

# THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## "COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES—XVIII



BOILS IN EGYPT.

*"And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians."*—Exodus ix., 11.

## SPURGEON ON INFIDELITY.

MR. SPURGEON has uttered another wail over infidelity. The oracle of the Metropolitan Tabernacle says that the crucifixion of Jesus was the crowning sin of our race, but Freethinkers are worse than the Jews, for by their unbelief they nail the blessed Lord to his cross a second time. We beg to differ. There have been many worse crimes than the crucifixion of Jesus done in the world, and several of them have been perpetrated by very pious Christians who are now enjoying their reward somewhere on the right hand of God Almighty. Jesus contributed to his own death quite as much as his enemies, and if his punishment was a crime at least half the guilt must be laid on him. Nay, we go further, and say that he should bear the whole. Mr. Spurgeon alleges that he was God. In that case he has only himself to thank for his fate. He expressly told the Jews, centuries before the Christian era, that they were to put to death everybody who broached new ideas on the subject of religion. When, therefore, he himself came in the form of a man, preaching new doctrines and pretending to be a kind of God, they applied to him his own order, roasted him at his own fire, and dished him with his own sauce. It was a fine piece of poetical justice.

The crime of "infidelity" does not exist outside Mr. Spurgeon's imagination. He charges us with saying "the most spiteful things against the Redeemer." But all criticism is spiteful to the Christian mind. Faith is the greatest virtue, and reason the greatest crime. Argument is blasphemy, and examination is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Of course we are "spiteful" to silly folk who want to fence their creed against the profane approach of common-sense.

Formerly, says Mr. Spurgeon, "infidelity" was philosophic, but now it uses "the blatant language of Tom Paine." Why does Mr. Spurgeon speak of *Tom Paine*? It is a piece of vulgar impertinence. What would he think if we spoke of Joe the Carpenter or Jack the Baptist? And what does he mean by the "blatant language" of the author of the "Rights of Man" and the "Age of Reason"? Thomas Paine wrote his native English with extraordinary elegance as well as power, and Mr. Spurgeon will never equal the beauty of his style. Look at the fine intellectual and graceful expression of Paine's features; then look at the gross and ungainly appearance of Mr. Spurgeon; and decide which of the two is the more likely to indulge in "blatant language." Probably Mr. Spurgeon spoke in ignorance. We do not suppose that he ever read a page of Thomas Paine's writings in his whole life.

The great preacher, as they style him, went on to say of these criminal and blatant infidels that "in their unmitigated scorn for Christ they prove that the very spirit of persecution still burns within them, and they would indulge it if they could." What consummate impudence! These Christians, in the name of Christ, have imprisoned us, racked us, and burnt us; they have done their utmost to crush us out of existence; they still try to rob us of our civil rights, not having the power to do more; and when we turn round and tell them that their Christ was no god and that their creed is false and inhuman, they cry out like dear injured innocents, "What! do you mean to trample us under foot? You persecuting wretches! Do you want our blood?"

Like a bully, who thrashes a boy until he grows big enough to laugh at him, and cries out "Murder" when the old victim greets his malice with chaff. We do not wish, much less intend, to persecute those who choose to be superstitious. If Jesus Christ and the Apostles were alive now we should treat them with the same good-humored contempt which we show the leaders of the Salvation Army. So long as they keep the peace, and their hands off us, Christians may be as foolish as they please.

Towards the end of his sermon Mr. Spurgeon waxed quite pathetic. "I see," he said, "a mystic cross to which your cruel words do nail my Lord. I see before my eyes the Lord himself crucified afresh and put to an open shame again by infidel sarcasm." How dreadful! We can scarcely see for tears. Our eyes rain down big drops, and the room is flooded several inches deep. Infidel sarcasm is an awful thing. We never thought it would nail up poor Jesus Christ again. But we see its fatal effects, and feel the force of Mr. Spurgeon's pathos. We are horrified, and we repent. Our next step will be to apply for a menial position in a church—"I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than dwell in the tents of the infidels."

G. W. FOOTE

## BEHIND DATE.

IF CHRISTIANITY were true there would be no necessity for the shoals of volumes that have been written to prove it. There would be no arguing the matter now. Not only is it absurd to suppose that God would come down to the earth and that the larger portion of the world would remain unconvinced. Not only is it incredible that, Jesus being God, the Jews, nay even his own brothers, should not believe on him; but further, and in itself conclusive against the supernatural claims of Christianity, is the fact that if





its teachings were true, Jesus would long since have appeared again, and the world have been brought to an end ages ago.

Jesus, speaking of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem is reported as saying: "Immediately after the tribulation in those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light," and so on. "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv., 29—34; Mark xiii., 24—30; Luke xxi., 25—33). Words could not be more explicit than these declarations of Jesus to his disciples. "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." "They shall deliver you up to be afflicted," etc. "Verily I say unto you, there be some *standing here* which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. xvi., 28).

Peter, in his first preaching at Pentecost, declared that the last days had come (Acts ii., 17). Paul's writings teem with the same teaching expressed in his usual emphatic style. Thus he writes: "The Lord is at hand:" "Waiting on his coming:" "For yet a little while, he that shall come will come and will not tarry:" "The night is far spent, the day is at hand," etc. But over and above all this, the great apostle expressly writes to the Thessalonians: "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [*precede* in Revised Version] them which are asleep" (1 Thess. iv., 15). And addressing Timothy *personally* concerning the traitors who should come in the last days, he says "from such turn away" (2 Tim. iii., 5).

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of "exhorting one another so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. x., 25). James takes up the strain, saying: "Be patient therefore brethren unto the coming of the Lord," and "Behold the judge standeth before the door" (v., 7—9). John, in his First Epistle, declares: "It is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (ii., 18). Jude says: "There are certain men *crept in unawares*," etc. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying: 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints'"—quoting from an apocryphal book attributed to Enoch, which, of course, was no more the production of the seventh from Adam than of Adam himself.

