

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sentenced to Twelve Months' Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

Interim Editor, EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc., Fellow of University College, London.

William James Ramsey, as Proprietor, sentenced to Nine Months' Imprisonment; and Henry Arthur Kemp, as Printer and Publisher, sentenced to Three Months' Imprisonment.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE IMPRISONED FREETHINKERS.

THE following memorial has been submitted to Mr. Gladstone:—

"Your memorialists submit that on grounds both of justice and of policy, it is desirable to put an end to the imprisonment of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey.

"On grounds of justice, inasmuch as where all religions are tolerated, and where freedom of speech is held to be of the greatest value, it is manifestly unjust to visit the offence of these men with punishment which, in its severity, goes far beyond anything required to vindicate the law and to prevent repetition of the offence.

"On grounds of policy, because the infliction of such punishment is obviously calculated to defeat its own object, to enlist sympathy with the offender where none would otherwise be felt, to create hatred against a religion requiring such severity, and to discredit the Liberal Government.

"Your memorialists therefore submit that they and the large number who think with them in this matter, have a clear right not only to appeal to you, but to expect either redress at your hands, or a distinct intimation that you consider justifiable, action which they cannot but regard as cruel and tyrannical."

DR. WAINWRIGHT AND ATHEISM.

[Continued from p. 250.]

THE first public utterance of the militant Doctor of Divinity with which I intend to deal is one of his most recent lectures. It appears that the Islington Protestant Institute has arranged for a course of lectures that have been delivered during the past eight or nine months, and one by Dr. Wainwright on July 20th, and upon "Bible Triumphs Scientifically Based," formed a part of the series. If the rest are at all like the one that it is my painful duty to consider, I should be shocked at the amount of moral harm for which the Islington Protestant Institute is responsible. The shock is, in some measure, lessened by the reflexion that an audience that could accept the words of Dr. Wainwright as anything other than a burlesque on serious matters must be already sunk so deep in un-intellectual coma that not even this sad teaching could do them further hurt.

I take this, one of the most recent speeches of Dr. Wainwright, as its looseness and inaccuracy will show how dangerous a guide he must be on all matters where mental operations other than those of the very simplest nature are involved. The title of the lecture was "Bible Triumphs Scientifically Based." If the last letter of the title had been omitted we should have had the solitary instance of correct thinking in the whole speech.

From the nature of the title it will be easily seen with what logical ease Dr. Wainwright fell to talking about Mr. Bradlaugh and the House of Commons.

The traitors to their country who have robbed Northampton of its rights were called "a noble band." For once we understand the disjunctive force of the conjunction in the phrase "noblemen and gentlemen." If a company of persons in whom dishonesty and cowardice fight a drawn battle for pre-eminence are to be called "noble," by all means let us understand that noble men are not necessarily gentlemen.

It is amusing to find Dr. Wainwright condemning "the craze for rehabilitation," when his time is spent mainly in the futile efforts to patch up a dilapidated book and a decayed deity. And when he quotes the elegant description of Henry VIII., by Charles Dickens, as "a spot of blood and grease upon the pages of the history of England," he comes perilously near a description of the god of the Old Testament with his love for the blood of beasts and the fat of rams.

The Spanish Armada came to grief, naturally, because of the religious faith of the English. Every one but the members of the Protestant Institute knows that the Spanish nation was, and is, a far more religious nation, far more rich in faith, than the English. The English won because their science, not their credulity, was greater, and because of a storm. Dr. Wainwright actually is sufficiently blasphemous to more than hint that the storm was laid on by god specially for the benefit of the victors. Surely the force of impudence and of presumption can no further go.

Dr. Wainwright is as ignorant of the facts of Mr. Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle as he is of the intellectual character of the House of Commons. But there is nothing surprising in his knowing little either of a great fight for liberty, or of anything that has to do with men's intelligence. He says "if Mr. Bradlaugh had been admitted." But Mr. Bradlaugh has been admitted. "There had never been a legislator, whether Saxon or English, who dared to say 'I don't believe in god.'" There are scores of men in the two Houses at this moment who no more believe in god than Dr. Wainwright believes in the Pope. But the clause "who dared to say" is almost a saving one, and had the words, "openly in the face of the country" been inserted Dr. Wainwright's literary salvation would have been complete.

Before dealing with the actual subject of his lecture Dr. Wainwright reviewed his previous efforts in the same direction. As I hope again to refer to these lectures (provided I can obtain notices of them) I would only note two phrases in this review. According to the lecturer, as reported in the newspapers, "nothing great or good had ever been achieved by men who did not believe in a divine being." In the first place the statement is not accurate. I would ask Dr. Wainwright to read Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, to study the life of Marcus Aurelius, the dramas of Victor Hugo, the political work of Gambetta, the poetry of Mr. Swinburne. In the second place, the statement proves too much. For it is equally true that nothing little or bad has ever been achieved by men who did not believe in a divine being. If the belief has been very general until recently among those who have done good things for man, the belief has been, and is, universal among criminals. It is clear

that the belief in god is quite as compatible with the deepest villainy as with the most exalted virtue, and if Dr. Wainwright quotes Christ, Luther, Milton, Washington, Bright, I quote Judas Iscariot, Leo X., Charles I., Guiteau and Peace.

The fact is that no conclusion can be drawn either way in this connexion from a study of the human race during the last few heart-beats—*i.e.*, the last few centuries of its hundreds of thousands of life years. Everybody during the last few centuries, with one or two rare exceptions, the first faint shafts of the growing dawn, has had, or thought he had, a belief in god. Even to-day, though the number of non-believers in deity is growing with a rapidity very beautiful and full of promise, the large mass of men still think they have a vague belief. To draw conclusions from the past, or even from the present, is as sensible as to say that "nothing great or good has ever been achieved by men who did not" wear clothes. Two or three centuries hence people will be in a position to form a judgment on this point.

