

**CHARACTERISTIC REPLY.**

Correspondence That Explains Itself.

How Father Lambert again Lashes the 'Freethinkers.'

(From the Buffalo Catholic Union and Times)

Our readers will thank us, we are sure, for reproducing from the Seneca Falls 'Reveille' the following characteristic reply of Father Lambert to an invitation to the Freethinkers convention at Saratoga:

N. Y. Freethinkers Association }  
33 Clinton place }  
New York, August 18.

REV. L. A. LAMBERT.

Dear Sir.—The N. Y. F. A. will hold its annual convention at White Sulphur Spring, on Saratoga Lake, N. Y., Sept. 2, to 12th.

Hundreds of persons who are now in "Doubting Castle," will be influenced to decide for secularism or Christianity at this meeting.

The first principle of Secularists is justice—our motto, 'Seek your own happiness by promoting that of others.' We desire, therefore, that all honest hearts be afforded opportunity to learn all the facts—that error may be refuted—and all be enabled to decide intelligently.

Knowing your great reverence for the Bible, we respect your consistent course in urging all to obey and reverence its teachings. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." I Peter 3, 15. We, therefore, feel confident that you will promptly respond to our invitation to give reason of your faith and hope.

We cordially invite you to attend on the days most convenient to yourself, and discuss the claims the Bible has upon the people as a guide of life—and the effect upon the civilized world of the religion known as Christianity.

We pledge you the most kind and courteous treatment. Your opponent shall be of highest moral character, a scholar, and in every respect a gentleman, whose desire is to have the truth triumphant.

Please forward the proposition you desire to affirm, and make your own selection of dates between Sept. 2d and 12th for the discussion, and the executive committee will arrange their programme to suit your convenience. Awaiting your reply with respects and kindly wishes, yours truly,

C. B. Reynolds,

Acting Chairman Ex. Com. N. Y. F. A.

DEAR SIR: I most respectfully decline your invitation to the annual meeting of the Freethinkers Association. My reasons for so doing will appear from the following considerations:

1. I do not agree with you that hundreds of persons will be influenced for or against Christianity by anything that may be said at your proposed convention. Why should they? Will anything now be offered in the way of scientific discoveries? Anything that the reader of the current literature of the day may not know? Will anything new in the way of objections to Christianity be urged? Anything that has not been said hundreds of times, and answered as many? Will there be present any men who recognized preeminence in science, philology, history, theology, or logic will give sufficient weight to what they may say to command more than passing attention? If so, will not your coming convention be a great improvement on your former ones.

If there is nothing new except the 'free thinks of a number of Freethinkers what purpose would be served by my going to Saratoga to oppose my "Free think" to theirs. Will their logic convince me of the truth of what they teach? If so they will destroy my 'free thought,' for no one, so long he is sane, is free to think contrary to what he is convinced is the truth. This would be self-stultification. Will my logic convince them of the truth of my convictions? If so, I would destroy their 'free thought.' On the hypothesis, then, that we are both honest, the result would be that their or my 'free thought' would be destroyed—in fact, both—for when victor and vanquished are alike convinced of the truth, their 'free thought' is lost, for it is just as unlawful to think against a known truth as to argue against a known fact. In view of the fact that 'free thought' is the only reason for the existence of your association, would such a result be desirable? Is it not a strange sight to see an association laboring for the perpetuation of a principle which the possession of truth must necessarily destroy. Do you not see that your effort to arrive at the truth, if successful, must destroy the principle of 'free thought,' which you so strenuously maintain? What can be more condemnatory of your theory than the fact that truth and free thought are essentially and eternally antagonistic, so that the existence of the one necessarily supposes the non-existence of the other.