The alleged speedy end of the world produced St. John's nightmare. The thought pervades the Revelation. The very first chapter shows how intense was this feeling in the author's mind. He declares his purpose to show "things which must *shortly* come to pass" (i., 1), and says (verse 3) "the time is at hand." Elsewhere he iterates this idea thus: "Behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him:" "Behold I come quickly," says the Lord, "hold fast which thou hast that no man take thy crown;" (addressing churches which had then, but which no longer have existence.) "Behold I stand at the door and knock," etc. And the book winds up with the repeated assurance that "the time is at hand." "*Surely I come quickly.*" (xxii., 10—20.)

Thus it is manifest that no single doctrine of the New Testament is clearer than that Jesus predicted the destruction of the world within the period of the generation then living. And no fact in the history of the Christian religion is plainer than that this was the belief of the whole of the early Church. Gibbon says: "It was universally believed that the end of the world and the kingdom of Heaven were at hand" ("Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chap. xv., p. 347, vol. 1, ed. 1869).

The Christian faith as at first promulgated appealed to the strongest hopes and still more to the direst fears of the credulous. The Messiah was shortly to return with legions of angels to destroy the old world and to set up the kingdom of heaven. The saints were to judge the earth and the sinners to be burnt with unquenchable fire. This doctrine accounts for the early spread of Christianity and for the fearlessness with which some of the early Christians met "labors, dangers, tribulations and sufferings," not, as Paley would have us believe, in attestation of their knowledge of the events recorded in the gospels, but attesting their faith in and fear of the near approach of the dreadful day of the Lord. The destruction of the "holy" city of Jerusalem intensified this belief and led to a state of religious excitement bordering on frenzy.

Every record of the early Christians shows the belief in the speedy end of the world to have been a principal feature in their creed, and the most important factor in promoting

its spread, both among the Jews, whose prophet Joel had detailed similar pictures, and among the Gentiles, whose principal philosophy, the Stoic, also looked forward to the destruction of the world by conflagration. The unconscious globe, however, still rolled on. The writer of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians found it necessary to warn them that there was to be a falling away before the Lord was "revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance" on non-Christians. Yet he proceeds to say that "the mystery of iniquity doth *already* work." John, despite being burnt in boiling oil, lived on to a good old age, and while he lived the Christians, mindful of the saying attributed to Jesus, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" thought he was certainly tarrying till the coming of the Lord. Nor would they believe that he could die ere the Lord came. Nor would they believe that he did die; for, even when it was known that John was buried at Ephesus, it was still asserted that he was not dead, but sleeping; and that the ground above his corpse might be seen slowly heaving up and down in rhythm with his breathing. They waited, but the world went on. Other elements crept into the Church, and the real Christians who looked for the speedy coming of their Lord were in time set down as heretical Chiliasts and Millenarians, and the book of the Revelation fell into disrepute. Yet from time to time in the Christian Church has this, its fundamental germ of fanaticism, broken out afresh, sweeping, as at the approach of the year 1000 A.C., the whole Christian world in one wild wave of terror at the coming doom of this heedless earth. Superstition, robbed of one cherished delusion, only throws itself more fondly into the arms of some fresh delirium. And still the Christians wait for their Master, who is so behind date. And one hardly knows whether to laugh in scorn at the absurdity of their waiting for a bubble pricked eighteen centuries ago; or to weep in sympathy with their futile hopes of the second coming of a supernatural redeemer, while nature marches on its inexorable course, as if in mockery of the vain expectations of impotent man.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON XXVI.

GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES.

"He shall guide you into all the truth" (John xvi., 13)

(Continued from p. 83.)

THE guidance, perhaps, has never yet commenced. Let us see:—

(65) *Dositheus* was one of the many early Messiahs. When he lived is doubtful, though his place of operations was Samaria. He gained many disciples, and was taken up to heaven. Of course, there are people wicked enough or silly enough not to believe that he went so high.

(66) *Nicholas Drabicius* was a prophet in Hungary, about 1630. He, like Jesus, gained few followers. It is not certain whether he was burned or went to the Turks or to the devil.

(67) The *Duhobortsi* are or were a sect of true Christians in Russia; that is to say, as far as they were Christians at all. They have no creeds, no ceremonies, no particular places of or for worship; they have all things in common. Our bishops and rich clergy will never join that sect.

(68) *Easter* in the Western Churches is always held on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the 21st March. This is a movable feast governed by the moon, and but for lunacy it would have been fixed to a particular date long ago. The Christians of the second century in Asia Minor kept Easter at the very time of the Jewish Passover, and alleged the authority of the apostles John and Philip for it. But other Christians kept Easter later, viz., on the evening preceding the day sacred to Christ's resurrection; and they pleaded the authority of Peter and Paul. Here was a splendid opportunity for a bitter quarrel, and the good-natured believers on both sides showed their love and zeal both in the conflict.

Towards the close of the century, Victor, Bishop of Rome, resolved to force the Asiatics to conform to general usage. They determined to keep their own customs: and this each party continued to do till the Council of Nice abrogated the Asiatic practice. Those who refused to conform to the decision of the majority were, of course, called heretics.

(69) The *Ebionites* were a very early sect of Unitarians,



probably the oldest Christian sect. They repudiated Paul and his doctrines, and observed the law of Moses, as Jesus commanded (Matthew xxiii., 1-3).

(70) The *Ellerians* were followers of one *Eller*, both a messenger and a temple of god, for god resided in him. He was called the "father of Sion," and his wife its mother. His enemies say he was ambitious and luxurious—of course, they were not so. Eller gave up two ghosts at once—his own and his tenant-god—in 1758.

(71) The *Encratites*, or self-controlled ones, were followers of Tatian, who, in the second century, renounced marriage, forbade flesh-eating and wine-drinking, rejected all the comforts and conveniences of life; and practised great mortification of the body. In this he followed the teachings of Jesus and Paul. He also denied the reality of Jesus's sufferings. Well, how could a god suffer?

(72) *Eon d'Étoile*, a lunatic of Bretagne, went to church and heard them sing *per Eum qui venturus est Judicari vivos et mortuos* (by him who shall come to judge the quick and the dead), and jumped to the conclusion that they were singing *per Eon*, not *Eum* (that is, by Eon, his own name, not *Eum*, Him—i.e., Christ). Henceforth he became a great prophet. He died in prison; but many of his followers clung to his cause, as did those of Jesus, long after.

