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*Charity enlightens.*—SWEDENBORG.

## A Floundering Apologist.

As a matter of fact, it is utterly impossible for a Christian apologist to do anything but flounder, and he generally does so, as the great preacher, Robert Hall, said of the readers of the voluminous Paritan writer, Dr. John Owen, "in a continent of mud." There is in this statement, however extravagant it may sound, no intended reflection upon the ability or dexterity of the apologist, but, rather, a conviction of the fundamental weakness of the cause he sets out to defend. "Viator," a regular contributor of the *Church Times*, is an exceptionally clever, fair-minded, and interesting advocate of the faith "which was once for all delivered unto the saints." He is free from the spirit of bitterness and bigotry, and he never intentionally misrepresents the views and arguments of opponents. If his own arguments are not always relevant and convincing it is certainly no fault of his, but wholly of the system he undertakes to champion. In the issue of the *Church Times* for July 11, he gives an account of a Christian Evidence lecture delivered, not by a theologian, but by a well-known electrician, whom he calls Braine, and particularly of the general discussion that followed it. Braine, he frankly acknowledges, is not in his element as a lecturer, but commits the fault of being at once diffuse and illiptical. He is confessedly not an adept at answering questions. A dark man asked for an explanation of the contradictions contained in the Four Gospels, specially in the narratives of the Resurrection, on the assumption that the men who wrote them were Divinely inspired. Braine said:—

"I will answer, like a Scotchman, with another question. On the hypothesis that God dictated the Four Gospels to the men who wrote them—I do not for one moment believe that he did, but just on that hypothesis—doesn't it seem probable that he knew his own business better than you or I can know it?"

"You are evading the question, sir," said the dark man sternly; "I asked why this was done." "Ah! that is a plain question," replied Braine, "and my plain answer is that I don't know." The dark man sat down triumphantly. "A soft-spoken man was of opinion that the lecturer really knew nothing at all about God, God being, according to the Athanasian Creed, incomprehensible. This was Braine's illuminating answer:—

"To say that a thing is incomprehensible is exactly the same as saying that you can't put a quart into a pint pot; but the pint pot will hold half the quart, and you can drink it. A thimble won't hold the sea, but I can dip a thimbleful out of the sea, and taste it, and know that it is salt. I have told you that I know very little about God. I can only dip with my thimble in that vast ocean, but I do know my thimbleful, and it tells me something about the whole."

The soft-spoken man pronounced that "very pretty, quite poetic, in fact," but declined to accept it as a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. In point of fact it is not an explanation at all. For one thing it takes the existence of God for granted, just as if it were as self-evident as that of the sea. The sea is there in full, irrefutable evidence, and you can easily dip your thimbleful out of it and drink it; but God is not there as a self-evident, indubitable fact, but

merely in imagination, or in exactly the same sense as the Olympian Gods were real to the pre-Socratic Greeks. The cases mentioned are, therefore, in no sense whatever analogous. It is true that you cannot put a quart into a pint pot; but the quart is there, and so is the pint pot, and you can put half the former into the latter; but God can be there only by being brought there imaginatively, and your little thimble is there in precisely the same manner.

Braine employed another false analogy, quite as misleading as that about the boundless ocean. He said:

"I am certainly incomprehensible to my dog, and to all dogs. Yet my dog knows me; he understands half-a-dozen words that I use; he knows when I am angry"—"because you lick him"—interrupted the rough fellow in front. Braine leaned forward and said, almost in a whisper, "I think that is one of the ways in which we know God." "So we may consider ourselves whipped curs," said the soft-voiced man, looking round the room; "I am sure we are much obliged to the lecturer. It is one of the truly comforting doctrines of Christianity." "That is so," said Braine; "we Christians like to compare ourselves to the little dogs eating the crumbs that fall from our Master's table. We know that we have a good Master, who sometimes whips us, and we can't always see why. We understand some of his words; not many, but enough to get on with. And," he concluded, "we are very sorry for a lost dog."

Anyone who takes the trouble to think can see at a glance how absolutely fallacious that reasoning is. The dog sees his master and hears his voice, and in countless instances there naturally spring up between them the closest friendship, the deepest affection, and the clearest understanding; but no one has seen God at any time, or heard his voice. Throughout all the ages of time he has remained both invisible and silent. In no respect whatever, then, is the relationship between a dog and his master analogous to that supposed to exist between man and God. It is perfectly true, as "Viator" avers, that a man is not an Agnostic because he doubts whether God spoke with Moses face-to-face; but it is equally true that many a man is an Agnostic because of the total lack of any convincing evidence that God has ever spoken to anybody in any way whatsoever. Consequently, the conclusion to which we have been inevitably driven is, not that God is unknown or unknowable, but that there are no grounds in reason for believing that he exists at all. And, with all due deference to "Viator," we venture to declare that to give expression to this conclusion is *not* "to talk nonsense." We go further still, and maintain that when "Viator" assures us that if he knows enough about "the works of God" to be able to catch a train he is "not entirely ignorant of God," he is decidedly not talking sense. On what authority does he assume that the phenomena of Nature are "the works of God"? It is easy enough to assert that "we observe in Nature certain activities which point with overwhelming probability to an intelligent and personal agent," but we beg to remind "Viator" that there are hundreds and thousands of scientific thinkers who, to say the very least, know fully as much about the activities of Nature as he does, but are not able to discern the slightest trace or sign of "an intelligent and personal agent." He informs us that "from a man who is not either Theist or Pantheist he is separated by a chasm of thought." We are aware of it, but we have looked to him in



vain for a single argument that even tends to invalidate the Atheistic position.

In an article in the *Church Times* for July 4, "Viator" commits himself to several extremely curious and, in our judgment, foolish statements. For example, he declares that God was never less evident to him than the world, or that the world was never evident to him "otherwise than as a revelation of God." If we interpret him aright he claims to know God and the world separately, and to have known the former before he knew the latter. When he first became aware of the world he recognised it as a revelation of God; but he omits to mention how and when he acquired his knowledge of the latter, though he is quite sure that it enabled him to hail the world as a visible reflection of his invisible being. This is a stupendous claim which cannot possibly be substantiated, and the more we examine it the more irrational it becomes. Fancy a man saying in cold blood that as soon as he reasoned with himself about the world, as soon as he was conscious of a sort of unity in the world, he "was conscious of God." By "the world" this writer presumably means the universe, and we ask him to tell us how his reasoning with himself about the universe made him conscious of God? The scientists have succeeded in demonstrating the fact that life and matter are alike controlled by purely physical and chemical forces. These forces are alone responsible for the production of matter as we know it, and for the innumerable changes that are continually taking place in the physical universe. Of this every student of astronomy and geology is inalterably convinced. The biologists, likewise, account for the origin and maintenance of life in the same mechanistic manner. Biological experimenters, like Dr. Loeb, are beginning to say openly that "we ourselves are only chemical mechanisms," and that all our activities are explicable without any reference to supernatural agency. Even psychology is classed with the natural sciences. "Viator" says that he has discovered "a sort of unity in the world"; but is he not aware that Atheistic scientists are always talking and writing about the unity of the universe without becoming "conscious of God"? As a matter of fact, we seriously question "Viator's" consciousness, as we would very probably deny the validity of his self-consciousness.

The universe teems with awful tragedies. Cosmic disasters are almost of daily occurrence. The order and beauty of Nature are ignorant, unfounded fancies. Even stars not infrequently collide and are destroyed as they rush through illimitable space. When we enter the kingdom of life the anomalies that we meet with are of the most shocking character. For millions upon millions of years the struggle for existence was a fearful and unbroken carnage. All through her history Nature has been "red in tooth and claw with ravine," shrieking with all her might against the Christian creed. And yet "Viator," face to face with the indescribable horrors and monstrosities of existence, and "conscious of a sort of unity in the world" whose hall-mark is cruelty, announces his consciousness of God; and being a Christian divine he doubtless has the hardihood to define the God of whom he is conscious as compassionate and redeeming love. Well, we are thankful that we can honestly say that from a man who fondly imagines that he has such a consciousness we are "separated by a chasm of thought." The more we study Nature the more impossible it becomes to believe in God; and the more familiar we get with history the more convinced we are that the hope of the world is centred in man. It is beyond controversy that we are indebted for all improvement, for all real progress that has ever taken place, to the intelligence and consequent goodness of men and women.

Are we not justified, therefore, in describing the theological apologist, in the words of Robert Hall, as "a double Dutchman floundering in a continent of mud"?

J. T. LLOYD.

## Science and God.

I HAVE been spending an hour or two in the company of a dead man. This does not mean that I have been calling up spirits at a spiritualistic *séance* or experiencing visions of a more or less weird description. But the man is dead in the dearest sense of the term. Once upon a time he was very much alive. His apologetic on behalf of Christianity was hailed as a valuable contribution to the armory of faith; he had shown a way in which science and religion might be harmonised; more, he had shown how scientific religion was, and that in the most important respects it had really forstalled science, proclaiming in the world of human life and emotion truths that science, with its slower and more cumbersome methods, had only established within recent times. The basis of science and the basis of religion were one. Properly understood, the laws of the spiritual and the laws of the natural world were one. They were merely working in different spheres of existence. For a time, the Rev. Professor Henry Drummond was a very live man in the world of religion. Orthodox men were afraid, but those who are called "advanced thinkers" in theology rejoiced. And in less than a generation the orthodox had lost cause for fear—from this quarter, at least. Professor Drummond was dead—before even he was buried. *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was forgotten. Some new apology was discovered, and learning nothing from past experience, the Bourbons of the world of thought were worshiping at the shrine of a new idol doomed to the same fate that had overtaken its predecessors.

Away from home, and with my weekly article—thanks to a habit of never writing to-day what can be put off till to-morrow—unwritten, I find among the books thoughtfully provided for holiday reading, a volume of the late Henry Drummond's on *Evangelical Christianity*. One of the essays in the book is entitled "The Contribution of Science to Christianity," and it has been annotated by someone who was evidently an ardent admirer of the author. The essay itself points out that there are two main contributions made by science to Christianity. One is the doctrine of evolution. The other, and the greatest, is a contribution of failure. Science, says the twice defunct Professor, "tells us candidly it has failed—and the failures of science are among its richest contributions to Christianity—it has failed to discover any clue to the ultimate mystery of origins, any view which can compete for a moment with the view of theology." We are invited to consider the impressive silence of science on the question of origins. Science took these questions from theology, "and proclaimed that it would try and answer them." It has now handed them back. "Science has not discovered a substitute for God."

