

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.]

COMIC SKETCH.—4.



"SILVER AND GOLD HAVE I NONE."

THE HALF-HEARTED FREETHINKER.

Is there such a being? asks the earnest reader doubtfully. Alas, yes! He is a delicate plant, this faint one, and he does not take kindly to his transference from the serene atmosphere and choice accompaniments of the Christian hothouse to the rougher, homelier surroundings of the garden of this world. The warm beams of the sunshine are too oppressive—the rough breezes and frequent showers too ungentle—the gay tints of his companions are too pronounced for his delicate organisation.

So to this half-hearted one his fellow Freethinkers in their earnestness appear coarse and vulgar. "Positively offensive," he will say. "I myself am a Freethinker, but I always respect the feelings of others. These writings and caricatures display an utter lack of good taste and polish!"

So in his self-complacency he nurses his "polish" and "good taste" and enjoys his freedom; while his more earnest brother, fighting with all his heart and strength against a vile superstition which he deems an absolute curse to humanity, suffers imprisonment—the tenant of a cheerless cell from winter to winter—while he knows that had he shirked his duty and thought more of polish than of fighting, he might have still been free.

But our perfumed Freethinker lays himself open to no such risks as these. He is semi-apologetic when he cannot avoid argument. "He certainly thought so and so, but perhaps he was wrong;" or, "Is it not true that such and such a passage is rather opposed to such and such another passage?" Then when the theological gloss has been duly rubbed over the subject, he mildly half-acquiesces with his "Ah! well, perhaps you're right."

A joke or pun on a Biblical subject is an unutterable sin. A scathing criticism arouses his deepest indignation. He has not totally abandoned his former idol. He may have carefully lifted the monstrosity into a corner, but its shadow is still before him. He is only a half-hearted Freethinker,

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and as such, is more likely to hinder than help us in reaching the consummation we desire.

He is not fitted for the work if he were willing. Hatred and persecution have to be borne and braved in our fight. We have thrown down the gauntlet of utter defiance to the votaries and champions of superstition, prepared to fight them to the end. Nor are we ignorant of their method of warfare. We have heard of the tortures of the Inquisition—the more modern tortures of the Old Bailey and the prison cell. We defy them. But our refined friend's kid-gloved hands shrink from disturbing the sanctity of the dust-covered shelf on which for ages has reclined the "urn of mystery."

But if our perfumed, delicate, kid-gloved friend insists on lagging behind with his "polish" and "good taste," Freethinkers proper will press onward without him—onward, ever onward, till the eager hands seize these false images, and crumble them to dust, while the strong laughter of emancipated humanity hails their ignominious dispersal on the "wings of the wind."

EDGAR T. BENTON.

A FURTHER NOTE ON MR. WHITMORE'S CASES.

By an error in proof-correcting, Nos. 7, 12, 13, 16 were stated to be "as 4 and 5." These four cases should have been mentioned as those of men unknown to the Secular organisations.

I overstated the case of J. Bebbington. He wrote in both the *Reasoner* and the *National Reformer*, started a paper called the *Propagandist*, and went on one lecturing tour, which was a failure.

On the other hand Thomas Cooper lectured on educational not on theological subjects on the Freethought platform. Since he was taken up by the Christians he has lectured on theological, not educational subjects.

TESTIMONY TO THE EXTENT OF ATHEISM FROM THE REV. C. J. WHITMORE.

SIR,—The holiday season has come and gone; and in returning to planning and laboring for the autumn and winter we may very profitably give our most earnest attention to the question of the religious condition of the working class in general, and of artisans and mechanics in particular.

The present condition is one of general indifference to all religious thought and feeling where that indifference has not been fostered into dislike and opposition. As to the indifference there can be, unhappily, no doubt whatever. There can be no doubt that the present outlook is one of the most serious character. The indifference of former years is widely increasing into opposition and dislike. Two recent instances will show the present condition of religion among working men. A lady went to read the gospel of John in a London west-end shop of working men. After reading, she inquired "What they thought of it?" The cool answer was: "Not one believed a word of it, they were all atheists." A young man came to me from a neighboring church asking help in Christian evidences. He said: "There are twelve of us work at one bench, the other eleven are atheists."

There are now several weekly papers expressly devoted to the spread of atheism and secularism. No sensible workman will believe in a religion that results in men and women making fools of themselves in the public street.—
Yours truly,
C. J. WHITMORE.

[We may state that the above is a literal transcription of sentences in a letter from Mr. Whitmore to the *Outlook*. He should have kept a sharper look-out, and then he would not have written on our behalf.]

A PIOUS CONVERT.

ALLAHABAD, a civil and military station in India, is a large straggling place at the extreme eastern end of the tract of country called the Doab that extends from the Ganges to the Jumna. The city lies on both rivers, the native half being near the Jumna, and the European half towards the Ganges. As its Hindu name "Prag" indicates it is considered a very holy place of pilgrimage by the worshippers of Brahma. As a natural consequence it has also been made the headquarters of missionary work by several Christian sects, and it is, or used to be, no uncommon sight any day of the week, to see a heated missionary or two, clothed in rusty garments, with battered sun-hats, standing at the corner of some street in the native quarter, and bellowing forth—with much expenditure of breath, and usually in bad Hindustani—hot news of hell and the heathen as connected therewith. Helping the missionaries in this preaching work were a few native converts, employed as Bible-readers, and to whom not infrequently the missionaries shifted the arduous part of the work—*i. e.*, the reading and preaching in the hottest time of the day.

