

THE Freethinker

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History tells us that the good cause triumphs in the end, though the individuals may not live to see it. But we strive for the cause, not for ourselves.

—GEORGE MEREDITH.

“Honest Doubt.”

TENNYSON started the talk about “honest doubt.” He said that there “lived more faith” in it than in “half the creeds.” He meant well. But he was mistaken. What is more, he was in a confusion. The whole passage was perhaps the weakest platitude in *In Memoriam*; and platitude so easily runs into sheer ineptitude.

It is assumed, in this unfortunate passage of Tennyson's, that there is some special virtue in “faith” and some special vice in “doubt.” But it is perfectly clear, when you come to reflect, that “faith” and “doubt” must both have an object, and that the value of either depends upon what they are related to. If you have faith that the moon is made of green cheese, and I doubt the proposition, the difference is not one of transcendent importance. But if you have faith that a certain man will keep his word, and I doubt his fidelity, and the life or liberty of both of us depends upon his being true to his pledge, our difference is of tremendous importance. If you are right, we both gain; if I am right, we both lose. But the issue does not establish your moral superiority over me, or mine over you; it simply establishes the fact that your judgment was superior to mine, or mine to yours; and judgment is an intellectual process, which a bad man may sometimes perform better than a good one.

It is absurd to speak of “faith” in the abstract. When we are told that a man has faith, we should ask “faith in what?” He may have faith in a God of vengeance, or faith in a God of mercy; he may have faith in “grace” or faith in “good works”; he may have faith in moral rectitude or faith in Papal indulgences; he may have faith in reaching heaven through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, or faith in reaching heaven through the gracious favor of the Virgin Mary; he may have faith in the Holy Trinity or faith in Mumbo Jumbo; he may have faith in holy water, faith in transubstantiation, faith in priestly pardon, faith in extreme unction, and faith in prayers for the abbreviation of purgatory, or he may have faith in simple human virtues, and regard all those things as superstitious inventions.

You may tell me that a man has faith, I may trust myself in his hands, and I may find that he is a Thug. By an act of faith he murders me. The deity he worships is pleased with human blood, and mine is shed for his gratification. The contents of my pocket may, at the same time, fall into the hands of the assassin; but the agent is entitled to some advantage as well as the principal.

John Huss trusted himself in the hands of the Catholic party, and they burnt him alive, because they had a faith against keeping faith with heretics.

A man may doubt the wisdom of peace, or doubt the wisdom of war. A man may doubt the value of parliamentary government, or doubt the value of autocracy. A man may doubt the sense of free

trade, or doubt the sense of protection. A man may doubt anything, or doubt its opposite. And what is the use of counting his doubts as moral or immoral? They are nothing of the kind. They are simply opinions, which he forms according to his information and intellectual capacity.

If one man works a sum and gives the right answer, he is not moral, he is accurate. If another man works the sum and gives a wrong answer, he is not immoral, he is inaccurate. And the bad arithmetician may be the better citizen of the two.

Learned and able judges try cases and give judgments, and their judgments are sometimes reversed by other judges. There is a difference of opinion in the two separate hearings. But it would be absurd to infer that the judge in the first instance was wicked, and the judge in the second instance virtuous.

Faith is but an opinion, and doubt is an opinion; and by no possibility can an opinion be moral or immoral. These terms only apply to actions and agents. Opinions may be sound or unsound; in other words, they may be accurate or inaccurate. They cannot be anything else.

This philosophy teaches charity. Although we cannot all see eye to eye with each other, we can dwell together in peace and goodwill. A fellow citizen may differ from me and not deserve locking up; and I may differ from him, without deserving the gallows.

People differ on the most important practical questions, and still regard each other as gentlemen; yet when they differ on speculative questions, as to which they are all very much in the dark, they scowl and hiss and spit at each other, and call each other vile names, and do each other terrible injuries, and sometimes cut off each other's heads, or break each other to pieces, or burn each other to death.

All bigotry is bad, but religious bigotry is the worst of all. It is rare to find a Christian who admits that an “infidel” may be as good a man as himself. The priests and parsons naturally minister to this evil spirit. They treat unbelief as a sin. They represent those who reject their teachings as enemies of God. They speak the word *Atheist* as if it were the name of a monster. The better sort of them still talk of “honest doubts”—as though there could be dishonest doubts. Whenever they see an opponent they say (or look) “I am holier than thou.” And the police reports often show that they are not.

Even the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D., one of the “great” Free Church divines, in a *Hibbert Journal* article some time ago, ventured to express himself in the following manner:—

“Much more doubt is voluntary and culpable than it is the fashion to admit. The mental confusion is due to some moral weakness and discursiveness. It is not wholly mental error, but to some extent moral dullness (to say the least), which causes so many to pass over the historic Christ as lightly as they do in their survey of the field of fact.”

It is only the professional exhorters who are allowed to talk in that way. Once they flung around the lightnings of persecution. Now they only wield stage thunders. But they look what they cannot execute. “Sir,” they say to the infidel, “consider yourself blasted.” And the infidel lifts his hat with an ironical smile.

Dr. Forsyth has not mastered the elements of psychology. Otherwise he would know how absurd it is to speak of doubt as voluntary. The will has nothing to do with the matter. A man cannot believe as he would; he believes as he must. It is impossible for him to disbelieve what he sees to be the truth—and impossible for him to believe what he sees to be a falsehood.

When a man passes over anything lightly he does so because he thinks it is unimportant. And when Dr. Forsyth speaks of "the historic Christ" he should remember—for he surely knows—that many sceptics do not believe in the historicity of that personage. They have looked into the matter and have found a different conclusion from that which is propounded by Dr. Forsyth. Were they to call him a scoundrel, he would be justly indignant; but it appears that he feels at liberty to suggest that they are no better than they should be.

Considering that at least a half of the people of this country never darken the doors of church or chapel, it seems high time that the men of God dropped these impudent airs of superiority. They are not wiser men, they are not better men, than their fellow citizens. And people are beginning to laugh at the clerical "swelled head."

G. W. FOOTE.

The Medicine Man, Ancient and Modern.

IN a savage tribe the medicine man and the magic worker are natural and inevitable figures. They are natural because they are of a piece with the rest of the social structure. They are inevitable because in his gropings after knowledge man learns by trial and failure, only finding the truth after many experiences of the false. Moreover, these experts in the supernatural have plenty of work on hand. Being in direct touch with that world of spirits which play so large a part in primitive life, they arrange for success in war and prosperity in peace. They procure good crops and avert disease. They interpret all the signs and wonders that surround man, and subdue him to order or inspire him to action. They interpret omens on the birth of a child, and prescribe the proper methods of attending to the ghost after the individual is dead. If the rest of the tribe has to support the primitive priest, he can at least be said, in a sense, to earn his keep. For the savage does not see how he could get along without him. The primitive community begs the priest to help *it*, the modern priest begs the community to help *him*. The positions are reversed; and herein lies a very important moral.

Time passes, and the relations of the priest to the community undergoes a profound change. Things that the priest alone could do other people accomplish without him. Strength, skill, and organisation in warfare are seen to be more important than incantations. The gods, ancient and modern, are on the side of the big battalions. The army chaplain is not invited to the council of war. He blesses the guns, but no one blames him if the gunner misses his object or praises him if the gun shoots straight. He blesses the Army, but if it is unsuccessful it is the generals who are blamed, not the parsons. If the crops are bad, we blame the weather or the soil. We don't say that the gods have nothing to do with the case, but we act as if we believe it. If disease rages, we appeal to the doctor, not to the priest. Even the pious Mr. McKenna, when called on to deal with an outbreak of cattle disease, took the opinion of scientists, and never once consulted any of his highly esteemed Nonconformist ministers. We do not go to the priest to find out the cause of an eclipse, or explain the significance of an epidemic. Nature, as a whole, has put off the livery of the gods, and their uniformed servants wander about without any definite or reliable instructions from their masters. All that God does, apparently, is exist. What he does no one knows; and a large number have ceased to care.

In civilised countries the conditions that gave birth to the priest no longer exist. The frame of mind that called for his help is gone; his function, as a priest, dead. He is as much a rudimentary organ in the body politic as the caudal appendage is in the human body. But he is still with us, still prominent in our social life, still demanding support from the community, and accusing it of lack of duty when it is not forthcoming. It is not important to inquire how many of him there are still with us, nor is it important to find out just how much he costs. The really important inquiry is the part he plays in life. Obviously, he cannot exist on the same terms that governed his existence in primitive communities. He may exert much the same influence—I believe he does—but the outward reasons for his being must be different. He no longer pleads supernatural reasons for his existence; he does not threaten supernatural penalties if we suggest his abolition. Both the justification and the penalties are social in form; and, although this is really giving up the ghost, it is on this ground that he must be met.

One curious feature about an attack on the priest is that he has so few open defenders. (I am using the word "priest" in a very comprehensive sense as embracing all varieties, from the Roman Catholic at the one extreme to the "advanced" Nonconformist at the other). A great many people will join with the Freethinker in denouncing the priesthood, but they will point to the good men among them as proof of the value of religion, to bad ones as evidencing the weakness of human nature, or offer the correction that the evils we ascribe to religion are really due to theology. There are three fallacies here in as many statements. Good and bad men are found in every direction, and in any case I am not concerned with whether the clergy represent good or bad types of human nature. I am only concerned with the influence of the clergy as an organised body; and that, too, only so far as it is a necessary influence. So far as it is accidental, it may be set on one side altogether, whatever its nature may be. To attempt to draw a distinction of any consequence between religion and theology is stupid. The bare belief in supernatural beings or in God, by itself, would be neither good nor bad. It is what man believes to be the relations existing between the gods and himself, and the way in which this influences conduct, that is of importance, and it is the statement of these relations that constitute a theology. There never has been a religion without a theology, and there never will be one. And, as a religion implies and involves a theology, so a theology involves some sort of a priesthood. The three hang together, an inseparable trinity in actual fact.

Now, it is a truism that the organised priesthoods of the world have been hostile to progress. I need not labor the point; it is conceded in the mere fact that each one admits it as true of all the others. Special individuals may here and there have taken the side of reform; special circumstances may for a season have ranged a body of the clergy on the side of reform; but, special circumstances aside, the truth remains that the clergy of all denominations and in all countries are found the supporters of retrogressive ideas. This phenomenon is so general and so uniform that it cannot be accidental. It must be due to something that has its origin in the very function of a priest in all societies immediately above the lowest stage of culture. Personally, I believe it will hold good even there; but I confine myself to the more easily demonstrable proposition.

