

# PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—XLVI.



## JONAH'S TRIP TO NINEVEH.

Inside, as snug as a bug in a rug, the prophet—he was a drinker—  
Smoked, and drank his brandy hot, and read his loved *Freethinker*.  
You may see him (just as he appeared) in our front illustration.  
Should you doubt 'twas drawn upon the spot you risk your soul's salvation.

See "Ye Bigge Storye of Jonah," p. 363.





## DODGING THEM.

It seems strange that anybody should be prosecuted for libelling a Ghost, and stranger still that the aggrieved Ghost should not be required to appear in Court or even to send a blood relation. But this is a strange world, and the unexpected is always happening. Things may be ordered differently in some other part of the universe; but this planet of ours is, and always has been, the home of as much folly and stupidity as could well be concentrated in so small a space. The fool-crop, as Heine said, is perennial; and if you reap it down in one generation it springs up almost as lively as ever in the next.

Matters, however, were worse once, so we need not absolutely despair. Time was, that if you breathed a word against a Ghost, you were not even treated with the ceremony of a trial, but just had your brains knocked out on the spot. Now you are treated less summarily, and there is a chance of "the law's delay" mitigating the savagery of superstition. Yet the Ghost's friends are still so powerful and numerous that, if they once taste the pleasure of hunting down heretics, they are likely to continue the pastime until they are thoroughly satiated.

Now all hunted creatures, if not rapidly exterminated, perforce develop a capacity for evasion. Even philosophers, said Voltaire, should have plenty of holes to run to when the priests are on their track. And that supple and dexterous heretic certainly practised this doctrine to some purpose; for he doubled and shifted like any old fox, and led his persecutors a wild dance for more than fifty years; during the whole of which time he ravaged their territory without their ever once getting properly on his scent.

If you wish to visit a certain spot, and there are two ways of reaching it, one direct and the other circuitous; and if by taking the straight route you are sure to meet a large band of well-armed assassins; you naturally take the other route; for although it is a long way round, you do reach your object at last. And if the assassins got wind of your movements, and shifted accordingly, you would naturally find out, if possible, a third way to avoid them. Always providing that as soon as you have friends enough to meet the rascals on equal terms, you will walk boldly up the straight road, and blow them to Hades, or whatever place in the universe affords hospitality to the souls of murderous blackguards. This proviso saves your valor from being all discretion, and makes your prudence honorable.

Whether we shall ever adopt such tactics we are not prepared to say. The Lord only knows what the future holds in store, and those who are curious had better inquire of one of his agents, say the Pope, or Archbishop Tait, or General Booth. But it will not be amiss to take a brief historical survey of the strategy of sceptics, and to point out how we might carry on a covert war on the Christian superstition by opposing cunning to force.

If we go back to the Renaissance we shall find the soldiers of progress fighting against terrible odds with nothing but a pen. But how they plied that weapon! Not daring to assail God, they struck at his friends. Merry tales were circulated at the expense of priests. The greatest fool, drunkard, glutton, and profligate of the story was sure to be a monk. These predatory vermin are satirised in scores of French *fabliaux* and Italian *novelle*, and even the gentle Boccaccio ridiculed them on page after page of his golden book, playing about them the soft summer-lightning of his wit.

His countryman, the fiery-souled Bruno, followed a somewhat different plan, as did many of his French contemporaries. He quizzed the gods of Paganism in such a way that the wise reader could apply the satire to the gods of a later faith. When, in "The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast" (*Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante*) he wrote of deities who could "walk on the water and do other pretty tricks," his readers would naturally think of the natatory feat which Jesus Christ is alleged to have performed on the sea of Galilee. Bonaventure Des Periers slants at the Christian deities in like fashion when he makes riotous fun of the Pagan gods and goddesses in his "Cymbalum Mundi."

Poor Des Periers, however, was after all not astute enough to keep out of mischief. The keen-nosed priests scented his heresy and denounced him. Père Mersenne called him an "impious rogue;" M. De L'Estoille said he

was "an Atheist, and unworthy the name of a man;" and Pasquier declared that he was "only fit to be thrown into the fire." This is how the beagles of persecution spoke of one of the finest writers of that epoch. His end is wrapped in some obscurity, but it seems that he fell on his own sword in prison to escape being roasted alive for the glory of God.

Rabelais was more fortunate. He dodged the enemy to the very last, and his Jovian laughter rang over the baffled pigmies. "After any particularly deep thrust," says Coleridge, "as if to break the blow, and to appear unconscious of what he has done, he writes a chapter or two of pure buffoonery." Rabelais had no taste for martyrdom and objected to dying out of bed. No doubt he expressed his own sentiment when he made Pantagruel quit the bigoted city of Toulouse, where they "stuck not to burn their regents alive like red herrings," saying: "Now God forbid that I should die this death, for I am by nature dry enough already without being heated any further." This grand thinker and humorist evaded many perils by his inexhaustible adroitness, and continued to a ripe age overwhelming the enemies of progress with a constant flood of irony.

We have already referred to Voltaire, who imitated Rabelais to some extent, three centuries later. Voltaire published many of his attacks on Christianity anonymously, and sometimes he attributed his pieces to other authors; as in the case of the *Épître à Uranie*, which was ascribed to Chaulieu, and the *Événement*, which was ascribed to Bolingbroke. Condorcet justifies Voltaire's conduct in this respect. He writes (*Vie de Voltaire*, p. 32):—

"The necessity of lying in order to disavow any work, is an extremity equally repugnant to conscience and nobleness of character; but the crime lies with those unjust men, who render such disavowal necessary to the safety of him whom they force to it. If you have made a crime of that which is not one; if, by absurd or by arbitrary laws, you have infringed the natural right, which all men have, not only to form an opinion, but to render it public; then you deserve to lose the right which every man has of hearing the truth from the mouth of another; a right, which is the sole basis of that rigorous obligation, not to lie. If it is not permitted to deceive, the reason is, that to deceive anyone, is to do him a wrong, or expose yourself to do him one; but a wrong supposes a right; and no one has the right of seeking to secure himself the means of committing an injustice."

