

Torch of Reason

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THURSDAY, MARCH 22, E. M. 300.

WE ARE FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The Liberal University is not opposed to anything that is for the upbuilding of the human race, and although some, who are anxious to find something amiss in us, have hoped we would oppose the public schools so they could have something to use against us, we are in sympathy with every public school, every public school student and every public school teacher. We know just what the public schools have to contend with, and one of the main reasons that our University was founded, is that we wished to free these public organizations, which should be strictly Secular, from the domineering and ruinous influences of the Roman Catholic and narrow Protestant religions. We have taught nearly all our life in the public school, beginning in a little log school house in cold, northwestern Wisconsin, and we know for a fact that the religious dominations and controversies, coupled with petty jealousies and spite work of those in control, often make public schools worse than no schools at all. But this is no reason why the great public school system should not be protected and made free as fast as possible.

Prof. Walker, in his able article on another page in this issue of the Torch, shows the dangers from the Roman Catholic church, and we wish to say "Amen!" to what he says, and add that the danger from the Protestant churches must not be overlooked. There will come a time when no one but a Christian

can be engaged to teach a public school unless we have "eternal vigilance." In fact, it is so now in many places, and this, too, where the Christians are not in the majority. There is not a Freethinking teacher of any note in the United States who has not felt the "laying on of hands" that the churches are continually engaged in. When Prof. Walker was teaching in Albany he felt it, and it was not the hands of the Romish church, either. THE CHRISTIANS ARE ORGANIZED.

In a little city in Oregon a minister's wife, who really, from an educational standpoint, is not fit for the position, is the principal of the public school. Not long ago two boys were quarreling on the school grounds, and a third boy said: "If any one called me such names, I'd knock him down." Of course, the poor boy had a wrong conception of things, but how much better was the Christian teacher, who beat him most unmercifully? The lad received over eighty stripes and was taken down with a fever, from which he narrowly escaped with his life. The father had to pay the doctor's bill and the whole family had to stand the mental anxiety and loss of time, but they cannot get justice because the Christians of that city are organized. The prosecuting attorney will do nothing, and when the higher court convenes the Christian lady will probably be "spirited" away until the court has adjourned.

The Liberals are the only people who can free the schools from this kind of religious fanaticism, and they have heretofore stood back and done little, excepting to growl. We must organize and oppose strength with more strength. The days for concerted action have come! Our cause is just! The Roman wolf and its whelps have had their way long enough. It is our turn now, and if we know enough to improve our chances, we can free the public schools, and with their aid free the world from the Oriental blight of supernatural religions.

HOW THE WORLD MUST BE SAVED.

The Christian sufferers have learned to say "God's will be done" until they think there is no remedy for the evils they suppose their kind, heavenly father sends us. If good men and women had the power, they certainly would at once stop the crime and misery in the world. Who is there that would not cure every smallpox, tuberculosis or appendicitis sufferer in the world if he only could? And yet God, who can do it just as well as not, will let us suffer on. They say, "God is love," but if there could be a God, his love is just like

a fiend's hate. Why trust in Gods and their children any longer? Ignorance, or the fact that we have not yet evolved to a higher state, is the cause of our sufferings. We must learn more about ourselves and about the world in which we live if we would know the causes of evil and how to promote the good. There is no personal, intelligent being above the skies who is directing things, or he would let us know for sure, give us better proof than the old, mythical writings called the Bible that he really does exist, and let us help him save the world if he isn't able to save it himself. "We can do nothing without God's help," says the preacher, but it seems that most preachers do very little, even with his help, and that all do fully as well when they depend on their own resources.

Our early ancestors were very superstitious and credulous, and it is very plain that we who have come from such stock have tendencies in the same direction. How easy it is, therefore, for many people to believe the doctrines of the church! And this is especially true of those who are surrounded by orthodox people and who are naturally a little cowardly, or whose emotional nature is more highly developed than their intellect. This is why the young people are about the only Christian converts and why there are so many Epworth Leagues, Christian Endeavorers, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, etc. This also accounts for the success of the Salvation Army among the ignorant classes and why, as the laws of mind are better understood, the old-time revivalists and camp-meeting are rapidly passing away, and intellectual morality and culture are taking their place.

During the last fifty years there has been a great change in religious beliefs, and the next fifty years will see a greater change. In the backwoods districts of the West, in the non-progressive districts of old, conservative New England, and in the illiterate districts of the South, there will, for many years to come, be a chance for orthodox preachers to ply their trade; but in the more enlightened centers of civilization, where the great libraries, universities and easy modes of communication and travel are found, the Goddess of Liberty already counts her hosts by the millions, and soon the believers in spooks of every kind will be as scarce as are now the believers in witchcraft.

As soon as people learn that if there is a God he is of no earthly good; that he don't help the good nor punish the bad; that the universe goes on just as though it was running itself (as indeed it is), and that nothing can be expected from a being who will not lend a hand to stop the crime and misery in the

world, even after millions have begged him to do so on their knees and with tears in their eyes. If there is a God, he is just of no earthly use; and it is absurd longer to depend on any help outside of ourselves. The old adage that "God helps him who helps himself" is only wrong in introducing the word God into it at all. Man, by his own exertions, must save himself. If all good men and women will now join together and work together, with their united efforts the world will soon be metamorphosed from a slave pen to a veritable garden of Eden. Now is the time, for our opportunity will soon be gone. We must work fast! Every hour is precious! We must drop what we do not know and use what we do know, through Science, to build up our new heaven and new earth. All objections and hindrances must count for nothing. If we do not do something worthy of our high office of a modern citizen of the world, we are a failure. We must plan our work. We must pull together. We must be in earnest. We must learn to enjoy our labors. We must understand that we live in an age of great opportunities, and learn to feel unhappy unless we are right in the front ranks and doing our best. When we all wake up the world will move indeed.

TO BE A LIBERAL ONE MUST WORK.

When any organism fails to adjust itself to a new environment, it soon dies. This law holds good with Liberals as well as with everything else. If in our struggle to LIBERALIZE the world we fail to understand what Liberalism means, and get side-tracked by some Christian-born idea, we soon die, as far as our cause is concerned, and cease to be real Liberals. The notion that Liberalism is to let everybody enjoy their own belief without any attempt on our part to get them onto the right track, is simply to do nothing and to be nothing. Now surely, a Liberal can not be a "do-nothing". Of all men we should be the most active. We understand the awful effects of the old erroneous beliefs, and we should not hesitate a minute.

"Don't be too radical," is the advice of cowardice. How can one be too radical? The word "radical" means "root", and we ought to get right to the root of things just as soon as possible. Those who are working the Christian confidence game care nothing for those who are afraid of being radical. They take no notice of such; but as soon as we "do something" they will begin to whine, boycott and use force where they can to down us. But this is only a sign that we are doing something. To prove

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