More:—

"It has seen plainly that Atheism is unscientific. It is a remarkable thing that after trailing its black length for centuries across European thought, Atheism should have its doom pronounced by science. With its most penetrating gaze science has now looked at the back of the phenomena. It says: 'The Atheist tells us there is nothing there. We cannot tell what it is, but there is certainly something. Agnostics we may be, but we can no longer be Atheists.'"

Now, I should not dream of inflicting Henry Drummond upon my readers, even at holiday time, if these opinions were peculiarly the author's. But they are not. They are really the commonplaces of apologists of every school. And when theologians agree, it is usually upon something that is incurably stupid. Is there, for example, anyone but a theologian who would hail failure, a confession of ignorance, as the most valuable of contributions? "The ultimate mystery of origins" is as great with theology as it is with science. Neither knows more about it than the other. I question, indeed, if anyone could say clearly and intelligibly what it means. At any rate, failure, if temporary, is good cause only for fresh effort, and if irretrievable, cause only for regret. But the



rejoicing of the religionist is that we are doomed to ignorance. No one can remove it. So he believes, and in effect he says, that so long as ignorance remains, so long there is territory over which religion may hope to rule. And so every Freethinker believes also. Hence the desire of the one to limit that territory as much as possible, and the instinct of the other to guard it as his dearest possession. To the one, knowledge is *the* symbol of power; to the other, it is the instrument of destruction.

Really, the "mystery of origins," in the religious sense, is not a scientific question or problem at all. It is the creation of religion, and a late creation at that. Early religion has no problem of origins. The facts of the religious life are there found in such phenomena as now admittedly belong to the scientific sphere. The gods are seen in the everyday activities and facts of life. It is when these gods are pushed farther and farther back, out of the world and over the edge of the beyond, when that organised knowledge which we call science holds the world in its grasp, and promises to explain things of which we are ignorant as it has already explained things we know, that religion falls back upon the "mystery of origins." Then the religious apologist bethinks himself, and says, "It is true that there is no safe place for God in the world that is known, or in the larger world that is to be known; but away beyond either the known or the knowable, in a region where knowledge can never penetrate, there God sits in absolute security. We feel he is safe because science can never get at him. We know he is there, because no one can tell us anything about it." Ignorance is the mother of Devotion, midwife to the gods, and stands in jealous guard over those whom she brought into being.

I do not know where science performed the remarkable feat of looking "at the back of phenomena." It seems quite a light and easy performance, as Professor Drummond describes it. But having got at the back, it really might have found out with some degree of certainty whether there was anything there or not. That is the worst of the theologian turned scientist. Either he gives science credit for performing greater things than it has accomplished, or he endows it with a degree of folly that properly belongs to his own department. Science has neither looked at the back of phenomena nor did it take in hand theological conundrums and "proclaimed that it would try to answer them." It found them engaging human attention, and *examined* them. And having examined them, it handed them back as futile and spurious. They were not genuine problems at all; they were manufactured mysteries that vanished into air just so soon as they were submitted to analysis. How many pseudo-scientific minds have been interested in the problem of what would happen if an irresistible force encountered an immovable object? This was a problem worthy of theology itself. And the correct reply is neither to formulate an answer nor hand it back as an unsolved mystery, but to point out that it is a meaningless jumble of terms, and has no reason for its existence. Ten minutes' careful analysis of most of these theological mysteries yield a precisely similar result. They are mysteries only because people do not trouble to find out whether they have any genuine claim to an existence. To pure science they simply do not exist. And if science has handed them back unanswered, it is as fairies and ghosts and the like have been handed back. They simply do not exist.

This is also the reason why "science has not found a substitute for God." It has not provided a substitute because it has nothing for God to do. A God who is in phenomena, or who regulates phenomena, is conceivably useful, and employment may be found for him. But a God who is merely at the back of everything, doing nothing and saying nothing, simply existing, is the most useless of all conceivable things. Early religionists were more intelligent than to believe in such a being. Their god, or gods, did something. He, or they, regulated the weather, the crops, disease, life and death. Civilised man alone

is unintelligent enough to pay homage to a Deity whom, he insists on, does nothing—as though unemployment were as signal a proof of divinity as it is of an aristocracy. Nearly two thousand years ago Lucretius undertook to prove that the things attributed to the gods were brought about by natural means. The submergence of ancient civilisation by Christianity prevented that proof being made popular; but modern science has reverted to the Lucretian point of view. Problems there are yet unsolved, questions still unanswered; but of one thing modern thought is assured, and that is that science alone can give adequate and intelligible replies.

The science that has made Atheism unscientific is as remarkable as the science that gets round to the back of phenomena and discovers that there is certainly something there. Why the whole of modern science is a triumphant vindication of the sanity of the Atheistic position. What is Atheism? It is not concerned with idiotic conundrums concerning the back of phenomena, and what may or may not exist in a probably non-existent region, and which is certainly beyond the reach of even human thought. It depends upon the invalidity of every alleged proof of mind animating or controlling nature. It denies that any such evidence will ever be discovered. Science does not categorically affirm this, but it certainly acts on the assumption that it is the only justifiable position. There is not a single branch of science that allows for the remotest possibility of "divine interference," and the man who suggested such a likelihood to a scientific assemblage would be looked upon as a lunatic. The universe disclosed by modern science is an Atheistic universe. The world of science is a world without God. A religious man the scientist may be—the human mind presents, often enough, a strange jumble of mutually destructive ideas—but he leaves his religion behind him when he enters the scientific workshop. He *acts* as though the Atheist was right; and the Atheist may well be content to wait for opinion to square itself with practice in this direction as it has already done in others.

Atheism "trailing its black length" across European thought may be dismissed as a piece of theological impertinence. One may only remind Christians that the European dark ages were not Atheistic, but Christian. It was not Atheism that buried ancient civilisation under mountains of superstitious ignorance, but religion. And it is not Christianity that we have to thank for freeing European thought from this incubus, but a succession of men, from Roger Bacon onward, whose dominant characteristic was their dissent from the prevalent forms of Christian teaching. These men not only beat back the churches of their day, they and their successors banished the Deity in whose name the Churches existed. The world exists without God's interference, and between a God who does nothing and one who does not exist, the distinction is merely verbal.

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

### The Wonder-Spirit.

A SOFTLY colored mist lay over the water. Greyish white it was; and it hung all around us like—oh! like a crowd of departed, spiritualised Christians, an assemblage of souls. Our boat seemed to be lying perfectly motionless, for the sea-swell, to all appearances, had died, and forgotten itself. Where we were the sea had a peculiar brown color, deep, dark brown that shaded away into black, and then brightened into a grey that became one with the mist. The strange peace of the waters contrasted strongly with the weird restlessness of the mist. It heaved around us sometimes like the expansion and contraction of a woman's bosom, when the arrows of sorrow penetrate her heart. Sometimes there were spasms of tempestuous anger, when it curled and rose in white columns that seemed engaged in inter-



nequine warfare. It would surge forwards, and retreat from our boat, as if attempting to show its resentment at our presence. Occasionally it would make as if to disappear, giving us a glimpse of a round yellow disc not far above our head, the sun; and then it would fall, in heavy masses, upon us, determined to make our stay as unpleasant as possible.

Without warning, in two or three seconds of time, it disappeared completely, and we were drifting slowly out into the bay, the hot rays of the sun pouring down upon us as they did but ten minutes before.

We enjoyed the fleeting, moving picture immensely. Once, many years ago, we had been nearly trapped on a hill by the mist. So keenly eager were we in its progress through the valleys that we failed to notice it had already begun to encircle us. We escaped in the nick of time.

In the evening, after supper, we related the pleasure we had enjoyed on the sea that afternoon; and the conversation turned upon the "wonderful" in nature and in life. Happily, or perhaps unhappily, the church-goers of the party had been sermonised on the subject at the evening service; and one lady gave us a synopsis of the sermon: Christianity developed the "wonder"-spirit of man; nay, more, Christianity was the Wonder-Spirit itself.

Naturally, we retorted we quite agreed with her and the parson. Christianity had never been anything but Wonder-Spirit. To-day, we said, it was the purest form of that mental commodity we had come across. For a long time it had been undergoing a process of distillation. Improving civilisation was gradually and very effectually eliminating all the more poisonous foreign substances from it. The black grains of bigotry, hate, murder, and hundreds of other social vilties that had, in the past, discolored the Wonder-Spirit, were being precipitated. We understood that all right; and we had often observed Christians holding up the glass jar to the light, and admiring the purity of the purified contents—when the precipitate had been removed!

We were quite delighted at our agreement with the minister and his hearers. What mattered it if our interpretations of "Wonder-spirit" were somewhat conflicting. Whatever the practical man may say, wonderment is a valuable mental condition at times; but when we get it in too frequent and too prolonged spasms pathology proclaims the necessity of a rest cure. Judging from the remarks of our holiday acquaintances and friends, and from the attitude of the preacher as revealed by them, we came to the conclusion that they were all wonder-mad.

We learned that the Christianity of to-day was the most wonderful thing that ever human beings had been blessed to enjoy. Men gazed in amazement up to the stars, the jewels of God's throne, and from their wonderment they gave us astronomy. Looking out upon the great sea, searching in the earth, turning his eyes upon his own delicately made body, seeing the wonderful beauties of the blue veins of his hand, the ineffable loveliness of the lines in a leaf, the exquisite softness of a violet, etc., *ad lib.*, *ad nauseam*, man saw and wondered at the great and glorious power of God. God gave man wonderment, and the spirit of wonderment gave man knowledge.

Had not wonder, they said, peopled and pictured the future?—to say nothing of the religious past, we said. Had not wonder brought us within the everlasting arms of the great Father?—they said—not to mention within the swing of the Devil's tail and the kick of his hoofs, said we.

Wonder had given us heaven—and hell; hope everlasting—and eternal damnation; fountains of love—and oceans of blood; noble-hearted martyrs—and ignoble, mean-hearted murderers. It had given us big-brained legislators, this Christian wonderment—and pew-holding, rack-renting, sweating capitalists. There was no end to the wonderful things this wonderful Christian spirit of wonder had given us—and taken from us.

And then they took us into child-life to prove that our contempt and unbelief were nothing but prejudice. They told us, in Marie Corellian language, that a baby's big blue eyes were mirrors of heaven. The pastor had said something about it. Grandly had he remarked that a child's wonderment was full of prophesies of paradise. They thought we were frivolous when we suggested that the child's paradise ran a bad second to a be-ribboned rattle. And when we insinuated that the affair was reversed in after years, that heaven, with its hierarchy of God, Christ, Holy Ghost, and angels as the dried peas, became the rattle, running a bad second to the realities of life, they intimated, in polite phraseology, it was time to terminate the conversation.

