

# PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sentenced to Twelve Months' Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

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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 CASE OF HENRY POWELL.

IN a society raised so little above that of the brutes whence man has sprung as is our modern society in this year of grace 1883, crimes of man against man are inevitable. We have climbed so short a distance from the fierce wild animals that have been our progenitors that the reversion to their passions and violence is so easy as to be frequent.

Hence theft and murder are yet rife in our midst, and will be thus until Education, the true, the only savior of mankind, in the slow centuries gradually brings about their elimination. No man is free from the tendency to revert to the ancestral habits now and again, from the tendency to allow old brutal impulses to master him. Almost no man passes through life without encountering circumstances that awake these tendencies. As yet the men and women are too few who have so much the mastery of themselves that the human nature triumphs over the brute nature reasserting itself for the moment.

We believe honestly that our earth-creed gives men a better chance of attaining that mastery than is given by the creed that is centred in god and heaven. And we believe that despite the sad case of the unhappy man Powell, who, condemned for murder, has suffered the penalty that is exacted by our English law. We still punish crime by the commission of the same offence.

In consequence of this sad case some few newspapers and more individuals have attacked Freethought as the cause of the crime committed by this Freethinker. It is difficult to conceive a lower depth of degradation than that reached by those who can thus write and speak. It seems impossible to believe that a man could, in a case so full of pain and grief, be capable of thus wounding the hearts of so many thousands of men and women.

We are not wont to receive mercy at the hands of Christians. We do not ask it at their hands. But for their own credit sake we ask them to reflect ere they charge our creed as responsible for the murder at Balham. This is not the place or time to remind them that every newspaper teems with accounts of crimes committed by those holding the Christian belief. It seems scarcely the place or time to remind them that of the innumerable prisoners at this moment in our gaols only two are known to be Freethinkers, and those two are in prison for conscience sake.

But it is necessary to tell them that this unhappy man, now dead, believed that he had been wronged, that not receiving the money that he believed to be his due, he had pawned all his things to pay the workmen whom he, as subcontractor, had engaged; that his wife and he had worked all through the night that a contract might be finished. Meeting, in this state of mental tension, one whom he regarded as a defrauder; receiving for his reply to his demands for money due, blows—he struck in return with the tool he carried, and at the sight of blood lost his reason for the next few fatal moments.

In the face of such a story as this, with its tragic issues, let us, and all men, be silent, forbearing, pitiful.

It is a consolation to us all, that after this terrible agony, Powell never gave way in regard to his belief. The professional representative of the Christian religion assailed him, but without avail. He met his doom firm in his atheistic creed.

EDWARD B. AVELING.

## JUMPING COMMENTS UPON THE BIBLE.

[Continued from p. 348.]

But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt (Gen. xix., 26). Some people, alas! treat this story as a myth. "Is anything too hard for the lord?" But if anybody doubts the transformation of Lot's wife, let him read some Classical Dictionary or Ovid's Metamorphoses. There he will find Daphne was turned into a laurel and Io into a heifer; Actæon was turned to a stag, and torn to pieces by his own dogs; and Atlas was transformed, not into a paltry pillar of salt, but into a mountain. If the bible had only said that this unfortunate lady had been turned into mount Lebanon, of course, all the world would have regarded the story as of divine origin; but, a pillar of salt! What god would work a whole miracle for such a trifle?

And it came to pass that god did tempt Abraham (Gen. xxii., 1). This is fully confirmed by James, who assures us that god tempteth no man (James i., 13). "Lead us not into temptation," is a very appropriate prayer for Christians. Had Abraham known the character of his god, he might have used the prayer and so have escaped the temptation. Can anyone distinguish this temptation from a practical joke played by one man upon another on April 1? I cannot—except it be that here the fun is entirely absent, though that redeeming feature is sometimes quite evident in a joke perpetrated by man. I believe, however, that this transaction really did occur on April 1, a time when deity considered himself at liberty to unbend, to resolve the monarch into the clown. So he sent Abraham to Moriah to murder his son; and when there, and about to do it, he cried, "Stop! it is a ram you have to kill, not Isaac!" Thereupon, his courts rang with the laughter of his flatterers, while Abraham felt himself deceived.

And Abraham gave up the ghost (Gen. xxv. 8). He had lived 175 years, so the bible says, and all the good recorded of him might have been easily performed in 175 minutes. There is nothing said about immortality in connexion with the old patriarchs. Indeed, there can be no doubt the writer made them live so long because he never expected, sensible man that he was, that they would ever live a second time. Had he expected his heroes to live again, he never would have stretched them so long "upon the rack of this rude world."

And Isaac loved Esau because he did eat his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob (Gen. xxv., 28). "All scripture is profitable," says an apostle—chiefly, I should say, in teaching you how you ought not to act. This family was a saintly one. The husband and wife, equally pious, are at sixes and sevens; the old father prefers one son before the other for the sake of his venison, which he was too old to catch for himself; and his wife loved the other son only, it appears, because his father made a favorite of his brother. Between the brothers the most deadly hatred existed: Esau was a "ruff," Jacob was a swindler, a coward, a cheat—a very picture of his god, and his special favorite. He robbed his brother of his birthright, though nobody can exactly define how much or little that meant. Jacob, of course, was too clever a swindler to plot and scheme for a trifle; and no doubt he got at least a million per cent. for his "mess of pottage," bread and lentils (verse 34).



The twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis may be skipped at a bound, for it is false from end to end, a mere repetition of the story of Abraham's sojourn in Gerar.

*And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn (Gen. xxvii., 19).*—Ananias and his wife were struck dead for lying; Jacob was protected and favored by the lord immediately after this atrocious lie. As Jacob bamboozled his earthly father, so most Christians to-day treat their father who is in heaven. He is too blind to detect the fraud, or he would soon make short work of the bishops, who rob the poor Esaus of their birthright. Every priesthood lives by imitating Jacob. That is why the patriarch is so popular with them.

