

## Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

Published Weekly by the Liberal University Company, in the Interests of Constructive, Moral Secularism.

J. E. Hosmer, ..... Editor  
P. W. Geer, ..... Manager

Entered at the postoffice at Silverton, Oregon, as second-class mail matter.

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

One year, in advance.....	\$1 00
Six months in advance.....	56
Three months, in advance.....	25
In clubs of five or more, one year, in advance.....	75

Money should be sent by registered letter or money order.

### Notice!

A pencil mark here denotes that your subscription will expire with the next number. You are earnestly requested to renew so that you may receive the paper without interruption. We have decided that it is best for all concerned that we do not send papers longer than the time paid for unless so ordered. This will prevent any loss and we will know just where we stand.

We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

THURSDAY, DEC. 23, E. M. 297

### The First Psalm.

Blessed is the man that walketh not  
In Reverend David's godly rot,  
And fights with might the pious skimmers  
Who teach that honest men are sinners.

But blessed indeed is every man  
That does the very best he can,  
And has obeyed whate'er he saw  
Was right in line with nature's law.

And though what this good man may do  
May not just suit the godly crew,  
Yet, like a stalwart tree he'll stand,  
A blessing to his native land.

But those who play the hypocrite—  
Care for their brothers, not a bit,  
Are like the chaff within the wheat,  
Or worse; they spoil the grain we'd eat.

Therefore the good must now unite,  
Turn priestly darkness into light,  
Truth and right we'll learn to cherish,  
And then inhuman ways will perish.

### O Thinking People, How Long!

There are many heathen tribes who are now in about the same condition, mentally and morally, that the Jews were in when Christ and his disciples performed their miracles. These ignorant Jews were then in just the right condition to receive the foolish ideas of casting out devils, turning water into wine, raising the dead, walking on the water etc.; and now that civilized people are gradually outgrowing these childish stories, the poor heathen is being stuffed by those from civilized countries who are slow in comprehending the real truth. The following little article from a Christian paper shows how the thing looks even from a Christian standpoint:

"In the 'General Missionary Department' of the Missionary Review we find this significant item: 'How painful almost to the shocking is the contrast between the tidings which come from the 'Foreign' departments of our societies, and those from the 'Home' depart-

ment! In well-nigh every case, while the former tells continually of deep interest, growth through conversions and need of enlargement, in the latter the main mention relates to lack of funds and the like. That is, tho among the heathen the outlook is most cheering, where Christians abound, the prospect is gloomy. O Lord, how long!"

What do the Christians mean by "How long"? If they want to know how long before the world will be converted to Christ, we believe we can inform them. It NEVER will be, for as fast as people become truly civilized they will discard the silly stories and beliefs of divine beings and their sons' tricks. We would like to ask thinking people (not a god) how long before we are to be rid of these old superstitions that are still distracting the minds of a vast number of people in civilized countries from Science, true morality and real progress, and plunging the poor heathen into deeper darkness. Thinkers, we must do something besides thinking. We must act! Give us teachers instead of preachers! Give us schools of Science instead of god-houses! Give us students instead of believers in myths and the world will soon be converted into such a happy place, that our lives will be like real happy dreams instead of bloody, ghostly nightmares of religious hate.

### The World Moves.

Two or three hundred years is a very short time when we are speaking of the history of the world, but see what a mighty advance civilized man has made in that time! It is almost beyond our comprehension, and yet we are more astonished when we see the possibilities that lie in the near future. We see by reading ancient and mediaeval history that formerly our advance was very slow and that at times it was checked and even entirely stopped. We have at times retrograded, and the main factor in holding us back has been divine worship—crafty priestcraft—sacrifice of meat, time, money and mental energy to the gods and their "anointed".

We soon get used to seeing new and wonderful inventions. The great changes in the thoughts of us common people, in regard to religion, rights of rulers and sources of poverty and crime, are overlooked oftentimes, but what a mighty change is going on! We are taking part in this change, and what possibilities there are for those who have had their eyes opened by science! "The harvest is ripe and the laborers are few," but they are increasing and what a glorious harvest may we reap for humanity, before we go to rest, if we can only appreciate and take advantage of our opportunities.

