

trace of any kind that it had ever existed. There is no mention of Nestorianism in the Chinese dynastic histories; no mention of it in any of the contemporary or later Chinese authors whose writings have covered every department of literature. Nor should we now know anything of the early advent of Christianity in China but for an extraordinary accident. In 1625 it came to the notice of Catholic missionaries that the tablet above described, and of which all knowledge had long been lost, had been unearthed somewhere near the old capital, at which we now know from the tablet that Christianity had flourished as above stated. The tablet was denounced as a Jesuit forgery by Voltaire and others, but for a long time there has not been the slightest doubt of its genuineness, and this point is somewhat laboured by Prof. Saeki, who thinks that it "has been preserved by the Divine Providence to reveal to us the true condition of the spiritual side" of China between A.D. 618 and 907.

Prof. Saeki's work is divided into three parts. The first part gives a general history of Nestorianism, especially in relation to the Far East, and the full story of the tablet, not omitting the attempt of Mr. Frits Holm in 1907 to carry it away to America. This enterprising traveller had to be content with a replica, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Prof. Saeki mentions a second replica, "which stands to-day at the top of Mt. Koyd, the Holy Land of Japan," where, we are told, "it was dedicated, with full Buddhist ceremonial, on Sunday, October 3, 1911."

The second part of the book—the translation of the inscription—is the least satisfactory, though it is just there that improvement would be most welcome. A single example must suffice. In the description of the Messiah we read (p. 164): "Hanging up the bright Sun, He swept away the abodes of darkness." This, of course, is unintelligible. The Chinese text means, "He *was* hung up, a bright sun, in order to prevail against the gates of hell"—a light to "lighten our darkness," alluding to the Crucifixion.

The notes on the text which form the third part are interesting and in many cases valuable.

#### OUR BOOKSHELF.

*Preservatives and Other Chemicals in Foods: Their Use and Abuse.* By Prof. Otto Folin. Pp. 60. (Cambridge: Mass. Harvard University Press. London: Oxford University Press, 1914.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

PROF. FOLIN'S lecture is a judicious and temperately expressed statement of the arguments for and against the use of preservatives in foods, but it adds little or nothing to our knowledge, and will scarcely tend towards forming a sound public opinion. He who seeks for an *ex cathedra* statement whether the addition of "chemicals" should be permitted to food at all, and if so, what alone should be tolerated, will find nothing in the way of definite pronouncement and not much in the way of light or leading. The author apparently

halts between two opinions. He is constrained to admit that modern conditions of food supply would seem to require the use of such substances. They have been forced upon the community as a commercial necessity, and the consumer is powerless to resist.

The uncertain attitude of the author, however disappointing it may be to his readers, is at least intelligible. The fact is, no one is in a position to dogmatise on the subject, for as regards certain of the chemical products which are capable of retarding or preventing the decomposition of alimentary substances we have no positive knowledge concerning their action on the economy. Nor is it easy to obtain this knowledge. The usual argument that if they retard or prevent the action of the enzymes or bacteria which are concerned in the decomposition or decay of food they will equally inhibit the action of those agencies in effecting its digestion, begs the question and is unsound. Age, idiosyncrasy, condition of health, and a number of other circumstances affect the matter: what is toxic to one person is harmless to another. This is true of food itself, even in the absence of all preservatives. The aphorism of *caveat emptor* affords little comfort to the consumer, but in the present condition of matters it is all that can be offered him; yet it is at least due to him to know whether the food he buys is "preserved," and if so, what preservative and how much of it has been employed. But this is precisely the kind of information that purveyors of food decline to supply except under pressure of legal pains and penalties.

*The Bearings of Modern Psychology on Educational Theory and Practice.* By Christabel M. Meredith. Pp. 140. (Constable and Co., Ltd., 1916.) Price 1s. 6d. net.

THE author's aim has been "to give a brief account of some portions of recent psychological work which have had and are likely to have a special influence on education." Part i. of the little book is devoted mainly to genetic psychology, part ii. to certain special observational and experimental studies. Within her limits Mrs. Meredith has done distinctly useful work, choosing her topics with discretion and treating them in a competent and serviceable way. Her sketch of the child's mental development is based largely upon the psychological work of McDougall and Shand, whose ideas she has used skilfully in interpreting the outstanding phenomena of the nursery, the playground, and the class-room, with all of which she shows a sound first-hand familiarity. In a well-written chapter on "Experiment in Education" she brings out, by apt illustrations, the complexity of the problems which the laboratory method has to face, showing why its results must always be used with caution and at the same time that they are indispensable to progress. The final chapter on adolescence contains wisdom for parents as well as for teachers. The omission, in so slight a treatise, of a short list of books for further reading is a defect which should be remedied in a second edition.