

The Methodist's Claim.

The article in last week's issue headed, "The Methodists Save a Saloon Keeper" is said by the pastor to be somewhat erroneous and it is no more than fair to give him a hearing.

He claims that our informant has misrepresented things, and out of a membership of 106 of his church only six signed the petition; that four of these had their names erased before it was presented to the judge and that the two remaining petitioners were relatives of the saloon keeper. He also claimed the methodist leaders had nothing to do in getting up the petition, and that their church does not sanction the selling of liquor anywhere.

A Refutation.

An advocate of freelove, writing for a freelove paper, states that the president of the Oregon State Secular Union "has either changed his personal habits since last November or is a hypocrite," and the person seems to insinuate that while in Chicago last November, I used tobacco or liquor or both. This is an injustice for I never took a drink of liquor in my life and have never used tobacco in any form, nor do I ever intend to.

I cannot imagine what the lady means and why she should write against me in this way. She is mistaken, for I believe her to be honest and surely she would not intentionally tell a falsehood. I was one of the advocates of the ethical basis for our organization a long time before it was adopted and now I realize that the adoption of it was a grand stride in the direction of right.

When I returned from Chicago last fall I was more than ever satisfied that the doctrines of freelove were wrong. I associated with the people of that belief just enough to satisfy myself they are mistaken. I am confident that many of them are honest in their ideas and Mr. Harman and I have always been on good terms but in all of our conversations the subject of freelove was never mentioned. He need not think that I agree with him or that I ever had any ideas favoring freelove. I am perfectly satisfied to let him believe as he pleases and want him to allow me the same privilege.

I want all people to know just where I stand. I was an advocate of the ethical basis before it was adopted and now that it is adopted I propose to stay with it and I can do so without being a hypocrite.

PEARL W. GEER.

The Ethical Basis.

While I differ from you on some details of the matter I entirely sanction your main contention, viz., that a moral test should be required of all persons seeking to go on the Sec-

ular platform. How any one with the good of Freethought at heart can think otherwise is more than I can understand. I do not believe in Phariseism, gossiping, or in meddling with other people's business, but character and principle in Secular leaders is entirely different from these.

We have assailed the churches for their low estimate of morality compared with faith. We have boasted that the Secular philosophy is superior to the Christian religion. Then it is not offensive self-righteousness to demand that those who advocate it shall be a credit to its principles. While I have never made myself a censor of any of my co-workers, I have always maintained this doctrine.

Franklin Steiner.

Des Moines, Iowa.

SECULAR NEWS.

The Oregon State Secular Union will have three lecturers in the field in a very short time. Miss Kate De Peat and Mrs. M. P. Hosmer will travel through Eastern Oregon and Idaho and Pearl W. Geer will go to Southern Oregon and California.

B. F. Underwood and Franklin Steiner will be in Oregon and Washington this Summer and C. Elton Blanchard will make us a visit in a few months. Every Secularist should do something to make their visit a success and help to forward the grand work.

The Silverton Marine Band gave a splendid free concert at Liberal Hall last Friday evening and were greeted by a large, appreciative audience. After the concert, Captain Allen's side of the Y. P. S. S. C., and the band boys were treated to a strawberry supper. An hour or so was passed in dancing and every one had a general good time.

Remember the drama at Liberal Hall, Silverton, Oregon, Saturday evening June 12.

Send us a subscriber for the Torch of Reason.

The Executive Board of the O. S. S. U. held a regular meeting last Sunday evening in the Liberal Hall. The members present were Pearl W. Geer, Pres., E. L. Smith, Secy-Treas. J. E. Hosmer Supt. S. S. S., Nettie Olds-Haight and Minnie P. Hosmer Vice Presidents.

The Sultan of Turkey refuses to receive James B. Angell as U. S. Minister because of his known connection with the Christian religion and with the Board of Missions that maintains and directs numerous American missionaries in Turkey. Probably the next thing on the program will be for our Christian (?) nation to go over and, with our big guns, kill off a few of the heathen and teach them the right road to heaven.

Prof. O. C. Lee of Texarkana, Ark. is much interested in the Liberal University. He sent this week some fine specimens of centipedes, scorpions, tarantulas, etc.

Little Points.

If God is everywhere, where is the Devil?