*And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of god ascending and descending on it (Gen. xxviii., 12).*—This must have been a divine dream, or it would not have been recorded. A ladder reaching to heaven! How preposterous! Angels running up and down! This was probably before they were fledged, or, as someone has suggested, it may have been at the season when they were moulting, their wings then being too tattered for a lengthy flight.

*And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the lord is in this place; and I knew it not (Gen. xxviii., 16).*—The saint did not know that his god was where he slept! He had evidently not said his prayers before going to sleep. He had left home without taking his god with him, and was startled to find him going on the same journey. *And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of god, and this is the gate of heaven (verse 17).* Ay! ay! it is always so. There is no place, except one, that saints find so dreadful as the gate of heaven, and that is the gate of its antipodes. If a saint ever needs comfort it is when in sight of the heavenly city. Then he sends for the doctor—or two or three doctors, if he is rich enough—to kill the messenger, the disease, god has sent to call him home. If the doctors succeed, there is rejoicing; if they fail, the poor saint shuffles off his mortal coil as reluctantly as he would strip off his clothes in the Arctic regions; and he enters heaven (that is, exits from life) with a face as long as he would wear were he going to prison or the workhouse! Ah! yes—the gate of heaven is a dreadful spot, and I should not be surprised to find it worse inside than out.

*And he took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it (verse 18).*—Here we land in absolute and widespread idolatry. Jacob was a phallic worshipper, and he consecrated this stone in the usual manner, his god, of course, being quite delighted with the act. He anointed it, and so made a Christ of it, that is, an anointed, greased, or smeared one.

*And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If god will be with me, and will keep (that is, protect) me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the lord be my god: and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be god's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee (verses 22, 23).*—This text is full of the marrow of divinity. 1. Jacob enters into a bargain with god and puts him to the test. He will have nothing to do with a god that will do nothing for him. In that he was right. Neither will I. 2. The vow shows that Jacob had not yet received Jehovah into his pantheon, and was resolved to experiment upon him before he did. Right again. 3. If the god did his duty, he should have that stone for his house! Very kind of Jacob; and the god did not object. Perhaps the stone had a hole in it. 4. He will pay god ten per cent. of all that god gives him! That must have been very tempting to Jehovah; and we must suppose he at once fell in with the proposal and accepted the bargain.

NOTE.—We are often told of the disinterested love of god and his saints. But the article cannot be found in anything except words. The bible exhibits no love but what expects a reward.

We shall see in the sequel that, whatever the lord did, Jacob never performed his part of this vow. It was the offspring of panic, as most vows are, never meant to be kept, but only to appease the present wrath of the deity and ward off a supposed or real danger. Religion, when dissected, is found to be selfishness consecrated.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

## A DEGRADING RELIGION.—III.

### QUEER MORALITY.

WHEN men talk of the sublime morality taught by Jesus, they either speak recklessly or in utter ignorance of the teachings of the Nazarene carpenter. Most true. Jesus did give utterance to some noble sentiments; and some of his teachings were of a very elevating character. But what public teacher could hope to gain the ear of the multitude who did not say something of an inspiring or wise nature? Most reformers appeal to the better feelings and lofty aspirations of their hearers; and it is no wonder that Jesus followed the long succession of religious teachers in this regard. But in very truth, all he taught that was entirely original was of a very harmful character, and his good doctrines had been taught by other teachers long before he was born.

Now, does it not strike the sincere Christian as somewhat singular that Jesus, who had been sent into the world by the infinite author of the universe, and who was himself a part of the god-head, should waste his time on earth in performing miracles which were useless or absurd, or proclaiming doctrines which others had taught more successfully before him, or enjoining men to perform certain actions, the tendency of which was to throw the world back into absolute barbarism?

Fortunate, indeed, it is for the world that even the followers of Christ have never attempted to act out in its entirety the teachings of their master. What sort of persons would the Christians—our parents and friends—have been had they believed Jesus when he said: "If any man come unto me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple?" (Luke xiv., 26). Such persons must have been bereft of all humanity. What loving mother would leave her babe to follow a fanatical preacher? What kind husband would abandon the wife of his bosom even for the salvation of his own insignificant soul? Better far be consigned to eternal torment than get eternal bliss on such hateful terms. Why I have seen a kind-hearted, loving woman cling through twenty years of a miserable life to a drunken villain of a husband—who treated her with great harshness and cruelty, and starved the children she had borne him—rather than leave him to his fate; which meant certain ruin, perhaps the gaol, or even the gallows. I have known men who, for love of wife or children, would have suffered pain unutterable, would have gone readily to a painful death to snatch them from the flames or rescue them from the surging waves; yet these are to be told that Jesus cannot accept them unless they hate those whom they love better even than life itself.

Surely it cannot be said that Jesus propagated lofty morality when he declared: "Think not that I came to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be of his own household" (Matthew x., 34–36). Assuredly a very strange mission this! A devil could not come on a worse errand. And yet Christians call this "tidings of great joy." To whom? Humble Christians like Uriah Heep might like it, and Daniel Quilp might chuckle over it; but most persons would prefer that their family relations were not interfered with in this unwarrantable fashion.

When Jesus said, "Love your enemies," he must have been joking; for, clearly, he never attempted to display any affectionate feeling towards his adversaries; and Christians of the present day appear to relish the joke immensely. But never was he more in earnest than when he said, "Blessed be ye poor." Yet nobody appears to appreciate the degrading influence of this doctrine more than the Christians themselves.

A certain sect of Christians have just issued a little book called, "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," revealing the state of things that obtains in the poorest parts of the metropolis to-day; and a very good commentary it is on the teachings of Jesus.

