

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

Published Weekly by the Liberal University Company, in the Interests of Constructive, Moral Secularism.

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Entered at the postoffice at Silverton, Oregon, as second-class mail matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

One year, in advance.....	\$1 00
Six months, in advance.....	50
Three months, in advance.....	25
In clubs of five or more, one year, in advance.....	75

Money should be sent by registered letter or money order.

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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, MAR. 1, E. M. 300.

BROAD IS THE WAY.

The reason of so much confusion in the world, lack of unity, in fact all evil comes from mental weakness and the mind's falling short of that comprehension of things necessary for proper action. Mental blindness, in other words, causes men to remain in or run into evil. Our race, when it was young, contracted bad habits, and now that it has reached what we like to consider an adult age it is very hard to shake them off. Among the bad habits of thought which seem altogether too firmly fixed is the habit of selfishness. This habitual thinking of one's own individual pleasure and profit irrespective of others' good, has brought the great majority of mankind into the narrow, individual way of looking at things. There are many who pass as good men and women, and who really suppose that they are good themselves, who do but very little good in the world compared with what they might do if they could only get a broader view of things. Following such mottoes as, "Charity begins at home," they use what power of good they have, trying to cure a few of the mentally diseased, instead of trying to rid the world of the poison which causes the trouble. The work of many so-called reformers is like one who goes about trying to heal the wounds of his friends who have been bitten by serpents that, right before his eyes, are biting other friends as fast as they can. We should kill the serpents first. That is, our work of reform must not be

local, narrow. We must fight to remove the cause of evil, and thus bring perfect salvation to millions, instead of only trying to help a few who have been badly bitten and are mostly beyond our reach, even if they are close by.

We as heartily condemn, or rather deplore, our own weaknesses as we do those of others, for we are all what we are because of our inherited tendencies and their cultivation or suppression by environments beyond our control, and one of our greatest weaknesses in our past experience as a teacher has been the worry over the individual success or failure of students. If the time and mental force which we have expended in worrying over unruly or dull students had been used in making the general conditions of the school better it would have been a great advantage to the unruly, the dull and the progressive students alike, and a saving of mental and physical health to the teacher. We must labor to make conditions right. We must work on principles, and not waste time on the dull and the vicious. If under right conditions a man or woman can not do well, there is no hope for them and time is absolutely wasted in trying to help them. The selfish, individual salvation of Christianity is its weakest point, and if we Secularists succeed it will be because we have the better and broader idea of entirely purifying the stream of life instead of endeavoring to filter each drop while the stream itself is loaded with filth.

Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto the selfish, orthodox heaven, and few there be who will get there; but wide is the gate and broad the new, scientific way that leadeth to the real earthly paradise, and many there will be who will go in thereat.

HOLD THE PICTURE IN THE LIGHT.

In a letter from one who has indeed been a friend to us in need are the following words:

"I see the difficulty of raising funds. If you say you are really hard up, some will think it's hopeless and not want to sink anything in it. If you appear too chipper, they will think you don't need help. If you say, 'Hurrah! we have a new friend who gives \$1000!' then that kind will say, 'My! but they're rich and don't need any more.'"

Our friend has struck the nail fairly on the head. In our anxiety to succeed we want to do just the right thing, but it is very difficult to know just what is for the best, and of course things look sometimes brighter and sometimes darker to us. What we do say through the Torch of Reason must be the truth, but unless the truth can be stated clearly and in its entirety, oftentimes it is better to say nothing, for many, especially those

who are anxious to injure us and our cause, will, if they are given a chance, use our own weapons with which to dash out our brains. Sometimes, therefore, we say nothing on subjects that are very interesting to us and which we believe would interest many of our friends. Our work is no exception to the general law, however. The same anxiety, the same hard work, the same doubt as to success, the same few who doggedly hold the fort—giving their all and receiving their trouble, if nothing worse, for their pains—has ever been the history of progress, science, civilization and humanity. But, ah! what are we saying? Excuse us, we did not mean to make the picture of our work look dark, dear reader. Allow us to put a dash of golden yellow here, a touch of rose there, and then you must hold the picture where the light can strike it properly.

Our school is in better condition than it ever was before; we have many more friends than we had a year ago; a thousand extra copies of the Torch are going out now every month—but ah! perhaps this is enough of the bright coloring. Hold the picture in the light, friend, and if anything seems amiss, please write or call in person and we will explain.

This much is certain, that every worker in the Liberal University movement is in dead earnest and doing all in his or her power to make the grand enterprise a success, and the only thing that can possibly prevent rapid growth and unparalleled results for the good of our race will be the little weight of filthy lucre that is needed with the small income from our young institution to balance the financial scales in our favor. Once let us get our building finished, and then we can and will accommodate enough truth-seeking students to pay our expenses, and our influence will soon be raised to a power that cannot be estimated by those who, with minds biased by superstition or greed, have never held communion with the great god of Secularism—Humanity.

ONE EFFECT OF OUR MISSIONARY WORK.

The thousand extra copies of the Torch which we are sending out every month are beginning to bear good fruit at this early date. Among the good effects that they are producing is the stirring up of many who are so absorbed in their little creed of "Moses and the Lamb" that they haven't yet learned that this is an age of progress, and that to Science we owe everything which civilized people think worth having. A card from one signing himself "A. Farmer" will show what this missionary work is doing along this line, and

also the fact that we have a great work to do in placing in the hands of millions who are still in darkness the true light of the world. Here is the card:

ALEXIS, Ill., February 19, 1900.
EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

I was handed a copy of your paper in Chicago and was much pleased with Mr. Wakeman's views on our republic. The balance of the paper is an attempt to make a God of ignorance, sometimes called "reason," sometimes "freethought," sometimes "agnosticism" and sometimes "science." I have spent much time in studying the claims of scientists, especially in regard to evolution and geology, and I find their whole creed founded on assumptions, without any foundation of established fact. So I look upon your advice to search the Scriptures of Science as a step backward toward barbarism. The "Light of the World is Jesus." No other reformers can improve on his work for Humanity. You can't dethrone God.
A. FARMER.

Mr. Wakeman would like to know what sense there is in praising him for scientifically demonstrating that the republic is the right thing, and then saying that "Science is without any foundation and that to search its scriptures is a step backward toward barbarism." If the light of the world is Jesus and no other reformers can improve on his work, why go for a republic at all when the said Jesus said, if he ever said anything, pray "thy KINGDOM come in earth as it is in heaven." And that, too, for the kingdom of the greatest and most cruel despot ever conceived of, to wit: The despot of the whole universe. That despot was first squarely "retired from politics" by the constitution of the United States and thereby "dethroned" effectively and forever, so that it is now useless to nominate him for anything.

Prof. Wakeman's idea is certainly correct. Mr.(?) Farmer's statements were made by a devotee of a mythical savior instead of by a lover and understander of Science, and therefore his ideas are not true ones. Science is the truth, and whatever is not true is not scientific. Science produced the paper, pen and ink with which he wrote the card. His knowledge of penmanship and even his ability to read about Jesus came from the same source. Science is certainly the true savior of the world.

One of the most evil effects of superstition is its opposition to Reason, Freethought, Agnosticism (honest doubt) and Science. This lover of Jesus and hater of reason represents a very large class of people who, having been confused by a superficial study of "the claims of scientists" and who by nature and environment are made very credulous, enlist in the army which seems to them to be the right one. They are good people; many of them want to do just