

# 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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## FREETHOUGHT MARTYRS.

### No. 1.—THOMAS WOOLSTON.

BUT a few years ago and many Freethinkers believed the days of active persecution were over. They have been rudely undeceived. With the most prominent fighter for Freethought excluded for years from his rightful seat in Parliament on account of his atheism; with three Freethinkers thrown into gaol for freely publishing their views, one of the most talented enduring, for his opinions, the severest sentence given during the last fifty years—it is evident that a deal of fighting has to be done ere we obtain our proper status in society. Meantime it may animate us to know the persistent courage with which our leaders emulate the bravery of the Freethinkers of the past. We have a noble army of martyrs and may do well to review their work and celebrate their heroism from time to time.

Boldest among the Deists in the commencement of last century stands the name of Thomas Woolston. He was born in Northampton in 1669. His father was a merchant in that town. After a proper education at a grammar school, he went to Sidney College, Cambridge, where he obtained both the degrees in arts and that of bachelor of divinity, and was chosen fellow of his college. From this time, in accordance with the statutes of that college, he conformed himself to the study of divinity, and, entering into holy orders, soon became distinguished both for his learning and goodness. He was noted for his study of Origen and the patristic writers, and for following them in placing an allegorical interpretation upon scripture. Equally was he regarded for his sober and retired life and for his benevolence towards the poor.

His first appearance as an author was in 1705, when he had printed at Cambridge a work on the evidences in which he adopted the allegorical method of interpreting the old Jew-books. This work excited little remark, and he continued at Cambridge until 1720, when he published a Latin treatise challenging as a forgery the letter said to have been addressed by Pontius Pilate to Tiberius Caesar. About this time he also wrote an epistle to prove that the Quakers were nearest like the primitive Christians. Shortly after these evidences of heterodoxy he lost his fellowship at college.

In 1723 he gave evidence of his power of hurling ridicule at the hireling priests by his "Four Free Gifts to the Clergy," by which he earned the life-long enmity of the cloth, and, on account of his imaginative style of writing, the imputation of insanity.

We next find him entering into the controversy which Anthony Collins had raised in his "Grounds and Reasons," and published "The Moderator between an Infidel and an Apostate." He had proposed to Collins to make a collection of the ridiculous opinions that have the sanction of the Primitive Church, and through them to bring contempt both on the Fathers and the modern clergy. This proposal is the key to much that seems strange in his subsequent writings, in which he attacked the gospels under cover of the Fathers. In the "Moderator" he maintained, among other matters, that the miracles were incredible. They must be taken as figurative. Saint Augustine had said that if some of them were not figurative they were foolish. A prosecution for blasphemy and profaneness was the result.

To the honor of Mr. Whiston, a clerical sceptic, he used his influence with the Attorney-General to drop the charge.

Undeterred by this narrow escape, Woolston pursued his work, and in 1726, and the following years, published the "Six Discourses on the Miracles," upon which his fame rests. They were dedicated to six bishops. They had no publisher's name on them, but were "Printed for the Author. Sold by him near Moregate, and by the Booksellers of London and Westminster." Infidelity was for the first time put before the people in common language. The older Deists had used the language of scholars, but Woolston attacked the church with mother wit and held its doctrines up to ridicule. The success of these discourses, in which the miracles were exposed both to the fire of argument and of raillery, was prodigious. Voltaire says that 30,000 copies were sold. Torrents of abuse flowed from clerical pens. No less than sixty pamphlets were written in opposition. The title of one was "Tom of Bedlam's Letter to his Cousin Tom Woolston." Another was "For God or the Devil; or Just Chastisement no Persecution, being the Christian cry to the Legislature for Exemplary Punishment of Public and Pernicious Blasphemers, particularly that wretch Woolston." The cry for persecution was of course taken up, and a prosecution for blasphemy instituted by the Attorney-General, who declared the discourses to be "the most blasphemous book that was ever published in any age whatever."

At his trial at Guildhall before the Lord Chief Justice Raymond, in March, 1729, Woolston spoke several times himself; and, among other things, urged that "he thought it very hard to be tried by a set of men, who though otherwise very learned and worthy persons, were yet no more judges of the subjects on which he wrote than he himself was a judge of the most crabbed points of law." He was found guilty on all the counts. Lord Raymond declaring that the court would not suffer it to be debated whether writing against Christianity in general was a temporal offence. He said, however, "We interpose only where the very root of Christianity itself is struck at, as it plainly is, by this allegorical scheme—the New Testament and the whole relation of the life and miracles of Christ being denied."

Woolston's counsel contended the prosecution should have been under the statute 9 and 10 William III., cap. 35, but the Chief Justice ruled that blasphemy was punishable at common law in addition to the statutory penalties. Woolston was sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. At the expiry of his time, being almost friendless, and unable to pay his fine, he was detained in the King's Bench Prison. Solicitations for his release were made by Drs. Chandler and Samuel Clarke, and this might have been procured upon the understanding that he would not offend again by the promulgation of his views. This he nobly refused to promise. He esteemed the right of freely uttering his views even more than personal liberty. Accordingly he lay in the then deplorably unhealthy cells of the debtor's prison until the prison fever brought release in 1733.

In his dying moments he turned to his gaoler and said: "My time is come, this is a struggle which all men must go through, and which I bear not only patiently, but with willingness." He gave a last look at the walls of his cell, then closing his eyes and lips with his own hands, that he might die peacefully, he calmly folded his arms and expired.



This real martyr was buried in the churchyard of St. George, the Christian pseudo-martyr, at Southwark. There were but few mourners. It was the corpse of a Freethinker done to death by Christian persecution.

We propose in a subsequent issue to give some examples of Woolston's attacks on the Christian miracles.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### MR. ALDERMAN ISAACS AND THE FREETHINKER.

