

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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## COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 113.



THE DESTROYING ANGEL.

*"And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it."*  
1 CHRONICLES xxi., 15.

## THE GODDESS GRUNDY.—II.

A FEW months ago I spent an evening with four doctors in a northern city. Among three doctors two Atheists, says the mediæval proverb; but in this case that measure of heresy was exceeded. Three of the company were Atheists, and the fourth was an Agnostic. This led to some discussion, the result being a discovery that the only difference between them lay in the name. Atheist was a more odious term than Agnostic. That was admitted; but the Atheists argued that Agnostic would become odious enough when the orthodox found it was only another name for their old enemy, a view which the Agnostic more than suspected to be true. On the whole it seemed that the new term Agnostic was little else than a sheet of respectable tissue-paper, screening the Atheist's naked heterodoxy from orthodox vision.

I am afraid that the Goddess Grundy is at the bottom of nearly all shrinking from the term Atheist by those who are "without God." When theology is banished from the world as completely as astrology, there will be no need for anti-theological badges. No one will be required to adopt any attitude towards an exploded superstition. We do not now divide into parties on the subject of witchcraft, although our forefathers did; we have simply passed it by as a mania. Some day or other we shall regard theology in the same light. We shall neither believe it nor disbelieve it, but simply ignore it, as we do witchcraft. Theist and Atheist will then be unnecessary terms. But until then we must go on employing them. Theist means practically "with God," while Atheist means practically "without God." All the metaphysical talk in the world about the relativity of human thought cannot obscure this plain distinction. The Atheist knows as well as the Agnostic that man is finite.

He knows what's what;  
And that's as high  
As metaphysic wit can fly.

With God or without God, Theist or Atheist—that is the

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issue which will be decided by ordinary people who have business to do in the world. They leave intermediate imaginations about the infinite to those who have the disposition and the leisure to imitate the Hindu Yogis or the monks of St. Athos in profound contemplation of the mystery of their navels. Our Agnostic friends do not, however, patronise this particular form of mysticism. They like the pride and pleasure of life too well. Their mysticism is usually borrowed from the dogmas of the Goddess Grundy.

Other worshippers of this goddess assume an air of philosophical temperance. "Come," they say, "why this assumption of wisdom? How can you assert your own opinion so firmly in presence of such diversity? Are you absolutely right, and must all who differ from you be absolutely wrong? Truth is many sided. Let us, as Tennyson says, shun the falsehood of extremes."

"Nonsense," I for one reply. "You are merely burning incense to the Goddess Grundy while ostensibly kneeling at the shrine of philosophy. The falsehood of extremes is an absurdity in the region of ideas, where every man is bound to follow his best light to the uttermost. Compromise is philosophy in matters of practice, but it is absurdity or cowardice in matters of thought. It may be prudent to take a composition of six shillings in the pound for a just debt; but that is very different from admitting that a sovereign is either twenty shillings or six."

Many devotees of the Goddess Grundy are to be found among the Unitarians. Some of them continue to call themselves Christians, although they neither believe in the inspiration of the Bible nor in the divinity of Christ; nay, they will even declare, in some cases, that the worship of a personal God is a highly-developed form of fetishism. They call themselves Christians because the name is respectable, knowing that so long as they wear the badge they can say and do what they please. They resemble the clergyman who had nine strong reasons against joining the Wesleyans, whose principles he approved—a wife and eight children; with this difference, however, that while he sacrificed conscience for his family, they too frequently do it for their personal comfort.

Even amongst Freethinkers there are votaries of the Goddess Grundy. The committees of Secular Societies do not include a fair proportion of the well-to-do members. Too much of the labor is left to working men, who have less to lose by avowing their heresy. These are admirable for their brave spirit and devotion to the cause; but how much more effective their efforts would be if they were assisted by the tact and knowledge of others who are more conversant with the methods of business. Our organisation would be immensely strengthened if all Freethinkers took their proper share of the work. The wealthier would also find their minds braced as well as their sympathies widened by mixing more freely in public matters with their poorer brethren. There is, and always must be, a solid sanity among those who keep touch with nature through bodily work; and contact with them is wholesome for the classes who lead a more artificial life.

For my part, I have no respect for those who shirk their duties through fear of the Goddess Grundy. "He who does nothing," says an old Hindu proverb, "stops the progress of the world." He has to be carried along by others. He throws on them a burden he might more easily bear himself. He purchases ease at the expense of manhood. He dreads a shadow. If all heretics would speak out boldly and dare the worst, they would find the Goddess Grundy no more terrible than the deities of Otobeite when insulted and challenged by its Queen. Our own cowardice is our greatest tyrant, and danger often vanishes when we courageously confront it.

The Goddess Grundy is a large subject. I intended to treat it more fully, but time and space at present forbid. On some other occasion I hope to expose more completely the cultus of this miserable phantom.

G. W. FOOTE.

### INSPIRATION.

WE are told that we have in our possession the inspired will of God. What is meant by the word "inspired" is not exactly known; but whatever else it may mean, certainly it means that the "inspired" must be the true. If it is true, there is, in fact, no need of its being inspired—the truth will take care of itself.

The Church is forced to say that the Bible differs from all other books; it is forced to say that it contains the actual will of God. Let us then see what inspiration really is. A man looks at the sea, and the sea says something to him. It makes an impression upon his mind. It awakens memory, and this impression depends upon the man's experience—upon his intellectual capacity. Another looks upon the same sea. He has a different brain: he has had a different experience. The sea may speak to him of joy, to the other of grief and tears. The sea cannot tell the same thing to any two human beings, because no two human beings have had the same experience.

A year ago, while the cars were going from Boston to Gloucester, we passed through Manchester. As the cars stopped, a lady sitting opposite, speaking to her husband, looking out of the window and catching, for the first time, a view of the sea, cried out "Is it not beautiful!" and the husband replied, "I'll bet you could dig clams right here!"

Another, standing upon the shore, listening to what the great Greek tragedian called the "multitudinous laughter of the sea," may say: Every drop has visited all the shores of the earth; every one has been frozen in the vast and icy North; every one has fallen in snow, has been whirled by storms around mountain peaks; every one has been kissed to vapor by the sun; every one has worn the seven-hued garment of light; every one has fallen in pleasant rain, gurgled from springs and laughed in brooks while lovers wooed upon the banks, and every one has rushed with mighty rivers back to the sea's embrace. Everything in nature tells a different story to all eyes that see and to all ears that hear.

