

Communications.

CHICAGO, Ill., Dec. 24, 1896.—To the Editor: The Chicago Secular Union, organized since the close of the national congress, is now in a very promising condition. On last Sunday evening the temporary organization was terminated by the adoption of a constitution and election of officers in accordance with its provisions. Mr. Gammage who was acting president is retained in that important office and the indications are that he can be depended upon to do his whole duty.

I am prepared to give but few names at this writing, but quite a number both men and women take a lively interest in the organization and show by their liberal contributions that they want it to live. One gentleman, whose name I cannot recall, donated 40 acres of land to the Union. This will probably be turned into cash in the most advantageous manner. The membership fee is \$1 per year and the first dollar was paid in by Wong Chin Foo, a Chinaman who was educated in this country.

This gentleman is a reformer in its broadest sense and as I understand spends much of his time in aiding his own countrymen who get into difficulties in this country. Mr. Foo was elected first vice-president.

Next Sunday's meeting will be a memorial to Samuel P. Putnam whose untimely death leaves a vacancy in the ranks of free-thought that will be hard indeed to fill.

One of the most serious problems that confronts us is the raising of funds as we have no gods to fall back on—nothing but simple truth and honesty—we are necessarily denied some of the most productive methods employed by our Christian friends, but we expect to get there just the same.

J. B. BEATTIE,
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TURNER, OR., Dec. 26, 1896.—To the Editor: At the Christmas tree in the Baptist church here on Christmas night, a lady gave a little lecture to the juveniles, on the institution of Christmas as a holiday. She repeated the usual orthodox story, that the day was the birthday of Christ etc., and probably believed the story she told them. And the undeveloped mind of childhood, "wax to receive, and marble to retain," probably believed it too, because there was no one to give the other side of the story. Thus the "crying," aye, the howling need of Secular Sunday schools is apparent.

But it appears that a ray of freer thought is invading even the orthodox Sunday schools.

It is related of a street "Arab" here who was "gathered in" to the orthodox Sunday school "as a brand plucked from the burning," that he

was properly docile for a time. One Sunday however, his teacher expatiated to her class about hell, what a terrible place it was etc., and how she was sure they wouldn't any of them want to go there, etc., and appealed to the "gathered" one for corroboration. "Oh, come off my teacher," said the "Arab," "don't give us any more of that rot. My Pa says there aint any such place."

Then there was silence for a space. F. S. M.

Question Box.

[Questions or answers for publication solicited. Send them in early.]

Which is better to be a croaker and croak at the mistakes of others or do something ourselves?

Because some men do wrong should we disown our connections with the human race?

If a professed Secularist does wrong, does that lessen our duty toward the cause or increase it?

As a rule which are the more honorable kind and charitable, professed Christians or professed Secularists?

Are little children naturally Christians or Secularists?

Which is nobler, to strive with all our might to gain a future state of bliss for ourselves, or for the earthly happiness of the human race?

Does a Christian lady love her Jesus more than she does her husband?

If Jesus was a perfect example, should men marry and have homes and families?

Was it as wrong for Christians to teach the Romans that their pagan religion was wrong, as it is for Secularists to teach that Christianity is wrong?

Which is better an atheist that loves his family and is a good, sober, honest, progressive man, or a man who believes in God but is cruel to his family, intemperate, dishonest and unprogressive?

News from Portland.

Since the last writing, grim death has entered our fold and robbed us of one of our most precious lambs. Tuesday morning last little Ruth Bailey died of diphtheria after an illness of about 9 days. Mr. and Mrs. Bailey are prostrated with grief over the loss of this flower of the family. Little Ethel takes it hard but is a great comfort to her parents. The funeral took place the same afternoon, Mr. P. W. Geer preaching the funeral sermon. The many friends of the grief stricken family, tender them their most heartfelt sympathy in this their hour of bereavement.

JOEBERT.

During early years every civilized man passes through that phase of character exhibited by the barbarous race from which he is descended.—Herbert Spencer.

Morality vs Theology.

