

MATERIALIST COLUMN

Edited by Eliza Mowry Bliven, Brooklyn, Conn.

Rev. Guy Fitch Phelps' statement on having sent me a challenge to debate is all right so far as it goes, but he seems to have forgotten the fact that it was agreed we would discuss our differences through the columns of *The Wood River Times*. But Mr. Phelps failed to put up his side of the argument. I do not expect the myth God to stop the war; if there was a God, there would not have been any war. I am only trying to find out what your pet God is doing for humanity? Where does he hold forth and what is he composed of? Our Rev. Sir cannot prove there is a God, and there could be no son Jesus without a father. The Bible could not be the inspired word of God when there is no God. This also knocks out Mary's little story wherein the Holy spook played such a prominent part and Joseph's mince-pie dream is crooked. What more have we to wrangle about?

This agent of the great three-in-one wishes to know the cause of the war. I would say Greed, Ignorance, too much Spirituality and not enough Humanity are the main causes. It is news to me that the materialists all believe there is a God. That's the kind of joke that makes me smile. What would be our object in trying to persuade others to dash the foolish belief if we were silly enough to believe it ourselves?

Our opponent makes the statement that "No one can really believe in his own being without believing in antecedent being-God." The fact of our being here in flesh, blood and body is proof enough that our forefathers, back to the beginning of man, were produced the same as we were. We do not require a Bible or Bible God to tell us we had great grand parents. Here is where our "boasted" reason plays a part. What is reason but foundation of all our knowledge of facts? Our eyesight is the strongest of our five senses; yet it would deceive us, if reason did not come to the rescue. We look at the stars above and they look no larger than the ox eye daisy in the meadow, still reason teaches us they are as much larger than this earth, as this earth is larger than a baseball. Reason proves that the Bible is full of lies from cover to cover; and every crime recorded in the criminal calendar of today is sanctioned and upheld by its God. When anyone makes the wild statement that all the bomb throwers, brewery men, saloon keepers, cut-throats, thieves, liars, safe crackers, white slavers and other wrong doers too numerous to mention are all materialists, I pity such an ignorance. All such a person lacks of being chief of the Ananias Club, is a few feathers in his hair.

As to hating preachers or anyone else I can only speak in my own behalf, and can truthfully say I do not belong to that low-brow-type of people that hate, as I do not hate anyone. Some of my best friends are preachers and their families, and they know I and my family are materialists. But they are too broad minded to condemn all as wholly bad who differ with them in their religious views. Such people are sincere in their belief. No, Mrs. Warfield does not need any Bible God, or Bible Dope; I had that kind of breakfast food three times a day until I was twelve years old; then modesty took the place of curiosity and one cold morning I lit the fire with the Holy Book.

There is a world of difference between morality and Christianity. Mr. Phelps had as well ask can there be any moral government without Grimm's Fairy Tales. Religion and morality are two entirely different things.—Religion is a superstitious devotion to things unknown and beyond demonstration, while morality is the science of social conduct.

Certainly matter (or material force) can produce conscience, reason and affectionate nature.

Maud V. Warfield.

In October, 23rd *Silverton Journal* I find much to praise and little to criticize. Richard Tischer's Letter claims that Materialism is all negatives and below Unitarianism; yet admits that it helped him out of the miraculous and supernatural priestcraft superstitions. He sees the necessity of that uplift into scientific knowledge. He does not see yet that this is only the first part of our work, and must be done before we can start the second part. Probably most materialists and other freethinkers never get any farther. They are glad to be free from those superstitions, church follies and fears, and are generally good citizens because that makes friends and success in business; and they like good neighbors, health, justice and happiness, so help toward the general welfare and morality fully as much as good Christians do.

But most people, especially the women on the farms, prize the getting together on Sundays, having a little chat with acquaintances, listen to music and hope to hear something that will make the burdens of life easier

to bear, or learn something interesting, useful, beneficial or instructive. But most preachers, especially priests, only stuff them with the worthless husks of theology, where capable lectures might teach them so many things valuable. Rev. Tischer's article on "Humanism," the article "Turn on the Light" and Peter Redford's two columns on the Farmer's Churches are all in the line of promoting the beneficial for this life, and are excellent, with this exception. They have not entirely given up the use of the word God, which implies a supernatural power back of human intelligence, and encourages the people to continue, relying on supernatural helps, instead of full dependence on the cultivation and use of their own human abilities. They all think of God as they were taught; a spirit without body, but capable of doing everything by miracle; so they think that after death they too can also be spirits and know and do things by miracle. So they believe in the Bible God. But faith in prayer and miracles is weakening, except among the ignorant classes, so priest-bound they have no chance to learn the facts that would set them free, till materialism teaches them why there is no God. Then they will see the Bible is a fraud, and priests are deceiving them about purgatory, hell, heaven and forgiveness of sins, etc. Then they will drop the confessional and praying and attend the kind of Sunday meetings that Tischer, Radford and the materialists are to establish everywhere. But in addition to lectures, music and social entertainments there must be free discussions every Sunday also. The more who take part in these discussions the more will brains develop and knowledge of right and wrong, beneficial and harmful, moral incentives, health laws and means to overcome evils, and make our life more worth living.