Once in my life, and once only, I heard Horace Greeley deliver a lecture. I think its title was, "Across the Continent." At last he reached the mammoth trees of California, and I thought, "Here is an opportunity for the old man to indulge his fancy. Here are trees that have outlived a thousand human governments. There are limbs above his head older than the pyramids. While man was emerging from barbarism to something like civilisation, these trees were growing. Older than history, every one appeared to be a memory, a witness and a prophecy. The same wind that filled the sails of the Argonauts had swayed these trees." But these trees said nothing of this kind to Mr. Greeley. Upon these subjects not a word was told to him. Instead, he took his pencil, and after figuring awhile, remarked: "One of these trees, sawed into inch boards, would make more than three hundred thousand feet of lumber."

I was once riding on the cars in Illinois. There had been a violent thunder-storm. The rain had ceased, the sun was going down. The great clouds had floated toward the West, and there they assumed most wonderful architectural shapes. There were temples and palaces domed and turreted, and they were touched with silver, with amethyst and gold. They looked like the homes of the Titans, or the palaces of the gods. A man was sitting near me. I touched him and said: "Did you ever see anything so beautiful?" He looked out. He saw nothing of the cloud, nothing of the sun, nothing of the color; he saw only the country, and replied, "Yes, it is beautiful; I always did like rolling land."

On another occasion I was riding in a stage. There had been a snow, and after the snow a sleet, and all the trees were bent, and all the boughs were arched. Every fence, every log-cabin had been transfigured, touched with a glory almost beyond this world. The great fields were a pure and perfect white; the forests, drooping beneath their

load of gems, made wonderful caves, from which one almost expected to see troops of fairies come. The whole world looked like a bride, jewelled from head to foot. A German on the back seat, hearing our talk, and our exclamations of wonder, leaned forward, looked out of the stage window, and said: "Y-a-a-s, it looks like a clean tablecloth!"

So, when we look upon a flower, a painting, a statue, a star, or a violet, the more we know, the more we have experienced, the more we have thought, the more we remember, the more the statue, the star, the painting, the violet, has to tell. Nature says to me all that I am capable of understanding—gives all that I can receive.

As with star, or flower, or sea, so with a book. A man reads Shakespeare. What does he get from him? All that he has the mind to understand. He gets his little cup full. Let another read him who knows nothing of the drama, nothing of the impersonations of passion, and what does he get? Almost nothing. Shakespeare has a different story for each reader. He is a world in which each recognises his acquaintances—he may know a few, he may know all.

The impression that nature makes upon the mind, the stories told by sea, and star, and flower, must be the natural food of thought. Leaving out for a moment the impression gained from ancestors, the hereditary fears, and drifts, and trends—the natural food of thought must be the impression made upon the brain by coming in contact through the medium of the five senses with what we call the outward world. The brain is natural. Its food is natural. The result, thought, must be natural. The supernatural can be constructed with no material except the natural. Of the supernatural we can have no conception. Thought may be deformed, and the thought of one may be strange to, and denominated as unnatural by, another; but it cannot be supernatural. It may be weak, it may be insane, but it is not supernatural. Above the natural man cannot rise. There can be deformed ideas, as there are deformed persons. There can be religions monstrous and misshapen, but they must be naturally produced. Some people have ideas about what they are pleased to call the supernatural; what they call the supernatural is simply the deformed. The world is to each man according to each man. It takes the world as it really is, and that man to make that man's world, and that man's world cannot exist without that man.

You may ask, And what of all this? I reply, As with everything in nature, so with the Bible. It has a different story for each reader. Is, then, the Bible a different book to every human being who reads it? It is. Can God, then, through the Bible, make the same revelation to two persons? He cannot. Why? Because the man who reads it is a man who inspires. Inspiration is in the man, as well as in the book. God should have inspired readers as well as writers.

You may reply: "God knew that his book would be understood differently by each one, and really intended that it should be understood as it is understood by each." If this be so, then my understanding of the Bible is the real revelation to me. If this is so, I have no right to take the understanding of another. I must take the revelation made to me through my understanding, and by that revelation I must stand. Suppose, then, that I do read this Bible honestly, carefully, and when I get through I am compelled to say, "This book is not true." If this is the honest result, then you are compelled to say, either that God has made no revelation to me, or that the revelation that it is *not* true is the revelation made to me, and by which I am bound. If the book and my brain are both the work of the same infinite God, whose fault is it that the book and the brain do not agree? Either God should have written a book to fit my brain, or should have made my brain to fit his book.

The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of him who reads.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

[Reprinted from "Truthseeker Annual."]

ANOTHER burial scandal has taken place at Kildown. The Rev. Mr. Harrison, the vicar, prohibiting a burial service to be conducted by a Wesleyan minister on the ground that notice had been sent to himself instead of Mr. Poyntz, the curate in charge. These little clerical amenities will doubtless be remembered when the day of reckoning, that is disendowment, comes.

## ACID DROPS.

LORD PENRHYN is much annoyed that workmen in his quarries in Carnarvonshire should have the audacity to form opinions of their own respecting the merits of the Established Church in Wales. Recently the Church party at Bethesda convened a meeting to protest against Disestablishment, the Hon. Colonel West, agent of the Penrhyn estate presiding. As a precaution Churchmen were admitted before the commencement of the proceedings and every effort taken to prevent opposition. A row ensued which gave Lord Penrhyn such offence that he has issued a notice "That henceforth lawless conduct will be met with dismissal from his service."

THE *Guardian* declares that our Government has not provided sufficient chaplains in the army to ensure that our soldiers in the Soudan get Christian burial. By all means send more chaplains to the front. Some of our fire-eating prelates could be well spared for the purpose.

THE same High Church organ suggests that agricultural laborers are unfit for exercising the franchise intelligently, and suggests that the clergy shall now direct Hodge in this matter. What a comment is the present state of the agricultural laborer upon the instruction he has received from the clergy in the past.

THIS question of the relation of the new voters to the Church has been occupying the attention of the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences, where it was resolved that the following subject be respectfully suggested as suitable for discussion at Diocesan Conferences:—"The duty of Churchmen at the present time, independently of politics, in view of the persistent efforts to make the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England a political question." Lord Egerton declared that "Nonconformist ministers were unpaid electioneering agents," and suggested that Church ministers should follow suit. Archdeacon Hannah put the same advice in a manner more child-like and bland. "While there was a perfect intercommunion of sympathy between the clergy and the agricultural laborers, he doubted whether there had been a perfect intercommunion of knowledge. He thought that the clergy might hold a great many more political conversations with their people than they had in the past, and so refute the statements of the Liberationists." The attempt to direct political action is no new thing on the part of the clergy. The influence of the Church has always been on the side of Toryism.

