

The man who finds a truth lights a torch.

How is truth to be found? By investigation, experiment, and reason.

Every human being should be allowed to investigate to the extent of his desire—his ability. The literature of the world should be open to him—noting prohibited, sealed, or hidden. No subject can be too sacred to be understood. Each person should be allowed to reach his own conclusions and to speak his honest thought.

He who threatens the investigator with punishment here, or hereafter, is an enemy of the human race. And he who tries to bribe the investigator with the promise of eternal joy is a traitor to his fellow men.

There is no real investigation without freedom—freedom from the fear of gods and men. So, all investigation—all experiment—should be pursued in the light of reason.

If it be good for man to find the truth—good for him to be intellectually honest and hospitable, then it is good for others to know the truths thus found.

Every man should have the courage to give his honest thought. This makes the finder and publisher of truth a public benefactor.

Those who prevent, or try to prevent, the expression of honest thought, are the foes of civilization—the enemies of truth. Nothing can exceed the egotism and impudence of the man who claims the right to express his thought and denies the same right to others.

It will not do to say that certain ideas are sacred, and that man has not the right to investigate and test these ideas for himself. Who knows that they are sacred? Can anything be sacred to us that we do not know to be true?

For many centuries free speech has been an insult to God. Nothing has been more blasphemous than the expression of honest thought. For many ages the lips of the wise were sealed. The torches that truth had lighted, that courage had held aloft, were extinguished with blood.

Why should we pursue the truth? and why should we investigate and reason? and why should we be mentally honest and hospitable? and why should we express our honest thoughts? To this there is but one answer: For the benefit of mankind.

The brain must be developed. The world must think. Speech must be free. The world must learn that credulity is not a virtue and that no question is settled until reason is fully satisfied. By these means man will overcome many of the obstructions of nature. He will cure or avoid many diseases. He will lessen pain. He will lengthen, ennoble and enrich life. In every direction he will increase his power. He will satisfy his wants, gratify his tastes. He will put roof and raiment, food and fuel, home and happiness, within the reach of all. He will drive want and crime from the world. He will destroy the serpents