

# THE Freethinker

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*I have the confidence, which began with hope and strengthens with experience, that humanity is gaining in the stores of mind, and that the signification of this gift of life, that we should leave a better world for our successors is being understood.—GEORGE MEREDITH.*

## Christianity and Force.

It is quite in accord with the policy of the religious press that not a word has appeared therein concerning the reported brutalities and massacres by the Christian powers in the Balkans. They have expressed regret that Bulgaria cannot agree with its late allies, and professed much sorrow over "this fratricidal war"—as though any war could be called brotherly—but for the rest there has been silence. I have only come across one implied exception to this, and with that I will deal in a moment. Meanwhile, those who know the readiness with which accounts of massacres are published, when it is a non-Christian power that is guilty of the crime, will appreciate the silence in this instance. The truth is, of course, that the first Balkan War made its primary and strongest appeal to Christian feelings; and before this every other consideration was of small weight.

What Christians in England expected was doubtless a wholesale conversion from Mohammedanism. Reports of such conversions actually appeared. Readers of the *Freethinker* may remember that, some weeks back, there were given in the "Acid Drops" columns some quotations from a writer in the *Christian World* describing how a number of villages had come over, practically in a body to Christianity. He assured his readers that no force was used in the conversion, the Mohammedan villagers had simply been hungering for an opportunity to embrace Christianity; doubtless attracted by the nobility of character exemplified among the Balkan Christians. The true story of those conversions appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of July 17, in connection with an account of the new "Bulgarian Atrocities." The account is from a statement by Mohammedans of standing, countersigned by several Bulgarian priests. The report states that, first of all, the Bulgarians converted the mosque into a church. This was at Doiran, the place of the reported conversions. Some thousands of people were also slaughtered.

"The Mussulmans at Guirian, Bala, and other villages were forcibly baptised by priests from Sofia. Many women and girls were outraged at Doiran. Others working in the fields, planting tobacco and maize, were assailed and dishonored in the daytime by Bulgarian soldiers."

The document is signed "in the name of the whole population of Kaya Doiran" by the Mufti and sixteen nobles. Then follows this statement, signed by Bulgarian priests:—

"We Bulgarian priests declare and testify the above to be the pure truth, and that this is a free and unconstrained declaration, due simply to the love of truth."

This account puts a very neat finish to the elaborate story of the conversion of crowds of Mohammedan villagers, although we do not expect the

correction will appear in the journal which published the original narrative.

It was said above that only one implied reference to the massacres had appeared in the religious press. This was to the effect that when the war spirit was aroused the better influences of Christianity were nullified, but that while the actions of Christians gave pleasure to the enemies of Christianity, others would discriminate between "the lofty and beautiful teachings of Christ" and the practice of some of its professors acting under the influence of racial hatred sharpened by a state of actual warfare. This is a very familiar apology for the misbehavior of Christians, and it has the fatal weakness of heavily discounting the value of Christianity as a civilising or even a moralising force. The lofty and beautiful teachings of Christ break down at the very point where they are most needed. Instead of curbing the passion of racial hatred, and humanising, so far as it can be humanised, the barbarous practice of warfare, we are warned that in such cases we must expect Christian principles to be completely ignored. The apology is thus bad enough as it stands, it is still worse when one examines it more carefully. Then it will be found that there is no more prolific cause of hatred and ill-will—not only in times of war but also in times of peace—than religion, and no worse offender in this respect than Christianity.

Let us look at a few facts. We will take them apart from the question of war, so that the subject may be looked at with a little less prejudice than would otherwise be the case. It will not be denied that Christians have quarrelled with each other, fought with each other, and murdered each other as the result of differences of religious opinion, nor will it be denied that differences in religion are the most intractable of all disagreements. Neither will it be questioned that usually people can express different opinions concerning science, or literature, or politics without a tithe of the ill-feeling aroused in religious discussions. And even though Christianity had no part in the perpetuation of this savage spirit, it, at all events, has been unable to abolish or even to restrain it. And it is a yet more striking fact that refinement in controversy and toleration of opposing opinions does not commence with religion and then pass on to other subjects. The movement is in quite an opposite direction. It commences with non-religious subjects; and habits engendered elsewhere exert a gradually refining influence on religion. It is life that humanises religion. Religion does nothing to humanise life.

Here is still another fact that hardly admits of dispute. Christianity has not only failed to induce people to exercise a common courtesy in differences of opinion, but intolerance and persecution have been more intense and more sustained under Christianity than under any other religion in the civilised world. The Balkan War gave Christians the opportunity of holding up Mohammedanism as a religion of persecution. That it has persecuted none will dispute. It is a religion, and carries the iniquity common to the species. But, as an historic fact, it has been far more tolerant than Christianity. Jews and Christians were allowed to live at peace under Mohammedan rule—under trifling restrictions—were allowed the exercise of their religion, and permitted to hold public office at a time when unbelievers were



being hunted down like vermin by the Church and Jews compelled to wear a distinguishing dress so that they might be the more easily exposed to public outrage. Moreover, in Europe all laws against heresy were of Christian origin. In the old Roman Empire liberty of worship was universal. So long as one treated the religion of the State with a degree of decency, one might worship any god one pleased. And when Christians were proceeded against under laws that were not primarily aimed at liberty of worship or opinion, the procedure was formal, the trial public, time given for defence, and the behavior of judges showed their dislike to the prosecution.\*

But with Christianity, instead of persecution being spasmodic, it was persistent. It was not taken up by the authorities with reluctance; it was inculcated by them as one of the chief virtues. Nor was it directed against a sectarian power that threatened the power of the State. The worst periods of Christian persecution were precisely those when the State had least to fear from internal dissension. The people persecuted were not men and women who were guilty of neglect of social duty. On the contrary, they were serving the State by the encouragement of literature, science, philosophy, and commerce. One of the Roman emperors, the great Trajan, had advised magistrates not to search for Christians, and to treat anonymous communications with contempt. Christians carried the search for heresy into a man's own household. It used the child in order to obtain evidence against the parent, the wife to secure the condemnation of the husband; it tortured to provide dictated confessions, and placed boxes at church doors to receive anonymous accusations. It established an index of forbidden books—an institution unknown to the whole of the ancient world. The Roman trial was open, and in accordance with established form. The accused could hear the charge, examine witnesses, cite witnesses in his defence. The Christian trial for heresy was usually in secret; special forms were used, no witnesses for the defence were allowed, special punishments were created. Persecution was raised to a fine art. Under Christian auspices it assumed the most damnable forms known in the whole history of mankind.

To what was this development of all that is most ugly in human nature due? One cant reply is that it was due to the natural intolerance of human nature. This, however, hardly meets the case. It is the same human nature that meets us in religion that we are familiar with in sociology or in science. And yet people hold different opinions in these fields without it ever dawning on the minds of the vast majority that the method of the persecutor should be invoked. Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists may be seen walking, talking, and eating together. It is significant, by the way, that the political question on which feeling is most bitter, that of Home Rule, is the one in which the subject of religion enters largely. Darwinists and anti-Darwinists have never suggested imprisonment for each other as a way out of their differences. Human nature behaves itself with tolerable decency in its different views of other subjects; why should religion form the solitary exception? Is it the subjects that have humanised men and women. If so, why is it that religion has not had an equally favorable influence? Or is it that men and women have raised the subjects to a better level? In that case, why should religion prove itself so intractable to civilising influences? In either case the verdict on religion must be condemnatory.

Another cant reply is that people have misunderstood, or have failed to rise to the level of Christian

teaching. The reply is really a condemnation. There must be something radically wrong about a religion that is so persistently misunderstood. And not for a day or generation, but for hundreds of years. Neither is it so misunderstood by one here and there, by men of little weight or influence. The greatest of Christian leaders, right up to modern times, have upheld the right of persecution. The forcible suppression of heresy has been taken by them to be one of the primary duties of the Christian State. It is strange that Christianity from the outset should have been so subject to this fatal misconception. It is the reverse of the usual order of things. Usually a teaching is best understood at the beginning; it becomes corrupted later. But Christianity was, we are asked to believe, never understood at all. It was misunderstood at its inception—it was misunderstood by both its teachers and its followers; it was misunderstood right up to our own day. And yet, wonder of wonders! it is this religion, continually misunderstood, mistaught, wrongly used, that has never really existed in practice, but which has yet exerted a supremely moralising influence on the world. That is the greatest miracle of all.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

### Experiment and Experience.

It is frankly acknowledged by many prominent divines that "there never was a day when it was easy to believe the Christian Gospel." The late Principal Rainy was in the habit of saying that "God never meant it to be an easy thing to believe." Belief is thus treated as a voluntary act, an act of which every human being is supposed to be capable. Volumes have been published in which the Will to Believe is regarded as a reality. The will to believe is possessed by all, though comparatively few put it in operation. In the New Testament, the refusal to believe is the one sin that damns the soul to all eternity. As a matter of fact, however, belief or unbelief is an intellectual necessity, over which the will has no control. A man believes or disbelieves simply because he must, neither act being a matter of choice. Every statement made is either true or false. If we know it to be true, we cannot disbelieve it; if we know it to be false, belief in it is an impossibility. This is a fact from which there is no escape, no matter what the preacher may say to the contrary. Now, religion begins in faith. Religious beliefs precede and are the cause of religious emotions and practices. The divines often appeal to what they call the consciousness of God; but whether such a consciousness is real or imaginary, it certainly does not exist in the absence of the belief in God. This being the case, the question naturally arises, Are religious beliefs verifiable? Can the Christian religion be proved to be true? What are the evidences upon which its apologists rely?

Two new Handbooks of Christian Apologetics have recently been published by two first-class Christian scholars, Principal Garvie and Dr. T. R. Glover. Dr. Glover entitles his book *The Christian Tradition and its Verification*. It is a work of distinct merit, and has been welcomed by the theologians as a fully convincing defence of the Christian faith. We may rest assured that the arguments advanced by Dr. Glover are the very best available, and that if he does not make a thoroughly good case for Christianity, the task is impossible of accomplishment. This is how he puts the problem:—

"There are three questions which we may ask about any religion—quite simple questions. What will it do for you? What will it do to protect other people against you? How far does it hold open the door for the future?" (p. 56).

Unfortunately, in dealing with those questions, Dr. Glover allows his judgment to be warped by prejudice. He admits that things are deplorably bad in

\* I am taking the persecutions of the early Christians for granted; but, as a matter of demonstrable fact, they have been very much exaggerated, and many of the related ones never occurred. The whole story of Christian persecution is so foreign to the Roman temper of government that it must be regarded with the greatest suspicion. It is a pity that someone competent does not subject the story to a critical examination. The story of ten persecutions is obviously mythical, being avowedly based upon there having been ten plagues in Egypt.