This proposition is a very simple one: it is that the existence of every clergy, every priesthood, is bound up with the perpetuation of certain ideas quite irrespective of their truth or utility. Progress, we may say, depends on a continuous readjustment of opinion to new needs and a widening circle of information. No man and no society is truly progressive unless he and it holds beliefs as subject to whatever modifications increased knowledge may

demand. To the true progressive the past is a book to be consulted, not an oracle to be slavishly obeyed. A new truth is something to be sought for; an opponent one to be welcomed for whatever light he may shed, not an enemy to be repulsed at all costs. On the other hand, the existence of the priest, as priest, depends upon the maintenance of beliefs that all verifiable knowledge tends to discredit. Although he exists in the present, he belongs to the past, and his power is exactly proportionate to his success in keeping the present in line with the past. His function is to hand on established opinions, not to create new ones. His is not only "not to reason why"; it is his task to prevent others reasoning why, or even to feel the necessity for so doing. Instinctively he feels, with an acuteness of perception that is curiously manifested by all vested interests, that a new idea is a ferment that may react disastrously on his position. Self-preservation, the first law of existence for institutions as for organisms, sets the priest in opposition to reform. Oppose it he must; to promote it is an act of class suicide.

The evil does not end here. A class that merely became identified with retrogressive ideas would exert but little influence. It would be known for what it was, and valued accordingly. Their success in safeguarding their status and function is really dependent upon the degree to which they are able to mould character. An historic tradition—little honored by the wisest teachers in all ages—gives them a prominent place in this matter. In that, and in matters of education generally, they still claim a prescriptive right to express an opinion. And yet the fact remains that of all classes in the community the priesthood is the worst possible for the work. Men who commence their career by pledging themselves to a set confession of faith, and continue teaching it by setting upon it an interpretation quite at variance with its plain meaning, must make the worst possible teachers and moulders of character. The secular teacher may be inefficient, but in that case he merely fails. The priestly teacher really aims to distort, and where he is allowed a free hand he rarely fails in his work. Their object is to give a decisive bent to the mind, and one that is fatal to a really healthy citizenship. Men who think more of where an opinion may lead than of the evidence for its justification can never either be genuine seekers for truth themselves or train others to the task. They would far rather see people grow up timid and credulous than strong with the strength that is born of fearless questioning and honestly expressed doubt. The purpose of every medicine-man, from the savage to the Nonconformist preacher, is to train people to become dependent on their ministrations, not to walk boldly in a path of their own choosing. By tradition and by training, by love of ease and lust of power, the clergy are thoroughly unfitted for the work of education or the healthy moulding of character. Every good teacher is interested in the ideas he gives his pupils; but the teacher whose existence, as a teacher, is bound up with the perpetuation of a special set of ideas is the most dangerous of all social forces.

Consider the character of those feelings aroused and maintained by religious discipline. The most generous of them are limited by the boundaries of a faith, the less generous by puny sectarian divisions. So far as people outside the faith or sect are considered, they are thought about as potential converts. The larger, healthier, humanitarian note is quite lacking. Unconsciously, this is admitted by the appeal to "Christian men and women" and "Christian feeling" when religious leaders are striving to rouse their followers to a sense of duty. Of course, it may be said that Christian feeling represents the highest to these people. This may be so, but the apology carries its own condemnation. For that, surely, is not the best teaching, which owes all its influence to appeals to what is essentially a sectarian feeling. It is but a poor defence of clerical training to argue that under its influence people are so poorly developed that appeals based on

a sense of common humanity falls upon practically deaf ears.

It is the system, not the individual, that I am attacking. Systems and castes mould men, just as surely as men create castes and systems. The medicine man, ancient or modern, is not born but made. He is the creature of a system, just as he strives to make others its victims. Each class has its own special code of honor, and the mischief is that the clergy possess a caste morality of its own that tends to subvert the workings of a healthier social consciousness. For the "greater glory of God" almost anything becomes permissible; moral responsibilities that obtain elsewhere break down here. The story—probably apocryphal—told of Bunyan may be fitly applied. "There but for the grace of God go I," he said, on seeing a criminal led to execution. Were any of us in the pulpit, bound by its traditions, and swathed in its teachings, we all might behave as does the priest. It is not the man that spoils the religion, it is the religion that spoils the man. And that is the ultimate reason for its destruction.

C. COHEN.

The Virgin Birth.

A FEW weeks ago we called attention to a grotesque attempt to explain away great Biblical doctrines, such as those of the Edenic Fall and the Virgin Birth. With reference to the Genesis story the Rev. H. S. M'Clelland, B.A., B.D., asks, "What more beautiful legend could there be than this, which typifies humanity dwelling in that blissful garden of innocence, until the dawning of the moral consciousness, and the beginning of our long struggle with evil, for the conquest of the soul?" According to Mr. M'Clelland, he who takes the narrative of the Fall literally lacks spiritual discernment; he is a dullard, like the Apostle Paul, for example. It was not a deplorable fall, but a marvellous rise, that took place in the Garden of Eden. So, likewise, the Virgin Birth is nothing but a beautiful legend. The following are the reverend gentleman's own words:—

"Apply the same method of spiritual interpretation to the Nativity stories that surround with their aureole of mystery the birth of Jesus, and you will see that there is more truth within those legends than you were at first aware of. Remember that more than fifty years had passed since that wondrous day, before any record of its events was written down. Remember, also, what Jesus had been to the simple men who wrote them. Is it very strange that they should consider that so unique a life *must* have had a dramatic entry, even though Jesus himself said nothing about it? They simply could not express what Jesus had been to them without the help of poetry and symbol. So we find his coming attended by the strangest of heavenly portents. A new star appears in the sky and hangs over Bethlehem, wise men come from afar, the heavens are literally opened, the angelic hosts become visible and audible.....To regard these statements as the record of actual facts is to deprive them at once of their spiritual significance for thousands of devout and holy men who simply cannot believe that they ever took place. To hold them as the expression of profound ideal truths is to find them rich in ethical and spiritual store."

If we bluntly characterise the spiritual interpretation of the Nativity stories as groundless and false, we shall be described as spiritually blind, and consequently incompetent to judge; but honesty compels us to declare that if Mr. M'Clelland is right all the Creeds of Christendom are wrong. If the Evangelists were poets, is it not strange that they were never recognised as such until the beginning of the twentieth century? So long as the people could believe the story of the Virgin Birth no one dreamed of regarding it as poetry. Matthew and Luke "could not express what Jesus had been to them" without saying that he came into the world without a human father. In order to tell us how he had changed the world for them by the mighty passion of his life they had to affirm that his mother had never known a man. In other words, the only way to make the

truth about Jesus known was to tell a gigantic lie. This is scarcely complimentary to the Evangelists, to say the least; but what we wish to emphasise is the fact that what is actually false cannot be poetically true, or that an event that never took place cannot be "rich in ethical and spiritual store."

Now, the Virgin Birth is or is not a reality; it happened, or it did not happen. If it happened, it is an actual fact; if it did not happen, the only possible interpretation of it consists in the statement that it is a pure myth. If it is only a myth, as Mr. McClelland seems to assume, how can it be "rich in ethical and spiritual store"? And what is the good of treating what never occurred as poetry or symbol? A lie can never serve the cause of truth; and a virgin birth that never happened can never show forth the glory of Christ, nor tell the world what he did for his disciples. We maintain, therefore, that by repudiating the Virgin Birth Mr. McClelland has considerably weakened the case for the Bible and for Christianity, forgetting that there can be no shadow when the substance causing it has been withdrawn. It is the height of absurdity to speak of the spiritual interpretation of what never took place. To a believer in God and the Deity of Jesus Christ the Virgin Birth is neither impossible nor improbable, and certainly he cannot dismiss it as absurd. Professor Peake, writing from the standpoint of such a believer, puts the case as follows:—

"We are speaking of one whom we regard as the Son of God, and whose earthly career closed with the still more stupendous miracle of the Resurrection. We are speaking of the central Figure of all history. Approaching the story along these lines, we may feel that in a person so supernatural the Virgin Birth was natural" (*Christianity: its Nature and its Faith*, p. 190).

When we read the story as related by Matthew and Luke, the impression made upon our minds is that the writers are dealing with a real incident, or at least wish us to believe that they are doing so; and when we come to the Apostles' Creed the impression is deepened. Here Jesus Christ is described as God's only Son, "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Tertullian states that "God, the Son of God, was sent by the Father into the Virgin to be born of her"; that "when Mary conceived, she conceived as a virgin"; and "that what she conceived was God as well as man, the Son of God, who himself, sent by the Father, entered her womb to be born." This does not sound like poetry, does it? This second century Father tells us, further, that the "Son of God was not only sent down of the Father into the womb of Mary the Virgin, but was *made flesh* there by the agency of the Spirit and power of God." Irenæus is equally positive that the Son of God was made flesh and became man, though he does not mention the agency of the Holy Ghost. In his famous *Apology*, Justin says that "the Word, who is the first-born of God, was produced *without sexual union*"; and he assures his readers that the Virgin Birth is by no means an extraordinary thing, as they were constantly meeting with it in Pagan mythologies. There is no trace of poetry or idealism here. There were Christians in the early Church who denied the Virgin Birth, such as the Ebionites, who held that Jesus was only a man, and the Gnostics, who distinguished between the man, born Jesus, and the Christ, that descended upon him, and took possession of him afterwards; but they denied it absolutely, and found no ideal truth whatever in the story. In the Nicene Creed, two centuries later, the Virgin Birth is affirmed with greater clearness than ever. Having described Jesus Christ as "the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, the only begotten [that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made," the Creed continues: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The Virgin Birth is here a dogma of the most definite and rigid kind, upon which the Muses never breathed. These two Creeds, the

Apostles' and the Nicene, with the Athanasian, the Anglican Articles of Religion inform us, "ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by certain warrants of holy Scripture." We fully agree, and cannot understand the position of those who boggle at the Virgin Birth while cheerfully swallowing the Resurrection. The one is not one whit more believable than the other. More irrational still is the attitude of those who endeavor to impose upon both a spiritual interpretation. Many New Theologians do not believe that Christ rose from the dead *bodily*, but *spiritually*; but what about his death? Are we to understand that he did not die physically, but ideally? Because it inevitably follows that if he died a bodily death he must have undergone a bodily resurrection, because 'it was that which died which was declared to have come to life again. Similarly, if Jesus was not born of a virgin he must have had a human father; and if he had a human father there is no intelligible sense in which the Virgin Birth can be true.