One afternoon at Allahabad I happened to be riding through the native quarter when I came upon one of these native Christian Bible-readers preaching. The crowd around him was rather large, filling up the narrow street, and I found some difficulty in making my way through. I was at length brought to a standstill by another crowd attending the Mussulman festival of the Mohurram, which came pouring down the street. The processions in the Mohurram are always accompanied by a fearful clamor of all the diabolical instruments of eastern music. This burst out with special vigor on that occasion and startled my horse, a young and spirited animal. He began to plunge, and the crowd scattered. I was in mortal terror lest some one should be trampled on and hurt, but a space was rapidly cleared around me, the people all rushing away except the Bible-reader, who stupidly stood his ground. I tried my best to quiet my horse, but he still kept half-rearing, and turning round and backing, and we presently bumped up against the Bible-reader. Over he went, the Bible flew out of his hand, his turban rolled on the ground, and he over his turban. It was a rough push but the man was not hurt. He rose, picked up his turban, then his Bible, and then turned round and faced me. I was very sorry for the mishap and had just begun an apology in my best Hindustani, when this follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, Bible in hand and words of Christian preaching fresh on his lips, began to vituperate me in the vilest Hindustani abuse. Those who have been in India will know what is Hindustani abuse. For others it is impossible to translate the language and epithets used, they are so foully obscene. Such a torrent of bad language was poured out on me that I was quite stunned. It was evident that the man had learnt the noble art of abuse from his grandmother, for of all proficients in it commend me to an old woman in the bazaars of India when she takes up her parable and holds forth.

Suddenly my horse made another plunge, and the devout Christian, thinking I was "going for him," tucked the Bible under his arm and made tracks. So abrupt was his departure and so ludicrous the way he flew down the street, evidently in fear of a chase, that I could not help laughing. A tall, handsome Brahman was standing near me. He also was amused and smiling.

"Who is that?" I asked, pointing to the retreating figure of the Bible-reader.

"He was a servant of the *Padre* sahib; he has become a Christian."

"Do you think that of which he was preaching and talking all true?"

The Brahman shook his head doubtfully. "Who knows?" he answered.

"But what do you think?" I persisted.

"I believe what my forefathers taught me." was the cautious reply.

I turned away, thinking in my heart that he had given as cogent a reason for his belief as nine-tenths of Christians could give for the faith that is in them.

C. T. BINGHAM.

NATURAL MAN.

[Continued from p. 310.]

SCPTICISM is the sign of a healthy mind. Doubt and unbelief invariably arise as the result of earnest inquiry and vigorous thought. Except among the philosophical Greeks and cultured Romans, doubts concerning the truth of theology were not openly expressed, even by the few, until many centuries after the Christian era began.

Of course, among the early Christians there were many who doubted; some who denied the divinity of Jesus; many who questioned the truth of the resurrection; among the Brahmins and Buddhists many who were sceptical on dogmatic points of their faith. But it was not until the middle of the sixteenth century that we find men questioning the pretensions of theologians, and exposing with admirable fearlessness and candor the errors of theology.

Martin Luther early in the sixteenth century boldly questioned the dogmas of the Romish Church. He was ably supported by Philip Melancthon, but these reformers although fighting bravely for the right of Freethought, were fearful lest others in the exercise of this freedom should go further than they did. Bruno, Telesio, Campanella and Vanini are among the first mentioned in history who courageously declared their disbelief in the prevailing theology.

Bruno was a Pantheist. He denied that god was a person, and declared that he was an essence. He affirmed that matter was indestructible; that nature produced "all phenomena as the fruit of her own womb." He believed in the plurality of worlds, and denied the teachings of Aristotle. Telesio and Campanella held much the same belief.

Vanini was an Atheist. For their heresies Telesio and Campanella were imprisoned; Bruno and Vanini both died at the stake. No doubt there were many others who entertained doubts similar to those expressed by these noble philosophers; but when they found that their scepticism would be burnt out of them if they expressed it, they doubtless came to the conclusion that they had better keep it to themselves until men were more prepared for the reception of it. And, probably, the time would never have come had it not been for the heroism of a Bruno, the defiance of a Vanini, and the persistent teaching of other less known Freethought worthies.

Galileo the astronomer must also be numbered among the sceptics. He denied that the earth was the centre of the universe, and in opposition to such teaching declared that it moved round the sun. For making known this now well-established fact the great astronomer was imprisoned, and a short interval allowed for him to recant or die the death of an infidel. He was an old man, and life was sweet; he elected to live. He had sown the seeds of doubt concerning the Churches' teaching of astronomy—he left it to blossom in its own good time.

In Europe periodical efforts had been made to improve the social and domestic life of the people. Feudalism having developed to its highest point, decayed, and upon its ruins were established strong monarchies, which vied with each other in voluptuousness and wickedness. But if the nations showed any signs of going forward in the march of progress, there was always one chain at least to drag them hopelessly back again. This was the Romish Church with its slavish theology and horrible corruption.

"For centuries the popes at intervals had embroiled Italy. Sometimes several popes ruled at once, and sometimes the Catholic Church had no pope at all. To unite and maintain the temporal and spiritual power in their own persons was ever the ruling passion of the Catholic potentates; and for this they have spilt rivers of human blood. Under their absolute power the Church and its vices had grown up for centuries. Rooted into the heart of society the people had learnt to revere the ancient institution. Their imaginations were captivated by its showy services; its priesthood had the keeping of their consciences; was their only means of

access to heaven; gave consolation in sickness; married, buried, and sent them to paradise. Its superstitions and centuries of cruelty had as yet only increased its power. Europe was filled with its images of saints and martyrs, real or counterfeit, and the people were instructed to fall down and worship them. Dead saints were made the medium of access to the deity; the services of religion were muttered in dead languages; priests were decked in dazzling garments; wax candles burnt in the churches at noonday; vessels of gold and silver stood on the altars; preaching had become rare, and had degenerated into frivolous talking; monks who lived a life of ease or idleness and often of vice, were scattered in multitudes throughout every nation of Christendom; and in order to prevent inquiry and crush opposition, the Inquisition was established and the fire of persecution lit. Pope Alexander VI, a man of unusual depravity, burnt Savonarola for preaching reform in the Church. In short, a frightful spiritual despotism, such as Europe had never seen before, held the human mind in abject bondage" (Dr. Bullock's "History of Modern Europe," p. 23.)

