

devils, evil spirits, enemies of man.

After a time there developed a class of individuals who pretended or really thought they had special power and influence with the gods. Let us be charitable to believe that enough of coincident occurred to fix an honest belief in their minds of some mysterious power. Here originated priestcraft, one of the greatest burdens the race has had to carry, and I lament to say it, but seemingly one of the evils of mysticism which clings to the human race in wonderful power—the source and propagator of superstition and bigotry, the producer of mental slavery and intellectual lethargy—the pious priest of modern supernaturalism.

As an illustration of how completely this class of individuals has submerged reason in the minds of their followers, we have only to examine older catechisms of the Roman church.

When the concept of spirit had been fixed in human thought all manner of theories were invented to answer the most natural of inquiries. The study of ancestor-worship shows us that the Egyptians cherished the belief that spirits took up their abode in the bodies of various animals. These animals became sacred. The cat, monkey, crocodile, birds of various kinds, as well as numerous other animals, have been the innocent subjects of such mysterious notions. In Egypt at one time, in certain localities, it was a capital crime to kill a cat. History tells us of a battle in which the enemies of Egypt won a great victory, because each soldier of the front ranks carried a cat, and an Egyptian would rather suffer defeat and death than injure this sacred animal—the keeper of the spirit of some loved relative—a mother-in-law, perhaps!

At the beginning of this paper the writer offered the opinion that the influence of mysticism has been, on the whole, detrimental to the race, but one good that has come therefrom should not be overlooked. If the sun, moon and stars were gods, it was a good thing to watch them. The movements of the gods should be studied. The Chaldeans were noted star-watchers, probably because they thought the moon the principal deity instead of the sun, an historical fact our modern social reformers can use to good advantage in advocating woman's rights.

This star-watching led to the building of temple observatories, some of which in Babylon were said to be set with great accuracy, so the sun would shine to the western end on the day of the spring equinox. Those early star-watchers originated the zodiac, and from their work of trying to find out the ways of the gods, which the bible says are past finding out, the great science of astronomy was originated. We cannot dwell longer upon

the discussion of primitive life with its great store of facts relative to our topic. Let us see what mysticism has done for religion, both ancient and modern.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

NOTE.—Address the "Old Doctor," care of C. Elton Blanchard, editor Current Thought, 802 Ansel Ave., Cleveland, O.

#### Woman and the Methodist Church.

Zion's Herald says of the proposal of the women to boycott the Methodist organization because of the refusal of the General Conference to admit women to its membership: "There is not the slightest ground for the threat. It is as futile as it is silly. There is no restlessness or discontent among Methodist women, much less a boycott." If it were not for the women there would be practically no support of Methodism nor any other creed in the United States, which effectually disposes of the alleged futility and silliness of a boycott upon the part of the female members of the organization. In fact, if the proposed boycott should go into effect immediately, there would be no salaries paid to the clergymen of the denomination next year, which of course, would put a stop to all preaching, for it is a peculiar fact that no minister ever yet felt called by the Lord to preach Christ and him crucified without suitable financial remuneration. The claim that there is no restlessness or discontent among Methodist women is offset by the fact that for several years past they have been conducting a vigorous campaign for admission to the General Conference—a campaign which in the end will undoubtedly prove successful. —[Ex.

#### Divine Revelation.

We have seen that a divine revelation is such only by virtue of communicating to us something which we cannot know without it, and which is in fact undiscoverable by human reason, and that miraculous evidence is absolutely requisite to establish its reality. It is admitted that no other testimony could justify our believing the specific revelation which we are considering, the very substance of which is supernatural and beyond the criterion of reason, and that its astounding announcements, if not demonstrated to be miraculous truths, must inevitably be pronounced the wildest delusions. On examining the supposed miraculous evidence, however, we find that not only is it on general grounds antecedently incredible, but that the testimony by which its reality is supported, so far from establishing the inferences drawn from the supposed supernatural phenomena, is totally insufficient even to certify the actual occurrence of the events narrated.—[Anon.