A little later Dr. Wainwright claims to have demonstrated that an unseen is necessarily behind the scene. This is the first time I have heard of a clergyman going "behind the scenes." But, seriously, how can any man speak of demonstration here? To demonstrate a thing is to appeal to the senses. And the very word "unseen" shows that no such appeal is possible. By the senseless only can the demonstration be imagined as complete.

Then Dr. Wainwright commits himself at last to mathematical statements. "In proportion to a man's godliness so were his ideas profounder, finer, richer and more precious to all with whom he came in contact." In mathematical phraseology the value of a man's ideas varies as his godliness, or that value is a function of his godliness.

Let us apply this formula. "General" Booth is more godly than the late Charles Darwin . . . the value of "General" Booth's ideas is greater than that of Charles Darwin's works, and the drums and shrieks of a Salvation Army are of greater use to the community at large than "The Origin of Species" or "Insectivorous Plants." Mr. Spurgeon is more godly than Edison of New York . . . Mr. Spurgeon's clerical gymnastics in that Sahara of intellect, the Tabernacle, are of greater worth than Edison's steam-dynamo; and the transpontine shouter's power of converting sinners is more beneficial than the steam dynamo's power of converting ninety per cent. of mechanical energy into electrical energy. Dr. Wainwright is more godly than Mr. Bradlaugh . . . the vaporings of the former round the Dead-Sea apples of Biblical blunders are of greater service to humanity than an attack upon perpetual pensions.

EDWARD B. AVELING.

JUMPING COMMENTS UPON THE BIBLE.

(Continued from page 250.)

THE second chapter of Genesis closes with the confession that the Elohim or Jahveh had not the decency to clothe the pair they had made. We need not be surprised. Gods and goddesses have never been civilised enough to clothe themselves. All the garments they have ever worn have been woven and made by mythologists, painters and sculptors. Not being clad themselves, the Elohim, including gods and goddesses, never once thought that the human beings they had made, just like themselves, had any need of garments. Dr. Watts, in a hymn many of us learnt in childhood, seems to regret that civilisation should have effected what god had left undone. The hymn is both pious and edifying—

"The art of dress did ne'er begin
Till Eve, our mother, learnt to sin;
When first she put the covering on
Her robe of innocence was gone;
And yet her children vainly boast
Of those sad marks of glory lost!"

John Milton also, in "Paradise Lost," has something to say upon the subject. That magnificent Zoroastrian or Manichæan poem should be read by all worshippers of orthodoxy.

GENESIS iii.—*The serpent was more subtle (sly) than any beast of the field which the lord god had made.*—iii., 1. Yes, the serpent was always an emblem or symbol of wisdom; though it required very little of that quality to out-wit the lord god and the first pair. Of course, the story is a "mystery" in the old-fashioned sense of that word. The

language is emblematical, and intended to show that all sin and evil, misery and death, spring from the union of the sexes. It was written by some vile ascetic.

By the way, how is it all clothiers and manufacturers of textile fabrics do not adopt the serpent as their symbol or as their arms or trade mark? The whole of their art is due to the action of the serpent. Had he not been wiser than the gods, clothes had never been adopted.

Lest anyone should be bold enough to question if the serpent ever held the reported conversation with the woman, let it be remembered that in "Esop's Fables" nothing is more common than for animals to talk; and nursery tales and folklore abound with similar incidents. "Be not faithless, but believing." "Ye believe in Esop, believe also in Genesis." If you doubt the speaking of the serpent, remember Balaam's donkey; if you are tempted to doubt the donkey-tale, remember that of the serpent. By thus comparing scripture with scripture you may assure yourself of the truth of one absurdity by reflecting upon another equally bad. If you should still be tempted to doubt, remember that all doubters will be damned; reflect upon the flames of hell until the conception drives you half mad. You will be able to believe anything then.

And Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the lord god amongst the trees of the garden.—iii., 8. You need not wonder now how the serpent dodged the lord god and got into the garden unknown to its owner—they were out of his presence! He could not see them; and had to call them to find out where they were! If I wrote here that I hid from the lord god, and got out of his presence, I might go to Holloway Gaol for blasphemy; and if I pretended to be revelation I was writing, and raised the late Archbishop of Canterbury from the dead to prove my mission, Dr. Benson and his party would give me an extra twelvemonths of solitary confinement for disturbing existing arrangements, while the resurrected defunct would have to be disposed of or "removed" as fast as possible. God could not see far in those early days, evidently; and his presence was no more extensive than Adam's. In process of time he grew in bulk till he became infinite; and now men can no more find god than god could find Adam and Eve. He is dissipated, like the gas of a ruptured balloon, or, rather, like the vital spirit of the torn and tattered creeds.

With a kangaroo bound I leap over the other incidents of the story, and alight plump upon the upshot of the first sin. "*Behold the man (literally), the Adam (that is, both the man and the woman) is become as one of us, to know good and evil*"—iii., 22. I told you the creators were more than one. They speak in the plural—*one of us*. The volumes of learned rubbish written to explain this would surprise one, if he did not reflect that twenty useless books are written for every useful one, and that for every great book you might find a waggon-load of literary rubbish. This mystery is usually explained by means of the trinity in theology. One of the three is spoken to by the Elohim! That is, the unity speaks to one of the trinity, or to all three. That is, one of them at least, talks to himself—a sign of weak intellect generally. That is, they all three speak with one voice, so lodged that all can use it at once, or one of them alone. Where the said voice was placed, or how it was managed I know not; I was not there. As this communistic or socialistic voice uttered what all three equally thought, each of the three heard with his own pair of ears what he himself and his two companions uttered; and thus each of the triad came to understand for himself what all three knew equally well before all three combined in this co-operative manner to pronounce it for the benefit of himself and two companions. Ah, me! My last sentence, I fear, is a bit mixed; so am I. It is that trinity that has done it. I feel as poor Captain Webb did, probably, in the Niagara whirlpools, so I'll make for the shore.