We reject the Virgin Birth simply because we believe neither in God nor in Christ, or because we have discarded supernaturalism in all its forms. We do not believe in the Divine Incarnation because we do not believe in Divinity. The late Professor Charles A. Briggs, of New York, imagines, in his *Fundamental Christian Faith*, that he has "hunted the opponents of the Virgin Birth out of all the holes and corners in which, like rats, they take refuge"; but in reality he has done nothing of the sort. For one thing, they do not take refuge, like rats, in holes and corners, but boldly take their stand upon stubborn facts which cannot be denied. It is utterly immaterial to us whether the word *begat* in Matthew's genealogy is used in the sense of legal or of physical descent, because we base no argument against the Virgin Birth upon such texts as "Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus, called the Messiah." Our opposition to that dogma, as well as to all other Christian dogmas, rests upon the total lack of evidence in support of the belief in the supernatural. For all phenomena known to us we can account without going outside Nature; and certainly Jesus can be fully explained without bringing in any supernatural agency. The Christ of Paul and the Church has never done a single thing to prove his own existence. Like his much belauded Sermon, he has been a dead letter in the history of Christendom; and to the Church itself he has been mostly a bone of contention, a man of war rather than a Prince of Peace. But Nature is at last dethroning Supernature, and becoming supreme in human life. J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—IX.

(Continued from p. 422.)

"The thin end of the entering wedge destined to split China into fragments, unless anticipated (as in fact it has been) in its disruptive work by some ruder allied agency, was clearly discerned by Consul Alcock while at Shanghai. Under cover of the first French treaties in 1844 and 1846 missionaries effected a legal lodgment on the coast of China, from which they cast longing eyes on the vast interior of the country. Rivalry between the Christian sects brought fresh pressure to bear on the Plenipotentiaries, and the 'toleration clause' was introduced into all the treaties negotiated at Tientsin in 1858 and in the German treaty of 1861."—ALEXANDER MICHIE, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 224.

"Fancy a Chinese Buddhist mounting on the roof of a hansom cab at Charing Cross and preaching Buddhism to the mob in pidgin English! That would give some measure of the effect produced on a Chinese crowd by a missionary I have seen perched upon a cart outside the great gate of the Tartar city at Peking, haranguing a yellow crowd of gapers in bastard Chinese."—A. B. MITFORD, *The Attaché at Peking*, p. 37.

OUR next war with China—in which the French took part—occurred in 1856. This arose through the seizure by the Chinese of the lorcha *Arrow*, trading under the British flag (a "lorcha" is a light vessel with a European hull, rigged like a Chinese junk) from which incident it is known as the

"Arrow War," and not, as I was informed in all good faith when I was a child, because the Chinese fought with bows and arrows. This was concluded in 1858 with the treaty of Tientsin. Other treaties were also concluded with Russia, the United States, France, and, in 1861, with Germany. In all these treaties a "toleration clause" was inserted, allowing Christianity to be taught in China. Says Mr. Michie:—

"What the Chinese would have said had they been free to discuss the demand made upon them, we can hardly conjecture, but in the position in which they actually found themselves they would have subscribed to any form of words submitted to them, their sole anxiety then being to get rid of the barbarians on any terms. Had the preamble run, 'Whereas the Christian religion as practised for 1800 years has not brought peace but a sword upon the earth, has set the father against the son, nation against nation, instigated crimes without number, sided with the oppressor and the unrighteous judge, and is daily prostituted for political ends,' the Chinese would have signed the toleration clause just the same. The phraseology was nothing to them, whence it follows that the responsibility for the consequences rests on the Powers who imposed the form, as well as substance, of the obligations."*

As the same historian further remarks:—

"The mediæval solicitude for 'saving the heathen' survives, and the statesman has to reckon with it. It can neither be reasoned with nor turned aside, and is the more intractable in that the logical effect of its inspiration is to place it above civil law, but under a divine law of its own interpreting, the interpretation varying indefinitely with the divisions of the force."

Therefore, he says:—

"To introduce such a complex ferment into the Chinese body politic was a psychological experiment on a colossal scale, and also irrevocable. It was, therefore, an experiment which demanded the kind of precaution used in handling dangerous chemicals. Yet absolutely no thought was bestowed on the subject, the explosive was imported with less ceremony than is bestowed on a bale of long cloth, and left to spread according to its own laws in the living tissue into which it was injected."†

Sir Rutherford Alcock spoke of "the futility of grafting on to a treaty of commerce, forced upon the Chinese under circumstances which left them no power to refuse, a proselytising agency for the conversion of the nation to Christianity."

As Mr. Michie further remarks:—

"A rose-cutting would not be grafted with the insouciance with which this spiritual element was inconspicuously inserted in a commercial treaty. Commenting directly upon the toleration clause itself, Sir Rutherford wrote: 'It is only necessary to read carefully the words of the article to be aware that, in the whole range of the treaty, from the first to the fifty-sixth article, there is nothing stipulated for so difficult to secure as the fulfilment in its integrity of this one clause.'‡

Sir Rutherford was a clear-headed and far-sighted man, as after events have proved.

We now come to one of the blackest pieces of treachery and forgery ever perpetrated, even in the annals of religious history.

We have seen how the missionaries were turned out of China some centuries before, entirely owing to their quarrels and interference with Imperial affairs. Of course, they could not take the churches, houses, and land they had acquired—in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, who, according to the Bible, had not so much as a place to lay his head—so they disposed of them in the best manner they could, probably selling them for what they could get.

The aim of the priests was to obtain possession of this property again by one bold stroke, and this is the way they went about it. To cite the same able historian—Mr. Michie—again:—

"There was one treaty stipulation which has not been left to chance for its fulfilment—the additional article inserted in the French Convention of Peking in 1860. An astute missionary, acting as interpreter to Baron Gros, managed to interpolate in the Chinese text

a clause of their own which had no place in the French—the ruling version—and was quite unknown to the French Envoy. By that clause full permission was accorded to French missionaries to purchase land and erect buildings throughout the empire; and, further, all churches, schools, cemeteries, lands, and buildings which had been owned by persecuted Christians (Chinese) in previous centuries were to be paid for, and the money handed over to the French representative in Peking for transmission to the Christians in the localities concerned. This astounding demand, in our eyes at once so truculent and so impracticable, seems to have been to the Chinese neither more nor less oppressive than the rest of the treaty, and they signed without demur, under the usual mental reservation."*

Mr. Michie does not mention the name of the wretch who was responsible for this piece of perfidy; but we learn from M. Eug. Simon's able work on China that it was M. Delamarre, a French priest belonging to the French foreign mission, who was employed by Baron Gros—the French plenipotentiary—as his chief interpreter. Another proof that a priest can never be trusted and should never be employed in public affairs. A man who perpetrated such a fraud in any matter of daily life, not connected with religion, would be covered with shame and ignominy; he might, like the forger Piggot, blow his brains out when discovered. But religion sanctifies every wickedness when it has a pious motive in view. M. Eug. Simon tells us that not only did M. Delamarre admit to him that he was the author of this pious fraud, but he "boasted of it."†

"Some effort of imagination is required," says Mr. Michie, "to realise what is implied in this surreptitious article," and it cites an analogy made made by Sir Rutherford Alcock, who says:—

"We must suppose a French Army entering London and there dictating the conditions of peace, and among others one that all church property confiscated by Henry VIII. should forthwith be restored to the Roman Catholic Church by the present holders, however acquired, and without compensation, and that the French Government could be appealed to in order to enforce the rigorous execution of the stipulation."

How the stipulation was enforced is thus described by Prince Kung in his circular of 1871, who declared:—

"During the last few years the restitution of chapels in every province has been insisted upon without any regard for the feelings of the masses, the missionaries obstinately persisting in their claims. They have also pointed out fine, handsome houses (belonging to, or occupied by, the gentry or others) as buildings once used as churches, and these they have compelled the people to give up. But what is worse, and what wounds the dignity of the people, is that they often claim as their property *yaméns*, places of assembly, temples held in high respect by the literates and the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Buildings which were once used as chapels have been in some cases sold years ago by Christians; and, having been sold and resold by one of the people to another, have passed through the hands of several proprietors. There is also a large number of buildings which have been newly repaired at very considerable expense, of which the missionaries have insisted on the restitution, refusing at the same time to pay anything for them. On the other hand, there are some houses which have become dilapidated, and the missionaries put in a claim for the necessary repair. Their conduct excites the indignation of the people whenever they come in contact with each other, and it becomes impossible for them to live quietly together."‡

This was the work of a Catholic priest, but what was the attitude of the Protestant missionaries towards this abominable treachery? Did they denounce it and decline to take advantage of the forged clause? Not a bit of it; they took full advantage of the forgery and advanced further claims of their own. Says Mr. Michie:—

"The fraud was more than condoned by missionaries of all nations and sects, whose legal title to residence in

* A. Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 225.
† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 226.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

* Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 230.
† M. Eug. Simon, *China—its Social, Political, and Religious Life* (1887), footnote to p. 160.
‡ Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 231.

the interior of China, distant from all authority, rests solely on the interpolated French clause, the benefit of which accrues to them under the most-favored-nation privilege. British Protestant missionaries, not altogether satisfied with this tainted title, in a long letter to their Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, claimed the right of inland residence on another ground. They adduced the public declaration of Mr. Burlingame, that 'China invites Protestant missionaries to plant the shining Cross on every hill and in every valley,' to which the answer was simple, that the Chinese Government disavowed the promises of the Envoy, and repudiated the implied obligation."*

This so-called Burlingame "mission," which provides one of the very few touches of the comic element in the tragedy of China, came about in this way. When Mr. Burlingame was paying his farewell visit to the Chinese Ministers before retiring from his post as Minister for the United States of America, Prince Kung made the polite remark, "Now, why cannot you, when you are again in the West, represent our views of what is taking place in China, and of what we would wish to have done in our country?" Mr. Burlingame replied, "Should I visit any of the Courts of Europe, I shall have much pleasure in doing so." Mr. Burlingame seems to have taken a polite speech—and China is the country of polite speeches—too literally, and presently entered upon his comic-opera mission to the Courts of Europe, which is now chiefly remembered, says Mrs. Archibald Little, in her *Life of Li Hung Chang*, by its leader's public declaration that "China invites Protestant missionaries to plant the shining Cross on every hill and in every valley," a statement, she indignantly remarks, "which leads people of certain temperament to form so stern a judgment of the speaker that I refrain from touching further on this episode" (p. 64).†

Mr. Burlingame must have known the statement to be perfectly false when he made it, or, if he did not, he was unfit to hold his position as representative of the United States; he was, therefore, guilty of bad faith towards the Chinese Government in misrepresenting their wishes. The missionaries also knew, from personal experience, that the statement was false, but this did not prevent them from using it as a lever by which to force an entry into the inland parts of China. While they are loud in denouncing the Jesuit maxim that "the end justifies the means," they always practise it when they have the opportunity.