Carlyle calls this Jesuitry in disguise, and sneers at Condorcet for putting forward such a plea. Yet we humbly opine that Carlyle's judgment in this matter is not worth very much. Both he and Mill kept back from the world a good deal of their convictions, although they had to face no greater foe than Bumble and Mrs. Grundy. Condorcet was an exceptionally honest man, and he was not likely to screen Voltaire or anyone else with a false plea. He knew the difficulties of the case, and could properly estimate the dangers in Voltaire's path. We agree with him that the persecutors' party have no right to complain. Their brutality is responsible for all the evasion. Voltaire's high courage was proved too often to be doubted. Who shall accuse the protector of Sirven and the vindicator of Calas of cowardice? Voltaire was assuredly no coward. But he had to fight single-handed an unscrupulous and powerful enemy. He matched his wit and finesse against all their strength—and won!

Mill somewhere (was it in a conversation with John Morley?) indulges in a cheap sneer at Gibbon's "insincere style." This is simply absurd. Gibbon's irony was necessitated by the Christian law, which sent Woolston to gaol for saying that the miracles of Christ were allegories, and Peter Annett for saying that the Pentateuch was not inspired. Everybody fit to read the "Decline and Fall" could understand exactly what Gibbon meant. He deceived nobody, but simply protected himself against a brutal law. When he wrote "it was not in this world that the Christians expected to be either happy or useful," his readers understood him as plainly as if he had said that "they were unsocial fanatics."

The same criticism applies to all the great eighteenth-century Deists; to Anthony Collins, to Lord Bolingbroke, and especially to David Hume, whose grave satire, in the "Essay on Miracles," is simply inimitable. In plain language his last paragraph comes to this; that Christianity is a religion of miracle, and that no man can believe it without having a miracle worked inside him. Hume had an eye to the Blasphemy Laws. And there could be no doubt as



to the danger; for when Thomas Paine put the scepticism of Bolingbroke, Gibbon, and Hume into direct and vigorous language for the common people, the cry of "Blasphemy" was raised by the Church and its dupes, as if Silenus and his ass had joined in a common bray.

Recurring to France, we may notice a delightful bit of strategy on the part of Diderot and D'Alembert. They once had a long chat on religion in a *café*, and in order to baffle a listening police-spy they agreed to call the Trinity by fictitious names. God the Father, if we remember rightly, figured as Monsieur Lepère, and Jesus Christ as Monsieur Lenfant. When the conversation ended the spy came up and politely asked who were the Messieurs Lepère and Lenfant that had been described as such dreadful characters. "Oh," said Diderot with an innocent look, "they were two police spies."

Might we not if the worst came to the worst, go in for something of that kind? We might even dispense with names altogether, and use algebraic symbols. ( $x$ ) would do capitally for God, the great unknown. The minus sign ( $-$ ) would do for our old friend Jahveh, as signifying that he is worse than no God at all. The plus sign ( $+$ ) would serve for Jesus Christ, as signifying the cross on which he had his last cold spread. And if we are put to it we shall probably succeed in working out appropriate signs for all the heavenly host.

Richard Carlile, whose untameable heroism is alone enough to inspire us with courage, tricked his persecutors in a way which we have no doubt sent a laugh through Hades, and even made old Monsieur Lepère smile upon his throne. The much prosecuted publisher, after he and his family and a dozen shopmen had gone to prison, devised a dial with a revolving hand and a list of his publications. The customer turned the hand to the name of the work he wanted, and it was passed through an aperture. No vendor was seen, and therefore sale could not be proved. Mrs. Carlile did a roaring trade, and all over the country the reformers toasted "Carlile's invisible shopman."

Well, here is another excellent plan. We may be obliged to adopt it; and in that case 28 Stonecutter Street will be known as "the hole in the wall."

If we were only prosecuted and punished under the Act of William the Third, what a splendid comedy might be performed! The last clause of that Act provides that any offender may obtain a discharge from all penalties and disabilities by going to the Court within four months after conviction, and making acknowledgment and renunciation. Suppose we took advantage of this proviso; what a howl would go up from the bigots all over the country, like a pack of hounds who have lost the game! We fancy we hear them now, and Tyler's yelp overtopping them all, "oh my ducats, my ducats."

We repeat that we have no present intention of doing any of these things. We merely point out what might be done, in order that the bigots may not make their creed more contemptible than it is already.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### "FREETHINKER" DEFENCE FUND.

U. Shiddard, 2s.; A Few Friends on board H.M.S. *Nor-thumberland*, 14s. [our special thanks to the jolly tars]. *Brighthouse Branch of N. S. S.* (per Squire Brook) 2s. 6d. W. Hunt, 5s. *Blackburn* (per H. Audley): Collected at Mr. Symes' lectures, 12s. 9d.; Mr. Umpleby, £1 1s. *Edinburgh* (per C. Nicholson): A. Orr, 2s. 6d.; C. Nicholson, 1s.; Mr. Geddes, 2s.; a Friend, 6d.; Collected at Door, 8s. 10d.; W. Dewar, 1s.; J. Robertson, 1s. *Liverpool*: Miss Tanner, 5s.; a Friend, 1s.; J. W. Whitfield, 5s.; J. F., 2s.; S. Campbell, 10s.; W. McMichael, 5s.; H. H., 1s.; J. Sisson, 3s.; W. Harris, 2s. 6d. *Boothle and Kirkdale Branch*: W. A. Newcomb, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Newcomb, 1s.; W. Mackintosh, 1s.; T. Donnelly, 2s.; M. Nixon, 2s. 6d.; D. Parr, 2s.; A. Weeks, 1s.; J. Carroll, 1s.; W. Murphy, 3d.; G. Massey, 2s.; G. Bickers, 1s.; W. Bickers, 6d.