We went out into the fresh air, down to the sea, and tramping over the moist sands we wondered at the magnitude and beauty of the waters; but we wondered more at the mental powers that discovered the relationship of sea and moon. While Christians were dry-rotting in the Wonder-Spirit, great men were working out bravely, against great odds, the problems Nature set them. Had they been praising the Lord we would have had less knowledge. Had they not been restricted in their labors by the children of the false Wonder-Spirit we would have had more.

The real Wonder-Spirit, if such a thing there be, prompts men to know, not to dream. It is Science.

ROBERT MORELAND.

### Christianity and the Chinese.—XIII.

(Continued from p. 486.)

"It will probably startle many good people who fancy they are sending out a message of peace and goodwill, to be told further that 'every missionary in every part of China is an element of more or less disturbance in the civil affairs of his neighborhood.'\* Yet this is a missionary's verdict on the situation.

"The Chinese have a culture of their own—defective in our eyes—but of which they are intensely proud; they have classics which are remarkable at least for their purity of thought and expression, and a cult which has served as a bond of social union through untold generations. It is fantastic to suppose that the first European commissioned to inform them that Christianity is superior to Confucianism will be able to convince them that his impression must necessarily be true. Only men of wide education and large sympathies, men sufficiently acquainted with the religious thought of China to understand what they are attacking, and sufficiently familiar with a difficult language to preach and argue without exciting ridicule, can hope to gain a sympathetic hearing. The day is past when public opinion approved proselytism by force. Yet is little less to insist that missionaries of every conceivable sect and of every intellectual standard shall be allowed to establish themselves and their buildings in the teeth of popular dislike, and to expect that that dislike can be hindered from finding expression."—R. S. GUNDRY, "Missionaries in China," *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1893, pp. 251-3.

LORD CURZON has remarked upon the ill-feeling caused by the special privileges the missionaries—

"are disposed to claim on behalf of native converts engaged in litigation or other disputes; and by their interference in the civil affairs of the neighborhood in which they reside. Just as in Southern India many a native becomes a Christian in order to get a situation as a servant or a clerk, so in China it not infrequently happens that a shady character will suddenly find salvation for the sake of the material advantages or protection which it may be expected to confer upon him."

And, as he further remarks, the thoughtful Chinaman "sees in missionary enterprise the existence of an insidious *imperium in imperio*, of a secret society hostile to the Commonwealth, of detriment and damage to the State."† He also remembers that the Tai-ping Rebellion was a Christian enterprise.

Mr. Eugene Simon gives a good illustration of the constant irritation caused by the missionaries; the protests of the Chinese against their methods being

\* Rev. J. Ross, "The Riots and Their Lessons," *Chinese Recorder*, August, 1892.

† Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, pp. 298-9.



denounced in the missionary journals as persecution.

He says:—

"A child has been converted, for example, and in consequence renounces ancestral worship and his contribution to its expenses. His brothers and relations demand that he shall give up his share of his inheritance, which he refuses to do. A lawsuit follows, with which the missionaries interfere; they in their turn are requested to take their departure. This is called persecution in the annals of the propagation of the faith. A criminal is being pursued and requests baptism, which is granted, together with a temporary asylum. The magistrate continues the pursuit and arrests the guilty person. This, again, is called persecution in the annals. The dream of most missionaries is to possess the right to administer justice to their converts, and they would not hesitate to bring about a new war if they could hope to obtain in a new treaty a clause giving them this right, even if they gained it after the fashion of M. Delamarre."\*

Mr. George Lynch says of these missionary extra-territorial rights:—

"I have discussed this with several conscientious and intelligent missionaries. One of them, a man of many years' experience of mission work in China, expressed the opinion, which was also held by many others, that if the rights were done away with, they would lose more than half their converts; but that the moiety that remained would be worth the larger number, because these would unquestionably be genuine, and would have no ulterior motive for continuing to profess Christianity."

We believe that if these rights were withdrawn, together with free education and free medical aid—and every missionary is now required to have a knowledge of medicine as part of his stock-in-trade—"the moiety" remaining would not be worth considering.

In September of 1878, an attack was made upon the mission at Woo-Shi-Shan, near Foochow, the mission buildings being burnt down. As usual, compensation was demanded from the Chinese Government, backed up, says Boulger, "by threats of the old 'gunboat' type"—this being remarkable, says the same writer, "as the first expression of China's intention to refuse to pay compensation for attacks on missionaries when their own acts had contributed to the occurrence." Mr. Boulger gives the dispatch—a most interesting document, but far too long to give here in full—of the Marquis Tseng, for the Chinese Government, to the Marquis of Salisbury.

The dispatch begins by recounting the well-known facts as to the toleration of the Chinese Government for all religions of a peaceable and non-aggressive type. He then deals with the causes which led to the destruction of the mission, as follows: "A Christian church was opened in the very buildings of a temple situated on a hill, which the people for ages had viewed with peculiar veneration." After a time, action was taken, on behalf of the public, in the courts of the country, with a view to the church being removed.

The result of the action was a compromise, the purchase of the premises—

"was ruled to be illegal, but in virtue of extenuating circumstances the Mission was granted a lease of twenty years, at the expiration of which the premises should again revert to the public, from which they had been secretly alienated. This produced much dissatisfaction and occasioned great popular excitement; whereupon the Governor, in order to prevent disturbances, proposed that the site of the Mission should be changed, and in terms which Her Majesty's Government characterised as very fair, offered another site to the Mission."

This proposal was submitted by the missionaries to their chiefs in England, who rejected the proposal.

The Chinese authorities, who continued to urge the danger to the public peace caused by the mission, submitted the same proposal to Her Majesty's Government:—

"While still under consideration, and before any reply had been received, Mr. Wolfe, the Superior of the

Mission, regardless of the dissatisfaction which already existed among the people, proceeded to erect a new building on land asserted to be beyond the boundary of the premises which he had hitherto occupied. Whether this were so or not does not appear to have been clearly determined, but, whether within or without, his act must nevertheless be stigmatised as highly injudicious and utterly inexcusable. The people who had been patiently waiting the result of the reference which had been made to Her Majesty's Government, seeing the chief of the Mission taking the matter into his own hands became enraged, and, forgetting themselves, set fire to the premises which were the subject of contestation."

The dispatch goes on to ask:—

"Who was the most to blame, the teacher who, disregarding the principles of forbearance which he came to teach, acted thus, or the ignorant people whom he goaded on to fight themselves? I cannot but consider the conduct of the missionary authorities most reprehensible. Whilst missionaries feel themselves at liberty to pursue their avocations without taking any of the precautions which common prudence may dictate, you will continue to find them, as at Woo-Shi-Shan, pushing their conquests into quarters where the result must inevitably be trouble of the gravest nature. Who can doubt that had they been made to feel that their occupation of the Tan Shan-guan was at their own risk, and might be attended with the sacrifice of the Mission premises, they would have hesitated before thrusting themselves into the temple, into the very sanctuary of the religion which it was their avowed object to overthrow? In no part of the world would such preposterous indiscretion be tolerated; and, except in China, in no country would a claim be made for compensation when, as in the present instance, it led to its necessary consequences."\*

Many of the missionaries deliberately seek to irritate and provoke the religious sensibilities of those they come to convert. It is a missionary who boasts that—

"standing with his back towards the tablet of Confucius, he (or his companions) addressed the assembled crowd on the folly and sin of worshiping deceased men perhaps the first Gospel discourse ever delivered in a temple dedicated to the worship of the Chinese sage." †

The same thing is going on at this very day, notwithstanding all the misery and bloodshed caused by such conduct in the past. For, at the annual meeting of the China Inland Mission, held in London last May, the papers record: "The annual report of the mission alludes to the preaching of the Gospel on 'the Altar of Heaven' in Peking—a spot for many centuries sacred to the worship of heaven by the Emperor alone."

Suppose a Chinese missionary came over here and attempted to harangue the people in St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey, upon the folly of worshiping a man who died on a gibbet. He would stir up a pretty hornet's nest about his ears. Yet his conduct would differ in nothing from that of our missionaries in China.

Another great cause of irritation to the Chinese is the erection by the missionaries of their ugly and foreign-looking (to Chinese eyes) churches and chapels, in the most commanding positions, and quite out of harmony with their surroundings. Moreover, it comes in collision with the curious belief entitled "Feng-shui." Lord Curzon observes:—

"To the European an elevated or commanding site is always, both for picturesque and sanitary reasons, preferable to a lower position; while for purposes of privacy or protection, a high enclosure wall is superior to a low one. But to the Chinaman, with his extraordinary ideas about the *feng-shui*, or Spirits of Air and Water, and his geomantic superstitions, a building in an elevated position appears to have an effect like the 'evil eye,' and is a source of genuine suspicion and alarm; while anything appertaining to secrecy suggests to his depraved imagination the ambiguous character of Eleusinian mysteries. It is strange that missionaries of all sects and creeds seem to be quite unable to resist these easily surmounted temptations. At Tokio, in

\* Eug. Simon, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life*, pp. 163-4.

† Boulger, *Life of Sir Halliday Macartney*, p. 329.

\* Cited in Boulger's *Life of Sir Halliday Macartney*, pp. 328-32.

† Rev. Justus Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, ch. xiv.; cited in *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1893.



Japan, the most commanding edifice in the entire city is the Russian Cathedral that crowns one of its timbered heights. At Canton, the twin towers of the French Gothic Cathedral, erected under circumstances that should bring a blush to every Christian's cheek, may be seen for miles across the level country. At Peking, one of the French Cathedrals, the Peitang, actually overlooked the sacrosanct enclosure of the Forbidden City; until at length, after prolonged negotiations, and the gift of a superior site elsewhere, the French authorities were persuaded, in 1895, to acquiesce in its removal.\*

Mr. Gundry, in his article on "Missionaries in China" (*Fortnightly Review*, August, 1898) quotes Mr. Michie as saying, "hateful as the invader is, *per se*, he becomes tenfold more so when he is seen erecting, on some commanding and salubrious site, beautiful (in his own eyes), but outlandish, buildings which bring ill-luck to the whole district." He also cites Mr. Little, who instances—

"two distinct riots caused, of late years, in Chungking, by attempts to build churches on prominent sites in that city. The Roman Catholics had succeeded, in one case, in tempting some Taoist priests to sell a beautifully situated old temple, which they proposed replacing by one of their 'hideous bastard-classic brick and plaster piles,' while a Protestant missionary was about to build, on another conspicuous site, one of the 'distractingly ugly whitewashed' structures that are so painfully out of harmony with their surroundings, instead of contenting himself with the Chinese house in which he had been temporarily located."