How can a person who has read the history of the world's sixteen crucified saviors select one that just fills the bill, when they are all so near alike?

A good mess of greens once in a while is better for a dyspeptic than prayer or the laying on of hands.

Some people are so small that they are willing to sacrifice the opportunity of building up a great cause in order to gratify some little personal spite or satisfy a whim.

All should eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge even if the priests do damn us for it.

Board Meeting.

There will be a special meeting of the Executive Board of the O. S. S. U. at Liberal Hall Silverton, Ore., Tuesday evening June 15.

PEARL W. GEER,
President O.S.S.U.

The Inconsistency of Agnosticism.

(CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE.)

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. What constitutes this animal? Organic structure—an aggregation of organs, nerves, arteries, muscles, brains, skeleton, etc.—which in combined activity, conditions favorable and the automatum in perfect order, produce life, sensation, consciousness and mind. Such an organism can live, see, hear, feel, remember, reason and propagate the race. In the absence of one or more, or all of these organs or parts, man is imperfect, unsound or does not exist at all. This complete organic structure causes the various activities, functions and processes, both physical and mental. This is the cause and basis of personal life and mind—remove this, nothing remains, and the effects, of course, must cease also.

When, then, the entire body after death is again disintegrated, and this complex structure, once constituting man has vanished from existence, is it not the wildest dream and delusion to insist that the identical individual, in the form of a "dual man" or "spirit" still lives; that man can exist and live during all eternity without this physical structure as well as with it; that something, nobody knows what—the equivalent of nothing—which cannot be seen, felt, weighed, nor analyzed into tangible constituents, can be a living, breathing man or woman and all it implies; and to insist that a living "dual man," "soul" or "spirit" emerges from the body when life ceases; can anything be more unreasonable and visionary?

Discarding all inherited and acquired superstition and faith; especially disregarding our individual hopes and desires, which cannot possibly be a factor in the inexorable economy of natural events, and confining our beliefs strictly to what we know, we must come to

the inevitable conclusion that when a man dies he is dead and remains dead.

Here the preacher generally enquires: "But do you believe you will die like a brute?" I answer: are we not born like a brute?

There should be no poetry or sentiment in the agencies or motives that decide our belief, but our sole aim should be to discover the truth in all things, and the above facts are final and absolute. Here our knowledge ends. When man dies nothing is left to re-constitute his personality. And it is not true that something "emerges" from the orifices of man's body when he dies. Absolutely nothing "escapes" to constitute a duplicate man—not even "his breath leaves him," which is simply air drawn into the lungs and forced out again, but with the last efforts remains in the body. A dying man placed upon a delicately adjusted pair of scales weighs not a grain less after death than before. What folly, then, to invest an airy nothing with the form and functions and characteristics of the most complex and highest product of nature's laboratory. What a waste of material, what a waste of energy, what a waste of cogencies, if complete men and women can exist during all eternity without physical organism as well as with it!

Where there is no stomach there is no animal life. Where there is no animal life there is no human life. The crudest monad, sac or cell, as well as the higher forms of life, all have stomachs as the basis of their existence; in fact this is the nucleus from which the organism evolves. The digestive process is a necessity to all forms of animal life and without it life is not possible. Spiritists must therefore prove the existence of spiritual digestive organs, spiritual gastric juice, spiritual food and digestive processes, or withdraw their belief from the arena of science and debate. An intelligent idea of what constitutes spirit entity, spirit form and spirit mode of existence not being forthcoming, it places their faith on a par with Romanism and fetichism.

Those affirming must prove. When we see a man die and cremated, we know that this is the end of this man because we know absolutely nothing to the contrary. We affirm and prove it. So those affirming spiritism must prove. If an entity, "spirit substance" must be subject to an analysis. This "dual man" must have parts and organs or he is not a man but a myth.

Neither will it do to plead that certain phenomena have been witnessed which can be explained on no other hypothesis. This is the theist's plea for a God whose being and existence is involved in infinitely greater mystery than nature itself. If the existence of a disembodied human being is a natural impossibility then it is self-evident that "spirit" explains no phenomena, but greatly mystifies it.

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. Ten million affirming is of no more importance than one. If rational they have no moral right to pose as agnostics.

OTTO WETTSTEIN.

Rochelle, Ills.