

Thanksgiving Home Festival of Joy.

Concluded from 3d page.

University, the grand department of SOCIOLOGY—the human domain, where used to prevail the gods of war, of battles and of nations—how is it now? The science of Sociology has within our own century, almost within our own days, replaced “divine guidance,” except as an excuse for aggression and robbery, by a Science of History and of Social Evolution and Progress. It is proved that MAN, individual, social, political, is the only PROVIDENCE of Man. Surely the Family of Nations and Peoples, as soon as their despot-gods are off their souls, will make this HUMAN PROVIDENCE the crowning glory of our race. There is no more room for spook-gods in Sociology than there was in Cosmology or Biology, indeed it may be said of them all:

Diis extinctis, deoque, successit Humanitas.
The gods being extinct, and God—Humanity—succeeds.

And next comes the question is there any use, sense and propriety in putting “up fervent prayers and thanksgiving” to this new Human Providence, in any or all of its forms—from the prattling child up, through the family, town, city, country, State, Republic, to Humanity in its final Congress of Nations. The Science of Sociology answers in the affirmative, because it finds that man, individually, and in all of the forms of his collectivity, is the only TELIC BEING known—the only being who can and does control future ends, objects and events by the intervention of his own will and power of changing intermediate events. He only can effect “final” or future (Greek, Telos) causes by his wilful manipulation of present causes. That is what TELIC and TELESIS means; and as they are useful words in our Science, you might as well put them down in your memory with Altruism, Socius, and Sociology itself as necessary additions to our language made by that Science.

The poet Goethe adumbrated this in Pindaric form more than a hundred years ago; and Shelley, in “The Hymn of Apollo,” made THE HUMAN the only intelligent eye and voice of the Universe, in words too true and relevant to omit:

I am the eye with which the Universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
All light of Art or Nature; to my song
Victory and praise in their own right
belong!

This was written as poetry but it is Science now. The praise and prayer which the President wishes us to give to a spook or to a world infinitely above human distinctions, are a part of the victory and praise which in their own right and nature belong to Humanity and to Humanity only. The President by

assuming otherwise makes “God” a partner with him in his present administration. With an amusing innocence(?) he goes over the great things he and God have done together, and wishes to praise God for what man has done, and to pray to God to continue the same divine guidance. Just glance through his Proclamation schedule and see how he has his thanks wholly misapplied. In every sentence God stands in the place of Man—thus:

1. “No great pestilence has invaded our shores.” But it was on our borders, and is there now. What keeps it back but MAN’s science and sanitation?

2. “Liberal employment waits on labor.” The fact is not so, but so far as it is true, what but MAN’s providence provides it?

3. “Abundant crops rewarded the husbandman.” Not so. Frost ruined the fruit, and mildew the hops, and the price of wheat is below the cost of raising it, and this fertile valley is desolated by the president’s “god”, with nothing but Man’s helpfulness and the forbearance of creditors to enable us to live through.

Well! the President gives us thirteen more items where he and “God” have done great things for us? But it would be tiresome to carry this solemn but absurd joke further. Where not wholly untrue, it is ridiculously partisan and humiliating. The president knows perfectly well that no god had anything to do with these things, and that the whole business is a hypocritical pretense to shoulder his failures upon “God,” while he makes an ostentatious flourish of the glorious results of “divine guidance”, which we can only hope to have “continued” by his own and God’s re-election. “God reigns”, wired Senator Hanna to the president when the bribed senate of Ohio made them triumphant. But if the people should relieve them both of public office, then who would reign—God or the —?

This proclamation ought to satisfy every man of common sense that it should be the last. Jefferson was right: honor the custom by breach instead of observance. If the uniformity of a general Thanksgiving and Harvest Festival is desirable, let it be secured, the same as any other public holiday, by a GENERAL LAW fixing the last Thursday of November as a legal holiday for that purpose—and drop this wholly unauthorized, absurd, half theological, half partisan proclamation business forever!

Would it be well to have any such general and secular holiday? Much can be said pro and con. As social and constructive Liberals, many would be inclined to vote, Aye!