WE were surprised to receive the following letter:—

"Mr. Alderman Isaacs has received the cutting forwarded to him by the editor of the *Freethinker*, with a request that Mr. Alderman Isaacs would 'tell the public something about the persecution of Mr. Bradlaugh by a Jew—Baron de Worms.' and adding that, 'in retaliation, it is the intention of the *Freethinker* to bring the injustice before Herr Stöcker in one form or another.

"Mr. Alderman Isaacs is prompted to remind the editor of the *Freethinker* that, as the fact is, Baron de Worms, who spoke and voted against the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh to the House of Commons, is no more the representative of Jewish opinion than the two other Jewish members of the House of Commons—to wit, Mr. Arthur Cohen and Mr. Serjeant Simon—both of whom spoke and voted in favor of the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh. In this particular case each of the three gentlemen above named was a freethinker for himself.

"Mr. Alderman Isaacs cannot conceive that the editor of the *Freethinker*, or any other journal—even admitting that there were but one side of the medal instead of two sides—would persecute thousands of innocent persons for the act of an individual who is in no way responsible to them for, and who has in no way consulted them in respect of, his action in the matter in question."

Mr. Alderman Isaacs is laboring under a mistake in supposing the cutting and remarks in question were sent by the editor of the *Freethinker*. Probably they proceeded from some individual who signed himself a "Freethinker." It is little likely that we should have anything to do with Herr Stöcker, the Berlin court chaplain, who after persecuting Jews and Socialists in his own country, comes here to celebrate the praise of Luther and preach on Christian Socialism.

#### THOUGHTS ON "THE BITTER CRY OF OUTCAST LONDON."

So soon forgot? Our honest, fearless Hood—  
Our Hood whose noble heart was all a rivalry  
Of manhood's truest feelings—who in jovial mood  
Lightly lamented "the decline of chivalry."  
Yet sternly to the proud the rich and strong,  
Sadly to hearts of men as generous as he,  
And sweetly still, and with a wierdly melody,  
Poured forth his song.

Song of a Shirt! Think of it, poets, men.  
Thrills thro' ye not the true-note of nobility?  
Is it a charm to lull the slothful in his den  
Of cold expedience and slow-puls'd utility?  
Do parsons prate of "works" from pulpit tiers,  
And zealots shriek at home their wild insanity,  
Or send abroad the price of their humanity  
And close their ears? \*

Blessed the poor, the meek, the spiritless;  
Blessed the lowly, crush'd, neglected and reviled.  
Well may your reverend lordships condescend to bless  
Proud demi-gods of England, sleek and undefiled  
By sights which shock morality afar. Endure  
The burden of your wealth, for there be souls at stake,  
Your crown of jewell'd thorns for your master's sake—  
And he was poor.

Too long has priesthood curs'd instead of bless'd;  
Too long have pow'rs and princes outraged fearlessly  
Their holy trust—till now the cry of the oppress'd  
Comes but a wail of woe—unhopeful, tearlessly,  
From vile and hidden places unto us again.  
Not unto wealth and rank; not unto seas on high;  
To rise and scourge oppression, this great bitter cry  
Appeals to men.

J. R. NICOLSON.

\* "In certain parts of London the poverty of many who strive to live honestly is simply appalling. . . One woman, who has a sick husband and child, was found employed at shirt finishing at three-pence a dozen, and by the utmost effort can only make sixpence a day, out of which she has to find her own thread."

#### IS GOD LOVE?

THE writer of this article confesses his utter inability to to conceive what could possibly have generated the idea that "god is love." This inability will be shared no doubt by all those whose minds have been divested of the religious prejudices of their early childhood. Where, in all earnestness, are we to look for any manifestation of this love? In nature—with its earthquakes, its floods, its pestilences, and its famines?

A ship, with its freight of human souls, is sailing calmly on the ocean. It is nearing its destination, and those on board are looking forward with joyful expectancy to their meeting with friends and relations. Just as their joy is about to be consummated, the liquid blue of the sky gives place to clouds of murky blackness; the rain descends in torrents, the thunder booms and crashes, and the vivid lightning flashes. Suddenly a cry, which under such circumstances is calculated to strike terror to the boldest heart, is raised! That last forked flash, more vivid than any that has gone before, has fired the ship! Every effort is made to subdue the flames, but in vain. Higher and higher they leap until the ship is enveloped from stem to stern. What a glorious conflagration. That conflagration would have been less glorious if it had not been for the human beings on board. The lurid glare which lights up the scene for miles around would have been less lurid but for those human beings. Truly, the "smoke of their torment" ascendeth up to heaven.

What man, however stony his heart, however callous his nature, but who would willingly have rescued them from this awful fate if perchance he had the ability so to do? And are we to suppose that a god of love, of infinite mercy, would be less loving, less merciful than the most hard-hearted of his own creatures? Theists say that god directs and controls the forces of nature. Did he lose all control over this particular flash, or did he purposely direct it toward the ship in order that the result might be as here described? It is well known that such cases as the above have not been at all uncommon in the "stirring tale of the sea."

Is there a god of love? Let the millions who have suffered the protracted and horrible agonies of starvation in consequence of famine, answer the question. What terrible scenes were to have been witnessed in India at the time of the famine! Contemplate the suffering of the little starving children, with their thin, wan, hunger-pinched faces, stretching out their wasted, skeleton hands, vainly imploring for food! Think of the starving mothers on their bended knees praying to their "loving father" in heaven to send them a little food to ease their own and their little ones' agonies! And this "loving father," this "god of love—if he exists—looks on calmly, benignantly the while—blind to their sufferings, deaf to their appeals!

The desolation and misery caused by earthquakes, pestilences, coal-mine explosions and the like, is incalculable. And yet theists are persistent in the assertion that "god is love." S.

#### THE SWORD AND CRUCIFIX.

FROM J. A. SYMONDS "SKETCHES AND STUDIES IN ITALY."