It is not, and never was a blessing to be poor. To be poor in a great town—surrounded by those who live in luxury, and know not what it is to want a meal—is a positive curse. What is the condition of the poor in London? Let the Christian answer. The writer of the pamphlet



named says: "Few who will read these pages have any conception of what these pestilential human rookeries are—where tens of thousands are crowded together amidst horrors which call to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave-ship. To get into the houses of the poor you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases, arising from accumulations of sewage and refuse scattered in all directions and often flowing beneath your feet; courts, many of them which the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air, and which rarely know the virtue of a drop of cleansing water. You have to ascend rotten staircases which threaten to give way beneath every step, and which in some places have already broken down, leaving gaps that imperil the limbs and the lives of the unwary. You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin. Then, if you are not driven back by the intolerable stench, you may gain admittance to the dens in which these thousands of beings who belong, as much as you, to the race for whom Christ died, herd together."

He continues: "Every room in these rotten and reeking tenements houses a family, often two. In one cellar a sanitary inspector reports finding a father, mother, three children and four pigs. In another room a missionary found a man ill with small-pox, his wife just recovering from her eighth confinement, and the children running about half naked and covered with dirt. Here are seven people living in one underground kitchen, and a little dead child lying in the same room. Elsewhere is a poor widow, her three children, and a child who has been dead thirteen days. Her husband, who was a cabman, had shortly before committed suicide." This does not look as though poverty were a blessing.

From hard and painful experience I have come to the opinion that nearly all the misery and crime in the world may be traced to poverty as its primary cause. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink" (Matthew vi., 25) has been acted upon by some persons, and the effect has been that our workhouses and gaols are filled, and the deserving and struggling citizens have to pay the piper.

"Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man shall sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (Matthew vi., 39-40). This is very good morality for ruffians and thieves, but not for honest men; and I will not degrade myself, nor humiliate my fellows, by attempting to put such detestable teachings into practice. ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### IS GOD A SPIRIT?

MODERN Christians have an idea that god is a spirit. The possession of such an idea proves that they have not read the bible which they pretend to believe and on which they say their salvation depends. Indeed, if Christians did read the holy book they would soon all become sceptics.

How can god be a spirit when he made man in his own image? A spirit would make a peculiar-looking image. This one fact alone ought to satisfy the Christians that god is not a spirit. They cannot pretend that we are spirits, which we should be if god is a spirit, and we are made in his own image.

What we should imagine a spirit to be—if it is possible to imagine such a thing—is something of no shape, no dimensions, no color, no proclivities—in fact, something possessing attributes which cannot be described.

But this god of the bible has many attributes that can be and that are described. This god can see, hear, speak, feel, smell, taste, eat, drink, and walk. He can also get angry, fight, repent, and do all manner of things—just like ourselves.

For illustrating some of god's attributes, Messrs. Foote and Ramsey are now suffering under Christian treatment. The attributes to which we refer are described by this spiritual god himself when speaking to Moses. "And it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by that I will put thee in a cleft of a rock and I will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. And I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen" (Exodus xxxiii., 22, 23). Let it be remembered that the illustration of these verses was given in a more becoming manner

than the words would lead one to suppose. The aid of the modern Moses was called into requisition. Now is it possible for a spirit to do or have such things as described above? And is it possible to imagine a spirit with a face and hand, which he himself says he has?

In 2nd Kings xix., 16, we read: "O lord, bow down thine ear and hear; open thine eyes and see." God is a spirit with an ear and eyes. We wonder if he has only one ear. If so, that no doubt accounts for his non-answers to prayer.

Isaiah says (xxx., 7) that god's "lips are full of indignation and his tongue is devouring fire." How can a spirit be possessed of lips and tongue? It is very evident that the majority of Christians are not aware that their god is in possession of such useful articles, or else they would certainly cease to call their god a spirit.

In Isaiah lxxv., 5, this spiritual god, speaking of the Jews offering sacrifices on brick altars, eating swine's flesh, and doing a number of the like trivial things, says: "These are smoke in my nose." Now is it possible to imagine a spirit with a nasal organ? If we are to believe that god is a spirit we certainly cannot believe that he has a nose, even if we are imprisoned in Holloway Gaol and damned for our unbelief.

One peculiarity of this spiritual god is, that he is a tailor. Genesis iii., 21, says: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the lord god make coats of skins, and clothed them." It is a pity he does not follow his ancient calling, and make some clothes for the miserably-clad poor of the present day. Christians should try the effect of a little praying. It might induce him to go back to his old trade.

Yet another proof that the god of the bible is a spirit, is in the verse: "And it repented the lord that he had made man on earth, and it grieved him at his heart." It is one of our elementary notions of a spirit that he should have a heart and be able to repent.

There are countless instances in the bible of this spiritual god speaking, but the most astonishing instance is when he makes himself heard and understood by a whale, who was attacked for the first and only time with sea-sickness.

All those Christians who truly and unfeignedly believe in this last extraordinary result of a spirit's vocal abilities, will doubtless believe all that we have quoted concerning him, and at the same time will have the hardihood to declare that he is really a spirit. They are welcome to their slavish credulity, but they must not try so force their foolish ideas down our throats. If they wish to be as "little children," by all means let them. But we object to their acting as "little gods" and dictating to us what we shall ridicule and what we shall not ridicule. A. WATKIN.

### ACID DROPS.

If Mr. Foote had again to stand his trial for blasphemy he could not quote as freely from Mr. Matthew Arnold as he did on the last occasion; for Mr. Arnold appears at length to have become shocked at his own irreverence, and to have determined to do something to atone for it. As a consequence, the new and abridged edition of "Literature and Dogma" does not contain that simile of the almighty as a sort of glorified Lord Shaftesbury, which might have had serious consequences if it had been written by a less learned man and published in a less expensive book. There may be no connexion between the two things, but the haste with which this suppression has followed upon Mr. Arnold's pension can scarcely fail to be subject for remark.

