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*Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts.*

—LONGFELLOW.

The Use of Missionaries.

It is naturally denied by the more zealous Christians that the missionaries are at the bottom of any of the troubles in China or in other parts of the East. The secretary of the Chinese Legation in London said that they were; indeed, he declared that there would be no peace, and no prospect of peace, until the missionaries were recalled. But the friends of the missionaries say that this is all nonsense. The Protestants admit, however, that the Catholic missionaries are an obtrusive and intriguing lot, and that the Chinese have at least *some* reason for hating them and trying to clear them out of the Celestial Empire. On the other hand, the Catholics broadly hint that all would go well if the Protestant missionaries would go back to Europe and take with them their absurd and narrow dogmatism. For our part, we believe both sides; that is, we believe what the Protestants say of the Catholics, and what the Catholics say of the Protestants. Probably they know each other if they do not know themselves; and, as lookers-on often see most of the game, it is quite possible that we see through both parties in this interesting dispute.

The Chinese do not appear to draw a distinction in favor of either set of Christian soul-savers. They love them so that they dote upon their very absence. Nevertheless, it must be allowed that there was no particular opposition to the missionaries when they first visited China. The Jesuits were almost welcomed, and they seem to have taken care that their welcome was not worn out too rapidly. They taught the Chinese a good deal of useful knowledge, translated Euclid into their language, gave them lessons in astronomy, and put them up to many wrinkles in the mechanical arts. Christianity was insinuated as they went along. But the Dominicans appeared upon the scene and quarreled with the Jesuits; and then the Protestants came and quarreled with both—and with each other; and the Chinese began to wish them all to the devil. But unfortunately they stayed there and played the devil with the Chinese.

What is the object of these missionaries? In the first place, they are getting a living, and some of them a good one. It is a mistake to suppose that they are all burning with disinterested zeal. For the most part the missionary societies are well-organised agencies for diminishing the pressure of the unemployed in the clerical labor market at home. Millions of souls still need saving here, but there are too many gentlemen engaged already in the business, and it is found advisable to send off a number of them every year to save souls in heathen countries. Ostensibly, of course, their object is to save the souls of the said heathen. To save them from what? The only possible answer is that the heathen are going in streams to hell, and that it is an act of infinite charity to arrest their headlong flight to everlasting perdition. Well, if the missionaries really believe that, and are actuated

by such a tender motive, they are worthy of our admiration from a moral point of view, whatever we may think of their intelligence. But they betray at least the mixture of their motives when they clamor for protection. They proclaim themselves as a species of traders. Missionaries should go on their own responsibilities, take their own risks, and accept martyrdom, if they meet it, as the crown of their enterprise. But when they claim to be protected as citizens of the countries they have left, and call for naval and military assistance in the extremities they have deliberately occasioned, they range themselves with the other commercial classes who seek openings in foreign lands. Moreover, they exhibit an additional hypocrisy; for Jesus Christ told his apostles that they should be delighted when they were persecuted for his sake, and that a great reward was awaiting them in heaven. It is, therefore, a gross insincerity on their part to fly from persecution, often with indecent haste, and seek shelter under the Union Jack. They say that Christ is their captain, but when their persons are in danger they trust to Admiral This and General That.

Even if the missionaries were perfectly sincere and absolutely disinterested, we might still ask them whether their game is worth the candle. China contains more than four hundred millions of inhabitants. Some fifteen millions of these die every year. Now, it is doubtful if the missionaries succeed in converting one thousand per annum. Would it not be just as well to let such a few die in their national faith, and make themselves as comfortable as possible in the other world with their own countrymen? It seems to be overlooked that converted Chinamen are expected to live in the other world with Europeans, and that a great many Celestials do not regard the prospect as alluring.

Some time ago the Rev. Dr. Clifford, the famous, energetic Baptist, delivered a very fiery speech on the subject of Missions to China. He more than admitted the "greed" of the Catholic missionaries for "political power," but he denied that "our Protestant messengers have created troubles." Anyhow, he said, they mean to continue their work. Their object is to "carry to men redemption and renewal, and peace and joy, the new life that is in Christ," and "nothing will hold them back." This, however, is untrue. Something *does* hold them back. Protestant missionaries have often fled for safety to places guarded by British and other European troops. They held back until they felt they could preach Christ again with the prospect of regular meals and sound sleep.

Dr. Clifford affirmed that "the undecaying strength of missions is the perpetual miracle of conversion." Miracle, indeed! Why, if conversion were a matter of miracle the whole world ought to have been converted long ago. Omnipotence should not be as slow as a missionary society. There are really no degrees in the miraculous; to God one act must be as simple as another, and the conversion of millions as easy as the conversion of units. The very paucity of converts is a proof of the absence of supernatural agency. Indeed, the phenomenon is rather surprising even on purely natural grounds. Considering the number of missionaries, their advantage of education, the money spent upon them, and the prestige they enjoy in belonging to the conquering races of Europe; con-

sidering also the curious worldly temptations so frequently offered to the lower classes of heathen; it is quite astonishing that so few are "brought to Christ." How many *real* converts there are it is hard to calculate, but the *nominal* converts can be counted, and the total is a satire on Christian pretensions.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Force.—II.

(Concluded from p. 466.)

WHY should religion be the one topic that defies tolerance and courteous controversy? In addition to the replies already given it is said that religious persecution is due to an intense conviction of the value of right religious belief. They are convinced that "the issue of the controversy is of the most momentous importance. Man's highest moral and spiritual welfare hinge upon the acceptance or rejection of the teaching." This strikes one as no more than a roundabout way of repeating the question. Theologians quarrel violently, Christians persecute bitterly, because they believe their teachings to be of paramount importance. In other words, because they are Christians. We knew this much at the start; what we want to know is, why it should be so? Why should Christians have got into a chronic state of mind which results in the belief that their opinions on religion are of so much greater importance than their opinions on other subjects as to warrant treating those who differ from them as either criminals or lunatics? Why should disbelief in religion call forth an exhibition of *moral* repugnance? This is not the case elsewhere; why should it be so here?

So far as tradition counts in the affairs of men everything is on the side of the Christian persecutor. The earliest appearance of groups of Christians is as rival sects fighting over fantastic points of doctrinal differences, and quarrelling with a ferocity that caused the tolerant Pagans to open their eyes in astonishment. Church councils as often as not ended in a fight; the election of a new Pope left the Church in which the succession was decided littered with corpses. In the election of Pope Damasus, according to Dean Milman, there were a hundred and thirty-four dead bodies left when the election was concluded. Over and over again, Roman Emperors had to stop the murderous quarrels of the sects. No other disputes can show the same barbarous scenes as those between Arians and Athanasians, Catholics and Protestants, Lutherans and Anabaptists. Luther, in the very act of pleading for tolerance, did not ask it "for such as deny the common principles of the Christian religion." The intolerance of Calvin has become a byword, and his apology for the murder of Servetus, *A Defence of the Orthodox*, bore on the title-page the sentence, "In which it is proved that heretics may be rightly coerced with the sword." His follower, Knox, illustrated the same principle in declaring that "provoking the people ought not to be exempt from the punishment of death." All over the Christian world imprisonment or death were the common punishments for heresy. Even in America, a country, so to speak, in which Christianity made a fresh start, Fiske says:—

"Anyone who should dare to speculate too freely about the nature of Christ, or the philosophy of the plan of salvation, or to express a doubt as to the plenary inspiration of every word between the two covers of the Bible, was subject to fine and imprisonment. The tithing man still arrested Sabbath breakers, and shut them up in the town cage in the market place; he stopped all unnecessary riding or driving on Sunday, and haled people off to the meeting-house whether they would or no."

Force in matters of faith is the one principle to which every Christian sect has yielded undeviating obedience, given the conditions for exercising it.

Persecution in matters of religion does not manifest itself as something sporadic, due to an outburst of human ferocity in a special direction; it is, indeed,

inherent in the nature of religious belief. The reason for this is to be found in the character of the ideas that govern respectively religious belief and social affairs. In all matters of social life, so soon as man emerges from the overpowering mass of superstitions that clouds primitive life, discussion plays a part. Just in proportion as fighting, hunting, or the various affairs of a tribe are liberated from superstitious beliefs, they become affairs that are amenable to knowledge, and their course to be decided on a basis of human experience and knowledge. No matter how valuable one person might believe his opinion to be, there exists not alone the recognition of the existence of other opinions, but that of their legitimacy and right of expression. The result is, that on the social side there is an element of toleration from the outset. The appeal is to what men know, to their judgment, a general recognition that the final course is to be decided by the weight of evidence and a balancing of opinion. And all this involves an appeal to man's reason instead of to his prejudices; to his sense of comradeship rather than to feelings of hostility.

With the religious idea the influence exerted is entirely in the other direction. Here all difference of opinion is discouraged, and this for one very strong reason. In purely social matters man is master of his fate in proportion to his knowledge of the forces with which he is dealing. If he blunders he pays the penalty; he knows it is due to his want of knowledge; and, generally speaking, he profits by his failure. In religion he is not master, but slave. It is not what he sees to be right, but what the gods declare is right. No purely social consideration could suggest the punishment of death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath, stoning to death for worshipping other gods, or make offences of a hundred and one other doctrinal lapses. The only reason for these things is that the gods have so decreed. Their decrees admit of no question, there is no room for asking why, there is simply a punishment for disobedience. Religion cannot be made a subject for discussion; there is nothing to discuss. It is only a question of discovering what the gods desire. And their will does not come under the control of human reason.

There is still another reason for the inherent persecuting spirit of religion. This lies in the fact of what Sir Henry Maine declared to be a cardinal feature of all primitive society, namely, a strong sense of corporate responsibility. The gods are not only quick to punish, they punish indiscriminately. If one member of the tribe offends the whole may suffer. In the story of Jonah, God is about to drown all the sailors because he is offended with one person, and this fairly represents savage notions on that point. The unbeliever is thus a social danger. His suppression becomes an act of social necessity. This idea, although primitive in point of origin, is modern in so far as it still exists with a large number of religionists. Thousands still believe that national calamities are judgments upon us for desecration of the Sabbath, or similar religious offences. It is this element that gives to religious persecution the character of a social or moral duty, as well as a religious obligation. It also marks religion as something that must be protected from discussion, and so fenced in from the more humanising influence of social life.

