

"Did any man ever propose a better method for it than this?—'As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' The especial love of the brethren is distinctly mentioned. We are fellow-members of 'the household of God,'—of each soul of that 'blessed company of all believing people,' loving the Church in this way, not because it is the Church,—or our Church, but because it is 'the Church of God.' For this very purpose,—because 'God so loved the world,'—our love must reach out to 'all nations' and 'every (human) creature.' Thus may we long and toil until—(either before or after the Second Coming of Our Lord) 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge and love of God, as the waters cover the seas.'"

The Rev. Mr. Bacon's Christianity is certainly commendable, and though his view of God is probably different from ours, we can understand him and shake hands over an abyss of scientific differences, but we would say that the two commandments of Christ are not two behests, but that according to the traditions of the Church they are one and one only, the first being interpreted by the second; and we, from our radical standpoint, believe in the God of science, believe that God is not a person but a superpersonal norm of light, so that we find no fault with this interpretation. The American Churches, which are not State Churches but free institutions, are in a position to develop in this right line, and in fact, so far as I can judge, they do expand and grow, and reach out higher to the last rung of the ladder of evolution. We need not spurn the Bible or any of the traditional dogmas of the Church, If we cease to believe them to be literal revelations of God, we can still reverence them as the landmarks of man's religious development. We must only bear in mind that life must progress, and religious truth is as much subject to the law of growth as is all other life, as well as intellectual life.

Yet there is one essential truth to be noted: whatever changes there may be in our intellectual comprehension, the right moral ideas have always been the same, and once recognised will remain unalterable. The Golden Rule, which Tolstoy takes to be the essential doctrine of Christianity, cannot be changed by any widening of our intellectual horizon, and the religion that spreads "good will on earth" is absolutely true, and will remain true, whatever the riddles of life have in store for us.

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### FREETHOUGHT CONGRESS AT ROME IN 1904.

At the International Freethought Congress at Geneva in September last year it was resolved that the next Congress should be held at Rome in 1904, Sept. 20th. No time has been lost in commencing the preparatory labors of the organisation.

M. Léon Furnémont, Deputy for Charleroi to the Belgian Parliament, and General Secretary of the International Rationalist Federation, is now in London for the purpose of forming an English committee.

Similar committees have already been formed in various other countries, notably France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Holland, and Switzerland. On the several national committees there figure such well-known names as those of Professor Haeckel, the illustrious German professor; Professor Berthélot, secrétaire perpétuel of the Académie des Sciences at Paris; MM. Aulard, Gabriel Séailles, professors at the Sorbonne; M. Hervé, director of the Institut des Hautes Etudes at Paris; such distinguished senators as MM. Clemenceau and Delpech; and numerous deputies, representing all shades of the Republican party, among whom MM. Buisson, Lockroy, and Hubbard may be noted.

In Italy the committee is headed by such well-known men as Professor Lombroso and Signori Enrico Ferri, Colojani, De Cristoforis, and Pellegrini (Deputies of the Italian Parliament), and Professor Sergi, of the University of Rome. Professor Bovio, the distinguished savant and patriot, whose lamented death occurred a few days ago, had accepted the position of honorary president of the Congress.

The recent successes of the Spanish Republican party have sent to the Cortés a number of deputies who have already joined the committee in that country. Among these may be mentioned Nicolas Salmeron, the former President of the Spanish Republic, Miguel Morayta, the Grand Master of the Spanish Freemasons, and Admiral Marengo (Deputy for Cadiz).

On the Belgian committee will be found the names of Professor Hector Denis and the following Deputies: M. Léon Furnémont, Paul Jansen, the leader of the Liberal party, and Georges Lorand. The office of the Federation is at 13, Rue du Moniteur, Brussels.

It may be noted that M. Furnémont is about to proceed to Berlin, Vienna, and Buda-Pesth, in order to form the German, Austrian, and Hungarian committees. Already in the various Republics of South America similar committees are being constituted.

The English committee will comprise representatives of all grades of Rationalist thought. Professor Henry Maudsley and the veteran George Jacob Holyoake will be the presidents d'honneur. The other names include those of Earl Russell, Lady Florence Dixie, Joseph McCabe, John M. Robertson, Edward Clodd, Sydney Gimson, F. J. Gould, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, Dr. G. B. Clark, E. Belfort Bax, J. F. Green, Charles Watts, G. W. Foote, Chapman Cohen, Victor Roger, and P. H. Thomas. Several of the above-named have intimated their intention of being present at the Congress. In the meantime the English committee will be placed in communication with the other national committees, and will co-operate with them in framing the programme of the Congress.

The secretary of the English committee, Mr. William Heaford, writes: "Let me assure the English reader that French, Belgian, Italian, and Spanish Free-thought—so far as I know its literature and the men who write and speak for Free-thought in those lands—is no mere anti-clerical cry of 'Down with the priest and up with the people,' but a conscious, intelligent movement, based on a wide survey of human history and of man's social and political needs, embodying a radically rationalistic view of life and duty—a movement accelerated by splendid enthusiasm and adorned by illustrious talent.

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## THE HIAWATHA LEGEND.

*To the Editor of The Open Court:*

I some time since received *The Open Court*, containing an article on Hiawatha and the Onondaga Indians, by Dr. Charles L. Henning. I published a summary of the Hiawatha legends in the *Journal of American Folk Lore* some years ago. Dr. Henning's version is much like that of La Fort's in the Thacher wampum case. Writers now distinctly bring down the date of the league to about 1600, the archaeological proofs of which I have often pointed out.

Dr. Henning's Talla Lake should be Tully Lake, and there is no Tennessee street in Syracuse. La Fort's place for the council was at the corner of Warren and Genesee streets, in the midst of a former dense swamp.