"INFIDELITY" was another subject discussed at the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences. Dr. Thorburn, who complained of the reckless way in which young people were permitted to read whatever came into their hands, and who "considered that the honest doubter was a person whose existence was made a great deal too much of," moved "That the present progress of open and avowed infidelity in this country, while it should not give rise to undue alarm, renders it incumbent on Churchmen to unite heartily in discovering and employing the most effectual means for arresting it." The words "should not give rise to undue alarm" were, however, objected to and expunged by vote from the resolution. It is therefore evident that this representative body of the English Church does view the present progress of open and avowed infidelity with alarm. After eighteen centuries of Christianity, with an Established Church and every social advantage, its highly-paid promoters are alarmed at the progress of infidelity whose advocates are poor, without endowment, and subject to legal and social persecution.

AN "Anxious One" writes to the *Church Times* to know how long he ought to fast after receiving the Communion. The editor replies that "the broad practical rule is that a quarter of an hour after Communion is held to be enough to fast." If it only takes a quarter of an hour to assimilate the Lord's body and blood, it is the most digestible comestible we know.

A PAMPHLET on "Caste in the Evangelical World" informs us that the Evangelical Society, an undenominational organisation, has issued a sort of manual of deportment for its agents, in which it insists, with amusing emphasis, on the necessity of its working men preachers touching their hats when they meet its gentlemen ditto. The City Mission is constituted on the same principle of caste; for no missionary in its service can ever rise to be a general superintendent.

FROM the *Record* comes a similar bitter cry from Evangelical curates, who protest that they are treated by their incumbents not as "brother priests," but as "upper servants." One correspondent writes: "I heartily wish that a private inquiry office existed. I could at once hand in the names of clergymen from whom Protestant Evangelical curates would turn with disgust." What a blessed effect the Christian religion has in promoting meekness and humility among its ministers!

PERHAPS this state of things, says the *Church Times*, may account for Bishop Ryle's treatment of his clergy, which is very like the way in which the Evangelical incumbent treats his curate. "A critic in the gallery once gave vent to the judicious remark, 'We don't expect grammar at the Vic., but you might jine your flats;'" and the clergy of Liverpool might well say, "We don't expect theology, statesmanlike insight, and other things of that kind from Bishop Ryle, but he might be civil."

"A PERPLEXED VICAR," who states that the value of his benefice is considerably under £100 a year, writes that he is threatened with a distraint of his goods for not repaying both interest and principal of a sum borrowed from Queen Anne's Bounty, which was instituted by Parliament for the relief of the poorer clergy.

THE *War Cry* reports that "Captain" and Mrs. Smith, of Manchester, went to barracks, leaving their little boy four years old at home in bed, and with a fire burning. A short time after a neighbor heard the child scream, but failed to obtain admittance. "Captain" Smith was immediately sent for, and found the child almost burnt to death. "Please pray for them," says the editor. Would it not be better to advise Salvation mothers to stay at home with their children?

ANOTHER notice in the organ of the Mahdi of Whitechapel is: "Beware of wolves going about in sheep's clothing. We are getting many notices warning our soldiers against impostors." The credulity of the Salvation flock evidently provides a fertile ground for the profit of knaves.

AMONG forthcoming theological works may be expected "Jehovah's Wax," by the author of "The Lord's Passion;" "The Bed of Straw," by the author of "The Pillar of Fire;" "Cuffing and Skelping," by the author of "Laying-on of Hands;" "Saintly Scouring," by the author of "Holy Dyeing;" and "The Late Nights of Heathenism," by the author of "The Early Days of Christianity."

THE Mahdi of Whitechapel is going to get up a new entertainment in the form of a sacred drama. Mr. Herbert Booth will take the character of the hero and Maréchale Booth that of Mary Magdalen. The Mahdi will bear the bag.

A CONGREGATION at Boston has been seized with uncontrollable paroxysms of sneezing during divine service. Even the parson could not restrain himself. On a search being made by the sexton it was found that a cargo of pepper had been stored in the cellar, which had been let to a wholesale grocer.

FAITH-HEALING does not always necessitate faith on the part of the person healed. The believing can be done by a second person. Thus a "Brother" at Bethshan House trusted in the Lord to heal his child who had been given up by the doctors three times, and the Lord did so. Can't the Salvation Army have faith enough to heal all of us and render hospitals, and doctors, and wooden legs and spectacles unnecessary? Healing by another person's faith is no new thing. Christ healed the daughter of a Canaanitish woman on account of the mother's faith (Matthew xv., 28). Why don't the Salvationists cast out devils now as Christ is said to have done on that occasion? Can the devils do no harm unless people have faith in their existence, just as Christ usually can do no good unless people have faith in him?

A CLERGYMAN at Hull announces a sermon on "Snuffers and Snuff-dishes." The *Christian Commonwealth* is horrified that a minister should vulgarise and degrade the Gospel in this fashion. But God himself vulgarised and degraded his gospel in this fashion (see Exodus xxxvii., 23; xxv., 38; Numbers iv., 9). Why must Christians be superior to their God?

A CORRESPONDENT in the *Christian Commonwealth* complains of the strong spirit of caste exhibited by the Exeter Hall Christians. A choir, it seems, had to be abandoned because mechanics joined it, and the Christian young gentlemen would not mix with them. Christian orators cry out in "an agony of earnestness," "Why don't the working men join us?" and then give them the cold shoulder if they do.

THE Wesleyans, too, are beginning to think of forming a Salvation Army to relieve the severe depression in religious business. In London their "ordinary circuit arrangements have completely broken down," we are told, and chapels in the midst of crowded populations are "almost deserted." The Rev. R. P. Downes is enthusiastically urging them on to the imitation of Booth, and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is ready to take the leadership of the proposed army.

A CORRESPONDENT in the *Rock* points out the "urgent need" of appointing days for national humiliation before Almighty God and intercession for his pardon and guidance. This pardon is desperately needed apparently, for the sin of allowing our Christian soldiers to salute the "sacred carpet of Mecca," and not, as less religiously disposed people might suppose, for the unnecessary slaughter of thousands of Soudanese. Another

correspondent discusses the question of the authorship of the term "Synagogue of Satan, applied by many Protestants to the Romish Church. It is a pity that people with the religious bee in their bonnets cannot find something more practical to do.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* has for months been telling Englishmen that they can only be saved by faith. *What* faith it does not take the trouble to specify; in fact, it appears to think that *any* faith will do. The revolutionary fervour of France, which over-matched the trained armies of Europe, or the religious fanaticism of the Mahdi's troops—either serves to send men to "die unflinching in heaps." The *P. M. G.* asks how we are to stand against the Soudanese without a "faith" as strong as theirs; which is rather a good joke when our troops, with but slight losses, slaughter the poor devils wholesale. "Is it in vain," it concludes, "to hope that we also may yet find a Mahdi for England?" We hope so. But stay; the English Mahdi is found. He hails from the Grecian, and his name is Booth. We trust that the *P. M. G.* will induce him to lead the Salvation Army against the other Mahdi. England could well spare them for the trip.