So he drove out the man (literally, the Adam).—iii., 24. This was an act of vengeance blind and cruel. It was an act of jealousy. For the three, that is the one, felt afraid of Adam and Eve. They knew too much. So they persecuted them, just as the bigots persecute now. The gods and bigots have always claimed a monopoly of knowledge: being densely stupid themselves, they have always done their worst to prevent other people growing wise. To claim a monopoly of knowledge is merely to wall up your windows with the object of shutting in all the sunlight, and to find yourself in absolute darkness as the result of such folly. Had gods and bigots (they are both of the same

species) been successful, the world would never have emerged from brutal savagery. The act of expulsion from Eden was one of mere spite—"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." These wicked gods begrudged man knowledge. The serpent assisted him, and he won that in spite of them. Then they deprived him of immortality. Here, too, the monopoly proved fruitless. Men die; but the race of man still subsists. The gods die, and leave no successors. Most of them are dead. The Bible gods are as dead as the dead languages that record their deeds.

When the horse was gone god shut the stable-door, and set cherubs with a flaming sword to guard it! That is a specimen of divine wisdom. Had he but set that guard at first the serpent might never have got in; had he not made the serpent he could never have tempted Eve. Inexperience and folly mark the whole of this story of the creation and fall. Nothing to equal it in these particulars can be found elsewhere. Most other nursery tales have some sense and some humanity in them; this is destitute of both. And yet this silliest of stories is taught still as divine truth even in Board schools, at the expense of the ratepayers. And those who laugh at it are sent to prison, for the gratification of bishops and other humbugs who fatten upon falsehood and grow rich out of the credulity of the poor.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

THE DELUSIONS OF THEOLOGY.—II.

EXPERIENCE shows that our early beliefs result purely from a geographical accident. We cannot decide before our birth in what country or of what parents we shall be born. Neither can we determine the quality of our organisation. We are brought into the world without our consultation, and we necessarily believe that to be true which our parents and instructors teach us as true.

We cannot mistrust our parents or teachers, for what interest have they in teaching us to believe that which in reality is false? None whatever. Consequently, in our childhood we implicitly accept all that is told us by persons of greater knowledge and experience than ourselves; and it is not until we hear of persons with other beliefs that we are at all sceptical concerning the truth of our own.

The theologian is ever anxious that we should believe that there is only one god and one true religion. He does not like us to know that there is strong competition in his line of business, and that if he cannot satisfy us with his "little god" and periodical doses of soothing syrup, there are others in the market who will try their "hand." So the theologian seeks to convince the young first. He takes the child when its mind is quite plastic, and sets the theological seal upon it. The reason of man he declares to be "foolishness" in the sight of god. He puzzles the child by saying that god is everywhere, though he cannot be found anywhere; he says that god is all-powerful, though he cannot prevent the Devil from turning everything "topsy-turvy;" that he is all-good, though he sometimes allows the tyrant to oppress and punish a whole nation of inoffensive people. But all these things are done, the child is assured, that god may be glorified.

When the child grows to manhood and finds that there are thousands, perhaps millions, of people who declare their belief in the same god and the same religion—sees that the institutions of the country are based upon the assumption that this religion is true; that the State and the religion are allied; that the priest and the policeman work together, he is satisfied, and henceforth he is counted among the faithful.

We have not all time to test the truth of our religion. Most of us have to take a good deal for granted; many of us believe on the authority of some person or persons whom we imagine as knowing more than ourselves. It is the same in all countries and in regard to all kinds of belief. The Brahmins, the Buddhists, the Mahomedans, the Christians, are all alike in this regard; they do not examine the evidence which establishes the truth or falsity of their belief, but are content to accept it on the authority of great men, or because their parents and friends believed it before them. This is the only rational way of accounting for the prevalence of erroneous religious belief.

But the theologian tells us that we cannot account for the existence of the world or of man unless we believe in his god. Suppose we could not give a satisfactory explanation of these things, it would not follow that the theologian with his hypothetical deity was better able to supply a solution of these problems than ourselves.

To say that god made the world or the universe is not to satisfy the inquiries of sceptics who push the matter a step further back, and ask: "Who made or caused god?" To this question the theologian has one unvarying reply—"It is not for man to inquire." If man has no right to inquire concerning the origin of the deity, why has he a right to inquire concerning the cause of anything? And if one thing; why not all?

But if the theologian further answers that god has always existed, then it is clear enough that god could not have created the universe. For if god is infinite—that is, boundless in extent, it is impossible for anything to exist independent of him, for within his existence everything would be comprised.

Either the theologian must have an infinite god and no universe, or an infinite universe and no god; or he must have a finite universe and a finite god—that is, no god at all.

But is it not clearly a delusion to proclaim god to be the creator of anything? God must either have produced everything out of himself or out of nothing. But he could not produce anything out of nothing, because *ex nihilo, nihil fit*. And if he were to produce anything out of himself it would still be himself—elongated perhaps, but not different in substance.

Again, if it is not difficult to believe god to be eternal why is it difficult to believe nature to be so? Of nature we know something, of god nothing. Moreover does not our experience demonstrate the indestructibility of matter and of force? And is it not reasonable to suppose that that which cannot be destroyed never began to be?

