

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.

Vol. III.—No. 51.]

DECEMBER 23, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

PROF. HUXLEY AND THE AGNOSTIC ANNUAL.

A PERSONAL squabble is often an excellent advertisement. The editor of the *Agnostic Annual* and Professor Huxley have, by this time, discovered something of the force of this truism, from two different standpoints. After reading and re-reading the correspondence that has passed between these two gentlemen, I cannot but think that Professor Huxley is in the wrong. The letter of Mr. Charles A. Watts, dated September 13, 1883, seems perfectly plain. Such words as "press," "publication," "annual," "text-book," are surely unmistakable. That they were not mistaken by others to whom the circular-letter of the editor was sent, is made clear by the facts that Professors Newman and Ernst Haeckel and Mr. James Beal replied and have had their replies published without a murmur on their part, and that Mr. Peter Taylor, after protesting against the use of his name as that of a contributor, was, on re-perusal of the original circular-letter, constrained to admit that the letter did imply the intention of publishing any reply.

And I will venture to say that the editor of the annual had more than one answer from other well-known thinkers, who, with a discretion that cannot be called the better part of valor, marked their communications with the word that Professor Huxley forgot—"Private."

The word "contributor," as applied to the President of the Royal Society is, I think, not well-chosen. But with that exception, the editor of the *Agnostic Annual* appears to have acted within his right, and I can only regret that our great master in science has not had the courage of the expression of his opinions. In all probability nobody now regrets more than Professor Huxley that he wrote the letter of November 18. Without inquiring too curiously into the reasons of his regret, the reason for that emotion on the part of most Freethinkers is only too clear. We are once again grieved to find that men whom we are proud to call our leaders are unwilling to have "the fierce light that beats upon" a printed publication brought to bear upon their utterances in respect to the most momentous questions of our age.

A man's unwillingness to have a private statement upon speculative belief made public, seems to some of us as incomprehensible as an objection to the publication of his belief, as to the number of somites in the lobster, or the termination of the intestine of *Terebratula*.

And now one word as to the use of the terms agnosticism and atheism in the annual. That use, if I understand what is printed in the Introduction, is very misleading. We might expect from a Christian such a misrepresentation of atheism as comes from the pen of the editor here, but surely not from a Freethinker. The "dogmatic atheism" to which Mr. Watts declares agnosticism to be as opposed as it is to theism, simply does not exist amongst "the foremost exponents of modern heresy." Not one of those "foremost exponents" defiantly declaims against the existence of a god.

Nobody should know better than Mr. Charles A. Watts that atheism and agnosticism are synonymous, and that his sentences upon the latter, with which I conclude this article, are true, word for word of the former. "Its creed is based exclusively on the known and the knowable. It contends that mankind should only believe that which reason and

experience demonstrate to be true, and which can be proved by incontestable evidence."

EDWARD B. AVELING.

[It is necessary to add that the above article contains the views of Dr. Aveling alone, and that the committee have declined to advertise the annual referred to in the columns of the *Freethinker*. They do not desire to interfere with the literary conduct of the paper, but it must be distinctly understood that they do not endorse in any way the above article.]

FREETHOUGHT MARTYRS.

No. II.—PETER ANNET.

