

Torch of Reason

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THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Children need object lessons, but there comes a time when they should put away childish things. A savior in the form of man may have served as an object lesson, and nearly every people has had a Jesus, a Buddha, a Mohammet. There were dozens of these saviors during the childhood of our race, but is it not time that the most civilized peoples, now that they have really become men, put away childish things?

Let us take up the higher abstract branches. Let us learn that Jesus, like other men, may have been the light of the world, but, like most of the Bible, he is only "typical." The honest, true light of the world is Science. Science is not what it was once thought to be. It is no longer the theories of philosophers, but the real truth of things so systematized as to be of the most practical use to us who need light.

The Christians sing, "More love, oh Christ, to thee," but what they really need is more love for the truth. Many fail to find the real light because "straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," while "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to the destruction" which comes from ignorance, idolatrous worship of the priests, their heroes and books, and many there be who go in thereat. The narrow gate is that of study, thought, reason; the broad way is that of credulity, faith, superstition; and the narrow

way is broad and the broad way is very narrow.

We once, with the judgment and reason of youth, tried hard to make ourself believe that Jesus was the only light of the world, and we tried very hard to make ourself believe that we did believe it, but the "spirit" of Science entered our "soul," and with the poor advantages that a nineteen-hundred-years' battle against a false and superstitious religion has given to those whom it has robbed of their birthright of equality, we read a little of this "blessed, Science gospel," became converted and a "change came o'er the spirit of our dream."

Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee,
Sweetly the Light has dawn'd upon me.
Once I was blind, but now I can see.
The Light of the world is SCIENCE.

CHRISTIANITY AND CHRISTIANITY.

We consider some of the doctrines and fundamental principles taught by Jesus Christ as the truth and a great boon to humanity. Of course we do not claim positively that a man by the name of Jesus lived and taught these doctrines, for this is much disputed by good authorities, but some of the ideas advanced by those who wrote the story of Jesus are certainly of great value. The first and most fundamental of these ideas which we wish to commend is his antagonism to the false notions of the orthodox churches of his time. In this we are followers of Jesus. He was not afraid to call those who loved to stand in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, making long prayers to be heard of men, hypocrites, and neither are we.

The time in which Jesus, or the writers of the story, lived was in some respects like ours. The political and religious forces were running things in their own financial interests. He tried to show the people that there is something higher than mere money-getting—a condition of life far superior to what they were used to—one in which equality would take the place of poverty and gluttony, happiness the place of misery and fear, love the place of hate.

The orthodox people of his time had turned the house of God (God is love) into a den of thieves; and is this not true of the orthodox people of our time? This has been done innocently, to be sure, on the part of many; but if the Scribes and Pharisees of today are not in the orthodox churches, where are they? Jesus taught the golden rule of Confucius and, as a social maxim, we think it is without a peer; but the orthodox people of our time teach that priest-grafted dogma of eternal punishment which is exactly the opposite to the golden rule, and they even advance the idea that their God practises this

hellish revenge, instead of overcoming evil with good, as Jesus taught.

There are many reasons for thinking that Jesus never pretended to perform miracles, nor taught that he was a god or the son of a god; but, like Julius Cæsar, he was made a god by a few ignorant people, assisted by their priests, after a cruel, orthodox-inflicted death. We hope that this is true, for we have charity for all men, and rather not think of him as a bigot and a liar. But let this be as it may, it is certain that if Christianity is the conscientious following of the best doctrines ascribed to Jesus Christ, that we, the despised Secularists, are the real Christians, and that the millions of orthodox Christians who, against the "spirit" of reform which has been breathed into a dead world, cling to the rules, ceremonies and dogmas of the ignorant past, are the Scribes and Pharisees-hypocrites.

BRICK.

What is the matter with the world? All know that there is much unnecessary suffering, poverty, ignorance, war, drunkenness, fear, hate and hell right here. Can't something be done? Why, of course it can. Here is the trouble: THE PEOPLE OF THE HIGHEST TYPES OF HUMANITY ARE NOT UNITED. Once united, we can accomplish wonders. What we call ignorance would soon be gone, and its offspring would soon follow suit.

Why can't we unite? Because the religions of BELIEF keep the people from getting the religion of TRUTH; or, in other words, people are divided on what they DON'T KNOW instead of being united on what they DO KNOW.

Let's build a university and teach, and teach, and teach, until many will catch this great truth and unite with us, and we'll keep at it as long as we live, and by and by the movement will get such a momentum that nothing can stop it, and the world will finally become a heaven to all who cast anchor on its beautiful, golden shores.

Come! The yoke of Truth is easy and its burden is light. Death ends all for those who do nothing, but those who place one brick in the great temple of progress—the great tower of the religion of Science and Humanity—will never die as long as the human family exists, and this unselfish immortality is an immortality worth a thousand times as much to us, living or dead, as the imagined, egotistical heaven of the unemancipated.

We have a start. We call our University The LIBERAL University, because it is free. Help us keep it free. Help us make it a power to free others, that they may in turn free the world and make it fit for union. Brick! BRICK! BRICK!

THE BARNHOUSES.

While we were in Eastern Oregon last year at the O. S. S. U. convention, we met and became acquainted with the Barnhouses, and we wish to introduce them to that portion of the Torch family who are so unfortunate as not to know them. The Barnhouses are not of the "Codfish Aristocracy;" they are of the yeomanry of Freethought and the kind of people who are Freethinkers, and know why. Mr. Barnhouse made us a short visit last year, and now Mrs. Barnhouse, Mr. E. R. Laughlin, their son-in-law, and Mrs. Laughlin, with their three little Freethinkers, are with us. To say that these good people are enthusiastic in the work, is stating it mildly. They have sent their son to our University; they have aided us financially; they have shown an appreciation and enthusiasm for our work that gives us the very necessary encouragement, and, best of all, they are not through helping yet. Mr. Laughlin expects to educate his three children in the L. U. O., and in other ways will do all in his power to make our labors not in vain.

A jolly crowd of us went to Silver Creek Falls last Sunday, and what a picnic we had! Although we have been in Silverton about four years, we had never been to see this wonderful piece of Nature's work. And it is truly wonderful in its wild, picturesque leap of two hundred feet to its rocky basin below, and all agreed that at some time this grand scene will be witnessed by millions, instead of by hundreds, each season. Truly, our University is being built in the garden spot of the world, and "there'll come a time some day" when it will be greatly appreciated for its position, as well as for its freedom of thought.

Monday we went to the capital city ("Salem, too, arrayed in beauty"), and friend Laughlin said that he saw more in that one day than he had seen in all the rest of his life put together. How we wish we had space, time and ability to write our innermost thoughts as we witnessed the pitiable sights at the lunatic asylum, at the penitentiary and the pompous, though beautiful, sights at the parade ground of the Oregon National Guards. Then, too, the beautiful scenery along the way always gives us food for indescribable thought. The beautiful fields of grass and grain, the orchards and the snug farm houses, from which, as we passed in the cool, fragrant evening, poured the melody of music, laughter and song, gave us the right kind of inspirations. Oh, what a happy world this might be to all, but what a hell it is for millions! And why?

We are glad that there are people who understand why, and we believe that some time there will be enough honest, hard-working, enthusiastic, Freethought people, like the Barnhouses, to apply the remedy—the Religion of Science and Humanity.