European and American society; but he rejoices in the conviction that "they are bad, nevertheless, with the continual correction of a Christian background" (p. 61). In the absence of this background, we are told industrial enormities, flagrant cruelty, and open uncleanness would continue unchecked, and gain rather than lose in volume. We do not believe it, and our author does not justify his assertion. He alludes to the ancient world as containing noble-minded and good-hearted characters, but denies that they exerted much influence upon their fellow-beings. In spite of them, the gladiatorial shows continued to flourish. Well, what has the Christian background done for Christendom? Has it put a stop to the bull-fights in Spain, or to fox and deer hunting in our own land? Has it rid us of sweated industries, flagrant cruelty, and open uncleanness? We affirm, without a moment's hesitation, that Christianity has never done anything for Europeans and Americans which has tended to establish its claim to Divine origin and power.

Dr. Glover is grossly unjust to the Buddha and the Stoic. Fancy a scholar, at this time of day, charging Gotama with taking the worth out of life, and characterising every non-Christian religion as follows:—

"The plain fact is that, in the long run, despair is at the heart of every religion without Christ; and if man or woman is to get through the world at all, it must be by the hardening or deadening of the more sensitive parts of human nature. Marcus Aurelius' *Diary* is a sort of breviary of despair" (p. 63).

Buddhism is pre-eminently a religion of hope. Has our author never heard what the Dhammapada says about Right Rapture, or the state of bliss to which every true Buddhist attains? "It is in very bliss we dwell," "Among men full of worries we continue calm," "We will become feeders on joy"—such are the phrases in which the followers of the Buddha describe themselves. Confucianism, likewise, teaches that man is master of his own destiny, and can by complete sincerity give its full development to his nature. Mohammedanism urges its devotees to observe justice, to banish hatred, to resist evil, and to strive to excel each other in good works. Dr. Glover avers that "the belief in Jesus has given men a keener insight and a warmer and quicker sympathy, waked the dedicated spirit, and taught new ways of service." It would be more accurate to say that the belief in Jesus has made men so overweeningly conceited that they are everlastingly singing their own praises and vilifying the characters of all others. It is a notorious fact that Christians are the most intolerant and cruel people on the face of the earth. If you want to know what Christianity has done for the world read the history of the Church. You will then learn with what colossal cruelty the Lamb's bride pursued for years and exterminated the Albigenses and how horribly brutal was the administration of the Holy Inquisition in Spain. And what do you see to-day? Christian Europe an armed camp, more war-like and war-prepared than ever before, Christ's people, with the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, slaying one another by the thousand under the banner of the Cross. If we are to judge Christianity by what it has done for Christendom, it stands utterly discredited and deserving of speedy extinction.

Dr. Glover's supreme appeal is to Christian experience. He tells us how Paul felt under the spell of the Nazarene, how the love of Christ flooded his whole being and constrained him in and out of season to preach the Gospel, and how in the Master's service he considered it a privilege to endure persecution. We have no desire to throw any suspicion upon the sincerity of the Apostle's passion of love to Christ, or upon the reality of his zeal in his service; but we are persuaded that his ecstatic experience cannot be adduced as an argument for the objective existence of a God of love and a redeeming Christ. It was not God, but Paul's faith in God, that threw him into such raptures of delight. God has never been seen or heard, but the belief that he is

accounts for every religious experience. Experiments are not possible in this region, while in science they are the main road to knowledge. Dr. Glover says:—

"The results of scientific experiment are patent to sense. Of course, the values of these results are not so patent. They require sometimes a vastly higher power of intellect to grasp them in their relation to one another, and to the whole body of established fact, than is required to make the experiments from which they are gained. But in the main the results of scientific experiment are patent and clear, and they lead to the establishment of facts which any competent person can verify" (p. 41).

Religion takes us into a realm in which experiment is absolutely out of the question and experience is the only form of verification furnished. A well-known psychologist explains religion as a matter of auto-suggestion, and we know that auto-suggestion may occur without any reference to external facts. Dr. Glover makes merry over this theory; and asks, "Why should auto-suggestion, when it takes the form or direction of the Christian religion, work so uniformly towards sanity and morals?" and we answer that it does not work so uniformly towards sanity and morals. Religious experience and morality are not vitally related. Devout people are not necessarily sane and moral; sometimes they are quite the reverse.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Christianity and the Chinese.—XI.

(Continued from p. 454.)

"This is an era of competition; and if it be true, as I have read, that there are now over fifty distinct societies, representing as many forms of Protestantism, contending for the credit of bringing the Chinese within their respective folds, the antagonism of interests must be somewhat severe. In the race for results which have to be presented to meetings at home, and to form the subject of 'reports,' the precepts of justice which form Article VIII. of the treaty are liable to be lost sight of, and to yield to considerations of a more strictly mundane character.

"This is exactly what the Chinese complain of. They urge that they never get a fair hearing. The people lament the supineness of their rulers, which permits their interests to be sacrificed. The governing classes feel that as between the people and the central authorities they are apt to be between the devil and the deep sea. The central authorities have before their eyes Ministers Plenipotentiary with ultimatum backed by ironclads in the offing."—T. C. HAYLLAR, *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895.

"Looking upon their [Catholic missionaries] polished, gentle, and courteous demeanor, they appear the best of men, and listening to their patriotic conversation, it is not to be wondered at that their influence, however problematical, should appear desirable. But they are not to be trusted, and however devoted and good they may seem, they lose their heads the instant that the interests of their religion or congregation appears in danger. They then become false egoists, hard and covetous, shrinking from no means, not even the sacrifice of your life, to enable them to reach either their own ends, or those imposed upon them by their position."—EUG. SIMON, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life* (1887), p. 165.

THE Tai-ping Rebellion—which attempted to substitute Christianity for Confucianism in China—was eventually suppressed by General Gordon. No one but a Christian was considered capable of exorcising the seventy devils of Christian fanaticism which the missionaries had loosed on China.

The popular "lives" of this Christian hero contain wholesale suppression of the truth and suggestion of the false. The truth as to the Christian origin, and the missionary support, of the Tai-pings is suppressed.

It is falsely claimed that Gordon raised and trained the Chinese troops of the "Ever-victorious Army" (which was not ever-victorious), whereas it was an American named Ward, a brave and fearless leader, who, after being several times severely wounded—the palate of his mouth being destroyed by a bullet upon one occasion—was at last killed in action, Gordon only taking over the command of the force after his death and against the wishes of the Chinese, who wished to appoint Macartney to the command. Macartney, who had entered the Chinese



service, and in whom the Chinese Government placed every confidence, was also largely instrumental in Gordon's ultimate success, for by almost superhuman exertions he founded an arsenal at Sunkiang for the manufacture of ammunition, and himself raised Chinese troops and took part in the operations in the field.

It would take us too far afield to deal with the real life of Gordon in these articles. It is time an independent life of Gordon (for which there is now plenty of material) was undertaken by a competent authority. It would present a very different picture to the melodramatic-Sunday-school-prize version which now prevails.

For instance, we read of Gordon leading his Chinese troops to the attack, armed only a walking-stick, himself unharmed among the storm of bullets, while his followers fell thickly round him. Quite on a level with the Theosophical fairy tales of the Mahatma, who, when fired at with rifles, calmly waved the bullets to right and left.

Now, Gordon—with the colossal egotism of all fanatics, who believe that the Creator of fifty million suns spends his time in watching over, guiding, and protecting them—thought that this escape was clearly due to the interposition of Providence, and was thus still further confirmed in his religious beliefs. But there is always a rational explanation for the supernatural, and this was no exception to the rule.

It should be borne in mind that the Tai-pings are the only important body of Chinese, in modern times, to extend a welcome to Europeans. The Englishman who served with them, and whose work we have quoted, observes: "To those who have experienced the ordinary dislike of foreigners by the Chinese, the surprising friendliness of the Tai-pings was most remarkable. They welcomed Europeans as 'brethren from across the sea,' and claimed them as fellow-worshippers of 'Yesu.'" And this friendliness remained unchanged, he says, "even when their dearest relatives were being slaughtered by my countrymen, or delivered over to the Manchoos to be tortured to death."\*

And this is the secret of Gordon's seemingly miraculous escape. Of this we have very definite evidence, for Mrs. Archibald Little, in her *Life of Li Hung Chang*, cites a letter from a contemporary paper at Canton, giving the testimony of an actual eye-witness, who declares:—

"Often have I seen the deadly musket struck from the hand of a dastardly Englishman (tempted by love of loot to join our ranks) when he attempted, from his place of safety, to kill Gordon, who ever rashly exposed himself. This has been the act of a chief, yea, of the Shield King himself; how then can we be accused of blind hatred even to our enemies?"†

So it was the hands of the men he was fighting against who preserved Gordon's life from his own countrymen.

The story of the capture of Soochow and the capitulation of the Tai-ping leaders to Gordon, who pledged his word for their safety—Li Hung Chang, and Ching, the Chinese commander, offering them a free pardon and Government employment—is better known, from the treachery of Li Hung Chang, who, in the absence of Gordon, ordered the chiefs to be hamstrung upon their declining to kneel, and then had them beheaded. It is often stated that Gordon went in search of Li Hung Chang with a loaded revolver; this is not true, but it is true he searched for him. The wily Li—who had received warning, probably from Macartney or Hart—was not to be found, or most probably that astute diplomatist's head would have made acquaintance with the famous walking-stick.

Unsuccessful in his search, Gordon wrote a furious letter denouncing his cruelty and breach of faith. The principal passages, says Demetrius Boulger:—

"were that Li Hung Chang should at once resign his post of Governor of Kiangsu, and give up the seals

of office to Gordon, so that he might put them in commission until the Emperor's pleasure should be ascertained; or that, failing that step, Gordon would forthwith proceed to attack the Imperialists, and retake from them all the places captured by the Ever-Victorious Army, for the purpose of handing them back again to the Taepings."\*

Macartney, acting the part of peacemaker, took a letter from Li Hung Chang to Gordon, who had gone to Quinsan on board the *Hyson*. Macartney arrived in the middle of the night. To cite Boulger again:—

"Before day had really broken, Gordon sent down word that he would see him, and Macartney went upstairs to an ill-lighted room, when he found Gordon sitting on his bedstead. Heu fond Gordon sobbing, and before a word was exchanged, Gordon stooped down, and, taking something from under the bedstead, held it up in the air, exclaiming:—

"Do you see that? Do you see that?"