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

### Acid Drops.

The taste of these religious people! Dr. Knox, Bishop of Manchester, began his mission on Blackpool sands last Saturday (Aug. 2) by blubbering over his dead mother. He told his audience that when his mother was dying she was moved to the window of her room, so that she could see the fields which she had always loved; and as she "gazed at the sunlit vista" (note the sentimental—that is, insincere composition) she said: "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off." At that point the Bishop broke off his address, and was silent for several moments, with clasped hands and closed eyes and tears trickling through them. Nothing, the French proverb says, is sacred to a sapper—and nothing seems sacred to a Bishop. An ordinary man, with no boasts and pretences, but just plain decency of mind and character, would keep his mother's last hours and words to himself. Working them up for a public audience would never occur to him, and the very suggestion would be utterly nauseous. But these Christian preachers have no sensitiveness and no reticences. What should be the most sacred private experiences are fully available for business purposes. Perhaps the Bishop of Manchester thought himself a monument of pathos. But the truth is that he was the most vulgar entertainer on Blackpool sands that week-end.

What on earth did Bishop Knox imagine that this anecdote proved or illustrated? Had his mother been an important public character, of whose end falsehoods had been concocted and imposed upon the world, there might have been a reason for relating what actually occurred. But to blubber in public over her death, merely as her death, is childish and contemptible. We repeat our question, What did Bishop Knox think his anecdote achieved? We should really like to get at something solid in the pious slush of his mind.

The taste of these Christians was further displayed at St. Paul's Cathedral last Sunday. During "divine service" between thirty and forty Suffragettes stood up and chanted: "God save Emmeline Pankhurst. Spare her, spare her with her life and set her free. Hear us while we pray to Thee." Presumably "Thee" means God. The supplicants were therefore asking the Deity to take their side in what they insist on calling a political struggle. They gave him the tip as to which side he should espouse—if he had any intelligence and self-respect. They wished to prevent his making a mistake. It was good of them, of course, and it is to be hoped that the Almighty is duly grateful. It is con-

ceivable, however, that the Almighty wondered what the ladies meant. Whether the militant policy is wise or otherwise, it is certain that Mrs. Pankhurst pursues it voluntarily. What has "God" to do with it? Why is he called upon to "spare" her? They should call upon the lady to spare herself. But religionists were always muddle-headed.

Someone wrote to the *Church Times* suggesting that what was wanted to counteract Secularist propaganda is "an organised band of hecklers." The secretary of the Bishop of Southwark's Diocesan Evangelical Council agrees with the suggestion, and asks that all who would like to undertake such work to communicate with him. He adds that the essential qualifications are a sense of humor and a good temper. We wish this gentleman all success in his endeavor to form a band of hecklers to fight Secularist propagandists, but we think a sense of humor is rather a dangerous qualification. A man with a genuine sense of humor wouldn't keep at the job for a month. The absurdity of the position he was defending would become so apparent that he would soon throw the job up. We notice that nothing is said about possessing knowledge. Probably the less they have of that the better.

The Rev. C. L. Drawbridge joins in the discussion, but only to condemn the proposal. He confesses that he tried the policy of heckling, and "soon found that I did a great deal more harm than good to the cause I had at heart." From what we know of Mr. Drawbridge, we should think this extremely likely. The man who was convinced of the truth of Christianity by Mr. Drawbridge's heckling or speaking would only cause surprise as to how he had developed sufficient intelligence ever to leave the fold. Mr. Drawbridge advises speakers to take notes of what the Secularist speaker has to say, and then "hold a rival meeting close to it." That is quite in character with what we know of Mr. Drawbridge. It is so much easier to reply to a Secularist when he is not present, and the lavish use of the speaker's name may induce unwary listeners at the other meeting to cross over and see what it is all about. But having listened once, we should hardly think they would care for a second visit. Mr. Drawbridge advises, also, that Christians should be organised to ask questions at the Christian meetings. Evidently he wishes the public to be deluded into believing that the questions so asked are suggested by the lecture itself, and to be gulled by pretended attack and defence that is really a put-up job. And that is quite like Mr. Drawbridge.

Dr. J. H. Moulton, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Didsbury College (Wesleyan Methodist), recently treated his listeners to a new version of one of the main ideas in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Dr. Frazer had showed, he said, the existence of a practically universal belief in God becoming incarnate and giving his life for the benefit of mankind. Thus the way was prepared for the Christian teaching of the Atonement. This is a queer distortion of the truth. What Frazer shows in the section of his work referred to is not that gods become incarnate for the benefit of mankind, but that men make gods for their own benefit. The god was not killed; it was the man who was killed, and being killed became a god. Of course, this belief and practice prepared the way for Christian teaching, for the killing of the man-god Jesus was only another example of the general practice of god-making. To put it more correctly, the Christian practice was a simple continuance of the primitive savage rite of god-making. The beliefs of savages prepared the way for Christian beliefs only in the sense that essential Christian beliefs are based upon them, and without them they would never have existed. Banish the savage from religion and it disappears entirely. Christian beliefs are only savage beliefs with the veneer of a more civilised language and a more dignified ritual.

The Rev. Dr. Horton is nothing if not extravagant and self-contradictory. One day he tells us that all great scientists believe in God and bow before him, and recognise Christ as his highest expression in history; but the next he is equally convinced that the intellect of the Protestant world is now engaged on the task of getting rid of God and Christ as unnecessary encumbrances on the uniformity of Nature. Now he assures us that "we are obliged to revise the geography of the spiritual world"; and of course Dr. Horton will be a member of the revision committee. We prefer to follow Shakespeare, who describes the spiritual world as "the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

The Rev. Dr. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, believes in and preaches the hell with the vivid description

\* Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 302.



with which Mr. Spurgeon used to frighten his hearers forty and fifty years ago. Of the sixteen well-known ministers and clergymen who express their views in the volume, *Is there a Hell?* Dr. Dixon is the only one who clings to the old-fashioned conception of a material hell-fire, in which the damned are to burn to all eternity. And yet, if the Bible is true, and if the Church is a Divine institution, Dr. Dixon is right, while the other fifteen are guilty of suppressing, or misrepresenting, an essential portion of the counsel of God.

"An Average Man" waxes hilariously merry in the *Manchester City News* for July 26, over the heresy hunt so vigorously indulged in for many months within the Wesleyan Church in connection with the appointment of the Rev. George Jackson, an exceedingly mild Higher Critic, to a theological chair at Didsbury College. The hunt turned out a perfect fiasco, a ludicrous failure. The following quotation is much to the point:—

"As an Average Man I sometimes marvel by what special mandate the so-called Orthodox call all who do not agree with them Heretics. The Jew calls me a heretic if I am not a Jew, the Christian calls me a heretic if I am not a Christian, the Moslem calls me a heretic if I am not a Moslem, and the Buddhist calls me a heretic if I am not a Buddhist. So we must all of us be heretics according to somebody else, but who made Somebody Else the Judge? Besides, all these Orthodox people are Heretics also from the standpoint of the rivals, and really they cannot all be infallibly correct. Religion is largely a matter of temperament and race. We are, as a rule, of the religion of the country in which we are born—the place of our birth decides that—and we believe that our own religion is the only religion that is true. If you tell a Mohammedan he is in error, he slays you in righteous indignation. If a Mohammedan tells a Confucian he is wrong, the Chinaman slays him in turn. And so it goes on. As for ourselves, we used to slay each other in the old days for what now seem to be the merest trifles. The orthodoxy of yesterday is by no means the orthodoxy of to-day, and that is why it is additionally difficult to say who is a heretic and who is not."

Writing of this kind would have been impossible twenty or thirty years ago in *any* newspaper. Galileo was right. The world *does* move.

Dr. Clifford is getting more and more reckless in his public statements. In his inaugural address as President of the second European Baptist Congress held at Stockholm on July 21, he asserted that "there are sufficient reasons for believing that the modern mind in its scientific and philosophical activities is coming to the aid of spiritual religion." The statement is a monstrous falsehood, though often brazenly repeated. Dr. Clifford must be culpably ignorant if he is not aware that the modern mind is *not* moving towards the supernatural and the spiritual with increasing sureness of step and certainty of conviction. We are getting tired of nailing this hoary lie to the counter. This rhetorical Baptist divine could not quote from a single scientist in support of his assertion. The only men he dared to mention were two famous metaphysicians, Eucken and Bergson, neither of whom can be claimed as an evangelical Christian. If Dr. Clifford were in the habit of perusing scientific works he would learn that the modern mind is moving away from "the supernatural and the spiritual with increasing sureness of step and certainty of conviction"; and were he to heed the signs of the times he would realise that Christianity has one foot in the grave already.

A correspondent informs us that on the Notice Board outside a church in the New Kent-road he read "Affliction of God." "I am not surprised," our correspondent says, "seeing the crowd of humbugs pulling his ear down every Sunday."

A mass of manuscripts in the autograph of Walt Whitman has just been sold for the paltry sum of £16 10s. Pork, iron, and copper "kings" in the Great Republic prefer spending their thousands on chorus girls and "spread-eagle" philanthropy.

The Lunacy Commissioners' Report states that there are 188,377 persons under care in England and Wales. Defenders of the Benevolent Design Argument, please note.

"The Christian Church does not rest on theology," says a recent apologist for Christianity. Maybe *perhapology* would be a more correct guess.

Writing in the *Labor Leader*, Mr. S. B. James says, "Socialism is a religion." One religion, more or less, will make very little difference. "Let them all come!"

The following elegant extract is from the *Johannesburg Star* (July 2):—

"ILL-TREATING A CAT.

"Kimberley, Tuesday.

"In the local Magistrate's Court to-day a clergyman was fined 20s. for ill-treating a cat by forcing the prongs of a fork through the animal's body, pinning the cat to the ground.

"The accused was the Rev. George Mitchell, and witnesses stated that an attempt to drown the cat had evidently failed, and that the accused drove a garden fork through the animal's body. The cat remained alive about half an hour. It was eventually despatched by the police, who found it screaming with agony.

"The accused, in defence, said he had no intention of torturing the animal. Having failed to drown the cat, he thought the other method adopted to dispatch it would be immediately successful."

What a product of nearly two thousand years of Christianity!

