

## Torch of Reason

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### The Glad New Song of Redemption.

If the Christian Churches would cling to that which is good, and leave the poor old stranded wrecks of religious phantoms, all good men and women could join, and what a mighty good could be accomplished. But they cannot leave their supernaturalism, for it is the foundation on which all Christian organizations are built. Take away the foundation of a structure, and it falls. Many of the older foundation stones have been removed, and the whole Christian faith now rests only on the great cornerstones of superstition and a few central props.

We had some idea, at one time, that Secular salvation would come through the natural liberalization of the Christian churches, but it never will, for a Christian church can never be entirely free from Christian dogmas. To be sure, the liberalization of the Christians and their churches is hastening the time when we will be free, but when that time comes there will be no Christianity and no Christian churches. Churches there may be, but they will be new, and better, more instructive and happier places, with the old name of church changed, or made to mean something that represent that which is good and true, instead of that which is evil, and which requires experts, trained for the purpose, constantly working, to make the people believe, even after a lifetime of trying. The different religious sects think each other wrong in many, to them, essential points; but it is the boast of many that Christians are coming closer together. In one of the cities of Oregon, the Catholics held memo-

rial services in the forenoon, which were attended by Protestants, their churches being closed for the purpose, and in the afternoon the services held in one of the Protestant churches were largely attended by Catholics. Thus the old hate and prejudices are giving way to common sense, and we hail the happy day when all will be united, for then they will have shown the falsity of many of each other's superstitions and will only believe those which they then hold in common. These superstitions will be, by that time, pretty well thinned out, both in number and intensity of belief. The belief in a god, the miraculous nature of Jesus and the inspiration of parts of the bible, will probably be the last moss-grown rocks on which the foundation of the united churches will rest. Then the number of devotees will grow less and less. Empty churches will be put to other and better purposes, and finally the dark nightmare of superstition will have passed and all civilized people will sing a glad new song of redemption.

Glory be to our brothers, and to their sons, and to all earthly hosts. As it was in the beginning, 'tis not now, and never shall be, world with an end. AH MEN!

### Leaving Out the Connection.

One of the old arguments against our work of tearing down the old superstitions, is the priestly dodge of declaring that we just take part of a verse or chapter of the bible and "leave out the connection", thus misrepresenting God's holy word.

This may have been done, both innocently and fraudulently, but it is not necessary at all in order to show the absurdities, misrepresentations and lies of the priests who wrote the bible. Put in all the connections you choose, Mr. Preacher, and the story of creation is unscientific and absurd. Fix up the connection to suit yourself, and the commands of your god to rob innocent men, women and children and foully murder them, only a few slaves being kept for the pleasure of his holy priests, do not commend themselves to people who dare to think. Does it need much of a connection to realize the absurdities of the Mohammedan or Buddhist miracles? What grammatical connection is then necessary to make clear the story of the devils going out of a man and getting mixed up with four-legged swine and causing them to take to sea-bathing? What connection is needed to make clear the (wrong) story of the loaves and fishes, the holy ghost-story, the idiotic tale of Joseph's dream of a holy thing, or the account of the graves opening and the dead people coming out and running about? It is certainly wrong to leave out the connections, but we mistrust that there

are some connections that some preachers are afraid to meet in public. There are scores of absolute contradictions in the book called the word of God that remain so after all the connections and explanations are made, and the fact in the case is that the preachers and priests are guilty of leaving out the connections themselves, while those whom they accuse are honest Freethinkers and truth seekers. Who is it that takes a text and talks hours about it without giving the connection? Who is it that picks out a little part here and another there and fixes it up to suit the poor, hoodwinked worshippers? Ah, nothing would suit Secularists more than for all the preachers to become honest and to be careful of their connections.

### Gum and Tobacco.

It is claimed by good medical authority that the constant action of the muscles used by habitual gum-chewers often causes softening of the brain, and in every case lessens the victim's power of deep, consecutive thought. The same result, of course, is noticed in habitual tobacco-chewers. The tobacco, however, not only injures its victim by the constant use of the muscles employed in chewing, but it adds the injury done by the nicotine. This poison, mixing with the saliva, is swallowed in eating and in drinking, and the system soon becomes full of it. As nicotine is a nerve poison, the brain, which is the center of the nervous system, is so affected, and especially in the young, as to cause absolute inability to think other than the most concrete thoughts. In smoking, the evil caused by the action of the muscles is lessened, but others are added. The pipe stem acts as a collector of the poison, which is often unconsciously sucked into the mouth in quite large quantities. A drop of the poison thus collected will kill a cat almost instantly. The paper used in cigarettes causes an irritation, and other poisons which are often used in making paper are taken into the system. Of course the nerves of the stomach are injured. This causes indigestion and its many evil results.

The evil does not stop with the first victim. The children of weakened parents are always less vigorous in mind and body than they might have been, and are very often affected so much as to be a burden to themselves and their parents—poor derelicts on the ocean of life.

Whatever may be said of those who have reached the age of maturity and have this "old man of the sea" riding them down, the

young should be protected. How quickly would we all cry out against a groceryman who would sell the children poisoned crackers or tainted meat which made the family sick; but the young of this great, wise people are day after day allowed to chew and suck and gnaw and blow their own brains out, lessen their usefulness and rob themselves of the power of producing healthy offspring and future generations of the happiness that comes from healthy brains in healthy bodies, while not many seem to know the remedy nor care for the result. Let those who claim to be interested, cease teaching such lessons as are taught in orthodox Sunday schools—lessons about mythical beings who once did miraculous things, and turn their whole attention to teaching the unadulterated truths of science, and no miracle will be needed to save the world from evil.

### Another Challenge.

There are professing Liberals who are not willing that those who differ from them, on any important question, should have the right to advocate their ideas; at least these infidel Infidels will turn all their guns loose upon one who dares to cross the path of their hobbies from any direction. Now this is not real Liberalism, as we conceive it, and we can't see why men can not honestly differ and yet be friends. If we were running a meat market, and some conscientious man should advocate a vegetable diet, thus lowering our sales of meat, should we try to injure him? We should honor those who are honestly trying to do good, even if we differ from them. Our only fight should be against the ideas which we think erroneous, and our weapons should be reason, argument and persuasion. The fact that many are led by their prejudices, instead of by reason, creates the tendency for all workers to lapse into a heathenish, comatose state, avoiding everything that MIGHT make some one mad.

Don't let us do this. Let us be definite in our work, and every one, good-naturedly, "get in" and FIGHT for PEACE with all his might. The saloon system is a subject near to many a Christian's heart(?) and one which affects many heads, both Infidel and Christian; but with the exception of a few bold outbursts, we hear but little said about what many of us consider one of the giant evils of our time.

Our friends at a distance may not even know that we have such a thing as a saloon in the city of Silverton, but although we are sorry to say that we have, we are proud to say that there is only one. We are acquainted with a professedly Christian city of about the same size which has eight saloons and