THE subject of the present sketch was born at Liverpool, about 1692. He was educated for the ministry, but, having some originality of mind, his studies led to his rejection of Christianity. He became a school-master, and put forward a system of shorthand. In 1739 he published a pamphlet on "Freethinking, the Great Duty of Religion, by P. A., minister of religion"—being the substance of two lectures he had delivered. He followed this up by publishing "The Conception of Jesus, Considered as the Foundation of the Christian Religion," in which he boldly attacks the doctrine of the Incarnation as "a legend of the Romanists," and "The Resurrection of Jesus Considered," in answer to the "Trial of the Witnesses," by Bishop Sherlock, in which the discrepancies and difficulties of the gospel stories are ably dealt with. This pamphlet occasioned some stir, and went through several editions. The controversy it gave rise to induced Annet to write "The Resurrection Reconsidered" and "The Resurrection Defenders Stript of all Defence," wherein is shown that the predictions of it were unknown, that Christ's miracles were not believed, that his rising again was not expected, the story of the watch is incredible, and that the various defenders of the resurrection disagree as much in understanding the alleged appearances of Jesus as the evangelists in relating them. This was published in 1745. The ablest opponents of Annet were two laymen, Gilbert West and Lord Littleton. The last especially founded his arguments for the resurrection of Jesus and the truth of Christianity on the conversion and testimony of St. Paul. Annet wrote in answer an "Examination of the History and Character of St. Paul," in which he does not scruple to attack the sincerity of the apostle and the authenticity of his epistles. This he followed up by a pamphlet, "Supernaturals Examined," in which he argues at length that miracles are altogether incredible. "If," says he, "a man tells me he came over the Westminster Bridge to-day, it may be true, though a little objection may lie against it, because it is not quite finished (1747), which may occasion some further questions in order to be better satisfied of the truth of it; but if he tells me he took a running jump at low tide, and leapt it over just by the bridge, I know it to be impossible, therefore a lie, and inquire no more about it." Apply this simple criterion to the bible stories, and it is easy to see what becomes of them.

In 1760, however, he was drawn into more prominent attention. The death of George II., after reigning thirty-three years, the same length ascribed to David, occasioned

a comparison being made between these two monarchs by Dr. Samuel Chandler. This induced Annet to publish a "History of the Man after God's own Heart," an exposure of Jahveh's favorite, which was very popular and provoked an outcry for persecution. He also wrote "Saul and David: a tragedy," which I have only seen in its French translation.

On October 17, 1761, Annet published the first number of the *Free Enquirer*. This was the first Freethought journal in England. The clergy took the alarm. A prosecution was commenced. The *Free Enquirer* only lasted for nine numbers, during which Annet had conducted an examination of the Pentateuch, less learned but scarcely more pronounced than that of Bishop Colenso. For this he was brought before the King's Bench, and in November, 1762, sentenced to suffer one month's imprisonment in Newgate; to stand twice in the pillory, once at Charing Cross and once at the Exchange, with a paper affixed over his head with these words—"For Blasphemy"; and then to be confined to hard labor in Bridewell for one year, and to find security for his good behavior during the remainder of his life. It is said that a woman passing by Annet while in the pillory, noticed the inscription and said: "Gracious! pillored for blasphemy. Why, don't we blaspheme every day?"

Upon his liberation Annet set up a school in Lambeth, but as soon as his Freethought became known he lost all his scholars. He never ceased to promulgate his views, however, and an anecdote is recorded how upon being asked in a coffee-house his views on a future life, he replied by this apologue: "One of my friends travelling in Italy, entered a town, and, seeing the sign of an inn, asked if that was the Angel. "No," replied the person addressed, "do you not see it is the sign of a dragon." "Ah my friend," said the traveller, "as I have never seen either angel or dragon, how can I tell whether it is one or the other?" Peter Annet died in great poverty on January 18th, 1769.

J. M. WHEELER.

MR. RAMSEY AT THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

ON Wednesday, Dec. 12, Mr. W. J. Ramsey lectured in the above hall to a large audience on the subject of "In Prison for Blasphemy; or, Nine Months of Christian Charity."