"The light through the small Chinese windows was so faint that Macartney had at first some difficulty in discerning what it was, when Gordon again exclaimed:—

"It is the head of the Lar Wang, foully murdered! and with that burst into hysterical tears."†

Seeing that it was useless to attempt to reason with Gordon in this highly hysterical condition, Macartney retired; later, at breakfast, Gordon would listen to nothing, but ordered the *Hyson* to be got ready, with a party of infantry, to attack Li Hung Chang and the Imperialist forces. Macartney borrowed a horse and rode post haste to Li Hung Chang to warn him, and also to bring up his own troops ready to oppose the advance of Gordon, who actually moved out of Quinsan with the intention of carrying out his threats, but returned there when the flotilla had proceeded half-way to Soochow, by which time, says Boulger, "he had fortunately reflected on the situation, and a sanguinary struggle was averted" (p. 108).

So far, Gordon's indignation, however hysterical and melodramatic it might be, was worthy of all praise. But one would think, after this terrible experience, that Gordon would be more careful how he delivered the captured Tai-pings into the hands of their enemies. It is quite evident that he did not regard them as the common robbers and brigands of popular imagination. For it is a fact that the very night after the treacherous murder of the Tai-ping leaders, as Boulger records, "The principal captor of Soochow [Gordon] was thus a prisoner in the hands of the Taepings during the evening and night of December 6" (p. 102), and was allowed to depart unharmed in the early morning. Lest we be thought guilty of exaggeration, we give the sequel, in the words of Mrs. Archibald Little, as given in her *Life of Li Hung Chang*:—

"People with a taste for bloodshed can certainly get enough of it in the Tai-ping Rebellion.....the ground soaked, the rivers choked, the dogs gorged, the stench and all the rest of it. Mr. Howard puts it forcibly, as usual:—

"Two weeks afterwards we stormed and captured their position, driving out the rebels into the Imperialists' lines. 10,000 were taken prisoners; about 4,000, old men and boys, were stripped entirely naked and sent adrift; the others, about 6,000, were put in a large compound and beheaded. It was an awful sight to see Li Hung Chang's men hacking at them. The bodies of the eight foreigners taken by the rebels were found with their heads off and their bodies mutilated."

"This was after Gordon and Li had become friendly again, Mr. [now Sir Robert] Hart having persuaded Gordon that he had judged Li too harshly. So Gordon had led his men to victory, and this was the outcome of it all. Certainly, war is not a kid-glove affair, but it is incredible that this was the highest use to which to put a hero-saint—to win victories for the Chinese Imperialists' forces who acted after this fashion, and then unconditionally to hand the poor conquered nation over to the Manchu dynasty, from which the Tai-pings had sought to free it. They, poor people, were certainly imperfectly enough instructed in the doctrines of Chris-

\* Lin-Le, *History of the Ti-ping Rebellion*; cited by Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 67.

† Mrs. A. Little, *Life of Li Hung Chang*, p. 21.

\* Boulger, *Life of Sir Halliday Macartney*, p. 105.

† *Ibid.*, p. 106.



tianity from the outset, and power and luxury not only had temptations for them, but also attracted to their side nearly all the needy daredevils in China. But what was the Imperialist side that we should send our men to fight for them, and watch Li Hung Chang's men hacking 6,000 men to death, after turning 4,000 old men and boys out naked to perish? And these were small numbers compared to those that were often killed. Captain Roderick Dew, R.N., tells how, in the great populous city of Ningpo, he found not a living soul, and Mr. Archibald Little has often told me how, as a young man, he has ridden through large cities and found only corpses." \*

This throws a somewhat different complexion upon the actions of General Gordon to that given in the popular "lives" of him. A great deal concerning Gordon has yet to be revealed. Sir Henry Norman observes in this connection:—

"Opinions differ among students of Chinese history as to whether it would not have been better for China had the Tai-pings succeeded. I came upon many curious reminiscences of General Gordon up and down the coast of China. He was a man of remarkable virtues and of no less weaknesses, and the stories of him which survive in the Far East would make very interesting reading. I do not give them, however, because public opinion seems to have determined that this many-sided man shall be known under one aspect only of his life—that of Hero. I will only say that there is correspondence of his, still in existence in China, some of which I have read, which should in the interest of history be published." †

There has been too much of this burking of facts regarding the life of Gordon, and, indeed, of the whole Tai-ping Rebellion from beginning to end. *But the inexpugnable fact remains; and by no artifice can it be explained away—that, but for the missionaries, there would have been no Tai-ping Rebellion. Therefore, the missionaries are solely responsible for the awful carnage which ensued.*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

### Another Leeds Fight.

WHILE we were away from home last week we heard from the N. S. S. Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, that the trouble with the police and the Town Council at Leeds was taking a serious development, and a public demonstration was being organised to take place on Woodhouse Moor the next Sunday (July 20). The time was then too short for intermediate correspondence; and as our advice was sought we were obliged to write to Mr. E. Pack, on behalf of the Leeds Branch, direct. We wrote a long and careful letter dealing with every aspect of the matter at issue, and we learn that it was found useful and highly appreciated. We also sent down some 200 copies of the *Freethinker*, by request, for sale at the demonstration.

This Leeds matter has been mentioned in our columns before. The Leeds Town Council went one worse than the London County Council. The latter refused all permits for collections at public meetings; the former refused a permit only to the local Branch of the National Secular Society. This singling out of one Society on which to impose a disability was tried at Chicago some twelve months ago, but the bigoted despotism of the police was foiled at last by an upright and courageous magistrate who declared that public rights and rules should be the same for all citizens, otherwise the police and not the law would govern the United States. He found that the action of the police was unconstitutional, and dismissed the case before him. That ended, once for all, we hope, the singling out of movements the police do not like to be deprived of a common right of citizenship. Some such lesson as this is needed at Leeds.

The Leeds N. S. S. Branch was bound to do something. The simplest thing was to set about exercising the right which the police assumed a power to suppress. A demonstration was organised for Sunday on Woodhouse Moor, by way of testing the alleged power of the police, and bringing the question before a court of justice. But in the meantime the police attempted a flank movement. And a very pretty movement it was.

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They issued one of their old summonses against Mr. Pack for "language." When they got him in court they proceeded to develop some strange charges. They represented him as using language that could hardly occur to anyone who was not mad or drunk; language which no English audience would stand from any speaker for a single minute. They also alleged that he was inebriated,—which must have been an afterthought, or they would have arrested him on that charge in the first place; moreover, there was no suggestion of drunkenness in the summons, as Mr. Pack very properly pointed out. But, after all, what we think of the police evidence is of less importance than what the Stipendiary Magistrate thought. Mr. Atkinson dismissed the summons and passed on to the next business.

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The demonstration was held on Woodhouse Moor. There was a tremendous crowd of orderly people who voted unanimously for the following resolution:—

"That this mass meeting recognising that constitutional methods have failed to secure for the Leeds Branch of the National Secular Society the same privileges accorded to other public bodies, endorses its action in challenging this grossly inequitable attitude of the governing authorities and condemns that attitude as a public menace and unworthy of the best traditions of the City of Leeds."

Mr. Pack acted as chairman. He informs us that everything was done in the spirit of our letter of advice and encouragement, portions of which were read to the meeting and greatly applauded. Messrs. Jackson, Weir, Killip, and other Branch members took up the collection, sold the literature, and delivered the speeches. Everything went off with gratifying enthusiasm on the part of the crowd and self-control on the part of the organisers and speakers.

\* \* \*

The next move lies with the police, who took the names and addresses of the "chief conspirators." If they issue summonses for collecting money and selling literature without the permit, which is granted to every other Society in Leeds, the case will come before Mr. Atkinson. We have great hopes of his intelligence and impartiality. But if the case has to be carried farther the Leeds Branch is going to fight it as far as possible, and it will have our best assistance as well (we feel sure) as the best assistance of the N. S. S. Executive.

G. W. F.

### TREE-ISMS.

To be oneself is the greatest luxury in the world, and the most expensive.

A reverence for buttons is one of the most curious attributes of our common humanity.

Philosophy is a filly got by Common Sense out of Misfortune.

A gentleman is one who does not care whether he is one or not.

Napoleon's most useful contribution to the happiness of mankind was the constitution he gave to the Comedie Francaise.

The really strong man is unconscious of his originality.

It is men like Christ, Sophocles, Dante, Shakospeare, Cervantes, and Goetho, rather than the heroic slaughterers of history, who have the abiding influence in the advancement of mankind.

People wear the habits of their mind ready made.

A certain amount of injustice must accompany all great reforms.—*Sir Herbert Tree, "Thoughts and After Thoughts."*

\* Mrs. A. Little, *Life of Li Hung Chang*, pp. 41-2.

† Sir Henry Norman, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East* (1900), p. 6.



## Acid Drops.

"It goes without saying," the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to his "Dear Mr. Lansbury"—"that anything relating to the well-being of those upon whom our industrial conditions press with harshness will always enlist my deep interest and sympathy." If it goes without saying, why say it?

We never thought the Bishops were fools, nor is it one of the charges we ever suggested against them. We knew they were clever enough. They don't surprise us by the new line they are taking in defence of their big salaries. Some of them hint what the Bishop of London declares. That right reverend father in God's salary is £10,000 a year, and he says that he loses on his job. Others plead that it costs them half their salary, and sometimes more, to keep up their positions and palaces. But it costs every man with a good income a terrible lot of it to keep up his residence and social position. That is where most of the money goes. In this respect a bishop does not differ from other people. To deduct all such expenses, and to treat the balance as his income, is to confuse salary and pocket-money.

The Bishop of Winchester has a glorious old palace and grounds at Farnham, situated on a natural terrace commanding a magnificent view over half the county of Surrey. The gardens and hothouses—with their beautiful flowers, and rich grapes, and other fruit—match the lovely grass which springs under your feet like three-piled Turkey carpet. Only a vandal would propose the destruction of such a place, and when the Church has to give it up some of us will know what to do with it. Its upkeep at present is said to be between £2,000 and £3,500. This is not a very precise estimate. Suppose we split the difference and call it £2,750. How, we ask, does that justify the Bishop's groans? His stipend, paid to him with the regularity of the seasons by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, is £6,500 a year. This leaves a balance of £3,750 a year. That sum his lordship has at his absolute disposal. Only £3,750. Think of it! What a martyrdom the poor man's life must be! Yet a lot of men would jump at his lordship's chance if it were floating their way. If it were not for the preaching, the praying, and the other nonsensical "duties" of the Bishop's post—if it were merely a question of keeping up the noble building and its beautiful grounds at a cost of £2,750 per annum, with £3,750 per annum in addition as personal pocket-money—we rather think we should be inclined to accept the post ourselves. If we refused it we should certainly not do so with any murderous violence. But we don't suppose there will be any vacancy at Farnham Palace until the Bishop of Winchester is taken away to make room for another martyr. Bishops grumble, but they "stick it." Bless them!

