

**Our Ideas Endorsed.**

Editor TORCH OF REASON: Allow me to sincerely thank you for your article in your issue of Feb. 4, entitled "An Ethical Basis." You are a young man and your journal a new advocate of Free Thought and I am much gratified to see you take such a noble stand in favor of clean and moral Secularism. Especially I am glad that the University is to be run on a high moral basis. It ought to take a much higher ethical basis than any of our orthodox schools, for our theory is different from theirs. They teach that the effect of sin and crime can be washed out, at any time, by the blood of Christ, whereas our doctrine is that there can be no escape from the penalty of violated law. The Silverton University must teach the rising generation that comes under its influence that the only way to avoid the penalty of sin is to commit no sin. The University must also teach its students that they must do right because it is right, not for the purpose of gaining an entrance into some mythical heaven in some future state of existence.

The churches this winter in many places are making a special effort to convert people to orthodox religion; let Liberals everywhere labor to convert the world to simple honesty. That is the kind of revival the world needs. If it may be called "religion" it is the kind of religion that every young man needs that starts out in the world.

President-elect McKinley has just appointed as his secretary of the treasury Mr. Lyman J. Gage, the president of the first national bank of Chicago. Mr. Gage was born some 61 years ago not far from where the writer of this letter was born. He was a poor boy. He never had any orthodox religion but he had what is much better the religion of honesty. He commenced life at the foot of the ladder of advancement and has been constantly ascending, because he could be trusted in every place in which he was employed, and he now has the esteem of all who know him, be they rich or poor. For that reason thousands who do not agree with his political views will be pleased to see him a member of President McKinley's cabinet. His religion is about the same as was Abraham Lincoln's and we are glad to say that for the last two years he has been a reader of the Free Thought Magazine. And that is the kind of men we hope to see the Silverton University send out into the world. Men who can be trusted. Men who love humanity. So I am glad to know that "The Torch of Reason" and the "Silverton University" are each to represent the highest phase of Liberalism. Yours truly, H. L. GREEN.

—Editor Freethought Magazine.

**Very Satisfactory.**

Editor TORCH OF REASON: Miss Nettie A. Olds, the young and brilliant Secular speaker, was here two evenings of last week, and lectured to large audiences each evening. It seems to me she charmed and satisfied the people here as no other agnostic lecturer has ever done before. I think all who heard her agree as to her eloquence, correct reasoning and kind treatment of those who differ from her in opinion upon Secularism. We hope to have her with us again soon.

We have had a very satisfactory revival meeting here, it closed the next evening after Miss Olds' lectures. It was a combination of Free Methodist, Southern Methodist, Soul Sleepers and Cumberland Presbyterianism. It was in full blast for about four weeks. Total results 0. Very satisfactory indeed.

Very respectfully,  
E. P. C.

Coburg, Ore.

**Prefers Ethical Basis.**

Editor TORCH OF REASON: We constantly hear some one asking what we stand for or what principle we advocate. No doubt Editor Hosmer had these same things in mind when he wrote that article, urging the Secularists of Oregon to define our ethical basis. We want it understood that we represent active principles, and to prove this to the world it will be necessary for us to formulate our platform. There can be no reasonable objection to this, and I for one, cry "more power to your arm." We cannot afford to be misunderstood on such vital points. We can well afford to be without the help of that class of individuals who accept certain tenets of our belief under the impression that liberty is license. Give the workers in our cause something tangible to struggle for and you will certainly see a quickening all along the line. We must put ourselves and our thoughts on a practical basis as well as a just one. Any basis, so long as it is not undeniably bad, is better than none at all.

The harvest indeed is plenty and the reapers few. Some are reaching out after the grain in a way that does you good to see and contemplate, but alas, how many are gathering in nothing but the dry husks and chaff of life. We want to show the world that we are living for something. To do this effectively, we must know "where we are at." There is such a thing as pinning things down to too fine a point for practical use. We have the teaching and experience of centuries, and the brightest and best thought of the present to guide us and with such aids we ought to be able to make our position clear and strong.

Z. J. MARTIN.

Poplar, Ore.

**From Vale.**

Dear friends: I enclose herewith two dollars and twenty five cents. One dollar from myself, and one dollar from my wife, Mrs. Minerva Johnson, for the "press fund" and the twenty-five cents for a three month's trial subscription to the TORCH OF REASON for J. W. Sevey, Vale, Oregon. I also enclose subscription to the university fund. I wish I were able to make it one hundred instead of ten dollars.

I can assure you that I am well pleased with the TORCH OF REASON and the Little Candle and I am doing all I can to get subscribers. I have been the means of getting you several trial subscribers, but so far I have not been able to get any yearly subscriptions owing to the hard times.

I hope sometime to have the pleasure of meeting Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Hosmer. I already feel as though I were acquainted with them as I heard them so well spoken of by Mr. Geer last fall when he was here, and since then by our county school superintendent, F. J. Stanton, and Mrs. Ella Wasson a classmate of theirs who has been teaching our public school this winter, and boarding at my house. Mrs. Wasson is a church member, but not fanatical or bigoted. She has taken part with us all winter in our secular meetings and Sunday schools. She will probably teach our school again next winter.

I should also like very much to meet that tireless worker for intellectual freedom, Miss Nettie Olds. I wish we could have several hundred as good as she is scattered throughout the United States. I hope she will find it convenient to visit Eastern Oregon on a lecture tour in the near future.

I wish I were able to send a couple of my children, Edwin and Viola, to the Liberal University. I shall try to send one of them anyway this fall.

We are doing what we can here for the spread of Freethought, and although we are not making the gains we would like to, we are still making our influence felt. The Rev. James Lower (Methodist) has been holding protracted meetings both at Vale, and up the river at school district, No 24, and although he has plead at every meeting for converts to Christ he has not had one come to the mourners bench. He preached in one meeting that I attended that God answered nearly all of his (Lower's) prayers and as a sample he told us how he prayed at a revival meeting at Canyon City, Grant county, for one hundred and fifty converts during that revival and how God had answered him by giving him one hundred and fifty-two, being two extra for good measure I suppose. I don't see why he didn't do some of his

praying on the same line here. Perhaps he thinks God don't answer prayers as well in Malheur county as in Grant county.

I enclose you a letter to my daughter Viola which speaks for itself. She will send copies as requested. Viola never misses an opportunity to speak a good word for the TORCH, Little Candle, or the Little Freethinker edited by Aunt Elmina. With best of wishes I remain yours for the cause of truth.  
JOHN E. JOHNSON.

**From Iowa.**

Dear Secularists and Co-workers: As I am secretary of the Secular Sunday school at this place and have been asked to send in a report. I report as follows:

Our lights are kept trimmed and burning. The Secular society here, which signifies sociology, is growing in interest. The members realize that the true basis of education is science; also that education is the means of developing a purer, a higher condition of thought and life. Good thoughts and pure motives are the instruments that bring about a higher type of mankind.

We discuss important questions write essays, and recite recitations. We think it a very social circle where everyone has a chance to exchange ideas.

We meet at the homes of the members once every two weeks. Though we are not many in number we feel that we are the friends of progress and justice, and that nothing can stay the inevitable tide of progress.

MRS. ALLEN MOFFITT.

Newton, Iowa, Feb. 6, E. M. 297.

Editor TORCH OF REASON: Yes, let us have an ethical basis, definite and positive.

The world is our country, let to do good, be just, and promote righteousness, be our religion.

"Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you; and do not unto others that which ye would that others should not do unto you."

This is a good foundation to build our code on.

F. S. Matterson.

Turner, Ore.

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