

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, JAN. 25, E. M. 300.

SECULAR CHURCHES AND SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Several friends have written in regard to the organization of Secular churches and Sunday schools, and we therefore think best to talk to all through the Torch.

There was a Secular church here in Silverton, but no very active work, outside of entertainment, was ever accomplished on account of the impossibility of doing anything when there is nothing to do but to tear down, as is the case where iconoclastic rather than constructive workers are in the majority. The progressive workers here at last gave up for the time being, and of course the "off element" did nothing as usual and the church stopped. But the Thought Exchange has taken its place and it is proving a very good substitute for the time being, and when we get the University work a little farther along we intend to organize a better church and Sunday school than ever.

There should be organizers placed in the field at once to organize these churches and Sunday schools, and instead of letting everybody join who has a dollar they should only solicit those as members who are known to be of the best Secular and moral timber. In nearly every community there are a few of the older citizens who are of this description and many of the younger ones who can very easily be shown the beauties of the true, common-sense religion of Humanity. If we were able we would have men and women in the field at once, and

these workers would be such men and women as all might be proud of, and the work would simply astonish the world. The rules of these churches must be very strict. We have catered to the weaklings and to their weaknesses long enough. Science must be our guide and savior, and what Science says we must obey if we wish to succeed. From a business point of view as well as from every other point of view, this is the only way. The Freethought work has poorly succeeded heretofore, on account of there being no guide, no aim, and no unity of action.

The establishment of the Liberal University marks an epoch in the history of Freethought. It means a scientific, definite plan and a definite understanding. It means the education of workers along this definite plan which means the conversion of the world to higher and better things. We must not be understood as meaning that this definite plan means any creed that is unalterably fixed nor that it doesn't provide for the highest and broadest expansion. Science always provides for growth, but the beauty of her work is that it is definite.

There are now several Secular unions, churches and Sunday schools but there is as yet no plan. Each organization is left to its own resources, and if the leaders are "spiritually" weak the organization is thus colored, and soon becomes far from Secular, or dies for want of something to do. Now we must get a plan, and the right plan, and make a start before we can accomplish much. Personally we have a plan which we are positive in our own mind is the right one, and the only one that will ever succeed. The Liberal University and Torch of Reason is the first step in this plan, and time is proving the first step a great success. That we of this generation may live to see the plan completed and working its scientific "miracles" for humanity, and that we may at least be satisfied that at some future time this planet will be owned by man instead of by the gods and their imps, ought to be the earnest working desire of every liberated man and woman in the world.

CAPACITY IS WEALTH.

To appreciate the things around us is certainly wealth. No man or woman can possibly be happy, it matters not how much gold, or lands or mining stock they possess, unless they are in sympathy, in touch with nature and its cap-sheaf, humanity. How poor is the rich man or woman who thinks he or she is poor. We have seen many who possessed thousands of dollars and much property, who are poorer than many who own naught but a contented yet progressive mind. Capacity to enjoy one's work and

to appreciate one's surroundings and advantages, and power of doing good, are certainly the true test of wealth; and this we can all have if we will only learn how.

Secular education will give us the broadest view of life of which we are capable. Instead of accounting for the causes of good and evil by supposing that there is a god ruling the one and a devil ruling the other, it gets down into the true causes of things and thus broadens and gives capacity to enjoy. This is true wealth, and those who are struggling to possess the other kind are on the road that leads to the most abject poverty. Life is short, yet it is long enough to do a great work for the future men and women who are soon to land on the shores of this heaven or hell that we are preparing for them.

In the fabled account of God's work of creation, the happiest time of his life must have been when he was working day by day and saw that "it was good," and the climax of his happiness must have been reached when he had finished and said to himself, "it is good." But what sorrow he must have experienced when he saw that he had not eaten sufficient of the "tree of knowledge" himself, and that his work after all was a failure.

We must eat of the tree, and become wiser than the gods of old. We must build a garden of Eden and be wise enough not to forbid the little Adams and Eves to eat of the fruits of Science, the real tree of knowledge. We must be Saint Patricks and banish all the subtle serpents.

And in the future, when our voices, echoing down through the ages in our works and perhaps in the records of human progress, call to the free and happy inhabitants of the garden, they will not hide themselves nor fear the proclamation of a curse.

THE REFORM OF REFORMS

The reason we are publishing the Torch of Reason and building the Liberal University, and the reason we are confining our life work to the reform which they represent, is because we consider it the greatest of reforms. Spookism is the tap-root of all the evils in the world. If we can destroy the supernatural trash the churches are teaching, we can soon bring about other needed reforms; but as long as the people of the world are groping around in the darkness of ignorance and dodging this way and that trying to avoid the clutches of the evil spooks and to secure the assistance of the good ones, nothing can be done. A more ridiculous condition than the present could not be imagined. This planet is yet a kindergarten and some of the children have very crude notions. Science is the trained teacher, and those

who have listened to her instructions and played with her "gifts" cannot help but pity the little heathen children who have come up under the false teachings of the old superstitious medicine-men, or been left without any instruction to ignorance and any chance empirical notion with which they might drift in contact.

But our work of destroying these false religious notions must go hand in hand with the great work of organizing; and perhaps it is true, as many of our best workers believe, that the most of our strength should now be used in constructive work, and thus naturally crowd out the old creeds. The ground has been pretty well broken up. There are many Liberals and liberal books in the world, and the thing to do now is to BUILD ON and CULTIVATE the ground that has been cleared or it will grow up to weeds and be as bad or worse than before. Thus our own reform of liberating the slaves of superstition now needs to be reformed and constructive, educational, moral Secularism is the only reform that can reform it. And so while we say Luo! Luo! we must remember that to set the slaves of superstition free without helping them to know how to use their liberty aright, is only making a bad matter worse.

Luo! Dirigo! We MUST set free and we MUST guide!

GOD VS. GOD.

One of the greatest battles that has ever been fought on the bloody field of superstition is now in progress. It is the fight between the personal, man-like god and the spiritual, intellectual-force monster, who is now throwing up his earth-works in the minds of many. But there is no proof whatever—absolutely none—that there is any higher intelligence than man. One force of nature is no more a god than any other. The word god is an unscientific term which must finally be cast into the waste-basket of the ages along with ghost, devil, witch, miracle and angel. Some of the forces in nature and the matter which they control are imperfectly understood, because of our limited powers, but that which we do not understand is as simple as that which we do understand, and there is no god nor trace of a god of any kind to be found anywhere. The spirit-god idea is as false and absurd as the personal god idea, and perhaps more productive of evil. At present the old anthropomorphic god has a great following among people who are grossly ignorant of the laws of nature. But his last battle with his rival spook is on and will continue until the masses begin to touch the hem of the beautiful, shining garment of Science.

But when all men have partaken of the true sacramental feast—when they have eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of Science, even the Unitarian god will droop and die, and man at last be crowned king of kings and lord of lords.