

For the Torch of Reason.

Freethought Self-poised.

BY JOHN PRESCOTT GUILD.

["It is better to wear the rags of honest poverty than to wear the purple robes of hypocrisy and deceit. Better to go down to the grave unheeded and unrespected save by those who honor a man for daring to express his honest thought, than to think for one moment of sacrificing nature's choicest gifts upon the blood-stained altars of bigotry and superstition."—Anonymous paragraph.]

Fear not to think thy thought
The thought thy sense describes.
His reason stands for nought,
Who dares not use his eyes.

Be bold to speak thy thought;
Dissemble not a jot.
The man who can be bought
Is nothing but a blot.

Be strong thy throbbing brain,
Stay not for feeble hearts;
For thine shall be the gain
When bigotry departs.

What though thou art alone
And "guyed" by all the throng?
Although thou gnaw a bone,
Be not thy actions wrong.

Can stand alone the just,
Mid hypocrites unkind;
And though he chew a crust,
Think with a full-fledged mind.

What boots the foolish boasts—
Vast flocks by error won?
One with the truth is host—
Freethought can stand alone.

The wise can stand alone,
Though multitudes assail;
The false shall be o'erthrown,
And truth at last prevail.

For the Torch of Reason.

Superstition, Insanity, Ignorance.

BY C. S. SPARKS.

Agnostics are unacquainted with "spirit manifestations"; the "departed" never "appear" to them, neither in their waking nor in their sleeping hours. In their "mind's eye" nothing but the real appears; gods, ghosts and phantoms give them the go-by and seek more congenial company in the "mind's eye" of the credulous. "Spirit rappings" never occur within their hearing; they are the creatures of the "Witch of Endor", and go in the same company as they did in her time. "Heavenly songs" are never heard by the Agnostic, and to the dying one Christ never appeared with outstretched arms. Strange, is it not? but it is true. He mingles in the same society as of old.

Agnostics know that "conversion" is an acknowledgement of belief and faith and a surrender of the authority of one's own mind, and that "sanctification" is an evidence of illiteracy, and is born of a consuming fear of "hell", and that to the intelligent the word is entirely without meaning; that millions of children have been cruelly sacrificed; that for centuries might has triumphed over right, all for the "glory of God"; that King David was a delightful subject for a penal institution; that John the Baptist, who came down out of the mountains with a girdle about his loins and a chunk of honey in one

hand, was fit to be classed with the "wild man of Borneo", and not even the most vicious snake of the jungle would dare "reveal itself unto him"; that "inspiration" was a commodity brewed by the ignorant and superstitious, or else by the depraved wise, who used it as a means to rob, subdue and control the ignorant and superstitious; that the advocates of the "divinely-revealed Bible" have always opposed science; that the names and deeds of all the fearless investigators and honest searchers for Truth will be loved and revered long after every priest and preacher that ever lived, now lives, or may hereafter live, shall have been erased from man's memory forever; that posterity will refer to them as the great and fearless deliverers of humanity, and to priests and preachers as treacherous stumbling blocks in the way of that delivery, who delayed human happiness for untold centuries behind a cruel curtain of darkness, superstition, chicanery, plotting, threatenings and murder.

Agnostics realize that it is nobler to do something for the benefit of man while he lives than it is to chisel a lying epitaph on his tombstone; that the eating of bread is better and more wholesome than a belief that one is eating it, or a faith that one may eat some in the future; that it is better to realize that this life is a certainty than it is to mope around like a chicken with the cholera and wait for a lovely hereafter that is a decided uncertainty.

Agnostics know that, according to the Bible, "God" made heaven and hell, and that he must be a very bad individual to have made the latter, and that association with him at either place is to be avoided. Between the two, it is likely, on account of the distance from the "maker's" abode, the latter would be the choice of the greater number.

Agnostics know that by reason of their investigations thousands upon thousands have left the graves of their dead without shedding a tear of fear for their welfare; that it has been almost two thousand years since the Christians have dared to claim that a single soul on earth has seen their God or had any direct communication with him; that he "revealed himself" only when the world was in the throes of darkness and ignorance, and if the education and present attainment of man remains at the high standard of today he will be seen and heard no more; that the time may come, when a belief in the Supernatural will be an evidence of insanity, as it is now, among the intelligent, an evidence of ignorance.

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