Miss Durham's letter to the *Nation* (July 26) is a document of such importance that we venture to call our readers' special attention to it. Her subject is the frightful barbarities of the Montenegrin troops; not accidental, not committed in an access of passion, but designed beforehand and deliberately inflicted. Miss Durham knows what she is talking about. She is an observant and a truthful person, and she is a Christian and not a Mohammedan. Common honesty bids her speak out. She cannot possibly have any other motive. Her denunciation of the Balkan "Holy War for the True Faith" is wrung from her. "Tsar Ferdinand," she says, "spoke the truth when he said that the war was one of Cross v. Crescent. The Orthodox Cross drips red with the blood of victims. They are not all Moslems. Orthodox fanaticism has not spared the Roman Catholics." Miss Durham tells how the Montenegrins "liberated" the Catholic village of Gajtan from Turkish tyranny. Entering the village as "friends" they pillaged it of everything movable; then they felled the olive and fruit trees, on which the inhabitants largely depended for a living, and even lighted fires at the roots of the olives to ensure their not growing again. "A flourishing little community was completely ruined to the cry of 'Long Live King Nikola!'" And having completed this glorious work the "Liberators" marched away.

The poor Moslems were treated not only with the worst brutality, but even with refinements of cruelty. Impalement used to be thought a Turkish monopoly. Some of our readers will remember the stories of impalement in the old "Bulgarian Horrors" in the late 'seventies, when Holy Russia fell upon the Turks in the name of humanity (heaven save the mark!) and Mr. Gladstone swept England with a deluge of passionate eloquence against the "unspeakable Turk" who was to be swept "bag and baggage" out of Europe. Canon McColl, if we recollect aright, swore he saw, with the aid of a field-glass, a Bulgarian stuck on a pole; and gallons of ink were spilt over that doubtful story. Only the Turk, it was said, could possibly do such things. But listen! The Montenegrin soldiers who fell outside Scutari, when time was found to bury them, were all completely clad; while the Turkish corpses were all stripped and plundered. There was even worse than that. "Outside Scutari," Miss Durham says, "two half-naked bodies of Moslems were found, bound with cords and extended, showing that they had been tortured, and they appeared to have died in great agony. Two others were clearly seen through field-glasses, impaled on poles near the Montenegrin lines." So the good Christians enjoy the luxury of impaling their enemies just as well as the wicked Mohammedans ever did.

We have seen photographs from Constantinople of Turks mutilated in a most diabolical fashion. They gave us the shudders for weeks. Judging from what Miss Durham says, they were not faked but authentic. She heard a professor of the Boys' School of Podgoritzza say, a few days before the war broke out, "Now you'll see plenty of noses!" He said it gleefully. Noses were to these beastly Christian "liberators" what scalps were to the North American Indians. Miss Durham describes what she saw on one occasion. "Among the crowd of wounded," she says, "were eight Nizams, whose noses and upper lips had been cut off by Montenegrins." She calls this a "peculiarly hideous mutilation"—as indeed it is. It strikes us as about the most atrocious mutilation conceivable. Words fail to represent it. It must be seen.

Miss Durham heard Montenegrin wounded in the hospital boast of the number of noses they had taken. "They described," she says, "the fun of transfixing a Turk on a bayonet, grasping his moustache, cutting off the coveted portion, and bidding him go home and show his wives how



pretty he was. It was considered, however, more honorable not to leave him alive." These soldiers of Christ also boasted that they had castrated their enemies; the "trophies" being taken to their commander. How it reminds one of the dower that King Saul demanded of David for the hand of Michol.

One fact mentioned by Miss Durham is of the most sinister significance. Scarcely any Turkish prisoners were brought into Podgoritza during the whole six months' campaign, nor were "any Turkish wounded brought into the hospital while I was there." "We cured them all with our bayonets" was the Montenegrin boast. No wonder that Miss Durham calls upon the Great Powers not to let any Moslems or Catholics come under the rule of these fiend-warriors of the Cross.

The devilries that Miss Durham records were deliberate. That is the worst of them. The war was not one of "liberation" but of "vengeance and plunder":—

"It is time that the foul savagery with which this war has been waged should be made clear; that the public should realise that the real reason why no correspondents and no foreign doctors were admitted to certain districts was because of the brutalities, planned in cold blood beforehand, which were to have no witnesses. A strict censorship was intended to suppress such details as might leak out."

Montenegro means to exterminate all Albanian or other populations handed over to her. Believing this, and with good cause, Miss Durham calls on the civilised world to take precautions against such an abominable catastrophe.

There is still no word of comment from the religious press on the subject of the Christian massacres in the Balkans. So far as they are concerned, they might never have occurred. Their chief concern appears to be lest any of the territory conquered from the Turks should again pass out of Christian hands. The *Guardian*, for example, says that the duty of the Powers is perfectly clear. If Turkey proves obdurate, she must "be turned out of Adrianople neck and crop." It is gracious enough to say that they do not "think the Christians who reconquered Turkey's Balkan possessions are a particularly admirable type"; but still they are Christians, and that is everything. The Balkan Christians are "amenable to the spirit of the West." "To Turkey civilisation, as we know it, is utterly foreign."

This is a double-barrelled sectarianism. First of all, a Christian as a Christian is preferable to a Mohammedan, even though the latter may be the better man. We hold no brief for the Turk, but no man of sense and fairness will hold that during the past six months the Balkan Christians have shown themselves in any way superior to their Mohammedan neighbors. If one half the barbarities recorded of Christians in both the first and second Balkan Wars had been recorded of Mohammedans, the English press would have been shrieking for immediate intervention. But they are Christians, and that atones for a deal. In the next place, we have the usual British stupidity that because the civilisation of the West suits us it must not only be the best form of civilisation for the rest of the world, but it must be forced upon all people at the point of the bayonet. It never dawns upon these wiseacres that a form of civilisation suitable to some people may be totally unsuitable to others. Friendly intercourse between peoples will enable each to absorb from the other all that is beneficial to them. Institutions and ideas forced upon them result in nothing but evil. And it is by no means certain that the West has not as much to learn from the East as the East has to learn from the West.

Mr. J. H. Ritson, secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, is greatly alarmed, as are other missionaries, at what they are pleased to call the menace of Islam in Africa. On examination, the menace only means that, in spite of Christianity occupying the more favorable position, it cannot compete with Mohammedanism in evangelising the natives. The missionary of Islam, without huge funds from home, and without his religion being that of the governing race, beats the Christian missionary at his own game. Mr. Ritson says that each missionary teaches the blacks Arabic, and opens the way to a religion "which sanctions the sins men love." It is seldom, indeed, that a Christian can refer to opponents without slandering them, and Mr. Ritson is no exception. We should much like to know what "sins" are sanctioned by Islam? It does not teach men to lie, to steal, or to commit murder. It does sanction polygamy—not very generally practised, however—but so does Christianity for that matter, and at any rate it is stupid to call that a sin. As an institution it may be

good or bad—we firmly believe it is the latter—but it is a social institution, and must be judged as other institutions are judged. And travellers of repute have testified over and over again that the native who becomes a Mohammedan shows a marked improvement in character and cleanliness over those who become Christians. At any rate, Islam manages to keep its converts free from the unquestionable evils of prostitution and drunkenness—two things that Christian civilisation carries into every country it conquers.

"Are these the people to make England great? Why, if they were sunk into the depths of the sea to-morrow morning, England would not be the poorer for it." These terrible people had been visiting the Holland Park Skating Rink on Sunday instead of attending church, and so the Rev. T. Phillips treated his congregation to his opinion of them. Mr. Phillips does not think that any people who spent their Sunday in this way would be found doing social work in the slums. We do not know; but we feel pretty sure that a great many of those who do not go skating on Sunday, but regularly attend church or chapel, are partly responsible for there being any slums to visit. And we do not think that Mr. Phillips would care to say from the pulpit that they ought to be drowned in the sea. It might thin his congregation somewhat. It is perfectly safe denouncing absentees to a chapel congregation.

Professor John Milne, the famous inventor of instruments to detect earthquakes, who died last week, spent the best years of his life in Japan, which experiences about 500 shocks yearly, often accompanied by great loss of life. The Professor, who was a Christian, married a Japanese lady who kept a large statue of Buddha in his home, to which she made offerings. Maybe, the devoted pair hoped to square the Divine Benevolence between them.

Laurel wreaths picked from the garden of the late Mr. W. T. Stead were dropped from the liner *Franconia* over the watery grave of the *Titanic* on Sunday, whilst the ship's band played "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Fifteen hundred men and women stood at the *Franconia's* side with bowed heads during the sorry business. It would be hard to beat this example of misplaced piety.

The recent publication of Charlotte Brontë's letters to Professor Heger in the columns of the *Times* makes interesting reading. There are, however, some matters that require further elucidation, as, for instance, Charlotte Brontë's statement that her writings had received the approbation of Shelley and Coleridge. Shelley died when Charlotte was six years old, and Coleridge was dead before she was eighteen.

An Exmouth lady has left the whole of her fortune to a Cats' Home in Whitechapel, because "cats are daily made footballs of by roughs of that locality." It is a pity that ladies so seldom leave money for the intellectual emancipation of the race.

An immense swarm of locusts has been doing enormous damage in Corsica, devastating the crops. The inhabitants must have had as jolly a time as the Egyptians with the plagues.

According to an Education Blue Book, there are nearly seven millions of scholars attending the elementary schools of England and Wales. Clerically controlled schools included nearly three millions of these children. In spite of kid-glove Rationalists, the N. S. S. has plenty of work in front of it.

A gold repeater watch, formerly belonging to Charles Dickens, was sold last week for £44 at a London saleroom. Priests who get high prices for relics of people who never existed will smile.

#### THE CATHOLIC RELIGION.

Of course, my Church is the best, said I, but that is not the reason why I belong to it; I belong to it because it was the faith of my house; I wish to take my chances with my own people, and so should you. If it is a question of going to hell, go to hell like a gentleman with your ancestors.—Robert Louis Stevenson, "St. Ives."



## Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

### To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.**—Previously acknowledged, £160 13s. 11d. Received since:—T. Hibbott, 5s.; S. Clowes and Father, 2s.; J. White, 2s.

**R. J. DE L.**—(S. Africa).—Your friend is not the author of the *Parson's Idol*. We printed it in the *Freethinker* some thirty years ago, and it was a bit of an antiquity then. It was written by that copious author Mr. Anonymous. We are pleased to receive your own letter.

**G. GILLETTE (S. Africa).**—Glad to hear you have read the *Freethinker* since 1890 and "never found a dull item in it." We will consider your suggestion about publishing Mr. Cohen's article on the *Witch Mania* as a pamphlet.

**T. HIBBOTT.**—We note your wish that the pace of the President's Honorarium Fund might be quickened. Kindly forward the book you refer to.

**S. CLOWES.**—Pleased to have your congratulations and good wishes.

**W. BRADBURN.**—See paragraph. Thanks.

**J. DRYSDALE.**—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. Sorry to say the verse is not quite up to our level for publication.