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REPLY TO MATERIALISTS

By Guy Fitch Phelps

In the *Silverton Journal* of November 6th Mrs. Bliven makes reply to one of my articles. I will notice a few of her statements. But let me say here that to assert a thing is not argument. I must give reasons why I believe and know there is. Let materialists cease to assert that there is not a God and logically explain the physical universe without Him. I notice that every one of them takes good care to shun the real issue, for it is in real issues that they are weak.

Her first assumption is that Washington and Lincoln were Infidels. Such statements should be enough to place all that the one making them might say in the column of discredit. I have a life of Lincoln, and it records a conversation between Mr. Lincoln and a very religious Christian woman. Mr. Lincoln asked her this question: "What is being a Christian?" The woman went into detail and expounded to him all the essentials of religion: Faith in the Divine Christ, as the Savior of men; belief in the inspiration of the Bible; repentance and forsaking sin; a personal and infinite God, etc. When she was through, Mr. Lincoln very earnestly replied: "Then according to that I trust I am a Christian." The correspondence and sayings of Mr. Lincoln are open to all. It is well known, universally known, that he was given to much prayer, and repeatedly asserted that only God could save the nation. What do materialists hope to gain by such unwarranted statements? Washington was a firm believer in God and prayed honestly. His state papers are open to all. Tom Paine believed in God, and defended Deism, and I have never seen where he advocated materialism. Ingersoll was the son of a minister, and said when speaking over the body of his brother, "Hope hears the rustle of a wing." I have Ingersoll's lectures and he never pronounced that there was not a Supreme Being and he was never an evolutionist. So we see that when examined materialism has little to stand on. I challenge materialists to show where Washington or Lincoln expressed themselves as disbelievers in the Bible or God.

Next she says that when we lie cold in death we enter into annihilation. But I ask her to prove that. Materialists demand proof, so let them give it. Materialists say that we came to our present physical perfection (according to them man has no more soul than a horse or a tree) through evolutionary processes; that nature built us up to what we are. Then they tell us that death comes along and wipes nature into the dust, destroying all she has done. But I ask them to prove that this same nature which built us—according to them—will not build us again? How do they know that nature will not reconstruct us? Nature rebuilds the mould of the wilderness into wild roses and grass; will it, may it, not build us again?

I will repeat my question which Mrs. Bliven took good care to let alone by going where they all go, to the assertion that Tom Paine was a fine fellow. I asked her what materialism had to teach men that would

better characters and give more hope, virtue, peace and inspiration to do good in the world than Christianity. I now repeat the question, and it will be amusing to see what she puts forth.

Next she talks about the vice and crimes of Christians. This is another bit of materialistic dishonesty. I admit that church members do all kinds of mean things; Christ blasted them in his day for their inconsistency. But when she talks about a Christian engaging in vice and murder she knows one cannot be a Christian and do those things, and that is why she feels so bitterly against those who do those things and yet profess to be Christians.