After the Reformation the disputes between Christians regarding the doctrines of the Protestant as well as the Catholic Church were numerous and exceedingly bitter. But the masses of the people having to work hard for a small pittance and little leisure, took comparatively small notice of these theological disputes, and applied themselves with commendable zeal to more useful labor than watching the wretched encounters of fanatical religionists.

The printing-press having now got into working order, began to disturb the peace of mind of the clergy and others in authority. Every shot from the armory of intelligence shook to their foundation the dogmas of the Church. The people continued to work. Scientific men, too, continued their labors quietly.

Columbus discovered America and frightened credulous believers in the flatness of the earth out of all the wits they ever had.

Descartes in France, Spinoza in Holland, formulated a philosophy that knocked the anthropomorphic deity of the Christians quite off his pedestal; it was done, however, in such a learned manner that the common people heard scarcely anything about it.

These continued the useful labors of the world. They tilled the soil; they bred cattle; they erected magnificent houses for the rich and small hovels for the poor; they made gaudy raiment wherewith to bedeck the persons of kings and priests; and plain dresses as a covering for the common people. Periodically, their progress was thwarted by being called upon to fight religious wars for the priests, and wars for the glorification or vanity of kings. Running rapidly over the pages of history one important fact stands prominently out. It is this, that as soon as the nations were at peace, for however short a while, the sceptics appeared again, and with the growing intelligence of the people, spoke in language of unmistakeable plainness about religion.

Thomas Paine directed his powerful intellect against the upas tree; Voltaire's wit went like a javelin to its core; while Mirabaud D'Holbach tore off the mask and left theology's errors exposed in all their glaring hideousness. And now the dawn of a new era for Freethought began to appear.

The clergy maligned great sceptics, but scepticism increased notwithstanding. Heretical works were condemned and the authors imprisoned; but the seeds of doubt having been widely sown, nothing short of the wholesale destruction of persons suspected of entertaining these doubts was likely to prove effectual in the extirpation of them. From this point rapid progress towards the higher civilisation was made in all countries in Europe where the people were bold enough to free themselves from the dogmatism of the priests, read the works of scientific men, take advantage of every new discovery, interest themselves in the political and social movements of the country. In short, man advanced in proportion as he devoted himself to the work of the world, and left the next world and all opinions in regard to it to take care of themselves. ARTHUR B. MOSS.

MR. CHARLES BRADLAUGH will lecture each Tuesday evening in November on "Early Christian Evidences," at Milton Hall, Kentish Town. Professor Proctor will probably give a lecture there on astronomy, one Sunday evening in the same month.

A BIT OF ADVICE TO PUBLICAN BOOTH.

(Slightly adapted from the "Biglow Papers.")

PUBLICAN BOOTH is a 'cute old chap,
His army he drills and hunts for recruits—
It's hard to catch him taking a nap,
With special sharp eye he minds first fruits.
But Justice S.,
With marked impress,
Said Publican B. told lies, no less.

What a dreadful thing—this Eagle fix:
The "General" can't turn Publican, sure—
But twenty-thousand turned to nix
Is more than earthly saint can endure.
And people sly
Just wink their eye,
And dare to say our saint can lie.

A brilliant thought my mind illumines,
No doubt an answer 'tis to prayer;
We'll show the Justice, who presumes,
A way to elude this devilish snare.
Perhaps Old Scratch
May find his match
In an eminent saint of a modern batch.

Nine-tenths of the Publican's army bold,
Which lik'd to Falstaff's well may be,
Recruited is, for the holy fold,
From classes most depraved, you see.
We're wide awake
This plan must take,
From the Eagle dilemma we'll capital make

At prominent points we'll placard clear,
A notice to every London rough
And bibulous core who likes his beer,
That at the Eagle there's *quantum suff.*
And nought to pay.
It's a clever way,
Recruits by hundreds we'll have each day.

You think it rather expensive though;
Such thought as that just shows you're green,
For thousands we'll get to cry, you know:
"In this god's finger can be seen."
They'll find the stuff
To improve the rough—
The thing must pay if we shout enough.

His nerves unstrung by alcohol,
The loafer, with his puny brain,
Will readily in the fountain roll,
And list' to the hallelujah strain.
It is so sweet
And very meet—
Bringing horrified roughs to Jesus' feet.

Suggestion keen like this, you know,
Must recognition meet—that's legal;
My hopes are humble—very low—
I'll just be landlord of the Eagle.
A bright idea,
Result of prayer,
Serving Jesus and selling beer.

A. LEWIS.

WHO IS THE LORD?

AND Pharaoh said, "Who is the lord that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?" (Exodus v., 2). There is, as the Rev. Robert Taylor says in his "Devil's Pulpit," "something so delightful in the mere sound of thorough good sense, that it gives eloquence to any sort of language in which it may be uttered." Who is the lord? Say the pious, "The lord is a spirit." "What is a spirit?" says Common-sense. "As much as is left of a man after the worms have finished with him."