It is rather a pity that the Protestant Churches have not the practice of canonisation. If they had we feel certain that there would soon be a Saint Pierpont Morgan in the calendar. We have read no end of eulogies as to his religious convictions, and in the July *Century* there is a further testimony from Mr. J. B. Gilder. He was a man of faith, it appears, so completely so, that it appeared to him a real and tangible thing, transmissible by legal process. Religion was "fundamental in his own nature, and as potent a force as any that shaped his actions." We do not doubt it. We believe it is equally true of Rockefeller. And in both cases it pays. The pity is, we repeat, that Protestantism cannot perpetuate the memory of men such as these in a Saints' Calendar. The Catholic Church has the calendar, but, to do it justice, it does not lay itself out to exalt to religious eminence multi-millionaires. That it leaves to Protestantism.

It is quite a long time since a blasphemer was struck dead by Divine Benevolence. According to the *Universa*, a Catholic paper, the thing has happened in America, the land of tall buildings and tall statements. The story goes that a miner, named Angelo Rotundo, at Trinidad, Colorado, U.S.A., parodied the death and resurrection of Christ, and lost his balance and never rose again. The tale is vouched for by Father Principle, S.J. If the tale had been told without principle we could hardly have believed it.

The *Daily Sketch* has been discussing childrens' names, and says the old-fashioned titles are dropping out. There are no Sarahs and Marys nowadays. Maybe, some up-to-date commentator will alter these Biblical names to Sally and Marie.

Citizen Rockefeller, the Christian multi-millionaire, visited the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, Cleveland, and the parson described him as "a rosebush in the Lord's garden." That parson never calls the fellows on the rocks blush-roses.

The *Montreal Star* of June 30, reported a Catholic meeting held at Three Rivers. The theme of discussion—if discussion it can be called where they all think as the priest does—was elementary education, and the summary of Dr. Baril's speech is decidedly interesting. We make the following extract:—

"Dr. Baril spoke of the public school as the battleground on which were arrayed the contending forces of the Church and the body of Freemasons, Freethinkers, and Atheists, whom he classed together, and whose object, he alleged, was to strike at the Church through the school. He charged them with making efforts to secure Godless schools for Canada, and said such efforts should be vigorously resisted by faithful Catholics.

"The speaker defined the leading principles of the Association in regard to education as first and foremost absolute unquestioning submission to the Church and its right to control in moral and religious education; secondly, the assertion of the parents' duty to watch over the child; lastly, the exclusion of the Government from the sphere of education.

"The Church," he said, "has the sacred right to direct the education of its youth and to see that none of the books of instruction are allowed to contain anything in the least injurious to the doctrines of the Catholic Church. It is the business of the State to give protection and financial assistance, if need be, but not to take charge of national education."

All the State has to do with education is to find the money. The Church will see to the rest. A fine thing—for the Church. But those who find the money are apt to have ideas of their own, and even to demand control of the expenditure. Which is awkward—for the Church.

In connection with that same gathering, Mgr. F. X. Cloutier bewailed the fact that the Church was in danger from "the growth of an anti-Christian civilisation." He was specially severe on Freemasons and Jews. The latter ought never to have been allowed to enter Canada. French-Canadian Catholics would be able to retain their rights if they only stuck together instead of splitting up over political divisions. What those "Catholic rights" are is not difficult to see. They mean that the Catholic Church, that is the Catholic priests—for it must be remembered that the Catholic laymen are no part of the Catholic Church, which is a pure Ecclesiasticism—should govern the whole Province of Quebec, and, if possible, the whole of Canada. We note that this arrogant priest denounced "the mistaken idea that religion must be kept out of politics." "A good Catholic," he said, "in private life must be a good Catholic in public life"—and obey the Church's orders in both cases. That is what his lordship, like all other priests, means by "the rights of our faith."

Sir Griffith Boscawen, M.P., speaking at a Church Protest meeting against the Welsh Disestablishment Bill at Southend-on-Sea, poured scorn on the suggestion of employing "God's" money for washhouses and museums. Evidently, this gentleman thinks cleanliness a very bad second to godliness.

Is it wicked to play whist? is the question asked in a religious periodical. It is—the way some people play it.

According to tradition, if July 15 is wet, the next forty days will be rainy, and we suppose that the same principle should apply to a dry St. Swithin's Day. There have been many wet St. Swithin's Days, but there is no record in which all the forty following days were wet. The record of the days following a dry St. Swithin's Day is, if anything, worse. Cold statistics prove that superstition and fact are in direct conflict; but, as usual, it has no effect upon the believers in the nonsense.

The Bishops of St. Albans and Barking have left their work of soul-saving for extended holidays. Times have changed since the fishing-nets of the Apostles were sold to the rag and bone dealers. "Blessed be ye poor!"

Dr. Horton tells us that in 1880 the great names were Huxley, Tyndall, and Spencer. Then he adds, "Haeckel still lives, representing the thought of 1880, a somewhat pathetic and antiquated figure, from whom all interest has disappeared, because his point of view has become practically meaningless for the modern world." A bigger lie was never told. Dr. Horton must know that Haeckel's works are read in this country at the present time by tens of



thousands of admirers, and that his point of view, so far from being "practically meaningless for the modern world," is the point of view of practically every living biologist. Indeed, less than a year ago, this reverend gentleman complained that the intellect of the Protestant world was now engaged on the task of getting rid of God and Christ. That was immediately after the "strange proceedings" at the Dundee meeting of the British Association, when Haeckel's point of view was all-dominant. Dr. Horton is anything but consistent.

In the *Christian Commonwealth* for July 16, there is an article entitled "The Reinstatement of Prayer," in which we are assured that the old-fashioned view of prayer is no longer tenable. That is to say, the Biblical conception of prayer is out of date. "*Laborare est orare* (to pray is to work) is the motto of our age." Prayer originated in fear, and fear was the offspring of ignorance. In proportion as ignorance and fear vanish the inclination to pray ceases, even among those who still nominally believe in God. Atheism excludes prayer altogether.

The Education Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference says in its report that it stands "for Christian education under public control." The position is quite unjustifiable, and the phrasing is simply dishonest. Christian education ought not to be a public matter at all. It is a private concern. The only difference between advocating Christian education or Mohammedan education as matters of public concern, is a difference of numbers. There are more Christians than Mohammedans, hence the Christian claim. And the "Free Church" Wesleyan Methodists ought to realise that the number of people who support a speculative opinion has no bearing upon the question of whether that opinion should be made a question of public policy. Moreover, public control here means, very clearly, Christian control. The word "public" is a cant word, only introduced because the majority of the population are Christians—nominally so, at all events. Clearly, Methodists do not mean that Christian education is to be controlled by Buddhists, Jews, and Freethinkers. What they really mean is, that public power and public money is to be used to teach Christianity, and that all other beliefs are to be ignored. We do not desire that any other form of religious or non-religious belief should be considered. We are only desirous that all should be put on one side.

The *Catholic Times* put the logic of the situation in a recent issue in the following sentence:—

"Either all religious teaching must be allowed public money in support, or none. And evidence is forthcoming that the secular solution is making its way in favor with the Wesleyans. If Free Churchmen nail their flag to the Cowper-Temple mast, they will certainly lose the mast, and probably the ship."

We believe the ship will be lost any way. But to cry out against State patronage of religion, and demand the State enforcement of religion in the schools, only hastens its destruction.

Six years ago the Rev. Frank Ballard was appointed by the Home Mission Committee of the Methodist Conference as a travelling infidel-slayer. Since then he has been travelling up and down the country—he himself says that he has travelled 50,000 miles and addressed a million and a half of people—and glowing accounts of his successes have appeared from time to time. The Committee is now recommending to the Plymouth Conference that a Committee should be appointed to look into the whole question of the Christian Evidence Mission, and that no new appointment be made at the present Conference. This, we may safely assume, is the Committee's way of reporting that the Mission has been a failure. And what otherwise could it be? Mr. Ballard could not hope to convert Freethinkers. They know the substance of his arguments before he gives them voice. That the growth of Freethought can be stayed by a Christian Evidence missionary is as wild and fantastic an idea as ever existed. He may save one here and there from straying out of the fold; but, on the other hand, he is all the time suggesting doubts to the others. The growth of Freethought is part of a world-process of development, and if the whole of the Methodist Church turned itself into a Christian Evidence Mission it would make very little difference. Religion carries within itself the seed of dissolution, as surely as Freethought contains the germ of certain growth.

Amongst those who escaped alive from the Cromer express smash a fortnight ago was the Rev. Len Broughton, of Christ Church, Westminster. Dr. Broughton informed his congregation the morning after the accident that "had it not been for the direct providence of God," he would not

have been preaching to them. Dr. Broughton, as a preacher of the gospel of poverty and self-sacrifice, was travelling in a first-class reserved compartment with his secretary, and had only just dined. Five minutes after he left the dining-car came the smash. Hence the proof of the "direct providence of God." Providence, we must assume, kept its eye on Dr. Broughton, waited until he had finished his dinner, and said, "Now that my servant Broughton has dined, and is back in his first-class reserved compartment, let her go," and the car was smashed into "worse than kindling wood." There is no other conclusion possible that we can see. The direct providence of God saved Dr. Broughton and let the rest of the travellers go to the Devil as rapidly as possible.

The *British Weekly* has been inviting correspondence on the ten men in England who would be most missed? A large number of people have plumped for Dr. Clifford. Only one reason is quoted; this is, "Because of the doughty championship of religious equality. He regards a parliamentary religion as a pharisaic anachronism." This might almost have been written by Dr. Clifford himself. When has Dr. Clifford worked for a genuine equality of opinion? We know he has worked to get Nonconformist opinions favored by the State to the same extent as is Episcopalianism. But that we believe is all. And the enemy of a parliamentary religion is, to-day, one of the most ardent advocates of a form of religion to be created by Parliament and paid for out of public funds. What slaves to phrases most men are!

Thomas Paine has been dead more than a hundred years. Yet the Wesleyan Methodists are just discussing a heresy-hunt against the Rev. George Jackson for entertaining doubts about Moses and Jonah. And they call Christianity a progressive religion!

The Methodist heresy-hunt fizzled out. The Conference President ruled the motion against Dr. Jackson out of order as being too late, the Conference having no authority to deal with an appointment when it is once made. This was a clever move. It averted an inconvenient discussion.

Rev. Irvine Lister, pastor of Ebenezer Congregational Church, Uppermill, near Oldham, has resigned his pulpit because his opinions on religion are now such as to prevent his continuing to be a Christian minister.