It is not true, then, that religious persecution owes its existence and perpetuation to either the inherent intolerance of human nature or to the incursion into the religious domain of the secular power of the community. Exactly the reverse of this is the truth. So far as the secular power has affected religion, it has influenced it for good. When a government has wished to persecute, whether it was a Mohammedan or a Christian government, it has nearly always invoked religious prejudice as its principal ally. The secular power of Spain would never have committed suicide by expelling Mohammedans and Jews, France would never have impoverished itself by expelling the Huguenots, had it not been for the power of religion. In the whole

history of the world one may challenge the production of a case in which the religious influence in the State has made for greater tolerance and a decrease in persecution. All available instances are in the other direction. Man has humanised his gods; society has civilised the creeds; the whole impulse to toleration has come from the social and secular side of life. To-day toleration is most complete in precisely those civilised States wherein religion has the smallest share in a conscious direction of the social forces.

As an apology for religious intolerance, it is sometimes pointed out that it invokes intense earnestness. But this is, if anything, an aggravation of the evil. No doubt the men of the Spanish Inquisition were earnest men. Calvin was the embodiment of earnestness. Men do not fight and imprison and kill unless they are in earnest. But it really does not compensate if, after breaking a man's head because he differs with you on the question of the Trinity, you plead that you feel very earnestly on the subject. Your victim might reply that with less earnestness and more judgment you would make a much better companion. A Christian may honestly believe that a Freethinker is an immoral person, or that a rejection of religion spells social disaster, and feel that it is his duty to suppress Freethought at any cost. All this may be admitted; but the essential point is not whether he believes these things or not—the point is that he has no right to believe them; that if he were guided by social considerations, he would not believe them; and that he only believes them because his judgment is decided by purely religious considerations. We do not act thus in science or art or literature or politics; we only do so where religion is in question, because it is fundamentally a non-social, non-moral force. Earnestness with judgment is a good thing; but earnestness without judgment, without those controlling elements that operate in secular affairs, is one of the most dangerous forces that can be let loose on society.

Savagery and persecution does not, then, result from a misunderstanding of Christianity. It is inherent in Christianity, as it is inherent in all religion. So long as people believe that salvation hereafter is determined by right belief, so long we retain the germ from which has developed persecution in the past, and from which persecution springs in the present. The brutalities of Balkan Christians occur, truly, because a state of war exists; but it is because the feelings excited by war are sharpened by religious prejudice that this war has provided us with some of the most horrible butcheries of modern times. The war is being waged by people who are habituated to persecution by religious hatred, who have behind them the tradition that religious differences rob a man of social rights, and dispenses with the necessity for courteous or considered treatment. Every religion carries this tradition with it, and a nation or a people does not outgrow a tradition in a single generation. And behind this tradition of hatred based on religious differences lies one of the oldest and deepest of social customs. Something has been done to weaken its force. The growth of science, the rationalising of one institution after another—in a word, the gradual secularisation of life—is slowly creating more rational, and therefore more tolerant, relations between people. But religion is still with us; and so long as it remains it will never fail to make its most secure appeals to passions of which the best amongst us are heartily ashamed.

C. COHEN.

Criticism Caricatured.

THE last chapter in Dr. T. R. Glover's book, *The Christian Tradition and Its Verification*, is entitled "The Criticism of Jesus"; but the chapter is remarkable, not for any criticism of Jesus, but for the entire absence of it. To the author, the reputed

founder of Christianity is immeasurably above criticism. Throughout its history, in all its varied experiences, the Church has carried within its bosom a direct challenge to the critic. In a word, the critic is rigidly excluded. Within the Church everything depends upon Christ:—

"In every phase of its life the one thing that decisively differentiates its experience from that of the world around is its relation to him. He is the historical source of the whole movement; he is the moving factor still;—such, rightly or wrongly, is the fixed belief of the Christian Church, after a great deal of experiment, both in trying to minimise the place he must hold, and in trying to avail itself of what it calls 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'" (pp. 193-4).

Consequently, the moment the critic turns up he is denounced as one incapable of doing justice to Christ because he does not understand him. If he did understand him his attitude to him would be identical with that of the Church. In other words, only a Christian is competent to judge a Christian. Or, as Dr. Glover puts it, "our business is to realise before we judge; and however odd the fundamental conviction of others may sound to us, we have to see for ourselves what they really mean, and what they are trying to express—not least when this conviction is strongly held by a community the thoughts and lives of whose members have so profoundly affected human history." We have no hesitation in characterising this account of the essential qualifications of a critic as wholly erroneous and irrational, although we are persuaded that there are critics of Christianity not a few who comply with the conditions laid down by Dr. Glover. They know by a past experience of their own "what it is that drives the Church back on to him [Christ] in every age and in every situation," and while thus knowing it they are bold enough to affirm that the Church has always been wrong.

It is true that "we are confronted by the historical Christian Church, and cannot get away from it, however much some of us may wish to be rid of it;" but, surely, the existence of the Church proves nothing. Personally, we have succeeded in cutting ourselves off from what our author calls "the deepest force mankind has known," because we have discovered that Christianity is not, nor has ever done, what its apologists claim on its behalf. Furthermore, we have found out that the alleged dependence of this religion on an historical Jesus is unsusceptible of verification. In his treatment of this point, Dr. Glover resorts to blind dogmatism because the facts are all against him. He says:—

"If the ordinary canons of history, used in every other case, hold good in this case, Jesus is undoubtedly an historical person. If he is not an historical person, the only alternative is, that there is no such thing as history at all—it is delirium, nothing else; and a rational being would be better employed in the collection of snuff-boxes. And if history is impossible, so is all other knowledge" (p. 198).

In our judgment, this is a piece of delirious reasoning, "nothing else; and a rational being would be better employed in the collection of snuff-boxes." It is simply because we *do* employ the ordinary canons of history in the case of the Gospel Jesus that we pronounce him an unhistorical character. You cannot get away from the fact that the Gospel Jesus is an unnatural, chimerical being, with a human mother and a Divine father. He is supernaturally born, leads a life that teems with supernatural events, dies a supernatural death, and then undergoes or accomplishes a supernatural resurrection. Without a doubt, if you apply the ordinary canons of history to the study of such a being, you will be bound to regard him as either a mythical or largely legendary character. The ordinary canons of history positively declare that such a being never existed.

According to Dr. Glover, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Savior of the world. Through the Church, "he has forced himself upon the world—quite quietly." As a matter of fact, he has not forced himself upon the world, whether quite quietly or otherwise, but only on a small fraction of

it, and even upon this most superficially, as every clergyman knows very well; and as history testifies, this forcing meant making thousands upon thousands of converts at the point of the sword, as Dr. Glover cannot but be aware. Is he proud of the record of the Englishman, St. Boniface, through whom Christ forced himself upon Germany? It was at the head of armed troops that that representative of the meek and lowly Jesus made converts. But that is only by the way, our present concern being with the personality of Christ as the alleged head of the Church. Our author informs us that we are made or unmade by our judgments upon him. That is to say, we disbelieve in and reject him to our own undoing. This is only another way of saying that Christ is above criticism. "He is the central figure in all human history," says Dr. Glover, "and on our attitude to the centre all depends for us":—

"On our judgment rests in great measure our use and place in society—as we ignore or admire, turn away or follow, hate or love, him who has meant and means most for all mankind" (p. 208).

Those are the words of a special pleader, for whom the subject of Christ is not an open question. And yet, strangely and inconsistently enough, our author says that "we have to remind ourselves again and again that we have to touch the fact independently of preconception, to know it from within, and to know it in its full significance and its true perspective." No true critic could indulge in such twaddle as that. To say that we must love Christ before we can understand him is to beg the question, because before we can rationally love him we must find out by means of criticism whether or not he is worthy of our affection. In order to touch the so-called fact of Christ "independently of preconception" we must touch it absolutely unaffected by love or hate, admiration or contempt. Impartial criticism of the Gospels is making it quite impossible for ever-growing numbers of people to accept and love Christ, or to regard him in any other light than that in which they regard all the Pagan Christs. This is what Dr. Glover contemptuously calls judging him "from the Stoic and Epicurean standpoint after all." We prefer to characterise it as judging him from the standpoint of reason and common sense. Dr. Glover says:—

"The general teaching of the Gospel is intelligible and simple, and it is amazing how, if you let people alone with the Gospels, they will understand Jesus Christ, if they are simple enough and true enough" (p. 212).

We maintain that the Gospel of salvation by faith in the efficacy of the blood of the Cross is neither intelligible nor simple, and that in proportion as the people become intelligent they spurn it as at once immoral and degrading. Dr. Glover asserts that "sympathy is the highest mode of intelligence," and we agree if it be sympathy with truth and virtue; but sympathy with error and falsehood and superstition is, surely, the highest or lowest mode of unintelligence. We cannot possibly have sympathy with the Gospel Jesus, because we do not believe that he ever lived. We neither love nor hate the Christ of the Churches, because we look upon him as nothing but a creation of the theological imagination. Of course, in Dr. Glover's opinion, this is the criticism of the "outsider" which "is everywhere recognised as worthless." We hold, on the contrary, that the criticism of the "outsider" alone is worth anything, because the "insider" is too prejudiced, too infatuated, too blinded by fanaticism to play the part of a critic at all. Dr. Glover himself is not in any legitimate sense a critic. As an "outsider" he does criticise Buddhism and Mohammedanism; and even as an "outsider" his criticism of these is not reliable, because it is biased by the fact that he is a Christian "insider." The only fair critic is he who stands outside all religions alike, for he holds a brief only for truth.

Dr. Glover makes use of an exceedingly thread-worn fallacy which has done service for countless generations.

"Is a critic of Jesus to be trusted who has no essential sympathy with religion; who does not see how native it is to man, like art and music; whose instincts for religion have become atrophied? Is he not, rather, like a color-blind person, who has not studied pictures, let loose in a picture gallery? What can he say without giving himself away?"