(To be continued.)

W. MANN.

Paganism and Christianity.

AN unusually interesting article appears in the June *New Church Monthly* (Swedenborgian) on the subject of "Paganism and Christianity," written by the Rev. J. R. Rendell, B.A. The reverend gentleman has been paying a visit to Rome, the result being to bring to his mind in "an astonishingly vivid way" the fact, "known to every student," of the close connection which exists between the old Pagan worship of Rome and Christianity. It is certain, says he, that Pagan temples were used as Christian churches. Ancient ceremonies like the burning of the lamp before the altar were retained. Incense was burnt before the Gods of Rome. The worship of the Virgin is not far removed from the adoration of one of the Roman goddesses. Even the robes of the Pagan priests were worn. Archæologists, says he, assure us that nearly all the details of the dress of a cardinal were to be found on the dress of the Assyrian priests. As Mr. Rendell visited the chief monuments of the city he "was often reminded of the close relations between the ancient civic life of Rome and the customs of Christianity." The popes did not hesitate to despoil the ancient Forum to add to the glories of the Church. The great bronze doors of St. John's Lateran were formerly the doors

of the Senate House. Professor Reynaud said that if by some divine power all that belonged to the Pagan temples of the Forum and its civic buildings were to be restored, St. Peter's itself would be the very first to move to the centre of the city. This, however, is more particularly interesting to the archæologist. What is more serious from the Christian point of view is the "naked and unabashed" way in which Rome has borrowed Pagan ideas and ceremonies. Mr. Rendell was present in St. Peter's on the occasion of some important ceremony at which the Pope was to have officiated, but did not owing to illness. The service occupied about two hours, but the vast congregation seemed to take no part at all in it. There was nothing for the congregation to sing, not even a response. No seats are provided. The people crowded and crushed as they might on entering some place of entertainment. Mr. Rendell could not help being struck by the irreverent manner of the priests. None of the crowd could hear a single sentence of the service.

A bronze statue of St. Peter is of special interest to the worshipers. It is blackened by age, with the exception of the great toe on the right foot, which is kept bright by the lips of the faithful. A line of worshipers was waiting the opportunity of kissing the toe. "What are we to think of it?" exclaims Mr. Rendell. No wonder, says he, the Churches of Italy are deserted and that they are forsaken by the intellect of the nation. Indeed, in Northern Italy, there is scarcely a good word for the priests. In Italy, as in France, the Government has found it necessary to suppress the monasteries.

Most of the Churches boast the possession of some relic of a saint. Mr. Rendell hopes he was willing to believe what the custodians told him, but even his powers of credence gave out when he was shown the bones of the whale that swallowed Jonah!

Another relic was a piece of the rock that Moses struck. Mr. Rendell (who is a Swedenborgian) is not particularly enamored of typical Protestant Christianity, but, at any rate, it is an advance on such besotted superstition as this. Moreover, Protestantism is an elastic term which may be stretched even to the extent of covering the position of the non-historicity of the gospel Jesus. *Vide* sundry reverends who are attending to the obsequies of historical Christianity. But the most striking instance of Paganism, says Mr. Rendell, is the Bambino, which he was shown in the Church of Araceli. This object is a large and somewhat ugly doll, covered with gold chains and jewels, and is kept in a glass case to protect it from theft. Not so long ago it was carried through the city as a means of staying an epidemic disease. At the present time children are often brought to it as a means of healing.

Mr. Rendell tells us that the great monuments of the city are a reminder of the divine honors paid to the Cæsars. These honors could only be conferred by the Senate by vote, and he recalls that Faustina was the first Roman lady to enter heaven, and she was smuggled in by a snatch vote. Mr. Rendell asks, is not this election to divine honors just what takes place on the canonisation of a saint? The cardinals assembled in the Sistine Chapel determined by vote whether a person was to be recognised as a saint or not. This, by the way, was the method adopted by the Church to decide which of the mass of Gospels and Epistles afloat in the fourth century should be regarded as inspired and which not. It suggests the question whether those who decided really cared whether the documents they selected were authentic or not so long as they put an end to a much debated question; for it surely must have occurred to the meanest intellect that the intrinsic truth of a book could not be demonstrated by a mere show of hands.

It has not yet dawned on Mr. Rendell that the facts he has personally vouched for are not the only reminiscences of Paganism in Christianity. If he extends his researches he will discover that practically the whole system is Paganism under another name.

* Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 232.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 232.

Mr. Rendell strikes a really good note in winding up his article. He says had he been compelled to choose between a religion that trusted to such ceremonies as he had witnessed at St. Peter's, and certain almost equally superstitious forms of Protestant worship at Rome, he fears he would have been constrained to join the crowd of those Italians who are utterly dissatisfied with religion and who have become Agnostics. Never before had he so fully realised the causes of Italian scepticism. A deeper penetration into the origins of Christianity may enable him to realise the causes, not only of Italian scepticism, but of that cosmopolitan scepticism which is undermining the Christian religion throughout the world. SIBLEY.

Acid Drops.

We can't help saying "I told you so," although the telling required no supernatural, or even remarkable, insight into matters. Still, when the religious press was publishing special articles on "China's appeal for prayer," and writing fantastic accounts of how Chinese statesmen felt the need for Christian help, we pointed out how absurd the whole business was. The Chinese did not want Christianity, and do not want it. It suited the missionary game to pretend otherwise, and the British public—surely the most gullible public in Europe!—were led to believe that if only people would subscribe liberally, within a very little while the Chinese Empire would be practically Christianised. It was not clear why these subscriptions were necessary. If the Chinese were really crying out for Christianity, and prostrating themselves in admiration before the types of Christians they saw—evidently a much different lot to what we have at home—there was nothing in the world, as far as we could see, to prevent their adopting Christianity offhand. But lavish subscription is always essential to missionary work. You must subscribe to help an Almighty God do his work, and you must subscribe to induce a people to adopt a religion they are clamoring to secure.

From recent articles in the daily press we find that the cat is now out of the bag. Yuan-Shi-Kai, who spoke well of Christianity, has been elected President of the Republic, and one of the earliest of his edicts has practically re-established Confucianism as the official creed. He cites Confucius's teaching that after war comes peace, and with peace real tranquillity and happiness, and declares that to be "the function of republicanism." And he adds that Confucius "must remain the teacher of China for thousands of generations." For thousands of generations! After that Christianity may be given a chance. And the poor fools in England were subscribing in the hope of an immediate conversion of the Celestial Empire! Of course, the religious leaders who worked the yarn of China's immediate conversion have remained quiet. That is only to be expected. People who lie for the glory of God usually remain silent under exposure.

Public bodies in China have been ordered to revive the ceremonies of Confucius, and the President will worship, officially, as Patriarch at the Temple of Heaven. The *Daily Telegraph* says that the appeal of the Government for "Christian prayers for the Republic throughout England and America only, two months ago, now assumes a particularly ugly look," and adds that the history of official China since 1911 may be "expressed in one pregnant word—bluff." We may point out that the Chinese did not ask for Christian prayers "throughout England and America." That was a Christian distortion of the truth. All it asked for was the prayers of Christians in China. That, we agree, was bluff. It deceived no person of common sense or knowledge. We do not believe it deceived even the missionaries themselves. But it suited their game to accept the bluff at its face value, and we expect the Chinese officials were sufficiently cuto in their estimate of missionary psychology to realise that the missionaries would be their best helpers at the game.

Six of Dr. Orchard's "Modern Tracts on Religion" have now been published in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The sixth is entitled "Why Go to Church?" and, like its predecessors, it contains several observations which are obviously true. It is true, for example, that "the church's call to worship no longer possesses any Divine or natural right in

the estimate of the majority." It is true, also, that if the tendency to non-churchgoing "continues our churches will soon be standing as forsaken and ruined as the monasteries." It is true, further, "that communal worship and religious fellowship are essential to religion, and particularly to Christianity." Then there follows a series of assertions that are palpably false. It by no means necessarily follows that "the decay of a social custom is due to the decay of the social sense." It is, on the contrary, a demonstrable fact that the custom of church-attendance has never tended to the cultivation of the social sense; as a matter of fact, it has, rather, fostered the spirit of division and snobbishness. It may safely be affirmed that the overwhelming majority of scoundrels, in all ages, have been noted for their devotion to religious exercises. It was stated that the notorious criminal, Charles Peace, had a pew in a South London church. We differ totally from Dr. Orchard, and without fear of contradiction from history reverse his statement thus: "It is much more likely that the notorious sweater will be found on Sunday singing hymns about entire consecration, rather than raising clouds of dust upon our country roads, or sunning himself for the week-end at some luxurious seaside hotel." The truth is that even Dr. Orchard fails to make out a good case for the superstitious and antiquated custom of church-going. It is a thoroughly bad case, and no amount of eloquent writing can ever make it good.

The religious bodies at Lincoln plied the Town Council with depositions against the Sunday cinematograph shows. We are glad to note that they failed in this professional effort. The continuance of the shows on Sunday was carried by a majority of twelve to six. Unfortunately, however, the Council started a censorship of the pictures, besides refusing to let the shows open till after "divine service" in the evening, thus limiting the performances to an hour and a half, from 8.30 to 10, and practically preventing the attendance of children. The censorship provides that "on Sundays only religious, historical, scientific, landscape, maritime, or select topical pictures shall be exhibited." This is pure Sabbatarianism, and we should like to know what right Town Councils have to impose that burden upon the public. The cream of this wretched joke is yet to come. Legal opinion at Brighton has been given in favor of what we have always maintained; namely, that Town Councils have no power to grant Sunday licences at all—that their legal control over the picture shows begins on Monday morning and ends on Saturday night. Why don't the picture theatre people in some town pluck up courage and defy the "authorities"? They would be sure to win if they stuck together.