Dr. AVELING, who took the chair, said: It is usual for a chairman at these meetings to say little or nothing. But I cannot resist the temptation that my position offers to say in public that which I have said to our friend in private. I want to tell him, and I do it the more readily as I know I am your mouthpiece in saying this, how grieved we were at his martyrdom, how proud we were of him for the way in which he bore it, and how glad we are to see him again a free man. If he had any doubt during the time of his imprisonment as to what were our feelings, the crowd that met him at the prison doors, and the faces on which he has looked since, must have dispelled that doubt. He is to speak to-night on Christian charity. We all know in what sense he is using the word "charity." In that sense, unfortunately, he can hardly cry with Tom Hood, "Alas for the rarity of Christian charity." It is proverbial that Christian charity begins abroad. So also with Christian persecution. It begins abroad, but, unlike the charity, it comes home afterwards. The persecution by Christians in the name of religion in other countries has always been only a pretence for political ends, and now, when they are persecuting us in the name of religion it is because they are greatly afraid of our influence as a growing power in the state. What makes us sad is, that yet another friend of ours is still suffering for some few weeks. The utterance of Mr. Foote on receiving his sentence, "My lord, it is worthy of your creed," will become historical. I think that the phrase of Mr. Ramsey on his release will become historical: "Before I despised Christianity—now I hate it." Let us cease simply despising it. Let us do something more. Let us hate it! Mr. Ramsey, we are proud of you. We hope you may be amongst us for years to come. Your presence will always be an inspiration to us, and when in the future you take the chair at our meetings in this hall, that you are here will be an incentive to lecturer and audience alike. Children yet unborn, we hope, may live to grasp as men and women your hand, and say, with tears not unmanly, not unwomanly, in their eyes, "You are the man who suffered for Freethought." (Loud cheers.)

Mr. RAMSEY, who was received with tremendous applause, said: Mr. Chairman and Friends,—I shall assume that all of you are aware of what took place after our first imprisonment up to the the time of the second trial. But there are a few things to which I shall draw your attention, and which

may have escaped your notice. The prosecutors were not prosecutors only, but were also the magistrates. They had us committed to their own Criminal Court to be tried. They sat on the bench while the trial was on. And our prosecutors also had the selection of the jury and entertained the judge. If I had all these opportunities and, like the City Corporation, a large amount of other people's money, I could get anybody convicted in the same fashion. You can understand why they objected to Mr. Foote's motion that the case be moved to a superior court. Our prosecutors would never have obtained the verdict they did if they had not the advantages I have mentioned. There was one weak point in the Thursday trial—they did not select the jury with sufficient care. But at the Monday trial that was rectified. A policeman in the court had stated to a Freethinker that "it was all right this time, this jury were certain to convict." No less than four names were sent to us in Newgate of men who had been subpoenaed for the jury and boasted in the hearing of our friends of their intention to convict. They only tried to put one of these on the jury, and him we objected to, but it made no difference. Now you may understand why the judge refused to allow us out on bail after the first trial. Because Mr. Foote made a long defence he got the longest term of imprisonment. I had not wasted so much time; I got a lighter sentence. Mr. Kemp occupied less time; that's why he only got three months. Mr. Cattell's counsel went on his knees; therefore he got off. Two of the jury were fast asleep while our trial was proceeding. This jury brought us in guilty without any hesitation. After the verdict of the jury and the sentence on Mr. Foote, there was a terrible scene in court, as you are aware. I stood looking at the judge, waiting for my turn. Somebody said, "Cheer up, Ramsey." I found it was the voice of Mr. Cluer. I saw two very big tears in his eyes. This made a lump come up in my throat. I am not ashamed to own it. So that when it came to my turn to be sentenced I could say nothing. I felt myself pushed down the steps from the dock into the presence of Mr. Foote, who, on hearing my sentence, said, "Won't we be revenged when we come out!" (Loud Cheers.) Presently we heard Mr. Kemp coming down the steps, who informed us what term he received. We then heard a tremendous roar. Friends, we heard it through the thick walls and through the gloomy, dark passages. After a time we were conducted to our various cells, and fell asleep. Mr. Ramsey then described the way the breakfast was served in the morning, and the journey in the "Black Maria" to Holloway Gaol, describing the narrow compartments, in one of which there was hardly room for himself. He also mentioned the various notices scratched by the prisoners on the panels of these small compartments in her Majesty's coach. After arriving at Holloway Gaol, continued Mr. Ramsey, we saw the Governor of Newgate and the Governor of Holloway Gaol. The latter observed that we had not got hard labor. Mr. Foote remarked, "I wish we had, for then we should get more sympathy than we get now." (Applause.) We asked if we could send in a petition asking for a mitigation of our sentences. The Governor promised he would give us writing materials. I had for my first dinner at Holloway Gaol—1 pint of pea-soup, 6oz. of potatoes, and 4oz. of bread. Then I was introduced to a bath. My clothes were put into a large net; and they brought me some prison clothes. I got into them the best way I could. They didn't fit, being three inches too small in the waist. When I asked if they would alter them to fit, the warder replied that I should shrink fast enough for them. When we were attired in prison clothes I could scarcely refrain from laughing. We looked like three scarecrows. Mr. Foote was trying to make a shirt collar meet, saying that he would get bronchitis if it refused to do so. Mr. Kemp had a suit as large as mine, and had to do a lot of tucking up. Then we went before the doctor. After examining us and making inquiries, he ordered us mattresses to cover the bare plank on which prisoners sleep for the first month. After this they took us to our cells. Then we had writing materials to send our petition or memorial to the Home Secretary, asking for a mitigation of our sentences, saying that no such prosecution as ours had taken place for twenty-five years, and then the man convicted was released before completing one-fourth of his sentence; and that such prosecutions were against the spirit of the age. I am sorry since that I ever troubled the Home Secretary. (Hear, hear.) So ended the first day in Holloway Gaol. Mr. Ramsey, continuing, spoke of the prison food, complaining of the potatoes, which were always very dark, corresponding with the suet-pudding that looked, he said, very much like a linseed-poultice. The lecturer then gave a full account of the treatment he received from the warders, etc., an account of the regulations and discipline, with a description of the prison, including his own cell. This was illustrated with diagrams. He then spoke of prison labor and its uselessness, thinking that prisoners should earn their living, and not be kept by those outside. He then related, in a humorous style, several discussions he had with the chaplain and his sermons. Mr. Ramsey stated how pleased he was on hearing that he would have to make several excursions to the law-courts for the other blasphemy trial, and also how pleased he was to have some decent food on those occasions provided by his