First: All Liberals have the best reason in the world to rejoice

and be glad. Glad that the old Nightmare of Theology is gone and that they are out in the clear! That the old “firmament” of heaven has been broken up by the telescope; and that it, and most of its consequences, have disappeared. Never can we be too glad that we live in an Infinite World! That fact of INFINITY is the only guarantee of perfect mental liberty and boundless aspiration. Yes, we ought to have some one day when we can rejoice TOGETHER that the firmament is gone, and that, standing out in the clear as Nature’s children, we inherit infinite liberty.

Second: Then next, we know that this liberty is the consequence of the infinite and immutable Laws of Correlation upon which we stand and by which we exist. We can not pray because they make us secure—the very idea of a world or of a god of caprice, vain-glory and fickleness is gone forever. We know whereon we stand and what we can do, and that, because of these immutable laws of the Cosmos, “the traces of our Earth days can not be lost in the depths of the ages”.

Third: We know that we are the inheritors of a mighty HUMANITY that has lived, suffered and died through a past beyond the records of History.

Fourth: Then as such inheritors we need a Common Festival to express a common joy by gratitude for all this past; and because the past is past, never to be present as a sentient continuity, those who are present in SOLIDARITY, are their representatives. How can we fail to so recognize, and to recognize ourselves, as the heirs of a glory past, and the builders of and transition-life to the greater glory of the earthly paradise to come! When therefore, the shades of the winter days—the colder, shorter days—begin to settle down upon us, our age and generation, more than any that has ever existed, has need of and use for all really human festivals, and these are already fixed:

THANKSGIVING, the harvest and HOME FESTIVAL of joy, gratitude and reconciliation—how, can that be spared?

Then CHRISTMAS, the FESTIVAL OF CHILDREN, marks the winter solstice-birth of the new Sun, and the promise to all of new life and hope. As long as children come that must be, though Santa Claus has gone?

Then the NEW YEAR, the first moon change after the winter solstice. The FESTIVAL OF HUMANITY the world over. All nations and peoples must be made more and more one in heart by that!

These festivals have been made epochs of joy and union by the human race through ages beyond memory. Because they have been tarnished or abused by superstitions, is no reason why they should be lost, any more than a precious

but tarnished coin or jewel. The use and therefore the reason for the existence of these celebrations can not but be greater as the feelings and interests of Humanity are enlarged by the evolution of the grander life of our species.

Let us then as social and constructive Liberals welcome this ingathering Home Festival of joy! It is the resultant, nay, a very part of the laws, processes and consequents of Nature; let us demand that instead of being dependent upon sad and degrading superstition and dubious Proclamations, it be made a regular Holiday AND Holyday of the land—the ever-enduring Festival of the Home!—an acquisition of our people forever! It will be a needed memorial of our past, from the old colony days down—the primitive rural ingathering of the “foison plenty”—the fruits, grains and flocks of summer under the threats of winter to be thus warded off!

It should be, also, the season of the social “Peace Offering”, when all family and other differences should be dropped as we join in the higher feelings evoked by Home, and Children, Country, and Humanity.

Thus sustained by an Infinite World; enlightened and emancipated by Science; cheered by the past progress and the future hopes of our race; warmed by the glow and love around the domestic hearth, though the superstition of the old prophet has gone, let us cherish and hold among “the immeasurable blessings of conscious existence” our aspiration for a life that will ensure every year throughout the land “joy and gladness, Thanksgiving, and the voice of melody!”

HONEST FREETHOUGHT.

Perhaps the best Freethought periodical in the world is published at 213, E. Indiana St., Chicago, Ill. Its name is the Freethought Magazine. The December number which reached us last week is loaded with thoughts that are free and full of truth and wisdom. Its editor Mr. H. L. Green, stands squarely on the principles of ethical, progressive Secularism, and instead of being jealous of others who enter the same field he does all he can to promote their work. This shows that the words he speaks are no empty words but are born of honesty of thought and purpose. We hope every one who can will take the Freethought Magazine, for we know by experience that it gives more than value received.

Remember, if you send us the names and addresses of 25 of your Liberal friends and acquaintances, we will make you a present of a copy of the Torch of Reason Song Book No. 2. This will only cost you a few minutes’ work and a two-cent stamp.