Every good or moral act is followed by good, not only to others, but also to self, because it tends to increase the strength of those faculties by which it is performed. On the other hand, not only is every evil or immoral act followed by its objective bad results, but it leaves its traces in the character of the actor—strengthening faculties which should be left to dwindle into disuse. Instead of prayer, the utterance of petitionary words to a man-like God, as a means of attaining our ends, will be substituted labor in the light of science. No temples will be set apart for propitiating and pleasing an imaginary deity; the mind itself will be a temple where conscience will be continually propitiated by the fulfilment of duty. Instead of the discoveries of science being received with continual dread and dislike, everyone of them will be welcomed as glad tidings of great joy. One more advance, it will be known, has been made in the great work of diminishing the pain and increasing the pleasure of human life. The foot of man, it will be felt, has been planted one step higher in the course of his evolution. At the close of life, again, no mirage of an imaginary heaven will be needed to generate hope; nor will any hideous phantoms of an angry God and an eternal hell be present to terrify the mind. The impenetrable darkness of the unknowable will be looked upon with calmness, and approached without thought of fear.—John Wilson.

Jesus of Nazareth.

It is a well known truth that in the second century the Christians were divided into many sects which bitterly disagreed with each other. Prominent among these were the gnostics who stoutly claimed that Jesus had no corporal existence, and they worshipped him as a spirit only. If at that early date an important branch of the christians doubted and denied the corporal existence of Jesus, does it not at least present a plausible reason why others who come after them should be troubled with the same class of doubts? The bitter and long-continued contest which raged in the 4th century, between the Arians and the Athanasians the one denying the divine nature of Jesus, the other affirming it, are matters of history.

No less than 38 councils were called to settle their prolonged contentions, and during their session soldiers were employed by both sides to defend their positions, and they sometimes engaged in the contest and blood flowed freely. The conflict of opinion between the Arian bishop Macedomus and the Athanasian Paul, caused the death of 3000 persons in the streets of

Constantinople. The Arian bishop of Alexandria sought to convert the Athanasian widows and virgins to sounder theological views by stripping them naked, scourging the soles of their feet and scorching them over slow fires. A Christian Emperor sought to convince the opponents of the Arian theory by drowning 80 priests upon a single occasion.

H. D. B.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The fact is that all breaches of health are physical sins. When this is generally seen, then, and perhaps not till then, will the physical training of the young receive all the attention it deserves.—Herbert Spencer.

We give the TORCH OF REASON and the Truth Seeker for one year to new subscribers, for \$3. The TORCH OF REASON and Free Thought Magazine for one year to new subscribers for \$1.75.

Secular News.

P. W. Geer was suddenly called to Portland Tuesday to deliver the funeral address of little Ruthie Bailey who died at the home of her parents on the 29 inst. Ruthie was one of our most active little workers in the Secular Sunday school and her death will be mourned by both young and old. Obituary will appear next week.

We have another typo this week and now we will be able to be more prompt with our paper.

Nettie A. Olds lectured at McMinnville last Sunday evening on the subject of The Christmas Festival.

Holiday exercises at the Portland Secular Sunday school next Sunday.

Secularists of Chicago are organizing. Remember what we say. There will be great changes in the religion of our country in the next decade.

If we succeed in our work Silvertown will see a big boom next Summer, and we will succeed. Why not? This is a beautiful country with its mild climate, its fine fruit, its excellent soil and best of all its liberty loving people. Come and help us.

Miss Ada Dewey our pianist will be here next week. All wishing to take lessons on the piano should let us know as soon as possible.

Miss Rafter our new typo makes a valuable addition to our ranks of busy workers.

Miss Olds is taking a vacation and so if the Little Candle is some what delayed this week don't think that it has gone out. Under a bushel, in a horn.

There will be a grand concert given by the Silvertown Marine Band next Sunday evening in addition to the short addresses by the members of the faculty of the Liberal University.

University Library.

Those wishing to become members of this Association may do so by contributing one or more good books.

Members who have joined during the month of December.

P. W. Geer. 10 vol. Cooper's Complete Works.

M. Fitzjerrell 2 vol. History of Christianity.

H. L. Allen 12 vol. Scott's Works.

Happy New Year!