It is a pain to the cultured mind to see so many persons bowing down to and living in fear of a "something-nothing" which they call god, before they have even asked themselves this simple, but unanswerable question as to the existence of deity. God is everywhere. How then can we who are not everywhere, be formed in his image. And the Christians are nowhere in respect to this matter. The very idea of a "real live god" living up in the clouds seems to savor so strongly of superstitious fear among the ancients, that we should be apt to wonder why there are not more atheists, were it not for the recollection that fools are many, wise men few.

And is it not surprising to see with what effrontery the average Christian laughs to scorn the fears and superstitions of savage man?—in nowise mindful of the fact that he himself is worse than the savage, for he boasts of civilisation.

Among the first things which shook my childish faith was the observation that the orthodox lived neither longer nor more happily than the heterodox. They were liable to the same diseases and very often died the same death, though the former generally died in the greater fear. Thus if a bishop walked too near the edge of a cliff, he fell over and hurt himself, just as much as, and perhaps more, on account of his size, than an atheist. Of course a bishop may be, and very often is an atheist. But he is a black sheep in the atheistic fold. These and many other such thoughts began to assert their power. The god-idea vanished and god with it. The futility of prayer became more and more apparent; the Christian religion became an object of hatred to me; and as the enslaving and unreasonableness of belief left me it was replaced by that peace of mind and, I hope, something of the purity of heart which an atheist can possess.

C. H. PRING.

ACID DROPS.

We hear that the British and Foreign Bible Society have a stall at the Fisheries Exhibition for the sale of the obscene book. We hope everybody will follow the advice given in the placards posted about the Exhibition that caution the public against purchasing from the stalls. The Bible is well placed in a Fish(er)y Exhibition. Nothing could be more fishy.

The *Outlook* says "Bishop Moorhouse has been giving evidence before the Royal Commissioners on the working of the Education Act in Victoria. Contending that the Act develops irreverence in children, and cuts the bonds of wholesome discipline, he gave the following startling illustration, which we hope is very exceptional:—"One of the most esteemed and respected clergymen in my diocese—probably the most eminent now taking duty in the Church—went to one of the principal schools in the city to give religious instruction. He called upon the class to read a passage of scripture. They read it. He then asked them to close their books, and they closed them with a vengeance! They shut the books and then shied them at his head. Not all the children, but a very considerable proportion of them. No book hit him, but he said they rained about him on every side and strewed the floor all round him. Now I say, without the least hesitation, that such an act as that would have been impossible in any part of England with which I am acquainted. If a man went down to teach a set of street arabs in a low quarter of London where such instruction had never been given, the children might be capable of such a thing; but that a highly-respectable and well-known clergyman should, when teaching a number of children constantly habituated to the discipline of a school, have the books shied at him, would be absolutely impossible. The event of which I speak occurred just after the state school had closed, and the clergyman felt himself perfectly powerless to restore order." Is not this delicious? Bishop Moorhouse does not see that the prompt but impolite action of the children was due to the immoral training of the Bible?

"HE that giveth to the poor lendeth to the lord"—*vide* Bible. It's a pity the lord does not pay interest. The Church has been (professedly) giving her substance to the poor for the last 1800 years, and is so reduced in pocket thereby that her sons are reduced to extremities for cash, and are entirely forgetting the divine command to "take no thought for the morrow." In the twelfth century a certain bishop named Poor (!) levied a tax upon every land occupier in his diocese of Salisbury, whereby the sum of 1d. per perch of land was extorted from the man who worked and given to the man who prayed. This tax was collected by the officials of the Bishop of Salisbury for the time being, up to the beginning of the present century. Then it lapsed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who fourteen years ago (1859) ceased to collect it.

Last year an attempt to revive it was defeated by the townspeople, and this year the attempt was made more strenuously than before. Again the townspeople rebelled. Their rebellion has been met by a threat on the part of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to put the law in force unless the rebels give way. It is a curious fact that of late years the Church has contracted the habit of appealing—not to god, but to the law to settle her disputes. Has the "arm of the lord" lost its power?

PUBLICAN BOOTH is going to "Bowdlerise" the Bible, strik-

out all "the genealogies and other useless matter," and sell his version of god's word at the small price of sixpence. While he is engaged on this necessary revision of the inspired word of god, which is to make us "wise unto salvation," it is to be hoped he will remove the indecent as well as the "useless" portions. At present god's word is neither fit for decent men and women nor the pure eyes of childhood. Still it is somewhat surprising to find so great a bigot as Publican Booth admitting that his god could inspire "useless" portions of the Bible. Probably such passages as "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor," "Take no thought what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink," will receive special attention in this Salvation Army edition.

THE landlord of the Eagle Tavern is likely to meet with some opposition in his work for Jesus. We hear that another great evangelistic campaign is shortly to be entered upon in the Metropolis by Messrs. Moody and Sankey, and is to extend over the next six months. The place of meeting is in course of erection at Islington.

"ZULU," writing to the *Echo*, says: "There is already a talk in Corporation circles that on the next occasion of the election of Lord Mayor, the church service which precedes it will be somewhat extended, in consequence of the unanimous expression of the Livery that the Litany shall be introduced, the Aldermen repeating aloud after the clergyman—'From pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good lord deliver us.' I think it a pity that so necessary and fitting an addition has not been made before."

Nobody but a cad could accept even the Lord Mayoralty of the City of London when it came to him in the way that this dignified office has fallen to Mr. Alderman Fowler. But Mr. Alderman Fowler is a cad, and he accepted.

MR. FOOTE, in his second trial before Mr. Justice North, referring to this City father said: "The prosecutors have the Corporation of the City of London behind them. One of the members (Alderman Fowler) of the Corporation is now sitting on the bench while the case is being tried." Freethinkers and Radicals might return this act of kindness on the part of Fowler by giving him a hearty "greeting" on the 9th of November.