We would be genuinely sorry for a color-blind person let loose in a picture gallery, for he would be a truly pitiable object; but his case is not in the least parallel to that of an outsider criticising Christ and Christianity. When a man is outside all religions he is precisely where all others would be were it not for persistent religious teaching and training during childhood and youth. Religion is not native to man, else all men would be religious. Its origin has been traced down to ignorance and fear, to the "primal stupidity"; and it is as true to-day as ever that unless a child can be induced to take to it in its teens it will never have anything to do with it at all. The other day we had the pleasure of meeting three bright and intelligent young people, the youngest of whom is fifteen, who are free from every vestige of religion, because it was not taught to them in their younger years; and what they are all young people would be in the absence of religious instruction in home and school. No, religion is not native to man, nor do even the divines believe, at bottom, that it is, for if they did they would not so vigorously oppose the adoption of the secular system of education in Government-supported schools. The religious outsider is, therefore, the only natural man, the only man who has a right to be a critic of religion, because he is the only man who has an open mind when its claims are set before him.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XII.

(Continued from p. 469.)

"Our missionaries go forth to earn the crown of martyrdom. But if they gain it their societies demand vengeance in blood and coin from the murderers. The Gospel of Love becomes the Doctrine of Revenge. 'Forgive your enemies!' O ye saintly missionaries who are so shocked at the ungodly lives of your sinful fellow-countrymen in foreign lands, will you not practise what you preach? Think of the divine precept of the Master you profess to serve and pardon the blind rage of the ignorant heathen!"—CAPTAIN GORDON CAMERON, *The Land of the Boxers*, p. 291.

"If I were a missionary I do not see why I should object to persecution. A soldier takes his wounds, or his possible death, as part of his day's work. Even in the nondescript capacity of war correspondent, I had to go through three diseases which are incidental to campaigns, and be twice wounded. And if the soldier takes his killing as kindly as may be, I do not see why the missionary should not do so. Or, if he is not prepared to do so, I do not think he is worthy of the high calling he has adopted, for inconceivably higher is the vocation of the missionary to that of any soldier. I do not understand this muddling of things. There have been more helpless Chinese laborers killed in North America alone than there have been Europeans killed in the whole of China."—GEORGE LYNCH, *The War of Civilisations* (1901), p. 257.

It is not our intention to go into all the cases where missionary aggression has been answered by Chinese retaliation, resulting in bloodshed, riot, and murder, followed by the demands of Christian Governments upon the Chinese for indemnity or the confiscation of territory. To deal with all of them would extend these articles to an interminable length. As Mr. Michie observes:—

"The fruits of this war of the social elements began to be harvested in 1868, as Sir Rutherford Alcock observed; but that was only the beginning of a long series of conflicts which have marked the progress of missionary work in China up to the present day. Riot, outrage, and massacre are its regular landmarks."*

On June 21, 1870, occurred the massacre of Tientsin, by which sixteen French sisters of charity—including an Irish girl, Alice Sullivan—a French Consul, several French subjects, and a Russian merchant and his wife, lost their lives. This was

* *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 238.

entirely owing to the operations of a Catholic orphanage, or institution for obtaining Chinese children in order to Christianise them, entitled the Society of the Sainte-Enfance. Says M. Eugene Simon:—

"In 1870 the Society of the Sainte-Enfance had, after several years without success, collected at Tientsin a certain number of children whose parents had been compelled to abandon them by the floods of the Yellow River. The parents, having recovered from their misfortunes, reclaimed their children, but, as they had been baptised, the Sainte-Enfance refused to give them up, and for greater security dispatched them to another province. The consequence was the massacre not only of the missionaries, but of the French residents at Tientsin and of the Consul."*

The missionaries—who do not believe in returning good for evil—demanded retribution and the punishment of the perpetrators of the massacre. Under pressure, "not without hints of stronger measures," says Mr. Michie, it—

"resulted in the offer of fifteen of the mob to be executed, which being unanimously rejected, the Chinese Government, apparently thinking it was the number that was inadequate, threw in five more, making twenty in all. Sixteen were actually beheaded, the remaining four being saved by the timely arrival of the Russian Minister, who (to his eternal credit) protested against the execution of the men accused of murdering the Russians, because he did not believe in their guilt. Compensation was paid by the Chinese officials to the families of the executed men, which, with the honors done to their dead bodies, showed that they were sacrificed not for crime, but for reasons of State. Of course, pecuniary compensation was made on account of the victims of the massacre, the Chinese Government being never hard to deal with where money is concerned."†

This cost the Chinese Government £160,000. "It is generally believed," says Mr. Davenport, that upon this occasion, as upon others, "the innocent have suffered for the guilty, who were too powerfully protected to be arrested."‡

This punishment of the innocent for the guilty again took place in the province of Shantung. On November 1, 1897, two German Catholic priests, who had thrust themselves into a far-off village, twenty-five miles west of Chi-Ning-Chou, in Western Shantung, were suddenly set upon by a band of twenty men, armed with swords, both priests being killed. It has never, we believe, been satisfactorily settled as to the motives governing this double murder. Says Mr. Arthur Smith:—

"Many theories were advanced to account for the act, such as that it was committed by banditti, who abound in that part of Shantung, that it was done in revenge for a failure to secure employment, or for help given to certain Catholic converts who had a lawsuit, or that it was instigated by the Ta Tao Hui, or 'Great Sword Society,' between which and the Catholics there had even at that time been a bitter feud of some years standing. Whatever the occasion for this outrage may have been, it was certainly not in any way due to official connivance, as the local magistrate happened to be well acquainted with one of the priests, and was much affected at the terrible sight, when he arrived in his capacity of coroner to make an official inspection."§

There is not much doubt that the murder was the result of some aggression on the part of the priests, due to their religion, for "No one else in the compound received any injury," which is not likely to have been the case if the attack had been made by brigands.

Again the pound of flesh was demanded. Two priests were killed on this occasion, and seven innocent men paid the penalty. Upon this point we have the express testimony of Father Stenz, the German Catholic priest, who wrote in 1898:—

"Up to this date, May 10, consequently more than half a year afterwards, not one of the actual murderers has been arrested. Two individuals have been be-

headed. Seven others have been found guilty; for, although innocent, they were tortured until they decided to make false confessions."*

Mr. Davenport, who cites this letter, observes:—

"Our missionaries tell us that persecution and death frequently await the natives whom they have converted; while, in addition, far too large a number of Chinese have been beheaded during the past half century as supposed murderers of foreign missionaries."

And yet they "persist in sending missionaries to China, knowing full well that under the present system either some of them, or of their converts, must from time to time necessarily be killed; and that other Chinese, innocent or guilty, must be beheaded in consequence."†

The Germans, who had long been waiting for a pretext for getting a footing in China, eagerly seized the opportunity. Within two weeks of the murder of the two priests, German ships of war made their appearance and seized Kia-chow, on the coast of Shantung. Says Mr. George Lynch:—

"From conversation with intelligent Chinamen and a few Europeans who have any sympathetic insight into things Chinese, it appears that there is nothing in later years which has made a more profound impression on the Chinese than this seizure by the mailed fist of the Kaiser of those parts of their Holy Land."

The Emperor of China—

"felt it so keenly, and for a time was so overcome, that he spoke of abdication. It broke the heart of the aged Prince Kung; he died in consequence in the year 1898. More than the loss of Formosa or Wei-Hai-Wei was the loss of this section of their Holy Land. It naturally worked on the religious and imaginative feelings of the people, and hallowed the aspirations of the Boxers with the sanctity of a crusade."‡

There is no doubt that this seizure was one of the determining causes of the Boxer rising two years later. The same writer observes:—

"If two Chinese missionaries had been killed in a German village, would the German Emperor have consented to the cession of a Baltic port as compensation for the outrage? And if through force of circumstances he had to consent, would it have been surprising if his subjects had risen indignantly in arms to wrest it back?" (p. 8).

Another great grievance to the Chinese is caused by what is known as the "Extra-territoriality" clause inserted in the treaties forced upon China. Sir Robert Hart remarks:—

"The most striking among the treaty clauses are those which, under the heading 'Extra-territoriality,' withdraw foreigners from Chinese control and place them under their own national officials in China; and, under the heading of 'The Most Favored Nation,' provide that whatever is accorded to new-comers will be enjoyed by their predecessors."§

The missionaries have taken advantage of both these clauses to the very utmost. Mr. Davenport quotes from a Parliamentary paper the letter addressed by a missionary to a naval commander, from which we extract the following:—"Why not bring a few gunboats to Nanking, and order the Viceroy to stop the nonsense in his district with the alternative of a bombardment?" Mr. Davenport continues:—

"The same Blue-book contains a letter from the then Commander-in-Chief to the Admiralty, wherein he states:—

"Having looked in vain for the authority under which English missionaries establish themselves throughout China outside Treaty limits, I applied for information to H.M. Minister at Peking, and the explanation is that no such stipulation was contained in the Treaty of Peking at all, but that the present state of affairs arises from Art. VI. of the Convention between the Emperor of France and China, signed at Peking, October 25, 1860, and that England has to claim for her subjects equal rights under the most-favored nation clause.....It seems altogether unreasonable that the Societies should exercise absolute freedom in going where they please,

* Eug. Simon, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life*, p. 161.

† Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 241.

‡ Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 291.

§ A. H. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, p. 106.

* Davenport, *China from Within*, pp. 291-2.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 201-3.

‡ G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, pp. 7-8.

§ Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, pp. 65-6.

and that their agents should look to H.M. Government for protection.'**

Mr. George Lynch illustrates how these clauses would work out in our own country:—

"If we were endeavoring to evolve a combination of circumstances which would absolutely ensure Christian missionaries being thoroughly hated by the Chinese, we could not have surpassed the present position. Assuming the principle of 'Do as you would be done by,' apply the position of our missionaries in the East to England, for instance. Say that Chinese missionaries had obtained an entry into this country by a clause in a certain treaty, and a clause which, parenthetically it must be remarked, is a forgery. Thus, as a matter of fact, every missionary passport to China at the present day bears upon it the seal of Ananias, the indelible stain of as low a piece of cheating as ever diplomacy can show. When the missionary starts preaching his strange doctrine, one of its immediate effects is that any converts he makes are practically exempt from the laws of the country in which they are living. The converts that a Chinese missionary would make around Covent Garden would *de facto* be outside the jurisdiction of the police magistrate sitting at Bow-street, and for the judgment of any legal dispute, or the punishment of any misconduct, would have the right to have their cases tried before the representative of the Chinese Minister in Portland-place." †

That very high authority upon Chinese history, Mr. Michie, observes:—

"But if toleration be the note of Chinese polity—concerning not religion alone, but almost every matter affecting government—it may be asked, what is it in the propagation of Christianity that excites the hostility of people and rulers? It is that the missionaries present themselves to Chinese view as the instruments of powerful nations bent on the ruin of the empire. They enter the country with a talisman of extra-territoriality; their persons are sacred: the law of the land cannot lay hands on them. That is the first stage. The second is, that they seek to extra-territorialise their converts also, whose battle they fight in the provincial courts and in the rustic communes, and so make it of material advantage to the people to bear the banner of the Cross. Many missionaries are really zealous in the work of alienating the Chinese from their natural allegiance, and of encouraging them to seek the protection of foreign Powers against the native authorities. Thus a revolution of the most vital nature is in progress, and is being pushed on with all the energy which Christian, combined with ecclesiastical and political, zeal can throw into the work. Village is set against village, clan against clan, family against family, and a man's foes in China are too often they of his own household." ‡

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

A PRINTER'S ERROR.

In the *Brighton Herald* of Saturday, July 12, there was, among the list of Church Services for the following day, a notice that, at the French Reformed Church, M. Le Pasteur Joye, B.A., B.D., would preach in the afternoon on "The Pleasures of Immorality." It seems only fitting that Parson Joye should discourse on Pleasures; but that the theme should be that of *Immorality* is testimony to the courage of this conventional cleric. Although the title of the sermon was not correct to a *t*, yet, as printed, it unwittingly conveyed the true character of the type of pleasure discoursed. So, on occasions, good cometh out of even a printer's devilment.—E. B.

SOME MEN.

'Twixt modest man and egotist
The difference is wide:
One thinks he never would be missed
If he to-morrow died.
The other thinks, when he sheds tears,
That every scene is bleak,
And fancies that the whole world hears
When he wears shoes that squeak.

* Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 294.

† G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, p. 255.

‡ Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 233.

Acid Drops.

The doings of the Bulgarian Crusaders continue to form ghastly reading in the daily press, with still not a word from the religious press that held them up to admiration while they were maltreating Mohammedans. A very circumstantial account of Bulgarian massacres has been supplied by Commander Cardale, an officer on the active list of the British Navy. Commander Cardale visited Doxaro immediately after the Bulgarian departure. His story eclipses all that has yet been told concerning these gallant liberators. In one courtyard 120 women and children were massacred. The walls were spattered with blood to a height of six feet from the ground. In one corner he saw huddled together the bodies of six little children. In one room a woman and her child had been crucified. In a stovepipe he found the body of a little girl wedged, who had tried to escape, but who had been killed with bayonet thrusts from below. Throughout the town Commander Cardale personally counted no less than 600 bodies still unburied, mostly of women and children. Bands of dogs were feeding on human remains, and the town presented a loathsome picture of burning and ruined homes and murdered bodies. For cold-blooded barbarity these Christian liberators appear to have eclipsed all records.

"Warfare in the Balkans," a leaderette in the *Catholic Times*, contains the following admission:—

"The Balkan Powers have destroyed for ever the reputation they gained when undertaking the war against Turkey. They appeared to be cordially friendly with one another, and their announcement that their troops were taking the field as crusaders bent on delivering the Christians throughout Turkey in Europe from an intolerable servitude secured for them enthusiastic admiration. Misgivings were laid aside, and it was generally believed that the desire to improve the position of the Christian subjects of the Porte was one of the motives, if not the chief object, for which the campaign was commenced. From the moment when the Turk lay vanquished and the question of dividing the spoil arose, it became evident that their aim was entirely self-aggrandisement. Jealous of the predominance of Bulgaria, the three other Powers—Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro—have turned their arms against her, and in the battles that have just taken place there has been fearful carnage. The belligerents have been betraying a stronger determination to give no quarter than when they were fighting against the Turks, and the devastation is now almost as great in their own territories as that caused in the Sultan's dominions by the invasion."

The Protestant journals in England are less candid. They try to hide the greedy blackguardism of the Christian Powers.

Here is another striking extract from another page of the same number of the *Catholic Times*:—

"History repeats itself in little in the sordid rivalry of the Balkan Allies. In the four great crusades against the Saracen and the Turk lust and avarice and brutal enormities covered with shame and dishonor Christian arms, and made the Crescent shine by comparison with chivalrous lustre. With broken pledges and fratricidal hate the Balkan barbarians 'reel back into the beast,' and make their unhappy lands once more the monage of the world's peace, and themselves the silly puppets of rival Powers who pull the strings. In the history of civilised nations the state of the Balkans to-day is without parallel."

We fancy the editorial knuckles will get well rapped by the Catholic dignitaries. This is plain speaking with a vengeance.

One of the most interesting conversions on record is that of John-street Congregational Church, Aberdeen, into a picture palace. At one time this church was eminently prosperous, with crowded congregations; but, one long, as a House of God it ceased to attract, and now it is about to try its luck as a place of amusement.

Is There a Hell? is the title of a shilling volume just published by Cassell & Co. The question is answered by sixteen Christian divines, who cannot all be speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost, since they differ from each other very considerably. We shall have more to say about this burning question next week. We believe we know quite as much about it as all those sixteen Christian divines put together. Still, we shall let them have a look in, though they wouldn't let us appear in *their* company.

Dr. Farquhar McRae should have known better. He became surety in the sum of £20 for the reappearance of Mrs. Susannah Watson, described as a Christian missionary and the wife of a Presbyterian minister in Canada, who was remanded on a charge of shoplifting. The lady disappeared;

it was thought she had gone for a holiday to Germany. Anyhow, she did not answer the call, and Dr. Rae was asked to find that £20. He pleaded for mercy, and Mr. Plowden let the poor innocent off with a fine of twenty shillings. He will beware of pious grass-widows in future.

The second Plymouth Conference of the Wesleyan Church may recall to some one incident of the first Conference held there in 1896. It was at this Conference that the admission of women as delegates was first raised. To the honor of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes it has to be recorded that he was in favor of their admission. On the other hand, the Rev. W. L. Watkinson said that, if admitted, they would be like poppies among the corn. The obvious meaning of this was that they would be pretty but useless; although a long while afterwards Dr. Watkinson explained that he meant very few would attend. A committee was appointed, we believe, to report on the question, and did so in its favor. This recommendation the Conference summarily threw out. Thus the matter remained until 1910, when the Conference decided that it was quite in accord with Christian principles that women might attend a Methodist Conference as delegates. That is the way Christian progress is achieved. After nearly two thousand years, some Christian discovers a truth that is generally recognised in non-Christian organisations. He brings it forward and there is some years spent in fighting the question before the pressure of public opinion converts other Christians. Then the reform is admitted—or, rather, the injustice is removed—and Christians assume the airs of devil-may-care, up-to-date reformers. Genuine reformers, meanwhile, only smile at these attempts of stage coaches to masquerade as motor-cars.

The Freethought analysis of the social function of religion was unconsciously endorsed in the presidential address to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. The President quoted with approval a writer who said, "The social service that Wesley accomplished was not the least of its triumphs, for Methodism diverted into religious channels a vast volume of social discontent which in France swelled the tide that submerged Church and State in 1789." This is quite true; but the service is not peculiar to Methodism; it is true, in measure, of all forms of religion. Its function has always been to direct social unrest into religious channels, and so help to keep things as they are. That is one reason why the powers that be have always encouraged religion and discouraged unbelief. And it is not without its significance that some of the worst features of the English factory system, and some of the vilest robberies of the land from the English people, succeeded the Methodist revival. As a religious movement, the revolt against the established form of religion was socially retrogressive. But it had other and indirect consequences—consequences that the Dissenters worked hard to suppress. The revolt against the Established Church led indirectly to a questioning of authority. Social causes, amongst others the French Revolution itself, directed attention to social ills and the prospect of remedying them; and many who had commenced with a break from the Established Church went on to break from religion altogether. But Methodism, no more than Episcopalianism, aimed at social reform, and, so far as its influence can be clearly traced on social and political life, it was wholly unhealthy.

The President of the Conference fell back upon the familiar argument that many of the social reformers of the last fifty years were born of Methodist stock and trained in Methodist schools. It would be surprising were it otherwise. John Wesley was born of Church of England stock and trained in Church of England schools, but we have never heard Methodists claim that they owed all that was good in Methodism to Episcopalian influence. Martin Luther was born of Roman Catholic stock and trained in Roman Catholic schools, and, by a parity of reasoning, Roman Catholicism is to be thanked for the Reformation. In a Christian country most people are naturally born of a Christian stock and trained under Christian influence. The significant thing is not that in a Christian country some leaders in social movements come from a Christian stock, but that so large a number of social leaders and workers break definitely from all Christian organisations and reject Christian doctrines. More significant still is the fact that practically every movement of social reform for the last hundred years has begun and developed apart from Christian influence and Christian teaching, and often enough in the teeth of Christian opposition. And it is tolerably certain that even now, when the Churches have been driven into professing an interest in progressive movements, if non-Christians were to withdraw from them the vitality of these movements would be reduced to a very low ebb indeed.

Mr. Dan Crawford, the African missionary, about whom some fuss was made a little while back, and who is returning to Africa because he prefers a non-Christian country, told a Y. M. C. A. meeting the other day that before Henry Drummond died he took back all that he once wrote in *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. We do not know whether there is anything in the statement, and it does not much matter anyway. The book is now dead as a doornail, and was a shoddy performance at best. Its chief significance lies in its having been one of the many works that was to harmonise Christianity with science, and which in due course went the way of its predecessors. After Drummond came Kidd; after Kidd, Balfour; after Balfour, Bergson. All have their day, and in a few years are forgotten. Christians confess their plight by the eagerness with which they greet every attempt, and its failure by the readiness with which they turn to a new one. Meanwhile, science is extending knowledge in all directions, and so providing the material that will one day expel all religion from civilised society.