(73) The *Euphratesians*, or *Peræans*, believed there were three Fathers, three Sons, and three Holy Ghosts. Well, if good, the more the better. I believe in millions of fathers and sons; and should probably believe in as many Holy Ghosts, if I only knew what they were. I presume, however, that the *Peræans* are all damned for believing too much.

(74) The *Eustathians*, in obedience to Christ, gave up all their property, as incompatible with their hopes of heaven. Of course, rich hypocrites, who want to secure this world and the next, called them heretics.

(75) *Eutyches* held that Jesus was all god while he was god, and all man while man. In A.D. 448, at a Synod held at Constantinople, Eutyches was condemned; next year he was acquitted at another council and his opponents banished; two years later a third council again condemned him. The Holy Ghost was in all of them.

(76) *Excommunication* is an old rusty blunderbus, which, though it killed thousands in days of yore, nobody could be found bold enough to fire off to-day. The churches are now on their knees crying to sceptics for mercy. They showed none in the days of their power; their miserable creeds shall get none now.

"Grant them the rights of men,  
And, while they cease  
To vex the peace of others,  
Grant them peace."

(77) *Exorcism* is the act of casting out devils. Jesus said this was one of the signs by which believers should be known. There are no exorcists now; and therefore no Christians who can *prove* that their profession is sound.

(78) The *Familists*, or Family of Love, originated by Henry Nicholas, in Holland, about 1555, asserted that no knowledge of Christ existed outside its bounds. Nicholas taught, amongst other doctrines, that the letter of Scripture was useless (he might have added, and its spirit mischievous). He also taught that it was lawful on some occasions to prevaricate in evidence—a doctrine Christians have generally practised. When this sect appeared in England, where there was too much Christianity before, they were ordered to be dispersed, and their books to be publicly burnt.

(79) The *Farnovians* of the sixteenth century held that Jesus Christ was made out of nothing before the creation of the world. Well: out of nothing nothing comes.

(80) *Greek Church*. In the eighth century the Greek and Roman Churches fell out and have never made up the quarrel. They quarrelled about images in churches, the Latins using them, the Greeks refusing them. The Pope of Rome excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Patriarch excommunicated the Pope. They also quarrelled about the procession of the Holy Ghost. The Latins say that this Ghost "proceedeth from the Father and the Son;" the Greeks flatly deny this, and charge their opponents with inserting *filioque* (and from the Son) in the ancient creeds. It seems never to have occurred to the stupid donkeys to ask the Holy Ghost or the other two gentlemen of the Trinity, to clear up the point and end the dispute. This insane squabble occupied the eighth and ninth centuries, and in the eleventh it began again. And how stands it now?

Both parties are right, of course; but neither of them knows aught of the question in dispute. And thus it remains to the end of time:—In Russia and other countries under the sway of the Patriarch, the Holy Ghost proceeds only from the Father; in all places where the Pope rules he proceeds from the Son also. In the greater part of the world, ancient and modern, people do not "know whether there be any Holy Ghost;" and those who pretend to have a monopoly of this spirit are humbugs.

(81) *Hierax*, of Leontium, in the third century, supposed Melchizedek to be the Holy Ghost—very likely to be correct.

(82) The *Homoiousians* and *Homoousians* were two divisions of Christians at an early date. The two names came prominently to the front in the disputes between the Arians and Athanasians. The former held that the Son was *homoi-ousios*, of like nature with the Father; the latter that he was *homo-ousios*, or the same nature, etc. And while the quacks were fighting about the nature of their deities the deities evaporated, and have never since been seen or handled. Now, we don't know the nature of the Father, and can't say if the Son is like him or not. He may be the image of his great grandmother for anything that is known.

(83) *Inquisition*, a faint and miniature picture of the future judgment, wherein the Catholics vainly strove to imitate Jesus and his Father. A branch of this tribunal has recently been established in the House of Commons by Messrs. Churchill, Northcote, Wolff and Co., for the more effectual dealing with one Charles Bradlaugh, an avowed Atheist, who is so far lost to all sense of decency as to go and get elected three times over by the people of Northampton, and who, so far, is too hardened to repent. The above company are the most godly and devout members of the House, who never pray without fasting, and are zealous even unto slaying for the Lord of hosts. Some say they would light a fire in Palace Yard and burn Mr. Bradlaugh, only they fear the people out of doors. I have heard that when they have disposed of this gentleman they intend to publish a catechism for the Members of Parliament, as thus:—

1. Do you believe in a God?
2. Which of them?
3. Do you believe in the Trinity in unity?
4. Do you believe in the Jewish God or in the Christian, or in both? Which of them do you prefer?
5. Do you fast on Fridays?
6. Do you eat meat in Lent?
7. Do you believe that Jesus descended to hell? How long did it take him to go down and come up again? What did he do when there? Did the devil kick him out for blasphemy, or did he refuse to take the oath of allegiance, and so get his seat declared vacant? Was he ever re-elected?
8. Do you believe that Lord Random Church-chapel is the incarnation of the Holy Ghost?
9. Do you believe in the Devil?
10. Which do you believe to be the most eminent for piety and most like Jesus—Stafford Northcote, Drummond Wolff, Mr. Newdegate, or Randolph Churchill? Which smell most strongly of the Holy Ghost?

\* \* \* \* \*

J. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

## ACID DROPS.

ANOTHER parson has committed suicide. Canon Robinson, of Hereford Cathedral, drowned himself a few days ago in the Wye.

AN old gentleman committed suicide in Liverpool the other day in especially close proximity to the Word of God. Mr. W. L. Honeyman, aged seventy-nine, a retired master mariner, hung himself in the scullery of his house, at 17, Vronhill Street; and the charwoman, who had been told that if ever she found him dead she was to open the Testament which he used daily, take out a telegram she would find there, and send it to his daughter in the South of England, did as she was directed and found the telegram inside the sacred volume. Christians never commit suicide, we are told; yet this poor old gentleman, who was an assiduous reader of the New Testament, deliberately places within it his last message to his daughter before despatching himself.