**H. D. A.**—Shakespeare is omitted as well as Burns. Your friend's verses want correcting by a grammarian. They are not without a certain merit. But, after all, they are not really poetry.

**A. N. KOHN.**—There is a Benevolent Fund connected with the N. S. S., with its own Committee, to which access is gained through the Secretary (Miss Vance). We understand that the gentleman you mention has several times been helped. We take no part ourselves in the administration of this Fund.

**E. B.**—Much obliged.

**W. A. YATES.**—Thanks for your successful efforts to promote our circulation.

**R. F. M.**—Naturally.

**J. H. KENWARD.**—Tyndall's statement was surely a truism. But it is a hypothetical statement, as all "ifs" are. It is the logic of thought, though not necessarily the logic of fact, that makes the conclusion follow the major and minor premises. Comte said truly that science is prevision. If we knew enough of causes we should be able to foresee results. It is a very questionable thing, however, to assert that what was evolved was originally involved. The case is one of confused metaphor.

**W. P. BALL.**—Much obliged for cuttings.

**G. DURDEN.**—Next week. Thanks.

**W. H. HARRIS.**—Thanks for the cutting, but we are going to review Professor Bury's book ourselves.

**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.

The trouble with the London County Council is now completely over. The unheard summonses against the N. S. S. London Branches, which had been standing over from August, are all withdrawn, and the collections and sale of literature go on as before in the case of *bona-fide* Societies. The legal bill has been discharged, including counsel's services in court and at consultations, and the whole of the Fighting Fund, with these deductions, is available for the ordinary work of the N. S. S. We gave subscribers an opportunity of objecting to this disposition of the balance of the Fund, if they wished to, but there has been absolutely no response to the paragraph which appeared in the *Freethinker*. The matter must, therefore, be now considered as ended. Perhaps we ought to add that "All's well that ends well"—and to thank the Freethought party for backing up our plan of campaign.

Mr. Lloyd takes the anniversary services at the Failsworth Secular Sunday School (Pole-lane) to-day (Aug. 10). His address at 2.45 will be on "The Making of Heroes" and at 8.30 on "Religion and Morals."

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on "Mr. Salt's Shelley" stands over unavoidably till next week.

Cupid laughs at everything but his own bow and arrows. He knows that he is the master of the world. Emperors, czars, kings, and princes are very secondary beings in comparison with him. Realising this, we are not surprised that we have to announce the marriage of Mr. R. H. Rosetti and Miss H. Pankhurst, which took place at the Registrar's office, Stratford, on Saturday (Aug. 2). Both belong to the West Ham Branch, the bride being its secretary and the bridegroom its president. We wish them a long life of private happiness and public usefulness.

Mr. Davidson paid a flying visit to Tunbridge Wells on Sunday. His object was to lecture, but accident brought him into a public debate with one of the most offensive Christian Evidence lecturers. The subject Mr. Davidson was invited to debate was "The Atheist and the Child"—which quite covered the two disputants. Neither the chairman nor anyone else could keep the C. E. S. speaker to time or from vulgar personalities. Mr. Davidson's matter and manner were evidently much more to the taste of a large and interested audience.

Dr. Arthur Lynch, M.P., reviewing Professor Bury's new book in the *Chronicle*, says that "laws against blasphemy exist which are a disgrace to the Statute Book."

Summonses have been issued at last at Leeds on account of the demonstration held by the Leeds N. S. S. Branch,—against Mr. Pack for taking up the collection and against Mr. Jackson for selling literature. The summonses are returnable at the Town Hall, on Wednesday, August 27, at 11 a.m. We have sent on an additional letter of advice to Mr. Pack on behalf of the Branch. There is no doubt, of course, that the demonstration was held, as to the collection and the sale of literature, against the strict letter of the bye-law. This is understood. But it was necessary to bring an all-important question to the test; the question, namely, whether the local authorities possess a discretionary power to favor the advocates of some opinions and put disabilities upon the advocates of other opinions. This has not yet been decided in a court of justice. It is high time that it were decided; otherwise the Leeds police will govern the city at will by successive acts of usurpation. There can hardly be a difference amongst Freethinkers as to the duty of opposing such intolerance; and if the fight has to be carried beyond the Leeds Police-court we shall make a confident appeal to the Freethought movement for proper support in this emergency.

The *Positivist Review* for August opens with an article by Sir Henry Cotton on "A Tragedy of the Gallows in India," which we commend to the attention of those who fancy that British government out there is perfectly ideal. Mr. Frederic Harrison writes on the late Mr. Goldwin Smith's recently published *Correspondence*. The article is interesting, for Goldwin Smith was a man of distinction, and Mr. Harrison wields a bright and facile pen. Mr. Swinny deals with M. Paul Sabatier's book, *France To-Day: Its Religious Orientation*. Like all that Mr. Swinny writes this article is worth reading. There is a curious touch in it, however, of what we may call Positivist partisanship,—a thing which we have often detected in this excellent little magazine. It is evident, we are told, that M. Sabatier has studied Comte; so Comte is quoted, and Guyau, and Bergson, as to the idea of an ever-advancing Humanity which is carrying all of us along. We do not "take much stock" in Bergson, but we very much admire Guyau, and we have always regarded Comte as one of the great seminal thinkers of the modern world. But our Positivist friends have quite a craze for quoting French writers and tracing every good thing to France. It was a great Englishman, Thomas Paine, who first used the expression "The Religion of Humanity." It was a still greater Englishman, the poet Shelley, who drew Leigh Hunt's attention in the Cathedral at Pisa to what a glorious religion men might have if its principle were humanity instead of theology. Even the "barbarian" Carlyle, as some reckon him, expressed the idea that Mr. Swinny refers to—as long ago as when he wrote *Sartor Resartus*. And we venture to say that he expressed it with greater eloquence and enthusiasm than Comte or Guyau (we will drop Bergson) ever had at command. We could quote several passages, but this one must suffice:—

"Spake we not of a Communion of Saints, unseen, yet not unreal, accompanying and brother-like embracing thee, so thou be worthy? Their heroic sufferings rise up melodiously together to Heaven, out of all lands, and out of all times, as a sacred *Miserere*; their heroic Actions also, as a boundless everlasting Psalm of Triumph."

Carlyle's graphic power has hardly ever been excelled, and this quotation is no bad sample of it.



### Christ on the Cinema.

A WEEK or so ago I went to a picture palace in Peckham, and witnessed a representation of the famous film entitled "From Manger to the Cross." I went on a Saturday, as that was the only evening I had vacant that week. Naturally, I expected to find the hall crowded, as it was the last night's representation of the "sacred drama" of the life and death of the supposed Founder of Christianity. The building, however, was far from full, and so little interest did some of the members of the audience take in the performance that they left before half the length of the film had been shown, as though the subject bored them, or had no real attraction for them.

The story is told in five parts, and although one or two girls giggled during some portion of the representation, the majority of the audience listened attentively, and treated the subject in what Christians call a reverent spirit. During each scene an American organ played well-known hymn tunes appropriate to the occasion. I regret that I did not arrive in time to see the scene depicting the alleged birth of Jesus; so that I did not see the young Messiah, as the ladies say, "before he was shortened"; nor did I see the wise men watching the stars, and being directed by one of them to the place where Jesus was to be born. But I saw Jesus as a boy, and a very nice-looking chap he was. I also saw Joseph and Mary and the Mother of Jesus, and I wondered why Mary was dressed like a modern Sister of Mercy, and whether such a costume was likely to have been worn by a lady who had no official connection with any Church close on two thousand years ago. Every scene was supposed to illustrate some text, or some alleged teaching of Jesus, and this text was thrown upon the sheet for the spectators to read.

The picture illustrating young Jesus being taken by his parents to the Temple and being lost, and the parents returning in three days and finding him confounding the wise men by his wonderful sayings, struck me as extremely unconvincing—especially the unsympathetic manner in which he treated his parents, who had been vainly seeking for him for some days, and who were broken-hearted with grief and despair at his loss.

There were two boys who played the part of young Jesus, one when he was twelve and the other when he was a little older; they were both good-looking boys, and contrived to look the character as near as possible. In the next scene we saw Jesus, the wandering missionary, grown to manhood, and I rather regretted that we did not have one scene with Jesus working at the carpenter's bench; but I suppose that was too commonplace and risky from a dramatic point of view. For many years I have maintained that the story of Jesus as told in the Gospels is purely a dramatic story, probably based upon some old morality play coming down to us from a Greek source years after the beginning of the Christian era.

On seeing this film I was more than ever convinced of the dramatic character of the story, although in some of its details it lacks the true dramatic grip, and is almost entirely destitute of female interest. Now, if Jesus had fallen in love with a pretty Greek maiden, and the Devil, in the person of Satan, had lured her away from him, and made Judas a rival, and then tempted Judas to betray Jesus, and thus to lead him step by step to his arrest and crucifixion, the story would have some vital dramatic interest. But Jesus apparently had no love for woman, although he had several female acquaintances who followed him about constantly; and on the cinema we saw two of these lovely females, who came and emptied bottles of oil over his feet and wiped them with their wavy long hair. Jesus did not seem to be particularly moved by this performance, but he turned and gave them a gracious smile, as though he was not displeased with their conduct.

When we saw Jesus in the act of delivering his Sermon on the Mount, the young man who played the part committed what used to be considered by the old school of actors the unpardonable offence of turning his back entirely upon his audience—that is, the audience in the picture theatre—while he addressed the multitude. The young actor who played the part of Jesus was a tall, handsome fellow, with Greek countenance, rather effeminate in appearance, with fine aquiline nose and long flowing hair, and the orthodox moustache and beard after the well-known pictures of the Nazarene; while his disciples, on the other hand, possessed strongly marked Jewish faces and general characteristics. I thought perhaps that the promoters of this religious film would scarcely risk putting on the screen the representations of the chief miracles said to have been wrought by Jesus. But they did. And when one comes to think about it, what would the life of Jesus be without the miracles? A series of Sermons on the Mount, of which not one word could be heard, would have little or no interest to the ordinary spectator. In drama, you must have action, and plenty of it; and, therefore, the managers have no option but to put on the sheet the representation of some of the most important miracles narrated by the writers of the Gospels. And so we have the miracle of the healing of the centurion's servant; the opening of the eyes of the blind; but as Jesus had merely to pass his hands over the eyes of the blind man and say "Receive your sight," the thing was simple enough, and, as the doctors would say, involved no complications.

We saw Jesus calling his disciples out of their fishing smacks from the useful occupation of fishermen, and getting them to join him in the missionary business as "fishers of men." And though we saw him casting devils (whatever they are) out of men, we did not see the devils come out and enter into the bodies of swine, whose constitutions were so disturbed by these new tenants that they rushed furiously down a steep pit into the sea, and were drowned. Whether the devils shared the same fate as the pigs, Matthew does not say. No doubt the manager found this one of the impracticable incidents in the miracle series; he could not get actors to play the part of pigs, nor devils to set them on the run, so that they could go scampering along to their destruction.