THE sexton of St. Peter's Church, Derby, and the landlady of the "White Swan" Inn have been fined for buying and selling wine on Sunday. It was communion-wine, but the magistrates fined none the less. Once more the Church and the public-house in connexion and as usual in wrong-doing.

RELIGION is looking up. In one issue of the *Liverpool Post* are no less than six cases of immorality against clergymen or religious teachers. Thomas Davies (Salvationist) for indecent assault. The Rev. Thomas Hughes for bigamy, etc. Thomas Higgins (quite a run on Thomas's—is it anything to do with Doubting Didymus?) Roman Catholic priest, for embezzlement. The Rev. Mr. Fitzroy for drunkenness. A School-Board official and haunter of a gospel-room for eloping and leaving a wife in the lurch. Well done, godly ones!

IN HONOR OF SIN.

THE following announcement lately appeared in the daily papers: "The Bishop of Hereford has given his consent to the fixing of a memorial tablet in honor of Nell Gwynne on the outer face of his garden wall, so as to mark what is alleged to have been the site of the house in which the royal favorite was born."

Christianity is assuredly progressing in compromise. Bad as the bishops were during the reigns of the Stuarts, they could hardly have gone further than the giving of consent for a tablet to be erected to the memory of a prostitute, unless she had been converted and so posed as a bright example of the cleansing power of the gospel. Nell Gwynne was a woman who could not even be ranked with those "who sell their love for shame to earn their daily bread;" but was far below them, for she deliberately set herself to the task of becoming the paramour of an English monarch.

So long as history is studied, it is impossible that her name can be buried in oblivion. But to erect a memorial tablet in her honor is simply disgraceful. Christ, in protecting the woman taken in adultery from death, said, "He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her," but said nothing that can justify his representative's action; who, not wishing to cast a stone at an adulteress, prefers to have it placed on his garden wall, where ignorant persons may see it and ask, "Who was Nell Gwynne and why was the stone erected?" The historian may have the satisfaction of replying, "It is placed there with the full consent of an English bishop, to perpetuate the memory of the harlot of a Christian King."

W. J. S.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture in the Ball's Pond Secular Hall, Newington Green Road, on Sunday, October 7. Subjects:—11, "Origin of Man's Morals;" 7, "Science and Religion."

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.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post-free to any part of Europe, America, Canada, and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

RECEIVED.—T. H. Ashworth, G. Minson, H. Morris, T. E. Lush, H. Sanderson, T. B. S., M. H. Bunton, B. N., Silo, W. Car Hill, W. R. Grigg, B. Dawson, Arthur F. Stone, A. H. Smith, T. Spencer, J. Gould.

EDWIN A. FARRINGTON.—Thanks. Glad you have dealt so severely and on the whole, so well with Mr. Whitmore.

T. B. SMITH.—Shall use your letter as an article.

CORRECTION.—In list for Prisoners' Aid last week, J. Wigaall and friends should have been 5s. 6d.

THE twenty-eight *Freethinkers* given by Mr. Hartman are this week sent to Mr. G. Beaumont, Lindley, near Huddersfield.

JAMES NEEDHAM.—We have in mind the idea of bringing out some *Freethought* children's books.

WILLIAM HENDERSON.—Thanks for your information as to the degrading treatment of sailors by the religion which has always tried to make men either fools or rogues. All honest sailors should reject with scorn every overture made to him by religious people.

J. T. RAMSEY has for sale to highest bidder the following numbers of the *Freethinker*:—No. 1, 3, 11, 13, 16, 17, 20, and Christmas Number, Vol. I.; 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 48, 50, 52, 53, and Christmas Number, Vol. II.; 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 15, Vol. III. All money over publishing price to go to the Ramsay and Foote Testimonial. Wanted the following:—Nos. 5, 6, 7, 15, 17, Vol. I.; 13, Vol. II.; 4, 10, 14, Vol. III.

F. A. V.—God is supposed to have made the world, but the Devil pulls the strings.

SPENCER M. COX.—The publication of your letter has been delayed by a printer's blunder. You will see we hold our ground despite your coarse language and your laughable threats.

A CONSTANT READER.—The Bristol Branch meets at "The Abbots," Belvoir Road, St. Andrew's.

BRADY'S, Easton Road.—We cannot possibly damage the character of the Rev. C. J. Whitmore. That would be a work of super-erogation.

D. EARLY.—Kindly communicate directly with Dr. Edward Aveling.

G. MINSON.—We do think the two words, Unitarian and Christian, contradictory one of the other. Our friend Mr. Sharman does not. We think that as the word Christian means to the majority of people a believer in the divinity of Christ, it is most unfortunate that any one should use it who only regards Christ as a good man. Nevertheless some Unitarians do this.

FRIENDS desirous of aiding the circulation of this paper can obtain thirteen copies of back numbers for sixpence. By the new parcel post 3 lbs. can be sent for 6d.

IT is particularly requested that all orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. 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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

DR. BEGG, who died in Edinburgh on Saturday, will chiefly be remembered as the most prominent figure of the Narrow Party in Scotland. He preached the doctrine of national degeneracy; he regarded Professor Robertson Smith as a heretic of the most dangerous type; and looked upon all kinds of instrumental music in church as certain perdition. In the Highlands of Scotland Dr. Begg was accounted the champion of Presbyterian purity. As a preacher he was excessively vigorous; and was noted for his discomfiting prognostications on the subject of eternal punishment.

C. H. PRING, of Bristol, tells us that he has worked very hard on behalf of the *Freethinker* and *Progress*, and that his sincerest sympathy is with our friends in prison. We are grateful to Mr. Pring, and feel sure that he meant nothing but kindness in his criticisms, though their form was rather an effective disguise.