At Crema I was shown by Signor Felcioni a crucifix. He pointed out to me a little steel knob fixed into the back between the arms. This was a spring. He pressed it, and the upper and lower parts of the cross came asunder; and holding the top like a handle, I drew out, as from a scabbard, a sharp steel blade concealed in the thickness of the wood, behind the very body of the agonising Christ. What had been a crucifix became a deadly poniard in my grasp, and the rust upon it in the twilight looked like blood. . . . I wondered for what nefarious purposes the *impious weapon* was designed, whether the blade was inserted by some rascal monk, or whether it was used on secret service by the friars. On its surface the *infernal engine* carries a dark certainty of treason, sacrilege, and violence.

Whatever may be the truth about this cross, it has, at any rate the value of a symbol or a metaphor. The idea which it materialises, the historical events of which it is a sign, may well arrest attention. A sword concealed in the crucifix; what emblem brings more forcibly to mind than this, that two-edged glaive of persecution which Dominic



unsheathed to mow down the populations of Provence, and to make Spain destitute of men? Looking upon this crucifix we may seem to see pestilence-stricken multitudes of Moors and Jews dying on the coasts of Africa and Italy. The Spaniards enter Mexico; and this the cross they carry in their hands. They take possession of Peru; and while the gentle people of the Incas come to kiss the bleeding brows of Christ, they plunge this dagger in their sides. What, again, was the temporal power of the papacy but a sword embedded in a cross. . . A long procession of war-loving Pontiffs, levying armies, and paying captains with the pence of St. Peter, in order to keep by arms the lands they had acquired by fraud, defiles before our eyes. First goes the terrible Sixtus IV., who died of grief when news was brought him that the Italian princes had made peace. He it was who sanctioned the conspiracy to murder the Medici in church at the moment of the elevation of the host. The brigands hired to do this work refused at the last moment. The sacrilege appalled them. "Then," says the chronicler, "was found a priest, who, being used to churches, had no scruple."

After Sixtus came the blood-stained Borgia, and Leo X., who dismembered Italy for his brother and nephew. Of the antimony between the Vicariate of Christ, and an earthly kingdom, incarnated by these and other holy fathers, what symbol could be found more fitting than a dagger with a crucifix for case and covering.

#### EXTRACT FROM SCHOPENHAUER'S "PARERGA AND PARALIPOMENA."

THERE is not a church which more dreads the light than the English church, for the reason that no other has such great pecuniary interests at stake as this church, the revenue of which amounts to £5,000,000, about £40,000 more than that of all the rest of the Christian churches of both hemispheres put together. On the other hand, there is no nation it is so painful to see systematically rendered stupid through the most abject of religious beliefs, as the English nation, intelligent above all in other respects. The root of the evil is that in England there is no ministerial department for public instruction, and this branch has hitherto been quite in the hands of the priests, who have taken good care that two thirds of the nation should remain in utter ignorance, not even knowing how to read and write, and have often, with ridiculous audacity, been bold enough to raise a bark even against the natural sciences.

It is, therefore, the duty of their fellow men to smuggle light, understanding, and science into England by all conceivable channels, and so at last put down the trade of these most well-fatted of all priests. Whenever Englishmen on the Continent make a show of their sabbath keeping superstition and suchlike stupid bigotry, one ought to meet them with undisguised sarcasm until they be shamed into common sense. For such things are a disgrace to Europe, and ought no longer to be tolerated.

#### THE LOGICIAN'S CREED.

I BELIEVE in Mill, the expounder of logic, leader of modern thought, and in the system of logic, his only logical treatise, our guide, which was conceived by his lofty intellect, published by Longmans, suffered under adverse criticism, rebutted it, and came out triumphant. In the last edition he rose above all objectors, transcended all other logicians, and sitteth as the recognised authority; and he shall remain to judge both the logical and the illogical. I believe in the infallibility of Mill in every matter of logic, the clearness of his style, the cogency of his arguments, the sufficiency of his refutations, and his fame everlasting. Amen.

THE other day a couple of stock brokers had just left the Exchange in Wall Street, and were discussing the state of finances in railroads and telegraphy in an irreverent fashion, when they were accosted by a parson who happened (?) to overhear them. He tapped one of them on the shoulder and said: "My friend, where will you spend eternity? Remember there is a *broad road* and a *narrow road* which leadeth to destruction." "What's he saying, Jack?" asked the other friend who had not heard the parson's remark. "Oh!" replied Jack, "he says there's a broad road and a narrow road"—"No matter a d—," said the friend, without waiting to hear the conclusion of the sentence. "They'll soon get consolidated."

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THE SOUL.—Reasoning from the common course of nature, and without supposing any new interposition of the supreme cause, which ought always to be excluded from philosophy; what is incorruptible must also be ingenerable. The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth; and if the former existence noways concerned us, neither will the latter.—*David Hume*, "Unpublished Essay," p. 400, vol. ii.; 1875.

JESUS AND OSIRIS.—The life of Jesus, as that of a god-man who came on earth for the good of mankind, was put to death by the power of the evil one, and rose again to be an everlasting king and judge, is an exact reproduction of the immemorial myth of Osiris. And this myth, not only in its moral Osirian form, but in many other shapes, was universally prevalent throughout the birth countries of Christianity at the time of the formation of the narratives of the life of Jesus.—*J. Stuart Glennie*, "Pilgrim Memories," p. 40.

NOXIOUS INFLUENCE OF AUTHORITY.—There is ever a tendency of a most hurtful kind to allow opinions to crystallise into creeds. In matters of philosophy and science authority has ever been the great opponent of truth. Truth itself is indeed sacred, but where is the absolute criterion of truth?—*Professor Jevons*.