It is estimated that the Queen's private fortune exceeds thirty millions. Yet still the hat goes round for her family.

HER Majesty has erected a monument in Hughenden Church to "The dear and honored memory of Benjamin Earl of Beaconsfield." The wily old courtier knew how to tickle his sovereign's vanity. Mr. Gladstone will never receive such a tribute of "affection and friendship." He has done much for the people, but what of that? Dizzy did nothing for the people, but he made the Queen an Empress. Hence these tears.

ON Earl Beaconsfield's monument is the inscription "Kings love him that speaketh right" (Proverbs xvi., 13). We could suggest a better text from Genesis xliii., 34. "Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs." During his one real premiership, Benjamin Disraeli made a greater mess than any other statesman of this century.

THE Russian lady who writes over the initials of O. K., informs the *Pall Mall Gazette*, from St. Petersburg, that the letter attributed to the Metropolitan of Moscow, calling on the Czar to come out of his seclusion and surround himself with enlightened ministers, is "an absurd fabrication, utterly without truth." We scarcely believed it was authentic. Archbishops seldom have a word to say against kings.

BY the way, O. K., in writing on the subject of the Russian outrages on the Jews, told the English people to mind their own business, and remarked that in protesting against persecution abroad while excluding a Freethinker from Parliament at home, they were making themselves the laughing-stock of the world.

THE *Christian World* is sarcastic over the lady and gentleman who drove down to the Positivist Chapel to hear Mr. Frederic Harrison, and told their footman and coachman to come back in an hour. The latter drove off grumbling "I wish they'd give their — lectures somewheres else." Whereupon the *C. W.* wonders whether the "superfine theories" of Positivism "are at all suitable for Jeames, as well as for Jeames's master and mistress." Does the *C. W.* mean that rich Christians don't drive to church and keep their coaches waiting about for them? And does it not know that the Positivists are not in the habit of canting like Christians about the Holy Sabbath, wherein no one is to do any manner of work?

THE *C. W.* makes great capital of G. J. Holyoake's pamphlet on the oath question, and quotes his nastiest sentences about Mr. Bradlaugh's conscience. It does not allow for the practical difficulties of the case, nor does it perhaps know the personal animus which inspires the "honest Atheist's" attack on his successful rival. G. J. Holyoake has always had a knack of recommending other people to make great sacrifices for his own principles. He doesn't make many sacrifices himself. Beyond giving any quantity of fine advice free, gratis, for nothing, we are unable to discern that he has done anything for Secularism during the last ten years. To Freethinkers his name belongs to history; at present he does not represent an appreciable percentage of their strength.

FOOL TALMAGE has made a discovery. A discovery compared with which all other evidences of Christianity are as nothing. Nothing less than two testimonies to the complete list of the New-Testament writings in the first century. Ingersoll may now hide his diminished head, and the ministers, who have recently seceded from the churches to infidelity, hurriedly make back tracks to orthodoxy.

FOOL TALMAGE's two witnesses are Jerome and Eusebius. He assures the Christian world that "Jerome and Eusebius in the first century, and Origen in the second century, and other writers in the third and fourth centuries, gave a list of the New Testament writers just exactly corresponding with our list." Unfortunately, Jerome was not born until 346 A.C., nor Eusebius till 270 A.C., and the latter rejected the book of Revelation. Origen did not write until the beginning of the third century, and he doubted the second epistle of Peter, and says of the epistle to the Hebrews "God only knows who wrote it."

FOOL TALMAGE should stick to bounce and bluster. Whenever he touches facts he exposes his ignorance. This is no mistake of the printer. The words we have quoted are verbatim in the *Christian Herald*, the *Christian Globe*, and the *Christian Age*. All these papers derive emolument from the sermons of Fool Talmage. What else can we call him? The days have gone by when even Christians expect scholarship from their ministers.

SPURGEON draws a nice distinction. Preaching on the text "Lead us not into temptation," he says, God tempts no one, he simply leads into temptation. We recollect reading in the first verse of the twenty-second chapter of Genesis that "God did tempt Abraham." But probably this is a mistranslation. It should be "God led Abraham into temptation."

IN the last number of the *Christian Herald*, George Muller, of Bristol-Orphanage notoriety, details how he began his scheme. He commenced by very modestly praying for "a thou," without

fixing a time. He says, "I asked in submission to his will, and without fixing a time when he should answer my petition. I prayed that he would give me a house, *i.e.*, either as a loan, or that some one might be led to pay the rent for one, or that one might be given permanently for this object; further, I asked him for £1000; and likewise for suitable individuals to take care of the children. Besides this, I have been since led to ask the Lord to put into the hearts of his people to send me articles of furniture for the house, and some clothes for the children." This statement he published and widely circulated at the time, and of course the money was gradually sent in to so exemplary a prayer. Yet he says he has got the money "without asking anyone."

COALHEAVER HUNT, *alias* the Rev. Wm. Huntington, S.S., was modest compared with George Muller. He only pray'd for such trifles as tea and sugar, a coat, and a pair of breeches. Hunt or Huntington, in his "Bank of Faith," says: "God himself condescended to give orders what Aaron's breeches should be made of and how they should be cut. And I believe the same God ordered mine."

THIS best of all possible worlds has still something a little wrong with its inside. The earthquake at Costa Rica, which it was reported had suddenly destroyed several thousand persons, is a manifestation of the mysterious way in which God moves "his wonders to perform." Voltaire was a good Theist, but he found the Lisbon earthquake in 1755 rather a hard pill to swallow for believers in the omnibenevolence of Providence.

THE *People* speaks of the junior member for Northampton thusly: "We object to him not only because of his opinions on subjects dealt with by the Sixth Commandment tend to utter demoralisation and destruction of moral life, but because he is the evangelist of those detestable doctrines." The "subjects dealt with by the Sixth Commandment," "Thou shalt not kill," have been supposed to include suicide and unjust wars. The *People* is a Jingo paper, and it should know whether Mr. Bradlaugh or itself has most responsibility in regard to these detestable doctrines. Some Christian friend should send the editor of the *People* a copy of the Church Catechism.