Such miracles as the healing of the withered hand, or making the lame to walk, were easy enough, especially when we knew that the actors were not lame, but only pretending, and did not have withered hands to heal. In like manner, it was an easy matter for Jesus to turn water into wine, especially as we did not see any of the disciples drink any of the water; but it was much harder for Jesus to walk upon the sea, without Boyton boots, and any man with a knowledge of stagecraft and stage carpentry could see that he was walking upon a solid plank, although the waves of the sea appeared to be close upon him. But the real dramatic incidents began to manifest themselves when the villain—Judas—showed his willingness to betray Jesus; and the scenes representing Judas selling his Master for thirty pieces of silver; kissing Jesus, as a sign to his enemies that he was the man they were seeking (as though they did not know him when they had witnessed all his alleged miracles, and had been lashed by him out of the Temple)—attending the last supper, taking the sop with the Master, these scenes were played with real dramatic effect.

So, also, were the scenes of the Trial and Condemnation. Pilate did all he could to save Jesus, but the mob was against him. When we came to the scene of the crowd assaulting and ill-using Jesus on the way to his execution, we could not help feeling for the poor fellow in his extremity, and in imagination we could realise what poor, despised Freethought martyrs like Bruno and Vanini must have experienced under similar circumstances. In the case of Jesus, I could not understand how he



could allow this ignorant rabble to strike him on the cheek, to spit upon him, to tear his robes from off him, to give him vinegar and gall to drink, and to subject him to other forms of indignity, when, by merely holding up his hands, he could have silenced and paralysed them all with fear. But, then, I was only a poor Freethinker, allowing my thoughts free play, and forgetting for the moment that I was only witnessing a play and being moved by a scene of human helplessness amid the passion and violence of a savage mob. The scene of the Crucifixion was, indeed, a great triumph of the art of the cinematograph.

We saw Jesus on the Cross, moving his head and body, opening his eyes and mouth, and expressing in his countenance great grief and anguish. Yes, we saw him there between the two thieves, and they all moved to show that they were actual human beings who were stretched upon the cross, and not mere puppets. How it was all worked, I do not know, but it was a great triumph for the actors.

There were no scenes of the Resurrection or Ascension, so I suppose these were considered unnecessary to the completion of the drama, or impracticable from the point of view of the manager. Be that as it may, I quite expected to see Jesus come again, in form like the Ghost of Hamlet's Father, and, though I did not expect to witness an ascension, I have no doubt it could be managed easily enough on the cinematograph.

On the whole, I am satisfied that the exhibition of this film will lead thousands to think, and to think on the subject of miracles is always liable to lead to doubt, and doubt leads to investigation, and investigation to truth. And, as we all know, "the truth will set you free."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## The Gospel History a Fabrication.

### THE STORY OF THE BAPTIST.

THIS narrative is one of those which the three Synoptists copied from a more primitive Gospel; but the way Matthew and Mark introduce the subject is somewhat peculiar. Taking Matthew's account, that editor says (xiv. 1, 2):—

"At that season Herod the tetrarch *heard the report* concerning Jesus, and he said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead."

Mark commences his account in precisely the same way (vi. 14). Matthew, next, makes use of the error into which the tetrarch had fallen to introduce the story of the imprisonment and death of John. He says:—

"For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife."

Mark likewise makes this mistake of Herod the introduction to the story of the imprisonment of the Baptist, and in nearly the same words as Matthew. The latter editor goes on:—

"For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her."

Mark, following the same plan, put this statement a little plainer—"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Both editors, in fact, commence telling the story backwards, after which they narrate it more in order. This story is as follows: That Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, had taken to himself Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and, being reproved by the Baptist for so doing, he had cast that baptiser into prison. Then, later on, "when Herod's birth-day came [Herod made a feast, at which] the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist.....And Herod sent and beheaded John in prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and

given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother" (Matt. xiv. 9—11).

This Gospel story is a Christian fabrication, though it contains a small grain of truth. John the Baptist was a historical person—a crank who preached and baptised near the Jordan—whom, after a short public ministry, Herod Antipas placed in confinement, and subsequently put to death. But the silly statements of John rebuking Antipas on account of his marrying his brother Philip's wife, of the dancing before him, of his oath, of the demand for the Baptist's head, and of John's immediate execution in consequence—these are pure fabrications.

In the first place, Antipas did not take his brother Philip's wife. He did, however, induce Herodias, the wife of his half brother Herod, to leave her husband and live with him. To make this clear, we have but to glance at the sons of Herod the Great who were living in the time of the Baptist. They were the following:—

Herod—who had married Herodias, and lived in private life.

Antipas—Tetrarch of Galilee, who had married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea.

Philip—Tetrarch of Trachonitis, who had married Salome, the daughter of Herodias.

These three sons of Herod the Great were by different wives, and therefore only half brothers. The first, Herod, was named after his father, by whom (in his will) he was disinherited. Herod the Great, though a hard and unprincipled man, was great as a king, and his name was honored throughout the Roman world. For this reason, Antipas assumed the name as a title (like that of Cæsar), and was called "Herod Antipas," or "Herod the tetrarch." Philip never assumed the name, though he could have done so, had he chosen.

Now, the concoctor of the Gospel story thought that the wife of Philip the tetrarch was Herodias. He says that Herod the tetrarch had taken "his brother Philip's wife," and he gives her name as Herodias. He had evidently never heard of the "Herod" who was living unnoticed as a private gentleman in Rome. The concoctor of the story, again, was not aware that the daughter of Herodias, whom he represents as dancing before an assembly of half-intoxicated men, was Salome, a grand lady, and the young wife of Philip the tetrarch, who would not be likely to demean herself by dancing before such an audience (Mark vi. 21)—even were her husband willing to countenance such an act.

In order to conceal the Gospel misstatement respecting Herodias being the wife of Antipas's "brother Philip," Christian reconcilers have elected to call the disinherited son of Herod the Great "Herod Philip," though they knew perfectly well that not one of the seven sons of Herod the Great had a second name. If we turn to a table of the "Herodian Family" in any Bible text-book, we shall find the disinherited son called "Herod Philip I," and Philip the tetrarch called "Herod Philip II." As already stated, Antipas assumed the name "Herod" as a title, as did also, later on, king Agrippa; but Philip the tetrarch did not, and was never known as "Herod Philip." Josephus never calls the disinherited son by any other name than "Herod," nor Philip the tetrarch by any other name than "Philip." Luke also says (iii. 1)—"Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of," etc. This was the "brother Philip" of the Baptist story.

There can thus be no doubt as to whom the primitive Gospel writer referred when he said "his brother Philip." The giving to Philip the tetrarch the honorary title "Herod" might, perhaps, be allowed to pass; but to give to the disinherited son Herod another name, "Philip," which this Herod never possessed, and to do it for the purpose of deceiving the uninformed reader—such a dastardly action is one which only a Christian reconciler could stoop to perform.

Coming now to the Gospel story, Luke tells us that "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar" (i.e.,



A. D. 28), Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan; shortly after which John was cast into prison, and Jesus began to preach. Now, if the Baptist had rebuked Antipas for marrying his brother's wife, it must have been *before* he was cast into prison, and Herodias must have gone to live with Antipas *before that*. The latter event, then, could not have been later than A. D. 28.

Leaving dates for the moment, we find that Antipas, when in Rome, saw Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod, and falling in love with her, he asked her to become his wife. To this the lady agreed, provided he first put away Aretas's daughter. But the latter, having been secretly informed of the compact, asked her husband for an escort to take her to Macherus, a castle on the borders of Arabia, subject to her father Aretas—which Antipas was pleased to grant. Arrived there, she made rapid journeys under Arabian escorts to Arabia Petrea, and informed her father of her husband's intentions. Upon hearing of such perfidy, Aretas sent a strong force against his faithless son-in-law; a battle was fought, and Antipas's army was annihilated. After giving a detailed account of the foregoing circumstances, Josephus says (*Antiq.* 18, 5, 2):—

"Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John that was called the Baptist.....For Herod, fearing lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion.....thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause.....Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death."

Josephus does not say how long the Baptist had been dead when the battle between Aretas and Antipas took place. We have now to ascertain the date of the battle. When Antipas received news of the loss of his army, he wrote informing the emperor Tiberius, "who being angry at the action of Aretas, sent orders to Vitellius [the president of Syria] to make war upon him." Upon receipt of this command Vitellius set out with a large force for Arabia Petrea, and, on his way, came to Jerusalem, where he stayed to confer with Antipas for four days. While there, he received official notice of the death of Tiberius, so he returned with his army to Antioch. Tiberius died on March 16, A. D. 37; hence, the little domestic arrangement between Antipas and Herodias, and the battle that resulted from it, would be in the year A. D. 36.

We are now in a position to compare the Gospel story with the foregoing facts of history. In A. D. 28, Herod Antipas hearing of the influence which John the Baptist had obtained over the common people, had him arrested and confined in the fortress of Macherus. Some months later (A. D. 29), he caused the Baptist to be beheaded. Six or seven years afterwards, Antipas paid a visit to Rome, and took lodgings in the house where his half-brother Herod was staying. During this visit he became acquainted with this brother's wife, Herodias, and made certain overtures to her, which she accepted on one condition—to which he agreed. After a short stay he returned to Galilee; but here, one of his attendants who had overheard or discovered the little matter planned with Herodias, mentioned the fact in strict confidence to her highness the legitimate wife of Antipas. Thereupon, that lady fled as fast as horses could carry her to Arabia Petrea, and informed her father Aretas—the result being a battle, fought in the same year (A. D. 36), in which the army of the tetrarch was destroyed.

Now, looking at the Gospel narrative, it is quite clear that no reconciliation with history is possible. John the Baptist had been dead six or seven years when Antipas married his brother Herod's wife; hence, the little stories of the Baptist reproving that tetrarch, of the daughter of Herodias dancing at the feast, of Antipas promising on oath to give her whatever she asked for, and of John's head being brought to her in a charger—these are all pure

fictions, fabricated by the primitive Gospel-writer to account for the imprisonment and death of the Baptist. Matthew, Mark, and Luke found the incidents recorded in the primitive Gospel, and merely made revised copies of them.

But, if we set aside all dates, the conclusion we arrive at is the same.

1. Herod Antipas had *not* taken Herodias to be his wife when the daughter of Aretas set out for Arabia Petrea, and some weeks later, when the battle was fought, John the Baptist had been dead some time.

