

Torch of Reason

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Notice!

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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, DEC. 20, E. M. 300.

Prayer and Bible not Secular nor Republican.

In the last Torch we presented the very able plea of our Hebrew fellow citizens against the opinion of Attorney-General Blackburn allowing the Lord's Prayer and the Bible to be used and read in our public schools. On another page you will find an equally able plea, to the same purport, from our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens. These articles, together with the leading one from the Oregonian, in the Torch before the last, are so perfectly conclusive that we cannot believe that this perversion of our Secular school system can be persisted in, for they show conclusively:—

1. That the said Prayer and Bible are "sectarian," and that it would be not only unfair, unjust, unlawful and a misuse of public money to impose them upon the sects who repudiate them, as do decidedly the Hebrews, Roman Catholics, Liberal Christians, and the Freethought Liberals who do not believe in the old churches at all.

2. That the immediate effect would be that all those sects, and large portions of our people, would withdraw their children from the schools, which would thus become Orthodox Protestant schools only. But such schools could and would not long be supported by public moneys, and so the public school

system, and our glorious public useful, Secular, republican, American education would come to its end—destroyed by a few fanatic religious sects, who really do not agree among themselves.

That this deplorable result would be realized is evident from the latter part of the Roman Catholic article we print today. This Blackburn opinion is there assigned at once as a reason why Catholic Parochial schools should take the place of the public schools. The Liberal and other objectors are right to the front with similar assurances that if the public schools are not kept strictly secular, they will not be used by them, but will be replaced by Liberal and other schools or none.

For, this is a matter of conscience, as well as of fairness, justice, and pride, and no power on earth can compel children and parents to use and sustain a school in which all of these four grand essentials of free and equal citizenship are violated at once. This word of warning from the Catholics and others must be heeded in time. It is of the utmost importance; for when the great, common, secular, public school goes, the foundation of the Republic goes with it. Universal education is the only basis and condition of safe universal suffrage. Give us nothing but a creedal education, and the state and nation will be more than ever the victims of creedal, selfish, jarring and mutually destructive religious schools, sects and factions. The great balance wheel of the Republic will be gone; and with it all real government of, for, and by the people. Despotisms and Theocracies will rule in their place. A word to the wise is said to be sufficient; and never, as it seems to us, should it be more decidedly so than on this subject, and in this emergency. That word is: "The Republic must be a Secular government, resting upon an impartial Secular, common school education or it will be no Republic at all!"

Now a word as to the way out. This opinion having been given by the attorney-general, who is the legal adviser of the state officers, will remain the law until it is overruled by the courts. It is, therefore, necessary that a case should be found, where a pupil is compelled to take part in, or better, is suspended from the school by reason of non-compliance with these exercises. Such a case should be brought before our courts, so that a controlling legal decision may be obtained. As soon as this opinion is acted upon, such a case must arise, and legal proceedings should be taken. It must not be said that this opinion was assented to by acquiescence. Those who sleep upon their rights lose them; and that danger can only be obviated by

legal action taken at the earliest opportunity.

Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe" Solved.

"The best time to shoot bears is when you see them." The best time to read books you cannot escape reading without serious loss, is when they come flying off the press. Haeckel's new book is unescapeable. It is Truth bringing the world to judgement. It covers cosmology, biology and physiological psychology—and gives us the verdict of Science on them. This verdict is the all important affair to mankind. For all of their religion, conduct of life, and future hopes rest upon that verdict: "Whence are we; what are we to do; whither are we to go;" are the old religious queries; and Science solves them by showing what the world really is; what man can and ought to do in it; and what the results of human life really are; and how they are continuous.

The first and astonishing thing about this scientific solution of Man and his world as presented by Haeckel and other complete scientists, is, that it is the exact reverse of the old Bible and Theologic solution. If one is true, the other is absolutely false: if the Universe is infinite and eternal, it was never created, and will never end. If Man grew out of the natural protoplasm on the earth's surface, he was never created. If he began in and evolved from a lowly and savage state, he was never perfect enough to fall out of any Eden. If he never fell he cannot be restored by any vicarious atonement, and the Christ story is a myth. If the earth rotates daily on its axis, and annually around the sun, and if the sun moves with all its planets 300 millions of miles per year through space, all of which modern Astronomy proves,—that is the total and absolute end of Christianity; and of all of the religions, except the Religion of Liberty, Science and Humanity, which must soon take their place. For, how can there be a heaven or a personal God to live in it, without a stationary earth and "firmament," as the Bible said. How did Elijah and Christ ascend to heaven. How will they and the "New Jerusalem" descend? Where is the hell in which Satan and his devils await "the damned?" The old religious Heaven, Hell, Gods, Devils and Spooks become too silly to pursue further. The first dawn—the first blush of Science scatters them all into the real nothingness of myths and allegories. They are not. They never were "Coelum non esse": Heaven is not,—said Bruno, and with heaven all of its belongings disappear.

THE CHANGE OF IMMORTALITIES.

But now, if all of the changes in the Universe, including life, mind, soul and ego, are equivalent correlates or resultants of each other—matter and all of its changes or properties being indestructible, ever convertible, without end or beginning—how about our immortality? Under this law of correlation or of "substance," as Haeckel names it, this venerable, selfish and ignorant superstition gets no quarter whatever. There are many people, however, who still retain an interest in this "be all and end all" question, as they have an unscientific way of thinking of it. We shall therefore condense the 10th, 12th and 11th, [as that is the better order] chapters of Haeckel's book into three articles for the first page of the Torch. In this number you have the gist of his chapter on "Consciousness," which begins the story. The next will be on the "Law of Substance," or the correlation of the "soul," or ego. The last will be on Immortality [Egoistic]. We hope in the Torch thereafter to present an article on Immortality [Altruistic], which will close the "Immortal" series.

If human science, thought and fate are of any account, these articles will be worth a million times the cost of the Torch. If they have in them some "hard words," and views that seem dubious to you, the reading of the whole book is the remedy,—and that we will send to you at the publisher's price \$1.50. It is the true Book of Genesis. It entirely reverses and takes the place of the old Bible in that regard.

Nebular Hypothesis Shattered.

BY DANIEL K. TENNEY.

Not long ago the authorities in charge of the Lick Observatory, by means of a reflecting telescope, photographed the celestial orbs, or tried to. It is claimed, by some nebulous thinkers, that the pictures thus obtained confirm the truth of the nebular hypothesis. The result of this astronomic endeavor is thus stated:

And especially among those monstrous and wonderful clouds of faintly glowing gasses, called nebulae has this telescope proved its exceptional power. Vast spirals, immense gulfs of blackness surrounded by luminous walls, intricate patterns of nebulous traceries, as delicate in structure as the finest lacework, besided with stars, interlinked rings of light, gleaming like the phosphorescence of the sea, but each so stupendous in circuit that the whole solar system and many solar systems together, might be embraced by it; orbs of pale fire, whose gigantic whirling motion and whose gradual compaction into new suns, under the pressure of gravitation, are all but visible. Such are some of the marvelous shapes and appearances that these photographs show.

In other words, they have been photographing the clouds in far off