

Torch of Reason

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Notice!

A hand pointing to this notice denotes that your subscription has expired. You are earnestly requested to renew so that you may receive the paper without interruption. We have decided that it is best for all concerned that we do not send papers longer than the time paid for unless so ordered. This will prevent any loss and we will know just where we stand.

We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, E. M. 300.

ABUSE OF POWER.

It is not safe to give any man, or any set of men, power unlimited. The Roman Catholic Church is an illustration of what slaves men and women become when they are brought up to believe in the infallibility of their priests and popes and when their earthly and eternal prosperity is supposed to be dependent on another's will. But the Protestant is slow to see that an invisible pope, whose throne is in the sky, and whose orders are written in a book and interpreted by preachers, is almost if not quite as bad as though this heavenly pope really did exist in the form of a man at Rome and issued his orders by letters which are in turn given to the people by the priests. The Protestant church is younger than the Catholic, and we hope it will die long before it has become as corrupt; but in some respects the doctrines of the Protestant churches would be worse in ultimate results, if it were possible for them to have full development.

The Catholic rulers are supposed to be infallible, but as they live in this age they have the power to govern their people better because they are on the ground and better know the conditions, while the Protestant ruler and his message (the Bible) are ancient and do not harmonize with modern ideas. But the Protestant religion has in it the elements of its own destruction, and can never reach the age and corruption of the Romish church, for its fundamental principle of absolute authority can never be carried

out. The interpreters (preachers) are not supposed to be infallible, and when a member of a Protestant church reaches a point in his mental development where his reason contradicts the message of the divine messenger, he becomes his own interpreter, creates doubts in the minds of others, who immediately begin to develop to higher things. Thus we find that the Protestant churches have continually grown more LIBERAL, that more liberal churches have been continually organized from them and that at last in the most civilized centers they are breaking down entirely and Freethought societies and Sunday Schools are taking their places. This is not the idle fancy of an Infidel brain. It is an actual fact, as the following account of the doings of the Methodist church fully proves:

The Methodists observed the week beginning March 25 in penitence and prayer on account of the decrease in church membership and attendance. This condition is recognized by the bishops as extending to all denominations and is attributed to the spirit of research and doubt represented by the so-called "higher criticism".—[Farm and Home, April 1, 1900.

Our friend, Mr. C. N. Cook, of McMinnville, Oregon, to whom we are indebted for the above quotation, adds the following very appropriate comment:

The devils believe and tremble, for they are in their death-struggle, and they die hard.

The salvation of the world, like the education of the individual, is a matter of growth, and when the great step of the Protestant Reformation was taken it broke in two the great organized abuse of power which had grown up under the name of the church of Christ, but the only good done by this division came from the increase of the elements of Secularism that were then introduced into the world and which have all this time been liberalizing and reforming, until we now find many who possess independent reason and common sense; and at last there will be a sufficient number of these modern protestants to finish the protesting business as far as the Protestants are concerned, and then all together we will cleanse the earth from the filth of Roman Catholicism, with its humbug virgin priests, its disease-spreading holy water, its monastical crimes, its narrow, superstitious, un-American education, and its wicked, inhuman abuse of power.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Perhaps some of our old subscribers and many of the new ones are not yet familiar with just how we are situated and what we have already accomplished, therefore we will briefly state that during the last three years, commencing with nothing, we, the despised Infidels, who, according to Christian logic,

never did anything worth mentioning, have published weekly the Torch of Reason; bought the press and other printing apparatus; bought a forty-four-acre tract of beautiful land as ever lay out of doors; built a dining hall and dormitory containing eighteen rooms, a small (24x40) gymnasium, and a main building that is now successfully used for study, recitations and office work. This building, when completed, will be 70x90 feet and will accommodate about 300 students. We have also taught all grades of students while we were doing this, having seventy-six on the roll at one time, and increased our library from a few volumes to two thousand five hundred. Now, if a few of us can do all this in such a short time, what can we accomplish when all who love liberty, justice and truth lend a hand?

During the vacation, which comes now in a few weeks, we want to finish our building and lay off our grounds into a beautiful park. There is nothing too good for our Freethought students. We want to truly educate them, and in order to do this their environment must be the best we can make it. No one can do his best when the mind is in other than a free, happy, unfettered condition, and we wish to make all those who come to our Freethought University free in thought that they may do their best and the easier vanquish the foes of Liberty in the coming struggle. Ours is a worthy cause, and such as we have and all that we have we gladly lay upon its altar.

OUR HOPES AND PROSPECTS.

With the beautiful spring weather comes new hopes and aspirations, and we cast aside all unharmonious thoughts, freely forgive those who have injured us, either personally or as an organization, and bend all our energies to the work of building that which will surely save the world from its allegiance to and worship of mythical, foreign potentates. Having cast off every weight of superstition, and having a very much increased desire to do our little part toward cleansing humanity from the blight of ignorance before our hearts and brains mix again in the great sea of inorganic matter, we are building a university which is entirely free from the gods and their agents. Here in a beautiful valley on the Pacific Coast, the last step before civilization in its westward march must again meet the superstitions of the Orient, we have found a fit place to begin Humanity's Garden of Eden. In the old mythical garden, where poisonous, talking snakes defiled and degraded, and liberty of thought was a crime, the tree of knowledge was made a curse; but here in the beautiful Willamette Valley knowledge is to be a blessing, and it has

been our first concern. The little tree we call the Liberal University begins to bear fruit already, and what gods or devils dare say that the day we eat thereof we shall surely die? The day we eat of the tree of knowledge we shall surely begin to live, and know and enjoy the unselfish, eternal life of good works.

This year our tree of knowledge must be carefully cultivated and pruned. As it stands today, with its staging still around it, waiting for the carpenter and painter to put on the finishing touches, it does not look very beautiful excepting to those who can "see the angel in it," like Michael Angelo saw in the rough stone from which he chiseled a most beautiful statue. If we are to feel the happiness and receive the benefits which come from progress we must move forward, for there is no standing still in nature; we must evolve or dissolve; we must advance or retrograde; our university must now be finished or we will at once begin to lose ground.

We have great faith in that highest development of humanity we call Secularism, and being Secularists ourselves we have faith in our work and thus we have a true working faith which is certainly the right kind. We can't fail now. We have the best location for our Secular Home in the world. There is comparatively speaking no sickness here at all. We have been on the Pacific Coast for ten years and no such diseases as kill off people by the hundreds in other climates ever bother us here. The fruit trees are now just loaded with blossoms. We believe we can raise a larger variety of fruits, grains and vegetables than any other country under the sun.

The winters are not so cold nor are the summers so hot as in the North, Central and Eastern States. The soil is most excellent, being clay and rich loam. Silverton being close to the mountains is well protected and is away from the damper, river bottom climate. How beautiful a place we can make here! How glorious will be our success and what a great blessing we will be to our own and future generations.

Freethinkers, we have the greatest privilege, the most sacred duty, the happiest life before us that any people of the earth ever had. Let us try to "act well our part; there all the honor lies."

The St. Joseph (Mo.) Gazette, in an account of the Liberal University this week, states that Mr. Geer has already secured \$100,000 endowment for our school. This seems almost too good to be true, but we anxiously await further developments. If Secularism is the only way to bring the true salvation of the world, as we honestly believe, then why shouldn't we get help as well as the Christian schools? How many hundred thousand dollars have they received during the last year? We hope that the able Freethinkers will remember us "that the prophecy may be fulfilled".