CONSCIENCE has taken millenniums to develop, and it has developed into obedience to a need, not a creed—sprung out of the fundamental demands of progressive existence rather than from the comparatively recent demands of theological aspirations. The hope of heaven may be doomed to extinction, but not the will to live upon earth; and until the mass of mankind is in a mood for suicide, there will continue to be a right and a wrong road for men to walk in.—*L. S. Bevington*, on "Modern Atheism."

THE RELIGION OF SAVAGE RACES.—It must, however, be admitted that religion, as understood by the lower savage races, differs essentially from ours; nay, it is not only different, but even opposite. Thus their deities are evil, not good; they may be forced into compliance with the wishes of man; they require bloody, and rejoice in human, sacrifices; they are mortal, not immortal; a part of, not the author of, nature; they are to be approached by dances rather than prayers; and often approve what we call vice rather than what we esteem as virtue.—*Lubbock's* "Origin of Civilisation."

THE following correspondence speaks for itself:—

"Sir,—My attention has been called to a letter in your issue of October 11, in which my name is mentioned. The reasons for my refusal to debate with Mr. Mitchell are that, on the occasions when I did meet that gentleman on the platform, he uttered the coarsest insults not only to myself personally, but to my friends. The last time I met him he publicly accused me of using the title D.Sc. under false pretences. As a reference to the calendar of London University for 1881, list of graduates, p. 28, would have shown the falsity of this accusation, Mr. Mitchell must be either indifferent to the truth, or its perverter.

"I have challenged Dr. Wainwright to meet me on any night he chooses to name, at any place, on any one of his own subjects. He declines. I enclose you a copy of his letter.

"I have challenged Mr. Whitmore to a written debate. My objection to discussing verbally with him is the same as in the case of Mr. Mitchell. He declines.

"After this, I hope that your readers, and the anonymous 'One who was present,' will know on which side the cowardice is. I suspect the 'One who was present' was Mr. Mitchell himself. In that case, we have further proof that this gentleman is 'one' beside himself.—I am, etc., E. B. AVELING.

"13 Newman Street, W., October 15."

"4 The Terrace, Green Lanes, N., September 22, 1883.

"DEAR SIR,—I much regret that your letter of the 29th ult. should have remained so long unanswered, although, in consequence of absence from town—the annual migration—I have been unable to prevent this. I see no reason, however, to depart from the decision already expressed on the subject of public discussion. I must therefore decline the proposal.—Very truly yours, S. WAINWRIGHT."

It is narrated of a certain preacher that in his youth he was slightly rapid and liked the card table. On one occasion the boys were playing and slacked up while they talked about their future labors. Each named a favorite calling, but our rapid friend became tired, and finally broke into the conversation by saying: "D— it, stop your talking and trump that ace. I'm going to be a preacher."



## ACID DROPS.

A CORRESPONDENT wishes to maintain the truthfulness of the bible, especially the 25th verse of Psalm xxxvii.: "I have been young and am now old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." They prefer stealing it.

THIS is what Martin Luther wrote about the story of Jonah: "It is more incredible than any poet's fable. If it were not in the bible I should laugh at it. He was three days in the belly of a great fish! Why the fish would have digested him in three hours, and converted him into his own flesh and blood. The miracle of the Red Sea was nothing to this. The sequel, too, is so foolish. When he is released he begins to rave and expostulate and make himself miserable about a gourd. It is a great mystery."

APPROPOS of the Luther Commemoration, a writer in a clerical organ calls to mind the fact that not only was Luther a firm believer in the real presence, but that he called the deniers of that doctrine "a set of deviled, be-deviled, per-deviled, and super-deviled wretches."

A CATHOLIC clergyman, the Rev. W. Laughlan, who writes on Luther in the Roman Catholic organ, the *Month*, thus tries to emulate the abuse of Martin—"Go to, then, Doctor Martin Luther, blasphemer and hypocrite, thou lustful monk and sacreligious priest, without faith in god or hope in the redeemer, even in the convent; take thyself off, begone out of sight, fly away into space. Papist or Protestant, we will have none of thee, for with all our sins and weaknesses, yet are we men, and thou art of the earth, earthy, of the flesh, fleshy, of the Devil, devilish!"

Good news from America! At the fifteenth annual session of the Congregational Association held in New York recently, the Rev. J. Cunningham stated that while formerly New York state had 600 Congregational Churches, now it has only 260. We wish we could hear the like report from the other bodies.

THE Devonport captain of the Salvation Army, named Bushell, has disappeared under disgraceful circumstances. He was lately stationed at Launceston, and a girl of eighteen from Launceston recently visited Bushell and his wife, the latter becoming, apparently with cause, somewhat jealous. Last Tuesday the captain received a letter from this girl, making appointment to meet at the railway station, Plymouth. Bushell told his wife he had to go to Plymouth, but should be back in time to conduct the evening service. He failed to return, but on Thursday a letter was received from him from London, saying he had been summoned to London to take part in special services. Bushell's unhappy wife and the girl's mother are grieving together, the wife being less surprised, because her husband eloped once before, previous to joining the Army.

AT Flockstone, on Saturday, a man named Smith, a Salvation Army leader, was committed for trial, charged with receiving coats stolen from the vestry of the parish church. Smith has a private interpretation of Matthew v., 40.

IN sentencing the Rev. Thos. Morris Hughes for bigamy, the judge remarked that the prisoner was one of the blackest villains that he had ever had before him.

IN the Hammersmith case, Ellen Rosaline Thomas, the young wife of an accountant who charges the Rev. Wm. Hancock with having indecently assaulted her, deposed that she had been used to seeing clergymen put their arms round young ladies waists and necks, and thought nothing of it because it was a clergyman. The superstition that there is a peculiar sanctity about the cloth which makes such privileges sacred to them alone, will not long endure when Freethought spreads among our girls.

JUDGING by the cases continually brought under our notice, we should advise all sensible husbands to request the parsons of their district, who are in the habit of visiting their domestic circle, only to call when the husband is at home.