To say that nature cannot of herself produce all the phenomena of the universe is equivalent to the declaration that we know precisely the limits of nature's capabilities, and can determine what she can and what she cannot do. Is not this exceedingly presumptuous? Yet this is exactly what the theologian says in effect. He says that nature has not existed eternally but that god has; that out of the bosom of nature living creatures could not have evolved; that nature could not produce man, but that god could.

Even if we were to acknowledge the existence of deity it would not prove that he was the author of man's existence. There is no evidence that an infinite being produced man. There is plenty of evidence that man was not produced by a being of infinite wisdom and goodness.

Infinite wisdom could no more stoop to make a naked savage than a naked savage could make an infinite god. The savage made the first god, and the theologian has improved him. Nature evolved the first men and left them to improve the world, themselves included.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

ACID DROPS.

THE editor of the *Christian Register*, writing on the "Doom of the Majority" of mankind, sends all the pagan world and a large portion of the Christian world pouring by millions over the Niagara of perdition. Of the twenty-seven millions who die annually, about twenty millions plunge into the regions of eternal torment to roast, and roast, and keep on roasting, without any "sweet by and by" or "beautiful shore" in the dim vistas of the eternal strand. This theory of human destiny "is very pitiful and of tender mercy," but we suppose we have no right to think aloud, and must be satisfied blessing our stars that we are not pagans, and that we have been born in sight of the narrow road. Would it not be humane to slaughter all the pagans, and so cut off a posterity with no higher inheritance than eternal fire?—*Grip*.

THE Rev. S. A. Barnett, of St. Jude's, Whitechapel, with a courage and a knowledge of the real needs of his parishioners greater than that ordinarily displayed by the clergy, recently treated the inhabitants of the East-end to a Sunday flower-show held in the school-ground of St. Jude's. No less than 34,000 persons—many of whom probably pass from one year to another without any opportunity of seeing really beautiful specimens of flowers—showed by their attendance an appreciation of this enlightened use of a portion of the Sunday. It would not be easy to say in what more innocent or attractive form a clergyman in that crowded neighborhood could carry

out his opportunities of doing good; yet the *Rock* takes Mr. Barnett to task for weakening the hold of the Sabbath on men's minds "at a time when it is so fearfully imperilled."

OUR attention has been called to the following paragraph in the report of the Royal College of Preceptors: "I regret to have to report that eight candidates were rejected for 'copying,' and for unfair communication with one another while under examination; and—what is of rare occurrence—two candidates were rejected for gross levity, approaching very near to profanity, in their answers to the Scripture-papers." "Scripture" is not one of the compulsory subjects. The fact of failing in the Scripture-paper alone would not, of itself, cause rejection. Dr. Edward Aveling, as a Licentiate of the Royal College of Preceptors, purposes inquiring into these cases.

THE *Western Morning News*, writing upon the disaster at Ischia, says: "We may hope this time that we shall not hear the common indictment of Providence which such great inflictions, by their power over the imagination, generally produce. In this case, at all events, it is not the fault of nature. If anybody or anything is to blame, it is human nature. That the whole of this district, so beautiful to the eye, so fertile, so productive of a graceful careless type of manhood, and of a bright though shallow womanhood, is volcanic, every inhabitant knows. If the population chooses to run the risk, they have no more right to blame heaven for the earthquake than Webb had for being drowned in the Niagara rapids."

WHY, in the name of thunder, does an almighty being want to make a district volcanic and then put it into folks' heads to go and live there? When will the average intellect see that to blame human nature is to blame god, on the Christian hypothesis? In supposing, however, that the writer in the *Western Morning News* is of average intellect, we are doing an injustice to our countrymen.

A poor little girl, called the "human serpent," is made at various seaside resorts to go through a very painful and, apparently, brutal performance. Our virtuous Home Secretary was appealed to by a kindly clergyman who witnessed the "performance." That functionary of State replied that he had no voice in the matter as such a performance was perfectly legal. It could hardly be expected that the man who could endorse the action of a judge in imprisoning men for attacking a creed loathsome to them, and who could tell a deliberate lie in his verbal endorsement, would have pity for a tortured child. Probably, Sir W. Harcourt was afraid to interfere with the performance of the "serpent" for fear of casting doubts upon his spotless orthodoxy in regard to the third chapter of Genesis.

At the Wesleyan Conference the usual amount of folly appears to have been uttered. But Alderman H. J. Atkinson, of London, was an easy first in foolishness when he condemned Wesleyans who went to theatres and balls and dancing parties. A good healthy dance between young—aye, and old—people, especially if it could be in the open air and in the daytime, would be better than all the "love feasts" of the whole Wesleyan body. And there is more teaching for the good of humanity in an evening at the Lyceum than in a year's preaching by the whole Wesleyan ministry. We would rather be box-keeper in the house of Irving than to dwell in the pulpits of Wesley.

In connexion with this conference there was an exhibition in aid of the local infirmary at Hull. The mayor invited the whole of the dissenting priests to the exhibition, and presented to each a beautiful gilt-edged catalogue. But the mayor knew that there were four collecting-boxes in the room, and probably anticipated a golden harvest from these followers of Christ. After they had left the boxes were opened, the mayor and his lady remaining to assist in the counting. Now, how much do you think these long-visaged gentry gave to the infirmary?—Fivepence-halfpenny. And the mayor remembered his gift of gilt-edged catalogues and praised god. As a pleasing contrast to this, on Sunday last, at Mr. Bradlaugh's lectures at Plymouth, the sum of £8 0s. 3d. was subscribed for the Freethinker's Benevolent Fund. Hooray!

