

## THE FREETHINKERS' CONVENTION.

## HARMONIOUS CO-OPERATION.

To all persons, and especially those who are seeking after and imparting truth, and teaching the liberty of thought and expression, we cordially extend an invitation to attend our Freethinkers' Association, to be held at Watkins, N. Y., on August 22, 23, 24 and 25, 1878.

Our object in calling attention to our first annual gathering is to have it early understood that so far as we can in word and deed, we shall give all civil classes, sects, and parties, an equal opportunity to declare their views of right and wrong for the good of all. To hear all sides and then decide, is the only safe way to fairly glean the facts so necessary to the formation of a wise conclusion.

Christians, Spiritualists, Infidels, Materialists and all sincere lovers of the Known and the Unknown shall be cordially welcome to our platform. We invite and protect universal expression of thought in the name of human liberty.

We believe it is unfair to dictate and command, where it is better to make plain all observation and experience.

We are to meet as earnest investigators of the truth, not like egotists and fierce disputants, as ignorance and superstition are the greatest enemies of individual development and freedom.

The blighting influence of fable, myth, miracle and fear, born of Theology and its various religions, must here meet the tests of reason and argument.

Justice and honesty as a rule of basis and action, with the evolution of thought will elevate or raise to the religion of Science.

Come as investigators of creeds and seekers of knowledge, which will make better fathers, better mothers, better teachers and better citizens.

Support mental liberty of knowledge, love and intellect. Equality should be ruled more by individual rights and privileges, and charity perpetuated by our experience in doing as we desire to be done by.

Useful culture will take its place in just the degree we meet out to each individual, equal education for the immediate wants of body and mind.

That we invite persons of all shades of opinions to an impartial investigation of all creeds and religions, and pledge ourselves to discard the bad, and accept and adopt the good from each, whether it be advocated by Christians, Spiritualists or Infidels.

That we encourage and insist upon the study and observation of natural, sanitary and scientific knowledge among the young, that each succeeding generation instead of being "weaker and wiser," will be "healthier and wiser," and pledge ourselves to advocate the punishment, by strict laws, of all persons guilty of publishing or practising that which tends to injure the morals of society.

That we recommend all persons to investigate impartially and carefully the doctrines of Christianity and Infidelity, respectively, as stated and defended by the standard authors of each creed, believing no person or sect has a right to defend any one doctrine without investigating the claims set forth by its opponent.

That we reverse the orthodox obligation which insists on faith and prayer to believe, and pledge ourselves to discourage faith and encourage doubt, and insist on the duty of doubt as necessary for the investigation of truth and advancement of the human race.

We petition that no child shall be permitted to grow up without a good elementary education, and that all schools shall be maintained with equal justice to all by confining them strictly to secular education.

That we heartily endorse and sympathize with the present movement to tax all ecclesiastical property in whatever it may consist, believing that the revenue arising from such just taxation, would, if rightly applied by proper legislation, tend to alleviate the sufferings of the starving poor and ragged pauperism that are left unnoticed to perish even in the shadows of their cathedrals.

That we extend our hearty sympathy to the co-laborers in the

great cause of Temperance, and pledge ourselves to recognize "Total Abstinence" as one of the first planks in our platform.

That copies of these articles properly signed by the President and Secretary of the Freethinkers' Association of Central and Western New York be drawn up and forwarded to the following Freethought papers for publication, viz: *The Boston Investigator*, *Truth Seeker*, (New York,) *Age of Reason*, (New York,) *Positive Thinker*, (New York,) *Boston Index*, *St. Louis Common Sense*, *Banner of Light*, *R. P. Journal*, and the *Evolution*, of New York, and that we extend a hearty invitation to the Infidels of Canada to participate with us in our Convention, and request that a copy of the above be forwarded to the FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL of Canada, whose motto is:

"In things demonstrated and certain, Unity; in whatsoever can be doubted, Free Diversity; in all things, Charity."

DR. T. L. BROWN, President,  
Binghamton, N. Y.

EDGAR M. SELLON, Secretary,  
Buffalo, N. Y.

## THE BELLEVILLE "INTELLIGENCER."

In February last Mr. Underwood delivered a course of lectures in the Opera House, Belleville. I was present at the last lecture, which was an examination of the so-called evidences of a personal God. There was a good audience, especially in point of intelligence and culture, and the lecturer was frequently applauded. At the close the clergy present were invited to reply if they wished, and state objections if they had any; but not one could be induced to take the platform. One ex-minister, however, made some remarks, from the rear of the hall, and after Mr. Underwood's rejoinder and invitation to him to come to the platform, he admitted there was no substantial proof of the existence of a God, and asserted that he had not come prepared to discuss the questions in issue. It is a little singular, to say the least of it, that a minister should not at any time be prepared to defend the first article of his creed! But, after Mr. Underwood had got a safe distance out of Belleville, those gentlemen quickly found themselves prepared, or at least willing, to defend their dogmas, and even primed for an attack. They accordingly lost no time in coming to the front. The absent Materialist was duly reviewed upon a Friday afternoon in one of the largest churches in the city. The *Belleville Intelligencer*, which had carefully refrained from making one word of note in its columns of Mr. Underwood's lectures, was promptly on hand the next day with a report of Rev. M. W. McLean's review. The liberal friends in Belleville sent me the *Intelligencer* containing said report accompanied by a request to reply to the Rev. gentleman's positions through the same medium. I did so, and sent my MS. to the *Intelligencer*. Instead, however, of having the fairness to publish it, the sapient *Intelligencer* delivered itself in this wise:—

"The letter professing to review the Rev. Mr. McLean's lecture on Mr. Underwood's attack on the Bible and Christianity is declined. The *Intelligencer* is always willing to assist in the spread of 'liberal opinions,' and to aid in 'emancipating the press from the bondage of popular prejudices,' but there is such a thing as liberalism degenerating into libertinism, and there is such a thing as people in their efforts to emancipate themselves from imaginary 'popular prejudices' plunging themselves deeper into error and placing themselves under a worse than Egyptian bondage. The attempt of pigmies in science, in literature, in sacred and profane history to overthrow Christianity by butting against the Bible and its learned defenders, is very much like the effort of a school-boy to batter down the walls of Gibraltar with a pop-gun. We agree with the writer that too much of 'our highest literature is laden with rationalistic sentiment,' and cognizant of that fact we have no disposition to lend the columns of the *Intelligencer* to its further spread."

Now, who will say that this is not an *intelligent* deliverance for a city *Intelligencer*? Pigmies, indeed! Tyndall, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Froude, Bradlaugh, Underwood, etc., are all liliputians in