WHILE the public school at Williamston (N.C.) was in session, Abner Esson, a lunatic, broke down the door, and, armed with a club, entered. He believed that he had been doomed to eternal torment unless he offered a sacrifice of 200 children; and calculated on killing twenty-eight in the school-room. He at once began the attempt, and girls were felled right and left by his club. He was surrounded by the boys and their teacher, and was finally overpowered after he had been knocked senseless. Some of the girls were painfully, but none, it is believed, were fatally hurt.

THE missing link is found. It is the Young Men's Christian Association. A sentence from the circular issued by the East End Young Men's Christian Association, asks: "Is it too much to suggest that the missing link is to be found in the Young Men's Christian Association?" We find that we have omitted the words, "between the Sabbath-School and the Church."



THE following mixture of folly and blasphemy is being circulated by Roman Catholics in Manchester. It gives the form of a prayer and the benefits from its use. We have no space for the prayer (which is in the usual strain), but we give its history and benefits verbatim:—"This prayer was found in the grave of our lord Jesus Christ, in the year of our lord 803, and sent from the Pope to the Emperor Charles, as he was going to battle, for his safety. They who shall repeat this prayer every day, or have it repeated, or keep it about them, shall never die a sudden death, nor be drowned in the waters, nor shall they fall into the hands of their enemies, nor shall they be overpowered in any battle, nor shall poison take any effect on them; and it being read over any woman in labor she shall be safely delivered and be a glad mother; and when the child is born say this prayer and lay it on its right side, and he or she shall not be troubled with any of the thirty-two misfortunes. And if you see anyone in fits lay it on his or her right side, and he or she shall stand up and thank you, and they that shall write this prayer from house to house shall be blessed of the lord, and they that laugh at it shall suffer. Believe this prayer for truth, for it is as true as if the holy evangelists had written it. They who keep it about them shall not fear lightning or thunder, and they who shall repeat it shall have three days' warning before death."

As a consequence of the pugilistic letter of the Rev. Mr. Hibbs, the Christians and their stout walking-sticks appeared in Regent's Park on Sunday, Oct. 28, and blows came about. It is to be earnestly hoped that our Freethinking friends, having the better of creed and argument alike, will not weaken our cause by taking the initiative in acts of violence.

THE Bishop of Bangor has been pitching into tea as heavily as a dissenting pew-opener at an "anniversary." He was right in principle. The cause of most of the evils is tea—Christians—tea.

AN "Observer" in the Herts of that ilk, sums up the two Burton letters. "Mr. Burton has given us the scientific side of the question; he may be right or wrong, but it matters little. We know that god formed this earth, and is bringing these things to pass, using methods that science may or may not understand. Let people read their bibles more frequently, and they will learn many things concerning every-day affairs that they did not know before." Observe the confidence of the "Observer." We know. We cordially endorse the last sentence. They will! They will!

PORCUS KELLY is a new species lately discovered in the precincts of the city by the fearless and persevering Mr. Kelly of Clerkenwell. It does not differ in any material degree from the rest of the porcine race, except that its skin resembles the coat of a city vestryman, and that it usually maintains the erect posture. It displays, however, one difference; that of being able to consume sufficient food whilst standing to furnish a meal for at least four men whilst sitting down. In spite of its immense yield in lard (di-da), it is, however, not a profitable breed for farmers; the cost of its maintenance being over £100 per annum, and its value in the market not the rap of an auctioneer's hammer.

A LEAFLET, "Experiences of a Christian," by John Clements, reaches us. It would be comic, were it not painful. It is all in the same vein as the following: "Driven out of bed at night by fire, about the streets of London with fire and cooling spirit passing through me from the soles of my feet out of my head; sweating the marrow out of my bones, and the flesh out of my body, day and night, to make room for spirit, electricity under the feet, and walking on suckers; feeling at times myself filled with spirit, and seeing forms in spirit near me, hearing words and feeling spirit in substance, teaching and assisting me in prayer, taught me to pray for myself, my wife, and those that are connected with me; the law-makers, the Queen and the royal family, the head of the country, the inmates of asylums, workhouses and prisons; for the protection of animals, for the church and every body, and kept me up till now." This poor man is but one of the many who have been driven mad by the terrible creed.

A MANAGER of a school in north-west London informs us that on the opening of a new School Board school, the chairman of the London School Board, Mr. E. N. Buxton, not only tolerated, but even led up to the farce of a prayer to the god but for whose blundering these tardy concessions on the part of the rich to the poor would be unnecessary.

THE Rev. R. H. Dickson is as brutal as his profession could make him. A poor old man, aged 62, applied to the Sheppey Board of Guardians for relief. He was an agricultural laborer, but unable to do much work; his wife earned a trifle every week—just enough to pay rent. The Rev. Dickson suggested that an order for the house be offered. Hearing that the poor old couple had a little furniture, the rev. gentleman added that they were not destitute. When he resided in Lan ashire no relief was allowed as long as there was a chair

in the house. Replying to a brother guardian, he said he would not give a man a loaf of bread as long he had a chair to sit upon. Much to the disgust of Dickson, 2s. 6d. per week was granted to the applicant. According to the "Clergy List," this minister of god has an income of £1,724. And this is the "guardian" who sought to deny the broken-down agricultural laborer, upwards of three score years of age, the relief of half-a-crown a week!

JAMES DUNCAN, of Hanover Street, Glasgow, sends us a comic letter. He informs us that he is a Scotch Presbyterian and that he cannot see the humor in our articles. It is a long time since we have had so eloquent and conclusive a testimony to the humor of the *Freethinker*.

