

Torch of Reason

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We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 20, E. M. 300.

WHICH?

CHRISTIAN.

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting.

SECULAR.

I BELIEVE in an eternal, infinite universe, of which every living creature is a part; and in Humanity, which was born of "lowly ancestors;" suffered under the rule of priests; was crucified, racked and burned, and lived in a hell on earth. In the Era of Man it began to rise above the dead teachings of the dead, and is now progressing into an Earthly Heaven, to enjoy the sunshine of Eternal Truth.

I believe in love for all mankind; the most earnest, conscientious right living; the union of all good people in every good work; the forgiveness of each other's weaknesses; the immortality of good deeds and in rest everlasting.

IT MATTERS NOT.

The old theological philosophers used to discuss the question of how many spirits could dance on the point of a needle, and the argument on the nebular hypothesis in the Torch might, by some, be considered something of the same order.

If Mr. Wettstein is right and the earth is to return to a nebular state, the right thing for us to do is to think of present conditions. As individuals we all know we must die, but Secularism teaches that

this life is very important and as it is without doubt the only chance

we will have to do any good it behooves us to work while it is yet day, for, even according, to the nebular hypothesis the earth is apt to be fit for inhabitants a long time yet—so long that for all practical purposes it is an eternity and by the time that time is up man may have become so enlightened that he can take a few bottles of liquid air and a machine for manufacturing food from the elements and jump aboard his "vrill" ship and move to Mars. Or, if the solar system is to remain intact, as Prof. Wakeman thinks reasonable, why, the same thing results as far as our work for humanity is concerned. Either idea is so much better than the old orthodox dogma about this life being of secondary importance, a vale of tears etc., and that each individual, i. e. a very thin part of each individual, the soul, is to move camp, some to play on golden harps and others to fight fire, that we can't see as either of our Torch philosophers' hypotheses is bad, but as there is no way of settling the question at present perhaps the Torch should now turn its attention to things nearer our time and more to our purpose. These theories and hypotheses are certainly important; they furnish much food and exercise for thought and thus strengthen our thinking apparatus, but we must not have too much theory nor waste all our mental force, thus evolved, on things too remote.

We are alive now, and our own generation and our posterity for ages yet to come need our best thoughts. There is great reason for men of thought and men of action to clear the way for a higher and a better civilization no matter whether the world is to stand a few billion years only or forever.

PRAYING AGAINST MCKINLEY.

The Evening Telegram says:

"The Woman's Christian Temperance Association is doubtless composed almost altogether of very excellent and well-meaning women. The general objects of their organization and work are praiseworthy, and deserve encouragement and aid. But, if they will pardon plain, blunt speech, when some of them start an "endless chain" of prayer that Mr. McKinley may not be re-elected, they do quite as silly a thing as any pagan mind could conceive and carry out. The idea that prayer can effect anything in such matters as war or politics is to a practical reasoning mind a grotesque absurdity; but, granted that it may, cannot these good but illogical and emotional women perceive that their "endless chain" will start hundreds of thousands of Republican women to praying for McKinley's success? And are these W. C. T. U. women so superlatively egotistical as to suppose God will hear and answer their prayers, and turn a deaf ear to those of their equally faithful sis-

ters? Because they are especially interested in temperance reform, do they assume therefore to have the ear of the Almighty to the exclusion of all other religious women who are not offended with Mr. McKinley because he has occasionally taken a sip of wine for good manners' sake? It would be difficult to imagine a campaign developing a more ludicrous piece of folly than this.

In the above quotation from the Evening Telegram we wish to call attention to this statement:

"The idea that prayer can effect anything in such matters as war or politics is to a practical reasoning mind a grotesque absurdity."

To be sure it is absurd in war and politics, but isn't it absurd in everything else? A reasoning mind soon sees that prayer is a great curse as well as a great absurdity. How little, narrow and stultified are the minds of those who think that their God is controlling things and that they can help him by going into a fit of prayer. Do men and women need judgement and reason? Do their offspring need mental strength? Does the human race need to progress? Then this witchcraft of prayer must cease and we must cleave to Secular Science and common sense. The Torch of Reason does not uphold the use of intoxicants of any kind but, although in our estimation, Mr. McKinley is setting a very bad example by drinking poison, he is doing less harm perhaps than those who ruin their own reason by the narcotic of prayer and who putteth the bottle (of superstition) to the mental lips of the young and maketh them drunken also.

THE GALVESTON DISASTER.

Such times as these cause those who are left to think.

The ideas that come to our minds as we view the awful disaster from a distance are in their order as follows: relief for the sufferers, cause of the disaster, the remedy.

The sufferers should at once be fully relieved. Every one should be given proper food, clothing, shelter and remunerative work to pay for them and their continuance. But it seems a very sad thing to us that the religious societies are allowed to almost monopolize this function which properly belongs to our government (the people), and that, too, mostly for the purpose of advertising the churches and their wonderful goodness. Here is a good work that all ought to have a hand in, and while thousands of dollars are being collected from the poor but sympathetic people, Infidels as well as Christians, the church gets all the credit and the money collected is distributed without any official record, thus not even giving the donors the assurance that the

money went where needed. And many who are familiar with the crimes of preachers are not very apt to donate at all. Thus the church has always usurped the people's rights and added insult to injury by calling everything bad unless it had the priests' or the preachers' trade mark. We wish that the Sunday school children, the sympathetic, emotional women and the virgin-mother men could be free from these priestly robberies and that the government could learn to take care of its afflicted without any aid from the agents of a god who is supposed to have caused the disaster.

But did the Christian god cause this awful calamity? Was this done for a warning to the people of the United States and to the Texas people in particular? Is there a god and could he have prevented this if he wished? If there is one, and he knows everything, even to the number of hairs on every head, should we trust him any longer? Could a devil do any worse? In the light of modern science the idea of a god is as foolish as the old Egyptian bull worship. We must look farther and deeper for the cause of this great disaster than the bible. We must study physical geography and learn about the great storm belts of the world; the direction these storms generally travel; their history, etc. This will give us a knowledge which will help us more in selecting a home than all the prayers that were ever uttered.

We came to Oregon! Destructive storms are unknown in the Willamette valley. The whole history of the Texan coast bears us out in saying that it is not a safe place in which to live. The New York Sun says:

"On Wednesday, Sept. 15, 1875, a storm broke over Galveston, which submerged half of Galveston Island and left the city cut off from the rest of the world until late on Sunday night. Several hundred tenements were destroyed, churches were unroofed, and the streets were littered deep with debris. Some score of lives were lost in the city and its environs in this gale, and the damage done reached nearly a quarter of a million dollars. The shipping in the harbor suffered severely, one schooner being hurled forty feet inland. In the Strand Market the water driven in from the Gulf by the gale was three feet deep. No railroad trains were run and the telegraph wires were down for three days. Other towns on the Texas coast suffered in proportion. In this gale the town of Indianola, in Calhoun county, with a population of 1,150, was entirely swallowed up by the sea. Two hundred lives were lost and the damage done to property reached a million dollars. Bodies were strewn along the beach for twenty miles after the gale.

In October, 1886, Sabine Pass, Texas, was practically destroyed by a storm on the Gulf in which 247 lives were lost. The Louisiana