

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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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, MAY 17, E. M. 300.

THE EFFECTS OF CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS.

The same forces acting under the same conditions always produce the same results, and although the domineering disposition of Christians has been somewhat softened, or has, at least, become more modest, by the triumph of secular over "spiritual" things, yet the nature of Christian-taught people is about the same today as when the thousands were slaughtered in Holland in the name of Jesus, or when Bruno was murdered for trying to spread the gospel of science. The first manifestation of this narrow, persecuting disposition in modern times is generally shown by perfectly ignoring every attempt at honest investigation. The next step is to search for weaknesses in the promoters of such investigations, and by exaggerating every weakness, to so blacken their reputation that not many can stand the awful ordeal. The third step is to destroy literature, the fourth to imprison, and the fifth to kill. But all this must be more carefully done than at one time, and many of our own ranks do not even suspect the awful crimes yet committed in the name of Jesus.

Let us look into this matter. Is it not true that our work has been almost entirely ignored by the Christian world. This is the first step. Where is the Christian minister or the Christian paper that has told the people about our work, just what our ideas are and just how we are progressing? Scarcely anything is said in the Christian papers, and the exceptions are

fanatical, ignorant statements of our awful wickedness, or a pitying, belittling prayer for our speedy return to the loving arms of Jesus.

But the second and third steps seem to be entered into lately, and even the fourth. Go to the State of Kentucky and see C. C. Moore, an aged Freethinker, unjustly cast into prison. Go to the penitentiary of Washington and see prisoners compelled to endure the cruel and unusual punishment of listening to teachings worse in their effect, and to a great extent accountable for, crimes which put the poor criminals in durance vile. See these Christian prison-keepers destroy the Torch of Reason and prevent the prisoners from knowing the truth of things; and this, too, without any real right to do so, and without any notice given to the prisoners or to the publishers. How this is done is better told by the following letter from one of our friends:

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Dear Friend:—In regard to the Torches that are being sent to Walla Walla, I have just learned that they are barred out of the prison, so you may as well cut them off the subscription list. The authorities have but very little use for anything that savors of freedom. They even went so far as to compel men to attend their religious services. In barring Freethought publications they say nothing at all to either the publisher or subscriber, but just sneakily throw them in the waste basket. They frequently make a tour of the prison, confiscating books that have been sent to or bought by the inmates.

No wonder the prisons are well patronized. When will the people of the world learn that to teach the youth the abominable stories of "holy writ" and to deprive them of the truths of Science and Scientific wisdom is simply training them for lives of fraud? And then when they are imprisoned and should be taught moral truths, they must be hardened still more by their keepers giving them still more of the poison of orthodoxy. It is far better to be neither a criminal nor a maker of criminals; but the worst criminals in the world are those who are out of prison playing the confidence game of posing as agents of a god. Our state schools are regular reservoirs of religious racket games. In the State School for Deaf Mutes the poor defenceless little deaf and dumb boys and girls are taught as solemn truth all about a god, a heaven, angels, etc. Think how cruel it is to still further darken their lives by making the world more of a mystery than their youth and their inability to hear and speak would make it. Oh, what lies are told in the name of religion!

But Christian printing presses must run and therefore Christian books, papers, and cards must be sold. A teacher who would introduce a kindergarten pupil to a complicated demonstration of geometry

and insist on his trying to grasp it day after day would be doing the child a great injustice, but what is to be thought of those who give the little ones such problems as they themselves can not solve? But it is thought by many that it is better for the people to have something to hold them in check or they might do something bad; and in order to keep up this checking business a bad set of hypocrites have control and are permitted to do bad, that the imaginary bad effects of knowing the truth may be avoided.

The last step, that of murder, is, and ever since "the church" gained its power has been going on. Even now, in France, editors who are opposed to the Roman Catholic church are obliged to call for police protection, and a great movement is on foot that is jeopardizing the life of every Freethinker in that great Republic. This hellish work is not so openly done now as when one could buy an indulgence for a few hundred dollars, but as we write, human beings who love life, light and liberty are being foully murdered for the glory of God.

THE BEST ARGUMENT FOR IMMORTALITY.

In a recent conversation with one who is trying very hard to believe in the old immortality myth, we discovered the very best argument in its favor that we have ever heard; and as it is no more than right to investigate both sides of all important questions, we wish our readers to look into this "new revelation" and discover if possible the truth or falsity of its claims.

The well-known fact that all matter is indestructible and, therefore, as far as we know eternal, was used to show that the most natural way to look at that wonderful "thing" called the mind or soul, the "thing" that causes the matter in our bodies to act, is that it too is indestructible and eternal. This we repeat is the best argument we ever heard in favor of the immortality of a soul part of man, and to thousands who are too lazy to think hard and to many who are too weak to think long it is no doubt a "clincher." "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord;" but as the Lord is not with us let us eat of the tree of knowledge and try to "be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The first weakness we discover in the argument is that the mind is not "a thing" but a process of the matter of which the nervous system is composed; but as this has been shown so many times we refrain from repeating the proofs, and for the sake of argument suppose for the time being that the mind or soul is a subtle substance—a real thing. Now if we follow the analogy further we notice that when the body dies, the elements of which it is composed break up, separate, go into other forms and no more bear any resemblance to it in shape, function or in any way. The water of which our bodies are largely composed (about $\frac{3}{4}$) will be

scattered in innumerable directions, as will also the carbon, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus, etc. Then, according to the argument(?), the mind, even if it were a thing, would also separate into its elements and no more resemble its former condition.

The real truth of the matter is this: What is called the mind is a complex expression of the energies of the matter of which the brain is composed, and as the sum of all energy is the same and as it is as indestructible as the matter itself, and as one form of energy is convertible and continually being converted into other forms, the forces whose combined results we call the mind, inherent in the matter itself, is immortal only as our bodies, or rather the elements of which they are composed, are immortal. These forces, however, do not remain intact any more than the elements of which our bodies are composed, and the theory of the immortality of a soul is one of the most absurd and injurious that Science has been obliged to fight. It is a weakness to which may be traced more years of ignorance and more years of misery than any other superstition or abnormal action of that most wonderful and complex combination of elements called protoplasm—the human brain.

History of the Ingersoll-Chair Movement.

[The following recapitulation of the history of the Liberal-University Ingersoll-Chair movement is given to our readers on account of the many calls for the same, combined with the fact that all our back numbers referring to this important subject are gone. We hope our friends in America will quickly follow the example of our English brothers and let the world know that we fully and rightly appreciate the work of the great American Freethought forerunner and prophet—Robert G. Ingersoll.]

From the Torch of Reason of Nov. 23, 1899.
AN INGERSOLL CHAIR FOR THE LIBERAL UNIVERSITY.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Geo. Jacob Holyoake, of Brighton, England, writes to me in a private letter: "If you and other leaders took it up, you could easily get gifts to found an Ingersoll Chair at the Liberal University." Mr. Holyoake is now, since Ingersoll's death, the best known Freethinker in the world. He is the father of Secularism. And now that he has suggested the raising of a fund to found an Ingersoll Chair at the Liberal University, I would suggest to the Board of Directors of the University that a committee be appointed for that purpose. And may I be pardoned for suggesting the following names for said committee:—For America: Dr. E. B. Foote, jr., D. A. Blodgett, B. F. Underwood, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan H. Wixon. For England: Geo. Jacob Holyoake, Charles Watts, G. W. Foote.

Yours truly,

H. L. GREEN.

[Acting on Mr. Green's suggestion, the Board has adopted the