

## Torch of Reason

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THURSDAY, AUG. 23, E. M. 300.

The man who invented the machine to pare and core apples did more for humanity than the priest who invented the father, son and holy ghost story.

The trouble with Jesus Christ's "absent treatment" is that his patients imagine themselves healed when they are really the worst—blessed and saved when really damned and lost.

God so loved the world that he said, "Thou shalt not kill," and then ordered Joshua, "Stretch out thy spear that is in thy hand toward Ai." Twelve thousand dead men, women and children was the result; and the good work still goes on.

What a blessing to the world is such doctrines as the following: Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. iii., 2). There is a cause for the hell that is now burning the life out of our people. What is the cause? PRIESTCRAFT!

There are two currents in the river of life; one flows forward toward light, life and liberty, and the other backward toward mental darkness, death and slavery. One current might be named Free-thought; the other, Superstition. In which current is the L. U. O.? In which is orthodoxy?

If an Infidel, when about to die, would cry, "My God, my God, why

hast thou forsaken me?" as Jesus did, the preachers would have another awful deathbed scene to preach about. Do you really suppose there is a god? Was there such a Jesus Christ as the priests wrote about? Did he think God had forsaken him? Did God really forsake his son? Ought we, the most civilized people of the world, to base our great future work on such idle tales?

A lady of Silverton was surprised to find a fine string of trout and a goodly piece of venison on the back porch the other day. She concluded, however, that a friend must have wanted to give her family a treat, and she therefore cooked the delicacies and they did eat thereof. It is said that her neighbor, the minister, on being informed in regard to the matter, seemed to disagree as to the source from whence the gift came. He saw an opportunity to do Jesus a good turn, and therefore insinuated that he must have sent the meat. It turns out, however, that a young Secular friend of ours was the donor, and although the "kid" by whom it was sent made a mistake and left the dea(e)r stuff at the wrong house, George has been re-christened, and is now hailed by the high title of "Jesus" by all the boys in town.

### HERE VS. "OVER THERE."

David Starr Jordan says that the mind is the function of the brain; that it is the sum total of the psychic CHANGES, ACTIONS and REACTIONS. He also says that consciousness is not an entity, but a condition.

If this be true, and where is a real student of psychology who can deny it, our consciousness must cease when its organ, the brain, is disorganized, and the old talk about the post-mortem consciousness is untrue, misleading and a great hindrance to the advancement of man's knowledge of his relation to the great cosmos in which he lives; and this knowledge, we must remember, coupled with his appreciation of those parts of the universe with which he comes in contact, is the measure of his worth and happiness.

That we live after death is at once the most absurd and damaging idea in the world, unless it be the idea of an arbitrary, capricious tyrant, who governs man for his own (the tyrant's) glory. Witchcraft had its victims, but they were victims of the accusers, while the victims of the eternal-life craze are victims of themselves. They carry within their own brains the destroying poison of superstition. It is as if one believed himself to be a witch and dared not put his hand to the harvest for fear of bewitching the fruits. For he who believes in the conscious state after death can not

with any degree of success help gather that mental harvest which is so necessary for the world's unity and progress, because this life becomes subsidiary, a vale of tears, a preparatory school only, a desert land, etc. Is it not an awful condition that produces the utter abandonment of this, the only life we know anything about? The poor victim, as good as dead, sings:

Then ask me not to linger long  
Amid the gay and thoughtless throng,  
For I am only waiting here  
To hear the summons, "Child, come home!"

If humanity ever got a "black eye" it did when this idea of future existence entered the brains of its leaders of thought; and now it will take a long time to unteach what they, in their unavoidable ignorance, scattered broadcast over the world.

The living is but a handful compared with the billions which have gone to sleep on the bosom of mother earth. Are those billions waiting for their friends, some in bliss and some in misery, or are they really at rest? If the President of the Leland Stanford University is right, if Spencer, and Darwin, and Huxley, and Tyndall, and all of the greatest of modern thinkers are right, these billions are not conscious. They are no more. And we need not worry or rejoice over meeting anyone anywhere in any other place than here on this earth. Is this not best after all? The work in hand, of making something out of this life, needs our whole attention. Think of the children that are here and those who are to come—billions of them! They need our attention instead of those who do not and never will exist. And after all, if we should meet a relative or friend in spirit form "over there," we could not MEET always; and what good would it do to go soaring about in a place that is so perfect that no good could be done? The Bible is right in saying that the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward (Ec. xi., 5). And now that there are no spooks or live-dead people "over there," let us turn our attention to this world! We have met here! This is a good place in which to build a heaven, and we are so constituted that we can't be happy without we ARE building. Let us help build a heaven for those who are coming, and perhaps we may find our heaven in building.

### THE COMMON GROUND.

The religious devotee says, "I know that my redeemer lives." And how do you know, dear friend? "I feel it in here" (solemnly pointing to his heart), says our heart-brained philosopher. But when we assert that we can give scientific proof that the higher forms of life have originated from the lower;

that this disproves the Bible account of creation: that it shows the uninspired character of the book, and that therefore it is all a mistake about his redeemer living and his feeling it in his heart, he gets very much excited and declares that we can't prove anything—not even that we are not in bed and asleep. He is willing to take as proof a feeling in his heart, but rejects without examination any real facts that might be used as a basis of reason with which to discover the honest truth. Why is this? Why will men and women refuse to honestly investigate? Why will they base their life work on faith? It is because THEY WANT TO BELIEVE in a God; THEY WANT TO BELIEVE in a future life. And why do they want to believe? Is it not that the eternal talk of the priests and preachers have educated them, and through heredity they are naturally credulous? Science asks no one to believe. In fact, scientifically, we are damned if we take a thing for granted because we feel it in our hearts. Doubt, and not blind faith, is necessary that truth be found and preserved.

Now, the two great, main pillars on which Christianity rests are a God and immortality; and it is the duty of all to doubt—to honestly test these as we would any questions of life. It is dishonest not to do so. The truth will make the world better, and, in the long run, any delusion, no matter if it be a pleasant one to many, will enslave us mentally and cause much unhappiness. Therefore, we have given Christianity, and especially its "two main pillars," an unprejudiced scientific test, and we find that, using the lines, rules and plummets known to Science as the eternal elements, the correlation of forces, natural selection, fossils, rudimentary organs, etc., etc., no traces of a God can be found, and that immortality is only an unscientific statement of unscientific religion-makers.

These facts are dawning upon the minds of men with an ever-increasing rapidity, and although this mental revolution may cause unstable conditions in some places for some time, yet the ultimate result will be a nearer approach to the perfectibility of our race. Science, applied to every department of life, will solve its mightiest problems. SCIENCE IS THE COMMON GROUND ON WHICH WE CAN ALL STAND. It will bring the whole human family together; and what a union! What a victory for Humanity when all men, from the cold, barren regions of Alaska to the war-beclouded veldts of South Africa, from the crowded lands of the Chinese Boxers to the peaceful Secular Home of the Golden West, can say: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"