THOUGH Solomon sang
To his gold harp's twang
His faith never grew any firmer;
For with the praise
Amongst his lays
You'll find his frequent myrrh-myrrh.

THE Rev. Nathaniel Cotton evidently considers that "the better the day the better the deed." He chooses Sunday for being drunk and disorderly. At 9.45 on a Sabbath evening the reverend gentleman entered "The Black Boy" in quest of drink. The obdurate landlord refused to serve him. Then he staggered homewards, brandishing a knife and vomiting

oaths at a crowd of men who followed their spiritual pastor and master.

ON another occasion Nathaniel had a wrestle with certain of his parishioners and a gun. On another, he transferred his abilities as a drinkist from the narrow sphere of the little village where he does duty, to the wider arena of the city of Oxford. Nathaniel thinks the streets are really broader there.

TRUE to his old love, however, Nathaniel was drunk when the warrant was taken to him at his own rectory. The time was seven in the morning.

SOME wonder why we take the trouble to record such cases as these. Certainly, if we noted all the instances of religious people going wrong, we should have to enlarge our paper. And this would unfortunately be without a corresponding increase in our circulation, as the subject is so very familiar to every one. We only therefore record cases so exceptionally interesting as that of the Rev. Nathaniel Cotton.

AND to those who remind us of the fact, only too well known to us, that in our own ranks and in our own persons there is much to be bettered, we say that this fundamental difference exists between our case and that of religious people. When they blunder or sin they do so despite the fact that they have the assistance of an omnipotent deity. Their shortcomings we record, not because they are theirs, but because every weakness or wickedness on the part of a religious person is a testimony to the impotence of his god.

AT Huddersfield a plaintiff in a civil action was non-suited because the engagement with the defendant was made on a Sunday evening. This is as reasonable as if our Nathaniel were discharged on the ground that he was drunk on a Sunday.

OF course it was one of the old acts of the godly, but not goodly Charles II., that interfered with justice between man and man, as they have interfered with man's business again and again.

THE Dog-in-the-manger (Working Men's Lord's Day Rest) Association which, like the Conservative working man, is the pensioner of people who are not, and never have been working men, has prevented the opening of the Fisheries Exhibition on Sunday. That the accusation as to the false colors under which this association sails is true, will be understood by those who notice that the memorial of the Dog-in-the-manger Association was signed by Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Samuel Morley, Mr. A. MacArthur, Mr. Alderman Fowler. Not one of these is a man; much less a working man.

THE memorial states one conviction of the memorialists—not a police-court conviction—"that there is no demand whatever on the part of the working-classes," etc., etc. We hope energetic Mr. Saverax will set to work and get up a counter-memorial that will show how misleading is this statement.

THE Prince of Wales must be very weak as well as vicious. Had he remained firm in this matter the public would have been more ready than they usually and foolishly are to gloss over the ceaselessly recurring instances of his evil life.

WILLIAM DAWSON, of Winterton, was a cattle-dealer, a local preacher, and evidently a bit of a wag. The other day, according to the *Eastern Morning News*, he preached a sermon from the text, "Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship" (Acts xx., 38). The next morning he decamped, having forged the names of two gentlemen living at Barton and Beverley and obtained £4,000 and £3,000 respectively. He was universally beloved in his district, detested Freethinkers, and of such is the kingdom of heaven.

WHEN men will not be reasoned out of a vanity, they must be ridiculed out of it.—*Sir R. L'Estrange*.

BUDDHA AND JESUS.—Several centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ some figures of constellations had become symbols of moral doctrines. Sooner or later these were connected with transmitted words of Guatama-Buddha. The Cosmical had become to that extent the symbol of the Ethical, that the son of Virgin Nāya, on whom, according to the Chinese tradition, "the holy ghost" had descended, was said to have been born on Christmas Day, on the sun's birthday, at the commencement of the sun's apparent revolution round the earth. Buddha was described as a superhuman organ of light, to whom a superhuman organ of darkness, Māra or Naga, the evil serpent, was opposed.—*Ernest de Bunsen*, "The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes and Christians," Introduction, pp. ix. and x.; London, 1880.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture on Sunday, August 19, in the Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, Islington, N. Subjects:—Afternoon, "Mind of Man and the Lower Animals;" evening, "Creed of an Atheist."

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, 13 Newman Street, Oxford Street, London, W.

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SCEPTIC.—Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" can be obtained at our publishing office. Price 1s; cloth 1s. 6d.

J. W. GRAUSHAW reports memorial sent to the Home Secretary and a letter, calling the attention of Sir W. Harcourt to that official's signorance of the case, upon which he recently unburdened himself of certain venomous falsehoods.

It is particularly requested that all orders for literature should be sent to Mr. H. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, to whom all Post-office Orders should be made payable. Considerable delay and annoyance are caused by the disregard of this rule. In remitting stamps halfpenny ones are preferred.

AGENTS wanted in town and country to sell this paper and other Freethought literature.

In our issue of August 26 will appear a list of agents for the *Freethinker*. All who sell the same will oblige by sending their names and addresses to Mr. Forder.

SUGAR PLUMS.

We this week issue No. 1. of "Profane Jokes," a pamphlet of twelve large pages. An enormous sale is expected, as we have only reprinted those jokes which are sure to cause much mirth.

THE *Republican* [G. Standing, 8 Finsbury Street, E.C.] has in its August issue, a good portrait and an interesting account of Joseph Symes. Every reader of the *Freethinker* should obtain so excellent a memento of one who has worked so hard and so bravely for the *Freethinker* as Mr. Symes.