2. Herod Antipas would only have been allowed to use the fortress of Macherus as a prison while he and his father-in-law, Aretas, were upon friendly terms. It must therefore have been *before* the flight of Aretas's daughter, when the Baptist was arrested, and sent there, and some time later put to death.

#### AN EXAMPLE OF INADVERTENCE.

The editor of Matthew's Gospel represents Jesus as saying (xi. 12):—

"And from the days of John the Baptist *until now* the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."

These words are said to have been uttered while the Baptist was alive, and at a period when "the kingdom of heaven" can scarcely be said to have begun. No time had elapsed between "the days of John the Baptist" and the day upon which Jesus is represented as speaking: they were the same days. Only a writer who lived many years after Jesus and the Baptist could have employed the words here put in the mouth of the Nazarene. These words, too, could not have been used until the Christians had become a well-known sect, and had suffered persecution—a fact which again points to post-apostolic times.

ABRACADABRA.

### National Secular Society.

#### REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JULY 31.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Brandes, Cunningham, Davidson, Heaford, Judge, Leat, Lloyd, Neate, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Thurlow, and Miss Kough and the Secretary (Miss Vance).

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the Edmonton, Kingsland, and West Ham Branches and for the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported that the L. C. C. had definitely decided to withdraw the adjourned summonses against the several members of the N. S. S. for taking collections while the permits were suspended, and the final account for legal charges incurred was ordered to be paid. The President announced that as no objection had been raised by subscribers, the balance of the "Fighting Fund" raised in the *Freethinker* would be handed over to the N. S. S. General Fund.

The correspondence with Mr. J. W. Gott was referred to, and the President's action endorsed; and the following resolution, moved by Mr. Davidson, and seconded by Mr. Heaford, was carried:—

"That this Executive repudiates all connection or association with Mr. J. W. Gott's propaganda, denies that he has ever had permission to use the name of the N. S. S. on the announcements or advertisements of his meetings, and calls upon him, as a member of this Society, to desist from such outrageous conduct. This Executive further repudiates responsibility for any literature sold at such meetings by Mr. Gott, unless the book, pamphlet, or paper bear the Society's imprimatur or guarantee."

Messrs. Davidson, Roger, and Thurlow were then elected as a sub-committee to consider and report upon certain printed matter falling under the previous resolution.

The question of the delegation to the International Congress at Libson was then reviewed, and after some discussion, particularly in regard to the prolonged absence from England that would be entailed, it was unanimously resolved:—

"That we retire from the position of the previous resolution on this matter."

Correspondence from Preston and other matters having been dealt with, the meeting adjourned until September 25.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*



### Christian Evidences.

MR. MARSH, the redoubtable Christian Evidence lecturer, who has recently gained an unenviable notoriety by his scandalous statements about a dead Freethinker, has been complaining bitterly of being followed about by Secularists, who have confronted him with his statements, and whom he describes as "dirty hirelings."

As he has continued to reiterate, deny, and repeat these slanders, and finally to make blustering challenges, I wrote him offering to accept his challenges and to produce persons who had heard the statements he now denies, or to expose his particular type of Christian evidence.

Mr. Marsh was announced to give a lecture at Parliament Hill on Sunday, July 27, and notified me he would re-read his former statements, and promised to answer any questions of mine.

On my arrival, I found Mr. Marsh on a brake, with the Rev. C. N. Drawbridge acting as chairman, supported by Mr. Baker, the Rev. O. D. Brown, and other representatives of the C. E. S., either to take care of or repress him. Mr. Marsh's performance consisted of reading a twenty-year-old article from the *Freethinker* (which he insisted upon describing as a "letter"), reading extracts from a letter, examining at some length a Mr. Richards on trivial matters which were never in dispute, and behaving generally like a hooligan, to the intense delight of a large and carefully packed crowd of his well-known followers. On his conclusion, the Rev. C. N. Drawbridge magnanimously allowed me five minutes in which to correct Mr. Marsh, put my questions, and produce my witnesses—having permitted Mr. Marsh to inquire of the audience whether he had not proved his case, before I opened my mouth.

I commenced, and was interrupted by Mr. Marsh. I requested the chairman to call him to order, and waited whilst they wrangled for some minutes. At the end of half-a-dozen sentences, during which time Mr. Drawbridge made no attempt to stop the howlings of Mr. Marsh's friends, he informed me my time was up.

Messrs. Davidson and Hope (who were there to answer the charge of "following" Mr. Marsh about) kindly waived their time in my favor, and I recommenced. In the next ten minutes, Mr. Drawbridge himself interrupted me no less than three times, whilst he descanted upon the unfairness of the Editor of the *Freethinker* in not printing in his paper the scholarly epistles of Mr. Marsh. In the meantime, the latter conveniently forgot his promise to reply to my questions. On being reminded of this, I received a partial and shuffling reply to one of them, with a piteous regret that he could not treat me as he would a man. No opportunity was given to Messrs. Judge, Cunningham, Hopkins, and others, my witnesses, whom Mr. Marsh had so desired to hear, as Mr. Drawbridge then announced that they were now "full up" of the other side. This was undoubtedly true; but, feeling that the other side had not had their innings, I called upon those who desired to hear me without interruption to follow, and my friends escorted me to the adjacent N. S. S. platform, accompanied by quite half of the C. E. S. audience, where I was able to hold them for upwards of an hour, to the evident discomfort of our fair-minded opponents. I hope, however, they are compensated by the snapshot they obtained of me on their brake. An incident worth snapshotting was, I am told, the expression on Mr. Marsh's face when a lady in the audience, who, whilst avowing herself a Christian, accused Mr. Marsh of being the aggressor in a disorderly scene at Edmonton on the previous Sunday (when he left his own platform to attack the N. S. S. speaker) and flatly told him she was ashamed of him, and, later on, the spectacle of another lady who, enraged by Mr. Marsh's vicious and untruthful statements about her husband, seized and shook him vigorously.

Mr. Marsh's swaggering and ludicrous challenge to Mr. Foote to debate with him was made in the full knowledge that it would never be accepted; but there are others who would condescend to refute him under ordinary conditions. When he can screw up sufficient courage to face this music, minus the assistance of a brake and a C. E. S. demonstration, the "following about" to which he so much objects will cease.

EDITH M. VANCE.

"Have you said your prayers?" inquired a mother of her little son. "No, I haven't," was the prompt reply, "and I didn't say 'em last night, nor the night before, and if nothing happens to-night, I shall never say 'em again."—*English Illustrated Magazine*.

Conductor: "Excuse me, but this is a bad nickel."  
Lady Passenger: "Oh, I beg your pardon. That was a mistake. I was saving that for the church collection."

### THE SERMON.

First prayer, then praise, then comes the  
Nae modern theologic teaching [preachin':  
To suit the taste o' warly folk;  
But plain, auld-fashioned orthodox,  
Wi' hell a'maist in ilka sentence,  
To fricht the sinner to repentance.  
The rich, the usurer, the cheat,  
The harlot, and the hypocrite,  
The sot, the glutton, and the thief,  
The suicide, o' sinners chief,  
Wi' unbelievers a' are doomed  
To burn, and never be consumed,  
In brimstane fire and burning marl  
Doon yonder in the nether warl'.  
Lood and lang the preacher rails,  
Flings his airms aboot like flails;  
Stamps and raves like ane possessed,  
Bangs the Bible, dauds the desk,  
Gars the stour flee out in cluds  
Wi' sic unmercifu'-like thuds  
That sleepers wauken wi' the soun',  
Sit up at last and glower aroun',  
Wi' dazed-like lugs that seem to say,  
"Guid Lord, is this the judgment day?"  
—George Cunningham, "Sunday."

### THE GLOOMY DEAN.

They've christened him the Gloomy Dean,  
For oft he vents his learned spleen  
By scoffing, in sardonic mood,  
At dreams of equal brotherhood.  
Ah, well we know his cultured school  
That breeds the Philosophic Fool,  
Who, stuffed with ancient lore, decries  
The nascent, live Humanities!  
Now, with some ponderous paradox,  
The gentler hopes of man he mocks;  
Now, flattered by the smiling Press,  
Acclaims the old Vindictiveness.  
A Gloomy Dean! Benighted he  
By his own dim theology—  
Deep versed in doctrines of Saint Paul,  
Of modern vision heedless all—  
No second Swift is here, we trow;  
The gloom that beetles on his brow  
Is of the dull, belated kind  
That haunts the mediæval mind:  
For the Dark Ages best had been  
The birth-time of this Gloomy Dean.  
—The Humanitarian.

Husband (sarcastically): "Well, my dear, did you derive much consolation from your attendance at church this morning?"

Wife (enthusiastically): "Rather! Mrs. Gibbs had on that old blue hat of hers—and I sat right in front of her the whole morning."—*London Mail*.

### Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. John Oram, of Bath, which occurred on July 22, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. For upwards of forty years Mr. Oram was a prominent Freethinker, who worked faithfully against superstition and for the dissemination of the grand truths of Secularism. He acted as secretary of the Branch of the N. S. S. which existed at Bath some twenty years ago. He died in the faith in the service of which he had spent his life; and although all the members of his family were not of his way of thinking, they loyally carried out his wish that only a Secular Service should be conducted at his funeral, which took place on Monday, July 28. We express our sincere sympathy with the family in their bereavement.—J. T. L.

It is with deep regret that I record the death of Mr. Alton C. V. Bonvoni, of Pembroke Dock, the son of Mr. D. E. Bonvoni, of Letterstone, Pembroke. Our friend, who was in the prime of his life (being only twenty-one), unfortunately lost his life while bathing on Sunday, July 20. Brought up in a Secular home, he was always ready and willing to assist in every possible way the advancement of the Secular movement. His nobleness of mind and his sterling qualities as a man endeared him to all that knew him. His god was science and his ideal was to know the truth. The funeral took place on Thursday, July 31. Owing to great difficulties, it was not a Secular funeral. To his father, mother, sister, and brother we tender our sincere condolence.—F. J. F.



**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.**

**INDOOR.**

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias-road, Stoke Newington): August 11, at 8, General Meeting. All members requested to attend.

**OUTDOOR.**

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

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

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

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss K. B. Kough, "God and Morality."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Burke, "Science and Dogmas"; 7.30, "Beelzebub," "Science and Superstition."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 11.30, E. M. Vance and M. Hope, "Christian Evidences"; 3.15, Jas. Rowney, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture.

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

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

**COUNTRY.**

**INDOOR.**

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): J. T. Lloyd, 2.45, "The Making of Heroes"; 6.30, "Religion and Morals."

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