

Torch of Reason

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THURSDAY, OCT. 11. E. M. 300.

THE PRIESTHOOD vs. OUR YOUTH

The way Christian ministers take advantage of the weak judgment and emotional nature of youth, is little less than criminal. We can speak from experience, having served a term in the mental prison known as the Christian religion. At one time, having been elected to act as a delegate to a Young Peoples' Christian Endeavor convention, we in common with other poor, weak, unfledged nestlings, were made to enthuse over the wonderful doctrine of holy-ghost nonsense to the great delight and profit of our spiritual guides. We remember well how we pricked all over with what we supposed was the entering in of the holy ghost, when, after a most persuasive sermon on this subject, we all knelt down and went through our little trick of praying that our trainers had taught us.

How cruel and heartless it looks to us now, after having found out for a certainty that the very preacher who took the most active part in that convention did not believe in what they led us poor, young things into believing. At that time we knew nothing about Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall and the revelations they have given the world, and when one young man in the convention, mentioned their names, explained and quoted some from their works, how well we remember the cunning way in which the preachers made it all count on the side of Christianity, how they actually covered up the truth and kept us in the darkness of ignorance.

No one knows our weaknesses better than we, but we truly and with good reasons rejoice that those dark, groping days of ours are past, but

"our heart goes out" to the suspecting youth of our great country, who by the millions are being made to work for the social and financial salvation of a set of lazy priests, under the silly delusion that they are saving souls for Jesus.

How much we lost by being stuffed with idiotic prayers, praises and pious paragraphs, instead of being instructed in the great modern discoveries of Science and the right living based thereon, is beyond our power to estimate; but knowing that we have lost much, and that there are millions of young people who are now being robbed of their birthright by the crafty priesthood, we are establishing a Liberal University in order to do what we can to check the putrid stream of human ignorance and misery which still flows from the dark, mental swamps and quagmires of an ignorant, superstitious age.

GOLD OR GOOD.

Wealth, when used as a mechanic uses a sharp tool, for making something useful, is a good thing, but when used as a morphine fiend uses his poison, to satisfy a thirst for that which destroys, it is a terrible curse. One whose thirst for gold is above his desire to do good, and there are many such, is in a pitiable condition. What though he leaves millions behind for charitable or educational purposes, his own life—the good that he might have done is lost forever. To see the truth of this, one only need ask himself which has done more good, the rich millionaire who dies a pauper to good works, or such paupers as have left legacies of great moral, intellectual, or economic victories. The poet has brought out this idea very clearly in the following:

"He only left millions and millions behind,
But none of the fruits of a glorious mind;
And today his old bones on the top of the hill
Are rotting away like a tumble-down mill.

In life he was selfish and greedy and cold,
And managed all people for silver and gold;
A tyrant by nature, a trimmer by art,
A man without mercy or kindness of heart.

I'd rather be Shakespeare or Goldsmith or Paine,
Who wrote for the heart and the home without gain;
Whose songs through the ages forever shall be
A joy and a bliss to the brave and the free.

When all men thoroughly learn the lesson that they can only enjoy a limited amount of wealth—that all above a certain amount is a nuisance, perhaps the "root of all evil" may wither.

As it is today, and as it has been for ages, those who could use their wealth to the world's best advantage are the fellows who are not, as a rule, the best money makers. Such men as we have in the United States whose daily income

reaches way up into the thousands of dollars have spent their lives in making money, and are not interested in bringing about better conditions, or at least have no idea how it can be done excepting for each one to get rich and this they soon despair of, after their first few attempts to help non-money makers to perform that wonderful fete.

But there is no sense in our complaining at conditions. We, both moneyless and moneyed, have reached this point in our development and the right thing for us to do is to look for causes and take hold of our advantages. Many money makers have excellent philanthropic energies, lying dormant, it may be, but if those whose lives are spent wholly in trying to bring about better conditions are not too antagonistic to the boys with dollar marks all over their clothes, they may after all help serve some purpose in the great march to higher and better things. We are all brothers and sisters—some weak and some strong to be sure—some weak in some ways and some strong in other ways, but whatever we are, we should always remember that any amount of money is worth nothing in comparison to the good, one well-trained, well-wishing, well-doing man or woman can do in a lifetime of constructive, moral, Secular endeavor.

AT THE TOP.

The old competitive, individual independent thinking has been, and is only the A B C of the great Freethought movement. The time has come when the Christian churches have met an enemy a million times more dangerous to their existence. The human family has actually met its Savior! Progressive, Moral, Scientific Freethought Secularism, based on essential, independent thinking, has arisen like the sun of truth, that it is, and is beginning to burn out the filth, which has been gathering for ages in the cesspools of superstition. It has come and can never go away. It will glorify, purify and unify Humanity. To be sure, its devotees will make mistakes; many will prove traitors and battles will be lost and won, but the sun of truth has arisen and can no more be put out than can the great fiery ball, which through ninety-five millions of miles distant from our earth, gives us life and light. Nor can this sun of truth be made to stand still at the command of modern Christian Joshuas any more than "Old Sol" ever did, the fabulous traditions of the ancient Jews to the contrary notwithstanding.

We should not let our minds be troubled; we believe in the truth, let us also believe in its triumph, and so act that its prophecies may be fulfilled.

When we realize that the tendency of those who have been propped up by the dogmas of superstition, is to go into the destructive paths of licentiousness when at first set free, we are apt to worry about the results, but we have now a great advantage in that we have "something to put in the place" of the old creeds. For many years while slowly and painfully the process of gaining independence of thought has been going on, the Christians have pointed with scorn at the children of Freethinkers, who on account of the bad conditions always brought about by mental as well as physical war, have had nothing to guide them or train them like they can guide and train themselves in societies built and managed for the accomplishment of some great ideal. But now there is to be a change and one that will give the children of Freethought a great advantage, for they are to have societies built for the accomplishment of an ideal in which there is neither room for doubt nor hypocrisy. Nor will the elements of enthusiasm, wonder and adoration be lacking in this ideal; and a "blessed assurance" that nothing can ever defeat, the good coming from their work will give the champions of this new religion of Science and Humanity an energy like that which comes to the victorious soldier. Let us then mount higher and higher, knowing that we are at the top of a tall ladder, up and down which the angels (the honest workers for truth and right) have been ascending and descending, and at the same time building, for countless ages. Here we are at the top. Look! Can you see the new Jerusalem with Truth seated upon the great white throne of purified human thought? See the pearling streams and crystal fountains of peace, and joy, and hope, and love! But look below us! See how they fight and struggle over the filthy rags of wealth, and rank and cruel power! How they cheat, and steal and lie, and kill, and devour each other, until it almost seems as though they would all fall and none ever reach the last strong rung we have put in place, and get a view of our beautiful, glorious, indescribable, Secular heaven.

But they're coming! Let us shout to them! Ho, down below there! Let go your bundles of rags and climb fast! Hark! What are they saying? O, yes; it's the same old story. They are praying for us and calling us hard names; but never mind, we must have faith in Humanity. See; there is one who has thrown down his bundle and is climbing fast! Others are following! O friends, if the ladder doesn't break, there will soon be enough at the top to make our dream a glorious reality.