friends. He was hoping that that trial would last until Nov. 24. (Laughter.) Mr. Foote, after the disagreement of the jury in this trial, on hearing there was a possibility of a second trial, told Mr. Ramsey that he was preparing a speech to last over two days, for the sake of being out of the gaol and having some good food. But the prosecutors were shabby enough not to go on with the case. (Laughter.) Mr. Ramsey then enlivened his lecture with several anecdotes, given in his quaint, humorous fashion, causing roars of laughter. Want of space precludes us from giving more than a fourth of his lecture. It was interesting and amusing all through. He concluded:—And now friends I have done. I little thought when I had been reading the lives of Freethought martyrs that I should be one, however humble in the ranks. I promised before our trial that I would stand firm; I said I would never flinch. If you believe I have not disgraced the Freethought flag; if you are satisfied with my conduct, and the Freethought party is satisfied, I will try to repay a little of the debt of gratitude I owe it for the kindness it has shown to me and mine, by devoting every day of my life to the furtherance of the grand old cause. (Loud and continued applause.)

The CHAIRMAN, in proposing a vote of thanks for the lecture, said it was exceedingly interesting, and that Mr. Ramsey was full of his old fun and humor; but the lecturer was not just to himself when he spoke of the littleness of his sacrifice for the cause. He was thoroughly entitled to rank among the martyrs of Freethought. (Loud cheers.)

CHRIST THE PHILOSOPHER V. CHRIST THE GOD.