Peace has been secured in the new Christian Republic of Mount Athos. Six hundred and sixteen of the monks have been arrested and deported to Russia in a transport of the Russian Volunteer Fleet. The fighting among the monks all arose over a quarrel concerning the name of God. Some said that the name, being part of God, was divine. Others denied it. And they proceeded to settle the dispute on the plan of starving those that could be seized and shut up, after considerable fighting. And now there is peace on Mount Athos—thanks to the gunboat.

Professor's Bury's new *History of Freedom of Thought* was reviewed by R. Ellis Roberts in the *Daily News* (July 23). Our contemporary should keep such ignorant insolence out of its pages. The reviewer has the impudence to sneer at Gibbon—the greatest of modern historians—and to call Buckle "the most shallow of writers." Vulgar outrages of this kind are unworthy of a journal that was established by Charles Dickens.

The *Daily Sketch* reports one of the Rev. G. Jackson's dribbles thusly:—

"It is a significant fact that neither Charles Bradlaugh in England nor Colonel Ingersoll in America has had any successor. Again, it is safe to predict they never will. And why? Because our changed methods of interpretation have robbed them of the miserable wares which formed their whole stock in trade."

This pretence of never having heard of the National Secular Society and the *Freethinker*, not to mention Mr. Foots, is simply ridiculous. And what is to be thought of the following?—

"As it was given to the Greek to teach men art, and to the Roman to teach men law, so to the Jew it was given to teach men religion."

Where is the *art* to be found? In many splendid galleries. Where is the *law* to be found? In courts of justice all over Europe. Where is the *religion* to be found. In the blood-soaked Balkans. On the whole, the world might dispense with the *religion*, and even with some of the Jewish gentlemen who keep it alive for our sakes.

"Preaching is vain without the Holy Ghost," exclaimed a preacher the other day. We know nothing about the powers of the Holy Ghost, but we do know that preaching is vain. At best preaching only helps to prolong the night of superstition and retard the advent of the day of enlightenment and freedom. The pulpit has always been and is now a spoke in the wheel of progress. Hence the knowledge that its influence is visibly declining fills our heart with joy. The members of the Black Brigade are very loath to admit that their glory is departing; but even they are obliged reluctantly to acknowledge that they are by no means the deep force they used to be in days gone by.

Little Dombey asked, "What are the wild waves saying?" At this season of the year, owing to the travelling evangelists on the sands, it would appear to be something warm.

Mr. A. C. Benson has just spoken on the subject of immortality. Of course, he had nothing new to say about it. He intimated that he had been converted to a belief in a future life by a "personal experience." The experience was that of a general breakdown through overwork. "The machinery of the brain was out of gear"; but his mind or spirit criticised and was sorry for the poor unfortunate organ of thought. Hence he jumped to the conclusion that his mind or spirit "was the thing untouched by illness or disability"; but had his mind been able to think a little

more logically and deeply he would have learned that paralysis of the brain is accompanied by a total loss of consciousness. Is the mind or spirit then "the thing that is untouched by illness or disability"? Clearly, Mr. Benson was not at his best when the said conversion took place.

Mr. A. C. Benson says that so far as we can follow the records of history and archaeology, the funeral arrangements of humanity testify to the belief in a life after death. This is true, but it is not the kind of truth it is assumed to be. The beliefs of primitive mankind do not testify to a belief after death, but to a continuance in living. This may sound an unnecessarily subtle distinction, but in reality it is a vital one. A child, for instance, finds it a matter of great difficulty to conceive a cessation of life—we doubt if any child could have any adequate conception of this—but it has no difficulty in thinking of people living, because that is a continuance of things as they are. The dead person is, to the child, asleep; and it is a quite acceptable explanation that he or she has gone away somewhere. It is the same with early humanity. Life is a continuous fact; to group the conception of death as a cessation of living, implies no small degree of mental effort. The truth is that the savage does not think of people dying and living again, but as continuing to live. Death as due to the cessation of organic functioning, is the other side of the conception of life as the outcome of organic functioning, and neither conception is present in primitive thought. Thus it is that man has not to grow towards the conception of a continuous life, but towards the scientific conception of death. Modern religious theories on the subject are due to the persistence of the primitive idea, modified by the pressure of more exact knowledge. Mr. Benson in no sense troubles the non-believer by proofs that people have always believed in a continuance of life—he rather supports their position. Even to-day it requires an effort to think of people as really dead. "Could we think that death was death indeed," the main strength of religion would be gone. Here, as elsewhere, it finds its main support in human weakness and incapacity.

At a reception given by a bishop, visitors of one rank were admitted by blue cards, and those of a lower caste by white tickets. A nobleman, who had married an actress, received a blue card, and his wife a white one. When challenged at the entrance, the lady insisted that they could go in together. "What do you take us for," she shouted to the astonished flunkey, "a blooming Seidlitz powder?"

"D. V." (*Deo Volente*, God willing) are initials that have dropped out of public announcements, except in the case of certain ignorant communities that still follow in the dreary old paths of the ages of faith. Nowadays, the public generally does not care a D. whether D is V or not.

As a rendezvous in cold and wet weather the British Museum finds favor with many people. One of the official guides has been telling of parents who send children from homes where there is infection in order to "get them out of the way." Fancy Pharaoh waking up at the call of the "mummy." If he caught the measles, he might think that he was back in the old Bible days, and faced by the ten plagues.

"It is a waste of time," says Professor Josiah Boyce in his new work *The Problem of Christianity*, "to endeavor to prove the usual theses of dogmatic Christology by any collection of accessible historical evidences. Such historical evidences are once for all insufficient." Thus is the second death of Christ gaining recognition even in Christian circles. The mythical Christ is doomed, and the historical Christ never existed.

The most rowdy students in Edinburgh, with one exception, are the "medicals." The exception is the "theologicals." It appears to be much the same further south. The non-militant Suffragette pilgrims met the "theological students" at Durham (the *Daily News* says), and the embryo divines "attempted to cause a disturbance." Of course they did. But the more gallant miners, with less godliness and more manliness about them, defended the women and ducked some of the future Bible-bangers in the river.

John Wesley indignantly denounced that blasphemous mockery called "lying in state." But the Salvation Army puts "business" before everything else. Mrs. Booth's dead body was exhibited to the crowd, so was William Booth's when his turn came, and the late Commissioner Railton's corpse laid in state for two days at the Regent Hall, Oxford-street, London.

A confused witness in a King's Bench case, before taking the oath, carefully examined the Testament, explaining that he was "looking for Joshua." Most professing Christians do not know one part of the Bible from the other; but they are so certain of their faith.

To enliven the big gooseberry season, the pious *Daily News* has published correspondence on "Ladies Who Smoke," and not a few of the writers were horrified at the very idea. A few years ago the pious world was charmed to think that men and women smoked—in the "next world."

The Southend Justices recently sentenced a man to fourteen days' imprisonment for sleeping out of doors. It would be interesting to hear the unfortunate prisoner's views concerning the blessings of poverty.

Jesus Christ and his Apostles were in the habit of sleeping out of doors. Fortunately, they lived a long time ago and in another country. If they lived now they would have to avoid Southend.

Father Hopkins, the sailor's chaplain, giving evidence in a recent law case, stated that he was "a sky pilot," and "had given his services for twenty-five years without stipend." Was this because his ship never started?

In the course of a discussion on emigration at a recent meeting of the Rochford (Essex) Board of Guardians, it was stated that children in Canada had to sleep in stables, and had been frost-bitten. A Mr. Leonard, one of the Guardians, retorted that "Jesus Christ slept in a stable." It is more certain that many of his followers behave as if they were brought up in such places.

Last week's *Church Times* had a long article on "Open Air Apogetic" in which both Christian and Freethought meetings were dealt with as impartially as could very well be expected. "What is wanted," the writer says, "is an organised band of hecklers to worry the rationalist speaker." We have no objection to that. At present organised hecklers are simply organised interrupters. Certainly the change would be very much for the better. Nor should we object to the hecklers doing all they can to "turn the laugh against" the Freethought lecturers. They will probably find it a difficult thing to do, but in attempting it they must allow the Freethought hecklers to turn the laugh against the Christian lecturers—which is comparatively easy.

Mr. John Francis, Mayor of Southend-on-Sea, speaking at the stone-laying of a new Baptist Church, said "The success of religion meant that the police force would have less to do." As the police are overworked all over England, we conclude that religion is a failure.

That up-to-date prophet, Old Moore, writing last year, declared that the weather this July would be "uncertain, causing some disappointment." This is not too precise, but it is to be wished that Biblical prophecies were half as accurate.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan declares, *ex cathedra*, that "the Bible must be retained in the schools of the nation." Why? Because he knows that if the Bible is taken out Christianity will die. He is quite right, and we do not blame him for his zealous opposition to secular education. All we wish to point out at present is that his and his brethren's attitude on this subject clearly shows that, even in their own estimation, religion's hold upon the human mind is purely accidental. What a humiliating confession on the part of those whose boast is, when they are not discussing religious education, that man is "incurably religious." Religious apologists are perpetually contradicting themselves, and they have been doing it for so many ages that they no longer blush for it.

The ban on Biblical subjects is to be removed from the theatre; but apparently it has already been lifted from the music-hall stage. Miss Marie Lloyd, one of the most popular of comediennes, has a song, "Mother Eve," which she sings in a dress symbolical of leaves. It contains the pious couplet:—

"When once I ate an apple the whole universe was stirred,
Now girls eat bananas and no one says a word."

The *Daily News* recently printed a paragraph relating to a woman attending school at the age of seventy. It is not a record, for Methuselah and other patriarchs must have attended school far beyond that trivial term.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £160 11s. 11d. Received since:—Frederic W. Walsh, 2s.

C. F. BUDGE.—You take the trouble to write us a long letter to persuade us of the uselessness of troubling about anything. Perhaps you'll see the joke of it all when it is pointed out. Seriously, you have fallen into the fallacy of supposing that it is of no use striving at all because man and his dwelling-place will never be perfect. We are neither Pessimist nor Optimist, but (adopting George Eliot's nomenclature) a Meliorist.