HE then revives the old fallacy of the founding of benevolent institutions by Christianity. With true national cuteness he inserts the qualifying adjective "modern." It is humanity, not Christianity, that has founded the hospitals. Their foundation has been due to the upgrowth of man's sympathy for man, long crushed under the fatal despotism of man's belief in god. When benevolent institutions are found to be synchronous with the rise of the earth-creed and the decay of the heaven-creed it is easy to see to which belief they are due. Well may James Duncan talk of "modern Christianity!" Does he know the date of the forming of the first hospital in Europe? That hospital, known as Les Invalides in Paris was founded in 1671. More than sixteen centuries elapsed after the death of the founder of Christian religion ere the humanity of the race triumphed over the horrible creed.

JAMES DUNCAN then quotes Christ as "the first true gentleman that ever breathed." This would seem to imply that there have been true gentlemen who could not or did not breathe.

JAMES DUNCAN is rather rough on god the father. It is clear that he thinks him no "true gentleman." For he was walking about in the garden of Eden—and must have breathed—long before Christ made his first appearance as a gentleman.

## E V A N G E L.—2.

But we're converted to the dainty plot—  
The necessary birth. How whimsic'ly begot!  
We are converted, and shall now begin  
To be redeemed from Eve's most shifless sin;  
And shown by judges the right path to glory,  
Will promulgate the truth of their sweet story:  
Never dispute "the bread of life" has risen,  
Or laugh at what is droll, for lo! the prison.  
By such indulgence in uncanny wit,  
We foolishly have put our foot in it.  
'Mid savage nakedness on Afric's sand,  
Or ignorance cajoled in any land,  
The fetish sacrifice—the bath of blood—  
Attest how sacred is the name of god;  
And blasphemy in every barb'rous time  
Is contumacious and malignant crime.  
Socrates wallowed in it. 'Tis the seeing  
Some promise of a peoples' future freeing  
Detects the loaded dicing of the hour—  
'Tis reason as opposed to selfish power:  
A charge we may be guilty of with pride,  
Upon the chance of being dignified.  
Never a question between man and god;  
But someone wanting someone else in quod.  
Some Radical, St. Peter, who would fain appall  
By urging Christ's decree—"swear not at all"—  
Though such rash words, whatever Jesus meant,  
Are most disgraceful and, though trebly sent,  
Would cost him from our Christian Parliament.  
Blaspheme? not us. Once bitten—*verbum sat*—  
Only your sons of god dare venture that.  
Of nothing else accused, condemned or tried,  
With theft and murder perched on either side:  
For blasphemy alone your savior died!

"Do you feel as if you will have a diadem when you die?" said the parson to the invalid. "I don't want to die-a-dem bit," said the man.

FREETHINKERS who intend sending subscriptions to the Symes' Testimonial, will kindly remit as early as possible. Those having lists are requested to return such lists without delay. It is desirable the list should be closed by Dec. 1, as Mr. and Mrs. Symes will leave for Australia about the third week in December. Subscriptions to be sent to Mr. Bradlaugh, 20 Circus Road, St. John's Wood.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

In consequence of the great demand for the "Freethinker" of October 28th, containing the Cartoon of "Publican" Booth, which is out of print, it has been determined to issue the Cartoon separately on fine-quality paper, at the price of One Halfpenny. It is now Ready.

## DR. E. B. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture twice on Sunday, Nov. 11, at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, City Road. Subjects:—11.15, "Hereditary: Theories of Darwin and Haeckel;" 7, "Morality without God." In the afternoon at St. George's Hall (Sunday Lecture Society). 4, "Pedigree of Man."

## 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.—Diogenes, Harry Morgan, Ebor, W. L., H. Cose, T. Pocklington, H. Harding, J. S., W. Heelle, John Johnson, C. B., H. Passers, D. Shee, Tompuss Newton, P. Knowles, G. H. B., W. J. D., George Clark, M. Heinemann, Arthur Hunt, F. Blackburn, Voltaire.

H. M. REALE.—You will see in the *N. R.* of last week, and in the *Freethinker* of this, the facts of the sad case.

J. WILLIAMS.—Too long.

F. BRYANT.—Mr. Wheeler is quite well again; but he keeps quiet for awhile.

FREETHINKER.—Thanks for jokes. We are using some. Cannot possibly read letters of such length as the one you have sent.

F. HOLE.—Well done, good and faithful servant!

R. MOOR.—We do not know Colonel Ingersoll's private address.

PERCENTATIO.—Received. Do not remember receiving the song.

J. E. DARE.—Will use contribution.

G. C.—A little too long.

J. C. GOODFELLOW.—Many thanks for your kind words.

A. R. ANDREWS.—Shall use your copy. You may send more if you will, but do not make the articles necessarily connected with each other. Let each stand alone.

INQUIRER.—We have given up all conundrums upon the relations between the three persons of the trinity and the family of the carpenter of Nazareth.

MOSES.—Jokes are always welcome.

CHRISTCHURCH.—The price of Huxley's "Lay Sermons" is 6s. (Macmillan).

GEORGE LEWIS.—Shall be glad to see your satire after the manner of "Æsop's Fables."

STELLA.—"The Story of an African Farm" could be obtained at Hayworth's library, High Street, Kingsland. Any of Mrs. Linton's novels.

H. G. SWIFF.—340 can hardly be called a few lines of verse.

G. CROOKSON.—The date of Shakspeare's birth is not quite certain; the year was 1564, the month, April; usually the 23rd is the day given; but this rests more upon tradition than anything else.

L. HILL.—We fear we must ask you to wait for your book until Mr. Foote comes out.

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.

Our brave friend, W. J. Ramsey, comes out from Holloway Gaol on Saturday, November 24. The course of proceedings in connexion with his release is under the consideration of a sub-committee of the N. S. S., and the various branches have been communicated with.