There is a row going on in one of the monasteries on Mount Athos, and the Holy Synod has sent Archbishop Nikon there to make peace—on a Russian gunboat!

Bible subjects are *tabu* at the Lord Chamberlain's office but it appears that the licensing is to be less rigid in future and the censorship is to make a start in relaxation with the voluptuous story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The play of "Joseph and his Brethren" is to be produced at His Majesty's Theatre in September. Miss Maxine Elliott is to play the part of Lady Potiphar. We should hardly think Sir Herbert Tree will play the part of Joseph. In any case, the interview between madame and the private secretary will have to stop short of the naked truth. These oriental stories are all right in the Bible, which is an oriental book; but they are rather embarrassing on a Western stage. The severity of *il casto Giuseppe's* temptation will have to be largely taken for granted—even in the days of the hobble skirt and the consumptive blouse.

The new President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, the Rev. Samuel Francis Collier, in his official address, declared that "the Methodist Church had a message for the twentieth century." His audience thoroughly agreed with the declaration. Here and there, perhaps, a very thoughtful one may have wondered when it was going to get delivered. A whole eighth of the century has gone by already. Wonder may have been felt, too, at Mr. Collier's declaring that "the late Canon Barnett had said that 'the Lord loveth a cheerful taxpayer.'" We know from Holy Writ that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver, just as we know that whoso giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord—though a good many rich Christians appear to mistrust the security. But a cheerful taxpayer! The word "publican" in the New Testament means a taxgatherer, and "the Lord" brackets "publicans" with "harlots" and "sinners." Canon Barnett is dead, but Mr. Collier might think this matter over again—with the aid of this paragraph.

How easy it is to twist the Bible into teaching anything under the sun. In last Sunday's International Sunday-school Lesson, the words "I will harden Pharaoh's heart"



occurred, which one reverend commentator explained thus: "The hardening of Pharaoh's heart simply means that he became the more determined or stubborn in his refusal [to let the children of Israel go]. It was not that God made him wicked; it simply means that God foresaw that he would not give way." Now, the Apostle Paul interpreted Exodus iv. 21 in a perfectly natural way, and founded upon the words his wonderful argument for the absolute sovereignty of God (Romans ix. 14-24). Modern divines may regard such a doctrine as utterly unbelievable, but it is entirely dishonest to pretend that it is not taught in the Bible.

A bitter controversy has arisen at Hull regarding the propriety of Sunday flying. As usual, the friends of Jesus are relying upon the police, regardless of the story in the Gospels of Christ's attempt at aviation.

A recent issue of the *Weekly Dispatch* contained a picture of the King's youngest son, with the touching inscription. "The Human Boy-Prince." It won't do! All the scribes of Carmelite House cannot deify royalty nowadays.

Eighty thousand pounds has been raised by the Church Missionary Society towards clearing off its deficit of £100,000. With a fourth of that sum to be expended on Freethought we would guarantee to knock a greater hole in the missionary man's religion in this country in a twelve-month than the whole body of the clergy could repair in a generation—or ever again.

Speaking at a British and Foreign Bible Society meeting at Southend-on-Sea, the Rev. Barclay Buxton said the Japanese were attached to the Bible even before they could read or understand it. It's about that way in England, anyhow.

S. Verdad, who writes the "Foreign Affairs" column for the *New Age*, referring to the fight between the Bulgarians and the Greeks and Servians, says that "the slaughter was appalling, and the outrages unprecedented. These Christians showed more savagery towards one another than the Turks had ever shown towards them. No trick was too contemptible if only the enemy could be lured into a trap; and no form of mutilation and torture was too vile once he was safely in it. We shall never hear the full story of this savage war."

What a terrible irony on the professed civilising influence of Christianity is contained in the Annual Report of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In England, Ireland, and Wales the number of offenders dealt with by the Society numbered no less than 74,678. Of these, 38,798 were males, and 35,880 females. The total shows an increase of 889 more than in the previous year. Of the victims, there were 79,366 boys, 80,041 girls, and—terrible to think of—23,175 babies under two years of age. The Christian religion has been in existence many centuries, and, despite the hypocritical boasting of its defenders, has done nothing to inculcate kindness in the treatment of the most helpless members of the community. One Freethinker, Colonel Ingersoll, did more to foster humanity in dealing with children than all the millions of professional followers of Christ.

Dr. Robert Bridges, who has been appointed Poot Laureate in succession to the late Mr. Alfred Austin, is a Doctor of Literature. The degree is indicated by the letters D.Litt., and, when Mark Twain had the same honor conferred upon him, he laughingly said he "cared D.Litt. about it."

At the United Methodist Conference at Halifax tearful reference was made to the huge decline in Sunday-school membership and other young people's organisations. The decrease was attributed to the falling birth-rate, emigration, Christian Science, Socialism, and other absurdities. Not one of the many sleepy theologians at the Conference woke up and suggested that the spread of Freethought had anything to do with it.

Rev. Hugh Fleming, of Rayrigg, Windermere, left £25,672. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, the distinguished actor, has published a little volume, entitled *Thoughts and After Thoughts*, in which he has some thoughtful and inspiring remarks on a multitude of subjects. He expresses his belief in the dawn of a "new religion," and writes forcibly and eloquently. We are glad to note that the religion he refers

to is that of humanity. It is only right that a Tree of knowledge should bear rare and refreshing fruit.

Dr. Hoskyns, the Bishop of Southwell, has been condemning caste in the Church. He found, in colliery villages where pitmen were called upon to mix with other classes, they were looked down upon by the classes who thought they were above them. The Bishop might notice that, in spite of twenty centuries of the religion of the carpenter-god, caste is just as prevalent in England as in India.

Christians are never weary of persecuting and defaming Freethinkers; but they do not want too much religion themselves. Pious ladies nowadays feel too tired to carry complete Church Services to "God's" house, and small booklets containing selected portions only are much in favor. A few more years and the worshipers will feel too tired even to carry that.

It seems that, like an electric bell, the Church must be re-charged periodically with spiritual life and power. At present, she is devoid of attractive and preservative energy, with the result that the crowds, instead of flocking into, are actually rushing out of her. Recognising this fact, the Rev. David Adams, Chairman of the Congregational Union of Wales, declares that the Church is in serious need of re-endowment. In view of such a declaration one naturally asks, What has happened to Jesus Christ, the Church's head? Has he taken offence at something and left her in a huff? Or where is the Holy Ghost, who was to dwell within her always, and lead her into all knowledge and complete efficiency? Merely to ask such questions is to fully expose the deceptive character of the Lamb's Bride.

We are indebted to the New York *Truthseeker* for the following choice specimens of eloquence from "Billy" Sunday, the American evangelist, who is drawing more than a Prime Minister's salary from his soul-saving crusade:—

"A young man or woman who fights against the Christian life cannot measure character with a grizzly ape or yellow dog."

"It takes a little weazen-headed, jug-headed man to doubt God—I've sure got down to the size of some of the nuts of your town this morning."

"Let me say that when you little, vile hounds attack me you are a liar and a coward, for it is at the cause of Jesus Christ and all the Churches united in these meetings you are striking over my shoulders. You little bum, I'm calling your bluff."

"If any minister believes and teaches evolution he is a stinking skunk, a fraud, a hypocrite, and a liar."

"The statement has been made by some dirty little puppet of the pulpit that there is no harm in the dance, the theatre, or cards. To hell with that kind of a minister. I am not swearing, brethren, I am praying. A preacher of that sort is worse than a bull-necked bar-tender."

"If a woman on the avenue plays a game of cards in her home she is worse than any blackleg gambler in the slums." We do not think that in any profession in the world, save that of Christian evangelicism, language of this sort would be tolerated. Sunday is a converted prize-fighter, but even that profession must have gained in decency by his conversion. Some clergymen, it is only fair to say, have publicly protested against Sunday's language, and some of the above expressions were in reply to their protest. Dr. Washington Gladden is among the number, and relates how, when a clergyman on the same platform with Sunday, had expressed a belief in evolution, Sunday shook his fist in his face, and yelled:—

"Stand up there, you bastard evolutionist! Stand up with the Atheists and the Infidels and the whoremongers and the adulterers and go to hell."

It is not reported that the clergyman went. He might have felt inclined to say "After you, Billy."

"J. B." has a long article in the *Christian World* for July 17 on "The Heart of Things," but after reading it most carefully we do not know what he means by the phrase. He tells us that the Christian Gospel is "the nearest approach to the heart of things which has yet been opened to our race"; but how does he know that? No one can tell what the heart of things is, not even that they have a heart; and consequently it is simply absurd to say of this, that, and the other that it is a nearer, or the nearest approach to it. Every religion, "J. B." informs us, is a more or less successful attempt to find the heart of things; but, of course, his own religion is the most successful of all, whilst Buddhists and Mohammedans think the same of their religions. We are convinced, on the contrary, of the utter futility of all religions alike, and stoutly maintain that science is the only agency that can lead us to the heart of things. In other words, it is by observing, examining, and listening to Nature herself that we have any chance of getting her secret out of her.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements**

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

**To Correspondents.**

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.**—Previously acknowledged, £158 19s. 5d. Received since:—R. Lancaster, £1; T. S. (Wimbledon), 2s. 6d.; W. Dodd, 10s.

**A. H. DUNSTAN.**—We have neither a private secretary nor an office clerk. Every bit of our business has to be done with our own hands—from writing articles to acknowledging subscriptions for the various objects appealed for from time to time in the *Freethinker*. Elaborate book-keeping is absolutely impossible; and, as a matter of fact, we never charged a half-penny for expenses against any fund that we "ran" in these columns. We are as careful as we can be, and we make a mistake occasionally, but very seldom considering the circumstances. To the best of our belief we acknowledge every subscription that arrives, writing out the acknowledgments when we open the envelopes containing them. Letters are dealt with, when necessary, at the same time; they are then torn up and thrown into the waste-basket. We could trace a cheque, of course, afterwards; but not a small postal order, which is not individually identifiable in the pay-in to the bank. What is not acknowledged we are bound to treat as not having reached us. Many things, it must be remembered, are lost in the Post Office—and are sometimes heard of in the police-court. This is a long answer concerning a very small amount, but the principle is the same whatever the size of the subscription.

**W. MATTHIAS.**—We have read your letter carefully, and in many ways it does you credit. But you did not read our paragraphs as carefully as we read your observations. So far from recommending that hunger-striking Suffragettes should be allowed to starve to death, we blamed Mr. Bernard Shaw for making such a foolish and impossible suggestion. Our own personal opinion is that the whole situation is pathological, like so much else in present-day society. We call this our personal opinion, because we only state it by the way without offering it as a topic for discussion in the *Freethinker*. To return. You failed to notice that the words "There are plenty of cemeteries" were printed in inverted commas. They were not *our* words. We do not think we are capable of such brutality. Those words were what we said that the authorities would address to the Suffragette prisoners if the "militancy" policy were pursued by a working-class women's movement. We have but one thing more to say. Many people abuse the word Determinism. You, for instance, apply it to the violent aggressor; you forget that it is equally applicable to the rest of mankind. Society has a right to protect itself against anti-social conduct on the part of its members. We admit, of course, that this should be done with as much common sense and humanity as possible.