"The Scythe" was the title of a column sketch by Basil Macdonald Hastings in the *Daily News* of July 2, and as it was placed next to the leading articles it must have been considered of some importance. We have only one fault to find with it; what William Cobbett might have called its "base and bloody" theology. A shocking motor-car accident is related, in which two attractive young people, bride and bridegroom, are crushed to death, besides other unfortunate victims of the unforeseeable. A peasant who had come over the hedge to lend a hand goes back to his grass-mowing, and the article winds up thus:—"Man scythes on one side of the hedge; God on the other." Is this what the *Daily News* wants people to believe? Mowing down the grass is honest and useful labor. Mowing down human beings is sheer massacre. The peasant was earning his living—and perhaps his wife's and children's. God was simply amusing himself.

What a pity it is that God (if there be a God) does not look after the world better. A Clerkenwell magistrate, the other day, asked a woman, "What is your husband?" "A drunkard, sir," she replied. Poor woman! Yet even according to orthodox Christianity the world has been under God's management for six thousand years! He might have done better in that time by what commercial advertisers call "strict attention to business."

Rev. Dr. Alfred Rowland, who is retiring from the ministry, has gone over the manuscripts of his sermons and destroyed over two thousand of them. We believe the public has reason to be thankful. Suppose he had published them!

"If Christian men," says Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., "will not perform the duties of citizenship, you may be quite sure that other men will pour into the gap and bring selfish motives and unclean hands to the work." Mr. Henderson is named as the next president of the "Brotherhood" movement. Apparently his conception of brother-

hood is to associate all who are not Christians with "selfish motives and unclean hands." We should have thought that Mr. Henderson's experience of churches and chapels would have shown him a deal of both in close connection with the most fervent Christian belief. At any rate, if his experience has been so curiously limited as to be otherwise, we shall be happy to put him on the track of getting evidence. The real vice of our public life is that it has been so largely in the hands of Christians; and Christianity has, along with the mouthing of superficially admirable sentiments, always had the effect of encouraging a type of mind fatal to a healthy social life. We might even suggest Mr. Henderson himself as evidence. For when a man has reached the point of ranking people as desirable citizens on the ground of whether they believe in Christianity or not, and so slandering a large number of his fellow citizens, he himself is helping to lower the standard of citizenship in no small measure.

"Why should we be ashamed of emotion and feeling?" asks the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury. We do not know that anyone desires that people should be ashamed of expressing emotion; and whether they are ashamed of it or not, it remains an inescapable fact. Freethinkers only complain when religionists take a burst of emotion for the conclusions of impartial reasoning. And above all, they object to the manner in which a highly emotional state is deliberately cultivated in some religious meetings; and while under its influence, people are induced to say things they would never dream of saying in their cooler moments. Such conduct is pure quackery. From a reasonable point of view, opinions expressed under such conditions are of no more value than those expressed under the influence of alcohol. There are many forms of intoxication, and there are many kinds of intoxicants. Perhaps the most dangerous form of all is that of lashing oneself into a frenzy of emotion in order to reach a conclusion that could not be attained otherwise. Emotion has its legitimate place in life, but a good thing out of its place becomes a veritable nuisance.

Mr. Parton Millum, in the Methodist magazine, the *London Quarterly*, says of Darwin's method of working that "the pivot upon which evolution has rested, and the means by which it has conquered men's minds, was a train of thought, a logical syllogism, rather than an observed sequence of events in outward nature." Mr. Millum should be more careful as to his facts, especially when the facts are so easily ascertainable. For instance, Darwin spent some twenty years in experimenting and observing before he published his great work on earthworms. His works on the fertilisation of orchids and insectivorous plants are also monuments of close observation and the careful checking of theory by facts. On the *Origin of Species* Darwin began to write in 1837, and did not publish for twenty-two years after. There are not many who observe and reflect for over twenty years in order to test a theory. One may safely say, if that were a general rule, many theories would be abandoned before publication. For a Christian to urge the complaint approaches very near impudence.

The Rev. George M. Searle, C. S. P., may be an excellent Catholic priest, but he is either profoundly ignorant of science, or he wilfully misrepresents it. In the *Catholic Herald* for July 5, the reverend gentleman asserts that there is "no real science" in Darwinism, that "the real inner ring of scientists have no real expectation that any further advance will be made in it," and that "some of them, who are opposed to religion, are trying to find some substitute for it, such as the production of life by artificial means." Every one of these assertions is wholly false. If Darwinism is "no real science," no real science exists. In point of fact, Darwinism is the accepted science of to-day, even for "the real inner ring of scientists." Will Mr. Searle kindly name five first-class biologists who are not Darwinians? The truth is that he does not know what he is writing about. Fancy his imagining that any biologist or even physicist can be silly enough to suggest the possible artificial production of life as a substitution for Darwinism. Why the two have absolutely nothing in common. Darwinism does not trouble itself about the *origin* of life, but with its *evolution*, with special reference to the origin of species. The curious thing is that Mr. Searle gives his readers nothing but bare assumptions and assertions, as if the mere word of a priest were sufficient on every point. It is not sufficient, however; and now at last even Catholics are beginning to find this out.

It is interesting to note that a writer in the Catholic organ of the Anglican Communion, the *Church Times* for July 4,

candidly admits that "Darwinism (transmutation of species) is taught everywhere as a dead certainty." Here we have one Catholic giving another the lie direct on a simple question of fact.

To serve the will of God simply means to exhibit piety, to be devout, and take delight in religious exercises. According to the *Burton Evening Gazette* for June 30, the Rev. E. Gilmour told the Red Cross Society and the Territorials, on the occasion of their annual military parade recently, that everything depends upon our attitude to God's will. We may be the best people in the world, doing all the good we can from the purest human motives, and yet, unless we are pious and show our piety by our attendance at public worship, we shall be accursed for ever. The vicar went to the length of saying that "God will disown all service that is done without any regard to his will." This may be sound Gospel teaching, and certain emotionally religious people may welcome it because it panders to their vanity; but as a matter of fact, it is nothing but arrant nonsense, and they who indulge in it are reaping their reward—emptying churches and chapels.

We agree with the Dean of Durham (Dr. Hensley Henson) that the secularisation of Christianity would be its destruction, and that they who take part in that process are its worst enemies; but after stating that truth, the *Manchester Guardian* for July 1 represents him as proceeding to make a savage and libellous attack upon Secularism and its effects upon character. Losing his temper, he thundered out that "in the English-speaking communities the spread of Secularism had been accompanied by sinister demonstrations of moral decline." Such a statement is absolutely false; and the reference to "the far extended corruption of American politics" is at once irrelevant and in very bad taste. It is generally admitted that the last Presidential Election in the States was the purest in the history of the country. Dean Henson had better stick to the truth and crucify his blind prejudices.

"Divine service" was held lately at Buddon Camp for the second Lowland Brigade. Chaplain R. M. Adamson officiated. The pulpit was extemporised from a gun limber. An excellent way of honoring the Prince of Peace!

The proprietors of the *Christian Herald*, at one time edited by prophet Baxter, have a curious sense of humor. They issue pictorial contents-bills, and the one for last week represented a battleship with big guns sticking out in all directions. Underneath were the words, "Entente Cordiale." A truly Christian idea of friendship!

Glad Tidings.

Down in the soul-swarming region of Hades,
Down in the lurid recesses of hell,
Christians—except a few humbugs and ladies—
Tell us that sceptics for ever will dwell;
Calling on God in vain,
Writhing in swoonless pain,
Senses unblunted and nerves all awake;
Dowered with hellish might
Meet for the endless fight,
Swathed in the flames of the sulphurous lake.

Up through the sky on the line of the plummet;
Up in the star-swarming region of space,
Christians will each have a harp, and will strum it,
Praising for ever God's love and his grace;
Grandly their hymns will swell,
Drowning the shrieks from Hell.
Mothers above, and their children below:
What though our children roast,
Praise Father, Son, and Ghost!
We have been rescued, and share not their woe!

Some of a family chanting God's praises;
Some of them, tortured, despairingly cry;
Some of them endlessly shrieking in blazes;
Some of them joyously singing on high—
Out on the heartless slaves!
Comfort their foolish slaves!
Sow what is true, if contentment you'd reap;
Cast heav'n and hell away!
Work! and let noodles pray!
Then shall your children say:
Life is a summer's day; Death is a sleep.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £156 16s. 11d. Received since:—W. Cromack, 5s.; H. M. Ridgway, £1.

G. FROST.—We don't understand what you want. If meetings of 5,000 are held in Leeds already, as you say, what special "help" is required. London headquarters spent a good deal of money on Leeds a year or more ago, and the local Branch ought to be running well "on its own" now. If it wishes for the services of London lecturers now and then, it should apply for them in the ordinary way.

W. MATHIAS.—Glad to hear the *Freethinker* has been of so much use to you. With regard to the other matter, we are not going to have the question of the suffrage, which is purely political, either for men or women, discussed in these columns. The rest of your observations commit you to nothing. Do you mean that political or social parties have a right to practise arson in order to advertise their cause or terrify the community? Or do you confine this privilege to women? And why do you mention Byron? He assisted Greece against Turkey; true, but it was in open warfare; he did not live amongst the Turks, enjoy all the advantages of doing so, and do them all the injury he could in an anonymous and surreptitious manner. As to "God defend the right," we should laugh at it on any banner; in fact, we have often done so. It invites ridicule. God defend the right! Whoever found him doing it?

A. MILLAR.—Glad to see the letter of which you enclose copy. We repeat our wish that Freethinkers would make more use of their local newspapers. You omitted the name of the paper from which the larger cutting was taken.

W. L. DEWAR.—Your compliments to the *Freethinker* are appreciated. Thanks for your effort to promote its circulation amongst your friends.

RAGGED ROBIN.—The verses are not one of your happiest efforts. Nothing atones for the lack of simplicity and sincerity. You cannot really mean that the working classes are "fed on stones."

D. MANNING.—We suppose it was left to the publishers; anyhow, we have not been favored with a review copy of the Rationalist Peace Society's new volume of Essays. You know now.