As a man, and viewed as any other philosopher, Christ was no doubt, in advance of his own age. But any feeling of respect or admiration we may entertain for Christ the man, and for much of his teaching is at once dissipated when he is held up to us as a god. The name and memory of Jesus Christ have been and are grossly insulted and disgraced by the puerile inventions surrounding them. Viewed as he was, fellow man and brother, we must regard him as one of the greatest religious reformers in the world's history. His mission was to abolish the cruel, barbarous and unmeaning religion of his own people, and inaugurate the religion of love; and though his work bore little fruit among his own countrymen, it has had the glorious result of hastening the religion of humanity. But how contemptible is that invention of priestcraft and superstition—the man-god! And what a specimen of a man-god! Can any sane man conceive of any god appearing on this world of ours, and confining his operations to a half-savage horde in a small corner of the globe? Can we conceive of any god uttering the dreary platitudes and performing the silly juggling feats with which Christ is credited in the four gospels? Can we conceive of a god so appearing, and doing nothing beyond conjuring tricks for the benefit of his millions of creatures? Telling them nothing, giving them nothing, helping them nothing, leaving them no better off than he found them! If it was a god who appeared in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago, why did he not tell us the secret of happiness? "Oh! but he did!" indignantly cry out our "pious" believers: "he told us it consisted in virtue!" Well, he need not have troubled to leave his heaven if he had only got that to tell us: for other philosophers had taught and preached that truth hundreds of years before the time of Christ.

If he was a god why did he not tell us something worth knowing? He knew everything: he could have told us the "why and wherefore" of everything? Why did he not? "Oh," say our pious ones; "it would not be good for us to know everything!" Well, that is a matter of opinion. A god surely might have told us something at any rate, and not left us quite as ignorant as he found us. Why did he not explain the mystery of the universe and of man? Why did he not tell us whether the planets are inhabited or not, and what the sun and moon are? Why did he not tell the ignorant people of those days that the earth is round and not flat; that we go round the sun instead of the sun going round us, as the Old Testament teaches? Why did he not correct the little mistake of Moses? Why did he not tell the Geographical Society of that day that there was a new world on the other side of the globe, of which they knew nothing? "Because it was not necessary for them to know it," say the pious ones. "Because he did not know," seems the more likely reason to wicked infidels. But of course infidels must not presume to give an opinion. It is only the orthodox who are able to explain so easily and so finally (in their

own minds) all our difficulties. Why didn't he tell us of the great truths of medical discovery, instead of leaving men to endeavor to find them out by the torture of poor dumb animals? "Oh! he came to cure our souls, not our bodies," say the pious ones. But we now know that the soul or mind cannot be in a really healthy state, unless the body is also. Why didn't this god, instead of pretending to cure all disease by miracle, instruct the physicians of that day in the science of medicine, that they might relieve the sick and suffering when he had left them? Why didn't he, instead of pretending to cast out imaginary devils, denounce the real "devils" of uncleanness, filth and dirt? Why did not the Christ-god give the peoples of that dark and ignorant age the grand discoveries of glorious science? Why did he not tell them of the printing-press, the steam-engine, the telegraph and the electric light? It would have been worth while his leaving his heaven if he had benefited mankind with any of these. "They were not necessary for saving the soul," suggest our pious friends. Well, where would the bible have been but for one of them—the printing-press? And surely the bible is the great soul-saving or soul-curing machine with all the old ladies who subscribe to have it sent out "below cost price" to Mumbo-Jumbo and his poor "benighted" people!

Why did not the man-god, by speaking out plainly and clearly, prevent the possibility of the crimes of which mankind have been guilty in the name of Christianity since his time? Why did he not tell us, with all the weight of his authority, that witchcraft, for instance, was an impossible crime, and thus have saved thousands of innocent persons—most of them women—from a horrible death; that human slavery was an infamous wrong, and thus have prevented the shameful spectacle—witnessed in a Christian country—of his own priests justifying and excusing it; that persecution for opinion was quite unjustifiable, and thus have prevented the hideous cruelties of the rack, the wheel and the stake? He knew (as god) that all these things would be done after his time; and yet he spoke no word to denounce them by anticipation!

What can we think of such a god? Surely, if such a god existed, he would be worthy our curse as a merciless fiend.

Why did not the man-god tell us how to get rid of poverty, disease, crime and misery? Why did he not, instead of telling us ridiculous lies about an imaginary heaven hereafter, show us how better to attain one here on earth? Why did he not, instead of inventing stupid stories about an imaginary hell, show us how to remove hell from this world of ours?