[We shall be glad to send collecting sheets to any Freethinker on application. As the most expensive part of the struggle will soon begin, we trust our friends will contribute as largely as possible during the next few weeks.]

Upon hearing that Miss Lila Clay was going to bring out a new opera di camera, for representation by ladies only, which will be entitled "An Adamless Eden," our profane friend "Lucianus" remarked that father Adam should never have gone to sleep, and he would have had a dam less she den.

#### YE BIGGE STORYE OF JONAH.

THE Lord got up one morning, and called his servant Jonah, To go and tell the Ninevites their sins they must atone, or He'd serve them like the Canaanites, and send them all to blazes.

But Jonah didn't like the job; he knew old Jahveh's crazes.

Said he, "Vy, holy Moses! shure I can't talk Nineviteish; Old Shaddai he's a ninny, though he calls himself Almightyish. I know his ways, ven in a craze he awful thundering harsh ish; Sho in a ship I'll give him the slip, and take a trip to Tarshish."

When in the boat and well afloat, old Jahveh in a passion, A storm sent out, which knocked about the ship in fearful fashion.

The pious sailors thought their gods intended an embargo, So as they carried contraband they pitched out all their cargo.

The storm kept on, the sailor's said, "It's owing to this Jew here—

You hooked-nosed lubber, tell us what the devil do you do here.

Just step outside." They threw him out. The ship no more did canter;

Like oil upon the troubled waves the sea grew calm instant'er.

In vain old Jonah cried for help; 'twas all in vain he holloa'd. The fishes would have eaten him had not a big fish swallowed: It was a whale, we have the tale on the authority of Jesus,— It said, "Come in here out of the wet, but mind you're not to tease us."

Inside as snug as a bug in a rug, the prophet—he was a drinker—

Smoked, and took his brandy hot, and read his loved *Freethinker*.

You may see him (just as he appeared) in our front illustration.

Should you doubt 'twas drawn upon the spot you risk your soul's salvation.

But Jonah ben Amittai said, "Vy, damn it, I perhaps am sailing to blazes—

Shlap bang into hell. Von never can tell vot Jahveh vill do in his crazes."

So, sore afraid, he turned and prayed for the sins which he had com-mitted.

Which made the whale so mortal sick, he fairly took and vomitted.

He landed him straight at Nineveh's gate, though 'tis an inland city;

If you should doubt how 'twas brought about it would be an awful pity.

Your unbelief will bring you to grief for blasphemy and libel; And it's just as sure as a good deal more that's found in the Holy Bible.

LUCIANUS.

#### ACID DROPS.

ANTONIO, in the "Merchant of Venice," observes how the Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose; and many a plain honest man since has marvelled to see how all sorts of contradictory doctrines are proved by an appeal to the same authority. Perhaps the most remarkable case of that kind has recently occurred in America. It appears that Mr. Barnum, the great showman, was badgered by a church deacon for a "pass" to see the winter quarters of his menagerie; but he declined to grant one, saying that although "passes" were issued for the big show to clergymen, orphan asylums, and other advertising bodies, no one would get inside the "winter quarters" except editors. The deacon thought this rule too narrow; whereupon the showman said, "Perhaps so, but as you generally like Scriptural authority for everything, I present you with this card." The card ran as follows:—

##### FREE PASSES.

In those days there were no passes given.

Search the Scriptures.

Thou shalt not pass.—Numbers xx., 18.

Suffer not a man to pass.—Judges iii., 28.

The wicked shall no more pass.—Nahum i., 15.

None shall pass.—Isaiah xxxiv., 10.

This generation shall not pass.—Mark xiii., 30.

Though they roar, yet they can not pass.—Jeremiah v., 22.

So he paid the fare thereof, and went.—Jonah i., 3.

A "BIG REVIVAL" took place at Hebron Baptist Church, near Livingston, Virginia, on the evening of the 21st of October, and was a great success; although the enthusiasm displayed by some of the converts was at times almost too marked. One of them, a young man named Dave Reynolds,



suddenly "professed religion," and in the intensity of his zeal jumped over the benches and through a window. As ill-luck would have it, at this moment a much-respected lady, Mrs. Jane Roberts, whose house is near the church, was returning home, accompanied by her daughter and two children. In the path leading to Hebron Church she found herself confronted by Dave Reynolds, who seized one of the children by the hand and exclaimed, "Come up to the church with me and get religion." Mrs. Roberts objected; upon which the enthusiast beat her so severely about the head with a club that by latest accounts her life was despaired of. Reynolds urges that he was carried away on the occasion by religious fervor; and as that is always held a very good excuse, he will probably be dismissed with a caution. We expect, however, that the church people will make him pay for the broken glass.

THE author of "Infidelity Rebuked" says that infidels refuse to believe in the Christian miracles while giving their assent to many things for which there is much less evidence. This statement shows ignorance of the necessity of proportioning belief to the evidence for it, and the evidence to the antecedent probability against the statement.

If we are told that four and twenty blackbirds were baked in a pie we may be a little surprised at the number of birds, but, unless our informant is a parson, or with some interest to deceive in the matter, we shall probably take his word without question. If, however, he goes on to inform us that when the pie was opened the birds began to sing, we shall require stronger proof for a fact so astounding and outside our experience; nor can we give our assent to the assertion as a literal fact, even though we may be damned eternally for refusing it.

