

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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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, SEPT. 7, E. M. 299.

THE WRONG NOTIONS OF REFORMERS.

It is very evident to every Free-thinker that many who have an honest desire to do good, do not know the best methods to accomplish the reforms in which they are sincerely interested. In fact, many would-be reformers do more harm than good by their lack of knowledge and their lack of judgment in applying their forces. Even in country places there is poverty, superstition, ignorance, and crime, and many of the large cities are just boiling over with that which makes our race a herd of miserable wretches instead of a happy united people.

Now the great majority of so-called reformers of the past, and, notably, the Salvationists of our own time, expend very much of their force in trying to reform those whose characters are perfect wrecks, rather than using the preventive methods that are sure, safe and always satisfactory. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is no exaggeration, and if the reader wishes to do good in the world, we advise him or her to lose no mental, physical, or financial power in trying to heal the incurables, while there is so much to do to prevent more incurables being produced.

It is far better to attend carefully to the new ships of character being built than to spend our energies in raising the old hulks of shipwrecked men and women, who, when raised, will be far from seaworthy, and, unless eternally buoyed up, will, to the disgust of the

divers, sink again to the muddy bottom of social impurity. We do not wish to advocate the idea that those who have sunken low in the scale of degradation cannot reform and do much good in the world. They can, and if we can say or do anything to make their reform more rapid or certain we should certainly do so; but in trying to reform wretched characters people often place themselves in the position of dictators, and the victim then acts in the capacity of an underling or ignoramus, and this condition is against all ideas of true reform. In order to be reformed, one who has made mistakes must have the desire and the strength to overcome evil under all circumstances, or soon he will lapse back into old habits.

The place to purify the stream of human character is at its source and not at its mouth. To eternally stand at the mouth of this stream and try to purify, lift up and correct the evil that has been born and bred into the men and women of our time, and neglect the evil conditions that are polluting the fountain-head of the stream, is sheer nonsense. We need to teach the young more about themselves. When they are taught self-respect, self-control, and independence, the Salvationist's work of preparing poor ship-wrecked wretches to be ushered into the golden city, burdened with golden harps and golden crowns, will pass away, and the golden age of reform will be upon the world.

The Liberal University promises to be one of the greatest factors in the noble work of true reform.

FEASTING ON THE HONEY.

A young man who is traveling in the interests of Jesus and his salvation, made Silverton a call last Friday evening. The occasion was quite a treat to the believers present, but it might be said that "the timbrel, the pipe and wine were in their feast, yet they regarded not the works" of Common Sense. The whole performance was so full of erroneous ideas that one is at a loss to know how to point out the mistakes without repeating it all, but we wish to call the attention of our readers to only one very common error of these god people. Part of their music was good, but the words which accompanied it were very foolish and misleading to those who are at the danger point in their religious experience. For example, the young man who led the meeting taught the audience the following little song:

Feasting on the milk and the honey and the wine,
Feasting on the milk and the honey and the wine,
Feasting on the milk and the honey and the wine,
See God feed his lambs!

It was explained that those who

eat the honey of God's word can be good natured three hundred and sixty-five days in a year. Quite an excitement was aroused and it did not take long for the congregation to learn the simple melody, and we have no doubt that several felt like real sheep feasting on a diet that would kill a billy goat.

But such is the power of salvation (excitement) that everything reasonable is abandoned and the child of God becomes a fool for Christ's sake. We would like to have whispered to every Christian present that people who never believed in God nor Jesus nor anything supernatural can be good natured every day in the year, fully as well as those who believe most.

How full of contradictions is the religion of Jesus! "Feasting on the wine" was sung over and over, and yet in his lecture the young salvationist condemned the use of intoxicants. Of course we understand that wine is used typically, but why use it thus? If it biteth like a serpent, as they say it does, it would be about as sensible to sing, feasting on the snakes. If milk and honey could represent truth and happiness, and the word wine could be changed to some good word to represent knowledge, wisdom, purity, or some other good quality, there might be some sense in singing the little verse after changing the line referring to God and his lambs to something with some meaning in it. But we must be satisfied with the gains we are making. The foolish demonstrations of "the power" of fifty years ago is now confined to the very low and ignorant classes, and as it is "hard spoiling rotten eggs", we Secularists will work hard to bring about conditions that will not need the salvation of a god and let the salvationists swell their ranks from the army whose character is beyond earthly redemption, and who, for the sake of board and lodging, would consent to eat the flesh and drink the blood of "any old thing".

THE STOCK COMPANY.

At last the requisite ten thousand dollars has been subscribed, the papers of incorporation have been filed and some of the subscribed stock already paid in. Every act of the incorporators and prospective stockholders has been carefully performed according to the best legal advice obtainable, and we now feel that our school is on the road to unlimited success.

Space forbids giving the articles of incorporation in full, but perhaps the parts which interest us most and make our school "the only one of the kind in the world" are as follows:

Article II., section 3.—But the existence of this Corporation and of

its said University, and the power and right thereof to exercise or do any act for the attainment of any of the objects, pursuits and purposes as aforesaid, are conditioned and dependent upon this provision and condition, to wit:—That all the education, or courses of education, instruction, art and culture shall be conducted and kept forever free from, and uninfluenced by any kind or form of Theology, Sectarian religion or supernaturalism, Christian or other, and that no religious creeds, catechisms, dogmas, public prayers, masses, sacraments, incantations or religious exercises shall ever be allowed upon its property or premises under its control, or be used or connected in any way with any of its discipline, courses of study or functions of any kind, except for the purpose of historical exposition or illustration; but the main purpose shall be in regard to religious matters and culture, to replace all of the said past phases of religion by the universal religion of Liberty, Science, and Humanity.

Article VIII., section 1.—The said Directors shall have the power to exercise all of the rights, duties and functions of similar officers under the laws of said State; they shall make and adopt the by-laws, rules and regulations of this Corporation and of its University, to be followed and obeyed by all of the Faculty, Students or persons connected therewith; they shall elect its faculty of instruction, and support the same effectually, so as to attain the said objects and purposes to the highest degree practicable; and to that end they shall be vested with, and manage all of its property and affairs as they may judge best for its welfare, but they shall not remove any President or Professor against the unanimous vote of the Faculty, nor dispose of, nor incur any of its real property or proceeds thereof, except with the approval of a majority of its stock-holders in number and amount. And also no stockholder, Director, Trustee, President, Professor, Teacher or officer of any kind, shall have the power to lessen or circumvent in any way the thorough exclusion of all Theology, religious creeds, dogmas and exercises as above provided; and any rule, motion or action having that effect or tendency, shall be wholly void and of none effect.

Now if we all remember to be pure, prompt and progressive, we can do for the world what Christianity never can do. We need help of every kind. No institution of the calibre that we propose to make the Liberal University can possibly succeed without much sacrifice on the part of its promoters. The Freethinkers must build this institution, for the Christians will not build on such advanced ground for ages to come; in fact, when they do they will not be Christian. We must do this work or it will not be done, and the world will plod along in the ooze and quicksands of destroying ignorance and superstition. We are now on a perfectly solid foundation, with the very best talent and support the Freethought ranks can afford, and we invite the hearty sympathy and co-operation of every lover of truth, progress and righteousness.