

Communications.

TURNER, ORE., Dec. 17, 1896.—
To the Editor: "Being crafty I caught you with guile."—St. Paul.

Our good Christian brethren undertake to explain away the ugly features of this admission of their pattern saint by arguing that lying and deception is not meant; that Paul was a mechanic, a craftsman who worked at his trade, or craft, for a living, and preached for love of God (the church) as preachers don't do now.

The thoughtful sinner who reads the whole story for himself is liable to smile at so lame an argument and to still have a lingering idea that the good Saint who so despised women did humbug the brethren of that church. And why not? If the "cause of God," i. e., the church, more abounded through his skull-duggery and lying, why should he be judged a sinner? And if he succeeded by lying (guile) why not? I can myself remember when it was openly held that deception was right if done through good motives and good, i. e., Christian advantage, came of it; and that branch of Christianity known as the Mormon church teaches yet that it is right to lie for the good of the church, i. e., the priesthood. And the ancients had St. Paul, St. Constantine, St. Eusebius, etc., and modern Christians have Spurgeon, Joseph Smith, Joseph Cook, Talmage, Clark Braden, "et genius homine," to overcome them with "guile." Well, why not? People are so easily humbugged. Why not indulge them some? If they kick at a name, yet accept the fact without the name, what does the name amount to? "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." [That quotation is old, hackneyed, threadbare, frayed at the edges, and all that I know, but it fits in here all the same.]

It is a fine thing to be brave, but when we have a treacherous enemy to overcome, who seldom fights in the open, is it not good policy to use a little "guile?"

This phase of human nature I illustrated a little when I lived at Aumsville. I tried to get some of my Christly friends to take the "Freethought," then being published in San Francisco by Putnam and Macdonald. I could not get them to read it, let alone subscribe for it. The name scared them. And there was sent me from the east, a few leaflets containing some sayings and sentiments by "Bob Ingersoll". They were so headed and had the ad of the A. S. U., its officers etc., printed on them and they were no go. No one would touch them, so I did a little "guile." I wrote to the parties who printed them to print me a hundred, leaving off everything but the subject matter. Then I said to my "Christian

friends." I have other leaflets, and they were overcome accordingly and took the leaflets, read them, and approved them, and I at least was happier.

Last week I attended some meetings here of the State Agricultural College Farmer's Institutes and listened. One night the local Methodist preacher here made an address. This preacher is a rampant "gold standard" man, and during the campaign just past has been especially savage on the populists, but his speech there was as radical a populist free trade effort (indirectly of course) as the most ardent Bryanite could require. The old Pop. war-horses sat there and grinned while the clerical Bro. was pounding away, apparently perfectly oblivious of what he was doing, and when he finished, the house, goldbugs and all cheered him lustily and the naughty Pops. smiled serenely. The president of the college followed. He spoke of the schools, its institution and its support and eulogized everything pertaining to it highly and probably not unjustly. This president is, I am informed, a "goldbug" politician and obtained his presidential position through a "pull." Of course he is not supposed to have any socialistic tendencies, yet he made a socialistic speech, pure and simple. But both himself and his audience appeared to be perfectly oblivious of the fact, and he was cheered to the echo at the end. The hall was packed, densely. Had these people been asked to come and hear a socialist address, by a socialist, three-fourths of them would not have been there. The Methodist preacher and all would have condemned and perhaps abused him afterward. Your christian, like your political partisan, seldom or never reasons, and has little use for torches unless it be the "torch of discord;" and certain names are to him like the proverbial "red rag" to a bull, and he may be hard to lead or to drive, but can often be "overcome with guile."

Freethought can only appeal to the intelligent and independent minded, yet there are very many good people who leave to others their way of thinking, and the formation of their ideas and conclusions; therefore if the cause of mental liberty shall more abound through (innocent) "guile," wherefore shall we be adjudged "sinners?"

This is not cowardice; it is diplomacy, strategy, justifiable under the conditions. We do not make the conditions, neither can we change them. They are, and it is the part of wisdom that we manage accordingly.