### Church and Stage.

Extracts from a Lecture Delivered at Unity Church, Salem, Ore., by Rev. W. E. Copeland.

The remarks made last Sunday by one of the Salem pastors on theatres and theatre-goers remind one of the fashion since the early days of Christianity to condemn actors as, by virtue of their profession, doomed to hell, and theatre-goers as captured by Satan.

No wonder that the early church denounced the theatre, for it was devoted to the old gods; in it the Christians were compelled to fight with the lions, and the sands of the arena were often sprinkled with the blood of the martyrs. When the dissenters broke away from the old established churches, the theatre was again an ally of their persecutors. Whatever the church approved the dissenters condemned.

New England was settled by Puritans who believed that the earth was a vale of tears, who accepted the grimmest kind of Calvinism and lived in the darkness of fear, which forbade smiles. New England has had a powerful effect in molding the religious thought of the United States, on the whole, for good; but as regards amusements, for ill.

Times have changed. People will no longer be dictated to by the preacher. He must have reason on his side or he will be worsted, and in the case of the theatre he is unreasonable. You must either admit that amusement is legitimate, for which God has provided a place, or else ban all amusements. But he replaces popular amusements with others less dignified. Some of the Sunday schools are about to give a fairy extravaganza, which is a play, and those who take part are actors. Parents who would not allow their children to dance, look on with approval at calisthenics performed to dance music and a dance step.

The question then is, Shall we ban the theater as a harmful amusement? We must remember that the word theater covers performances from a minstrel show to a choice opera; from a broad farce to an exalted tragedy. To say that the theater is an invention of Satan has no more sense than to say the same of the printing press. And for that matter the church is not clean, for Rome calls all dissenters agents of Satan, and the dissenters retaliate on Rome and on each other. Say the worst you can of the theater, you can find in churches, as their history is recorded, more of devilishness than ever found its way onto the stage. When one remembers the rivers of blood which the priests have caused to flow, when you recall the auto-de-fe, the dragonnade and the tortures of the inquisition, actors appear white beside the priests. How dare these

cruel men, with blood-dripping hands, denounce actors? The immoral actor is a thousandfold better than the pious hypocrite, who attends church regularly, prays loudly, but robs the widow and orphan and with biting slander blasts the fair fame of some brother or sister who differs on a point of theology.

We are told that the stage is degraded. Why? Because it has been called bad names by Christian zealots, who have made no effort to elevate the drama. The church can make the theater an ally of morality and that true religion which Jesus declares consists in loving one's neighbor. On the stage today are men and women who lead honest, earnest moral and even devotional lives.

But you cannot pray in a theater? No more can you in a bank, a butcher shop, or a drug store. Indeed the atmosphere and surroundings of the theater are more conducive to prayer than those of the business house, where men and women are cheated. I could more consistently offer prayer before one of Sol Smith Russell's comedies than before an Oregon legislature begins such sessions as we witnessed last year. Nobler thoughts are aroused by many comedies on the stage than by the farces played in state legislatures and the national congress, where winning wealth and power outbid honesty and devotion to the popular good.

### How God "Does It".

Last week, the leading editorial of the New York Christian Advocate was a curiosity. It gravely recited how a young girl came from the west to Gotham, got a job as typewriter, worked a month, became sick and was taken to a hospital. She was a devout Christian, as most sickly girls are. The learned doctors of the hospital found it necessary to perform a very delicate operation in order to save her life. She got well and the Advocate urges that therefore the "good Lord saved her life".

This is tough. The girl had doubtless bombarded the throne of grace for months without any relief, praying till she was seasick to get well. Instead of getting better she got worse and worse till she went to the hospital where the men of science performed the operation that rescued her from death. Now the bald headed rabbi of the Christian Advocate jumps up and down shouting that "god did it". We notice that when the sensible Christian gets real sick, he sends for the doctor instead of the priest. If he dies the doctor did it, but if he gets well, up bobs the clergy shouting that "God did it".

W. E. J.