

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.

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

THURSDAY, MAY 25, E. M. 299.

ABOVE HARD WORK.

The priests and preachers are hardly ever seen at hard work. It is evident that they are afraid that people will mistrust that they are just common men after all, and thus they would lose their "pull." To be always seen in broadcloth creates in the minds of certain ignorant classes a feeling that the flesh thus robed is of finer texture, and so our preachers hardly ever indulge in the inspiration of manual labor. But this very mistake is one of the factors that will finally defeat their priestly scheme. Taking the preachers as a whole, they are the most impractical and useless set of men in the world. They do not mingle with other men, and thus learn their practical ideas and needs. They go to basket sociables and may, on occasion, bid for a fair one's basket and try to smother their god nature for the sake of getting hold of more converts, but their whole life is artificial, put-on humbug.

"What will we preachers do when the common people are educated as well as we are?" said one young minister to another, and we answer: Take your place among the ranks of common men and no longer carry burdens of divinity. It is an erroneous idea that the little tinky sermons that most preachers deliver once a week requires their whole time in the preparation. After they get used to it it takes but a very short time to prepare what they give the people, much of it being repetition.

These men are mere idlers—parasites. They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet they live and seem to enjoy good appetites. We do not wish to under-estimate the value of mental labor, but the priests and preachers of our time do but very little of it. The country school teacher does a hundred times as much work, is a thousand times more benefit to society, but receives less pay and less credit, usually, than these holy ambassadors of the Santa Claus God in the Sky.

The best work for humanity is done by men and women who are not idle, and the old adage of Satan finding something for idle hands to do has some truth in it, as is shown by the awful record of the crimes of preachers. Some of the more ignorant among this class of non-combatants may be sincere, but the great body of our spiritual fraternity know and use the people's ignorance to their own advantage, thinking that of the two horns of the dilemma the one that is the most profitable and pleasant is the best. They believe in "being on the safe side," and so they speak, not their honest thoughts, but carefully protect their halo of divinity by keeping aloof from common men in their struggles for existence, and, like young robins, chirp and chirp and take the good things that drop into their mouths.

We know by our own experience as lecturer, teacher, editor and common laborer that the preachers have a "mighty soft snap" compared with the labors of other men, but we would not even now complain if what they teach, be it little or much, is in the line of truth; but for this great army of well-dressed, well-housed and well-fed men to lie like scalawags one day in the week, while other men toil six or seven days and many of them away into the night, is a disgrace to civilization, and for one we advocate old Moses' doctrine, that these god-men earn their bread by the sweat of their brows or by some equally as honorable a method. What say you?

THAT PREACHER'S CONFESSION.

In his Freethought confession, the Presbyterian minister mentioned last week in our editorial, "A Deplorable Condition," makes the following significant statement: "The candidates for [church] office have long since discovered that the brother who stays in his room and prays generally gets left in the distribution of the 'spoils', while the 'hustler', who is a good hand at building fences, is the one who rides in the 'band wagon'. It is decidedly humorous to hear the brother pray a little while and then see him rush out after the 'member from the country' to get him cor-

ralled before he has promised his support to 'the other fellow'." How many Secularists would like to have us print the whole confession in pamphlet form? Can we sell it if we print it? It is rich!

OUR FIGHT AGAINST IGNORANCE.

"Say, that man Hosmer is a great damage to our city," said a Christian to one of our best Freethinkers, the other day. "Why, do you know that he teaches that we came from apes? Now you have a family of nice boys and girls, and do you want them taught that they are no better than cows?" Thus this man of God ran on, using language and illustrations too low and obscene to print, even in an Infidel paper.

Now, ignorance is no crime, provided the ignorant one has had no chance to gain knowledge, but this man who is striking us in the back is almost guilty of criminal ignorance, for he is wealthy and has had many opportunities that poor men have not; yet he has not become familiar enough with modern ideas of biology, geology, psychology, physiology, etc., to know that our ideas of the origin of man are the same as those held by the great scientists of our time. The educated men of his church teach the modern theory of evolution, and that is what we advocate.

It is fully as absurd to combat the idea that man originated from "lowly ancestors" as it would be to try to destroy our work on the supposition that we are wicked and a detriment to our Christian friend's city because we teach that the earth is round.

The more we are developed mentally, the farther we are removed from our ape-like ancestors, and if Mr. J. will put more of his money into books of science and less of it into an institution that has fought progress at every step, he will know more and be as willing to trace his origin to the life-forms of the past as to believe that he and his boys are made of mud and that his wife and daughters originated from an old spare rib.

Prey, pray and read your Bibles, brother Christians. Jesus will "give us a rest" by and by.

Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll lectured at the Academy of Music, New York City, last Sunday, the 21st inst. His subject was Thomas Paine, and the entire net proceeds was given to the Paine Bust Fund. The handsome bronze bust of the immortal author of "The Age of Reason" was exhibited on the platform on this occasion, and will be placed on the monument at New Rochelle.

"Dog in the Manger."

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Noticing in a late number of a southern Freethought publication a scurrilous assault upon you by its editor, I cannot refrain from expressing my opinion in regard to it. Told in a nutshell, our good friend and critic is afflicted with a mental distemper which, for want of a better term, we may call human nature, "with all that it implies," and he has it in its worst form. But I did credit him with enough sense not to "let the cat out of the bag" so recklessly as he did, laboring, no doubt, under the impression that people cannot judge of the cat when they see it. In order to hide his own shortcomings he generally accuses others of what he is guilty of himself, crying "stop thief" to impress people with his own innocence. One who is not in the habit of looking beneath the surface of things and of reading character would take him for a saint. Appearances were never so deceptive. Hear him talk about "any amount of egotism," while being himself egotism incarnate! He possesses this commodity in an inordinate degree and claims it for his own individual use and benefit.

The first insight I got into this phase of his human nature was on an occasion when I mildly protested against the constant mutilations to which my contributions to his paper were subjected. Imagine my amazement when I was told point-blank in reply that I was conceited. From what premises he argued to come to any such conclusion, I have vainly endeavored to fathom. But it reminded me of a former experience in human nature. When a boy I used to argue with a very pious old lady on religious matters, and at one time, after I had located in another city, I wrote her a long letter on the same subject—my "maiden effort," in fact, in the Arena of Polemics. The reply I received was virtually the same in effect as I received from our good friend and critic, namely, that she read enough to satisfy that I only wanted to show how smart I was, and then she tore up the letter. Thus was "Love's Labor Lost," but it effectually cured me of my ambition to convert pious — to the cause of Freethought.

This experience afforded me a clue to this peculiarity of human nature, however, that a large percentage of people labor under the hallucination that any person whose mind runs in different channels from that of the multitude is conceited; or, as our good friend and critic expresses it, considers himself "entirely too much of the I-am-better-than-you kind of man."

Any one who is so foolhardy as to enter beyond the limits of the known or dwell in realms beyond