

# Torch of Reason

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### We Must Destroy the Incentive.

The priests of religion are not the only priests that are a curse to mankind, and in our secular work we should not only try to scatter seeds of truth, but we should pull up every weed of error, even if some of them are difficult to handle. The orthodox guardians of the supposed soul of man are perhaps no more of a nuisance than the orthodox guardians of our health. The modern physician, if he is what he should be, has to combat and compete with the old ideas of purge, bleed and blister, just as secular lecturers are obliged to fight the old ideas of hell, blood atonement and miracles. We hope the time will come when not only public speakers will confine their work to things which agree with science and advanced methods, teaching us how to live happy lives here, but when the business of our public servant, the physician, will be to keep us well instead of bleeding us after we have already been afflicted.

Then we have with us the priests of politics, those lawyers who care not for law, justice or right, but who, like the orthodox preacher and orthodox physician, works for what he supposes is for his own interest. He will sell out his client, plead what he knows to be false, or act the baby to affect the jury. If he is a good (?) fraud he will be elected to represent us perhaps in Congress, and be forever afterwards an "honorable" man.

The only remedy that we can see for the horrible conditions these false priests have brought us to, is in some way to do away with the incentive for preachers to pretend, doctors to poison and lawyers to lie. How can we do this?

### Christians vs. Christianity.

Many of the ideas that are said to have been brought to light by Christ are not practiced by Christians, and in fact are strenuously opposed by most of them. The Sunday laws which are now being forced upon our people by Christians are directly opposed, not only to common sense, but are just opposite to the ideas expressed by Christ to the Pharisees in regard to the Sabbath day. Then Christ was supposed to say, "if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, etc." Now his saying this seems to imply that their right eyes would be apt to offend some of them, or what was the use of this all-wise master mentioning it; and where are the Christians who have plucked out their right eyes? We never have seen one who has plucked out a right eye or cut off a right hand, and we are quite sure that these members have in many cases given offence, for how often we hear the Christians calling themselves "vile worms," and in many ways showing that they themselves believe that their organs have offended them.

Then again, how many cases do we find of Christians being divorced and marrying divorced wives, which is absolutely against the teachings of Matthew, V—32. Nearly all Christians swear in court, and in making out a simple affidavit they nearly all disobey the scriptural injunction, "swear not at all." Where is the Christian who will "resist not evil?" The Christians themselves would consider a person who would not resist evil a fool, and our advice is to look out for the law if you trespass on a Christian's rights. There are but few Christian ministers who really "love their enemies," and as far as "giving to them that ask" and "turning the other cheek" is concerned, they no more practice this than the Infidels, and would be foolish if they did under present conditions.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men," says the god-man, but when a collection is taken up for the poor heathen, or for any other purpose, or when a rich Christian gives alms, people seem to find it out very easily. In fact, there are no people in the world who sound a louder trumpet before them when they give, than the followers of him who is said to have forbidden such work. The secret alms-giving idea seems to be bankrupt and the reward promised for secret alms-giving never comes, but a person is rewarded by himself and his friends if he works.

One of the very plainest instructions is in regard to prayer: "And when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues (churches) and in the corners of the streets, that they may

be seen of men." The preachers have found that they can do better to disobey Christ's instructions and pray to be heard of men. The closet plan is a failure; there is no money in it. God will not answer these closeted prayers and Christian ministers know it.

Everyone knows that the Christians are as anxious to make money as anyone. Many of them have money in the bank and whenever they can get good interest on a loan they seem pleased just like other people; and yet the holy book says, "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Is there a Christian who is so foolish (or so wise) as to "take no thought for his life?" Where is one that does not think of what he shall eat or what he shall drink, and the clothes that he is to wear? Most of them seem to be as anxious about these things as we Secularists, in spite of the fact that swallows and chicken-hawks do not run seeders, harvesters or threshing machines, and the lilies of the field do not wear pants. We wonder what Christ, who said, "judge not, that ye be not judged," would say if he heard a Methodist preacher passing judgment on the Secularists? Many Christians really believe that they are trying to be Christ-like, but they would not for one moment attempt to do what he is supposed to have taught, or do as he is supposed to have done.

According to some of the accounts given in the bible, if he should come here today as he was, or as he is represented, ignorant of the modern ways and worship, and went to teaching and acting as he did then, he would be taken for an anarchist and probably justly so, for he would turn over the money schemes; stop the preachers praying in public; break the holy Sabbath; condemn the preachers who have divorced wives; and the giving of alms in public; prevent Christians from laying up money for a rainy day and raise the dickens in general.

Both ancient and modern Christianity is many centuries behind the times, and what is now rapidly taking its place is the more practical and up-to-date ideas of Secularism, the Scientific religion, the religion of Progress, the religion of Humanity.

### Tramps.

The beggars that are thronging our cities and pestering our farmers are of two classes; those who want work and can't get it, on account of inability, and those who do not wish to work. Many people condemn and hate both of these classes; some feel sorry for the first class, while they despise the last, and others sympathize with both. Without prejudice let us reason from cause to effect and perhaps we may discover what should be our attitude.

What causes the first class? Perhaps no greater cause can be found than blind faith in an all-wise and

loving God. Weaklings are born into the world with their poor brains befogged by inherited faith and credulity and are thrown upon the world with no ability except to worship. These we pity from the bottom of our hearts. Poor things, they were lost when they were born and no matter how many times they are "born again" they will remain lost, and lost forever.

The second class are mostly men who were born all right, and in many cases have had a good chance for school, but being thrown on their own resources before they had experience enough to overcome difficulties that always arise, they become discouraged, give up, think there's no use in trying and are lost. This class might be redeemed by proper surroundings, and this is the class that should awaken the liveliest sympathy; not in a narrow, help-one-man way, but in a way that means the removal of the cause, and the ultimate earthly salvation of all. Have you no sympathy for this man who will not work? Let us look at his history: As a boy he was considered intelligent, but being deprived of parental care, he hired out to work for a brute of a man who shamefully abused him and finally when the boy retaliated he was cursed, perhaps beaten, and sent away without being paid his scanty, hard-earned wages. Perhaps he tried again with no better success, for there are many well-to-do men whose only thought is to get all they can out of a hired boy, and when the limit is reached the boy's mind is fixed; he will not work; he is shunned as something evil; he himself is convinced that he is no good; he is a tramp. To be sure, it takes more to make some people tramps than others, but most any one can be brought down by favorable conditions, and instead of being satisfied with blaming these poor unfortunates, or wasting our energy praying for them, we should get at the root of the matter, remove the cause and save the boys.

### How Many?

We know of a number of intelligent people who have given up working for the good of humanity and are at present working for money and money alone, and when we consider the pressure that has been brought to compel people to do this, we do not feel so hard toward them as we otherwise might. The Christian church is a great, strong organization which is forcing men and women, with terrible force, to play the hypocrite and act the Christian part for what there is in it.

One of our deceives has unearthed the following from one of the supposed saints. This heaven-bound traveler's words will speak for themselves. He says in a private letter, which he never expected would fall into our