THE *Christian* seems to be aware of the little success of missionaries in India; it says "the spiritual conquest of India must be effected through the instrumentality of its own sons." We wonder how many native Christian preachers there would be if they had to subsist on the fare of Jesus and his apostles.

GOSPEL tub-thumpers and Bible-bangers take warning. An American orator got so enthusiastic the other day that he struck the large knuckle of his little finger on the pulpit with such force as to break it. He now preaches with bandaged hand and mild movement.

M. RENAN says "The Roman Church has become a woman. She deifies us in words that charm us into agony, even when she threatens what she will do to us some day?" If the priests had but the power, M. Renan would speedily cease to be charmed.

POOR Tracy Turnerelli! Ever since he covered himself with ridicule by getting up a gold wreath which was refused by Beaconsfield, he has been seeking for some new object to obtain notoriety. At last he says he has found "a task in which Liberals as well as Conservatives can join in defence of God and Religion." His plan is to organise "A National Anti-Atheistic Association," for the detection and prosecution of the disseminators of blasphemous and obscene publications." We would direct his early attention to the British and Foreign Bible Society.

WHATEVER are we coming to! The editor of the *Christian World* for November 9th, speaks of the Doctrine of the Fall as "the hypothesis at which conscience stands aghast and by which reason is utterly revolted, that because a miraculously talking reptile persuaded an inconceivably constituted woman six thousand years ago, to eat an actual fruit, men, women and children in the nineteenth century are guilty and accursed in the sight of God."

In another part of the same paper the editor speaks of "the ghastly and blasphemous doctrine of a hell of elaborate torture, of which the pains are dragged out to all eternity." These gentlemen are adopting the plan of doctors who, when their medicine is distrusted, give sugar-coated placebos instead of nauseating the patient with bitter tasting drugs.

"A. X. E." has had the temerity to attack the Christian superstition in the columns of the *Nottingham News*, whereupon a correspondent, signing himself W. H. Heath, asks why he does not give his own proper name. "Doubtless, he is so ashamed of his opinions (if an infidel can be ashamed) that he has not the courage to own them." Mr. Heath probably thinks himself a Christian full of the charity which thinketh no evil, but he can hardly be unaware that to disclose opposition to the prevailing creed is frequently to expose wife and children to social obloquy as well as to injure business through Christian persecution. He may know, too, that there are plenty ready to give their names who endorse the opinions of "A. X. E."

At the Liverpool assizes on Friday the Rev. Patrick Pacificus

Wade, a Roman Catholic priest of Darlington, was tried for having committed a rape on Charlotte Henderson, five years of age, at Prince's Park, Liverpool, on the 20th of last month. He was acquitted of the more serious offence, but pleaded guilty to an indecent assault, and was sentenced to two years' hard labor.

A CORRESPONDENT informs us as a fact, coming within his own notice, that a little seven years old boy asked his grandfather the puzzling question, "What language do they speak in ebben (heaven). A hundred years or so ago he would have been answered "Hebrew" without much hesitation. Learned doctors of theology argued that Hebrew was the original God given language of Paradise, and that it would be resumed in the realms above. Modern philologists, however, make it to be but a branch of older Semitic tongue, and probably derived from the Phœnician. So the child's question is likely to remain an unanswered one.

THE *Yorkshireman* says: "The week before last, at the Quarter Sessions for the North Riding of Yorkshire, the officer of the Court gravely handed to one of the witnesses a reporter's note-book—currently said to contain a verbatim report of a speech by Mr. Bradlaugh on the "Oath"—and swore the said witness solemnly on that engine of the Press. 'Twas not until the owner of the said book discovered his loss that the fearful mistake was revealed. So horrified was the Court with the desecration that the officer was "blown" up, the former oath expunged, and the witness re-sworn."

WE have been just sent a little tract headed "Prepare to Meet thy God." It states that this day may be our last on earth, and that our almost certain destiny is perpetual torment in hell-fire. Rather glad tidings this for a much worried editor expecting to be relieved from the cares of office by an enforced retirement in the calm seclusion of Holloway jail!

THE Rev. Joseph Cater, rector of St. Luke's, Chorlton on Medlock, has nine children, but being anxious for a divorce, told his wife that he had committed adultery over and over again with a young lady whom he had brought into his house, and that he would beat her about so as to establish cruelty. This he proceeded to do. Mrs. Cater petitioned for a judicial separation which was granted with costs, the petitioner being given the custody of the children.

A NEWSPAPER report of the Cambridge University Tours says that there was a good race "between Third Trinity and Jesus." What is Sir Henry Tyler about? Surely he will prosecute such horrid blasphemy.

THE Archbishop of York, has just been informing the men of his county that in the old Pagan days "there was no such thing in any quarter of the world as a hospital." He is grossly ignorant or grossly mendacious, probably the latter. We should very much like to discuss the subject with him before an audience or through the *Freethinker*.

CHRISTIANITY undoubtedly provides a good hospital for incurables. There are more well-paid ninnies in the Church than anywhere else.

ONE of our East End readers attended a Salvation Tea a few days ago. The decoction served up as tea looked and tasted like dirty water and treacle, and the edibles smelt too high for such low company. The sceptical visitor was obliged to decamp, but not before he had inserted a *Freethinker* under the table cloth. Query. What became of it? We dare say they cursed it and—read it all round.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a cheap edition of "Hell open to Christians," with some new illustrations. Talk about blasphemy; here it is with a vengeance. Father Pinamonti travelled in the hell-fire business and carried samples. As Hamlet says of Polonius, "you shall nose him as you go."

