

hands, these laughable, yet awful words: "I have been teaching the bible class in the Congregational Church since my arrival just for the sake of standing up and talking loud and being admired by the sisters, but last Sunday the Superintendent called for Brother — to lead in prayer and I saw that it was a golden opportunity to make myself conspicuous, so I prayed loud and long. I flock with the Christians and am a hypocrite but its \$'s I'm trying to get and I will let some one else do the good. I have been poor on honesty long enough, so now I am looking to business."

The above was actually taken from a letter written by one who is supposed by his Christian friends to be a humble and devout follower of Christ, and the question arises in our minds, how many of the members and ministers of the orthodox churches are playing the same game? No doubt many of the sisters and probably the superintendent are trying to fool him and each other. Isn't it ridiculous?

There are, as we have said before, two classes of Christians, viz., the humbugged and the humbuggers.

In one of the large cities of the far West there lives a doctor who uses the Christian churches as an advertising medium. He goes to prayer-meeting and gives in his testimony; he drops money into the hat; he writes for the Christian papers and by so doing he makes money, but at the same time he is an infidel, reads all the infidel papers and laughs and jokes, when he thinks it safe, at the "fool stories of the old god-book." This business of playing the hypocrite and making money is one of the greatest evils of our time, and our Secular Churches must come to the rescue, gather the remnants of honest, moral, intellectual people, and save our inheritance of the wisdom and experience of our forefathers or all will be lost, and civilization will cease to be.

No Need to Trust in the Lord.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

I am interested in the Liberal cause in Oregon and especially in the Liberal University. I hope it may be built and sustained by the friends of mental liberty. I wish to contribute a small amount. Enclosed please find \$5 for the building fund and 50c for six months' subscription to the TORCH OF REASON. When the University is about completed I will send \$5 more, unless times get so hard that I can't raise that amount. In this event you will have to do as the preachers say—"trust in the Lord," which, if you do, I think the building would never get to be one foot high.

I will say to our Liberal friends of Silverton, accept my thanks for your undertaking for the Liberal cause. Yours respectfully,
Wisconsin. A. VANDERPOOL.

Defence of Agnosticism.

Mr. Wettstein, in the TORCH OF REASON of June 10th, in reply to a previous article of the writer, concludes thus: "The agnostic attitude, then, in relation to immortality, is not consistent, because if the doctrine that man lives after death is irrational, as they concede it to be, they should reject it. If rational, they have no moral right to pose as Agnostics."

Now Agnostics do not concede that the doctrine that man lives after death is irrational; neither do they assert nor believe that it is rational. But they do assert that all arguments which have been made in favor of the doctrine are irrational. It is not a logical sequence that immortality is not a fact, because all arguments which have been, and probably which may be, made in its favor are untenable. This I consider to be self-evident; yet Mr. Wettstein makes his fundamental mistake right there.

His whole article might be disposed of merely by asserting another self-evident proposition, namely: that it is impossible to prove a negative, which he endeavored to do by his article. In doing so he attempted a logical absurdity.

Mr. Wettstein said: "If we devour an oyster or a chicken, can we not prove, or is it not a self-evident fact, that after we have eaten and digested such oyster or chicken, that then this individual oyster or chicken exists no more? So if man is cremated, or inhumated, it is a self-evident fact that he, as such individual, exists no more." This would be true if the soul, if there is any soul, disintegrated with the body, as the body does; but as it is asserted that the soul does not do so, Mr. Wettstein's comparisons are not warranted and are not sufficient. In his comparisons he has entirely left out a consideration of the immortal soul—and yet, that is the whole question! Mr. Wettstein further says: "The problem, if so it must be called, resolves itself into the old simple schoolboy question, "What is man?" If man is an animal, a living, physical, organic structure, and not simply a bag of wind, a breath of air, or less than a soap bubble, then it is self-evident and an absolute fact, that when such animal or living organism dies, and is again decomposed into its segregate chemical constituents, that then this animal, or man, as such being and form, has vanished, or ceased to exist. If man is an animal, as science plainly classifies him, then the animal is the man and the man is the animal. Without the former the latter cannot exist. If, then, the origin of man is not known, nor thinkable, separate from the origin of this animal, it is self-evident that without this animal structure man cannot exist." Mr. Wettstein has again made the mistake of not considering the

existence of the soul—I mean an immortal soul. Those who believe in the existence of the soul and its immortality, define man, approximately speaking, as consisting of a body and a soul. The proving of the animal origin and nature of the body of man, does not disprove the existence of the soul, as animals are asserted to have souls—which they undoubtedly have, if man has—so that the controversy reverts back to the position occupied by Mr. Wettstein and myself before he had shown the animal origin of the bodies of mankind.

Mr. Wettstein should bear in mind that those who assert the existence of the soul and its immortality, also assert, as they logically must, that the soul did not come into existence with the body, but always existed. He apparently overlooks the fact that logic forces us to the conclusion that the soul, if there is any, must have existed eternally, before and after death.

I asserted in my previous article that the Oregon Secular Churches would be failures if they declared that this life ends all. I did so for the reason that materialism is insufficient upon which to base a code of ethics and morality. One reason it is insufficient is that if this life ends all it is not worth living; and if it is not worth living, to be consistent, materialists should commit suicide. It is very patent that there is more pain than pleasure in this life, and that such being the case, the logic of materialism is suicide. Therefore, agnosticism is the only consistent and rational guide to conduct. This I consider to be pure Secularism, which, as stated by John Jacob Holyoake, the founder of Secularism, or rather the originator of the term, neither denies nor affirms immortality. Immortality can be neither proven nor disproven, and I believe it will be ever thus. It will ever remain a matter of belief and not of evidence. The moment there is evidence, positive and final, either for or against immortality, that moment will be the knell of human existence in this world. I say this not as a prophet, but as a student of logic. JAMES R. ALLEN. Ohio.

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