

Torch of Reason

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SEEK THE TRUTH.

Jesus Christ is represented as saying, "Seek and ye shall find." This is good doctrine if applied to the search for truth and right, but it is against the foolish faith of every orthodox man and woman in the world. Orthodoxy says, "Have faith and ye shall be made whole"; and instead of searching for the truth, it searches for that which will strengthen its faith. Thus credulity is born into the minds of helpless babes, and thus our world that should be filled with life and light is overflowing with death and darkness.

Paul Carus says that the principles of the Religion of Science are as follows:

First, to enquire after the truth ("Seek and ye shall find"); second, to accept the truth; third, to reject what is untrue; fourth, to trust in truth; and, fifth, to live the truth.

These principles are certainly true ones, but how different are they from the advice of priests and preachers and their holy book. The Lord, who is supposed to have written the Bible and inspired the preachers, seems to be selfish like those whom he has called, and wants the people to waste their time trying to find him, instead of searching for truth.

It is amusing and instructive to find what the ancient ignoramuses who wrote the Bible advise their dupes to seek after. Out of about ninety passages in this ancient book that speak of "seeking" for things, there is only one that

speaks of seeking for truth, and it is as follows:

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it."—[Jer. 5:1.

In order to appreciate the idiotic ravings of this prophet Jeremiah, one should read the whole chapter, but perhaps it is enough to say here that truth seems to mean to those who have use for a god, nothing but absolute submission to the priest or prophet.

There are four other places where something akin to truth is mentioned. In Is. 1:17 it says: "Learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Taken alone, this seems like a gem of advice, but as it is mixed with threats, lamentations and complaints to force the people into an unnatural service, which is its only object, we see that it is not unselfishly given for the good of the people, but for the sake of getting control.

In Eccl. 1:13; 7:25, the search for wisdom seems to have a bad effect on the old preacher, and when we consider the preacher's habits we do not wonder that his search was a failure. "And I gave my heart to search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. . . . behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." This is a very bad doctrine, for when thoroughly believed it makes its victims cease searching for anything. These words of the said-to-be wisest of men have probably prevented progress more than any other words that were ever printed. All is not vanity and vexation of spirit to those who will seek the truth and live it after they have found it.

But the climax is reached when in 1 Cor. 1:22, we find Paul, the woman-hater, expressing his contempt for the Jews (who were formerly God's pet people) and the Greeks for seeking after proof and wisdom. "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness."

So we see all through that real truth and wisdom is set aside for belief, faith, and the weak and foolish things of the world. The many other passages where we are advised by this "holy word" to seek after things are devoted to seeking after things that are not the truth. We are told to seek after God and his righteousness, not Good and the righteousness of man. This seeking after God is the burden of the seeking song nearly all the way through and, then as now, seeking

after God meant joining the church and doing as "God's anointed" told us to do or be damned. Even the opening quotation of this article, "Seek and ye shall find," turns out to mean to seek for a ghost spook instead of seeking for the truth. Soon after uttering the words, Jesus is represented as curing a deaf man by casting out a devil. Physicians have long since abandoned this method, and many of the best in our land believe that instead of casting out a devil, he (or the inspired(?) writer) cast in a devil, and a black one it has proved to be, for it has sent the people off after gods, angels and ghosts and prevented the best and noblest of earth from seeking and finding that which the world most needs. Let us now seek the truth!

A SPIRITUAL POT OF GOLD.

Every teacher finds students who have much difficulty in getting their problems. Careful investigation always shows that some one little principle or method is not understood, and that whenever that particular thing is involved the student is embarrassed, puzzled, becomes discouraged and fails. If it is an essential and much-used principle there is much difficulty, and unless his mistake is corrected and he is taught the truth his progress is checked if not entirely stopped. Thus it is with our lives. If we do not base our work on the solid foundations of true principles it will be a failure. Does this not answer the oft asked question, "What harm, even if it is not true, does it do to believe in a future life?" If a future state of existence is not true, and we go all through life with a lie in our minds, how many other mistakes and what degree of failure it may produce, is impossible to tell unless we have the power to strike a balance between all the true and false notions and consequent actions of our lives. That it is desirable to believe in an egoistic future state of spiritual existence to make us better or happier as individuals or as a people is only determined by the question, "Is it true?" One lie or false idea leads to others, and the nearer ALL TRUTH we can get, and the sooner we learn to be happily in harmony with all truth, the sooner will the truth make us free and happy.

Suppose one sets out to win a fortune. He may be strong, industrious, and economical and in every way excepting one well equipped for the struggle; but if he is credulous, ignorant of natural laws, and believes the old story about a pot of gold at the end of the rain-bow, what will be the immediate and ultimate effect? If thoroughly converted to the idea he will neglect his work and run

after the end of each rain-bow that appears. Securing a fortune by steady, legitimate methods will become harder, because less interesting. The many disappointments that are certain to come will have a bad effect on the disposition, and the fortune and all the good for which it was to be used will be lost and the word before "finis" in the book of life will be FAILURE!

Life to the great majority is a failure, for men and women, guided by false ideas, are yet running after rain-bow notions, or drifting derelict upon the sea of life.

To stop all this, to make the life of all a success and thus save the world from its corruption, ought to be the earnest desire of every intelligent man and woman of the world. We must learn to base all our mental and physical labors on the known and demonstrable truths of Science. The inherited weaknesses and unnatural longings of material or spiritual treasure must be conquered. We must learn, when excited by grief or other strong emotions, to avoid the unbalanced condition of mind that always comes from long and continuous longings for that which in our normal condition is absurd. Let our love for Humanity teach us to unselfishly live and labor for the good of all.

WHY WE WILL SUCCEED.

It is said of Voltaire that "he conquered violence by a smile, despotism by sarcasm, infallibility by irony, obstinacy by perseverance, ignorance by truth." In our time there is as much need of men and women who can and will conquer the conscious and unconscious enemies of our race as there were in the times of the American and French Revolutions. Yes, perhaps more need, for we must protect the jewels of truth and liberty that such men as Voltaire and Paine secured for us and wrest from modern tyrants the scepter of their power.

This can only be done by those who learn to smile; by those who secure through education the power of sarcasm and irony; by those whose perseverance is trained by the discipline of labor, and whose faith is built on the proven and assimilated truths of Science, unbiased and unneutralized, instead of upon the mythological blood and righteousness of a foreign prince. And this is why we are building the "only school of its kind in the world." Our success is certain, for those who have the spirit of Bruno, of Voltaire and of Paine are coming to our help, and all the powers of ignorance and superstition can not prevail against an army that can neither be bribed by gold nor frightened by orthodox spooks.