C. F. B.—Yes, we were right over the latest Eastern Question. The Balkan war has, as you say, followed the course we predicted at the very beginning. The Christian brigands are fighting each other for the lion's share of the spoil. The cutting you send us is one proof amongst many that the ordinary newspapers are following in our wake—after the event.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—What you may wish to see on Sunday, and what you may have a right to impose upon other people by Sabbatarian legislation, are entirely different things. And how on earth do picture shows interfere with cricket and other outdoor games? We fail to see any serious rivalry—for the games are played in the day and the picture shows are most patronised in the evening. Anyhow, the law of liberty is the best law in all such cases.

W. CROMACK says he is glad to see that Mr. Foote is better in health. He takes two *Freethinkers* a week, and wishes all readers who can afford it would do the same.

E. B.—Much obliged.

J. J. WARDHAUGH.—Shall be sent as desired. Much obliged for the list.

J. BLACKHALL.—Shall have attention. But 'tis impossible for us to regulate all the Freethought platforms in England. The local *Freethinkers* should move first in such matters.

ROBERT KENNEDY.—The names and addresses we really want are not those of hardened bigots, but those of persons who show liberal-minded tendencies. Sorry you misread the announcement.

W. J. RASNEY.—See paragraph.

A. H. P.—It has no merit as verse.

J. A. R.—Apply to J. R. Holmes, Hannev, Wantage, Berks.

G. CHRISTIAN.—Mr. Foote will write you on the matter of your letter.

FREDERICK DIXON.—Our paragraph on Mrs. Stetson and her relation to the Christian Science movement was based, as was stated, on the account given by the *Daily Telegraph*. We cannot take further responsibility for its accuracy. Still, as you say that Mrs. Stetson's connection with the movement was brought to a close "several years ago," and as she is now running an opposition body, calling it a "split" doesn't seem a very grave abuse of language. We did not say that Mrs. Eddy taught reincarnation, only that Mrs. Stetson claims, or it has been claimed for her, that she is a reincarnation of Mrs. Eddy. We are not very much interested in the question of whether reincarnation is correct Christian Science teaching or not.

"AN OLD BRADLAUGHITE," in sending us an account of last Sunday's annual pilgrimage to Bradlaugh's grave at Woking, expresses his disgust at the behavior of a well-known Christian Evidence speaker and his supporters, some of whom must have

travelled to Woking for the express purpose of misbehaving themselves. The graveside is a place that has a restraining and sobering effect upon all with a spark of decency in their composition, but those C. E. S. gentlemen who went to Woking for the purpose of attacking the N. S. S. and its work must have lacked even that solitary spark. A meeting was organised outside the Cemetery gates, and the public treated to the customary slanders of the N. S. S. and those who carry on its work. The effort does not appear to have met with great success, and we hope that thoughtful Christians present made due note of the place and method of attack and the type of those who engineered it.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. M. H. Donohoe contributed a good article to the *Daily Chronicle* (July 2) on the death of Henri Rochefort. When the great French journalist left the *Intransigeant* in 1907, after being connected with it for twenty-seven years, he transferred his pen to the *Patrie*—a journal of a very different color. On this point Mr. Donohoe writes:—

"His departure from the *Intransigeant* set Paris talking. The old Atheist, it was said, had seen the error of his way, and had decided to die in the bosom of the Church.

"Well do I remember calling on Rochefort on this occasion to ask his opinion. His mop of white hair stood bolt upright. The face was pale, but the eyes had lost none of their fire and the body little of its vigor. The man himself possessed that silvery speech, that vivaciousness and charm of manner which combined to make him the most dreaded, albeit the most admired, man in France. In his vigorous fashion, M. Rochefort denied that he had taken the road to Canossa. 'My convictions,' he said, 'religious or anti-clerical, whichever you wish, have undergone no change, neither have my political views. I am still as anti-clerical as ever. My enemies say this is my one consistent attitude. When I ceased attending church, I did not become anti-religious. It was only that my way of viewing things religious had become changed. It was quite a mistake to suppose that I am thirsting to kill all the priests in France. When I meet a good fellow in the shape of a curé, I have not the slightest objection to cracking a bottle of champagne with him.'

Rochefort's nature was evidently less vitriolic than his pen. "The old Atheist" was no bigot.

Professor F. T. Del Marmol, writing to the *Star*, says that Henri Rochefort had a free hand in the *Patrie* and his articles were most distasteful to the Clericals. "So strongly did he feel on the subject of religion," Professor Del Marmol continues, "that he said to me, not many months ago, that he could never understand how any thinking man could accept the dogmas of any of the existing religious creeds."

We have pleasure in calling attention to the excellent July number of the *English Review*. Mr. Henry Newbolt's article on "John Milton" is extremely well written. His position is one that we have ourselves maintained in the *Freethinker*, especially during the late centenary; namely, that the Puritan ossification of Milton's genius prevented his fulfilling the promise of his exquisite early poems. Mr. Newbolt smiles broadly at Addison's assurance that the theme of *Paradise Lost* could never lose its interest, as "all will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and Eve." That statement might have been generally endorsed so recently as fifty years ago, but we belong now to "a generation which does not number Adam and Eve among its ancestors." This is followed by a further instalment of the deeply interesting correspondence between Nietzsche and Brandes. Mr. Arnold Bennett's article on "The Writing of Plays" is written with intellect and authority. Professor Rémond's scientific article on "The Sexual Correlations of Poetic Genius" is calculated to flutter the Suffragette devotees. Its conclusion is that the qualities and functions of men and women are determined by physiology; and as it is the male generally, who wears and wields the sexual decorations amongst the lower animals, so it is the human male who paints the pictures and writes the poetry. The other

articles include a noticeable one on "Women and Morality," by a Mother. It is strongly written and remorselessly points out social evils. But the writer seems more plain-spoken than she really is. She hints at her solutions, but does not actually state them, and we are left with a feeling of frustration. Mr. Norman Douglas's "Pioneer of Aviation" is brightly and vividly written—and humorous; and the editor's monthly notes are, as usual, stirring and suggestive. Freethinkers should not neglect the *English Review*.

The Leeds Branch of the N. S. S. recently applied for permission to renew its meetings on Woodhouse Moor, where the same conditions appear to govern the sale of literature and the taking up of collections there that obtain in the London Parks. That is, permission of the Council must be first of all obtained. At the request of the local secretary Miss Vance, the Society's general secretary, applied to the Parks Committee of the City Council, asking that such permission should be given. As the request came from headquarters, there could be no question as to the *bona-fides* of the organisation. The reply to the application was that the Parks Committee had advised the Council "not to accede to the application of your Society for permission to make collections and sell literature at meetings on Woodhouse Moor." We are not aware of the ground on which permission is given by a City Council to some societies to do certain things and withheld from others. It appears to be a gross usurpation of power, and the Leeds Branch is taking steps to make a public protest against such differential treatment. We hope that this public protest will be as effective in Leeds as it has been in London, and the local Society may rely upon headquarters' assistance in any legitimate effort it may make to vindicate its right to just treatment at the hands of the public authorities.

The July number of the *Humanitarian* (organ of the Humanitarian League, price one penny) is well up to its usual excellent level. There is a moderate but firm protest against some of the cruder cinematograph shows, in which cruel violence (of men to animals or animals to each other) is represented. Young people, especially, cannot be improved by such pictures. This is followed by a spirited protest against Child Beating—a matter in which "God's Englishman" is miles below the heathen Jap. How this brutal practice degrades even superior men is shown by Mr. John Burns's reply to a question put to him in the House of Commons by Mr. O'Grady respecting the flogging of convalescent boys in the Camberwell workhouse infirmary. "My attention," Mr. Burns said, "has been called to this matter. The punishment does not seem to have been excessive, and I see no necessity for a public inquiry." Who would have thought, when John Burns was imprisoned in connection with the "Battle of Trafalgar Square," some twenty-five years ago, that he would sink into giving such pompous and callous replies to questions in the House of Commons? We ought to be grateful to the *Humanitarian* for turning the searchlight of publicity upon these exhibitions of brutal stupidity. We do not speak in haste to repent at leisure. Beating children at all is a moral offence; and beating them deliberately in public institutions is a social crime.

Mr. M. M. Mangasarian has delivered his farewell address for the 1912-13 season to the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist) at Chicago. The first lecture of the 1913-14 season will be delivered on October 5. In the Program for May 25 Mr. Mangasarian wrote:—

"And now let me utilise this opportunity to express once more my deep appreciation of the loyalty of the members to our platform; of the devotion of the Trustees to the interests of the Society; of the activity of the ladies who have so admirably kept up the study classes and the evening meetings, which have done so much to cultivate the social spirit among us. I am also greatly indebted to the ushers, who, with wonderful regularity and commendable disinterestedness, have given their Sunday mornings to the care of the audience, which frequently overflowed the house when hundreds had to be turned away. No public speaker in Chicago is more fortunate either in the number or in the character of his colleagues as is—Your grateful lecturer, M. M. MANGASARIAN."

We are delighted to read this favorable report.

The *St. James's Gazette* (July 2) was tolerant enough to publish a letter from Mr. Joseph Lebold-Carey, of Cardiff, against the cruel sport of otter hunting. "I have travelled widely," he concluded, "and in my varied experience I have found as much, when not more, kindness and downright honest regard evinced among professed Freethinkers, Agnostics, and Atheists than among those Christians who profess to serve an all-merciful God."

"Quo Vadis?"

I WAS in the mood of Kipling's camel; I had got the hump, the double hump; I had to wash and dress, tie and collar, and clean boots, and walk all the way into the town to worry about a blessed pump valve; leave my books and everything and pad the hoof over a newly tarred road; no trams, no penny 'buses, shanks's pony all the way; so I had the hump, and when I had seen about the pump, and had half-an-hour with one of the most tempting bookshops (and bookseller's) in the kingdom, I did not feel like sitting down to write or read.

So I decided I'd go on for a bust, and recklessly dashed down sixpence to see what the film really could make of *Quo Vadis*?

It was the early show, and some of the *élite* (*moi aussi*) had been moved to attend, but particularly to be noted, was a considerable delegation from the two grammar schools.

As they filed in in batches, it would seem that this must have been a special bit of 'cute managership (reduced prices for schools, perhaps), seconded by the goody teachers and chiefs.

It was rather droll later on to note the very evident dilemma as to whether they should clap when the ghost of Christ walked along the Via Appia, or whether they should be particularly grave and quiet; I think the clappers had it.

As a sample of film-making, there is no doubt it deserves all that has been said about it.

