

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.

THURSDAY, AUG. 17, E. M. 299.

A PIOUS LIAR.

In speaking of Robert G. Ingersoll, T. De Witt Talmage, a very fair representative of orthodoxy, in his "Christian Herald", says:

"Once in his life he was induced, while at Kalamazoo, Mich., to look into the life of a church there, and when he saw how it was seeking to help men to a better life, he exclaimed, 'It is the grandest thing in the country. I would join such a church as that if its members would permit me.'"

He also says:

"He never had more than a superficial knowledge of the Bible, and even that was acquired through jaundiced vision. This was proved by the fact that the qualities of love and generosity and kindness and charity, which he most lauded, are the very qualities inculcated by the book, whose influence he did his utmost to undermine. Unhappily he succeeded in prejudicing many shallow minded young men against religion, by leading them to believe that his conception of it was the true one."

Mr. Talmage intentionally lies, or writes about things he is grossly ignorant of, and ought to be ashamed of himself. The church in Kalamazoo, to which Ingersoll referred, was not a Christian church, but a Church of Humanity. It was a church that any moral Infidel could join if he would promise to do all the good he could. Many known Infidels were members, and when our champion went to "look into the life a church there" he knew it was not a Christian institution. It makes our Freethought

blood boil when we realize that we cannot reach the many thousand Christian readers of the Herald and explain to them Col. Ingersoll's true position in this matter and their humbug preacher's damnable rascality in misrepresenting our dead brother's endorsement of a non-sectarian, secular church.

The next falsehood that Rev. Talmage permits his evil pen to record, that Christ may abound, is this:

"He never had more than a superficial knowledge of the Bible."

Every interested person, whether Christian or Infidel (and this includes our reverend enemy), knows that Robert G. Ingersoll had a knowledge of the Bible that very few men possess, and that it was acquired by honest study; and we Infidels know that after honest study no scientific mind can agree that it is a book of love, generosity, kindness and charity.

We also know that he happily succeeded in opening the eyes of millions to the beauties and benefits of mental freedom and the absurdities of the idiotic doctrines of such shallow minded religious fanatics as the great(?) De Witt Talmage, who, we believe, holds his present high position among the saints on account of his willingness to play the hypocrite and combat the heroes of Truth.

LIFE'S PUZZLE.

As soon as the little child is old enough to think, he is puzzled at the wonderful new sights and sounds that are being continually conveyed to him through his senses. His eyes open wide with wonder, and he stretches forth his tiny fist to grasp the bright toy. He soon begins to ask the questions of "What?" "Where?" and "Why?"

The youth is continually thirsting for more knowledge. He has solved the simpler problems of his childhood days, but still he is not satisfied. His eyes sparkle, his cheeks glow, and his heart beats faster as he leans forward to catch the words of an eloquent speaker. He is still unconsciously trying to answer the questions of his babyhood days, "What?" "Where?" and "Why?" Will there ever come a time in his life when he will be fully satisfied; when he can take the good and bad the "gods" provide, ask no questions, and feel no curiosity to know? Can he hope for rest this side of the grave, or will this phantom of unrest follow him, remorselessly dogging his footsteps by day, and hovering over his couch by night, until his mind and body is racked with a consuming fever, and he longs to "die and end it all?"

Let us ask that gray-haired preacher. He has had experience and looks as though he had solved the problem of life, at least to his

own satisfaction. He hesitates not a second. With a superior smile he answers, "I have gone over the same ground as the youth you mention. I know just how it is. There is only one way—leave it all with Jesus. Don't try to pry into things you should not know. If we knew everything, my dear brother, don't you see we would know as much as God himself." That is all. Strange isn't it? But we are not satisfied. This looks to us like mental suicide, and we believe that death would be almost preferable to the remedy advised by our preacher, who is certainly dead in his superstition.

We consult another, and find that he believes in "predestination." He believes a great God above made each living thing on earth for a certain special purpose. Our life has been fore-ordained, and we cannot change it one hair's breadth. What is to be will be. The assassin works out the mission God has given him, just as surely as the saint and all work for the glory of God. We turn away disheartened, and murmur "Moral suicide!"

We are saved from despair at last by the philosopher. He teaches us that all things are a product of evolution. All good and all evil in the world are simply effects brought about by certain causes. In order to bring about reforms we must seek the cause of evil and lessen it; seek the cause of good and multiply it. Studying along this line, we find that life indeed is good and beautiful. We find ourselves growing mentally and morally stronger; existence is made not only bearable, but enjoyable. Verily, all things are possible to man. O, youth! O, preacher! O, friends! Here, with the philosopher, we find our answer: Evolution!

CAUSE OF RUSKIN COLONY'S FAILURE.

The Truthseeker of the 12th inst. comments on the failure of the Ruskin Co-operative Colony in such a manner as to convey the idea to us that the Macdonalds have but little objection to free love and anarchy while they belittle the idea of co-operation. We believe the failure of the colony has been what the Truthseeker states one of its ex-members declares it to be:

"The failure was not commercial. The association was perfectly solvent. It had always discounted all its bills, and was rated A1 at Bradstreets. The cause of the trouble was the dissatisfaction of less than a dozen members. These people attempted to disseminate the doctrines of Anarchy and Freeloze, but were prevented by the remaining two hundred, who stood firmly for law, order, and morality."

When free lovers and anarchists begin to show themselves, people who believe in homes and good government begin to move out, and finally the society falls of its own weight, for those who do not believe

in nor practice good government nor home building cannot succeed in such an undertaking.

The experience of Liberals who have tried hard to organize and thus rapidly convert the world to Freethought, have always been defeated by this impudent element in our ranks, who care more for their own little, nasty creeds than for the main issue. As we have said before, there are Freethinkers and Freethinkers, and we must learn to classify and work accordingly, or our work will move at a snail's pace. We must educate!

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVORERS.

There is a vast army of Christian Endeavorers. In fact, all Christians who are honest, and not in the church as a business proposition, are only endeavorers. They are trying hard to believe that which is unreasonable, because they have been taught that to even doubt the miracles and doctrines of their supposed savior is a sin. They therefore try hard to stop up their minds against every argument; pray their God's forgiveness if a stray ray of light happens to come upon them unawares, and promptly drop, as they would a red-hot iron, every book or paper that combats the old theories of their holy directory. This leaves the young, active minds of the brightest endeavorers in a most pitiable condition, and the only refuge is found in smothering all aggressive thought and substituting, therefore, only light, frivolous gossip, repartee, and silly attempts at happiness, instead of that free, natural happiness that comes to those whose minds are unfettered by superstition.

As a society, the Christian Endeavor, and other kindred societies such as the Epworth League, the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A., are great factors in building up the Christian churches. The obligations are just enough to keep the young men and the young women from asserting any ideas of their own, thus preventing them from doing any very valuable work, or making any valuable discoveries for Science, the true savior of man.

In nearly every State school throughout our land, the Christian societies are not only allowed but encouraged, advertized, and aided with public money. Non-Christian people are in the majority, or, at least, there is a very respectable minority, and why should we be forced to help support these institutions, which are not only absurd to us but absolutely of a very pernicious character? Freethinkers must organize similar societies in the name of Secularism, and then we must force the schools to recognize us. If we pay taxes to support schools, we should see to it that our ideas have a fair chance with those who think that "Jesus is the way." Young men's and young women's Freethought associations have just as much right to be recognized in our State schools as have the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, but people will never have their rights until they are bold enough and united enough to demand them. We must educate!