Your pretension, then, of free thought is a confession that you have not yet arrived at the truth, and that being the case, why do you assume, in or out of you conventions, to instruct others. It is worse than the blind leading the blind, for while your free thought principle compels you to admit that you do not yet possess the truth, you assume to teach those who by their principles claim to possess it. It is then a case of the blind officiously volunteering their services to those who can see. This is the logical position in which your 'free thought' principle places you. Why then try to convince men that Christianity is false since by your principles you cannot say you know it to be false. Why try to

take from Christians a reality, when you have nothing to give them in its place, but a bold negation? Why do you not first agree on something positive, and build up a structure that will command the respect and veneration of honest, intelligent men before you ask them to reject that which has stood a test of ages, commanded the veneration and obedience of the greatest geniuses that have ennobled this earth of ours for the last two thousand years, and given us the highest and best civilization ever known. Does any sane man believe that the combined wisdom of ages is to pale before the eccentric and erratic scintillations, to be emitted by your Saratoga convention? Do you imagine that the medicinal qualities of the aperient waters of Saratoga will give you clearer heads than those of the great men of the past, who stand like pyramids in the corridors of time?

When you meet you will under pretence of seeking the truth, repeat the laughs, jokes, derisions and smart things about Christianity that have been the refrain of infidels for the last century, just as a Swiss music-box repeats the tunes it has been constructed to play. And you expect Christians to go to Saratoga to listen to your repetitions of the old objections, as if they had never been refuted—as if your convention were a congress of the world, at which the destinies of the race were to be determined once for all. The fly on the carriage wheel said: 'My, what a dust we make.' One would think that the logical outcome of 'free thought,' as preached by you and Ingersoll, and seen in the anarchist riots and bloodshed in Chicago, with seven scaffolds looming in the near future, should sober you gentlemen somewhat, and cause you to ask yourselves. Whether are we drifting? The only difference between you and the anarchists is that you preach and they reduce your doctrines to practice and get their necks into the halter for so doing; you under the pretext of free thought, attack the foundations of social order; they, under the pretext of benefiting their fellow-men, attempt to abolish law and introduce the reign of anarchy by bloodshed. They deserve more respect than you, because they are at least logical, and take the consequences of reducing your doctrines to practice, while you talk, talk, talk.

2. You say, the first principle of the secularists is justice. But you come too late in the history of the world to claim justice as your distinguishing principle. Justice was taught by theology as an attribute of God and as the highest form of virtue in man, before secularism in your sense of the term had any existence on earth. Your motto 'Seek your own happiness by promoting the happiness of others,' is also a Christian maxim that needs not the sanction of Freethinkers to give it value.

3. You desire that all honest hearts be afforded opportunity to learn all the facts, that error may be refuted, and all be enabled to decide intelligently.' In this desire I agree with you, but I do not agree with the implied inference that your Saratoga convention will afford the opportunity. I have seen nothing in the proceedings of your former conventions to lead me to that belief. On the contrary, from what I have read of your former proceedings, I have come to the conclusion that your conventions afford an opportunity for all kinds of queer people to get together to air their ill-digested notions, to exhibit their shallowness and vanity, to tell what Solomon says they are and what fools the rest of the world is. There may have been some men of sense among them, but they must have felt very lonesome amidst the general clatter. Was it not at your Watkins convention a year or two ago that even Ingersoll got disgusted and resigned? What reason have we to believe the Saratoga convention will be different from its predecessors.

You say your motto is 'to seek your own happiness by promoting that of others.' Well, in what way have infidels or Freethinkers—they are synonymous terms—acted to promote the happiness of others. Have they ever established a school or an hospital, or an asylum for the aged poor or for the children of the dead. Have they ever consoled the afflicted, or wiped the sweat of anguish from the brow of misery. One little Sister of Charity by the unostentatious devotion of her life to the happiness of others will put to shame all the loud, pharisaical infidels that ever lived. Ask the soldiers who were wounded or sick during the late war, who consoled them in their gloom and anguish, and they will tell you that the angels of mercy came in the form of Christian men and women. How then, have you promoted the happiness of others? I will tell you by giving some facts. There was but one time in the history of the world when infidels had full control, and could do as they pleased. It was that short time in France, between the execution of Louis XVI. in 1793 to the advent of Napoleon Bonaparte. In the graphic words of Dr. Goodwin, they abolished Christianity by vote. They declared there was no God, forbade public instructors to utter his name to their children. They struck the Sabbath out of their calendar, and made the week consist of ten days instead of seven. They wrote over the gates of the cemeteries 'Death is an eternal sleep.' They tore down the bells from the church spires and cast them into cannons. They stripped the churches of everything used in worship, and made bouffies in the streets, and then instituted the rites of the old Pagan religions, where the altars had stood.

