

Torch of Reason

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THURSDAY, APRIL 91, E. M. 300.

OUR NEXT BATTLE.

Perhaps many of our friends do not realize what influences are brought to bear upon our work in order to thin us out, scatter us abroad, and wool us around to tire us out and make us ready to quit. Sometimes we wonder how, under the Christian and Infidel bushwhacking fire, the real Freethought cause has prospered at all. We are fools, as far as what most people call self interests are concerned, or we would have abandoned the field of battle long ago.

If in our Thought Exchange we would say nothing about spooks and the old religions, some think many would patronize us who now stand aloof. "Just teach Science and don't offend any of the audience," says a timid one. Dear friends, do you not know that those who are offended at the truth come for that purpose? They want to be offended, and they would find something to be offended at even if a speech was proof read by every orthodox preacher in the country, and if we endeavored to please them instead of presenting the truth it would soon result in our own disgust and retreat, with the respect of no one. No one can teach Science today and not teach evolution, and no one can properly teach evolution without contradicting the dogmas of Christianity and the "immortal" nonsense which blocks the gateway of the first principles on which our modern Science is based.

One friend thinks that we ought to say nothing in the University

about religion. That we will lose patronage if we teach that there is no future life and that there is no God. While it must not be thought by any that we teach nothing else, we feel it our duty to say that the promoters of the Liberal University are more anxious to get and more anxious to teach the truth than to gain patronage. We want students; we must have students in order to have a school, but any of us can get students in public schools and get good pay for our work if we choose to teach as other teachers are pleased or forced to teach. If we were compelled to say nothing on the questions that affect the lives of our students more than any other questions, and leave them to the tender mercies of the preachers and other religious fanatics, of what value would be a Liberal University? We must have the privilege when teaching the causes of things (the very foundation of Science), that there is no proof whatever that there is either a man-like or a spirit god.

There is not an emancipated person in the world who is afraid to think or who is afraid to have their children think that the idea of a god is a myth, and we expect to get patronage only from those who are not afraid to have their children think and know that all the old priestly notions are not only untrue but very unscientific and injurious.

How can we teach the great law of the indestructibility of matter and its consequent eternal existence as far as man's mind is able to grasp the eternal thought, or how can we teach the correlation of forces without disputing the popular notion of matter being created and governed by a god? The notion of a god destroys the very foundation principles of Science and is accountable for the slow progress of Science and the still unreasoning condition of the majority of human minds, with the awful results of crime, hypocrisy and disunion.

"But you do not know that there is no god, that there is no heaven, and that the soul is not immortal; and you ought to confine your teachings to what you do know. If you would, you would get many more students," is the burden of a number of songs which have lately been sung.

This is a great mistake. We do confine ourselves to what we do know. If we have no foundation but to just try to please, in order to get students, we will fail. We do know that Science has at last driven from the world every spook and devil. We do know, fully as well as the Christian knows that there is no god in the Hindoo's white elephant, that there is no god in the sky or anywhere else. Of course in one sense no one knows anything; but we do know, in the sense that it is absurd

to think otherwise, that when a man is dead he is dead, and that the idea of an immortal spirit in is entirely without proof. That a heaven is a myth does not need proof, for it has never been proven to exist at all; but its absurdity is as easily shown as that of the Indian tradition that the "great spirit" is a cross between a jack rabbit and a musk rat.

The Liberal University is not an organization of cowards who are afraid to speak their honest thought for fear of losing a student. Let those who are afraid to investigate go to other schools, or stay at home, read their Bibles and learn how God made a dirt(y) man in his own image; those who do come will not only learn about the great laws of Nature, but will also be taught the absurdities of the old dogmas which have so long hindered the truth from being known. To be sure, the younger students will not be burdened with questions too profound for their young minds, but parents who send their children to the L. U. O. for any length of time may consider them lost to all forms of spookism and saved for the great work of Science and Humanity; for it is a most encouraging fact that when one is thoroughly emancipated, which takes only a short time after he becomes willing to search for the truth and accept it whenever and wherever it may be found, he can never go back to his old, stale diet of the five loaves and three small fishes of Christian myth.

We who are free would be cowards indeed to close our lips and let our beloved students think we believe as the priests do, or that we are afraid to say what we honestly believe and what we do know.

Our students will always be urged to investigate for themselves, and that it is as wrong to take our word as conclusive evidence as it is to take the word of a priest or a holy book. The books are open to all. The facts of Nature stand ready to be proven. That which can neither be demonstrated nor made to harmonize with her great laws must be considered untrue and an enemy to Progress. Why, then, should there not be one University in the world that dares correct the errors in the demonstration of the causes of things, the demonstration of the nature of the mind, and the whence and whither of man, as well as to correct the errors in a demonstration of an algebraic or geometric problem? If a professor in any Christian or public school should show the absurdities in the silly beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, or in the beliefs of the modern Kanackas, no one would object. Why, then, should any one object to our showing how absurd a thing it is for us any longer to expect an eternal home in spirit or with a resurrected body in a sky-

parlor heaven, or to depend on either an anthropomorphic or an æolian god for our daily bread?

Those who are emancipated must build the Liberal University, or it will never be built. Those who are still in the fog of mystery and miracle would not if they could, and ~~could not if they would, for there is no agreement among them, and a school built on the principles(?) of either spookism or cowardice would be nothing new nor of much force.~~

The Liberal University is non-sectarian, but not in the sense that it does not know or does not dare to stand firmly on a scientific foundation, and that it does not dare to combat everything that is unscientific. The belief in gods and devils; the belief in ghosts and holy ghosts; the belief in an immaterial entity called spirit, and the belief in a heaven or a hell, are perfectly unscientific. Not because we say they are, but because they contradict the best established laws of Science and can only be taught by deductive reasoning with the poorest kind of a foundation for a basis.

Nor must it be supposed that being free from the old dogmas takes from life one iota of usefulness or happiness. In place of the old conception of a god we have the awe-inspiring yet elevating thought of the great boundless universe of which we are a part. Yes, we are a part of this great, wonderful cosmos, and the same laws govern us as govern it. In place of the Christ who, in a little country of Western Asia, in a little life, during a time of little knowledge, performed(?) a few little miracles, we have the great Humanity, of which we are also a part, to love and work for—Humanity, whose country is the world, whose life is indeed immortal compared with that of one man, and whose miracles of industry, invention and abstract thought fill the world with delight and happiness.

Instead of the selfish immortality of the individual we have the unselfish, altruistic and progressive hope of an immortality of our thoughts, of our words and of our works in the race itself, that is far more beautiful and inspiring than the hell-born hope of a golden strected heaven. And the best part of it all is that it is true.

This then is our next battle, and we enter it with the greatest hopes of a glorious victory. We will emancipate soldiers as we march along, who in turn will volunteer in this the greatest battle of the ages, and make the old dogmas of darkness seek shelter among the caves and crags of heathen lands until finally the sunshine of truth will cover the whole earth and all nations will rejoice in the emancipation proclamation which we are now beginning to write.

This glorious crusade, to wrest from the hands of hypocrites, cowards and weaklings the tomb of Science, offspring of the virgin minds of Humanity, demands every lover of Truth to the front. Here is our torch—REASON; and here our watchword—LUO!