**G. SMITH (Montreal).**—Thanks for your letter and cutting. The latter is dealt with elsewhere. We quite understand what a hotbed of bigotry you are in.

**E. B.**—Much obliged for cuttings.

**W. TAYLOR.**—An opinion without its grounds is of no particular value. It does not enlighten or help us in any way. Nor should it. We listen to facts and arguments, but we allow no man's judgment to weigh against our own.

**W. P. BALL.**—Your cuttings are very welcome.

**A. M.**—You are by no means "an empty shell." Clear your head of that nonsense and smile again. Not that a little self-depreciation now and then will do you any harm. But let it be only now and then. Most men suffer in the opposite direction.

**J. F. AUST.**—"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" occurs in Luke ix. 27. You would find our *Bible Handbook* useful for all such references.

**N. LEVY.**—We have not neglected "the report of a great victory for free speech in Scotland." We have not seen it. Perhaps you will explain your impolite postcard.

**W. DODD,** subscribing again, wishes to see the President's Honorarium Fund "going stronger."

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**THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S** office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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**Sugar Plums.**

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a long article by Mr. Foote on the new edition of Mr. H. S. Salt's monograph on Shelley.

Loving Christians tried to break up the Edmonton Branch meeting on Sunday evening, but they failed in their amiable attempt. Mr. Max Hope was the lecturer, and an able one too. The next evening he ventured to ask a question of the speaker on the platform of the West London Mission. A pious constable arrested him, and he was bound over to keep the peace he had never broken! By the way, a lady lecturer (Miss Pankhurst) should be well supported at Edmonton this evening (July 27).

We are exceedingly sorry that in our issue for July 20, we inadvertently attributed the description of the New Theology as "a Pantheistic and anti-Christian hash" to Canon Masterman. We ought to have stated that it occurs in a review of the Canon's book, *The Challenge of Christ*, which appeared in the *Church Times* for July 11. We tender to Mr. Masterman our sincerest apology, and beg to observe that the reviewer, who employed the offensive characterisation of the New Theology, warmly eulogised the Canon's treatment of the subject. With this correction the paragraph stands.

*Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*, by Sir Hiram Maxim, is causing the greatest possible consternation among the Christians in China. The missionaries are beside themselves with indignation against the author and his book, and would burn both had they the power they once had. The *Shanghai Times* could not find terms strong enough to denounce the wicked volume, although its command of Billingsgate is exceedingly great. The ire of the *Times* was fanned into leaping flames by a long and powerful letter from Sir Hiram, which the *Republican Advocate* had the courage to print. In this letter were quotations from many eminent authorities, notably from the writings of the learned Jesuit missionary, Père Le Comte, who was honest enough to tell the truth about the Chinese. It is a significant fact that no Missionary Society has ever made use of the valuable information contained in the letters of this famous Jesuit. It is interesting to note that Le Comte gave the Chinese a splendid character, decidedly superior to that of Europeans. And this is really the damning fault of Sir Hiram Maxim's book—it gives the Chinese such a good character that the presence and labors of Christian missionaries among them can only be regarded as an insult and a crime. This book is also unpalatable to the missionaries because it shows the Chinese what Christianity is in itself, and what it has really done in all the ages of its dominance in Christendom. Sir Hiram is to be heartily congratulated upon the fact that his *Scrap Book* is already doing much to discredit the Christian superstition everywhere, and particularly in China.—J. T. L.

From the *Daily News*, Saturday, July 12:—

"PRISON RELIGIOUS CENSUS."

"The Home Secretary has informed Mr. Hay Morgan, M.P., that a recent census of the religious persuasions of inmates in England and Wales as stated by the prisoners on reception were as follows:—

Church of England	13,891
Roman Catholics	3,273
Wesleyans	442
Baptists	96
Presbyterians	93
Methodists	87
Congregationalists	41
Jews	133
Freethinkers	109

"Personal inquiry, Mr. McKenna adds, resulted in some change of the figures, the chief alterations being that 13,957 were ascertained to be of the Church of England, 669 Wesleyans, and 209 Baptists."

Using the amended figures in the three instances given we find 18,329 Christians to 133 Jews and 109 Freethinkers. On the face of it this overwhelmingly refutes the common orthodox statement that "infidelity and immorality are the same thing." Not only in England and Wales, but in other countries, it is found that Freethinkers contribute less, not more, than their proportion of criminals to the general total. If may even be less than it looks. One would like to know whether the whole 109 Freethinkers in this list professed themselves Freethinkers or were placed in the list simply because they belonged to no Christian denomination.

Napoleon, like Cæsar (both, by the way, were Freethinkers) had a strong keen pen. It was as potent as his



sword. When we speak of his pen we must include his tongue—both worked by the same strong brain. Some of his sayings are as immortal as his deeds. Even about the general run of them there is something of the great general's sagacity and the good soldier's brevity. Many sarcasms, some of them very witty, were expended upon Mme. Tallien, a famous frail beauty of the last days of the French Revolution; but which of them can be compared to Napoleon's that she "had two or three husbands, and children by everybody"? Compared with such a sentence ordinary journalism and oratory are as flat ginger-beer to a fine and fresh champagne. Even religious journalism and oratory are poor things, with all their inspiration, after the speech of the "Corsican atheist" who did not wait for the Pope to put the crown upon his head at Notre Dame, but took it between his own hands and clapped it upon his own head.

Mr. J. W. Gott resents our references to him in recent numbers of the *Freethinker*, and he has published an appeal against what he seems to regard as our tyranny. It appears that he started some "missionary" work in Lancashire, paying the missionaries themselves at the rate of a shilling a lecture, which must be highly conducive to efficiency. One of these missionaries got into trouble with the police at Blackburn by the use of indiscreet language in a place of public resort. Mr. Gott prints two of his missionary's expressions. We see no reason for reprinting them here. What we have to say is that if Mr. Gott thinks this sort of language proper and useful at public meetings his ideas and ours are too far apart for useful correspondence.

Mr. Gott wrote to us in a great hurry when his missionary got into trouble at Blackburn. He requested our advice as to whether Mr. Thompson should pay the fine or go to prison. We can hardly conceive a meaner request from one human being to another. We have hinted this before; we say it plainly now, and once for all. Left to himself, Mr. Thompson chose the fine; he also gave an undertaking not to repeat his offence, or even to lecture on Atheism again in that district. This news was forwarded to us with a further request that we would pay Thompson's fine and costs, amounting in all to something like £5. Had we done what Mr. Gott requested there would have been no tyranny about us. We declined to exercise the presidential authority, which must sometimes be exercised between Executive meetings, on such a matter and in such circumstances. Mr. Gott still had it open to him, however, to apply to the Executive at its monthly meeting. And he still has it open.

The statement with which Mr. Gott seeks to cover himself and gain sympathy is that "the lectures were delivered under the auspices of the N. S. S." We reply that Mr. Gott has no right to employ lecturers—at a shilling a time or otherwise—to represent the National Secular Society. He has no such commission himself, and how can he impart it to others? The idea that the illicit use of the Society's name saddles it with responsibility is one that could hardly enter any head but Mr. Gott's. He says that his use of the Society's name is *not* illicit. He is one of the Society's members, he says, and that gives him a right to use the Society's name as he pleases. There is, of course, an easy practical refutation of that sophistry. Meanwhile we may notice another specimen of Mr. Gott's logic. "I tell Mr. Foote," he says, "that as long as I remain a member of the N. S. S. my work will be for the N. S. S., whether he likes it or not." This ridiculous outburst does not touch the point at issue. That point is whether Mr. Gott shall use the Society's name without its permission. He says that he will. We say that he shall not. And if he does not desist out of regard to common sense and common decency, there are ways of compelling him to desist, and they will be employed. He will not bluff the N. S. S. Nobody has ever attempted that very successfully.

Mr. Gott aims a parting shot at the despotic President of the N. S. S. "Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner," he says, "has sent for full particulars of the Thompson trial, with a view to having some questions put in the House of Commons." What a contrast to the do-nothing Mr. Foote! But it happens that Mr. Foote was at the bottom of that movement. He introduced the Thompson case at a meeting of the National Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. No other member present had heard of it. It was unanimously agreed that Mrs. Bonner, who occupies the chair, should be requested to obtain further details, with a view to several procedures, of which a question in the House of Commons was one. It is never safe to assume that Mr. Foote is doing nothing because he is not doing it himself before the footlights. Those behind the scenes know better.

## The Gospel History a Fabrication.

### THE NAZARENES.

IN the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, as we have seen, the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ is narrated as having taken place at three different periods of history. We have also seen that the Virgin Birth story had no place in the primitive Gospel from which Matthew, Mark, and Luke copied the main portion of their narratives. That this story is an early Christian fabrication is further proved by the following facts relating to the Nazarenes.

1. The Christian religion took its rise amongst the Jews; its first believers were also Jews. This fact is admitted by all critics.

2. The name by which these primitive Jewish believers were first known was "the sect of the Nazarenes"—as stated in the Book of the Acts (xxiv. 5). It must not, however, be thought that in citing "the Acts" as evidence I thereby assume that book to be historical. I do nothing of the kind: but this particular fact is not dependent upon the accuracy or veracity of Luke; it is one that would be known to all Christians of any standing in Luke's day. This name, too, was employed from the earliest times throughout the entire East to designate believers in Jesus Christ, and is still applied to Christians in some Eastern districts at the present day. We are also incidentally told in the Acts (xi. 26) that these believers were first called Christians at Antioch. This may be true; but the name was applied only to Gentile Christians, and at a much later period than that implied in the Acts. The primitive sect of Jewish believers were known from first to last (*i.e.*, to the fourth century A.D.) as Nazarenes, though those of the sect who remained faithful to the Jewish ritual received the name Ebionites (from *ebion*, poor). It was probably the latter who were referred to in the text—"Blessed are ye poor," etc.