"A."—It doesn't seem to call for any special notice. "Liberal Christianity" is a shockingly hybrid expression.

J. McCLELLAN.—It certainly is the poorest alleged Freethought production we have ever seen.

GOCHURCH.—The Welsh revival was not alone in being followed by a reaction which set religion farther back than ever. It is rarely if ever noticed, but it is an obvious fact that John Wesley's revival in England was followed by the great fight over Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. It was all the worse for religion in the end.

J. WRAIGHT.—You knew, of course, that matter posted on July 24 was four days too late for that week's *Freethinker*. It appears this week.

E. PARKER.—We note your correction—that in last week's Obituary Miss Mary Ann Warner should have been Mrs., and her age 76. The other point is hardly worth raising now.

J. F. AUST.—A printer's blunder. It should have been Luke xix. 27.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. L. B. (Johannesburg).—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

E. B.—Your weekly cuttings are always welcome.

W. J. RAMSEY.—Thanks for the newspaper extracts, but we have got the book and shall notice it at some length.

"SUB ROSA," with no date, address, or name, writes us a letter on our criticism of the "Sub Rosa's" use of the word antiquarian some weeks ago. We do not happen to know Mr. Spencer Hughes's hand-writing, and are therefore unable to tell whether this letter comes from him or not. We could not deal with it this week in any case. Perhaps we may hear as to its authorship in time for our next issue.

Mrs. FLEMING.—Accept our best thanks for your trouble in the matter. Lord Rosebery's lament over the decay of good manners seems only too true in many directions.

A. B. MOSS.—We hope you will have a good time at Clacton, and shall be glad to see you on your return.

F. COLLINS.—You forget that our advice was requested.

E. PACK.—Pleased to hear the meetings and the sale of literature continue good at Leeds.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS are once more warned that their letters cannot be dealt with. We act upon the common rule of journalistic etiquette in this matter.

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

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

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

At a very large meeting held on Edmonton Green on Thursday, July 24, protesting against the recent attempt to suppress free speech, the following resolution, supported by the several Secularist and Socialist speakers—Mr. J. Hecht, Mr. W. Davidson, Mr. F. Charters, Mr. C. Diltney, and Mr. J. Summers—was carried without dissent: "That this meeting of Edmonton citizens expresses its disgust at the cowardly and unfair tactics displayed by certain religious elements in attempting to destroy the right of free speech, and pledges itself to maintain that right at all costs."

We are glad to hear that Miss Pankhurst had a most orderly meeting at Edmonton on Sunday.

There were lively times at Parliament Hill Fields last Sunday. Miss Vance has written an equally lively account of them, which we regret we must hold over till next week, the copy reaching us too late for inclusion in this week's *Freethinker*, the make-up having already been settled.

We are glad to see that one Leeds paper, at least, sympathises with the local N. S. S. Branch in its fight with the police for its common rights of citizenship in the holding of public meetings. We take the following paragraph from the Editor's "Review of Current Events" in the *Leeds and District Weekly Citizen* (July 25):—

"The Leeds branch of the National Secularist Society is making a fight for the same freedom given to other societies in the public parks of the city. The present position is that anyone can speak in the parks, but if it is desired to give or sell literature, or to take a collection, special permission must be obtained. The Secularists have applied for this permission, and have been refused. Last Sunday they sold literature and took a collection on Woodhouse Moor, in spite of the by-laws. In this fight for liberty we are entirely with them, and fail to see any consistency in the position of the Parks Committee."

Another paragraph reproduces the resolution which was "carried unanimously" at the Woodhouse Moor demonstration.

There was a slight confusion of names in our report of the Woodhouse Moor demonstration last week. The point is not one of great importance, but we may as well be correct. It was Mr. Pack who took up the collection and Mr. Jackson who sold the literature, and the veteran Mr. Sollett's name should have been in the list of speakers.

The Leeds police are apparently not going to take up the local N. S. S. Branch's challenge *re* the "permits" for Woodhouse Moor. Up to our going to press no summonses have been issued on account of the Demonstration on July 20. They have prosecuted three lads, instead, for larking on the Moor and using obscene language.

We are delighted to see that the High Court at Edinburgh has dismissed the appeal of the Edinburgh magistrates against the decision of the lower court. It will be remembered that the magistrates took it upon themselves to issue a proclamation forbidding public meetings at the Mound. Mr. John M'Ara refused to obey this proclamation. Litigation followed, and the Court held that the magistrates had no right to make laws on their own account. They appealed against this judgment, but the higher court has confirmed it. The victory remains with free speech, and Mr. M'Ara and his supporters are to be congratulated.

Mr. Frederic W. Walsh, our much-tried brave friend at Leamington, insists on sending his mite to the President's Honorarium Fund. "It is very little," he says, "but after all every little helps, and if all enthusiasts for 'the best of causes' gave what they could, the Fund would not drag on through a whole year." If this won't stir up the laggards, nothing will; so we say no more at present.

Mr. Walsh sends us an interesting page or two about the late W. Hale White, with whom he was brought into contact by correspondence.

Mr. Walsh has since called our attention to Miss Durham's "ghastly record of atrocities" in the *Nation*. "You are one of the very few," he adds, "who foresaw all this." Referring to our prophecy of how the Christian warriors would act if they had the opportunity.

Mr. Cohen is holidaying. He will be back about the middle of August. We hope he will find the change beneficial. The work of a Freethought lecturer and journalist is more trying than most people imagine.

Abbot Gasquet, addressing the Catholic Congress at Plymouth, said that—"The Bible of the northern working classes was a certain blasphemous, yet well-written, weekly Rationalist newspaper."

Sir Robert Anderson, formerly head of the Criminal Investigation Department, in an interview published recently in the *Daily News and Leader* said, "The Humanitarian League had more influence than all his Majesty's judges." This is a well-deserved compliment to an institution which, under the guidance of Mr. H. S. Salt, has done so much to awaken the national conscience.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

THE three Synoptists, as we have seen, were editors who re-wrote and revised a long series of narratives which they found in a more primitive Gospel. The writer of the Fourth Gospel, however, was a born fabricator who could not copy a reputed historic event from an ancient document without so altering the details as to make a practically new story—and with an utter disregard for truth. Not content with taking some of the primitive narratives and transforming them almost beyond recognition, he boldly fabricated some new ones himself; to which, at the same time, he added a number of new sayings and long discourses, which he piously placed in the mouth of his Savior. Next, he altered the plan of the public ministry of Jesus, and placed it in Judæa instead of in Galilee, as recorded in the three Synoptics. Finally, though he took his account of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus from the same primitive records as the Synoptists, he could not refrain from altering and making additions to those alleged events also. He has placed the trial a day earlier than the Synoptists—on the day for eating the passover in the evening—so that the accusers of Jesus could not go into the Pretorium where the trial was held, lest “they might be defiled,” and Pilate is represented as repeatedly going out of the court to speak to them outside—a thing which no Roman procurator would have done. The writer has further introduced new incidents at the Crucifixion, and has fabricated new appearances of Jesus to his disciples after the alleged resurrection. Space will not allow me to go fully into all these matters here; I shall therefore content myself with giving some brief examples.

THE CALL OF PETER AND ANDREW.

The call of these two brothers, as revised by the first two evangelists from the primitive source (Matt. iv. 18—20; Mark i. 16—18) is thus recorded by Matthew:—

“And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him.”

Mark relates the incident in nearly the same words. We now turn to the Fourth Gospel, and find the event completely transformed. According to this writer, Jesus came to the Jordan the day after he had been baptised. The writer says (John i. 35—42):—

“Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold the lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?.....One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah. He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of Joanes: thou shalt be called Peter. On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee.”

The writer of this account knew that in the primitive document Jesus did not go into Galilee and commence preaching until after John the Baptist had been cast into prison (Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14), and that the call of Peter and Andrew did not take place until after that; also, that the two brothers were strangers to Jesus when called to be apostles. These facts he knew quite well; but he could not resist the temptation of trying to make a better story of it, as in the case of casting lots for the garments at the Crucifixion (John xix. 23—24). We find, further, that this fraudulent writer has put his own words and ideas in the mouth of the Baptist. This will be seen by comparing the following paragraphs: Mark i. 4—11; Matt. iii. 1—17; Luke iii.

7—17, 21, 22; John i. 6—7, 15—51; iii. 23—36. Here Matthew and Luke have evidently made additions to the primitive account; but these are small in comparison with those made by the accomplished fabricator of the Fourth Gospel.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

In John v. 2—9 we find the following extraordinary narrative, piously fabricated by the writer himself in order “that ye may believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God” (xx. 31):—

“Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered [waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden]. And a certain man was there, which had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? The infirm man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.”

There is no need to read further; Jesus, of course, healed the infirm man. But the method employed by the writer's God to show his love and compassion for his afflicted people was, to say the least, god-like. That deity possessed the power, if he thought fit to exercise it, to heal all the sick people around the pool; but, in his loving-kindness, he chose to heal but one. Moreover, the writer's Savior, like the writer's God, never gave a thought to the healing of more than one person, but went away leaving all “the sick, blind, halt, and withered” unhealed.

Now, that the foregoing story is a fiction is beyond the shadow of a doubt. In the first place, the account was not in the primitive Gospel from which the other three evangelists drew the main portion of their narratives. In the next place, no such pool at which an angel agitated the water for the cure of sickness or disease is mentioned by any writer known to history. Josephus, in his description of Jerusalem, states that there were places within that city called “Bethso” and “Bezetha,” and mentions “the fountain of Siloam” and “Solomon's pool”; but he knew nothing of a periodical intervention of heaven for the cure of disease at a pool in Jerusalem. It is probable that Bezetha was the locality which the Fourth Gospel writer selected for his imaginary pool. Writing, as he did, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, he had no fear of his fraud being detected.