THE Rev. Carrington Lake, of East Street Baptist Chapel, Southampton, publishes a monthly *Reporter* devoted to the interest of his own shop, which doesn't seem too prosperous. He sets aside one column for sly falsehoods and brazen lies. One of the latter states that a Secularist lecturer at Burnley was mobbed for attempting to destroy a Bible in the open air. There is not a word of truth in the story. Mr. Tamlyn, the lecturer referred to, never was guilty of such an absurdity as to help the Bible trade in that way. He tried to destroy, not a Bible, but the Bible; and not by violence, but by argument. The Christians replied to him with brickbats, and afterwards got up a neat little lie to justify themselves. It's just like them.

"FATHER," said a child to a parson in the throes of sermon-writing: "does God tell you what to preach?" "Certainly, my child." "Then why do you scratch it out?"



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures twice to-day (Sunday, Nov. 19th), at the Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.:—Morning, at 11, "Progress and Poverty;" evening, at 7, "Gospel Ghosts."

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

November 26th, Claremont Hall, London.  
 December 3rd, Huddersfield; 10th, Bradford; and 17th, Grimsby; 24th, Milton Hall, London; 31st, Sheffield.  
 January 7th (1883), Claremont Hall, London; 14th, Manchester; 21st, Hall of Science, London; 28th, Claremont Hall, London.  
 February 4th, Leeds.  
 March 18th and 25th, Hall of Science, London.

## CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed, to the Publisher, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C.

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—"Analytical Concordance of Revised Texts," P. D. Manning, E. Leprevost, F. S. Dover, Chas. Grayson, C. Woodhead, "Jesus of Nazareth" (by the Rev. J. E. Manning, M.A.), *Sydney Bulletin*, "Langham Hall Pulpit," W. de C. F. Goulding, F. Summersgill, A. Bath.

HOLY PIGEON asks us what was the name of that disease (see Psalms xxxviii.) with which the man after God's own heart was so sorely afflicted? Commentators differ; some considers it indicates a disorder popularly supposed only to have been known since the fifteenth century.

J. C. MARRIOTT points out that the general opinion that the title "defender of the faith" was first conferred by the Pope upon Henry VIII. is incorrect, as Richard III. used the title in all his acts against the Lollards.

A. BENNETT.—Your jokes are always welcome.

J. HILL.—Prof. Seeley's book on "Natural Religion," reminds us of Voltaire's saying that taking supernaturalism from religion is cutting off its head. The author of "Ecce Homo" seems to think it can walk well enough without its head, which it has long since lost. The fact is it can only wriggle and sting with its tail.

SCRUTATOR.—The picture in the *Christian World* of Columbus' ship with a sailor looking through a telescope, is almost as decided an anachronism as the Dutch painting of Abraham with a gun over his shoulder. The invention of telescopes is variously ascribed to Jansen, Porta and others, about the end of the sixteenth century. They were not in general use until after they had been improved by Galileo.—Your scraps are always welcome.

J. LAMPARD.—We have not seen the book in question. A trashy work by the same author, entitled "Peter's Keys," makes us doubt if it is of any value. If you send it to us we will give our opinion.

NERO.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. BEECROFT.—There is nothing unusual in it. Nearly all the churches send out similar begging letters.

J. ROBERTS.—When a clergyman warns his flock against the *Freethinker* we balance his insult against his advertisement and remain perfectly contented.

CORRESPONDENTS whose communications do not appear promptly, need not think they are overlooked.

A. B. C.—We believe the special jury in the Tichborne case received £200 each. The sum was generally considered inadequate, as they were all business men in good position.

JOHN PARKS.—Your letter does you great credit and we doubt not you will effectually serve the cause some day. Practise writing. The lessons in "Cassell's Popular Educator" may be of service.

A. SHAW.—The Greek word for "drunk," used John ii., 10, is "Methusko." The Hebrew word is "shekhar."

W. URIE.—A small advertisement of your meeting can be inserted for one shilling.

L. HEATHER.—We have handed your letters to our publisher, to whom all orders should be sent direct.

C. NICHOLSON.—Glad to hear at last.

J. H. COOKE, 81 Brighton Road, Stoke Newington, will be glad to hear from Freethinkers in that district, with a view to forming a branch of the National Secular Society.

INQUIRER.—*Progress* will be sixteen pages larger than the *Liberal*, that is 64 pages in all.

S. WILKINS.—An Atheist is not simply a person who does not know that there is a God, for that definition would make all men Atheists. He is one who does not believe that there is a God.

SARCASTICUS.—We are not exactly sorry that the Archbishop of Canterbury has recovered, for there is always another candidate for the £15,000. Yet it does seem that the Lord is very unkind in bringing him nearly home to heaven, and then sending him back again to wander in this vale of tears.

J. P.—We cannot answer your question. Ask the nearest parson. If that fails, pray every night for a week. If you get no reply then, you had better give it up.

W. E. D. JONES.—Thanks.

MEMO.—Mr. Foote was more than satisfied with his reception at Liverpool last Sunday. He thanks the Liverpool friends, one and all, for their hearty welcome and ready support.

E. BINNS.—Your friend is immortalised. See "Acid Drops."

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE is highly gratified at receiving so many letters of congratulation on the starting of *Progress*. He is naturally glad to find that so many readers of the *Liberal* still remember it with affection. They may rest assured that *Progress* will be, according to the name, a real advance on its predecessor. The first number, we venture to say, will surpass expectation. A very handsome design is being executed for the cover, and a fine copperplate portrait of Spinoza to accompany the Biography. Articles will be contributed by a variety of able writers, and no effort will be spared to satisfy every reasonable taste.