A YOUNG Austrian committed suicide at Delph, in Saddleworth, by swallowing prussic acid. The inquest resulted in a verdict of *felo de se*, and in accordance with the coroner's warrant the head of the Saddleworth police force had to take charge of the body and see that it was interred without religious rite or ceremony. A crowd of nearly two thousand people assembled at the graveyard to protest against the barbaric law, and the police had great difficulty in keeping order.

POOR Adolf Skrohofsky's small headstone bears the inscription "Alas for the rarity of Christian charity." That line from Hood ought to be cut on the tombstone of Christianity itself. We suppose the poor fellow was crushed by the world's strife, and felt as much puzzled by it as old Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss." He took his sure dose of prussic acid and settled "the primordial riddle" and himself at the same time. He sleeps soundly enough now, and all the "Christian charity" will neither be able to disturb him nor prevent the grass from growing greenly over his grave.

We read in a Christian journal that the "Evangelicals still hold the fort" of Solifidianism. "What the deuce is Solifidianism?" will be the remark of the ordinary British reader on reading such an announcement. Having duly investigated this important subject we are enabled to inform a sadly unenlightened public that a Solifidian is one who believes in justification by faith alone. Go on holding the fort then, ye Solifidians, as long as you can stand the ridicule with which you will be bombarded. When you can grow corn and make steam-engines by faith alone we will believe that you can justify all your fanaticisms and crimes by mere faith.

AT Hawick the sitting magistrate, Baillie Milligan, has been presented with white gloves in honor of the circumstance that during the previous week there had not only been no cases before the police-court, but no persons locked up. Bailie Milligan said the town was an orderly and peaceful one with one painful exception—he referred to the clergy, who were continually fighting and quarrelling. He suggested that the Rev. Mr. Orr and the Rev. Mr. Thomson should each be presented with a pair of pistols before beginning their services next Sunday.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* confesses that the revision of the Old Testament will not remove "imperfections and stumbling-blocks" from the divine narrator, which preserves bad laws and "annals of crime and punishment which shame and appal." "These dark places will remain," for the revisers cannot transform "semi-barbarous Syrian chiefs into meek and lowly Christians, taught from their infancy to forgive their enemies." They have to leave untouched "these irremovable occasions of pain and shame, which, however salutary when rightly considered, seem necessarily to the unpurged eye to be stains and scandals in Holy Writ." But why does God send a revelation so evidently abounding in stains and scandals to convert men to his sway? They can only accept the divine Word by defying their own moral instincts and perverting their intellect.

THE *C. C.* also owns that the profession of grace without excellence of life is "so common that Christianity has been brought into unconcealed contempt." In old times piety was so real "that persecution was its inevitable correlative," and "martyrdom was fiercely and unreservedly dealt out" by both sides. "Let it not be forgotten," says the *C. C.*, "that the intolerance was first on the side of Christianity, which would endure no idol." The decay of this zeal, and the consequent "tolerance which is deadening the collective conscience" is as much lamented by our contemporary as it would be welcomed by us if it had only reached the still more latitudinarian stage of leaving Freethinkers entirely unpersecuted.

A RELIGIOUS suicide last week left behind him a pious letter enjoining his son never to forget God and praying that he might

grow up in the fear of the Lord. Yet Talmage assures us only infidels commit suicide.

DR. SKENE has written a new "Gospel History," to the full as credible as the old stories. One of its statements is that "Mary the wife of Cleophas, is called by both (Matthew and Mark) the mother of James the Less and of the *Apostles* and of *Joses*." Dr. Skene doesn't say whether he means the twelve apostles or the seventy-two, but any way, this Mary must have had a large family.

IN last week's *Detroit Free Press* Luke Sharp tells a story of a magic lantern entertainment. One of the slides represented the ironclad *Invincible* lying in the Thames; another one showed a good picture of an open Bible with a book-mark on one of its pages. The exhibitor on showing the latter was in the habit of spinning the well-known yarn of Queen Victoria saying to some savage potentate, "This is the secret of England's greatness." At the word *this* the picture of the Bible was thrown on the screen. On one occasion, however, the story was made much more truthful than usual by the assistant, at the words "This is the secret of England's greatness," throwing on the picture of an ironclad.

MR. SKINNER, a teetotal orator, has been giving vent to the following rich hoax: "A London drayman was taken to Guy's Hospital, and died while under treatment. After death, his body being of enormous size, the surgeons made sixteen holes in various parts of his body, inserting a gas jet in each hole, and applying a light, the flames of alcohol lit in every hole." This drayman must have been as full of the spirit as the Apostles at the day of Pentecost, when cloven tongues as of fire sat upon each of them, and the spectators thought they were "full of new wine."

THE writer of "Chats with the Young Folk" in *Sunday Words* should seriously ponder the doom pronounced on a certain class of persons in Rev. xxi., 8. He signs himself "The Old Boy." If he were "the father of lies" himself he would be hard pushed to crowd more "fibs" into a single column. We would back "The Old Boy" against an American humorist, save on the score of originality. The only story in the pack of lies about infidel conversions and death-beds which is possibly original is the statement that "Sir Isaac Newton began life as an infidel." The others are our familiar friends, the horrible death-beds of Voltaire and Paine, the last of whom, "like Voltaire, began to call upon God, thus giving the lie to all the teachings of his life." Friend Whitmore's "what shall we call them" about the conversion of infidel leaders is also hashed up for the benefit of young folk, who must be very green indeed if they swallow this sort of pious garbage.

TALMAGE is horrified because the Americans are taking to enjoying themselves on Sunday. He declares that "every place of secular amusement that is open on Sabbath in any city is grand larceny against the Lord God Almighty." Preachers of the Talmage order always identify the Lord God Almighty with themselves, and resent nothing so much as a threatened poaching on their preserves.

#### THE MAN AT THE DOOR.

You'll see him every Sunday,  
On the cathedral stair—  
And know him by his sainted look,  
And meek, resigned air.

