

Torch of Reason

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Notice!

A pencil mark here denotes that your subscription will expire with the next number. You are earnestly requested to renew so that you may receive the paper without interruption. We have decided that it is best for all concerned that we do not send papers longer than the time paid for unless so ordered. This will prevent any loss on the part of the Union and we will know just where we stand. We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

THURSDAY, MAY 20, E. M. 297

Reason.

Secularists say a great deal about reason, and it is right that we should, but it is quite important to know what reason is before we talk too much. As we understand it, the knowledge that we gain comes through our senses, i. e., through seeing, hearing, and feeling.

Now when we have gained knowledge of a thing in this way it becomes possible for our minds to bring up the mental picture thus formed and hold it independent of the object or action perceived by the senses. Then the mind has several powers after these powers of memory and conception have done their work. Imagination is one of these powers and consists in combining different mental pictures so as to form a new and complex mental picture. Analysis and classification are others, and then comes the last to be evolved in the individual as well as in the race, judgment and reason. Of what does the process of reasoning consist? Let us see. As reason depends upon judgment we must understand what judgment is. We see a tree from our window and we say that it is a maple tree; so we see that seeing in our minds that a thing is so, and being ready to affirm it, is an act of judgment.

Upon the truth or falsity of our judgment depends the value of our reasoning.

Come, let us reason together.

Our judgment says, "All maple trees produce sweet sap;" and again it says, "That is a maple tree."

Now comes the conclusion that that tree produces sweet sap and, acting on this reasoning, we might go and tap the tree.

Let us try again. All infidels are bad men. Mr. Jones is an in-

fidels; therefore, Mr. Jones is a bad man. Now if the first and second propositions are correct, then the conclusion is correct, and the whole thing is sound reasoning.

We might reason thus: All infidels are good men. Mr. Jones is an infidel; therefore, Mr. Jones is a good man. We believe that in the last two examples, at least, the reasoning is very poor for in both, the first propositions are not true.

There are two kinds of reasoning. One kind is called deductive, and is the kind used in the schools of learning before Bacon introduced what is known as inductive reasoning. In deductive reasoning we start with a general proposition that is accepted as a fact and reason from that down to some particular one, for example, the Christian people of today accept the proposition that there is a God, and, reasoning from this they come to many conclusions that others do not. They also accept the Bible as the word of God, and from this they reason that Christ is the son of God, etc.

Inductive reason, which is very rapidly taking the place of the old faulty deductions, commences at the very foundation and takes as the first propositions particular facts which are well established, undisputable truths, and reasons from these to general truths.

The above examples are deductions, and when the propositions are first reasoned out by induction, they may become a sound basis for valuable syllogisms, but the danger lies in accepting an untruth as a first proposition, and therefore we should always resort to induction when there is any doubt of the soundness of a deduction and if its propositions cannot be proven by inductive reasoning the conclusion should not be accepted as the truth. The question arises in an inquiring mind, "What causes the light?" Then the inquirer may reason thus: There is an all-powerful God. God said, "Let there be light;" therefore, light came into the world. Now this is deductive reasoning, and if the inquirer ever comes to doubt his first proposition viz.: There is a God. He might apply his reason to that. If he used deductive reason again he might again come to a conclusion that would finally become unsatisfactory.

The fact in the case regarding the proposition "there is a God" is that it is an unreasonable statement for there is no known fact from which to use the only sure proof that it is true, and is therefore a mere matter of supposition or belief. Science deals in inductive reason and when ever a thing cannot be positively proven, the true scientist states his idea as a theory. How much more then should science be trusted than theology?

One or two more syllogisms and we are through. Men who knowingly state unproven theories as the truth are not to be trusted. Theologians talk of a God, which they know to be an unproven theory, as if his, her, or its existence is really true; therefore, theologians should not be trusted.

The truths of science and morality brings happiness into the world. Happiness is what we all want; therefore, we should accept the gospel of science and morality and help to remove every obstacle in its way.

Are these deductions logical or are they based on poor judgment?

The Board Meeting.

At the board meeting of the Oregon State Secular Union, which was held last Saturday, among other important matters settled, was the question of the examination of applicants for lecturers and teachers. It was decided that there shall be a board of examiners consisting of the president of the Oregon State Secular Union, who is to be chairman, and two other members of the executive board, which are to be appointed by the president.

As there are several applicants we expect soon to announce the successful candidates and hereafter keep a standing list of our public speakers.

Another important item was the adoption of application blanks for membership to take the place of the old membership blanks. The application blanks read as follows:

Application Blank.

.....Ore.,E. M. 29..
To.....Organizer.

I hereby make application for membership in the Oregon State Secular Union, and I agree to live an honest, moral life, and assist this union, and my local Secular church, all in my power, and to advance the cause of Secularism.

Name

This application is to be accompanied by 25c for three months' dues, which is to be refunded in case the applicant is rejected.

In this way we will avoid getting in members who are detrimental to our work and make the act of joining our union mean more than it has in the past. It has been decided to print the amended by-laws and we will soon be prepared to furnish our lecturers and others with material that will give all our friends the information necessary to understand our work, and in this way we expect to greatly increase our number of workers in the next few months, and those who do not join us in this grand work will always regret that they did not assist us when we most needed their help.

Every Man at His Post.

Those workers who have been working in the freethought ranks just for notoriety or as missionaries for free loveism or spiritualism, will withdraw their support from the Oregon State Secular Union on account of the clause referring to them in our amended by-laws, therefore real Secularists should stand firm. Every man should be at his post, ready to do the best he can himself and to secure the help of others who will gladly join our ranks now that we are on the right track. Look out for lies! Many who do not like our ethical basis do not like anything that is good and have only been in our ranks heretofore because of their hatred to the good that is in the Christian church and because we had no moral test of members. It has been said that liberals cannot organize, and we honestly believe that that class can not, but Secularists can and will. Our success is sure, but the work will be much more rapid if all true Secularists can realize the evils of procrastination and at once rally around our standard. Our organization stands for home, for purity, for freedom of thought, for science, for progress, for everything that is good! Every man at his post and a great victory is won for humanity!

The University.

It has been thought best to close our work one month earlier this year than was planned. This seems necessary on account of the large amount of work in getting ready to build. This closes the first year's work of the Liberal University, May 28th, E. M. 297. The school has increased up to the present date to nearly twice the number we started with and the students and patrons all seem very well pleased. We are sorry to cut the work a month short, but it seems best for all hands to be putting every effort forward that is possible, in order to get a more suitable place in which to commence our work next year, and we feel that it is the right thing to do.

The committees met last Friday; the location of the building was settled; the bids for the lumber have been called for, and, as soon as school is out, lecturers will be put in the field to carry the glad tidings of great joy to all people that a savior is born in the city of Silverton, and to solicit funds to build a new manger. We hope that all Liberals will do their very best to encourage the young champions that come out against the giant wrong of the ages, and do all in their power to set this institution on its feet. In order to get our building finished by the fall term, we must all do our share, and we