Not content with this, Chamette, one of the leaders of the convention, appeared one day before that body leading a noted courtesan, with a troop of her associates. Advancing to the president he raised her veil and exclaimed: 'Mor tals! recognize no other divinity than reason, of which I present to you the loveliest and purest personification.'

Whereupon the president bowed and professed to render devout adoration. A few days later the same scene was re-acted in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, with increased profanations and more outrageous orgies, and was declared to be the public inauguration of the new religion of the commune. . . . The greatest debaucheries were inaugurated, the excesses prevailed and were glorified in. Contempt for religion and decency became the best of attachment for the government. The grosser the infraction of morals, the greater the so called victory over prejudice, the higher the proof of loyalty to the State. To accuse one's father was the best proof of citizenship; to neglect it was denounced a crime, and was punished with death. Wives were bayoneted for the faith of their husbands, and husbands for that of their wives. One of the chief tools of the commune, Carrier, ruling at Nantes, declared that 'the intention of the convention was to depopulate and burn the country,' and he was as good as his word. He shut up 1,500 women and children in one prison, without beds without fire or covering, and kept them two days without food.

The only escape was for men to surrender their fortunes and women their virtue. He contrived ships with slides in their hulls below the water line, loaded these with prisoners under pretext of transporting them elsewhere, and when the vessels were in the middle of the Loire, ordered the valves opened and the victims plunged into the water, while he, surrounded by a troop of prostitutes, looked on and gloated over the scene. Mr. Ingersoll admits that 17,000 perished during this combined reign of infidelity and terror; but he forgets to add that throughout France not less than 3,000,000 lives were the costly price of establishing the new religion. There is no disputing these facts, nor the reasons that underlay them. This whole terrific record—and history knows none that is darker and more damning—was the direct and legitimate fruit of the doctrines which Mr. Ingersoll lauds as the sublime truth "that is to fill the world with peace."

Such is the war infidels sought "their own happiness by promoting that of others," when they had the power to reduce to practice the logical result of their principles. Is this atrocious record of the only time in all history, when infidels had full swing, such as to inspire confidence in their professions, or hope in the future if their principles should ever prevail? I do not mean to say you and those eccentrics who will meet at Saratoga would sanction or intentionally encourage a petition of such atrocities but I do say most emphatically that the horrors of the French Reign of Terror were the legitimate result of the principles maintained by latter-day anti-Christians, whether called infidels or Freethinkers.

I am willing, under proper conditions to give an account of the Faith that is in me, but I cannot consent to become a part or an actor in your enterprising exhibition. The performance, I have no doubt, will be sufficiently entertaining without me, and, considering the number of old ladies of both sexes that will be there, the proceedings will not be wanting in snap. I hope they may have a good time, and that a ten-day course of Saratoga water will relieve them of anti-Christian bile, and enable them to return to their homes, after their arduous labors, healthier if not wiser men and women. Your selection of Saratoga was a happy and economical thought. By a judicious mixture of talk, philosophy, and sulphur water, you can abolish Christianity and relieve yourself of superfluous lithic and lactic acids at the same time.

A. M. D. G.

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SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned and marked "Tenders for Timber Berths" will be received at this office until noon on Saturday the 23rd day of October next, for a timber berth of five square miles, situated on Cascade River, a tributary of the Devil's Head River, in Township 27, Ranges 11 and 12 west of the 5th Meridian in the District of Alberta.

Sketches showing the position, approximately, of this berth, together with the conditions on which it will be licensed, may be obtained at this Department, or at the Crown Timber Offices at Winnipeg and Calgary.

A. M. BURGESS,  
Deputy of the Minister of the Interior

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Sketches showing the position, approximately, of these berths, together with the conditions on which they will be licensed, may be obtained at this Department or at the Crown Timber Offices at Winnipeg, Calgary, N. W. T., and New West Minister, British Columbia.

A. M. BURGESS,

Deputy of the Minister of the Interior

Department of the Interior, Ottawa, 14th August, 1886.

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