AMONG the special list of lectures given by the Manchester and district branch of the Christian Evidence Society, is one on "The Right Treatment of Sceptics." For further particulars apply to Judge North, or at Holloway Gaol, or to the Liberal Home Secretary.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* points out that no less than nine of our bishops are either too aged or otherwise incapacitated from performing their duties. They are the Bishops of London, Chester, Carlisle, Salisbury, Bignon, Ely, Peterborough, Saint Albans, and Winchester. Plenty of clergymen could be found to perform all their functions for the salary of one,

and the salaries of the remainder could be employed to better advantage in relieving the poverty of their dioceses.

THE latest religious sect is known by the name of the "Flying Roll." As it is said they emulate the Salvationists, a roll in the mud is probably intended. They have several meeting places, one being at Norwood, another at Nunhead, London.

ON Thursday last, the Rev. C. R. Holmes, M.A., of All Soul's, Halifax, committed suicide by cutting his throat after a fit of religious depression. Had this been a Freethinker, what comments there would have been on the pernicious results of unbelief.

THE Rev. Rowland Young has been continuing his lectures at Reading on "Modern Unbelief." He remarked that, "Scepticism could be traced to the Reformation. When once an authority, believed to be infallible, was repudiated, and the 'right and duty of private judgment' took its place, the sluices were opened up, and the land had been since gradually flooded with the waters of doubt and disbelief; for once admit the doctrine of private judgment, and varieties of opinion, to the extent of even atheism, were all but inevitable." None the less Protestants have been persistent in persecuting those who have followed out their principle of private judgment, from the time of the burning of Servetus to the imprisonment of Foote.

THE *Christian Herald* of November 21 takes the occasion of commenting on Sir Moses Montefiore, to say: "We believe that at no very distant period the Jews will be restored to the land of their fathers: when 'the lord shall comfort Zion, when he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.'" We believe that the Pope will marry Connie Gilchrist before the Jews emigrate to the land of their fathers. They know a thing or two more than that.

WE are, necessarily, and on principle, advocates for freedom of speech. But we are compelled to think that the opponents of Herr Stöcker were in the right when they demanded from him a guarantee for discussion when his lecture was over, and, failing in their demand, refused to allow him to speak. Herr Stöcker has been so wicked already, and has wrought so much evil that the strongest advocate of freedom of speech would hesitate to permit to him unchallenged speech.

IF anything had been wanting to show the character of the man, his remarks to a select audience in the St. Stephen's club would have supplied the deficiency. Herr Stöcker is a Christian first, a German next, and a human being last. Let us quote but one phrase of this wicked person. "One great point of difference between himself and the anti-Semitic party was that when a Jew was converted he no longer opposed him."

EVEN the *Daily News* comments on this: "Herr Stöcker, with a magnanimous charity of which he seems not a little proud, is prepared to tolerate everyone who does not differ from him in theological opinions. . . . If Herr Stöcker's house was pulled down over his head, and he himself was stripped and beaten, he might perhaps consider the fact of his professing the Christian religion as an inadequate offence for the outrage."

A PERSON from Camden Town sent us a letter enclosing one of Thomas Cooper's bills, and advised our going to Mr. Cooper's lecture, that we might judge him better. We wrote at once to the Rev. C. J. Whitmore asking if after Mr. T. Cooper's letter on Charles Darwin discussion would be allowed. Coward Whitmore, as usual, finked. There will be no opportunity for discussion.

WE know that Mr. T. Cooper is an aged man. But even his age does not warrant him in gross outrages on one whom scientific men delight to honor, under circumstances in which he knows his scurrility will be unchallenged and unpunished.

MR. COOPER's bill makes a delightful admission for the Atheist. It is headed "Christianity *versus* Men of Science." That's right. Christianity is diametrically opposed to science.

COWARD WHITMORE's letter is as illiterate as his lucubrations generally. Twelve lines without a single stop in them, and the grammar more than doubtful.

TEACHER (to class of girls): "Now what do we learn from this parable of the wise and foolish virgins?" Girls, decidedly: "That we should watch hourly, that we miss not our bridegroom when he comes."



## 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 at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., on Thursdays, November 22 and 29, December 6 and 13. Subject:—"Shakspeare's Falstaff Comedies."

## 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.—H. Chainey, A. T. Townsend, G. W. Payne, C. Gillies, H. J. Barnett, J. W. Moss, G. Clark, Thomas Bridger, W. J. Ford, M. Plackett, M. Coleman, Whyte Tighe.

A. ASHLEY, New York.—Very pleased to hear from you and receive your good wishes. Thanks for the cuttings.

W. J. FORD.—Your verses on Mr. Foote are excellent in sentiment, but hardly up to the standard of expression.

R. DAYTON.—You will do well to procure Dr. Aveling's "Essays on the Border Land between the Living and the Dead," published by the Sunday Lecture Society; or his "Biological Problems." Price 1s.

W. EDNEY, Penryn.—There was no address in your letter, or Mr. Forder would have written you. Marshall, 125 Fleet Street, is a wholesale agent who will supply the *Freethinker* and all Freethought literature.

MR. HARTMANN'S *Freethinkers* are this week sent to W. M. Hussey, 39 Fenchurch Street, Folkestone, who will supply all Freethought literature.

J. B. S.—The Hebrew vowel points represent not the original pronunciation, but the traditional pronunciation of a time when the language had ceased to be spoken.

R. B.—The Battersea Freethinkers meet at Henley Hall, Henley Street, York Road, and are deserving of all encouragement.

CORRESPONDENT.—"La Bible Amusante" can be procured from our office for 8s. 6d.

W. POWELL, 49 Mathias Road, Newington Green, Kingsland, offers a large number of back numbers, including the prosecuted numbers with six Christmas Numbers, to the highest bidder; the proceeds to go to the Testimonial Fund.