WILLIAM IRVING issues another of his careful, thoughtful and useful pamphlets. This one is entitled, "What is Blasphemy?" The temperate tone of this pamphlet should make it of use in appealing to the large number of people who are hovering on the border-line between the dead and the living creeds. There is a printer's error, p. 3, line 9 from end, and one on p. 4, line 5.

CREMATION is making great strides in Italy. England will probably wait until some terrible epidemic is clearly traced to our present custom of getting rid of the past and preparing a source of disease-germs for the future.

NOBODY seems to have noticed that in the terrible catastrophe at Ischia the people who were at that place devoted to the wrath of god, the theatre, were all saved from destruction. Jahveh will have to destroy a London theatre to keep up his reputation; or better still, a continental one on some Sunday.

We have received from Boston, N.S., a copy of the "Paine Hall Calendar" for the present year of science, 283. The reasons given for the adoption of this date are that the Christian year 1600 marks very nearly the time when the Copernican system of astronomy became established; and that it is consecrated by being the date of the death of the great martyr

for Freethought and science, Giordano Bruno. The fact that it does not lead to any mistakes, when, as is usual in business letters, it is written shortly as '83, is a still more practical reason for its adoption.

MR. WALTER WATT (of Pollockshaw, Glasgow), has kindly presented to the Prisoner's Aid Fund Committee a number of copies of his work, "Sketches in Prose and Verse." The book is now on sale at our office, price sixpence, or free by post, ninepence. The proceeds will be added to the Prisoners' Aid Fund.

In one of his sermons, Henry Ward Beecher has a passage, interesting as coming from him, and as containing a strange mixture of truth and error: "The tendency of the times is towards infidelity among the laboring men. The first result of intelligence is that they repudiate the churches. I notice that the working men from Great Britain are to a great extent infidel. The laboring classes that think are tending to think themselves away from the house of god, and are substituting other institutions of their own; and this, if not arrested, will be fatal to them. If they throw away the Church, let them at least save the Bible. The New Testament is the cradle of liberty. The hope of the poor and the laboring man is in that gospel which says, 'I was sent to preach to the poor.'"

"Thou shalt have one god only; who
Would be at the expense of two?"

sings Arthur Hugh Clough.

Cheaper, surely, one than many,
But still cheaper none than any.
Humanity, good Mr. Clough,
For you and me is quite enough.
To aid weak, erring sisters, brothers,
Is better for ourselves and others
Than wasting time in idle prayers,
Addressed to one who never hears—
Or, if he does hear, answers never;
But good deeds live and work forever.

DR. ANDREW WILSON has begun, in *Health*, a series of papers on "Miracle-cures and their Explanation." He says: "That persons should be cured of even serious ailments by what they are pleased to term 'faith' is nowise surprising to the physiologist. He knows how great and predominating an influence the workings of the brain may exercise over the body in the case of certain persons, and of those possessing sensitive temperaments and nervous constitutions."

"THE BIOGRAPHY OF SATAN."

ONLY lately the editor of this paper asserted "that the belief in a personal Devil is rapidly dying out." All Freethinkers would be glad to feel sure of this; but that Dr. Aveling is giving too much credit to the enemy is shown by the fact that there is now being delivered a series of sermons by that shining light among Congregationalists, Dr. Macaulane, on "The Biography of Satan."

He commences by asserting "that Satan is an intelligent, a moral, and responsible being;" and then goes on to describe his origin. He says there was a time "when all space was more silent than any cemetery, and god was entirely alone." Apparently, god found his existence rather monotonous, having no one to glorify him and nothing to engage his attention, so he determined to make something. His first attempt was an invisible world, and Satan "began to be before this world came from its maker's hands." We may conclude that god was fairly successful as Dr. Macaulane says he (Satan) was created "not in feebleness but in strength, and evil was not wrought into the texture of his nature."

"He was originally one of the angels, who were possessors of great knowledge, and therefore distinguished for immense intellectual power. He came directly from god. As the fountain was pure, so was the stream; as the father was immaculate, so was the son." Exactly, Satan was one of god's own sons.

"He spent the morning of his youth," not sowing his wild oats, "but in complete sympathy with the king and in sweetest concert with the holy universe." But the concert broke up, Satan determining to play first fiddle on his own account. "Alas! he became changed, sadly, awfully, sinfully changed." But the great question arises, did he inherit his bad tendencies from his father, or were his surroundings in the "holy universe" so bad that evil was spontaneously generated? In either case his respected parent was to blame. What can be said in extenuation of

an all-knowing and infinite father allowing a son to develop into a wicked devil who very nearly ruined the world, and then, to that parent's disgrace, allowing the youngest son to be punished for the sins of his brother?

Dr. Macauslane says he cannot specify the "day, month, nor year when Satan sinned; but it must have been in some place, either heaven or some other region, where he had been sent to perform some important work." Here is something of an imputation upon the infinite god. If he had been aware of the maxim of to-day, "If you want a thing done, do it yourself," he would never have sent one portion of his creation to work in another portion.

Satan did not do well, but very much the reverse. If the sin occurred in heaven, we are informed, we need not grieve, but be assured that "it was not permitted to dwell there, but was hurled over the battlements" and fell—where? Dr. Macauslane does not state.

The phrase, "hurled over the battlements," is rather suggestive of a walled city; and Satan, finding himself outside, looked around with the intention of building a city and founding a principality of his own. It is needless to remark he succeeded. His father had created another class of worlds and beings of more visible materials. The beings were not quite so intellectual as his former productions, and less likely to revolt. Satan seeing them, determined to give them the best of all gifts—knowledge—and win them for himself. If numbers are to be taken as a criterion, he has thoroughly defeated his father, the other angels of the same age as himself, and his younger but unfortunate brother.