What is he? Not a parson—  
Nor lay-brother—nor priest—  
He's not the man who rings the bell—  
For all *he looks so triste*.

He's one of those religious men  
Who stand the porch within,  
And hold the plate for pious folks  
To drop therein their tin.

And all the good church-going dames  
Declare, with one accord,  
It does them good to see him work  
Free gratis for the Lord.

But should that good collector's brain  
With too much liquor reel,  
His tongue, too glib, will tell the cause  
Of all his pious zeal.

Collect? Of course I do! he'll say—  
And truth for once he'll speak—  
"Because, you see, that plate to me's  
Worth just a pound a week!"

MEDICUS.

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 29, Ram's Horn Room, Ingram Street, Glasgow; morning, afternoon and evening.

Monday, March 30, Paisley.

Thursday, April 2, St. James's Hall Peace Demonstration.

APRIL 5, Bolton; 12, Milton Hall; 14, Walworth; 19, Hall of Science; 26, Hall of Science.

MAY 3, Hall of Science; 6, Camberwell; 10, Milton Hall; 17, Hall of Science; 24, N. S. S. Conference; 31, Manchester.

JUNE 7, Liverpool; 14, Plymouth.

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RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—A. Gibbons, A. Hillerby, G. L.

J. DE FRAINE.—Shall appear.

S. TRUIN.—Papers sent. If Edward Tomlin is willing to give one pound towards putting us down, he had better send us the amount, and we will keep it until the Lord orders another prosecution.

A. FREETHINKER.—It is hardly in our way. The Rev. G. London's hatred of Nonconformity is only natural in a Churchman, and it of course stirred his bile to see a brother clergyman aiding Wesleyan rivals in his own parish.

J. W. CROWTHER, 37 Gibbet Street, Halifax, has opened a shop for the sale of Freethought literature.

R. A. DEITH.—Glad to hear that you are making converts to Freethought. Mr. Sharman is an advanced Unitarian, not an orthodox Christian.

H. G. SWIFT.—Shall appear.

PAUL WILSON.—Your sketch was too forced an interpretation of the text, and the execution was not quite up to the mark.

W. V.—Many thanks for the handsome photograph of the Shelley memorial, which we shall frame and hang up in our blasphemy factory. We could, however, have suggested to the artist a better design; at least we think so; his lacks strength, and the audacity which should commemorate a genius so soaring. We do not publish an Index to the *Freethinker*.

J. CADDICK writes "Never be tempted to leave off the sketches. During these hard times they are as good to me as a pound of steak . . . I show them to a Wesleyan local preacher here who drops in on Monday to have a peep at them; and doesn't he laugh at them on the quiet."

J. MORRISON.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. ROBSON.—Thanks for your good wishes. Your article is fairly well written, but we have no space for it. Now and then a paragraph or a scrap of verse is all we can find room for besides the contributions of our regular staff.

A. CUNNINGHAM.—We have sold over a quarter of a million of our "*Freethinker* Tracts." Over thirty thousand copies have been sold of some numbers of "*Bible Romances*."

W. S.—We cannot add to our Tracts at present. Mr. Ramsey will write you about the price for a large supply if you address him direct. You do well to order the six copies of "*Comic Bible Sketches*" through your newsagent. That is always the best plan.

F. POLLARD.—Where is the point of the joke?

ARGUS.—Many thanks.

E. W. GRAY (Port Adelaide).—Subscription for Capt. Walker received with thanks. It will expire Feb. 21, 1886.

A. W. HAMMOND.—The following texts refer to David as a man after God's own heart and as walking in God's ways: Acts xiii., 22; 1 Samuel xiii., 14; 1 Kings iii., 14; xv., 3, 5.

G. HORN.—The advice is needless. Remember the wise word of the poet—  
"Teach not a parent's mother to extract  
The embryo juices of an egg by suction.  
That good old lady can the feat enact  
Quite irrespective of your kind instruction."

S. CAER.—"*Freethought Gleanings*," consisting of telling extracts from authors of repute upon the main points in dispute between Christians and Freethinkers will suit your purpose. Price one penny.

J. SAUNDERS.—Thanks for scraps and suggestions.

ANTI-CHRIST.—We are too busy to write to you direct. The Jewish book referred to is the "*Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*" which we publish. Our notes explain how in the credulous age in which Christianity took its rise, no Jew thought of contesting the alleged miracles, or of examining their evidence. It was so much easier to say they were the work of magic or evil spirits, and this is exactly what the early Christians said of the pagan miracles. The boasted spread of Christianity before the time of Constantine is largely a myth. Gibbon estimates the whole Christian population of the Roman Empire in the time of Constantine as twelve millions. Far more converts were made by Buddhism in half the time. A writer in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* contends that the Christian success in India is equal to that in the first ages. That Christianity made little progress before the destruction of Jerusalem is certain, or it must have been described by Josephus, who relates at length all the affairs of that time. Many Christian authorities date the book of Revelation as written at the end of the first century, yet the seven churches mentioned therein are all within a narrow radius.

KILMARNOCK.—'Scotia' desires us to intimate that Freethought friends in Kilmarnock, New Milns, and surrounding district, desirous of forming an association are invited to meet friends on the banks of the Irvine, between Grongar Rows and Milton Mill, on Sunday, April 5, at 1 p.m.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Echo—West Surrey Gazette—Scarborough Evening News—Lucifer—Northamptonshire Guardian—Christchurch Guardian—Leeds Daily News—Hampshire Independent—Hull Packet—English Mechanic—Truthseeker—Liberator—Dundee Advertiser—Porcupine.

## "FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

We offer another *PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA* for the best Comic Bible Sketch, and a *PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA* for the best Religious Topical Sketch; the competition to close on April 1.

The drawing must be done on white cardboard or thick white paper in pure black ink. The lines should be bold and well distinct. Washes or colors must not be used. The size should be about one-third broader than our ordinary single or double column size.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

GRIMSBY gave Mr. Foote a hearty welcome last Sunday. The weather was glorious, and Freethinkers came in from distant places, such as Louth and Hull, a few journeying as far as thirty or forty miles. The lectures were presided over by Mr. Alward, the gentleman who took the first prize at the Fisheries' Exhibition for the best model of a fishing smack, and who has been known in Grimsby as an ardent Freethinker as well as a good citizen.