On Wednesday, December 12, W. J. Ramsey will lecture at the Hall of Science at 8.30 p.m. All Freethinkers please note.

MR. C. C. CATTELL'S "First Man" is a thoughtful and suggestive little work, well fitted for those who are anxious to know the facts and theories as to the origin of the human race, and adapted for lending to those who are not so anxious, but who must be taught that the old biblical story is a myth.

The attention of Freethinkers (juniors only) living in the vicinity of Holloway, is called to the fact that a Mutual

Improvement Class and Social Club meets at the Hanley Road Secular Club, 56 Hanley Road, N.

HERBERT SHARP owes his release from the fetters of superstition to the *Freethinker*. He has converted his brother. Everyone should work thus. Attaining freedom ourselves, let us then lead our brothers into the same liberty.

No better sign of the times is there than the increasing number and artistic excellence of our halls. The Hall of Science, Milton Hall, Claremont Hall, Ball's Pond Hall, are every one of them large, commodious, and good to the eye.

MR. SYMES will deliver a farewell lecture for the Hackney Branch of the N. S. S. at the Progress Hall, 88 Well Street, Mare Street, E., on Wednesday evening, November 14.

ON Sunday, November 11, Miss Bradlaugh will lecture at the Claremont Hall on "Mind Physiologically Considered." Chair taken at 7 p.m.

THE Sundays at the Ball's Pond Secular Hall will of a surety become quite a noticeable feature in the Freethought movement. This society, being its own landlord, has not to break up its assemblies at any given minute after a meeting or lecture. In consequence a freedom of work is secured, which is utilised in a manner calculated to astonish some who remember the somewhat dreary mode of passing Sunday even in Freethought circles.

LAST Sunday morning Dr. Aveling lectured for this society on "The Origin of Species," to a fair audience; and in the evening on "Children and Freethought," to a very full audience. There is always half an hour of pianoforte selections before the lectures at this hall, and, as a rule, a members' concert. On this occasion a fine brass band gave selections of high-class music. In addition to this there were some singing and a recitation by Dr. Aveling, who gave "The Bells." These devices are having great effect in securing new members. Freethinkers living in the neighborhood should join this branch. They will find a happy blending of amusement and instruction in its proceedings.

THE hall at Balls Pond is now a really beautiful one. It is of good size and very prettily decorated. The illuminations in which Christians put texts of scripture are here utilised for advertisements of Freethought literature.

THE South London Branch will meet every Sunday evening during the winter months at Mr. Craigen's, Angel Tavern, Lambeth Walk, S.E. The first meeting, on Sunday, Nov. 11, at 7.30, will be a social gathering. There will be readings, recitations, etc. The Building Committee's report will be submitted to the meeting. Members and friends, especially ladies, are invited to attend. Freethinkers desirous of joining this branch should apply to the secretary, Mr. J. M. Errington, 38 Webber Street, Blackfriars Road.

E. W. T. reminds us that Mr. Samuel Morley is making a virtue of necessity—it is quite pleasant to find virtue connected with him even under compulsion—and resigning his seat for Bristol. E. W. T. suggests that G. W. Foote might stand for Bristol. We expect the latter will not make any decision in this matter until he knows where our virtuous Home Secretary is going.

A FRIEND from Sheffield writes to tell us that after attending a lecture years ago by Dr. Edward B. Aveling, he bought a *Freethinker*. Next week he ordered the paper of his news-agent. Recently he has lent it to a church clergyman, who also is now a regular reader. Our friend exhibits the paper, now that the illustrations have been resumed, in his shop-window. Publican Booth's portrait brought in over sixty applicants. These he referred, as he had always done, to his news-agent, who, after repeated refusals, has at last ordered a supply, every one of which was sold.

THE Testimonial Fund for Messrs. Foote and Ramsey claims the earnest attention of Freethinkers and friends of freedom generally. All contributions should be forwarded to Mrs. A. Besant, 19 Avenue Road, London, N.W.; they are acknowledged in the *National Reformer*.

## OUTCAST LONDON.

EVERY honest Atheist must shudder as he reads the pamphlet entitled "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London." The *Graphic* (Oct. 27, 1883) treats the subject in one of its leading articles, but as some old women try to hide their love for gin in the grimaces they make over it, so the *Graphic*, while condoling and deploring the fact, conceals the real cause of the evil and the remedy for it. Why not speak the truth out boldly?



The word "progress" as applied to the improvements and discoveries of the last hundred years, has nothing whatever to do with the subject. The cause and the remedy for the degraded and hopeless condition of city populations are not far to seek. Profits are not fairly divided. The poor are oppressed, are preyed upon by their more wealthy brethren; driven from the soil which is theirs and could support them, to make way for the game preserves that take their place. A fine fat pheasant represents a starving man. The extent of ground required to rear a deer would sustain a family.

Charities are misapplied, and it costs more to pay and provide for the governor of an asylum than for all its inmates. Money bequeathed for the sole benefit of the poor and taxes levied on their behalf are ruthlessly stolen from them.

We are burdened with a costly royalty and aristocracy, and a grasping, open-mouthed Church, ready to swallow all the gold that fools are able to pour into it. Down with your city churches!—down with them all!—and with the proceeds erect buildings for the poor.

The thousands of pounds given to the directors of the Egyptian massacre would have been better applied in feeding the English poor. For the sake of one of those humbugs (who profess to be followers of him who preached "peace on earth and goodwill towards men") thirty-six millions of Christians were almost ready to spring at each other's throats.

Do not let us believe in all this childish talk about difficulty. Let us have more practice and less preaching; and, above all, don't talk of god-fearing people, for they are generally humbugs, and the god they fear is real progress, as represented by the right of the people to their share of the soil, by their relief from the burthen of supporting bloated apostles of the church, worthless scions of noble and royal houses, army and navy pensioners, many of whom have fought and fled on the plains of Aldershot and on the waters of the Solent.