The acting, or posing, is as perfect as one can think possible; the pictures of the men and women really look as if copied from actual living, breathing men and women, not mere dolls or dummies; and the architectural construction and details seem as near perfection as any theatrical scenes can possibly be. The pictures look as if photographed from real marble and stone. It may be that the duplications of transference, from the built-up wood and canvas to the first photo and then from that to the film photo, gives opportunities for touching-up and solidifying; I cannot say, but the final effect is very, very real.

So, also, is the fine scene—the burning of Rome; it is an exceedingly clever bit of stage craft, and some of the incidents really grip.

Another detail worth note, too, is the completeness of every picture, calling for big, busy, masses of people; the crowds are real crowds; it is difficult to specify and say which is the best when each is so good, but certainly the great banquet scene, with the dancers, is worth notice.

But, having said all this of the production, as a wonderfully complete bit of workmanship, what is to be said of the idea of making a public show of such a series of incidents, no matter be they true or false?

How the clergy of this enlightened land of ours can ever have been brought to consider such a show of any advantage to *them* is beyond comprehension.

As something to read, Sienkiewicz's clever novel, no doubt, has been read by thousands without more than the usual satisfaction or realisation that graphic writing gives, but with a really well done film there comes a something which, for a moment, must move almost the most cold-blooded and captious of critics.

Without any doubt, the moving picture bites into one with a keenness that not even Dickens or Zola can touch, and, by the same token, the feelings of disgust and ludicrousness are enormously intensified also.

Great Nero! what can these fool Christians be thinking of, to boom up this *Quo Vadis*? film in the way they do, while to any thinking being—to even the most careless thinker it seems almost—the outstanding feature of the show must be an echo of the old cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

There is no single phase of the whole so many thousand yards of film, where the religious part is made prominent, that does not positively glow with

the abounding fatality, the absolute puerility, of the God or the Christ to whom they appeal.

It is to see a marvel of impotence to compare the ferocious completeness of Nero with the conduct of the apostle Peter when he meets the ghost of Christ on the Appian Way.

Peter has had enough of Rome, so he and a disciple are doing a best on record "Down to Dixie" or elsewhere, and have just got on to a straight stretch towards safety when they meet a shadow; they are asked where they are off to in such a ragtime hurry, and told that if they do not go back and attend to things, "he" will have to go, and be a second time made a sacrifice.

The thought seems to jump at one, on the very minute, why the plague he does not go, if he be "he"? why, if the first sacrifice was any sort of good, his chosen ones should be in such deadly strait as they are said to be? But no; the shadow fades away, and, as Peter and his mate turn on their tracks, we match the *Quo Vadis?* with *Cui Bono?* A lot of his chosen ones get burned in the general conflagration; some are soaked in the Roman equivalent of kerosine, and set up on tall poles and used as torches; and another lot are kept for what is a really fine bit of scenery—the arena and the lions.

A mob of men, women, and babies—bowing, crouching, horror-stricken—some with arms uplifted towards the sky, praying to their damnably idle or careless God, the mock of the effective, potent Nero, the one real dominating force of the whole show, every nerve and sense plainly at bursting point with a surfeit of the pleasure of almost unlimited power.

The horror grows as the animals come up into the arena, and prowl around, and draw near the "chosen ones"; and, as Carlyle said, "God does nothing."

A sudden flash and blank—and—some little heaps dotted about, a scuffle over the last mouthful—and— Well, what price that for a living, loving God?

What everlasting blithering fools these Christians must be to allow this to be seen.

The final duel between Ursus and the bull seems almost tame compared to the previous one, although the bull has the heroine strapped on. The leap of the hero down into the arena, and the baring of his bosom, is acting—and looks like it; and the death of the butcher of Rome leaves one unmoved—he deserved something slow, with burning oil, unless the last joke of Petronius could be made effective.

Just when dying he read a letter which was to be sent to Nero, and in it said to be a matricide or to burn a city was nothing, but for Nero to read his poems to his guests was something in the way of a refinement of cruelty; and so it almost seems to me that for the poor Christians of to-day to be invited to see *Quo Vadis?* as a means of Christian propaganda is really taking a mean advantage of their supreme ignorance and want of logic. It is a low-down, mean sort of trick to play on them.

It would almost pay for Freethinkers to circulate a small leaflet to annotate the *Quo Vadis?* program. Will someone try it?

T. SHORE.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE TIME WHEN JESUS LIVED.

THE period in Jewish history at which Jesus Christ is supposed to have appeared as a teacher is thus recorded in three of the canonical Gospels:—

Matt. iii. 1, 13.—"And in those days cometh John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judæa.....Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan," etc.

Mark i. 4, 9.—"John came, who baptised in the wilderness.....And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee," etc.

John i. 6, 29.—"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.....On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him," etc.

Now, it is quite clear from the foregoing extracts that the unknown writer of the primitive Gospel

from which the Synoptists took the main portion of their narratives, did not know at what period in history Jesus and the Baptist commenced their public ministries; he therefore placed it "in those days," which is the Gospel equivalent for "once upon a time." Coming now to Luke, who wrote later than the others, and who had consulted the *Antiquities* of Josephus for historical facts connected with the Gospels, we find details added which fix the time.

Luke ii. 1, 2.—"Now in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness," etc.

This addition was, of course, inserted to make the Third Gospel appear historical; but it does not affect the older primitive source of the Synoptic narratives. Now, if the writer of the primitive Gospel had no knowledge of the period when Jesus first appeared, neither would he be likely to know the time of the alleged Crucifixion. This period, as we have seen, was supplied by Luke when he named Annas and Caiaphas as high priests and Pilate as governor of Judæa in "the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar"—that is to say, in the year A.D. 28.

In the case of one of the last-named individuals, however, Luke was mistaken. Pilate was procurator, and Caiaphas was high priest, from A.D. 26 to 36; but Annas, or Ananus, held the latter office from A.D. 7 to 14, and at no later period.

In the primitive account of the trial of Jesus, the names of the high priest and the procurator, being unknown to the writer, could not have been given. In accordance with this fact, we find no name of the high priest in Mark's or Luke's Gospel. Luke, though he names two high priests in chapter iii., does not mention either again. In the case of Matthew, the house or palace of "Caiaphas" is twice referred to (xxvi. 3 and 57); but the high priest himself is not named. That "Caiaphas" was not in the primitive account we know from Luke xxii. 54 and Mark xiv. 53—in which latter passage (and in Matt. xxvi. 57) the word "house" is implied.

With regard to the procurator, the name "Pilate" is now found in all four Gospels; but in that of Matthew—which is the nearest to the Common source—we find both "Pilate" and "the governor." The following extract from the latter Gospel may be taken as a sample of the reading given in the primitive account:—

"Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews.....And he gave him no answer.....insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner," etc. (Matt. xxvii. 11, 14, 15).

In the parallel passages in the other three Gospels only the name "Pilate" is used; never "the governor." Of course, after Luke's Gospel became known, the name "Pilate" found its way into all new copies of the other Gospels, and the original reading "the governor" was omitted; but in that of Matthew the proper name was probably only inserted in the place where the governor was first mentioned—"delivered him up to Pilate the governor" (xxvii. 2). In the course of time, however, "Pilate" came to be inserted in other passages by copyists; so we now find the procurator in some places called "Pilate," and in others "the governor."

LYSANIAS.

Another misstatement of Luke in the foregoing Gospel extract is that relating to Lysanias. In "the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar" that tetrarch had been dead sixty years. This Lysanias was the son of Ptolemy Menneus, the ruler of a kingdom in the north of Palestine, its principal city being Abila. In the second or third year of the reign of Herod the Great (38 B.C.—4 B.C.) Ptolemy died, and Lysanias succeeded his father as ruler. After reigning for three or four years, Lysanias was put to death by Mark Antony (32 B.C.). His successor is uncertain;

but the kingdom was leased to Zenodorus, a man in league with a band of cut-throats, who robbed and murdered all who passed through the country. Complaints at length reached the ears of Cæsar, who, to stop the evil, bestowed part of the kingdom on Herod, and placed the other part under the rule of the president of Syria.

There is no need to go into this matter further, for one fact is beyond doubt. No other Lysanias ever ruled over the province whose capital was Abila. After Herod's death, that king's portion of "the kingdom of Lysanias" was given to his son Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis, etc., the other portion remaining under the governor of Syria.

But, how came Luke to fall into such an error? Well, Josephus, later on, having several times occasion to mention the district once ruled by Lysanias, calls it "the tetrarchy of Lysanias" or "Abila of Lysanias" (*Antiq.* 18, 6, 10; 19, 5, 1; 20, 7, 1). Luke, in searching through these *Antiquities*, noticed these statements, and took them as meaning that Lysanias was "tetrarch of Abila" at a later period. He had not looked so far back as *Antiq.* 15, 4, 1, where the death of that tetrarch is recorded, nor had he seen what became of that kingdom.

THE MARTYR ZACHARIAH.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is represented as saying to some of the chief men among the Jews:—

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers..... that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, *from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar*" (Matt. xxiii. 29, 33, 35).

In the parallel account in Luke's Gospel (xi. 50, 51) the words "son of Barachiah" are omitted. With regard to the justice of punishing the Jews of Jesus Christ's day for "all the righteous blood shed on the earth" up to their time, I have nothing to say, being now concerned only with the words in italics. From these it is quite clear that the reference is to "all the righteous blood shed" from the earliest recorded instance (Abel) down to the latest notable example—"Zachariah the son of Barachiah."

Who, then, was this recent martyr Zachariah? Upon this question Christian commentators throw no light. In 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21 we have an account of the martyrdom of "Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada"; but this took place more than 800 years B.C., and could not be the one referred to. We have therefore to look for a much later Zachariah, and, of course, we find him. He was "Zachariah the son of Baruch," who was foully murdered (A.D. 68) by the Jewish assassins called Zealots in the temple, or court of the temple, during the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus, *Wars*, 4, 5, 4). Barachiah and Baruch are merely different forms of the same name. No other historical martyr of the first century named Zachariah is known.

In the Gospel passage, then, Jesus is represented as referring to an event that occurred thirty-eight years after his death: or, to put it another way, this Gospel paragraph was one of the little hearsay stories which the writer of the primitive Gospel collected and committed to writing at some unknown period. This period now appears to have been a decade or two after the destruction of Jerusalem—say, between A.D. 80 and 90, or later. The four canonical Gospel writers all lived in the first half of the second century.

THE PROPHECY OF THE LAST DAYS.