A FRENCH FREETHINKER.—Your suggestion is good, but comes a little late.

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.

## THE RELEASE OF MR. W. J. RAMSEY.

BEFORE this is in the hands of many of our readers, Mr. Ramsey will have regained the freedom of which he has been for nine months most unjustly deprived. He will come out injured in health but not crushed in spirit: and prepared to continue vigorous war against the bigots who have so cruelly persecuted him. A number of friends will start from the Hall of Science and various other quarters early on Saturday morning to congratulate him upon his release, which will be celebrated by a breakfast party of friends at the Hall of Science. The tickets are limited to fifty.

Mr. Ramsey leaves Holloway Gaol at 8.15 on Saturday morning. Friends who may be present to greet the martyr for Freethought are requested not to enter the gates of the prison. W. J. Ramsey will be driven directly from the prison to the Hall of Science, Old Street.

The banquet and presentation of testimonial will be deferred until Mr. Foote's release in three months' time, when a number of distinguished persons will be invited to take part in the proceedings.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

FREETHINKERS in Morley, desirous of forming a branch of the National Secular Society, are requested to meet at Mr. Taylor's, Temperance Place, Chapel Hill, Morley, on Sunday evening next, November 25, at 7 o'clock.

ON Sunday evening, at 7.30, the Rev. W. Sharman will lecture on "Man: Past, Present, and Future," for the North-West London Branch of the National Secular Society at Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, when the Committee hope all Freethinkers residing in the district will attend and support one who has done such grand work for the emancipation of his fellows. Next Tuesday evening (Nov. 27) at 8.30 Mr. Bradlaugh will deliver the last of his course of lectures on "Jesus and his Teachings," entitled, "Their Result as Shown in Christian History."

MONCURE D. CONWAY has been lecturing with much success in New South Wales.

*Truth*, a Pittsburgh Freethought journal is dated Era of Man, 283.

We are pleased to observe a laudatory notice of Mr. Waller's "Woodland and Shingle" in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*.

OUR Hindu contemporary, the *Thinker*, records the starting of a new Freethought society under the designation of the Madras Improvement Society. Its object is declared to be to eradicate superstition and propagate Freethought in various parts of Madras. It is to be hoped it will ally itself with the Hindu Freethought Union and the National Secular Society.

THE movement for the disestablishment of the church is making great progress in Wales. Large meetings have been held at Cardiff, Swansea, and Carnarvon.

THE *Middlebro' News* says: "Mr. G. W. Foote, editor of the *Freethinker* and *Progress*, will issue a new work on leaving Holloway Gaol. He has made known his intention to contest any seat sought by the Home Secretary at the next general election."

THE Rev. Stewart D. Headlam begs to announce that he has made arrangements for a concert, with recitations, on behalf of the funds of the Guild of St. Matthew, on Wednesday evening, November 21, at the Neumeier Hall, Hart Street, Bloomsbury, at 7.30. Tickets, 5s. (numbered and reserved), 2s. and 1s. Can be obtained by letter from the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, 22 Hyde Park Gate South, S.W.

THE Guild of St. Matthew is giving a series of free lectures on Thursday evenings at the Balls Pond Secular Hall. That on November 29 is by the Rev. C. W. Stubbs, M.A., on "Shelley, Poet and Prophet." As discussion is invited, we hope the Freethinkers of the locality will be present in goodly numbers at these meetings, and meet face to face our friends, who are at the same time our foes by reason of their holding to the cursed creed.

IN 1884 the magazine, *To-Day*, will commence a fresh series under new management. While there will be plenty of light and amusing matter, much space will be devoted to the discussion of social questions from the standpoint of the great and increasing number of Socialists in this country. Arrangements have been made for contributions from the leaders of the Social Democrats of the Continent and United States. Among others, H. M. Hyndman, J. L. Joynes, Wm. Morris, and Edward B. Aveling will write in the January number.

## THE RECENT DIOCESAN CONFERENCES.

THE bishops of no less than four dioceses: Lincoln, Gloucester, and Bristol, Manchester, and Chester, have recently given to us who are Freethinkers great help and encouragement. We learn from these dignitaries, and from some of their under officers, one long wail of dismay at the tremendous spread of Freethought. There was an almost unanimous agreement among these four assemblies of



priestly survivals and Christian parrots that Secularism is winning and that Christ's church is losing.

We Secularists know that victory is on our side, and our enemies at length admit this, though with tears. Must it then not be true that the kingdom of man is at hand, since all parties: Catholics, Protestants, Rationalists alike, say so. What everyone says—after full investigation and repeated experiment—should be true.

Let all Englishmen and Englishwomen who are "ashamed of the gospel of Christ" unite their efforts, and then no bishop—should any be left—will dare to be so deceiving, or so ignorant, as the Bishop of Lincoln to-day proclaims himself to be. For this learned and honest priest after the order of Melchisedic, recently told his clergy that at the present time the very same sins were prevalent which were prevalent before the Flood. There has been, if geology is true, no universal deluge like that which Genesis tells of, and the bishop firmly and childishly believes in. But a flood is coming which will swamp the church—Christ's ark—with all its captains, mates, and cabin-boys. The flood of Freethought is a real flood, it is mightier than the mythical flood from which only eight persons of this world's inhabitants escaped; for the flood of Freethought will one day drown the whole Christian world and not one of the Christians will survive.

The Bishop of Lincoln proceeded to comfort his flock by reminding them that earthquakes—allowed, it seems, by his fetish Jehovah—the spread of Freethought, and the democratic movements of the time all showed that Christ was coming again soon. Christ, we reply to the bishop, had better make haste, or else stay at home always in heaven; for unless he comes very soon to this earth—man's home, he will have the disappointment of finding the doors closed upon him for ever by the freethinking householder—  
Humanity. J. E. DARE.