H. L. COSE.

#### BIBLE MIRACLES.

LET me begin with the miracle of creation, Gen i., 1-31; ii., 1-25. The principal operator in this little entertainment is an almighty, infinite, all-good and unchangeable being, who, finding his residence in everywhere a little monotonous, determined to make a world—only one, you understand. By making up his mind to do this he performed the first miracle—he changed the unchangeable. Then he found a corner where the infinite was not (miracle No. 2) and set to work. Chapter i., 1: he made the heaven and earth—and the earth was not much to boast of when he had made it—it was without form and void. You could not see it, for darkness was upon the face of the deep (verse 2.) As the spirit of god was on the face of the waters, there is no wonder it was dark. Miracle No. 3 turns up in verse 3. "Let there be light," says Jehovah, and light appears. And he examined the light; found the quality excellent, and performed another miracle. He sorted the light and darkness, and labelled one "Day," the other "Night." Then he went back to everywhere, and the first day was done.

He was up early in the morning, and soon hard at work with his miracles. And he began with a tremendous one! He made a firmament—the sky—and put a lake on top of it! He called the firmament heaven. Now he edged in another miracle, because he had morning and evening, and light and dark without any sun and moon.

The third day saw him at business as active and hearty as ever; and his first miracle was to separate the land and sea and name them. Then he turned gardener, planted herbs, trees, etc, told them to yield seed after their kind, and then held his hand. But before morning dawned a thought struck him—he had got the earth revolving serenely round—nothing! He had forgotten the sun. But when he made the sun he also made something—and that was a mistake. He stuck the sun in the firmament for the sole and express purpose of giving light to the earth, quite forgetting what an inconsiderable speck this ball is in the solar system. But he thought it was all right and ceased, under the impression that he had done it all admirably.

The next morning he started off with confidence. He

worked his miracles in fine style, creating the birds of the air and the fish of the sea on that day.

But the sixth day was the chief work! In the morning he made all the beasts of the field, and a little later he said, either to himself or to somebody who was not in existence, or who was as old as himself: "Let us make man in our own image." And he did, too! Now the first *men* that lived on earth were dirty, ignorant, bestial savages. Perhaps the likeness was good. But he had a little trouble over this miracle; because, although chapter i., 27 says: "male and female he created them," yet chapter ii. lets us into the secret of the great fuss that took place. God made a man and then showed his utter ignorance of humanity by omitting *woman*—just as if man could get along alone! When god saw the mistake he had made, he first tried to satisfy Adam by giving him a choice of a wife from amongst the beasts. This, however, did not prove successful and a difficulty arose. Now, you see, when he started his work of creation he had on hand a big stock of material—viz., nothing. But this was all used up, and there was no more nothing anywhere! As a last resource, god put Adam to sleep and performed still another miracle. He took a rib, and made it into a woman, and proudly brought his handiwork to Adam, who was mightily pleased. And then god gave them command over the beasts, and the fowls, and the fishes, and went off home and kept the Sabbath in rare style. And the world was made! Would not Moses have made a splendid editor for a comic paper?

Finally, in conclusion and as one word more, let us remember that god did not use up all his nothing—he kept a little for the brain-pans of religious people.

VERITE SANS PEUR.

#### THE BOOTH FAMILY.

"NEED'S must when the Devil drives." In pursuance of my vocation, I recently attended at Exeter Hall the "thanksgiving meeting, held to praise god for the liberation from prison of Marechale Booth and her comrades in Switzerland." The day's proceedings opened in the usual clamorous style of the Salvationists—by the beating of drums, blowing of trumpets, banging of tambourines, shouting and singing, led by one of the younger male Booths. Each member of this family takes some leading part in these shows, and evidently intends that they and they alone shall "boss the concern."

On this occasion, Publican Booth, Mrs. Booth, Miss Booth, and Master Booth were all actively engaged; but the *pièce de resistance* was the appearance of the "Marechale." The easily worked-up frenzy of the thoughtless fanatics was first lashed into the proper religious fervor by the Publican and his emotional and tearful wife. The old soldier himself, with much profanity and blasphemy, read, altered, and commented upon the Acts of the Apostles to make them apply to his army and fit in with his notions. The meeting was plainly informed that god had made it apparent that the army were to be a people *separated and quite apart from other Christians*. The "Marechale" supported her father's revelation notion. Whilst in prison, "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" cheered her heart. She had a distinct revelation, and saw plainly how Christ was crucified; that it was public opinion which crucified him; and she compared herself and her comrades to Christ and his followers. It was revealed to her that she and her followers were to imitate Christ, and give of their substance, their thousands, hundreds, pounds and shillings, "to help in the formation and the making of a new people, *separate and apart from others*." The foundations having been laid, she said that "all rulers and governments in the world, banded together with hell to back them, could not suppress or annihilate the army."

The Publican looks very sharply after the cash, and does not mind interrupting the meeting at what he considers a favorable opportunity for asking the audience to fill up what he calls the "canaries"—or subscription papers. At the gathering under notice, those near the platform—not too much intoxicated with the surrounding excitement—might have seen the old soldier artfully prompting his daughter; and he especially requested her to say that the son of Garibaldi had invited her to visit Italy with the army.

Miss Charlesworth—who has considerable private property, and is to be married to one of the Booth family—has thoroughly estranged her father—a clergyman of the Church of England. This is very, very sad so far as the family relations are concerned. But what right has Mr. Charlesworth to complain, when the accursed creed of Christianity teaches those who forsake "brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life?"