W. J. STUDDARD.

PRISONERS' AID FUND.

For the support of the families of the men now in gaol, for the protection of their interests, and for the aid of any others who may be in similar case; any balance to be used in the discretion of the Executive.

A. Bell, for sale of *Freethinkers*, 2s. 6d.; J. Bull, 2s.; Scarles and Claringbull, 6d.; W. Muller, 1s.; H. Rosenblatt, 1s.; J. Ireland, 1s.; T. H. Holt (India), £5.; Hartlepool Branch N. S. S., 15s.; C. Rowlands, 2s. 6d.; W. Bass, 5s.; Joe, 3s.; D. Mawdsley (6th donation), 5s.; A. J. Stoney (6th donation), 5s. Per C. H. Dumble: G. Ford, 6d.; W. H. Hockey, 6d.; C. Peters, 6d.; W. H. Handford, 6d.; J. Tucker, 1s.; S. Ellis, 1s.; W. Ellis, 1s.; G. H. Dumble, 2s. Per A. Webb: — Sowden, 5s. 10d.; — Hawkins, 5s. 4d.; — Aplin, £1 0s. 10d.; — Barnes, 7s.; — Trude, 1s. 8d.; — McCluskey, 9s.; John Rogers, 3s. 6d.; James Rogers, 1s. 6d.; Anonymous, 1s. Per R. Taylor: G. L. Newmilns, 1s.; W. Forbes, 1s.; W. Steel, 1s.; R. Taylor, 1s.

C. HERBERT, *Treasurer*, 60 Goswell Road, London, E.C., to whom all remittances should be sent. Collecting sheets will be sent to any Freethinker on application to 28 Stonecutter Street.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A LETTER FROM MR. G. J. HOLYOAKE TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—The *Truthseeker* (from which you recently quoted a paragraph about me) is angry with me because I had no sympathy with the "Cupid Yokes" business. You know that I merely refused to sign a petition asking for "mercy," the first Freethinking petition in which that craven word was ever found. I will sign twenty petitions in which that word does not appear. I think better of Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey than you appear to do; and believe they would never sanction the cowardly epithet, as it was always regarded in the Freethinking school in which I was reared. I proposed to you to have a petition drawn without the word "mercy," which gives delight to every persecutor in the country to see, and to think that any persons put forward as champions, are brought so low as to cry for that. Any petition without that word of abasement in it, I told you, I would "gladly sign." As you gave me no such opportunity, I have had to address Sir W. Harcourt on behalf of the prisoners myself. Mr. Conway, I find, represented to the St. James's Hall meeting that I had refused to sign a petition for Mr. Foote's release. Yet you had published my letter in which I had said the contrary, and that I would sign even the "mercy" petition if you could assure me that Mr. Foote approved it. I am sorry you did not ask Mr. Foote's opinion. When I have an opportunity of visiting him with Mr. Cluer,* I shall, as I never thought Mr. Foote deficient in spirit. Mr. Conway, I did think, was sufficiently a Freethinker to take pride in the honor and defiance of Freethought, and to put what I said in its true light.—Yours faithfully,

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

* Mr. Cluer has no intention of visiting Mr. Foote in Mr. Holyoake's company.

CANTICLE ONE. By BALAAM'S ASS.

THAT man hath blessed perfectness
Who walketh not astray
In council with the godly men
And seeketh not their way;
Nor sitteth in the parson's chair,
But placeth his delight
Upon the law of common sense,
That only, day and night.
He shall be like a tree that grows
And yieldeth reason's fruit
That in the minds of honest men
May take eternal root.
And all he doth shall prosper well,
Unmarred by superstition.
Nay, those who snarl "He'll go to hell,"
Theirs is the true perdition.
In judgment therefore shall not stand
Those who the gods do fear,
Nor in the midst of Freethought men
Shall hypocrites appear.

JESUS CHRIST, THE HEBREW MORALIST.

IN the present violent reactionary feeling against Christianity, it is but natural that the (supposed) founder of the religion should be the first victim of the anti-Christian. Freethinkers and Atheists have too often, from denying his spiritual inspiration, fallen thence into the error of condemning Christ as an impostor or a madman. In my opinion he was neither. That he was no more the son of god than the writer will not be doubted by any of our readers; that men have existed very much his superiors, both mentally and physically, does not admit of argument; but in searching through the dark annals of the Jewish nation, especially among his contemporaries, we might find many worse men than this very much maligned Jesus of Nazareth.

We will and must admit that Christ was under a delusion, a monomania which pervaded his whole being, and made of him a kind of non-aggressive fanatic. This delusion was also present with Mahomet, who, though he did not aspire to be the actual son of god, yet aimed at establishing his reputation as his infallible prophet, and was no doubt, to a certain extent, as sincere in his way as Jesus. But Mahomet was ambitious not only of spiritual but temporal power; he made war, conquered kingdoms, overthrew dynasties, put whole populations to the sword to assert his own individual supremacy as well as that of his new creed. In Christ we see nothing of this. It was not from lack of boldness. His kingdom was to be in heaven; and wrong-headed as he was, he was philosopher enough to disdain the petty distinctions of earthly riches and power.