Then she says she found not only that Christians were vice-ridden, but that the Bible was full of "bad things" and the God of the Bible was so "cruel" and so on. We have heard all that before. But will Mrs. Bliven please explain why so many scores of millions of the best educated and the best moral people in the world believe in the Bible, read it daily and teach it to others, and are happier and better by it? Did reading the Bible hurt D. L. Moody? Was not his life like a fountain of waters rushing out to bless the world? Did reading the Bible hurt Jerry McAuley, the river thief, bum and drunkard, ridden with vice and vermin? He was all that till he began to read the Bible, then he quit stealing, drinking, impurity, blasphemy, tobacco and gave his whole life to doing gospel work among the outcasts, till he was called the apostle to the drunkard. I have his life, and I find he gave Christ and the Bible all the credit for the reformation he made. In his mission he kept piles of bread to feed the hungry and clothes for the outcasts. Will materialists please explain the life of Jerry McAuley? Don't dog this case. It is vital to the contention. I challenge them to meet it and explain it in harmony with their contention that Christianity blights the reason, etc. Have infidels anything they could take down on the Bowery that would convert and transform the drunkards and harlots there? If they have why don't they go there and do the work? They haven't got it, and they know they have not, that is why I say their whole contention is just a big bluff. When materialism will go into the gutter and make a prostitute clean, then I will believe it is right. But Christian workers have to get materialistic drunkards and harlots cleaned up there. Infidels swarm about saloons and gambling halls. The fact is, materialism has no moral code: you can be anything and be an Infidel. Rand, the eight-times murderer, sold his body for a pound of candy, sat down on his bunk and ate the candy; drove the ministers out of his cell and bawled after them that he was a 'Bob Ingersoll man,' and no one disputed him. But if he had said he was a Christian even materialists would have pointed the finger of scorn and cried, 'Aha, Look at your Christian!' In fact that is just what Mrs. Bliven is trying to do in this article. But to be a Christian one must follow and obey the teachings of Christ, and that makes it impossible to do wrong and retain the right to His name. Materialism has no moral standard (they would have to borrow it from Christianity if they tried to fix one up), therefore you can be anything debased and be a good infidel. I do not say all materialists are such, but that there is nothing in all their teachings that would prevent it. WILL MATERIALISTS PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY AND HOW READING THE BIBLE AND FOLLOWING CHRIST CHANGED JERRY MCGAULEY AS THEY DID? If their contention be true that Christians cease to reason, and are superstitious and degraded, how do they explain the fact that in every slum of every city the Salvation Army and the mission workers are seeing the very lowest characters on earth transformed and brightened into efficient and intelligent workers in the reformation of their fellows? How do they explain the transformation of Blue Bird of Mulberry Bend? A woman so terrible in her life that she was the terror of the police. Found one night in an underground beer hall, a Christian woman asked her to leave and let God lift her to a better life. She did so, and was transformed from the lowest of drunken, fighting harlots to a clean, sweet-faced woman, with her face full of light and hope. I have two pictures of her; one taken when she was low and outcast. Her body was covered with knife-scars, and her head with spots where the hair had been torn out in fights. Her cheeks are sunken, and a devilish expression is on her face. The other picture was taken a year after she began to read the Bible. She stands with the Bible in her hands, dressed in a nice suit, a smile on her face, and real beauty in her features. Do infidel materialists have anything that will do work like that? If they have let them come along with it. That is the kind of work Christianity will do; can they match it? I happen to know that these are things materialists have to meet. WILL MATERIALISTS PLEASE EXPLAIN THEM? I have a book on Christian work in Turkey, that sin-ridden land. In Turkey woman is little but a brute. She goes with her

face covered, and has no soul. In this book is a picture of a group of graduates, young women from one of Christian colleges, and they look exactly like, and are dressed the same as, the same number of girls in one of our American schools. They wear the same kind of hats and cloaks, and look bright and womanly. The veil is gone, not only from their faces, but from their hearts and minds. And that is what Christianity will do. Can infidels show anything like that? No. Christians do the work and they do the kicking and scoffing.

Then she says that good people now are much better than the teachings of Jesus. Now that is a swift one. I wonder whom Mrs. Bliven thinks she is writing to? Don't she know that reasoning people will read what she writes? After making a statement like that she will talk about the light of reason, and superstition of Christians, etc. I think I know thoroughly what Christ taught, and if she will show in what particular one can be better than Christ taught that he should be I will give up the case. Christ taught love, honesty, humility, fairness, virtue, peace, hope, gentleness, meekness, benevolence, kindness, charity, with every other excellence known. Now will Mrs. Bliven tell us in what way good folks are getting above these things? You notice that she does not say in what they are better. I remember that in a former article she said that 318 bishops in the time of Constantine invented Christ.

Next.

The next article is by one Gauvin. He makes some amusing admissions. One of the things always to be expected about materialists is that they can't reason. They will cross themselves every time.

This man admits that Christianity is all right, for he begins by saying that "after nineteen centuries of Christian teaching the world is engaged in a terrible war." That is: Why hasn't Christianity prevented it? Well, Germany is flooded with materialists: why didn't they prevent it? If men would follow the teachings of the Bible they would not hate each other. For God said in the days of Moses: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The same is the teachings of the New Testament.

He says that Rationalists know that all the so-called sacred books of the world were written by man. I ask him how he knows that? Millions of men and women disagree with him. The scholar, Paul, said that "all Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and that it is profitable for reproof," etc. This is some more bluffing. Let us have arguments, not bald statements.

He says that all the facts of science, logic, history and human experience teach that the universe is eternal. Well, if I believe in an eternal Being called God, is that unreasonable, then? But what does he mean by the universe? Nature or the worlds in the heavens? If he means nature then what becomes of evolution? If he means the physical things, what becomes of the teachings of science that worlds are formed by processes? See how these infidels cross each other.