The Christian Church would be glad to get rid of this miracle; but not being able to do so, they have in the Revised Version omitted from the text the words I have placed within brackets, and relegated them to the margin, though they admit in doing so that “Many ancient authorities insert wholly or in part” the words they have erased. The reason for this action was to get rid of the statement that “at certain seasons” an angel agitated the water of the pool—which they all knew to be a fabrication. But these apologetic efforts to conceal the fraud are vain; for the words I have italicised in the reply of the infirm man prove that the words within brackets were originally an essential part of the narrative, which is not only founded upon them, but cannot be understood without them.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

In the same questionable Gospel, chapter xi., we have the story of Jesus restoring to life a man named Lazarus, who was not only dead, but his body “had been in the tomb four days,” and putrefaction had commenced. This miracle Jesus is stated to have performed by “crying with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth”; whereupon the putrescent corpse came out of the tomb restored to life and perfect health. The only evidence we possess for such an astounding miracle is that it was written by the man who fabricated the story of the Pool of Bethesda. No one

ever witnessed it, and the three Synoptists never heard of it.

The same pious fabricator excogitated the little story of Turning water into wine (John ii. 1-11), a miracle which no one ever beheld, and of which the Synoptists had also never heard.

NEW INCIDENTS AT THE CRUCIFIXION.

In his account of the Crucifixion, the same fraudulent writer says that "there were standing by the cross of Jesus" his mother and other women, besides the disciple John; that Jesus, looking down upon them, said to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son," and to John, "Behold thy mother"; and that "from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (John xix. 25-27).

This mendacious writer next represents the Jews as asking Pilate to have the legs of the three persons who were crucified broken (xix. 31), in order to have a pretext for making one of the soldiers pierce the dead body of Jesus with a spear, and by so doing, fulfil two Old Testament "prophecies"—"A bone of him shall not be broken," and "They shall look on him whom they pierced"—after which he has the hardihood to say: "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe" (xix. 35). This last statement is implied to have been made by the apostle John, in whose name the Gospel was written.

A NEW PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS.

According to the Synoptics, Jesus came to Galilee and commenced preaching after the Baptist had been cast into prison (Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 14), and remained in the northern province teaching and working miracles until within a fortnight of his crucifixion. He was arrested six or seven days after entering Jerusalem. The writer of the Fourth Gospel has, however, represented Jesus as spending nearly all his time in Jerusalem or Judæa, with only three flying visits to Galilee, the latter recorded in John ii. 1-12, iv. 48-45, vi. i-vii. 9. The first of these visits was to "Cana of Galilee" where the water was turned into wine, which visit was made *before* John was cast into prison; that is to say *before* Jesus had commenced preaching in Galilee, and *before* he had chosen any of his disciples. Yet this writer represents Jesus as having all his disciples with him, and says that they "believed on him" after witnessing the miracle. The events in these three visits are equivalent to the following paragraphs in the Synoptics: Matt. xiv. 13-34; Mark vi. 30-53; Luke ix. 10-17—that is to say, less than one chapter in each—which scarcely affects the public ministry at all. Hence, while Jesus is preaching in the cities and villages of Galilee, according to the Synoptics, another Jesus is represented as declaiming and wrangling in Jerusalem or Judæa, in the so-called "Gospel of John." Two such conflicting ministries cannot both be historical: one account or the other must be a fabrication.

Christian apologists endeavor to reconcile the two by saying that "the apostle John" had read the other Gospels, and wrote his own to supply circumstances which they had omitted. This is simply apologetic nonsense; for not one of the canonical Gospels was written in apostolic times, and not one of them by an apostle. The forger of the Fourth Gospel lived in the second century, in the days referred to by Luke in his Preface (i. 1-4), when "many" Christian scholars were making revised copies of the primitive Gospel, and when the new Gospels, after they were made, circulated singly in different districts. Later on, when the four canonical Gospels had become known, fresh forgeries would be impossible. But the unprincipled Christian who wrote the Fourth Gospel—probably, John the Presbyter, a friend of Papias—succeeded in getting his forgery received as the evangel of the apostle John.

I have no space for noticing the sayings and discourses of the Fourth Gospel. It must suffice to say

that they were *all* composed by the writer himself, and placed by him in the mouth of Jesus. This fact is beyond all doubt, but it would take too long to deal with the matter in this series of papers.

ABBACADABRA.

Mr. Salt's "Shelley."

Percy Bysshe Shelley—Poet and Pioneer. By Henry S. Salt. Revised Edition. Watts & Co.

I AM indebted to Mr. Salt for a presentation copy of this excellent little book. I have not gone through it carefully with the former edition, but there does not appear to be much alteration in the text. That does not, however, affect the justification of this re-issue, for the former edition had, I believe, been long out of print; and the book is certainly not one that should remain inaccessible to the new generation of readers that is always coming along.

The really novel feature of this revised edition is the frontispiece, in the shape of a portrait of Shelley, reproduced from a painting by William Edward West, a young American artist, who was living at Florence in 1822, and met Shelley at Byron's villa near Leghorn. He had no commission for the portrait, but he was so struck by Shelley's personality that he "made a surreptitious sketch of him which he afterwards completed and took back to America." It was preserved, after West's death, by his relatives, and is now in the possession of Mrs. John Dunn. The oil painting is eight by nine inches in size, and is very beautiful. "The soft, light-brown hair," Mrs. Dunn says, "the blue eyes, the youthful texture of the flesh, the freshness of the coloring, the strength and beauty of the soul within, charm the eye and fill the imagination." Of course the reproduction in Mr. Salt's new volume is in black and white, and we miss the "coloring" that the lady praises.

"It seems to me," Mr. Salt says, "that we get a better understanding from this portrait of Shelley's human qualities than from the more familiar pictures." I cannot say it makes quite the same impression on me. It certainly corrects the "inspired lunatic" portrait which adorns so many editions of Shelley's poems; but, on the other hand, it rather suggests an extremely refined doctor than the most ethereal of English poets. The head seems to outweigh the face. Now the head of Shelley was not large, though beautifully shaped. The nose, likewise, in West's portrait, looks too thin, and the nostrils look too close, for those of the "poet of poets." The eyes are better, and there is in them something of the sadness—an intellectual and moral sadness—of the rich and noble nature that bruised and broke itself against the hard world, and at last found its merciful Nirvana, in less than thirty years.

We ought to thank Mr. Salt, however—we lovers of Shelley—for giving us the opportunity of seeing this fine picture. It possesses a haunting quality, there must be something of Shelley in it, and it should help our realisation of him "in his habit as he lived."

I have called Mr. Salt's book excellent. Beyond all question it is the best succinct biography of Shelley ever written. There is the warmest eulogy; there is also the criticism of an independent thinker, in whom worship does not extinguish sagacity. I recommend this volume, above all others, as an introduction to Shelley. Here and there I should hesitate to endorse Mr. Salt's view without qualification; but I am confident that, in the main, his conception of Shelley as man, poet, and reformer is perfectly sound. Neither is there any slipshod or feeble writing in this volume. Mr. Salt maintains a high level of vital efficiency from beginning to end.

It should be added that if he is not always fair he always tries to be. He recognises that it takes a lot of people to make up a world. There has been

too much mere partisanship in Shelley criticism and biography. Shelley was not always right, and those he came into conflict with were not always wrong. His side of the case may have been very strong, but there was something to be said for theirs. I repeat that Mr. Salt is fair. And he is never bitter. He sees, with a great French thinker, that to know all is to forgive all. Take, for instance, his treatment of the quarrel between Shelley and his father, and indeed with the whole family. Mr. Salt's remarks are eminently sane:—

"No verdict of 'bad son' or 'bad father' is to be given in such a case; the pathos of the position—a typical position—lies far deeper than that. Estrangement, whether veiled or recognised, must inevitably result between those who, albeit blood-relations—are by temperament strangers from the first; and it is worse than useless to allot praise or blame when there is no single feeling in common. On the one side is the Family, with its constant demand that each and all of its members shall think and live in subjection to the domestic ideal; on the other side is the young and ardent spirit, possessed of larger aspirations and wider aims, which realises that the true piety of life consists neither in gratifying nor in mortifying self, but in faithfully following the highest line of self-development."

The same sanity marks Mr. Salt's attitude towards the Harriet question. Shelley was young, but he *did* blunder. For my part, I agree with Matthew Arnold as to the quality of Shelley's letter to Harriet, after the separation, inviting her to accompany him and Mary on a tour of Europe. Shelley meant well, from his own point of view the invitation was an act of benevolence; but he ought to have learnt enough of human nature by that time to be aware that nothing could be better calculated to fill her with disgust and agony. It is literally true that Shelley was too good for this world. Experience brought him knowledge without taint, and the knowledge enlightened his sympathies. It is from his own point of view alone that a sufferer can be soothed and comforted. Shelley knew all that when he wrote the *Cenci*. He is not to be blamed severely for not knowing it at the age of twenty. Some virtues cannot belong to youth; they depend upon experience. A very young man is as much qualified as an old one to pronounce upon the truth or falsity of the Christian religion. But his opinion (say) on the institution of marriage (other things being equal) is sure to be of far less value and importance. In practical matters a power of weighing the facts is necessary, and that power only comes through vital experience. According to the proverb a bachelor's children are always well brought up. Which means, of course, that nothing but the experience of fatherhood enables a man to understand the real nature of the family problem.

Here is Mr. Salt's charitable account of Harriet:—

"Harriet was a schoolgirl of sixteen, pretty and pleasing in appearance and manners, but utterly destitute of any real strength of character, the mere reflex of the surroundings in which her lot was cast; at first a Methodist in religious creed, and looking forward to some day marrying a minister, though at the same time confessing in her own mind that the military were the most fascinating of men—afterwards an easy convert to Shelley's revolutionary arguments. It is true that she was far from being actually illiterate; but her interest in literature was a mere passing illusion, derived at second-hand from opinions which she chanced to hear expressed. Neither in religion nor in culture had she any fixed principles or convictions which might prove a guidance and support. And though at this early age she was bright, winning, and compliant, there was a fibre of obstinacy and worldliness in her nature which was destined to make itself felt as the years went on."

And here is Mr. Salt's judgment on Shelley:—

"'Foolish but generous' has been the usual verdict of Shelley's biographers regarding the marriage with Harriet, the unhappy consequences of which were apparent to the last day of his life. Let it be frankly recognised that the folly was greatly in excess of the generosity, and that we miss in this disastrous action the clear-sighted and faithful adhesion to rational principles which was conspicuous in the other great turning-

points of his life. Had it not been for the restless, excited condition of his mind at this time, he would have seen, as he saw afterwards, that it could be no duty of his to devote himself to a girl whom he did not love, and of whose fitness to be his permanent companion he had by no means satisfied himself. From such a blunder there could only ensue a life-long crop of calamities, which, though insufficient to warp the main purpose of his strong and indomitable will, would yet have the power to cause him and others much acute suffering."