WE beg to remind our London readers of the great Demonstration against the Soudan war, which will take place in St. James's Hall next Thursday evening. Mr. Bradlaugh will take the chair, and among the speakers will be Mr. Labouchere, M.P., Mr. Storey, M.P., Mr. C. B. McLaren, M.P., Professor Beesley, Mrs. Besant, and Mr. Foote. There are a few numbered reserved seats at 2s. 6d., tickets for which can be obtained at 63 Fleet Street or 28 Stonecutter Street. Those who desire platform tickets should apply to Mr. Bradlaugh, 20 Circus Road, St. John's Wood. We hope to see St. James's Hall crammed to suffocation, as the newspapers say, and a resolution carried unanimously against the policy of "Butcher and Bolt" in the Soudan.

THE following prayer from Sheridan's *Critic* is humbly offered to the Archbishop of Canterbury. With the alteration of just one word, it would exactly suit in the present crisis.

"O mighty Mars!  
Behold thy votaries submissive beg  
That thou wilt deign to grant them all they ask,  
Assist them to accomplish all their ends,  
And sanctify whatever means they use,  
To gain them."

THE *Globe* asks "Major" Pearson to try his faith-healing on the members of a Church Army procession, who were seriously injured by a horse they frightened. Good; but why call us blasphemers for asking why similiar experiments were not tried eighteen centuries ago?

MR. F. BACON FRANK a prospecting candidate for the Doncaster division, was severely heckled by Mr. Hillerby as to whether he would vote for the Affirmation Bill and the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Our friends throughout the country will do well to follow Mr. Hillerby's excellent example.

THE *Northamptonshire Guardian*, in an article on Mr. Foote's recent lectures in the Shoemakers' Borough, says that his imprisonment "has been wholly mischievous" to Christianity, and that Sir Henry Tyler, Judge North and other pious Tories are "curses to the cause they think to defend."

So far so good. But we cannot agree with the *Guardian* in the theory that real Christianity is not responsible for our imprisonment. Appealing to the utterances of its founder is risky work, as they are so contradictory of each other. All we know is that from the days of Constantine, when Christianity first came into power, until the days of Judge North, it has systematically persecuted to the full extent of its opportunity and ability.

LORD THURLOW's motion in the House of Lords in favor of opening the Natural History Museum at Kensington on Sunday afternoons was very nearly carried, the voting being exactly even, 64 to 64. It is anticipated that Lord Thurlow will obtain a majority the next time he brings his resolution forward. He would have done so this time but for the votes of the Bishops.

Lloyd's Newspaper is outspoken on the Sunday question. It says that "Our Sunday observance is an organised hypocrisy," and remarks that "many of the people who are so afraid that the Sunday frequenters of museums would use public conveyances

to go there, themselves habitually use public conveyances to sit under their favorite preachers."

WE are requested by Mr. Sharman to acknowledge the following subscriptions to the National Association for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws:—Henry Crossfield, 3s.; Thomas H. Bastard, £1; Clara Kingsford, 5s.; John A. Sommers, 10s.; W. B. Waterson, £1 1s.; J. B. Darton, 2s. 6d.; W. W. Roberts, 3s.; W. Mumby, 5s.; G. W. Cooke, 10s.; W. Delgarno, 1s.; S. Sowden, 1s.; Mills, 1s.

THE Hon. Robert Stout, a pronounced Freethinker, has just taken the office of Minister of Education in the New Zealand Cabinet. The Hon. R. Stout is Premier, and doubtless considers the Ministry of Education the most important office.

THE *Liberator*, Melbourne, speaks thus of our Christmas Number:—"The imprisonment that Mr. Foote and his friends suffered appears to have made them better—from their own point of view. Certain it is that the present Christmas Number of their paper is, at least, as 'blasphemous' as ever. The front page bears an illustrated article on 'God in a Cradle,' and which places the Holy Ghost in a rather awkward position. 'Abraham and Isaac' (revised version), 'The Christian God' (full-page portrait), 'Joseph's Brethren,' etc., are all well executed caricatures that will make the pious 'squirm.' Sixteen pages of reading matter, prose and poetry, complete a number replete with satire and amusement."

THE Liberation Society's Electoral Conference, presided over by Mr. Illingworth, M.P., took a very decided stand as to Liberal candidates being required to support the abolition of the Establishment in Scotland, and the Disestablishment of the Church of England. The general opinion was expressed that the time had come for bringing the whole question to the front, and resolutions were passed dealing with ways and means directed to that object. The tug of war, as is pointed out in an article in the April number of *Progress*, will come on the question of disendowment. Mr. Illingworth said the Liberation Society would point out alternative methods of using the 200 millions absorbed by the Church. But what are the alternative methods? Many Nonconformists think only of disendowing episcopacy in order to endow their own superstitions. Freethinkers will do well to advocate the claims of education in opposition to the Church.

RELIGION is being gradually disendowed in France. The Chamber of Deputies has considerably reduced all the grants for religious purposes, and increased those for education. In Germany also, when pious King William takes the throne and crown which await him on high, no doubt a separation of Church and State will follow, and Christianity be left to support itself on its own resources.

AMONG the resolutions passed at the Liberation Conference was one declaring approval of Mr. Hopwood's Affirmation Bill.

THE Rev. F. T. Reed, Unitarian Minister, has made a great stir at Poole by preaching one Sunday on the Deluge. He took the side of the rationalists, and showed the gross absurdities and improbabilities involved in the account in Genesis, which he treated as a mere legend inserted solely for the moral lesson it was supposed to convey. He said that the theory of a partial deluge was a "device of perplexed theologians;" the idea of propping up over a limited area a column of water three miles high—for Ararat, which was covered by the flood, is of that height—was absurd enough to startle the most unquestioning credulity. Notwithstanding this, the Rev. E. Evans, Congregational minister at Poole, in replying on a subsequent Sunday evening, resorted to this ridiculous idea as a full explanation of difficulties, since the ark would then have been large enough to hold the animals of the limited area. But Genesis (see vi., 13, 17; vii., 4, 21-23; viii., 9) clearly represents the flood as universal, and as destroying "every living substance." A clergyman who can defend the Bible by contradicting it thus ignominiously, and who can unhesitatingly assure men that no historical fact is better attested than the flood, is simply a mendacious humbug or a conceited simpleton.

No less than twelve letters appear in the last number of the *English Mechanic and World of Science* on the subject of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in connection with the origin of man. Ample proof is found in this correspondence of the spread of modern scientific views and of the critical spirit. "Memnon" shows that the Pentateuch is a number of separate documents written and edited long after the time of their alleged author. "Priam" shows that Moses could not have written details of his own death, and that the Israelites were strangely ignorant of the all-important consequences (according to the later Christian theory) of the fall of man. W. J. Grey upholds the Darwinian theory, and condemns the interpolation of countless ages between the verses of Gen. i. F. W. H. speaks of the "infantile mythical character of the whole narrative" of the creation. "A Fellow of the Geological Society" speaks of the "fossil ideas and arguments" still brought forward in opposition to geology as suitable only for the pages of the *Christian Million*.

## THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR'S HYMN.

"Thou shalt save nothing alive that breatheth."—MOSES (Deut. xx., 16).

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—CHRIST (Luke xvi., 31).

GUIDE us, O thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrims through this ravaged land;  
Guide us to fresh scenes of slaughter;  
Help us with thy pow'ful hand.  
We are weak, but thou art mighty;  
Help our sanguinary band.

Grant us grace to do thy will, Lord;  
Grace to kill thine every foe;  
Grace to sabre all before us:  
For thou dost command us so!  
We will slay both child and mother;  
We will slaughter high and low.

Thus thou'lt give the Canaan promised  
To thy saints, so good thou art,  
If we slay the present owners,  
If in faith we do our part.  
Help us then, O great Jehovah;  
Make thy cut-throats strong of heart.

Orphans shriek in vain for mercy,  
Women weep and dotards whine;  
But we scorn mere human weakness,  
We obey the will divine;  
We fulfil thy murd'rous mandate,  
For our hearts are hard as thine.

Holy horrors shall delight us;  
Crops and homes in fire shall glow:  
Godly bayonets shall transfix men,  
Holy lances lay them low,  
Lurid bolts and heavenly thunder  
Sweep the field of every foe.

Bless our pious wars and plunder,  
Thou who hear'st our Sabbath chimes:  
Wholesale theft and wholesale murder  
Thou hast order'd many times.  
Keep us holy, keep us righteous;  
Consecrate our splendid crimes.

Then o'er heaps of butcher'd heathen  
We will glorify thy name.  
We will serve thee, we will bless thee,  
Far and wide shall spread thy fame,  
If thou wilt but always help us  
In our deeds of blood and shame.

W. P. BALL.

THE ALLEGED NECESSITY OF A REVELATION.—That the human race needed a revelation is the primary assumption of all Christian evidence writers since the time of Paley. The Hindu, the Mahomedan, or even the Latter Day Saint, might deduce from the same premisses the probability of their scriptures being divine. But if there be a necessity for a revelation, is it not equally necessary that revelation should be effectual? Omnipotence having spoken, the universe must have been convinced. To believe otherwise is to imply a failure in divine effort, or such dispensation is not "necessary." A God omniscient would have known how to convince mankind; a God munificent would have wished to convince them, if necessary to their eternal welfare; and a God omnipotent would have had the power to effect what his infinite wisdom and goodness dictate; therefore human belief must have uniformly followed.—*Robert Cooper*, "The Bible and its Evidences," p. 3; 1858.

THE SECOND COMING.—The prophecies of the second coming of Christ (Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Mark xii.; Luke xvii., 22-37; xxi., 5-36), are mixed up with those of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in a manner which has long been the perplexity and despair of orthodox commentators. The obvious meaning of the passages which contain these predictions—the sense in which they were evidently understood by the evangelists who wrote them down—the sense which we know from many sources they conveyed to the mind of the early Christian—clearly is that the coming of Christ to judge the world should follow immediately the destruction of the Holy City, and should take place during the lifetime of the then existing generation. Now, if these predictions really proceeded from Jesus, he was entirely in error on the subject, and the prophetic spirit was not in him; for not only did his advent not follow close on the destruction of Jerusalem, but 1,800 years have since elapsed, and neither he nor the preliminary signs which were to announce him have yet appeared. If these predictions did not proceed from him, then the evangelists have taken the liberty of putting into the mouth of Christ words and announcements which he never uttered.—*W. R. Greg*, "The Creed of Christendom," vol. ii., p. 18; 1874.

## THE GOSPELS.\*

THE author of this little handbook sends it to us with a courteous request for our impartial opinion. The best courtesy we can offer in return is the frank expression of our objections to his arguments, which although of an *ex parte* character, we gladly acknowledge are presented in the style of a gentleman and a scholar. It is unnecessary to mention our points of agreement with the author, but we would state at the outset that were the whole of his contention granted and the gospels shown to have been generally received by the Christian world at the end of the second century, and even to have been written by the authors whose names they bear, it would not follow that they were trustworthy in their wonderful stories of a man who was born of a virgin, was taken by the devil to the pinnacle of a temple, walked on water, sent devils into pigs, and ascended from the earth into heaven, or in the statement that those who did not believe should be damned. A divine book should come with divine credentials, yet the gospel writers never claim divine command or sanction for their works. Jesus neither wrote himself, nor is he alleged to have authorised others to write for him. What guarantee then have we for the truth of such a story as that of the miraculous conception? On the other hand, if these documents were the product of a credulous and uncritical age, if they were not written by eye-witnesses, as only two are pretended to be, and if these were not the production of those whose names they bear, what better reason is there for believing the miracles they contain, than for crediting those related in the Gospel of James, the Gospel of Thomas, or the Gospel of Nicodemus? A demonstration of the antiquity and genuineness of the Gospels, and of the truth of the Christian religion are not the same thing, but the latter is dependent on the former. If the Gospels are not authentic, Christianity, so far as its supernatural features are concerned, is out of court. Our author sets out with the testimony of Irenæus, said to have been appointed Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, A.D. 174. The work which goes under this name is the first to mention the four Gospels as by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. "His appeal to the Gospels," says the writer, "must be considered not as individual but representative, *i. e.* of the universal feelings of Christians at the time." This we dispute. So far from there being universality of belief upon this point, the very statement of Irenæus that "the Gospels could not be more or fewer than four, for the sufficient reason that there were four principal winds and four regions (or corners) to the world in which we live," was directed against heretics who had other gospels than those afterwards declared canonical. The book ascribed to Irenæus mentions the Gospel of Truth, used by the Valentinians, and the Gospel of Judas, used by the Cainites. The Marcionists used the Gospel of Marcion, and Gospels ascribed to Philip, James, Peter, and the twelve Apostles, as well as the Gospel of the Hebrews and the Gospel of the Egyptians, were in existence and repute in the second century. The orthodox Dr. Donaldson observes of Irenæus: "What he says about the Apostle John has the appearance of being, to say the least, highly colored" ("History of Christian Literature," vol. i., p. 157); and George Reber, in his book, "The Christ of Paul" (New York, 1876, p. 178), says: "The studied dishonesty of Irenæus in attempting to palm off the Presbyter John for the Apostle, is as dark a piece of knavery as is to be found in the history of a Church which has encouraged such practices from the time it claimed to be the depository of all the divine wealth left by the apostles."