3. Before the appearance of the Greek canonical Gospels, the Nazarenes had a Gospel of their own, in Aramaic, called the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," which was also the Gospel of the stricter members of the sect who were called Ebionites. Now, we have evidence that this Gospel contained no Virgin Birth story, but commenced, like the canonical Mark, with the preaching of the Baptist. We also know that the Nazarenes and Ebionites believed Jesus to be merely a man, begotten by Joseph. Thus, speaking of the Ebionites, Eusebius says (*Eccl. Hist.* iii. 27):—

"They cherished low and mean opinions of Christ. For they considered him a plain and common man, justified only by his exalted virtue, and that he was born by natural generation.....They use only the Gospel according to the Hebrews, esteeming the others as of but little value. They also observe the Sabbath and other rites of the Jews."

Treating of the same subject, Irenæus, who first mentions the four Gospels, says (*Her.* v. i. 8):—

"Vain also are the Ebionites.....who do not choose to understand that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and that the power of the Most High did overshadow her."

Thus, these two kindred sects, that had been the first to embrace Christianity, came to be regarded by the Gentile churches (in the last quarter of the second century) as heretics. They were quite aware that a Virgin Birth story was recorded in the Gentile Gospels; but they could not be induced to believe or adopt it: so that in the time of Epiphanius (A.D. 374—377) their Gospel commenced, as at the first, with the preaching of the Baptist.

Looking, now, at the foregoing facts, there cannot be the smallest doubt as to the deliberate fabrication of the story of the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ. The first generation of Jewish Christians, who for some unknown reason revered the name of Jesus, knew nothing about a Virgin Birth, and gave no credence to it when they afterwards heard the



story. And no other early Christians, save the Nazarenes, were in a position to judge of the truth or falsehood of that alleged event. If they rejected the story, it was because they knew it had been concocted after their Gospel was written, and concocted by Gentile Christians who knew nothing about their Jesus. The sect, it is true, narrated stories of that personage working miracles; but this was because it was believed that the "spirit of God" had descended upon him at his baptism: then he became a prophet like Moses and Elijah—who were reported to have come down from heaven to converse with him.

Christian apologists and reconcilers, as might be expected, assert that the Nazarenes were a sect of heretics that arose after the appearance of the canonical Gospels; but the fact that "the sect of the Nazarenes" is named in "the Acts" as the first society of Christians proves the assertion to be a Christian misrepresentation. The name "Christians" had, of course, come into general use in Luke's time; but the appellation "Nazarenes," which preceded it by many years, was known in that day to have been the original name. The Nazarene sect appears to have been a branch of that of the Essenes, whose doctrines and practices upon many points were in agreement with those afterwards ascribed to Jesus. The Nazarenes were therefore practically Christians before they knew anything about that personage—the belief in the latter as a prophet being probably the only new matter added to their articles of faith.

JESUS THE NAZARENE.

One of the most important facts in connection with Jesus Christ is that he is called in the Gospels and the Acts "Jesus the Nazarene"—a title which is mistranslated "Jesus of Nazareth." In no less than seventeen passages the Jewish Savior is called "Jesus the Nazarene," the word employed in some places being Nazoraios; in others Nazarenos. By a comparison of parallel passages, we find both referring to the same person or sect, as in the following examples:—

Matt. xxvi. 71.—"This man also was with Jesus the Nazarene" (Nazoraios).

Mark xiv. 67.—"Thou also wast with Jesus the Nazarene" (Nazarenos).

The first appellation might be translated Nazarite, and the second Nazarene; but Epiphanius, in his book on Heresies, quotes both as the names of two distinct sects among the Nazarenes of his time—one of them, apparently, being the proper name of those called by the Gentiles "Ebionites." Hence, in conformity with Matthew's statement—"he shall be called a Nazarene"—Jesus is so called in the Gospels. The only question remaining is the origin of the name. Was Jesus a member of the sect when he first appeared? or, Did his Essene followers give themselves that appellation to glorify his name?

Well, in the first place, there can be no doubt that "Jesus the Nazarene" was in some way connected with "the sect of the Nazarenes." Why, otherwise, have our translators and Revisers deliberately mis-called him "Jesus of Nazareth"? We may be quite certain that this was not done without some good reason. In the next place (as will be shown later) there appears to have been no city in Galilee called Nazareth, from which "the Nazarene" could take his name—and the latter appellation has to be accounted for. Why, then, was Jesus so called? To this there can be but one answer: Jesus must have been a member of the sect, and possibly one of some authority in it. The name "Jesus the Nazarene" was evidently employed in the same way as that of "John the Essene," who is mentioned by Josephus as a general in the Jewish war. Had the Jewish historian had occasion to refer to "Jesus the Nazarene," it would have been by this name; but his not having done so clearly shows that Jesus must have been almost unknown outside his own sect. The Gospel of the Nazarenes was not composed until some years after the death of Jesus, and the latter, being then esteemed a prophet, it is not sur-

prising that in those times fictitious sayings and doings were ascribed to him. It should, however, be remembered that miracles were then believed to be possible, either by magic, the agency of Satan, or the power of God. Why, then, should not Jesus be credited with the power to work them?

Assuming the Epistle to the Galatians to be authentic, Paul refers in it to James, John, and Cephas, who, he says, were "reputed to be pillars" of the primitive Jewish Church, the president being "James, the Lord's brother." These—whom we may assume to be historical—were, of course, Nazarenes: from which fact it appears evident that these three so-called "apostles" of Jesus were simply elders of the sect—the society having arisen some time before Jesus came to be regarded as a prophet. The other "apostles" named in the Gospels were probably only ordinary members of the sect, of whom nothing was known except the names. As to Peter, it is doubtful whether he was the same person as Cephas (John i. 42); for the Synoptists appear to have never heard of the latter name.

The Nazarenes, being Jews, required their converts to be circumcised and to conform to all the Mosaic ritual—except animal sacrifice. These conditions Paul found to be a stumbling-block to the would-be Gentile converts; he therefore set them aside as unnecessary—making the simple belief in Jesus—whom he exalted into a divine being—the sole condition of salvation. Needless to say, that "apostle" had no authority for so doing: for one of the traditional instructions of Jesus to his disciples was to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; while the last twelve verses in Mark's Gospel—including the command to go to "all the world" and preach salvation by faith only—were a later addition to that Gospel, written long after the time of Paul. The last-named "apostle" was an unscrupulous innovator, and the real founder of Gentile Christianity, which in a short time spread from Asia Minor to Greece, Rome, and Alexandria; but the first sect of Christians, the Nazarenes, who merely regarded Jesus as a prophet, "having remained beyond the reach of the great current which had carried away all the other churches, were treated as heretics" (Renan).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS.

The Biblical critics who admit that the narratives in the Synoptics were drawn from a primitive written Gospel make no attempt to identify the latter Gospel; but it appears that it was the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," used by the Nazarenes. Epiphanius says in his work on Heresies (xxx. 13) that the Ebionites had a Gospel "called the Gospel according to Matthew, not entire and perfectly complete, but falsified and mutilated, which they call the Hebrew Gospel": after which he quotes the opening paragraph—of John baptising in the Jordan, and of the baptism of Jesus.

Again, Jerome, presbyter of Antioch, who lived at the same period, says in his Commentary on Matthew:—

"In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which I lately translated from the Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by very many the original Gospel of Matthew, the man with the withered hand is described as a mason," etc.

This statement is in agreement with the fact that the canonical Matthew (omitting the first two chapters) is considered to be nearer to the primitive Gospel than any of the others, besides containing more Hebraisms. Moreover, the Gospel of the Nazarenes appears to have contained all the three-fold narratives which the Synoptists took from the Common Source, besides several others not found in the canonical Gospels. The statement of Epiphanius that this Gospel was "falsified and mutilated" refers to its not containing the Virgin Birth story, which, as we know, the last-named editor added from an apocryphal source. All the so-called Christian "fathers," from Irenæus downwards, assumed as a matter of course that the canonical Gospels were



written in apostolic times, and were the originals from which all other known Gospels were derived; whereas, as a matter of fact, they were the last written.

ABRACADABRA.

### George Borrow.

1808—1881.

"I claim no place in the world of letters; I am, and will be, alone, as long as I live and after."—LANDOR.

THE small but fierce tribe of Borrowians will be delighted at the news that the city of Norwich has been honoring that bright and particular genius, George Borrow, the scholar-gipsy, who deserves the tribute of the town as much as that other great writer, Sir Thomas Browne.

It was one of fate's little ironies which imposed on the pagan George Borrow the function of colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The story of Borrow's introduction to the officials of the Society is characteristic. Hearing of the possibility of work for the Society, the young man tramped from Norwich to London, walking one hundred and twelve miles in twenty-seven hours, and spending less than sixpence on the way. On arrival, he told the surprised secretary that he could translate Manchu, and this was his first work for the Society. Borrow went to St. Petersburg, and, facing great difficulties, translated the New Testament into the Manchu-Tartar dialect. There was nothing he was not ready to do, even to setting up type, teaching wooden-headed compositors, buying paper, and hustling Russian officials. Later, he went to Spain on behalf of the Society, and the adventurous career he led in the Peninsula while hawking Bibles in this most bigoted of Catholic countries forms the groundwork of one of the most vivacious travel-books ever written, *The Bible in Spain*. "*Gil Blas*, with a touch of Bunyan," the volume has been called wittily. For the author pays small attention to the evangelical business of the Society that dispatched him, and he writes of thieves, murderers, gipsies, bandits, prisons, wars, and kindred subjects, with all the gusto of a Burton. Addressed to the narrow-minded Victorian religious public, it was a wonderfully stimulating drink to unaccustomed palates. It was the time when strict evangelical parents forbade secular books on Sunday, and Mr. Augustine Birrell has told us how, as a boy, he rejoiced in the old pagan's writings, the innocent title of which had passed the unsuspecting critics on the hearth.

As may be imagined, the correspondence between Borrow and the Bible Society officials is delicious reading. For Borrow worshiped at many shrines from that of Christ to that of Tom Sayers. We see the old Adam peeping out in the evangelist, as Dr. Jekyll changed into Mr. Hyde, and the growing distrust of the authorities, who saw their official boxing the compass, and forgetting the narrow channel which they wished him to pursue. At times, Borrow quite forgot the theological jargon of Earlstreet, and it all ended in his being recalled and being given no further employment.

This strange agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society commenced his literary career in London by writing the *Newgate Calendar*, which bears so marked a resemblance to the earlier books of the Holy Scriptures sold by the Society. He was ever a fighter, even when his Flaming Tinman days were over, and his animosities extended from popes to parsons. When a Canon of St. Paul's ventured to criticise *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow sent a saucy note to his publishers, calmly stating that the ecclesiastic was a jackass, and that he would be doing better by minding his own business in his ugly cathedral.