Amidst all the profanity and buffoonery by which he pleases



his followers, Publican Booth exacts from them an obedience more implicit than that claimed for the Pope; and pretends to interpret the extent of the power of god, saying that god "cannot work effectively by any soldiers who are not fully obedient to their leaders." A true Salvation Army officer renders (he says) unquestioning obedience to his superiors. It is instinctive with him to obey—he would rather obey than argue. He would rather somebody else decided for him than decide for himself.

E. W. T.

### DR. BRIMSTONE'S SERMON.

THE Reverend Brimstone says: "Beloved,  
Be always meek and 'umble;  
A saint should never ax for moor,  
An' never larn to grumble."

We ain't to tork o' polleticks  
An' things as don't consarn us;  
And wot we wornts to know o' lawr.  
The madgistraitt will "larn" us.

We ain't to drink wi' Methodists—  
No, not a friendly soop;  
We ain't to tork o' genteel folks  
Unless to prase 'em oop.

We ain't to hear a blessed word  
Agin our betterers sed;  
We're got to lay the butter thick,  
Becorse they're rich—'igh bred.

The parson put it kindly like.  
He sed, says he, as 'ow  
We bean't so good as them there grubs  
We turns hup with the plow.

There's nowt more recheder 'an we,  
Or werthier 'an the rich;  
I prases 'em for bein' born,  
And 'eaven for makin' sich.

We got to keep our wicked tung  
From disrespectful speekin';  
We han't a got to heet two much,  
Nor yet go plesyer seekin'.

Nor kitch a rabbit or a aire,  
Nor call the bobby names;  
Nor stand about; but go to chersch,  
And play no idol games.

To luv parokeal horficers,  
The skwire and all that's 'iz;  
An' never go wi' hidle chaps  
As wornts the'r wajes riz.

So now conwarted I ha' bin  
From hignorance and wice.  
It's only hapines that's sin,  
And nerty things that's nice.

Whereas I called 'em hupstart jents,  
The wust o' lo-bred snobs.  
Wi' contrite 'art I hollers out,  
"My heye, wot bloomin' nob's!"

I sees the herrer o' my ways;  
So lads this wornin' take.  
The poor man's path, the parson says,  
Winds round the Burning Lake.

They've changed it since the days o' yor—  
Them gospel preechers; drat 'em.  
They used to preech it to the poor,  
An' now they preech it at 'em."

In Want full many a vice is born,  
And Virtue in a Dinner.  
A well-spread board makes many a Saint,  
And Hunger many a sinner.

GAFFER DITCHER.

### ADDITIONAL "FREETHINKER" AGENTS.

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## PROFANE JOKES.

If poor old Noah was now in the ark with his collection, what book of the International Freethought Series would he represent?—"Mind in' Animals."

CANNON FARRAR is one of the authors of the "Life of Christ." Our irreverent young man says the holy ghost is the other.

AFTER DEATH.—A Border farmer, who belonged to a Dissenting congregation, being at the point of death, was visited by a minister, who in solemn tones descanted upon the vanity of human life. "All life," he said, "even the most successful, ends in death." "Ah, my friend," he added, "what follows death?" The dying man, remembering something about the world whence he was going, calmly replied: "Likely a row about the siller!"

THE *Somerset and Wilts Journal*—a paper published for the water-drinking Johnnies of Frome—tells its readers that the first man made was a teetotaler. This is doubtless the fact that accounts for the world having gone wrong. If Adam had been a good whisky-drinking chappie, he would have known too much about snakes to have been fooled as he and his old woman were.

CLERGYMEN say that it does not follow that Noah brewed beer because the kangaroo went into the ark with hops. We have always considered that Noah was a sensible man, and is it likely when he had the hops on board that he neglected his opportunity?

SCENE—Church baptism. Woman with malechild.—*Minister*: "What name?" *Woman*: "Peter." *Minister*: "Peter! Oh, don't have that name. Peter denied his master. Suppose we name him Joseph." *Woman*: "Joseph! Oh no, that would be worse. Joseph denied his mistress."

SCHOOL TEACHER: "What do you know of the Patriarch Abraham?" *Scholar*: "He was the father of Lot and had ten wives; one was called Hish-male and t'other Haygur. He kept one at home, and the other he turned out into the desert, where she became a pillar of salt in the day time and a pillar of fire by night."

### THE RELIGIOUS VIEWS OF LORD BYRON.

"I WILL have nothing to do with your immortality. We are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another. If men are to live, why die at all? and if they die, why disturb the sweet sound sleep that 'knows no waking'?' . . . If a good Pagan will go to heaven and a bad Nazarene to hell, Argal, I argue like the grave-digger, why are not all men Christians, or why are any? . . . I am no Platonist; I am nothing at all. But I would sooner be a Paulician, Manichean, Spinozist, Gentile, Pyrrhonian, Zoroastrian, than one of the seventy-two villainous sects who are tearing each other to pieces for the love of the lord and hatred of each other. . . . Let us live well, if possible, and die without pain. The rest is with god, who assuredly, had he come or sent, would have made himself manifest to the nations and intelligible to all.

"One remark, and I have done. The basis of your religion is injustice. The son of god, the pure, the immaculate, the innocent, is sacrificed for the guilty. This proves his heroism, but no more does away with man's guilt than a schoolboy's volunteering to be flogged for another would exculpate the dunce from negligence. . . . I do not believe in any revealed religion, because no religion is revealed; and if it pleases the church to damn me for not allowing a nonentity, I throw myself on the mercy of the 'great first cause' (least understood), who must do what is most proper, though I conceive he never made anything to be tortured in another life, whatever it may be in this. . . . Let us make the most of life, and leave dreams to Emanuel Swedenborg."—"Memoir of Francis Hodgson, Provost of Eton," by his son, Rev. Jas. T. Hodgson, M.A. (2 vols., Macmillan; 1878).

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Edited by

G. W. Foote.

Interim Editor, EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.

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