But does the statement of Irenæus even prove that he had the same documents as are now known as the canonical gospels? We venture to doubt it. How comes it that Irenæus seriously argues that Jesus lived to be fifty years of age? His testimony to the Gospel of Matthew is, like that of all the Fathers, that he wrote in Hebrew. But our Gospel is a Greek one, and there is good reason to believe it is not a translation. But if it is a translation, who made it? Not one of the early Fathers mentions a translator, or suggests that Matthew wrote other than a gospel for the Hebrews written in their own tongue. And this Hebrew Gospel was different from our Greek one. Epiphanius tells us the version used by the Ebionites omitted the story of the Incarnation. Moreover Papias (A.D. 150) informs us that what Matthew wrote in Hebrew were *λογία* or "sayings." Our author says this word is "as applicable to the extant Matthew as to a book of simple discourses." This is hardly so, as any may see who will look to the signification of the word in Acts vii. 38, Rom. iii. 2, Heb. v. 12, Pet. iv. 11. Moreover, it is in the sayings alone that occur the Hebrew words, "Raka, Mammon, Gehenna, Amen" etc. That the compiler of Matthew had other writings before him is evident from his duplicate versions of the same thing.† Indeed it is clear from a comparison of Matt. xxiv. 22-25 with Mark xiii. 28-31, and Luke xxi. 29-32, that the Synoptics, instead of being, as they are claimed to be, original productions, either borrowed from each other, or what is more probable, from a common source. The allusion to the Church in Matt. xviii. 17, is sufficient of itself to show the late date of the earliest gospel, which Dr. Davidson places about 105 A.D.

\* "The Antiquity and Genuineness of the Gospels." London: W. H. Allen and Co., 13 Waterloo Place, S.W. 1884. 2s.

† Compare iv. 23 with ix. 35; v. 29 with xviii. 9; vi. 14 with xviii. 35; ix. 34 with xi. 24; xii. 39 with xvi. 4; xvii. 20 with xxi. 21, etc.

(Introduction, p. 416, vol. i.; 1882). Even if we allow a much earlier date, there was ample time for the accretion of legends among a credulous people in a superstitious age.

The evidence that John, the only other alleged eye-witness of the miracles, wrote the Gospel which goes under his name, is of a still more dubious character. It is never mentioned before 170. Papias, who is called a hearer and disciple of John, makes no mention of any Gospel by that Apostle, though he does mention those by Matthew and Mark. Even Justin Martyr does not mention it, as he surely would have done to support his theory of the Logos, had he been aware of its existence. As it is, his theory is quite distinct from that of the fourth Gospel. Irenæus says it was written to extirpate the errors sown in the minds of men by Cerinthus, a heretic of the second century. Even our author places it at the year 98. John must have been a wonderful old fisherman, if at that age he could compose a theosophical treatise, and remember such wonderful miracles as the turning of water into wine for guests well drunk, the opening of the eyes of one born blind, by spitting on them, the raising of Lazarus from the dead after he was stinking, events quite forgotten by the first three evangelists, and neither mentioned by Paul or any of the apostolical Fathers. But our author boldly declares the fourth Gospel has John's own signature and the counter-signature of his disciples. By the first assertion he alludes to the strong asseveration of the fact that blood and water came out of the side of Jesus, "he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe," which might apply to any one who witnessed the fact, and being in the third person can hardly have meant the writer, or imply that "he" wrote all the preceding narrative. The author says "In chapter xxi., which is supplementary, other people as clearly sign in his favor." But what right has he to suppose the last chapter an addition or interpolation by other hands? Who were these parties unknown who knew that the unnamed beloved disciple testified to those things, and that his testimony was true? The Church of Ephesus we are told. May not the Church have put in other passages such as those similar ones in chap. iii. 11, 32, showing the unbelief of others in their testimony? Moreover, John the Presbyter, or elder, was at Ephesus, and the discourses of Jesus in the Gospel of John are so like the epistles of John the elder as to warrant the opinion that the later manufactured the former. On the other hand, it is certain that if John the Divine was author of the barbarous Revelation, he never wrote the refined fourth Gospel. Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, in his celebrated charge in the Tichborne case, pointed out the difference of mental and moral character exhibited between the undoubted letters of young Sir Roger and those of the claimant. The difference of character between the author of the Apocalypse and the author of the last Gospel is even more striking, and to a critical mind precludes the idea of both being by the same author.

It would be unfair to the writer of the book under notice not to mention the most original portion of his volume, that in which he follows the lead of Isaac Taylor in showing that many of the ancient classics have even less evidence of their authenticity than the Gospel. To this the reply is simple. No literature labors under such a heavy load of suspicion as early Christian literature, not only because the claims of a dominant Church are founded thereon, but because there is connected with no literature such demonstration of wholesale forgery. Of the canonical books of the New Testament even orthodox critics are constrained to admit that at least the Epistle to the Hebrews, the second epistle of Peter and that of Jude, were not written by the persons whose names they bear. Forged Gospels were attributed to nearly all the Apostles, in addition to forged Acts of Pilate, Acts of Peter and Paul, forged epistles of Peter, James, Paul, Clement, Ignatius, and Diognetus, and numerous forged Revelations. Eusebius cites as genuine a forged letter from Jesus Christ to Abgarus, a forged testimony of Phlegon to the darkening of the sun at the crucifixion, and a forged passage in the works of Josephus. The worth of the *Æneid* and *De Rerum Natura* would not be in the least degree affected, if we had not contemporary evidence, as we have, that these epics were written respectively by Virgil and Lucretius. Does our author put the Gospels on the same footing? Are we at liberty to accept or reject the miracles as we may the theory of Epicurus or the descent of Æneas to hell with the Sibyl? It must be remembered that with few of the classics was there anything like the occasion for their being mentioned by succeeding authors, as was the case with the divinely-inspired standards of the Church. Had the fourth Gospel been written by John it ought to have been mentioned by the apostolical Fathers as surely as each succeeding work on geometry mentions Euclid.

Although much of the book before us is compiled from other books, it is in this respect not different from others of its class, and the prefatory essay shows that its reverend author has an original turn of mind. We know no reason why he should not give his name. In an age of scepticism he might find, like Canons Sanday and Westcott, that Apologetics is a path to preferment.

J. M. WHEELER.

The bellringer of Holy Trinity Church, St. Anne Street, Liverpool, suddenly dropped dead after ringing the church bells on Sunday. What an awful warning!