### I PRAYED WHEN ALL WAS SILENT.

I PRAYED when all was silent,  
In the deep and dreamy wood;  
When nought that was human heard me,  
I searched for a great all-good.  
I had sought with a deep, wild longing,  
In church, and book, and creed,  
And I found the simple thronging  
To the shrines where fraud sat wronging;  
And reason wept in the throng for the wrong  
Ill done in the game of greed.

I searched in the time-glazed pages  
Of the story of my race,  
And I saw but the golden wages  
That gilded a brazen face.  
I watched for the sweet in-bringing  
Of the proof that they said was nigh,  
And I heard but the dispute ringing,  
Undrowned in the saintly singing;  
And reason wept for the wrong of the song  
That was only a tuneful lie.

I looked to the worlds far gleaming  
In the depths of the deathless blue,  
Yet came no light on my dreaming,  
No greater than man I knew.  
I learnt of the rocks their story,  
Of the years in millions told,  
And I wept for the falsehood hoary  
Of the past and the after glory;  
And reason laughed at the jest of a rest  
Evermore in the streets of gold.

So I prayed when all was silent,  
In my temple in the wood;  
When nought that was human listened  
To my yearning heart's wild flood.  
And, oh! how my fond heart sickened  
For the answer that never came;  
Till the doubts that around me thickened  
Were gone, and my heart was quickened.  
And Reason stood for the great all-good  
I had known by a different name.

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

LITTLE Meg came into her Sunday-school class one morning, her eyes filled with tears, and, looking up into her teacher's face, said: "Our dog's dead, and I guess the angels were real scared when they saw him coming up the path, for he's awfully cross to strangers."

### LUTHER AND THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

THE following letter from our indefatigable friend, Mr. George William Payne, appeared in the *Manchester Examiner and Times*. No Christian has as yet thought it worth while to attempt a reply:—

"Sir,—There is a bitter irony in the circumstances which to-day compel thousands of Protestant ministers, and hundreds of thousands of Protestant laymen, to join in praises of Luther for his grand work of maintaining the right of private judgment in matters of religion, whilst at the same time, with at least the tacit approval of both ministers and laymen, two Freethinkers lie in Holloway Gaol, in solitary confinement for twenty-two hours out of every twenty-four, simply because they exercised the right for which Luther fought. Your paper reports the sermons preached yesterday by many of our most prominent local ministers, but I search in vain for one word of sympathy for the prisoners for blasphemy, or a single hint that the sentence under which they are now suffering is flagrantly inconsistent with the fundamental doctrine of the Protestant churches. I cannot, therefore, but look upon the glowing periods in which the work of Luther is celebrated as mere words, and nothing more. Doubtless the ministers who uttered the words, and the congregations who heard them, went home congratulating themselves upon the freedom which Protestants have won, and deluding themselves with the idea that they are firm and inveterate haters of any and every kind of mental tyranny. Such self-complacency is nothing unusual with Christians, though probably it is seldom exhibited on so large a scale as that which the Luther commemoration calls forth. But if Protestant Christians had the true spirit of liberty within them, they would never have allowed Messrs. Foote and Ramsey to continue so long in prison; they would have scouted the very idea that the cause of religion could be served by imprisoning its opponents, and they would have demanded that the prisoners should be released and the vile law of blasphemy abolished. They can, however, claim no thanks from Freethinkers in this respect. They have been perfectly content that the full term of the sentences should be served, and they appear to be sublimely unconscious of their brazen effrontery in posing as admirers of Luther and advocates of the right of private judgment.

"The bulk of the wealth of the country is in Christian hands; Christians have the command of the press, with very few exceptions, and they have an unchallenged right of speech in thousands upon thousands of pulpits; and yet, though their opponents are but few in number and poor in pocket, they can find no better mode of answering them than by putting them in prison. What a commentary upon the progress of liberty of thought during the four centuries since Luther's birth. The Bishop of Manchester 'fearlessly' challenges us to produce a better or safer guide than the bible; but anyone who ventured to accept the challenge would do so at the risk of being hauled before the magistrates for blasphemy; and the good bishop knows it. I should like his lordship to say whether the bible permits or enjoins believers to put heretics in gaol. If not, why does he not speak out 'fearlessly' against the injustice of keeping Messrs. Foote and Ramsey in prison? But if, on the other hand, the bible does award imprisonment to unbelievers, how does he reconcile this with the right of private judgment, and how can he expect unbelievers to think well of the book which authorises such tyranny and brutality?—Yours faithfully,  
"Manchester, November 12. GEORGE PAYNE."

### "LOCUSSES AND WILE HONEY."

*The Reputation of John the Baptist Saved by a Tennesseean.*

He was a country squire, an elder, a most excellent man, with all the pretentious ignorance of a Dogberry, or Fielding's squire. The lesson was in John. The boys had formed various theories about the "locusses and wile honey"; but the asking of questions was not encouraged; it gave trouble sometimes. The teacher was in the habit of revealing all that ought to be known, which was all he knew, plus a large amount which he didn't know. "Now, boys," said he, raising his specs, "I expect you all want to know what kind of locusses and wile honey John the Baptist et in the wilderness. The kimintators make out it was the seventeen-year locusses and bee-honey!" Here the squire lifted his specs higher, and assumed a severe judicial expression, as if he were about to expound the law, or construe the statutes. "The kimintators was but man with like passions as ourselves. The seventeen-year locusses, as you all well know who have sense enough to have seen 'em, isn't fitten to eat, and it's my o-pinion, as bein' against nachur, John never et em. The Jews was mighty particular, and they never et pork till the lord showed Peter what was good. If the seventeen-year locusses had been in that sheet I told you about they'd a flew away, wouldn't they. It's against reason



that John ever et such trash. He was goin' about his master's work, and had no time for foolin' with bee trees, and what's more, bees ain't found in the wilderness away from settlements. Now, I'm goin' to tell you boys what he et in my o-pinion. It was honey locusses; you've all et 'em, and I've et 'em, when I was a boy—the common honey locusses and nothin' else." There was a general assent: all the boys had eaten "honey locusses," or fruit of the three-thorned acacia, and the explanation saved the reputation of John the Baptist in the matter of taste.