That he did not begin his evangelical "mission" until his thirtieth year merits some reflexion. He was before this a simple Jewish man, toiling, living no doubt like others of his class. He was a student. We hear of his confuting the doctors in the temple when not more than twelve years old, much to the astonishment of those learned worthies; and though we must accept with all reserve the details of this remarkable controversy, there is no reason to suppose the entire incident to be simply a deliberate fabrication. On this we may base our vindication of Christ's character. Born in poverty, bred in adversity, thoughtful and retiring, he was gifted withal with the same reflective powers, which in the seventh century made a Mahomet, in the fifteenth a Martin Luther, and which, with the advantages of nineteenth-century education, would have given to the world an ardent reformer not only in religion but in politics. But he had no guiding star to show him the way to knowledge; he, the poor Jewish toiler, had no books to read that would modify his own ideas, and so he moped and floundered, seeing the miseries of the world, the haughtiness and oppression of the Pharisees, the moral degradation of his countrymen, the insolence of their Roman conquerors, asking himself whether he could alleviate the suffering and diminish the darkness which pervaded his surroundings, until his natural melancholy prevailed over his good sense. He knew the tradition of the coming Messiah. Why might not he be the Messiah? And this *idée fixe* got the better of him, sending him forth a sad but noble anomaly, to preach that he was the son of god and to save the world.

And he might have saved the world—in a strictly worldly sense, but for the stupidity of his apostles and other believers—down to the present time. He was a determined enemy of bloodshed, pride and vice of all kinds; a zealous defender of the poor, though too helpless to safeguard their interests in any way; a hater of humbug and ostentation; honest, no doubt, and upright in all his dealings; an enthusiast for the good, the pure and the beautiful; but, alas! an idealist whose whole system—more the fault of the age than his own—was involved in the insane creations of his own rapid fantasy. A Radical and a Democrat, but without any political programme; a patriot, but minus any plan for re-animating the national spirit; a religionist, but without any religion beyond his own undefined and confused ideas. So he went through life to a cruel, bitter death, a spoiled genius, *un esprit manqué!* Poor Christ!

It is no fault of his that posterity has not profited by him. His fanatic worshippers, in all but fanaticism, differ from him in every essential point. Where is the "Christian" who would "sell his goods and give them to the poor;" or who recoils before injustice and the persecution that tries to establish, by brute force, a faith which Christ in his own poor way only wished to have established by force of intellect? Where is the humility which Christ really practised in all but that one fatal point—his "celestial" birth? No. Christianity is dead.

But Freethinkers may learn much from the supposed old enemy of Nazareth. A Freethinker himself, he fell a victim to the orthodox bigotry of the times—the first Christian martyr. A well-meaning man, many of whose ideas were expressive of, in some cases, benevolence and love; a reformer, and a Radical.

SANS BARBE.

FREETHOUGHT FABLES.

8.—WORK v. PRAYER AND FAITH.

Two men each wished to build a house. There were all the requisites at hand, but they would have to labor to get them in their places. One knelt down on the ground where he desired his house to be, and prayed faithfully and much for the lord to build his dwelling; but never a brick appeared. Such was the result of prayer.

The other set to work. He made the bricks; he felled the trees, and had them cut up; he dug the iron ore and fashioned it to his purpose; and soon there stood a magnificent abode. Such was the result of work.

Moral.—We get all good by work, not prayer and faith. Faith may build a mansion in the sky, but what use is that to one who has to live in one on earth.

9.—THE MICE AND THE TRAP.

A great spirit once made two mice and placed them in a beautiful room, full of bacon and bread, and everything they could desire. But that which they loved most, the golden alluring cheese, he set in a trap, open at both ends. Then he said to the mice: "On no account must you touch that cheese; you'll suffer if you do." The mice obeyed for some time, but they could not conquer eternal temptation, and it was cruel to tantalise them thus. Why did the spirit place the cheese there if they were not to eat it?

One day the female mouse crept into the trap, and after some hesitation, nibbled the cheese and was caught. To keep her company the male mouse entered the trap at the other end. So they were both caught.

Moral.—Believe the spirit was a wise and good spirit, or prepare to meet damnation.

WITTWON.

AN APPEAL TO THOSE WHO STAND ALOOF.

ALL you who call yourselves true men,
And friends of liberty,
Come join our ranks, and help to break
Men's chains, and set them free.

Stand not so callously aloof,
But help to swell our throng;
Union is strength, and with your help
The fight will not be long.

Come join our ranks, be not afraid,
Heed not the bigot's frown;
A great and noble victory
Our efforts soon will crown.

Against oppression of the weak,
And tyranny and might
We are at war; then join our ranks,
And help to win the fight.

Of superstition, we're the foes;
We truth and knowledge seek;
We claim the right to freely think,
The right our thoughts to speak.

S. BELLCHAMBERS.

PROFANE JOKES.

Who was the first woman?—Adam; for he was made (maid) first.

Who was the first subscriber to a newspaper?—Cain; for he took Abel's life. (*A Bell's Life*).

Why did woman come after man? The answer is obvious.—She is always after him.

Our irreverent young man wants to know if Mr. Joseph Cook, of America, is so almighty sure of every untruth he tells about science because his initials are the same as Jesus Christ's.

GOING TO THE GRAVE.

"My son," said an old Dublin man, "did you ever see a Christian die?"

"Well, I don't know, father; I saw a man who, at the very moment of death, said his trust was in heaven, the harbor of his soul, and that he had no desire to live longer in this wicked world where he could not see god and the angels. I suppose that man must have been a Christian; wasn't he?"

"Yes, my son—yes, he was a pious and holy man," said the father, rather reluctantly, and as if dissatisfied at being forestalled. "There have been good men going down to the grave every year—the lord giveth and the lord taketh away. Who was the holy man whose end you witnessed?"

"The scoundrel that was hung over in Carlow—time I was on jury, don't you know?"

The aged man turned his face to the wall, the evening sun-glow darkened in his eyes, and he pursued the conversation no further.

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In god's merciful sweet by and bye.

Chorus—Oh, the bliss where they hiss,
In the land that is hotter than this
(Bye and bye)

Where they roast and fry
In the beautiful sweet bye and bye.

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