OUR "Christmas Number" is going on capitally. It will be the greatest budget of fun and grotesque art ever published in the interest of Freethought or any other thought. A very clever French artist has designed a splendid cover, and eighteen illustrations of as many episodes in the life of Jesus. These last are full of fantastic humor. We warrant them to produce, for every reader, a hundred good laughs and a thousand chuckles. We never saw their equal. An allegory, entitled "The Fanatical Monkeys," attributed to Charles Southwell, will be reprinted with funny illustrations of Simian theology. There will also be an amusing "Trial for Blasphemy of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John," by Mr. Wheeler. Mr. Symes and our Editor are preparing contributions which will be announced next week; and Dr. Aveling will be represented if the School Board election leaves him any leisure. There will be a large cartoon, plenty of small illustrations, miles of good jokes, and last, but not least, some excellent verses, including a Freethought Psalm.

MODERN commentators are getting freer in their treatment of God's Holy Word. Dr. David Thomas, conductor of the "Homillist," has just issued a volume on the Psalms, in which he says: "I have not been able to see what most of my predecessors have seen—much moral excellence in the character of David, satisfactory reasons for his awful imprecations, or many, if any, Messianic references in the whole book." To speak of the words of the Holy Ghost as David's awful imprecations, is surely blasphemy. Dr. Thomas, however, thinks the way such writers as Spurgeon and Bonar treat the Psalms is "not only amazingly absurd but blasphemous." Writers who can justify a psalm the meaning of which, when reduced to simple but expressive English, is: "If thou wilt damn mine enemies I shall be happy," on the ground that it is an outburst of "righteous passion" Dr. Thomas tells us "may just as well call David's adultery righteous adultery, David's lies righteous lies, and David's other crimes righteous crimes."

WE are pleased to observe a notice in the *Middlesborough News* that Mr. John Rowell Waller contemplates issuing a new volume of poems. Doubtless some of the readers of Mr. Waller's contributions to the *Freethinker* will desire to possess themselves of the volume, and they will do well to send in their names as intending subscribers.

THE GOSPEL OF THE HOLY GHOST, OR THE TRUE HISTORY OF JESUS, THE SON OF MARY AND ———?

[Continued from p. 355.]

AND, behold, Jesus, as he lay in his fever, did rave exceedingly, and said that the devil had come to him in the wilderness, where he had fasted forty days and forty nights, and was very hungry. The devil brought unto him a pig and tempted him to eat it; but he repelled the temptation with horror. Then the devil caught him up and flew with him to a battlement of the temple and hurled him over; but an angel caught him before he fell to the earth. Then the devil took him away to a mountain exceedingly high, and showed him all the cities and kingdoms of the world, even in both hemispheres at one view; and promised to make him the ruler of them all, if he would only worship him. This he refused to do. And the devil left him there upon the mountain, cold and hungry, and not knowing which way to turn to find his road home. Then an army of angels, as soon as the devil was out of sight, and they were no longer afraid of him, took Jesus up and bore him home to his bed in a moment of time. And behold, he awoke and told his vision to his Mother Mary; and she perceived thereby that her son would be great, and that divine wisdom dwelt in him more than in all the prophets that were before him.

And Jesus, when the fever had left him chose twelve disciples, and their names were these: Simon *alias* Peter;



Andrew (Peter's brother); James and John Zebedee (also brothers); Philip; Bartholomew; Thomas *alias* Didymus; Matthew *alias* Levi; James Alphæus; Lebbaeus *alias* Thaddæus; Simon Canaanites; and Judas Iscariot. These he sent out to preach his Gospel. They were bidden not to meddle with Gentiles, but only Jews; and to cry as they went, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand!" They were commanded to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils; for Jesus would never forgive the king of devils for tempting him to eat pork. Therefore, would he have war with him and his angels for ever. And he commanded them, moreover, to raise the dead to life. They were forbidden to take any gold, silver, or brass with them; he commanded them not to have two coats; and to wear sandals instead of shoes.

Then the disciples went everywhere shouting their cry "The kingdom of heaven is at hand!" and healing the sick and raising the dead in multitudes; insomuch that the doctors and undertakers and the parsons were deprived of their occupation and their burial fees; and they cried out against the disciples with an exceeding bitter cry. And all as many as held property under their fathers' wills, when they found their parents and ancestors rising up to life again, did gnash their teeth with rage against the disciples of Jesus. And it came to pass that all the devils whom they had cast out did unite with the physicians, and the undertakers, and those whom their fathers had disturbed and dispossessed, and the parsons who had lost their fees; and they set upon the disciples, and drove them out of their cities. And all men wondered at that which they beheld, and said, "Why could not those men who raised the dead defend themselves against the living?"

After these things Jesus and his disciples and his mother went to a wedding, so that the wine ran short. But Jesus turned a large cistern full of water into prime old port; and then "the fun grew fast and furious;" and many good toasts were drunk and good songs were sung. And they all sang a new song, even the song of Moses and of the lamb, in honor of Jesus, saying,

"For he's a jolly good fellow!  
For he's a jolly good fellow!  
For he's a jolly good fellow!  
Which nobody can deny," etc.

And passing on from thence Jesus met one thousand old women, very decrepid, withered and toothless. And when they asked alms of him, he said, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" And they say unto him, "Lord, that we may be restored to our youth and beauty." And he healed them all, insomuch that they became the most beautiful women upon earth. Some of them remain even unto this day "to witness if I lie." And when this was noised abroad, behold, all that had old and decrepid wives and sisters besought him to heal them also. But he passed by and hid himself in a desert place.