DR. EDWARD AVELING refuses to meet the Rev. C. J. Whitmore on a public platform because of the coarseness and violence of the latter make it impossible for any respectable person

to address him, unless the reverend gentleman is under the restraint of print.

WE hope our friends are calling upon G. Pitman, bookseller, 140 Gower Street, who will not sell republican or atheistic literature, and making his life a burden.

AN address by G. J. Holyoake on the death of Josiah Gimson, of Leicester, is cast in the mould of the speaker's charming style, and is, on the whole, very delightful reading. So much in it is excellent that to speak of the unhappy part of it seems ungracious. And yet the address is here and there so dangerous. It "palters with" men "in a double sense." It panders to the god-idea. "Seeing that the mystery which we know as life is unexplained by its author." We have no evidence that life has an author. All evidence is against the fancy. Or again, speaking of the horrors of the world Mr. Holyoake says: "Does God incite and permit this? Is not that man who says I will not charge God with being the cause of this, more reverential than the Theist who says that the carnage of creation is the manifestation of God's love? Is not the thought awful? Is not silence worship compared with this appalling religion?" Here is a hint that god may exist, a hint that becomes something more than a hint in the phrase, "He lived a life which the God of sincerity must love." We have no evidence of the existence of a god of sincerity. All evidence is against the fancy. It is sad that such a man, speaking of such a man, at such a time should have bowed the knee to Baal.

OUR new name for the leader of the Salvation Army is spreading. The *Warrington Examiner* of September 29 has a long and earnest letter, signed "High Ranger," exposing the Salvation Army and referring to its head as Publican Booth.

TESTIMONIAL to atheism from the Hon. G. N. Curzon, given at the Derby Archidiaconal Conference. "Atheism was not in the strict sense of the words a vice belonging to the lower orders of society. Scepticism, or as it was now-a-days called, agnosticism, was a characteristic of the upper and more fashionable ranks of society. (Hear, hear.) The poor were by no means the only wanderers in the wilderness of infidelity. (Hear, hear.) There were two classes of persons whose teaching had considerable influence with the masses, and the first of these were those who appealed to their audiences through their feelings. The second were those who took a higher ground, and made an appeal to the people through the faculty of reason."

THE Finsbury Branch of the National Secular Society wish to inform our readers that they have taken the Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville, for the winter season of 1883-4, where they will continue the propaganda of *Freethought*, hitherto so successfully carried on at Clerkenwell Green. Every effort will be made to render the Sunday agreeable and instructive. The hall, re-decorated, will re-open on Sunday, October 7, when Mr. Joseph Symes will lecture. Subject:—"The Apostles' Creed; or, The Exposure of Christianity." Vocal and instrumental music will precede the lecture.

THE *Echo* printed Dr. Edward Aveling's letter on the conduct of our virtuous Home Secretary and on the blasphemer, Matthew Arnold, in full. The *Weekly Dispatch* made a front-page leaderette of the letter; and the London correspondent of the *Derby Evening Telegraph* has the following paragraph in his letter:—"Dr. E. B. Aveling makes out a strong case in favor of the release of the two *Freethinkers* imprisoned for blasphemy. The Strome Ferry rioters, he points out, have been liberated on the ground that they outraged the law only for conscience' sake. What Foote and Ramsey lacked in Christian faith, the rioters made up by excess of zeal, and both broke the law. Further, Dr. Aveling returns again to the matter, much discussed at the time, of the partiality manifested in this prosecution for blasphemy. He complains that the popular blasphemy in the *Freethinker* means a year's imprisonment, while the keen and polished blasphemy in 'Literature and Dogma' apparently earns for Mr. Arnold a pension of £250 a year, and a Government post worth nearly twice that sum. This seems like the punishment of stone-throwing by the same law that encourages poisoning. Matthew Arnold has done more for infidelity than the *Freethinker*, and Christianity persecutions more than both of them. How, by the way, did the Church Conference at Newcastle come to discover that infidels are often men leading blameless lives and seeking earnestly for the truth?"

RECENTLY, the Guild of St. Matthew held their annual meeting; the Revs. C. E. Escreet, W. E. Moll, H. C. Shuttleworth, J. Hill, S. D. Headlam took part. The following resolutions were proposed and carried with half a dissentient a piece:—

"That the continued exclusion of the junior member for Northampton from his seat in the House of Commons on grounds of religious opinion is an act of injustice—fraught

with danger to the Church no less than to the constitution of this land—against which it behoves Churchmen to protest in word and deed till right be done." Moved by Rev. C. E. Escreet, seconded by H. W. Hill (Guild of All Souls); carried with one dissentient.

"That this meeting of Churchmen protests against the continued imprisonment of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey for 'blasphemous libel,' and, believing that far greater harm is done to the Church by the use of injustice and persecution against her opponents than by any efforts of the opponents themselves, pledges itself to support any lawful agitation for obtaining the repeal of the laws under which so great a scandal to religion is possible." Moved by Rev. H. C. Shuttleworth, M.A., seconded by Rev. W. Moll, M.A.; carried unanimously.

PROPOSED ELECTION FUND TO ENABLE MR. G. W. FOOTE TO OPPOSE SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT AT THE NEXT ELECTION.

THE following promises have come in on behalf of the Election Fund (if one is started) for G. W. Foote:— J. Lees, £1; J. Elchells, £1; T. Lees, £1; J. Hansom, 5s. All are of Mossley, near Manchester; all are members of the N. S. S., and all promise to enlist others in the same good cause. George Griffiths also promises 10s. T. R. Hinde (of Hanley) in a letter containing his offer of 10s. to this Election Fund, reminds us of the parallel case of Ernest Jones and the Home Secretary of his day, nearly forty years ago. He writes:—

"Ernest Jones was imprisoned for seditious speech. His case was brought before Sir J. Graham, the then Home Secretary, who acted very much as Sir W. Harcourt is acting now in the case of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey. Ernest Jones on his release opposed the Home Secretary at the next election, and from the hustings showed up his conduct in betraying the secrets of his office. As a consequence of the exposure Sir James Graham came to be an object of popular hatred to all classes."