"Be ye therefore wise as serpents;" never mind the "dove" business. That can be considered later.

F. S. MATTESON.

ELSINORE CAL. Dec. 16, '96. ED. TORCH OF REASON—Dear Sir: I have received the TORCH and I like it very much. I hope Liberals will circulate it extensively, that it may be well sustained. When I left the East a year ago my intention was to locate where I could hear a freethought lecture occasionally at least; but circumstances have located me here for the present, where nearly all the women and children and weak minded men belong to the orthodox churches. The more intelligent and substantial male citizens do not. But when I ask them to subscribe for freethought literature they decline to do so for various reasons; some are afraid and others have struggled so long with the effects of boom times that they think they can not spare the money. Please send me the Little Candle and a copy of the Sunday School Quarterly and oblige yours for truth and justice while living and eternal sleep when dead.

A. G. DESCENT.

P. S. I was born in 1830, married in 1856. My wife is still with me and when death separates us she expects to go to Abraham's bosom and I expect to be cremated.

Descent of Man.

Man represents the highest development of animal life, and is included in the order 'Primates' with apes and monkeys, each being of common mammalian descent, originally tree-dwellers in Tertiary times. The apes of the old world are the highest of their class, are the nearest to man, and are consequently called 'anthropoids.' They include gibbons, orangs, chimpanzees and gorillas; all being without tails and cheek pouches, and having and catarrhine nostrils like man. The gap between civilized and savage man is greater than that between the savage and the anthropoid ape. Man and ape are similar in structure, bodily life, gesture and expression, and both are subject to the same diseases, form distinct societies, and combine for protection, combination favoring the development of emotional and intellectual strength. Man differs from the ape in that he has a heavier brain, broader forehead, and possesses the power of building up ideas; he is more erect has a more perfectly developed vocal mechanism, a better heel and shorter arm. Man's individual development reads like a recapitulation of his ancestral history. His prolonged infancy helped to evolve gentleness, as the habit of using sticks and stones, and of building shelters, evolved wit. Man and the antropoid, or man-like ape, branched off, in different directions, from a common ancestor, through many centuries of evolution and development as ape-like man [Alali] of the Miocene and Pleocene

periods; as savage man [Homo ferox] of the Paleolithic; as semi-civilized man [Homo semi ferox] of the Neolithic; and as civilized man [Homo cultus] of the Bronze Age, reaching eventually, by his higher development of brain, the highest position of man [Homo sapiens], in the Iron Age. He can be traced by his tools and weapons of rudely chipped flint, with the bones of huge extinct mammals in old river beds and limestone caverns, Kent's cavern, near Torquay, being especially notable. The Neanderthal skull has attracted much attention from its singularly brutal appearance, and appears to be the nearest approach that has been found, as yet, to the missing link between man and ape. The oldest type of man known is characterized by long and narrow heads [dolichocephalic], prominent eyebrows, medium stature, and great thickness of bones, and prominence of ridges denoting great muscular strength.—Agnostic's Primer.

Question Box.

If five hundred men, who lived nineteen hundred years ago, claimed to have seen witches, would you believe in witches?

Is there as good proof that witches exist as that Jesus was resurrected?

Is the fact that you never saw George Washington any proof that Jesus was divine?

Do orthodox people use deductive or inductive reasoning in trying to prove their religion? Which is best, deductive or inductive reasoning?

If a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein, why are there so many Christian denominations?

Is the religion of humanity very easily understood? If Jesus had lived in the 19th century, to what church do you think he would belong?

What did Jesus mean when he told the orthodox people that they were like whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but were within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness?

Was Jesus a reformer? Did he try to tear down the orthodox churches of his time?

Did such a man as St. John makes out Jesus to be, ever exist?

How long after Jesus had died did St. John say, "In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word (Jesus) was with God, and the Word (Jesus) was God?" Did a man by the name of John ever lie?

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