And his disciples went into a ship to cross over the sea; and lo, a great wind arose, and the ship was in danger of being overwhelmed in the midst of the sea. And the disciples, as becometh good Christians, were sore afraid, saying, "Alas! must we enter into the New Jerusalem before our time?" And Jesus breathed upon the sea and it dried up; and he turned the ship into a chariot, and six sharks into horses, and thus rode, he and his disciples to their own home. And all men, as many as heard it, did marvel greatly at those things that were done.

And going on from thence he met a man who had fifty million devils in him. And he cast them all out, and the man was empty. And the devils he sent into a herd of swine; and behold, the pigs began to fly like eagles, until they were over the sea. And then did they all tumble into the water, and were drowned, they and the devils also. And when the owners of the pigs heard thereof, they ran out, they and their neighbors, and chased Jesus out of that region.

And when he came to a fig-tree, he went to see if there were any figs thereupon; for he was very hungry. But the season for figs was not yet come, and he found nothing on it but leaves. Then he began to curse and to swear, and the fig-tree turned as pale as death with fright, and entreated Jesus not to curse it so, for it was unreasonable to expect figs out of season. But Jesus gave no heed to its entreaty, but he answered and said, "Because thou hast not borne figs to feed me when I am in need, henceforth let no figs grow on thee for ever! Selah!" And it came

to pass that the fig-tree, being condemned in his own conscience, suddenly fell down and gave up the ghost, and became a pillar of salt, as it is written in the book of Moses concerning Lot's wife. And behold the man whose fig-tree it was did weep and lament exceeding sore, both he and his wife and family, for that which had befallen their tree.

And going on from thence, there encountered them certain of the Pharisees and Sadducees. And it came to pass that as they chode him and mocked him, behold he performed a miracle and turned them all into cabbages; and when the sun shone hot upon them, having no root, they withered away. And all men wondered at that which had come to pass.

Then began Jesus to say unto his disciples and to the multitude, "Behold, I came down from heaven." And they said unto him, "When didst thou descend from heaven? Lo, wast thou not born in Bethlehem? Didst thou come from heaven before thou wast born? Or hast thou been up to heaven and returned therefrom? Tell us, we pray thee, what explanation thou canst give." And Jesus was wrath, and said, "He that believeth not shall be damned. It shall be worse for you that doubt my words than for Sodom and Gomorrah." And he shook off the dust of his feet against them, and went his way.

JOSEPH SYMES.

(To be continued.)

### KANT AND THEISM.

IMMANUEL KANT, though for so long a period left free from any extensive biographical disturbance, has at length been exhumed and revived by Professor Stuckenburg of Ohio. That the additional facts are few is due to the comparative uneventfulness of his career; that they are often trivial to the omnivorous zeal of his biographer. His relations with the phenomenal world, though periodic and punctual, were never of a very exciting nature; and if, as he argued, man as intelligence exists in a supersensible world, the better part of Kant's career requires a supersensible biographer, which Professor Stuckenburg is not. It may of course be of philosophic interest to know that in his more social moments Kant commenced dinner with the words "Now gentlemen!" by way of grace before meat; or to learn that he expected visitors to help themselves, occasionally condescending to use provincialisms as an encouragement to his guests and to set the tone of the conversation. These details and others like them are not of great moment, though they serve to indicate the points of contact between the philosopher and his more common-place surroundings. There is indeed throughout his life a sort of other-world accompaniment, and apart from this there is a strange child-likeness and simplicity which latterly passed into childishness.

His relation to religious thought and life is exceedingly interesting, for though he cannot be considered as other than a Theist, he was far from being a Theist of the Christian type. The pietism of his mother appears to have influenced him at first and probably led to his entering the university as a student of Theology, but inclination speedily diverted his energies into the channel of Philosophy. By his own account it was the study of Hume which first awoke him from dogmatic slumber, and gave a new direction to his speculative inquiries. Forsaking once for all the dogmatism of Wolff and his school, he found in Hume's scepticism that which, in his own words, "conducts us to a sound investigation into the understanding and the reason;" and though he did not rest there in his search for the solution of problems of reason which Hume regarded as lying beyond the horizon of our knowledge, yet his after theory and practice were considerably modified by the calm reasoning of the older philosopher. The infancy of pure reason, said Kant, is marked by *dogmatism*; the evidence that judgment has been improved by experience is found in *scepticism*; and it was exceedingly natural that he should regard his own—the *critical* method as indicative of the maturity and manhood of the judgment. One striking feature of this method is, however, that it conducts to a purely negative position from which escape is only possible by the substitution of "moral feeling" and "moral certainty" for logical method and certainty, making the former the ground of conviction by a very perilous leap, the hazard of Faith. It was this negative result of the application of the critical method to pure reason, a source of much per-



plexity to Kant's more orthodox admirers, which led Heine to characterise him as the arch-destroyer—the Robespierre in the realm of thought. "Destined in the natural course of events for the weighing out of coffee and sugar, fate decided that they should weigh other things: into the scale of one it laid a king, into the scale of the other a God . . . . and both gave correct weight." The whole passage in which Heine sums up the logical results of Kant's first great treatise is worth quoting, premising that that the Lampe referred to is the philosopher's old servant, not the Lampe of interminable theological dissertation.

