

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, OCT. 26, E. M. 299.

LIBERTY, NOT SLAVERY.

Freethinkers use the word liberty very much, but we are afraid that there are many who have a very vague idea of what liberty really is.

We hold that whenever we do that which is detrimental to others we rob them and ourselves of liberty; therefore, in order to have and to promote liberty, we must do no wrong, and must continually seek out and perform the right.

Whatever hinders our individual growth, mental, moral or physical, is wrong; therefore every habit, every practice, every thought should be examined by the lover of liberty and tried by his highest tribunal—reason—and dismissed as innocent or condemned by his chief justice of judgment to eternal banishment.

Liberty is not the individual gratification of one's appetites, passions and whims. In the social state no one can be a law unto himself and not rob others of their rights, and as soon as robbery begins, then all lose a portion of their liberty. In the home, the school and the state every evil thought and evil deed is a blow at one's own and his fellow's freedom. It is not a weakling's fault that he is weak, but his weakness causes all to lose a portion of strength in supplying what he lacks and losing what he might have furnished to the general fund of prosperity.

Jesus Christ is not "the way, the truth and the life." The only way to salvation is through real liberty, which can only come to us by doing right, which wrongs no man. To be sure, a robber of liberty must

be "held up," and the weapon called truth must be used, and we should all become sharpshooters.

To those who have become experts in finding and using the truth against slavery, are we indebted for the great degree of liberty that we have today. The light that must lead us on liberty's way and give us knowledge to wield our mighty weapon against every enemy of our race is reason, which will grow brighter and brighter as the way and the truth is better known.

It is very much to the interest of all that every one does right. Come and take a glimpse into the home where all are happy in a splendid liberty. What do we find? All do right. If one child does wrong then all suffer. It is true also of the school. One wrong action of a student engages the thought of the teacher and all the other students are at once robbed of their liberty and their rights. This is also true of a nation; and we, the people of the United States, are suffering much loss this moment on account of the many individual citizens doing that which they in their ignorance think will be an advantage to their own selfish selves.

To lessen the wrong and promote the right is the only true religion, and, as Secularists, we must not be narrow workers. We must understand that giving alms is not as good a thing as helping to bring about conditions in which almsgiving will not be necessary, and that working for the liberty of an individual or a class is not as good as working for the liberty of the whole world now and in the years to come—a condition in which it will not be necessary to give anyone freedom or even to think of it; for when once possessed it will not be necessary to seek it farther, any more than one searches for water when plenty is at hand; but when we possess liberty—real, true liberty—we can then use it to build up the grand future heaven, of which the true prophets of good have so often prophesied, and by whose pearly streams and crystal fountains of happiness, those who possess our souls of truthful thoughts may bask in the sunshine of love and liberty.

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

A Christian lady remarked the other day that she rather go to church than to our lecture hall, because we offered her nothing in the future. The kind lady did not realize that being offered a thing and being able to get it are two different things. We might offer her the fountain of immortal youth, that old Ponce de Leon tried so hard to find, and she would be about as liable to get it as she will the "silver streams and crystal fountains" sung about at her

church. And then, after all, do we not offer more and give more than the orthodox preachers do? We teach what we do know. We know as much about the Bible, about God and the angels and about heaven as they do; yet we are too honest to "offer" that which we do not and cannot possess.

We offer the sublime truths of science; they offer the ignorant, damaging falsehoods of theology. But the greatest idea for our Christian friend to think about is that our doctrine of heaven on earth for human beings is far superior and will make her more happy than the orthodox heaven idea. If it were possible for heaven to exist, how wrong it would be to selfishly work for its golden treasures and neglect the improvements of this earthly home to which millions of little travelers will arrive yearly, ages and ages after we have left its shores. And, unconsciously, the victim of this selfish idea of heaven becomes all wrapped up in self, and like a miser with his gold, he becomes so hardened that it matters not to his narrow, stunted mind whether millions are lost or not. He is going to heaven; glory to God! He shouts: "I am saved to the uttermost! Halleluia! Jesus is mine! Glory be to the Lamb!" All this is the quintessence of selfishness, and one of the awful results of trusting in faith instead of reason.

Come, dear lady, to the fountain of eternal truth. Wash and be made spotless. Do not try to "dump all your sins on to Jesus." But be sure to FORSAKE them, and come into the Secular ranks prepared to let your light so shine among men (and women) that others may see your GOOD WORKS and glorify humanity on earth.

FINANCES.

We are now working in the new building, but it is far from being finished, and, although it seems necessary to finish it, we dare not go much farther until we settle up our accounts and get more money. Our expenses for the last few months, when compared with the income, has been enormous, and we have reached a point where we must stop and "gather up the slack."

We have had splendid success this year in every way, but now much of our success will be lost unless we can follow up our work and finish it. The fact in the case is that we are a little in debt and want money enough to pay up and complete the building. If each Liberal in the country can spare 5 cents toward completing this Free-thought fort, we'll see that it's finished in good style and our guns trained on the enemy.

Now that we have a full corps of instructors and an ever-increasing

number of students, all we need is a chance to teach without being embarrassed by creditors and worried about how to get money enough "to keep it up" until the school is large enough to be self-supporting.

Let's cover up this institution with money just once, and "astonish the natives." If we can't spare a thousand dollars, let's put in what we can spare, if it isn't more than a "widow's mite." All doing a little will accomplish wonders. "Go(o)d loveth a cheerful giver," and much good may be accomplished if we will all cheerfully give, "and pray (to our neighbors) without ceasing."

REASON VS. FEELINGS.

We once said to a young minister: "You do not know that there is a god, and why do you teach it as a fact." A bright light came into his dreamy eyes as he replied: "I do know that there is a god;" and, as he pointed to his sternum bone, he continued: "I feel it here, and I know that my redeemer lives as well as if I had seen him and felt the prints in his hands and thrust my hand into his side." Of course it is hard to reason with people who have such wonderful feelings, but hoping to help some who are not quite so far along with the feeling disease, "let us reason a bit," as an Englishman would say.

If some one would tell us that there is a piano in a certain house in Silverton, and if, after searching every room carefully, we could not find it, would we not be justified in saying that no piano is in the house? Now, thousands and millions of people, both those who are in favor of finding a god and those who see no use for such a creature, have searched everywhere possible for this everywhere-present god and no one can find him. The microscope, the telescope and all the wonderful eyes of science fail to reveal any traces of such a thing.

For a searcher to say he feels that there is a god somewhere is equal to the searcher for the piano to say he feels certain that it is in the house. It might be a thing much to be desired by some, but there is no such thing as a god, which is proven by the utter lack of proof that there is. Men and women are the highest, the noblest, the wisest beings in the universe of which we have any knowledge, and we should turn our love and adoration from the mythical spooks, which some think they feel, to the highest, the noblest and the best. Let us serve Humanity.

In this age of progress it is impossible for Christianity to stand still. It must progress or die; and when it has outgrown its old skin of myth it may as well be called by a new name—Secularism.