should be better qualified than a minister of Jesus Christ. He should have a good understanding of the natural sciences; he should know fully as much about the Christian Bible and much more about the other bibles; he should have a good

moral character and be entirely free from all superstition; he should have a deep-seated conviction that the religion of Humanity is just what the world needs, and energy and enthusiasm in preaching this gospel that knows no defeat.

But where are we going to get such workers? Never fear, they will be ready when the demand is great enough for them. We must first know what we want. We must then make conditions right to secure them. We must not allow our cause to be represented by every thing that takes a notion to talk against the orthodox religion. In fact, we must take a definite stand, so that people will know what Secularism means. It too often means only the secularization of the government and a fight against the orthodox churches. This is too narrow a platform for broad-minded men and women.

The American Secular Union and Freethought Federation is all right for the purpose for which it was organized, but it does not represent what we mean by Secularism. It is an anti-religious, political movement and deserves the sanction of all true Secularists, but it does not fairly represent Secularism by any means, and we are sorry that, in the eyes of many, it misrepresents the real cause. But we will not have long to wait before every state will have a regular Secular Union of Secularists, when there will be a real American Secular Union and when Secularism will be judged by true representatives and its good fruits, instead of being misjudged, as it now too often is, by misrepresentatives and their idiosyncrasies.

WHEN OUR SHIP COMES IN.

We wish to do something before we "shuffle off this mortal coil". We will try to do something, and "when our ship comes in" we will finish our University, buy a large tract of land, lay off a city, put up manufactories and give every one who wants to live in a real Secular community a chance to do so. The land adjoining the University tract is level and the finest place in the world for such a community, but it takes money to get the thing started. The land is excellent for gardening and for fruit and grain. Crops are a sure thing here, and as the West is growing very rapidly, manufactories of all kinds flourish. We do not say this from any selfish motive whatever. What we are talking about is the best way to advance the cause of Secularism; and we can think of no better way than for a lot of us to get together in a community and demonstrate to the world that there is something in our principles superior to Christianity or any other supernatural religion. We should have our city all built on scientific princi-