Borrow had a real passion for adventure, and a love of language. Whilst an articulated clerk to a solicitor at Norwich, he translated a volume of ballads from the Danish. Later, at St. Petersburg, he published his *Targum: Translations from Thirty*

*Languages and Dialects*. In the course of his travels through France, Germany, Russia, and Eastern Europe he learnt languages as he went. With the exceptions of Sir Richard Burton and Prince Lucien Bonaparte, he was probably the most enthusiastic linguist who ever lived. During a few years of travelling activity he translated portions of the Bible into many languages and dialects, he produced a Turkish version of *Bluebeard*, and rendered Danish, Russian, and Welsh tales in English.

For the last forty years of his life he lived on "emotions remembered in tranquillity," passing his existence between Oulton Broad, Norfolk, and London. *Lavengro*, *The Romany Rye*, *Wild Wales*, were all written amid the peaceful Broads, and his tranquillity was only broken by fierce paper warfare with publishers, critics, and reformers, who aroused the old lion's wrath. Borrow was always furious at the want of public appreciation; but his fame has grown since he died at Oulton, and Norwich has done the right thing in purchasing Borrow's house.

Nature mixed George Borrow in a moment of magnificence. Only those who have realised for themselves the inadequacy of a pen when brought in contact with the rich and tumultuous glow of life can appreciate to the full the wonder of his achievement; the imagination, the insight, which are required to bring before us those unforgettable incidents of human life. Besides all these gifts, he possessed in a great degree the sense of the significance of life apart from any personal liking or disliking, of the beauty and continuity of the great stream. A little aloof, a little inscrutable he will ever remain, but magnificent because of his greatness as an artist. Borrow was impatient of the narrow standards of civilisation and society, and loved the men and women of the wayside. He recognised in these vagrants the true sons and daughters of "The Great Mother who mixes all our bloods." Listen to his exquisitely phrased Pagan glorification of existence: "Life is sweet, brother. There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, brother—all sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?"

MIMNERMUS.

### Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Brown Virgin of Mexico.

WITHIN half-an-hour's ride of the City of Mexico, in a pretty and romantic situation on the top of a hill, may be found a fine cathedral, of Spanish design, which is the headquarters of the Brown Virgin of Mexico, better known to the faithful as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

We are informed by sacred history that for many centuries it has been the custom of the Mother of God to appear occasionally in Catholic countries for the edification of the pious, and it would have been a sad omission on her part to have neglected to put in an appearance in such a devout country as Mexico was in the time of the Spaniards.

It is reported that in the year 1531 the Blessed Virgin appeared to a poor "peon" named Juan Diego on the exact site where the present cathedral now stands. Astonished at so wonderful a revelation and so great an honor, the poor Indian, after saying a prayer and devoutly crossing himself, rushed breathless to the nearest church and informed the clergy of the miracle he had witnessed. Like the unbelieving disciple, they were not readily convinced, and sent him back again for further investigation. This time the Virgin not only favored him with an "encore," but caused a beautiful rose-bush to spring out of the sand, which, in ordinary circumstances, would have been a most unsuitable place for it to grow.

This confirmation settled the matter in the mind of Don Juan. He returned to the church in holy fear, and, whilst explaining his second adventure to the astonished priests, they suddenly observed in the folds of his "Ayatl" (a rough cloth used by poor Indians to carry their goods or cover them on a journey) a beautiful picture of Our Lady surrounded by celestial objects.

The final corroboration put matters entirely beyond doubt. A church was soon built on the site, and solemnly dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Unfortunately, like love, the course of true religion does not always run smooth.



Many difficulties had to be contended with from the start. Our Lady, like some others of less exalted position, had a rival. The proud and haughty Castilian who came over with the conquerors, Nuestra Senora de Remedios (Our Lady of Help), was not at all inclined to give place to her tawny rival. The Spaniards patriotically stuck to their own Queen of Heaven, and looked down on the Queen of the Dagoes as they would have done on a daughter of Moctezuma. For many long years this royal rivalry existed, but the time came at last when the Mexicans rose in revolt. Goaded by the cruelty of the Spaniards, they threw off the hated yoke, and in the year 1810 established their independence. After ridding themselves of their oppressors, they lost no time in packing off Our Lady of Help, and sending her after them. With solemn ceremonies they excommunicated her, and banished her for ever from the Republic. The Mexican Senora then reigned in peace, and rewarded her patrons with innumerable miraculous cures.

Every year pious Indians come from distant villages on a pilgrimage to the shrine of their saint and, after painfully crawling up a long flight of steps on their bare knees, present their humble offerings to their protectress.

The walls of the little chapel at the back of the cathedral are covered with testimonials to the power of the Virgin; scores of pictures are hung round, showing the blind restored to sight, cripples throwing away their crutches, and the sick jumping from their beds. Names, date, and place are given, and everything is most convincing to those who believe. But to the sceptic there is a certain amount of pathos in it all; it seems sad to reflect how degraded human understanding may become through the influence of superstition—to see the poor untutored Indian put his trust in such sorry means, and pin his simple faith to the priests' decoy duck.

S. SODDY.

Correspondence.

FLYING FISH AND PHARAOH'S WHEEL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The article by "Sibley" in the *Freethinker* of July 13 on "Paganism and Christianity" is full of interest, and the part in which he refers to relics reminds me of the story about the orthodox old Scotswoman whose son became a sailor. On his return after a long absence, she plied him with questions about the various things he had seen in different parts of the world. At length he told her that on several occasions he had seen "fleein' fish." "Noo, noo Jock," said the old lady with a knowing smile, "dinna try tae tak aff yer auld mither. I've heard afore o' the lees you sailor chields come hame wi', but ye'll no catch me." Jock smilingly let this pass, and further on in the course of their conversation he told about his experiences coming through the Red Sea. The old lady's features at once assumed a look of reverent awe when that Scriptural name was mentioned, and she waited with eager interest for all her son had to tell. "An' then, mither," he remarked, "just as we got about the middle we drappit the anchor, and when we hauled it up to start again we found we had fished up one of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot." "Ay, laddie," said the old lady in a subdued voice, "Dae tell me that? What positive proof o' the truth o' the guid auld Book. I wish I had been there tae see't!"

SIMPLE SANDY.

God and Immortality.

SELECTED BY E. B.

The hope of a future state is that which our wise men do promise, but do not prove.—*Seneca*.

I hope to go hence to good men, but of that I am not very confident. Nor does it become any wise man to be positive that so it will be. I must now die, and you shall live, but which of us is in the better state, the living, or the dead, only God knows.—*Socrates on his dying bed*.

Neither soul nor body has any more sense after death than before it was born.—*Pliny*.

I can deliver nothing as fixed and certain regarding a future life, but only something as probable, and as having some likelihood of truth. Which of the sentiments of the various philosophers is true, some god must tell us; which is most like to truth is a great question.—*Cicero*.

If there are gods they certainly pay no attention to the affairs of men.—*Quintus Ennius*.

Whence and why is evil, and whence and how is man, and whence is God?—*Tertullian*.

The immortality of the soul is rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed in the Bible.—*Archbishop Tillotson*.

If God made man in his own image, man has certainly returned the compliment.—*Fontenelle*.

If God did not exist, it certainly would have been necessary to invent him.—*Voltaire*.

Science has conducted God to its frontiers, and thanked him for his provisional services.—*Caro*.

God does nothing.—*Thomas Carlyle*.

The only excuse for God is that he does not exist.—*Stendhal*.

If there be a presiding intelligence in the universe it certainly suggests "some blackguardly larrikin kicking his heels in the clouds, not perhaps bent on mischief, but indifferent to the fact that he has caused it."—*W. H. Mallock*.

Those are the elect of God, his best and most useful servants who teach *science* and *wisdom*. They are the luminaries and legislators of the world which, without their help, would fall back into ignorance and barbarism.—*Al Mamoun, Arabian Philosopher*.

Gods are even more changeable than men. In the course of a century a god will become almost unrecognisable. The God of the Christian has changed more than any other.—*Anatole France*.

An honest God is the noblest work of man.—*Ingersoll*.

The truth is that no human being knows anything of what is beyond the grave. If nothing is known, then it is not honest for anyone to pretend that he does know. If nothing is known, then we can only hope for the good.—*Ingersoll*.

While one does not yet know what life is, how should we know what death is?.....While you cannot serve man how can you serve spirits?—*Confucius*.

Death is not so great a matter when you don't make it the gate to a heaven or to a hell.—*E. Temple Thurston*.

What went before, and what will follow me, I regard as two impenetrable curtains, which hang down at the two extremities of human life, and which no man has drawn aside.—*Thomas Carlyle*.

An Epitaph.

HERE lies Jehovah, once the God Supreme,  
Now but the memory of an empty dream.  
The fell disease that brought his end about  
Is quickly told,—Jehovah was found out.

His life was long. His fortunes rose and fell  
Like those of men. At first he did but dwell  
Among the household Gods of some wild clan,  
Perhaps, at first, the ghost of their head man.  
Successful battles fame and honor brought  
To him the victors worshiped. Men were taught  
By cunning priests his friendship to procure,  
And by rich gifts their welfare to ensure.

'Twas said that Jupiter his place had gained  
By conquering Saturn, who before had reigned.  
A paltry boast, beside the ample claim  
With which Jehovah's priests adorned his fame.  
The God who once, with other oddments, rode  
Inside a box, or in a tent abode,  
Who once to win a paltry fight had failed,  
Creator of the Universe was hailed.

When, 'neath Imperial Rome's corrupted sway,  
The classic nations fell into decay,  
And learning withered till it almost died,  
The Jew God's worship triumphed far and wide.

Through ten long centuries of darkest night,  
All Europe knew and feared Jehovah's might.  
On God was centred every heart and mind,  
To every other subject men were blind.

But when the dawn of science lit the earth  
And ushered in the cultured world's re-birth,  
The knell of ghosts and Gods was surely rung,  
Whose fate on ignorance and darkness hung.

God died not suddenly, but pined away,  
His priests with every art prolonged his stay.  
They strove with all their heart and soul and might  
To stop the progress of the fatal light.

No deed too vile, no lie too gross they found  
To keep their useful phantom safe and sound,  
But all their foul conspiracy was vain.  
Jehovah's dead, and ne'er will rise again.

As "essence immanent" Jehovah's ghost  
Still haunts his former strongholds, and a host  
Of priests exploit his shadow for their bread,  
Who know full well the Bible God is dead.

HERBERT W. THURLOW.



## 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, Mr. Darby, a Lecture; 6.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, Mr. Gallagher, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Pankhurst, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Burke, "The Empire of Man"; 7.30, F. Schaller, "Science v. the Bible."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Debate, H. Donovan and W. Davidson, "The Riddle of the Universe." Finsbury Park: 6.30, J. Hecht, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, a Lecture.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, E. Burke, a Lecture.

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, G. Glaister, "The Reformation."

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