BISHOP CLAUGHTON is ill. If his ill-health arises from overwork he might resign either the post of Chaplain-General or the Archdeanery of London. The work must be too heavy for a bishop who ought to be in Ceylon.

THE Queen, in her letter to the people, as given in the *Morning Post*—which we sometimes see, now it is down to something like its value, a single copper—prays God "that He will continue to protect Her for Her people's sake, as He has hitherto so visibly done." Query. Does She think the masculine party in question "visibly" refused to protect the late little-lamented Czar? At any rate He might have stepped in to save President Garfield.

THE *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* condescends to notice us. It says, "Apologising for the painful necessity of polluting these columns with language so atrocious, we deem it of wholesome effect to write down four lines by way of showing what the editor of the *Freethinker* deems 'comic' writing. But no; we cannot publish the words, they are too blasphemous for publication." The spectacle of the editor trying to summon up enough courage to transcribe our blasphemy must have been an edifying one. He lies, however, without any effort, for he goes on to say, "Mr. Bradlaugh has repeatedly and ostentatiously spoken and written in favor of the *Freethinker*." These people expect us to show courtesy to creeds which have not enough wholesomeness to keep them from lying and slandering.

THE Rev. Mr. Dundas, rector of Albury, has been amusing himself with a little stupid slauder of Freethinkers. In one of his Lent sermons, he had the cool audacity to state that Free-thought teachings caused Maclean to shoot at Queen Victoria. Perhaps Mr. Dundas knows better, but the poor man must preach, and it is difficult to get up fresh sermons every week, and at the same time stick to the truth.

MR. DUNDAS argues in a novel fashion—novel, that is, outside church. He says that Maclean hated Jesus Christ and *therefore* he fired at the Queen. The rector of Albury is a model logician.

THE Rev. D. Woodroffe, vicar of Grantham, describes Mr. Bradlaugh as "the avowed advocate of profanity and immorality." When did Mr. Bradlaugh *avow* himself to be anything of the kind?

PARSON WOODROFFE slanders that fine fellow Esau also; in fact, he seems to hate every honest man. Esau, he says, was a fornicator. And on what evidence does he rely? Why the testimony of Paul, who lived two thousand years later! He further describes Esau as a murderer, because he wanted to kill Jacob. He conceals the fact that Jacob deserved killing. If Esau had rung his neck it would have served him right. Parson Woodroffe admires Jacob. That explains his hatred of Bradlaugh.



SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (Sunday, March 19th) in the Secular Hall, King Street, Glasgow.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

March 21st, Walworth; 22nd, New Commonwealth Club, London; 26th, Nottingham.

April 2nd, Manchester; 3rd, Failsforth; 9th, Middleton's Hall, Birmingham; 16th, Hall of Science, London; 19th, Hackney Workmen's Club; 23rd, Liverpool; 30th, Hall of Science, London.

May 14th, Plymouth; 28th, N. S. S. Conference.

June 11th and 18th, Claremont Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ALL business communications to be addressed to Mr. W. J. RAMSEY, 28, Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9, South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

FREETHINKER, Edinburgh.—Thanks for cuttings. Address, "Washington."

WM. THOMPSON, Whitehaven, sends us a rhymed pamphlet on "The Moral and Physiological Character of the God of the Jews and Christians," which he has just published. We are always glad to receive words of encouragement from old Freethinkers like W. T.

OBSERVER points out that in Mr. Symes notice of the Doceta he omits any reference to the important fact that this early Christian sect denied that Christ had come in the flesh or possessed a real human body.

C. B. S.—"The Diegesis," by the Rev. Robert Taylor, was first published by Richard Carlile in 1829, while its author was still in Oakham jail.

P. W.—Published by J. Heywood, London and Manchester.

G. B. and T. B.—Should any respectable journal incite to our prosecution you may rely we shall notice the fact, but we decline advertising the paper in question.

N. J. MERVETT.—Many thanks.

W. JARMAN.—We are overcrowded at present, but shall be glad to hear from you again.

B. BRIGGS.—Thanks for cuttings. You are doing good work in circulating the *Freethinker* in Bible classes.

J. G. W.—Thanks for transfer, which will be reproduced in due course. Always glad to hear from you.

A. HASSALL.—Will appear in due course.

L. RUDERICH.—Your friend's verses to S. Morley are good, but we cannot afford space. We are continually overwhelmed with verse.

H. GARROD.—It should of course be Clio Rickman.

A. B. MOSS.—Will appear in due course. Thanks.

OMAR.—The word Mohammed, according to Emanuel Deutsch, means the predicted Messiah (Hag. ii. 7).

T. HAMILTON, Glasgow.—You are right. The first allegiance of a Catholic is to the Pope. We know something of your Meekly and Daily Wail. Your activity in circulating Freethought literature deserves all praise.

MIDDLESBOROUGH.—The title of your "Observer for the Promotion of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Piety" is in itself a rich joke.

A. MACLEAN.—We regret that we cannot find room for your article. We have too much copy in hand already.

E. N.—Received.

YORK.—The story is an old one. We heard it in a comic Scotch sermon years ago.

FREETHINKER writes that by lending this journal about he has secured the sale of six copies a week through his newsagent. His own copy goes through at least a half a dozen hands.

SEVERAL answers to correspondents stand over owing to Mr. Foote's absence in Scotland.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE University of Aberdeen has conferred the degree of LL.D. on William Robertson Smith who was expelled from the Hebrew chair in the Free Church College for heresy. Dr. Smith is now publishing his lectures on the Jewish prophets.

THE Rev. T. E. Slater, of Madras, says it is no use trying to convert the Hindus with the doctrine of hell-fire. The brimstone business is pretty well played out at home too.

In an article on "The Oath Question in France," M. Pressense admits that Atheists are very numerous in France, that they grow bolder every day, and that they "no longer wear a mask."

A CANADIAN COURT has decided that pew-openers have a right to sleep and snore in church, and an American court has decided

that a man has the right to put his feet up on the back of the next pew if he chooses.