He is right in saying that religion and morality are two different things. Christians make that difference. One can be religious or moral and not be a Christian at all. Please keep that in mind. He says that Christianity refuses to reason (he means that). I wish this man would take up the study of Butler's Analogy and see if the Christian is capable of reasoning. I grow sick of these statements. They are so openly and manifestly untrue. Take up the books of the world and see if Christians can reason. Go to the colleges and see if they can reason. Webster, who compounded the dictionary, was a very devout Christian, and conducted family prayer daily. This is the best materialists have to offer. He says hell is the "heartless dream of a fanatic." It is amusing to see how infidels make war on the doctrine of hell. There is a reason! Christians are not worrying about hell—they are not going there. But farther along he tells us that "Every wrong act brings its consequences."

In that statement he concedes the whole teaching of Christianity on hell. Christians say that sin makes its own punishment; that the same thing that can make a lunatic asylum in the universe can make a hell,—and that is sin. As he says, the transgression of law brings its own penalty, and the Bible says, "Sin is the transgression of the law." He says that the doctrines of Christianity are a source of evil, because they divide the world into quarrelling sects. Yes, Christianity divides between the good and the bad; between the pure and the impure. If infidels want harmony let them become clean and Christian and we will all be one. But I would remind this man that three out of four, yes, more than that, of the people since Christ died for men have been infidels and Christ rejectors: why haven't they fixed the world up as it should have been long ago? Why blame your failure on Christianity. He says that materialists are trying to banish superstition and fear. But there is no class on earth so full of fear as they. They are haunted with the fear that in their

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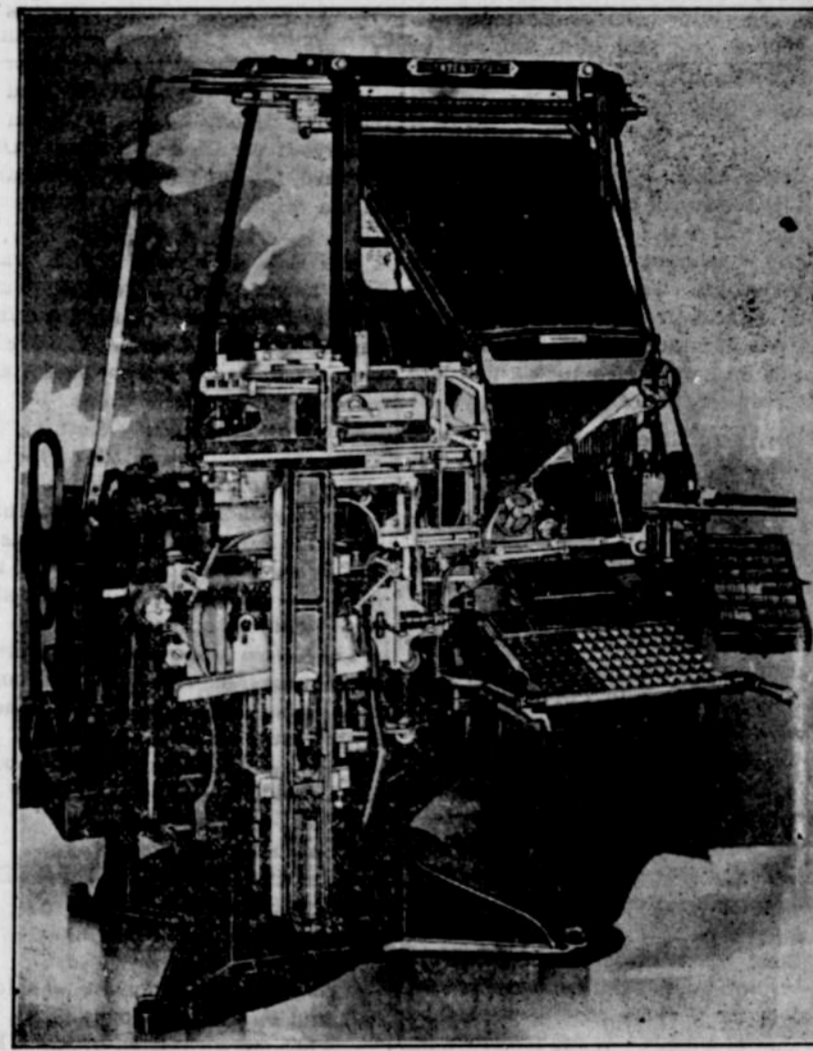
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sleep some dread dreams may come, and that the rub. Charters, the blatant infidel and God rejector whimpered on his death bed: "I would give thirty thousand pounds to have it PROVEN that there is no hell." Newport, the most relentless foe of Christ among them all, cried out when dying: "O, the insufferable pangs of hell! O eternity! forever and forever!" Mrs. Mary Benjamin, a nurse who took care of Tom Paine when dying, says that he repeatedly called on Christ for mercy and blasphemed.

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