Of Christ the philosopher we have no reason to complain that he did not do all this. He did a great deal, because he was man and not god. He did real service to the cause of true religion; he acted up to his lights; he did his "level best," as a man, to leave the world a little better than he found it, and he could do no more. But, viewed as a god, he is about as sorry and contemptible an impostor as ever disgraced humanity. CARINGTON FORSTER.

GOD AS A BABE.

THE trinity had tried in vain
O'er sin the victory to gain.
At last they hit upon the plan
Of overcoming it as man.
With this intent god came to earth,
Went through the form of human birth:
God went through this in hope to win
His own creation, man, from sin.
He failed—he must have known he'd fail—
Foreseen mistakes with him prevail.
Few are the souls in Abram's breast—
The Devil's share is still the best.
The Devil chuckles, well he may,
He chuckled loudest on that day.
He said god carried out his plan
Of gaining—in the form of man—
A victory over sin, when he
Had fail'd as the whole trinity.
He chuckled loud, as well he might,
To see his foe arm'd for the fight.
To see, prepared with sin to battle,
God, as a baby, shake his rattle!

ACID DROPS.

THE Christian papers are full of reports of bazaars and other contrivances to pay off the debts incidental to churches, chapels and mission-halls. The immense majority of places of worship throughout the country are deeply in debt, though their frequenters believe that the holy ghost commands them to owe no man anything.

A LIVELY debate on the subject, "Is the sale of intoxicating liquors as beverages consistent with Christian principles?" recently took place at Exeter Hall, between Mr. C. Haig and the Rev. Dawson Burns. It was amusing to find that each party accused the other of playing into the hands of infidelity. Dr. Burns said, to show Jesus sanctioned intoxicating drinks was to help infidelity. Mr. Haig declared that infidels exulted over the spectacle of Christian people with their bibles in their hands saying it was a sin to take intoxicating drink. Those of our readers who wish to see the bible-texts on this subject should read No. 6 of the *Freethinker* Tracts.

ANOTHER "man after god's own heart" gone wrong. The curate officiating at the parish church, Egham, Surrey, the Rev. — Williams, made his appearance in the reading-desk at Egham church, on Sunday evening last, in a state of complete intoxication, and after several ineffectual efforts to read the prayers, was removed from the church by the churchwardens and sent home in a cab.

In consequence of non-Christian Socialists having been allowed to speak at the conferences on Christian Socialism, the president and council of the English Church Union have suddenly withdrawn permission to have the use of their rooms from the Brotherhood of St. Peter, under whose auspices the conferences were taking place.

THIS exhibition of intolerance of course gratifies the *Church Review*, which is at pains to inform its readers that the Church of England Working Men's Society is in no way tainted with Socialism. The churchmanship of the C. E. W. M. S., which consists of a few parsons and shopkeepers, is thoroughly Conservative.

M. EUGENE PELLATAN, senator and Protestant, has just published a book, directed against both Catholics and Materialists, with the startling title, "Dieu, est-il mort?" Is god dead? Well, according to Christians god died on a cross upwards of 1800 years ago. It is true, when the absurdity is put plainly before them, they say, "Oh, it wasn't the divinity of Jesus which died, but only his humanity!" And yet in the same breath they tell us that it was incompetent for any man to redeem the world from sin by dying.

THE Christmas number of the *Rock* contains a paper on "The Efficacy of Prayer," by J. H. Wright. The proof of prayer which the writer offers to the nineteenth century is the statement of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, that his prayer was heard and his wife Elizabeth should bear a son. Who now can disbelieve?

MR. WRIGHT of course girds at the poor scientists. He declares, "One miracle would upset all their philosophy." Very true, but the one miracle is not forthcoming in our own days. Like wine, miracles are only esteemed when old and musty, although Prof. Huxley has given his opinion that there is tenfold more evidence for the miracles alleged to take place at Lourdes than for those of Christianity.

