

## Torch of Reason

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### FALLACIOUS ARGUMENTS.

One of the most fallacious arguments in favor of a future life is summed up in the following Christian quotation:

"Man alone, of all earthly creatures, asks, 'Can the dead die forever?' and the instinct that urges the question is God's answer to man. No instinct is given in vain."

To one who is not of an analytical turn of mind, and to the young, whose judgment is yet but feebly developed, this kind of argument(?) has great weight, and one of the most productive works in which we Secularists can engage is the overthrow of just such reasonless statements; for when one who has accepted such as par-excellent reasoning, finds that the foundation of one of his dogmas is easily shaken, he begins to doubt the truth of others, and doubt is the beginning of wisdom.

The Bible writer says that "the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward". Now we think much that the Bible writers have said is erroneous, but we believe that the one who wrote that was correct, and we might now vary the quotation and make it read thus: "Man alone, of all earthly creatures, says that the dead have no more a reward. And the instinct that urges the statement is God's answer to the question, for no instinct is given in vain." This transposed statement shows without doubt the weakness of such attempts to prove man's immortality, but it is also full of error. It uses a term, on which its

truth or falsehood must rest, that contains a mere unsupported supposition. That term is the word "God". Then again, an instinct, according to modern scientists, is not "given", but is a matter of evolution; and, last, but not least, we all know that some instincts are really detrimental and worse than "vain".

It makes us very indignant and oftentimes sad to think of the wholesale slaughter of innocent minds by those whose stock in trade is nothing more than cunningly devised and whitewashed lies made to appear like great, "divine" truths.

### CLAMS AND BIRDS.

There are human mollusca as well as the kind that humans like to masticate; but, although it is our duty to give to the world all the facts we can in what is said to be "the proper study of man," it must not be supposed that we blame the lower order for being what they are, any more than we credit the higher; for let us remember what our great fallen champion said, and what we have so often repeated in the Torch, that "men are what they must be." If human clams live in the blackest dirt of the mud-flat of ignorance, whose fault is it? It is certainly not their fault nor their ancestor's fault, any more than it is the fault of the hog to "rubberneck" at the outside world through a hole in the ground, in his particular inlet of the great sea. But the study of clams and birds helps us to be of a higher order, and with this end in view let us stretch our specimens on the Torch of Reason table and examine their parts.

Human clams, like their bivalvular miniatures, are forms of life with but few parts. They are soft, and yet many of them are tough. There are but few things they know how to do, and they never change their place of worship (labor is worship), nor their minds, for they haven't any. With their headless necks stretched, their legless bodies in position, their almost nerveless flesh insensible excepting to the lowest animal feelings, they take what little slimy food is forced upon them by the filth-laden waves of their home. And though the clam-dealer shouts in their very ears, Clams! Clams! Clams! they heed him not until they are in his sack on the way to the market, from which no traveler ever returns. And they have never thought how much more pleasure they might have had and made if they had had heads, legs, and wings like the birds.

There are human birds as well as those "of a feather," and though many are too rapacious, others shun the full light of day, and some sing songs that grate on the sensitive ear; they are birds just the same, and do much more to make the

world bright and happy than do the wingless (reasonless) clammy clams. They are at home high in air, above the little things that jar the clam and so easily make him shut up; and yet they can descend to a dark nook in the earth, and extract from the soil or from the flowers many a choice tit-bit of happiness. They are beings of parts, and are always ready to change their position when their higher instincts warn them of danger. They build their homes (their belief) high above the mud-flats of their wingless (reasonless) neighbors, but when the cold gusts of winter storms beat upon them, instead of drawing deeper into the mud of superstition they flit away to a more congenial atmosphere, where they build new homes and teach their little ones the art of flying.

Lord Chesterfield says: "If you improve and grow learned, every one will be fond of you, and desirous of your company; whereas, ignorant people are shunned and despised." In other words, the birds, those who do something to make the world brighter and happier, are honored and beloved. They are happy singers of the music written for Mother Nature's older children. But the clams, those who do nothing but exist and spout mud at passers by, go into the clam sack, "unwept, unhonored, and unsung."

Young man, young woman, keep out of the mud! Do something! Make life worth living! Don't be a clam!

### EDUCATED FOOLS.

There is nothing in the world that develops people so rapidly as work and study at the same time in proper proportions. One who is educated in books alone, is indeed in a pitiable condition. His ideas are all theoretical, and he is fully as unfortunate as a "hen on a hot griddle," or "a fish out of water." At every turn he fails, for practical knowledge is absolutely necessary in the discharge of any of life's duties. On the other hand, one who has only labored with his hands, becomes a mere mechanical slave. He cannot apply his labor scientifically to anything, for he has not learned the great principles which can only be gained by taking advantage of what many others have learned and written in books and papers for our benefit. Work and study go together, and furnish the two arms of the lever by which we must lift ourselves to higher and yet higher things. Much depends on the fulcrum of our natural abilities to be sure, but with a good foundation of inherited strength we must still apply the lever in the proper way, or our life's endeavor will be a flat failure.

The Liberal University proposes to teach the students to work with their hands as well as to learn what others have done; and we believe that the young men who are now working on the building, to pay for their winter's tuition and board, are receiving one of the most valuable parts of a real education. To

make a good joint, to frame a window, to cut a rafter, furnishes cultivation for both hand and brain, that the solution of a problem in algebra cannot furnish; and although algebra and kindred studies are very valuable, the mental strength thus secured must be applied to practical work of some kind, or the student becomes one who can anticipate but not enjoy, a thinker but not a doer, a would-be worker without the ability to work, and what is commonly called an educated fool.

### PRAISE GOD?

When the Christians build a school or a church they continually thank their god for their progress, and we Infidels, robbed(?) of that great privilege(?) must turn our thankful feelings in a different direction. We are succeeding in a wonderful way, to be sure. Our precious Pearl has returned safe and sound. He is in excellent health and spirits (not holy nor alcoholic ones) and brings the best news that we could possibly receive. Our success is as certain now as anything can be. We met Mr. Geer in Portland and together we ordered a large bill of building material, and soon a carload of shingles, lath, etc., will steam into the city and materialize into a Free-thought institution.

Sunday evening, October 1, Mr. T. B. Wakeman, who, according to Mr. Geer's statements and according to all we can learn without personal acquaintance, is one of the grandest Freethinkers of our times, will lecture to us. This will be a great treat for the Silverton people and a red-letter day for our University.

As our building, for which we have labored and waited so long, assumes its permanent form, with its spacious study rooms, recitation rooms and hall, we do feel as though we ought to thank some one, for we certainly could not have done this great work alone. Whom should we thank but each other? Let us thank Mr. Geer for his untiring efforts in interesting and enlisting the very best talent in the world. Let us thank the noble men and women of the East who have stretched out their hands toward our work and blessed it. Let us thank our Silverton friends who have stood by us through evil as well as good report, and let us thank each other in advance for the work we are willing and able to do in the future.

How much more reasonable and beneficial it is to thus thank those whom we know deserve our thanks than to superstitiously mumble a half-thank and half-fear prayer to the imaginary benefactor and devil combined whom Christians call god. Let us learn to love and praise and thank each other, and the fires of gods' hells and the follies of devils' heavens will pass from the minds of men and the many builders who are now working on "mansions in the skies" will learn to labor for a material heaven on earth. To thank every benefactor of our race and to despise everything that detracts from the adoration of the true saviors of mankind. To