## Correspondence.

### Merry Christmas.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON AND ITS MANY READERS:

It gives me great pleasure that I can wish the workers and many readers of the TORCH OF REASON a merry Christmas. I hope that the TORCH will illuminate more and more from week to week until its light is seen entering into every home in this great land of America, and I sincerely hope that its light will become so strong that it will penetrate into even all the Christian homes and all the churches of the land, as the most, if not all of them, have very poor "light". I know very well that if the TORCH was read by a few of the members of each Christian church it would not be long until the bright light would shed its little torches equally in every community. I therefore hope for the welfare of all humanity, and especially the laity of the Catholic church, whose torches are hardly ever trimmed, and as a rule they must use the old tallow candle, as their spiritual advisers tell them the old candle is good enough; that too much light is dangerous and an injury to their souls. My dear Catholic friends, I sincerely sympathize with you, one and all, and only hope that the illuminating light of reason will one day, and that in the near future, shine over you all.

I once more, dear readers of the TORCH OF REASON and its workers and managers, wish you a long life and happiness. Keep The TORCH burning until the light penetrates and clears out all the darkness where ignorance and superstition exist.

Dr. L. S. STOLL, Ex-Catholic.

### Arouse, Ye Liberals.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Enclosed you will find twenty-five cents, for which send me ten cents worth of Tract No. 2 of Scientific Wisdom, and for the remainder Tract No. 3, that will be printed in January. I think this plan of Scientific Wisdom a grand undertaking and with the encouragement and support due it from Liberals it will be a decided success. I intend to contribute to its support as much as I possibly can and will distribute all the tracts I can get. I earnestly hope that all Liberals will take an interest in this plan and try and make it a success. Very little from each one would accomplish wonders. It don't require a big donation from all, but what it does require, and what it deserves, is the united support of the Freethought element. "United we stand, divided we fall." Let us unite and work in harmony, and prove to the world that this planet can be governed without any supernatural agency. Liberals should

and must take an interest in these things in order to accomplish anything. There are enough Liberals at the present time in the United States to put the Freethought plan on a firm basis if they would only take an interest and do what they can. So many, either through fear or indifference, stand idly by watching the struggling few, refusing to lend aid, yet in full sympathy with the movement. Some no doubt through fear of ridicule refuse us aid. To these I would say, better stand the ridicule and scorn of selfish and prejudiced Christians today than be subject to the tyrannical laws that would be enacted in the near future should Christianity be allowed to gain absolute control of our government.

Washington said, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and only by eternal vigilance and unceasing work will we accomplish our grand object. Washington helped to frame a liberal form of government, and it remains for Liberals to maintain that form of government and prevent the Christians from incorporating God in the constitution. Christians from far and near are wakening to the fact that Freethought is making a grand stroke to free the country forever from ecclesiastical control, therefore they are doubling their efforts to crush us. Shall we let them? Never! Liberals, arouse, unite! Remember that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Yours for progress,  
M. P. GIFFORD.

### Ninety-Nine Men Wanted.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Enclosed find money order, for which please continue the TORCH OF REASON to my address.

Permit me to make this proposition, viz.: I will be one of one hundred who will give fifty dollars toward the University fund. That would make five thousand dollars, a sufficient sum to erect a respectable building and show your good works in the way of teaching and turning out good scholars. See what influence this proposition will have. I will pay any time when the one hundred is assured.  
Respectfully,  
P. C. MOSIER.

### Scientific and Materialistic.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

Enclosed please find one dollar for another year's subscription to the TORCH. I am very well pleased with it. It is both scientific and materialistic in its views, and that is about the highest testimonials I could pay any Journal. Some time ago I promised you some scientific and Freethought books for the University Library. You will certainly get them, but as the charges are very high, almost one third what the books cost, I have about concluded to visit your town sometime next summer in which case I will bring them with me. If I cannot make the trip I will send them by freight. Wishing the TORCH every success, and the live Freethinkers of Silverton a Happy New Year, I remain, Yours for Mental Liberty,  
JOHN McARDLE.