It is a strange political fact that Home Secretaries are generally the most disreputable members of the Administrations.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT AND FREETHOUGHT.

O Willie we have missed you
While daring what to think;
Humbug has surely kissed you
With wily lawyer's wink.

You say 'tis for the Christian's good
Freethought in durance dwells—
On skilful feeds, and sleeps on wood
In solitary cells.

You hold that Freedom's golden rule
Has been a great mistake,
And seeming of the Lib'ral school
Freethinkers speechless make.

You laud the Dutchman's daring thought*
And courage to be free,
Yet crush our sons, who daring fought
For mental liberty.

Your book of fables—full of lies—
May shackle some again,
But cannot close the mental eyes
Of free and thoughtful men.

The day will come when you and all
The bigot, tyrant crew
Will lose the power to war and maul
The freedom of the few.

You're but a bubble seen to-day,
That floats upon a river;
While human thought will flow and play,
Its destiny, For ever!

C. T. E.

* Sir William Harcourt married as his second wife the daughter of the eloquent historian of the Dutch Republic, and as he has read the story, we look upon him as a political humbug.

HEAVEN REJECTED. (A Mystery Explained.)

A SHORT time ago I visited the village of Rothwell, near Northampton, where I heard funny stories about a vault under the church containing human bones, which it was said could not be accounted for. My curiosity thus being aroused, I with a companion sought the village sexton, who kindly undertook to lead us to the mysterious place.

Having each been provided with a lighted candle, we descended a flight of stone steps that have been made into the vault, and entered the chamber of death, determined if possible to learn the cause of its mystery. Reaching the bottom of the steps we advanced to the middle of the sepulchre. The darkness was intense and our candles seemed to add deeper impression to the gloom. The silence was indeed deadly. Only the beating of our hearts and the glimmer of our trinity of light reminded us that we were yet of the living world.

We halted. Around us were the objects of our search—bones. Human bones were indeed piled about in regular order. Skulls, arms, legs, ribs, were there in tens, in hundreds, even in thousands. Among this multitude of dead our wonder grew even more. Who were they? What did they do? Why came they here? None had hitherto been able to learn.

While these reflexions passed across my mind a sudden change took place. Our candles were changed into elegant lights, soft as the moon but radiant as the sun. The place was altered also. We were within a gigantic mansion of unlimited extent. The light, though intense, was growing every instant. The lofty columns of polished granite were capped and set with silver; the roof bore a resemblance to an eastern sky. The elegance and extent of the place far surpassed description.

The bones had altered also; they had resumed their flesh and formed figures of noble men standing around us. They commenced conversing with us, and leading us along golden paths, described to us the beauties of the place and the charms of its surroundings.

We now inquired where we were, and why these people stayed here. In reply they informed us with kindly and pleasing manner, that we had arrived at their so-called "Rest," which on earth was miscalled Hell. "What!" I inquired, "is this Hell; and why have you not entered Heaven, or for what reasons did you prefer this place?"

Again their sweet-toned voices replied, "We came here to avoid the other road upon which many travel upon their way to Heaven. We see many passing that way, but they are of a class with whom we do not desire to live. They comprise Christians, Mahomedans, and many kinds of superstitious people. Bad men, cruel-hearted, vicious and lying, often pass among them, singing hymns of praise and repeating prayers to gods. Their discordant noises are unpleasant to us, and their actions toward others grieve us when we watch them passing along. It was through noticing these things that we decided to form our own company and establish this for our home, where we live in peace and goodwill. None of us desires to travel the road towards heaven, or enter its provinces. We would prefer men to join us here in "Rest," rather than enter upon that way with hypocrites and knaves. Heaven is the abode of saints and sinners and all unrighteous men who spend their time making discordant noises upon harps and trumpets; and it is now said that some have taken tamborines and drums in order to make up in noise what they lack in harmony; and display in antics what they lack in grace. The company thus forms an unhappy one, and as they cannot agree, their dissensions create unlimited strife. Among them the clainor of trumpets and the banging of tamborines continues for ever and adds to their unceasing misery. Christ has long since disavowed them. Good has been dethroned by them; Evil now reigns supreme among them. Their once-prized golden-gates were long ago removed, and now form the ground on which we tread. Heaven is thus open to all who wish, evil as well as good. Therefore all wise men are forsaking it and joining us in adding to the glory of "Rest."

"And who are you that speak thus of Heaven?" I inquired. The answer was delivered with sterling sincerity; thus:—

"We were the philosophers and the scientists of our day. We were the pioneers of Freethought who were persecuted and punished for our learning by the leading citizens of Heaven. We suffered and died, but by that we conquered.

They fought for and secured Heaven, but we attained a better and holier place. We left our works and words among men. Go ye and tell them to join us in this our home named 'Rest,' but miscalled Hell."

When these words had been pronounced each bone resumed its place, each candle resumed its light, and I returned home a wiser and better man.

M. H. B.

HOW PHONO BECAME AN ISRAELITE AFTER READING THE BIBLE.