REVIEWS.

*There is a God.* A Reply to Mr. Bradlaugh's "Plea for Atheism." By FRANCIS WINTERTON. London: Thomas Richardson and Son, 1883.

Most Theists inherit their belief. The existence of god is considered unquestionable because never questioned. The most difficult of questions is solved without inquiry, and the utterance of a word is held to settle the problem of existence. To such persons we can heartily commend this so-called reply to Mr. Bradlaugh. Minds hitherto strangers to doubt cannot fail to perceive its weakness, and the mere opening of the question suggests so many difficulties in the Theist's position, that one is less likely to make the bold affirmation of its title after reading it than before. Many Freethinkers have been made simply by reading Christian books on the evidences, and the numerous demonstrations, of the being of a god, have been powerful auxiliaries to Agnosticism. But Mr. Winterton does not demonstrate, he simply affirms, and his affirmation amounts to this. We quote his words in conclusion:

"Of all the beings which we see or know directly, not one possesses in itself the principle of its existence. There must therefore exist another being, which is at once its own and their principle of existence. That principle we call god."

How different is this principle from the omnipotent omnibenevolent personal creator of the ordinary Theist.

*Science and Religion.* A Review of Judge Higinbotham's Lecture. By T. CHEYNE FARNIE, M.A. Dunedin: J. Braithwaite, 1883.

FRETHOUGHT is evidently extending in New Zealand. In Dunedin, in order to meet the scepticism of the age, Judge Higinbotham, who appears to be a believer of an advanced type, was induced to lecture before the Dunedin Freethought Association on "The Relations of our Modern Science with the Christian Churches." The admissions of this lecture are ably commented on by Mr. Farnie, who points out that the concessions of theology cut away the foundations of that so-called science. The judge gives up the Pauline doctrine of the Fall and Mr. Farnie observes:

"This is the cardinal doctrine of orthodox Christianity. If you take away the doctrine of the fall of man, if you show that man has not fallen from perfection to imperfection, but has been progressing from a lower to a higher life, you take away the connecting link between the Old and the New Testaments, you cut away the ground from Christianity and leave no necessity for its existence. If man did not fall then there is no need for the system of the Christian churches—that system topples over as soon as this is shown."

We congratulate the Dunedin Freethinkers upon having so able a champion as Mr. Farnie.

*A Biography of Jesus Christ.* Written for young Freethinkers. By CONSTANCE HOWELL. London: Freethought Publishing Company, 63 Fleet Street.

LIVES of Jesus are as plentiful as blackberries. The fame of a theologian, now-a-days, is not established until he has put forth a bran new Jesus of his own. The market is well stocked with every variety of the article to suit all tastes, from that of the most orthodox, with his very god of very god, incarnate in the flesh, to the views of the complete rationalist. The works of Keim, Schenkel, Strauss, Hanson and Meredith are almost too learned for the ordinary reader. Those of Clodd, Scott and Renan are scarcely suitable for children. The six volumes of the "Bible for Young People," by Drs. Oort and Hooykaas, are rather voluminous for juvenile readers, and the "Life of Jesus, Written for Young Disciples," by John Page Hopps, is disfigured by an excess of gush and capital G's. In presenting the story of Jesus in simple shape for children, eliminating as far as possible the unhistorical and superstitious elements of the gospels, Miss Howell has performed a much needed work. Her account of Jesus is, on the whole, the common sense one of a well-meaning, good-hearted, but weak-minded religious reformer, whose extravagant claims must be entirely rejected, and though we deem not altogether sound her view that Jesus did not really expire on the cross, but died by degrees afterwards from exposure, want of food, distress of mind, and the bodily

effects of what he had gone through, her work is one which we can heartily commend for its clear statement of the main elements of the life of Jesus, and for its just criticism of his doctrines. We should like to see the little volume placed in the hands of all young Freethinkers. It would make an appropriate Christian present.

PROFANE JOKES.

"PAPA, who made god?" "Nobody, my son. God made himself." "How could he make himself, when he wasn't made himself yit?" "That's something we mustn't study into. Say your prayers and go to bed."

OUR friend Mr. Ramsey, on coming out of Holloway Gaol, has only followed out Christ's command—"To be born again"—after nine month's imprisonment.

A COUPLE of bipeds, male and female, residing at Oldham, went to the "Owd Church" to have a child christened. They had perfumed themselves with gin, instead of the more orthodox, but less odorous eau de Cologne, and when the master of the ceremonies desired the female to bring up her infant, she, on looking, found several empty and part empty bottles of perfume about her person, but never a baby; which appalling fact, when it at last became clear to her rather cloudy intellect, induced her to call out to her reeking spouse: "Aw towd thee we'd forgotten summat, Jack; go an' fetch that kid."

AT a prayer meeting, which was being addressed by an ignorant lay preacher, Exodus xxvi. was read. In the 14th verse it directs that one of the tabernacle coverings shall be of badger's skins. This the preacher read beggar's skins, and proceeded to expound that these were godly beggars whose skins were thus honored, and not like the swearing, drunken beggars that we see now-a-days.

PARSONS sometimes get answers they do not expect, even from children. One of them was questioning a Sunday-school class about the parable of the good Samaritan who fell among thieves on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho. Bringing the story to a point, he asked: "Now, why did the priest and Levite pass by on the other side?" A scholar held out his hand. "Well, my boy, why did the priest and Levite pass by on the other side?" "I know," said the lad—"because the man was already robbed."

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