"I refrain from all popular discussion of Kant's reasoning in disproof of the Ontological argument for the existence of God. Suffice it to say that since Kant's time Theism has quite faded out of the realm of speculative reason. It may, perhaps, be several centuries before this melancholy notice of decease gets universally bruited about. We Germans have, however, long since put on mourning. *De profundis!* You will say then that we may now go home. By my life, no! There is yet a piece to be played; after the tragedy comes the farce. Up to this point Kant had pursued the path of inexorable philosophy. He had stormed heaven and put the garrison to the edge of the sword; the ontological, cosmological, and physico-theological bodyguards now lie there lifeless; Deity itself deprived of demonstration has succumbed; the immortality of the soul lies in its last agony—you can hear its groans and death-rattle; and the old Lampe is standing by, with his umbrella under his arm, an afflicted spectator of the scene, tears and sweat-drops of terror falling from his countenance. But at last Immanuel Kant relents and shows that he is not only a great philosopher but a good man; he reflects, and half good-naturedly, half ironically, says—'Old Lampe must have a God, otherwise the poor fellow will be miserable. Now man ought to be happy in this world—Practical Reason says so: well, I am quite willing that Practical Reason should also guarantee the existence of a God. As the result of this argument Kant distinguishes between the Theoretical Reason and the Practical Reason, and by means of the latter, as by a magician's wand, he revivifies Theism which Theoretical Reason had killed.'"

The views on which Heine comments thus humorously can scarcely be explained in a paragraph, but they may be briefly indicated in their general outlines. In the latter part of his *Kritik of Pure Reason*, published in the maturity of his powers, he considers the arguments for the existence of God under their three main heads. First, the Ontological argument, involving both in its statement and refutation a higher pitch than the upper D of the mental piccolo. Let it suffice to say concerning it, that the cloud on which God appears seated is the possibility of a being the most real of all beings; in this reality is necessarily involved existence; if you deny that existence is involved, then you deny the possibility of a most real being of all; which is self-contradictory if, as is supposed, you set out with its admission: therefore, there is a most real being of all beings.—Q. E. D. The refutation may be omitted.

Kant next encounters the Cosmological argument—that if any thing exists there must exist an absolutely necessary being as its cause; and shows that it must fall back for support upon the previously demolished Ontological argument. Finally he takes the Physico-theological, the Design argument, and shows that this in turn must fall back upon the Cosmological, which fell back upon the Ontological, which had nothing to fall back upon—a method of logical treatment apparently constructed on the lines of the legend of "The house that Jack built!"

This being the apparent end of God, how is it we meet with him again in the subsequent developments of the Kantian scheme? It is a clear case of Ghost, and of that lamentable type the stage-ghost. We are to accept God as a regulative principle not as a demonstrable fact. It simplifies matters, and enables us to systematise our experiences in much the same way that the assumption of an independent "mind" or "soul" enables us to systematise our personal faculties. It gives a hypothetical unity to our ideas, and furnishes us with an ideal, which, though logically lacking in objective value, is useful as a subject for philosophic contemplation, and for whipping up the rear of humanity to a proper sense of its social duties. Any assertion of the actual existence of a God must rest its

claim to acceptance upon personal feeling merely, for outside the bounds of individual conviction there is nothing to induce belief.

Kant's after treatment of the Theistic idea by the light of so-called Practical Reason, involving the question of the claims of "moral certainty" must be left to the intelligence of those who are prepared to follow him through a series of conundrums and linguistic contortions. For his practical life it may be said that he considered acts of worship as Fetichism, rejecting all religious observances; that he styled church psalmody mere bawling; that he treated prayer as a superstition to be ashamed of; that he thought the weakness of old age in becoming devout altogether contemptible, an idea which clung to him through all his childishness and weakness; and that he faced death having what George Sand once termed "the faith to say 'I know not.'" M. W.

#### DAT ANGEL CHOIR.

MATILDY, a colored cook lady who consents to serve in an Austin family for ten dollars a month and what she can steal, has two bad habits. One is going to camp meetings and getting more religion than she knows what to do with, and the other is smashing crockery. A few days ago, while singing a hymn about

"When I jines dat angel choir," she smashed a large cut-glass dish.

The white woman who hires the colored lady, remonstrated with Matildy and asked her to be more careful, to which the incipient, mahogany-colored angel replied:

"You must learn nebber to repine at de chastenins ob de Almighty. I bear up under 'em wid Christian fortytude

"O, when I jines dat angel band."

When the head of the family came home to dinner, he said if he had been about when she smashed the three dollar preserve-dish, and he could have laid hands on a hatchet, she would have jined "dat angel choir" in sections.—*Texas Siftings*

#### PROFANE JOKES.

"ELIZA, my child," said a peevish old maid to her pretty niece, who would curl her hair in beautiful ringlets; "if the Creator had intended your hair to be curled, he would have done it himself."

"WHY are there no marriages in heaven?" asked a young lady. "Because there are no priests there," was the reply.

At a Methodist prayer meeting a fervid wrestler with the Lord, cried out "Oh God, curtail the Devil." The next tub-thumper improved this idea by soliciting the deity thus: "Oh Lord, cut his tail off altogether."

A COMPROMISE.—When Jonathan Wild got into Newgate he was waited upon by the Ordinary, who wished to converse with him on spiritual things. "Well," said Jonathan, "before we go into that, join me at a bottle of wine." "Oh, no," said the Ordinary, "I could not think of such a thing; I could not think of drinking with you." "Very well; if you will not drink with me I will not talk with you, so there is an end of the matter." The good old clergyman found that he had not a chance unless he drank with the prisoner, so the waiter was called—(for Newgate was conducted then very differently to what it is now, and if a man had plenty of money he could get what he liked)—the waiter was called, and a bottle of wine ordered. "Stay," said the rev. gentleman, "if it will make no difference to you, I would prefer a noggin of whisky." "How's that?" said Jonathan; "you objected at first to drink with me part of a bottle of wine, and now you come to whisky; you must have some powerful reason. What is your reason?" "My reason is," said the chaplain, "that wine is frequently spoken against in the Scriptures, but there is nothing said against whisky."

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