Mistakes are vices only when they are repeated and prolonged. There was not an atom of vice in Shelley's composition. He blundered—and he suffered—and others suffered. For nature makes no difference between mistakes and crimes. Whatever the motive, we have to face the consequences of our actions. We are moral beings. She is non-moral.

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

One World at a Time.

MANY Christians are brought up to regard all those who reject their faith as wretches who have thereby put themselves outside the pale of all that is good, and discarded the very foundations of morality. When, however, they mix in the world; when they study its history; when they read its best literature; they discover what a petty item even the widespread Christian faith appears. They find that noble lives have been lived where it was never heard of, and that even in Christian nations some of the brightest minds reject the Christian faith. If they come into intimate contact with unbelievers, they discover they are no whit worse than their neighbors; nay, that they are among the most earnest in seeking to improve the common lot. And this is after all only what is reasonably to be expected. Morality is not dependent on the will of an arbitrary being with "right divine to govern wrong," but has its natural foundations. It is based on the relations of man in society. It implies recognition of reciprocal rights and duties. These relations remain, whatever views may be held concerning our origin and end.

The Freethinker, as much as the Christian, recognises the value of love, sympathy, and mutual helpfulness. The elements which have given vitality to the old faiths have been all human, and in discarding supernatural dogmas we by no means throw away anything that gives life its dignity and value. Take God away, the universe remains. Cease to regard Christ as divine, you still have the heroes of entire humanity. Have no special reverence for the Virgin Mother, and there is still womanhood to evoke love, tenderness, poetry, and chivalry.

The Freethinker can, and does, accept all of worth in the Bible, as in any other book. But he also knows that it contains much that is barbarous and false. Viewing its books as human products of the past, they have a new significance and value from the light they throw on past history, anthropology, and human evolution. But he knows the world has outgrown the polygamy, slavery, witchcraft, intolerance, persecution, and superstition sanctioned by the Bible, and he refuses to treat as divine that which but represents a lower phase of humanity, and objects to such a dogma being thrust on the plastic minds of innocent children.

History proclaims that those who have most concerned themselves with celestial business—priests, monks, and inquisitors—have been scourges of humanity. The ages of faith were ages of darkness. The Church has had its chance. It set itself in opposition to the happiness and welfare of this world, which it held to be doomed to speedy destruction. Its theory of endless futurity elsewhere necessarily dwarfed all mundane duties. Yet, does anyone now suppose the eternal salvation of any being was assured by the ascetic, ignorant faith and misrule which prevailed for a thousand years in Europe when the Church was supreme? No; the

world is becoming secularised, and the Church with it.

It is learning that it is better to make a clock than to go in search of perpetual motion; better to dig up coal than seek to transmute iron into gold. The poorest hut gives better shelter than the finest castle in the air. So the Freethinker loses not, but gains by giving up some cherished illusion to concentrate his effort on the actual and the real. By resigning the vain hopes of alchemy, valuable effort was saved, and true science advanced. A like gain is made when human intelligence ceases to concern itself with a miraculous hereafter, but turns its attention to realising a better life here and now. Concentration on the attainable is the secret of success. The present age is literally full of important secular problems pressing for solution. Its progress is only hindered by what George Eliot called "that impiety towards the present and the visible which flies for its motives, its sanctions, and its religion to the remote, the vague, and the unknown."

This world is our home. Who is likely to make the best of it—those who regard it as such, or those who sing, "I'm but a stranger here, Heaven is my home; Earth is a desert drear, Heaven is my home"? Here at any rate for a while we may live. Let us make the best of it. We cannot sow and neither can we reap in the skies. This earth may be a desert drear to many of us, but it is at least improvable. If we cultivate our garden we may reasonably expect a few blossoms. The worst scourges of mankind—poverty, crime, war, slavery, oppression, and much of disease—are removable evils. Here is something definite. There is no limit to *may be's*. We may have pre-existed; we may be in purgatory now. This at least is certain, if we waste our thoughts on unverifiable speculations and our energies in seeking to serve a being who can have no need of our services, we shall be in danger of missing the plain duties nearer hand. One at a time is good fishing, and one world at a time is a very good motto to ensure right living.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER

Letter by Mr. Foote to the Leeds N. S. S. Branch

Re the Proposed Demonstration Against the Arbitrary Action of the Police and the Town Council.

[One unimportant paragraph of this letter is omitted. The rest is printed in order to show the principles on which Mr. Foote is prepared to assist in protecting the rights of Freethought.]

Ramsgate, July 17, 1913.

DEAR MR. PACK,—

I quite understand that you have an unchallenged right of meeting on Woodhouse Moor. What the Council refuses you is a permit to take up collections and sell literature.

According to the "Extract from Bye-Laws" you send me, the Council has clearly a right to grant or refuse such permits. But it is also clearly its duty not to do so arbitrarily or out of mere whim or prejudice; its action must be governed by a principle which is capable of being stated, and which is to be applied to all citizens with absolute impartiality. To deny citizens justice, and refuse them the rights guaranteed to all other citizens, except on obvious grounds of statute or common law, is to leave them to such redress as they can obtain by themselves, whatsoever that redress may be. And the original wrongdoers are responsible for any disorder that ensues.

If the Town Council refuses you the permit which it grants to all other applicants, it must justify the difference of treatment. It is not enough to say "we refuse your application because we choose to, and that is an end of the matter." Public bodies must give public reasons for their actions. And the reasons must be just and wise reasons that would satisfy sensible men. This has been pressed upon the licensing magistrates again and again by the Judges of the Supreme Court. I do not say that you (or anyone else) will always get your legal rights, but you are entitled to them, and it is bad citizenship to let yourselves be robbed of them. You are morally bound to resist the exceptional treatment to which the

Council seeks to subject you and to resent the insult which it involves. And in that direction you shall have my fullest support as President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*.

You have two courses open at the moment. You can hold your Demonstration and collect money and sell literature in defiance of the police; not out of *mere defiance* (you should explain that) but in order that the matter may be brought before a Court of Law, to which citizens must appeal, and to which alone they can appeal for the protection of their rights against arbitrary power.

If, however, there is any reasonable hope that a fresh application for the permit would meet with a better fate, I think you should make it. Citizens should not flaunt the public authorities unnecessarily, and if there has been a misunderstanding you should give them (if they will accept it) an opportunity of remedying any mistake.

If you decide to go on with the Demonstration, I advise you to be very careful in what you do. Mr. Atkinson is a wise and just magistrate, but he is not omnipotent. He may inflict fines and tell you that you have taken the wrong method of redress. It would be well, then, to have as few as possible actively engaged in challenging the police; say *one* to collect and *one* to sell literature. The Chairman and speakers are also responsible, but the Chairman would probably be the one proceeded against as *obviously* responsible.

Mr. Atkinson's dismissal of the case might end the prosecution. But he may not dismiss it. He may find the police a loophole by saying, as Mr. Taylor told us in London, that the proper method of procedure was by *mandamus*. In that case you should plead for the very lightest fines as your action was not fractious but a serious attempt to ascertain and defend your rights.

I think you ought to have a competent Solicitor—*one* generally respected, if possible, and not a fanatic in any way whatever. Towards the expenses of this policy I will engage to contribute a substantial support.

If you remember, it was our threat of a *mandamus* and my prompt action in the *Freethinker* that made the London County Council pause. I believe the battle will ultimately have to be fought on those lines.

Be firm and dignified. Don't let the fool friends of our movement spoil your good case. Good manners and decent speech do not cause any harm. It is possible to be very effective without ill-breeding. Severe things can be said without vulgarity. The language of the smokeroom is out of place at a public meeting. Let us think of our cause, as a good man thinks of his wife or his sweetheart. We are things of an hour; it is "the best of causes," as Meredith called it, that is immortal. I don't want to preach, but I do want us all to be as sensible and self-controlled as we can in these emergencies.—Yours faithfully,

G. W. FOOTE.

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Mrs Smart, the wife of Mr. T. Smart, of 20 Pelling-street, Limehouse, which occurred in the forty-sixth year of her age. Though brought up in an orthodox Christian home, Mrs. Smart became, soon after her marriage twenty-five years ago, a firmly convinced Freethinker; and her subsequent life was given to the practical exemplification of the glorious principles of Secularism. Her noble-mindedness, her love of truth, her loyalty to convictions, and her diligent discharge of all her wifely and motherly duties, endeared her to all who knew her. The funeral took place on Thursday, July 24, at the Woodgrange Park Cemetery, when a secular service was conducted at the graveside. Mr. Smart is a life-long Freethinker, and was a member of the old East London Branch of the N. S. S. To him and his three sorrowing children, we tender our sincere condolence. J. T. L.

I regret to record the death of Augustus Williams, who passed away at the age of 67, and was buried at Bow Cemetery on July 25. He was for many years an active Secularist, a frequent attendant at the Hall of Science, a member of the Central London Branch of the N. S. S., and, in later years, of the Bradlaugh Fellowship. He was one of the rank and file of the movement, and was always ready to champion the cause and its leaders when attacked. It was his expressed wish that there should be no religious ceremony at his funeral. A brief and simple address was given by George Standing in the presence of a large number of sorrowing relatives and friends.—H. REEVE.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Gallagher, Lectures.

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

ROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine street, near Town Hall): 7, a Lecture.

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

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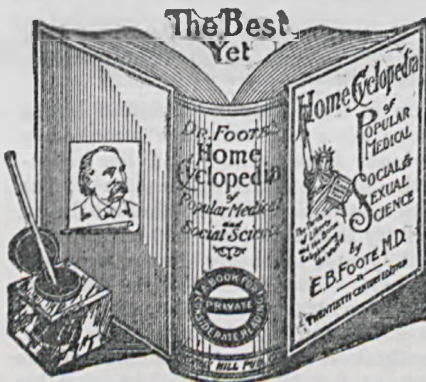
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