THE current number of the *North American Review* contains a thoroughly Freethought article from the pen of Professor John Fiske, on "The True Lesson of Protestantism." This lesson, according to Professor Fiske, is that religious belief in no way concerns society but only the individual. Protestantism in its essence implies the break up of all authoritative creeds and "unity of belief is no longer possible or desirable." The Catholic Church may afford a refuge for those who "find the atmosphere of free discussion too bracing," but there is no firm footing between Romanism and complete Rationalism.

BISHOP FRASER, adverting to the absence of church attendance, cries out, "Oh that the Holy Ghost would come as with a fresh day of Pentecost upon the Churches. Then, and not till then, will there be hopes." The Bishop is quite right. There will be hope for the churches when we go back 1800 years. Meantime the Holy Pigeon appears to be on the moult.

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON'S Lectures on Positivism are being well attended. In his last lecture he declared that a man might love God and his neighbour, and come up to all the religious requirements of Christianity, and yet live "as lazy as a pig."

WE rejoice to observe the Positivists showing signs of activity. Though we find Comtism too cut and dried for our taste, we know that many heretics of "culchah" desire to see a definite reorganisation to replace, and displace, discarded supernaturalism. With these we have some sympathy, and Positivism attempts to supply their want. Only we think there needs to be a great deal of uprooting of old errors first, ere the new Gospel of Humanity can be firmly implanted and surely thrive. Ours is the arduous work of preparation.

JULES SIMON tried to gain a position in the French Senate by doing the dirty work of the reactionaries. He got a clause inserted in the Compulsory Primary Education Bill, requiring schoolmasters to teach their pupils their duty towards God; but the Chamber of Deputies threw it out. On March 11th the Senate itself rejected the clause by 167 votes to 123. This is the result of the last elections. Poor Simon!

WE have seen the Annual Report of the National Sunday League, which we are very pleased to observe maintains a satisfactory position. The annual meeting will be held in St. James's Hall, on Monday evening, March 20th, under the presidency of Mr. James Beal. The canting pharisaical Sabbatarians are losing their hold in London, and if our provincial friends would start branches of the N. S. L., we might soon hope to see a rational Sunday universal.

M. J. LEMOINE, writing on the Bradlaugh question in *Le Journal des Debats*, says, "France, so much calumniated, and who so often calumniates herself, has shown herself a thousand times more liberal and truly religious by establishing liberty of conscience, and not demanding perjuries."

THE French section of Freethinkers, under M. Lepelletier, have decided to hold their Annual Congress for 1883 in London. We can assure them of a hearty welcome. A more cordial union of French and English Freethinkers would be of great advantage to both. If they need our solidity, we still more require their *verve*.

HENRY RESTALL, wearing the uniform of the Salvation Army, was summoned before Sir Thomas Owden, in the City of London Summons' Court, for causing an obstruction by selling the *War Cry*. Henry said he did it because he wanted to work for God. The Alderman said the defendant could not make him believe that nonsense. Another officer of the "Army" had been summoned for a similar offence, but it was stated that he had given a false address.

SOME good Freethinkers think us too harsh and bitter towards the enemy. We advise such to read the Christian papers. The *Rock*, for instance, which calls on the faithful to keep a thrice-chosen member of parliament from his seat, in order to thwart "the Atheists and their allies, some of whom are actuated by a love of change, and others by desire for plunder." Christians who are ready to accord justice to Freethinkers shall be treated with courtesy and fair play, but maligners, who persecute us as far as they dare, deserve nothing at our hands but contempt and exposure.

THE Bishop of Manchester is going from bad to worse. We are glad of it. The more foolish eminent Christians become the better for Freethought. People will desert the Church all the faster when they find that the pulpit induces softening of the brain.



## THE FIGHT IN THE CAMP OF HISTORY.

(Concluded from p. 54.)

PROCEEDING in his vituperations against Dr. Zerffi and the heretical element in the Royal Historical Society, Dr. Charles Rogers dealt the deadliest blows at his own objectionable superstition in the vain endeavor to strangle genuine historical research, and bend the work of the society to prop the tottering church. Quoting as he did, largely from Dr. Zerffi's work, published without the pale of the society, he failed to see that he himself was the means of bringing together a mass of widely and well-gathered facts from ancient history to be marshalled in unconquerable array against his own party, and thus practically defeating his own purpose, while the opponent he wished to injure and annoy stood off, coolly defiant and smiling, while this wrathful divine fiercely battered at the walls of his own citadel, and admitted the silent and victorious forces of heresy through the breach. Thus he further quotes the "Science of History" in his "Parting Words" to Lord Aberdare.

"In their secluded position, with a useless river and enchanted lake of their own, the Jews had time to ponder over the great 'I am I' mystery of the Egyptians. In time, forgetting that they had learned it in Egypt, they appropriated to themselves the 'I am I' as their own Deity, in whose image they *alone* were created, marked and distinguished. This 'I am I' granted to them exclusive knowledge of, and insight into, higher sacred matters. Their forefathers had tasted of the tree of knowledge, and their god then cursed him and his descendants, because Adam *the assumed first man*, had wanted to become 'as one of Us' as the sacred text runs. This 'Us' contradicts the strict Monotheistic notion of the Jews, and shows some reminiscence of Egyptian theology in its Polytheistic form."

Dr. Rogers did not attempt to refute the fact taught by this passage, that the Jews had stolen their god from the Egyptians, as the Christians have since stolen him from *them*; he did not dispute the fact that the Jews, being strict Monotheists, betrayed the theft by being too careless and leaving the old Polytheistic trade-mark on the face of their surreptitiously acquired bogie; he only sought to harm his opponent in the eyes of the society by showing that he *would not* swallow the nauseous pills of the old quack creed, and must be dangerous to "right thinking," that is, dogmatic people, inasmuch as he openly taught reasonable heresy in his researches.