THE other evening I spent a few idle moments reading the Christians' Bible; I was a little tired when I sat down to read, and consequently very little of such literature served to suffice me. As I closed the book I also closed my eyes, and directly afterwards found myself in the land of Canaan—a farmer and the possessor of considerable flocks and herds. Somehow, too, my features had by this time gotten a Jewish cast, and the faces of my children and all around me bore the unmistakable sign of the Jew. I was seated in a large tent of ancient design, bartering, as only Jews can barter, for the purchase of a young Hebrew servant whose parents were poor. He was a fine-looking young man, and as I handed over my shekels to his father, he simply turned his head aside so as not to catch sight of his weeping mother, and then strode firmly away, as I directed him, to work in the corn-field. His father and mother soon left, though not until the mother had adjured me to remember that her son was of Abram's seed, a child of god; and had besought me to obey the law of Moses, and not to treat her child with rigor. My family were exceedingly rejoiced that I had bought such a fine-looking bondsman, and bought him so cheaply. After I had also rejoiced with them I betook myself to the fields so that I might behold after what fashion young Izhar did carry himself in the corn-field. I found him looking contemptuously upon his fellow bondsmen (who, being of the heathen, were bondsmen for ever) and reviling them scornfully. Yea, even when I drew nigh unto him did he not cease his revilings, but incited them the more to idleness. Then was I exceeding wrath, and regretted that I had bought the lad; so I bade him cease lest I dealt hardly with him. Whereupon he demanded of me, "Who made thee lord over mankind?" At this was I very wrath, yet restraining myself answered him, "Hath not the lord given me thee as my bondsman, and have not I paid thirty shekels of silver for thee?" Again he replied boldly, "Yea, verily thou hast bought me from my father whom thy silver did beguile, but when thou sayest that the most high hath given me to be thy slave, thou liest, for thou knowest the wickedness and deceit of the scribes who write out the judgments." Then could I contain myself no longer but cried, "Base blasphemer, dost thou deny the judgments of Jehovah? Then will I smite thee!" And I did chastise him furiously with my staff until he was nigh unto death, and when I had made an end of chastening him my bondsmen sought to keep the life within him that the judgments might be fulfilled, and he die not immediately at my hands. Nevertheless, at the end of the second day did he die, and I made sacrifice unto the lord. And lo, as I came from the altar the father and mother of the young bondsmen came to meet me, and I looked upon their agonised faces as, holding out to me the thirty shekels I had given them, they besought me in the name of the lord to give them back their boy that was slain. And as I looked upon them their features changed to those of my own aged father and mother, and rushing forward with a cry I awoke, and remembered that I had been reading the abominable 21st chapter of Exodus, which treats of human slavery and delivers the life of the bondsman into the hands of his master.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A CHRISTIAN-FREETHINKER'S CRITICISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have, since Mr. Foote's imprisonment taken in the *Freethinker*, and hoped, under Dr. Aveling as an editor, to find it conducted with candor and decency. But, although I am no believer in the doctrines of the atonement, the incarnation, or the miraculous conception, I am shocked to find doctrines held most sacred by the vast majority of Christians (1) not only cruelly and unfeelingly caricatured, but grossly and foully misrepresented by the ribald rhymes quoted in Mr. Beckwith's letter in your paper of the 9th inst.

Let your readers, for one moment, put themselves in the place of an orthodox Christian. He believes that god, the son, the creator, and lord of all, out of divine compassion to his own creatures who had sinned against him (2), actually condescended to take human form, and bear an infinite and unutterable load of misery (3) for our sakes, and that, to carry out this scheme, the virgin Mary was caused miraculously, and in violation of the ordinary laws of nature, to bear a child by the direct operation of the will of the holy spirit;

and that the second person of the trinity united himself to, and became identified with, this child.

Mr. Beckwith must know that no Christian believes that any sexual intercourse occurred (4), but that, on the contrary, Mary is always emphatically styled the virgin (5); but he thinks it fair and decent to represent the doctrine to be that the holy spirit was actuated by vain lust, and thus converts a most touching act of divine benevolence and self-sacrifice (6) into a disgusting and contemptible gratification of libidinous desire. If misrepresentation such as this be not both obscene and blasphemous, words have lost their meaning.

I have no desire to enter into any controversy with Mr. Beckwith, but the public are entitled to hold Dr. Aveling responsible for what appears in the paper he edits, and I ask him to disavow and apologise (7) for the foul and prurient lines he has allowed to emanate.—Yours obediently,

SPENCER M. COX.

Honiton, September 11, 1883.

[(1) Our whole business is to attack doctrines held sacred by Christians, and regarded as filthily indecent by us. (2) Thanks to god's own wickedness. (3) Made by god, borne by omnipotence, conscious all the time of the farce it was playing. (4) The Bible of the Christian distinctly states that such intercourse occurred. (5) As god is styled "the Just," and on equally good grounds. (6) There is neither benevolence nor self-sacrifice in the disgusting story of the birth of Christ, or in the disreputable bargain called the atonement. (7) Dr. Aveling is wholly responsible for everything that appears in this paper. He neither disavows nor apologises. He is delighted to find that the *Freethinker's* attacks upon the foul indecencies of the Bible and the Christian religion has hit their mark so successfully.]

PROFANE JOKES.

JUDGE: "Prisoner, you are charged with being drunk and disorderly, and severely maltreating your neighbors. Guilty or Not Guilty?" PRISONER: "Guilty, your worship. No punishment is too bad for me. Like Nehemiah, I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and made them swear, by god"—"Silence," roared the judge; and then relapsing into judicial tones, "three months."

A BRIGHT little three-year-old likes to go to church and especially enjoys the singing. One day the choir sang, "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me," and after she got home she was heard singing very seriously, "Rock the babies kept for me."

FEMALE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER: "Now what is meant by the pomps and vanities of this world?" SMART FIVE-YEAR-OLD: "That false silver chain round your neck and them flowers in your bonnet."

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