One of the longest and most important of the threefold narratives which the three Synoptists took from the primitive Gospel is that now called "the prophecy of the last days" (Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xxi.). In this so-called "prophecy" Jesus is represented as predicting the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of that city and the temple, with all the attendant horrors that should come upon the Jewish nation (A.D. 66—70). After reading this long chapter of predictions, the question naturally arises:

Whence did the primitive writer get all the words which are there ascribed to Jesus?—which words, assuming they were actually spoken, were certainly not taken down at the time. Neither, again, could any disciple, assuming he heard them spoken *once*, commit them to memory, or afterwards reproduce them in writing—even if we further assume that fishermen and such people *could* write in those days. The old orthodox plea that the evangelists wrote their Gospels under the influence of the "spirit of God," which brought the words of Jesus to their remembrance, is now exploded. Whence, then, did the primitive Gospel writer obtain this long oration? The answer is, He had no report of the speech from anyone. The words were simply fabricated for the occasion, and then piously placed in the mouth of Jesus. This was, of course, done some time after the fall of the holy city; for, needless to say, the primitive Christians possessed no prophetic powers: they were all, without exception, extremely ignorant and credulous men.

There need, however, be no mystery as regards the source. The chapter, upon examination, will be found to be a purely literary composition, made up of a dozen or more passages pieced together, these passages having been taken from the Old Testament and apocryphal writings. It can, therefore, be safely said that this grand "prophecy" was never spoken by Jesus, as represented in the Gospels, but was laboriously compiled by the primitive Christian teachers from the source I have named. Moreover, the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew (or either of its parallels in Mark and Luke) is itself a proof, not only of systematic fabrication, but of the fact that the earliest known Gospel was written after A.D. 70. After Jerusalem had been destroyed, and a large proportion of the Jews had been slaughtered or carried away captive, the primitive Christians (who had taken no part in the war) imagined the end of the world to be at hand. Hence, it is stated in this pseudo-prophecy that "immediately after the tribulation of those days" the "Son of man" should come with his angels to judge the world. This "immediate" coming is afterwards modified into "before that generation should pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 29, 34)—the generation referred to being that of those living at the time of the "tribulation" mentioned. It was during this period (A.D. 70—90) that the primitive Gospel was written. The time when Jesus is said to have first appeared—"in those days"—was, of course, before the holy city was besieged by the Romans: but how long before we have no evidence to show.

ABRACADABRA.

FAITH.

A teacher wrote two separate sentences on a blackboard. They were: "The hen has three legs," "Who done it?" the object of one being to exemplify a misstatement of fact, and the other to illustrate bad grammar. Then a boy was called up, and the teacher said to him: "Harry, go to the blackboard and show where the fault lies in those two sentences." The boy went up, studied the sentences diligently, took up the chalk, and wrote: "The boy never done it. God done it."—*Western Mail*.

"Now, to business!" said the Chevalier Terence Theophrastus O'Shaughnessy. "I have here a schedule of certain studies. Each day in the week, of which five are educationally important, and two relatively independent—I propose to devote to one or more of these studies. The sixth day is to be observed as an opportunity for recreation. The seventh, I need hardly tell well brought up Christian young ladies, is appointed for attendance on holy rites and conventional ceremonies such as make this good land so notable for hypocrisy."—*Rita, "A Grey Life."*

It is usually supposed that children are ingenuous, frank, and outspoken. But the modern child has a reserve hardly in keeping with this character. A little fellow had helped himself to two apples in his father's garden and afterwards told his sister. She was shocked and inquired, "Did you tell God about it?" "Yes," was the slow reply, and then added, "I didn't tell him I had taken two."—*English Illustrated Magazine*.

In Bull Lane.

THOMAS PAINE,
B. 1737; D. 1809.

Author of "Common Sense,"
"Rights of Man," and "The Age of Reason,"
A Founder of American
Independence with Pen and Sword.

LIVED IN THIS HOUSE
As Exciseman and Tobacconist.
1768—1774.

—Inscription on a house in Bull Lane, Lewes.

HERE in the heart of the Sussex hills,
Green young Summer hath stayed to sing
The chalky pits and the shallow rills,
And the footprints left by the feet of Spring.
In Lewes town there is Summer again,
As under the eaves in old Bull Lane
We linger to dream of one Thomas Paine.

Out on the hills dance the nymphs with Pan,
Fresh from the woods and the brisk, bright streams;
But here in Lewes the Rights of Man
Were born in a brave Exciseman's dreams.
And see, here is Summer! Here Summer hath lain,
Waiting and waiting and to live again,
As she lived in a brave Exciseman's brain.

Oh, here in Lewes who would have wist,
As he strolled for his shag in the years of yore
To the vigorous young Tobacconist,
That far away, on a strange new shore,
Where Washington strove, and the English ran,
That a Freethinker and a Republican,
One Paine, would herald the Rights of Man?

One Paine, one born in Thetford, knew
That the world, not England, would blare his fame;
So Albion, Gaul, and Columbia drew
A lighted torch from his lambent flame:
For he served his land, and his land was the world;
And wherever Freedom, with banner uncurled,
Strides through the earth, Paine that banner unfurled.

Pure was his brain from craft and creed,
His hope was centred alone in Man;
As pure was his life from graft and greed,
A Freethinker and a Republican!
Joy for the Man! And the rest may go—
With God above and the Devil below,
With the Church of Christ, with last year's snow.

The streams are stirred by Summer's breath,
The hills are green over Lewes town!
Here dwelt one fearing nor life nor death,
For he hated the Cross as he hated the Crown.
In Lewes town there is Summer again;
Under the shadows in old Bull Lane,
We stay to wonder at one called Paine.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

"All These Things....."

Two there were on a mountain peak,
Who stood and gazed on the world around
In silence, for neither cared to speak,
Viewing with rapture the waste profound.

The mountain range upon either hand,
Its cloud-capped peaks reared to the sky,
While away from their feet the pasture land
Sloped down to a river rippling by.

"All this is grand," the younger said;
"The hills, the vales, the woods, the stream;
The gorgeous colors God has spread
Seem like a wild, fantastic dream."

"You call it God;" the old man smiled,
And paused, and in a while began,
"Your God is naught but Nature, child,
And Nature neither God nor man."

"This fair expanse of vale and hill
Is but a battlefield of blood,
Where Nature's lovely creatures kill
The lesser, weaker ones for food.

"Each has to kill to keep alive;
Each has a life he must defend;
Each feels the pain he must survive:
All is a struggle from start to end.

"Did God in his love create all this,
This war, this battle of weak and strong,
And cloak behind his tender kiss
His jaded sense of right and wrong?....."

"God neither made this world of pain,
Nor us, its grandest product, man;
Nor sent his first-born to be slain,
To mitigate an ill-made plan.

"Like yonder waters as they flow
To lose their ripples in the sea,
One day we come, another go,
And slip into eternity,

"Leaving no more to mark our course
Than bubbles scar the river bed:
Ripples from the very source,
Fading away when life had fled."

JAMES L. RAYMOND.

Sunday Pleasures.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REV. FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN.

DEAR FATHER,—I have read with much pain your dismal and pathetic wail which appeared in the *Daily Mail* of the 27th ult. You are quite right, and you have my sincerest sympathy. People are really taking to motoring on Sunday instead of going to church and counting their beads as they should, but you can comfort yourself by reflecting that your Church is not the only one that suffers in this respect. It is chronic. All the Churches have the same trouble.

When I started the gun works at Crayford, I employed a large number of men, most of them trained mechanics. We had only been running a short time when a very pious Protestant lady came down from London with the laudable intention of saving the souls of my poor benighted workmen. I gave my consent, for which she thanked me. She then started a little mission hall, and, after several weeks of strenuous effort, she came and told me that she had not met with the least particle of success; she had been fishing for souls that really ought to be saved, but had not had a single bite. She was discouraged and disheartened, and asked me if I could give some reason why the men failed to be interested in religion. I told her that perhaps they had found out that it was not true. She said she thought I was quite right; I had diagnosed the case correctly. This was twenty-four years ago. Quite recently I learned that this one-time very pious and God-fearing lady had given up religion altogether; in fact, she appears to have all the characteristics of that horrible, wicked, and detestable gang known variously as Agnostics, Infidels, Atheists, and Freethinkers, who have no faith and obstinately refuse to believe anything except the truth.

A dreadfully wicked infidel, now happily dead, and no doubt receiving his just deserts, said: "The way to be happy is to make those about us happy; the place to be happy is here, and the time to be happy is now." These unholy words were uttered by that arch-infidel, Colonel Ingersoll; but, wicked as they are, they cannot at all be compared with the following, which I quote from the Chinese System of Ethics:—

"Do not dream of a life beyond this, for you will find no other, nor of a heaven beyond the universe, for beyond the infinite universe there is nothing. Earth is heaven, and paradise is on earth; it is for you to realise it. Cultivate your mind, honor your ancestors, respect your traditions, let the past and the future be both a living present to your mind. Identify yourself with one and the other through humanity. Never forget that you are one with the earth, with the universe, and take care no act of yours offends against this unity....."

Can we imagine anything better calculated than the above to demonstrate the necessity of sending missionaries to that benighted people?—Mournfully yours,

HIRAM S. MAXIM.

"Please, sir, ought I to be punished for something I have not done," inquired a boy of his form master. "Why, certainly not," he replied. "Well, then, ought I to be punished because I have not done my sums?"—*English Illustrated Magazine.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.
OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.
CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.
CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine street, near Town Hall): 7, Jas. Rowney, a Lecture.
EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss K. B. Kough, "The Futility of Prayer."
KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, "The Pathway of Faith"; 7.30, Miss H. Pankhurst, "The Suffragette in Heaven."
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, M. Hope, a Lecture.
WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, E. Burke, a Lecture.
WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, R. Townley, "The Principles and Objects of Secularism."

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN (Market Place): Matthew Phair, 3, "Thought the Great Want of the Age"; 6.30, "Why I Reject Christianity."
BOLTON (Town Hall Steps): R. Mearns will lecture on Secularism every Saturday and Monday night at 7.30.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7, F. M. Wilkesbarro, Christian Socialism: An Impossibility."
PRESTON (Market Square): Gilbert Manion, 11, "God"; 3, "Why Free Speech is Necessary"; 6.30, "A Dying Creed."
ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): R. Mearns, 3, "Historic Christianity"; 6.30, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

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