Practically, the pious D. D. admitted the strength of his opponent's historical truths, and assumed that all who studied history were already prepared to receive Christianity as an established fact needing no question, and must therefore reprobate a man who did not settle how his discoveries should tend before he made the discoveries. He has since learned, however, that intelligent and earnest men do not rear a rickety structure and then band together to seek guy ropes and props to strengthen their own foolish building, but first gather together the trustworthy material with which such a structure can be reared as to far over-top the ungainly hovel of barbarian times. The poor pious doctor fairly wails over Zerffi's profanity in stating the following fact:—

"The sublime Vedas of the Indians, their gorgeous epic poems, the admirable rock-hewn temples of the Buddhists, the pure moral teachings of Confucius, the mighty victories of the Romans, their patriotism, all the monuments of antiquity, all the historical writings and records of all nations, were superseded as false and untrue, and the Jewish records placed above them as the only true revealed Word of God, who had forsaken and abandoned all his other creatures, and exclusively held communication with the Jews. The insolent imposition was gigantic, and became, day by day, more powerful. There was something wonderfully majestic in this systematic delusion of humanity."

Dr. Rogers threw into italics the words "insolent imposition" and "systematic delusion of humanity," and threw up his hands in holy horror at the audacity of truth, but left the passage unrefuted. He sneered at Zerffi, as a "philosophical historian," thereby himself disclaiming all pretensions to philosophy, and granting in his own immaculate self a superabundance of that accommodating essence "Faith," to fill the void caused by the lack of philosophy, and accepting a plentiful possession of that miserable abstract, "the grace of god," as an excellent equivalent for brains. Again, in priestly alarm, he quotes:—

"We have very little reliable historical information concerning the life of Christ . . . We may demonstrate all that was asserted of him was also believed of Melchisedec, Krishna, Osiris, Buddha, Apollo, or Mithras. We may trace in him, and

to him, all the legends of divine incarnations through which man, having become conscious, wished to find an explanation of his low animal desires, and the lofty intellectual longings of his mind, thus working out divine models of human beings, or gods in human form. We may study the gospels and their contradictory views, and critically wade through the still more contradictory writings of the Fathers . . . We may quarrel and hate one another with the same fervor as did the Jewish sects, and curse every one who does not hold our own opinions as *to the color of the beatitude, the length of the wings of the angels in heaven, or the horns of the devils in hell.*

The good man's horror at this language was almost frantic, no doubt, but what awful things were foreshadowed to his godly mind when he stumbled on the following excellent advice:—

"Those students who may wish to make themselves acquainted with the spirit of the three principal civilised European nations must study—

- "1. 'The Life of Jesus,' by Dr. Strauss, the German.
- "2. 'The Life of Jesus,' by Renan, the Frenchman.
- "3. 'The Life of Jesus,' published under the title of 'Ecce Homo,' by an English Professor."

What if this advice should be followed? The thought was too awful! Why people would learn the truth; and they mustn't if Christianity is to live! Students would be driven to think without curb, and that must not happen if D.D.'s are to thrive!

Yet it is so, oh, Charles Rogers! This abominable creed must cease to be, with all its tawdry pomp and paraphernalia. D.D.'s may multiply if they will, as insects multiply, while history, the giant iconoclast, strides on among the fallen deities, and its votaries laugh at the bickerings and squabbings of the puny white-chokered throng that flutter and sting away their miserable day, and miss the greater, grander things that make life worth living. Felines may catawaul upon the tiles and poodles snap at the moon, if it pleases them, but Luna sails on for all that, and halos the earth with a golden light, borrowed from the sun of science and history. Deem us lunatic if you will; what then, my pious brother man?

"My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time."

JOHN ROWELL WALLER, F.R.H.S.

## A CLEVER SERMON.

A CANDIDATE for the pulpit of a country church in the North of Scotland asked the minister how he would be most likely to satisfy the congregation. "Display as much critical knowledge as you can," was the answer. "The more languages you quote the better they will be pleased." "Oh," thought the candidate, "considering that I can only speak Welsh and English, that will be rather a difficult matter." Nothing daunted, however, he appeared to preach his trial sermon. After delivering the text, he pointed out that the English version was at fault. "The sentence in the original Hebrew runs thus," he said, and proceeded to quote it in Welsh. The prominent members of the congregation nodded approvingly to each other. In a short time he touched upon another text. "To understand this verse we should carefully study the original Chaldaic," he said, and he again gave the Welsh. He next came to a passage in the New Testament, saying, "The innate loveliness and grand sublimity of this beautiful sentence can only be seen in the Greek." Here again he quoted the Welsh language, whilst the presbyters looked wise, and the churchwardens, who were reputed learned scholars, did not fail to show their appreciation. Emboldened by his success, he was just proceeding to quote a famous translation in Latin when his eye alighted upon a stout, good-humoured, sandy-haired member of the congregation, sitting at the back of the church, and almost suffocated with laughter. He at once saw the gravity of his situation, and, in place of the promised text, said loudly in the Welsh tongue, "My friend, for heaven's sake! don't let any one know about this until I have had a few words with you." The jolly Welshman kept the secret, until the authorities, who thought they might do worse than elect a man who could interpret the Scriptures in five languages, had installed the candidate in his living.

A PARSON hearing a lad swear very heartily, thought to improve his morals, so he took him into his house. There was a large St. Bernard on the rug. To teach him the Lord's prayer, after requesting him to kneel (the boy keeping his eye on the dog), the parson began, "Our Father, which art in heaven." The boy not repeating, but still watching every movement of the dog, the parson again presses him to repeat after him, "Our Father," so, after much anxiety on the boy's part, he comes out with, "Our Father, which art in heaven—but will the devil bite?"



WHO DARE DEFEND HIM?

Who dare defend him? the slighted, the slandered,  
 First of the champions of liberty, Paine,  
 Under the ban of the stronger, he wandered,  
 Bruised and down-trodden again and again;  
 Yet as the camomile, crushed in its beauty,  
 Gives a fresh perfume the more it is bruised,  
 So, with his heart ever tuned to its duty,  
 Better he worked when that work was abused.

Who dare defend him? the churches are crowded  
 With men who revere him but dare not speak,  
 Breathe but his name and their prospects are clouded  
 Thus the strong triumph and hold down the weak:  
 What though a nation may vaunt of its freedom?  
 Dark as the past still does slavery reign;  
 Crushed and tongue-fettered by priests and their minions,  
 Thousands condemn whom they love, Thomas Paine.

Who dare defend him? the true, the brave-hearted,  
 Martyr to freedom and friend of his kind;  
 Never in fear from the truth he departed,  
 Healing the creed-sick and leading the blind;  
 Say you his life was debased and immoral?  
 Hush the foul falsehood, his life was a light;  
 Would every man had such claims to the laurel,  
 Oh! then the world would be sunny and bright!

I dare defend him! the slighted, the slandered,  
 Now call me heretic, crush me to earth,  
 Yet will I hold while I may to the standard,  
 Station is no true criterion to worth;  
 Once with the crowd I reviled and besmeared him,  
 Stood in your pulpits and slandered his name;  
 Now to atone for the days when I jeered him,  
 I dare defend him and fight for his fame!

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

FANATICS.—Remark your commonest pretender to a light within, how dark and dirty and gloomy he is without! as lanterns which the more light they bear in their bodies, cast out so much the more soot, and smoke, and fuliginous matter, to adhere to the sides. Listen but to their ordinary talk, and look on the mouth that delivers it, you will imagine you are hearing some ancient oracle, and your understanding will be equally informed.” —Jonathan Swift, “A Discourse on the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit,” Works, vol. x., p. 286. Edinburgh, 1824.

CONVERTED INFIDELS.—So many Freethinkers, you say, have been converted. But do not make too great a boast of this. Such stories of conversion belong at best to the department of pathology, and are very doubtful evidence for your case. After all, they only prove that it is impossible to convert Freethinkers so long as they move about under the open sky, in the enjoyment of their healthy senses, and in the full possession of their reasoning faculties.”—H. Heine, “Religion and Philosophy in Germany.”

How MYTHS GROW.—In England, there is a place called Chateau Vert; the peasantry have corrupted it into Shotover, and say that it has borne that name ever since Little John shot over a high hill in the neighborhood. Very similar is the etymological confusion upon which is based the myth of the “confusion of tongues” in the eleventh chapter of Genesis. The name “Babel” is really *Bab-El*, or “the gate of God,” but the Hebrew writer erroneously derives the word from the root *Babel*, “to confuse;” and hence arises the mythical explanation—that Babel was a place where human speech became confused.—Prof. John Fiske, “Myths and Myth Makers,” p. 72.

PROTESTANT PERSECUTION.—“But while the pre-eminent atrocity of the persecutions of the Church of Rome is fully admitted, nothing can be more grossly disingenuous or untrue, than to represent persecution as her peculiar taint. She persecuted to the full extent of the power of her clergy, and that power was very great. The persecution of which every Protestant Church was guilty, was measured by the same rule, but clerical influence in Protestant countries was comparatively weak. The Protestant persecutions were never so sanguinary as those of the Catholics, but the principle was affirmed quite as strongly, was acted on quite as constantly, and was defended quite as pertinaciously by the clergy.”—W. E. H. Lecky, M.A., “History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe,” chap. iv., Part II., pp. 42-43, vol. ii., 1865.

... SURELY I ought to be talking platitudes when I say that it is not English to tell a man a lie, or to suggest a lie, by your silence or your actions, because you are afraid that he is not prepared for the truth, because you don't quite know what he will do when he knows it; because, perhaps, after all, this lie is a better thing for him than the truth would be, and this

same man being all the time an honest fellow citizen, whom you have every reason to trust. . . . And yet it is constantly whispered that it would be dangerous to divulge certain truths to the masses. “I know the whole thing is untrue; but then it is so useful for the people; you don't know what harm you might do by shaking their faith in it.” Crooked ways are none the less crooked because they are meant to deceive great masses of people instead of individuals. If a thing is true, let us all believe it, rich and poor, men, women, and children. . . . Truth is a thing to be shouted from the house-tops, not to be whispered over rose-water after dinner, when the ladies are gone away. . . . I cannot believe that any falsehood is necessary to morality. . . . It cannot be true, of my race and yours, that to keep ourselves from becoming scoundrels, we must needs believe a lie.—W. R. Clifford, “Essay on Right and Wrong,” *Fortnightly Review*, Dec. 1875.

PROFANE JOKES.

MOTHER, did you hear Polly swear? No, my child; what did she say? Why, she said, she wasn't going to wear her darned stockings to church on Sunday.

A PLYMOUTH Church widow is about to marry her fifth husband. Her parson rebuked her for contemplating matrimony so soon again. “Well, I just want you to understand if the Lord keeps on taking them, I will too,” was the spirited reply.

CHARLES LAMB was once asked to say grace at a large tea party. He rose and inquired, “Is there any clergyman present?” “No,” it was answered. Then, said he very solemnly, “Thank God.”

LEIGH HUNT once asked Lamb, “What makes Coleridge talk so much about heavenly grace, and the holy church, and so on?” “Ah,” replied Lamb, with the hearty tone of a man uttering an obvious truism, but struggling with his habitual stammer, “there is a g-g-reat deal of fun in Coleridge.”

A FREETHINKER was recently riding in a railway carriage in company with a bishop. He tried to draw the shovel-hatted dignitary into an argument, by remarking that the expulsion of Mr. Bradlaugh was a darned shame. “My friend,” said the shocked “father in God,” “do you know where you are going to?” “Well, I guess to the same place as your lordship, only I've got a return ticket.” The conversation came to a dead halt.

A SAILOR returned from a long voyage, told his mother that in the Indian ocean he had seen flying fish. “No, no,” said the old woman, “it's no good telling such lies to me.” “Well,” said he, “do you believe that when we hauled up our anchor in the Red Sea we found a big chariot wheel sticking to it.” “Oh, I believe that, for the Bible tells how Pharaoh's host were drowned there.”

MORE BIBLIANA.—Who was Zachary? One of the lesser prophets, who on account of his smallness got up a sycamore tree to see Jesus ride on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass. He was the father of John the Baptist, and was slain between the altar and the temple for being too full of the Holy Ghost.

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