THIS *Rock* writer is unaware of any good argument against the efficacy of prayer. What does he think of that derived from statistics? Thomas Chubb long ago pointed out that kings, although the most prayed for, were among the least moral of men, and Mr. Galton has shown that, although the long life of monarchs is always prayed for, they live fully six years under the average of human life. Perhaps Mr. Wright will say that is because the prayers for monarchs are "said sarcastic."

THE Duke of Wellington had the right notion of prayer. His chaplain being about to pray for rain, he advised him to wait till the east wind was over. Prayer is very efficacious when indulged in at the right season. When in Central Africa Dr. Livingstone once confounded the native rain-makers. They had long prayed for rain in vain, till at last he offered up his supplications. The clouds descended, and the Doctor's infallibility was established. The secret was, the learned traveller possessed a barometer and the natives did not.

THE *Christian Chronicle* says: "We have not found greater faith than this, no, not in our own dissenting Israel. A popular independent minister from Chicago, U.S.A., is at this moment occupied in fulfilling his six months' engagement in London. The winter is setting in with hard frosts, and the utter cry is likely to be intensified. We need every available

penny to warm and feed starving bodies of men, women, and children. Yet this Evangelist, Independent as he is, puts the all too scanty charitable purse of London to the enormous expense of building up and taking down for him *once a fortnight* a temporary church, as huge as it is ugly. Fifteen thousand pounds has had to be raised for this purpose, and we are told that another fifteen thousand pounds will be required. Thirty thousand pounds is almost as much more than three hundred pence as Mr. D. L. Moody's big box is greater than the alabaster one. But the alabaster box was at least dedicated to the Master, whereas the laborious and expensive travelling tabernacle is solely designed to propitiate church people. They will not let Mr. Moody preach in their churches, nor will they go to chapel to hear Mr. Moody. Hence this vast burnt-offering to anglican pride and prejudice." Is Dr. Parker jealous?

A LETTER FROM CAPE COLONY.

DEAR AVELING,—The enclosed is from a family connexion of my own in South Africa. It may be of interest to the readers of the *Freethinker* as showing how the good old cause is spreading even in such remote parts of the globe as the South African diamond fields.

I have written him to send me information from time to time as to progress there, especially with reference to the doings of those missionary humbugs. You may rely upon the information, as the writer is a gentleman of position and distinction in the colony.—Yours in the cause,

20 Brownlow Street, Dalston.

W. J. RAMSEY.

"MY DEAR WILL,—To tell you that I could express my surprise, contempt and indignation at the sentences passed upon Mr. Foote, Mr. Kemp and yourself, would be a lie, for I did not think that such rancorous bigotry could possibly have existed among your intelligent (?) classes in the ninth decade of the nineteenth century (Christian era). I was astounded and mentally 'floored.' The idea of blasphemy is preposterous. An atheist, from my point of view, cannot possibly blasphemous, for the very simple reason that he does not acknowledge and has no cognisance of the Jew-God. By Jove, pardon me, I meant god, with a very small 'g.'

"We read your trial with an intense and all-consuming interest, and as I before said, we were staggered at the result. Now, if you will believe me, I do not regret your imprisonment; because I am firmly of opinion that your incarceration has worked and done more good for our cause than probably five years of writing would have done. And, besides, the consequence of your appearance before North and Lord Chief Justice Coleridge has done a vast amount to agitate and awaken public interest in the movement, which would not so soon have taken place but for the actions that the courts of law have taken. In the immediate future our posterity will regard with surprise the motives and actions of the present hypocritical bigots; and it is as clear as the noonday sun that your names will go down to future ages as rays of light from the remnants of the dark times, when men were grilled, tortured and imprisoned.

"Religion here has done a lot of mischief, and is still powerful for evil. But, fortunately, there has lately been a good deal of discussion, which has ended in the house dividing against itself. The missionaries among the natives are having a fine time of it—of course at the expense of a gullible British public. But if it be any consolation to you I may inform you that I have been informing the natives of every tribe, that the Christian religion is a fraud and a lie—and I am making sceptics. The same applies to the English and the Dutch. I hope to convert several soon. I am called an atheist, and I reply that I am proud of it.

"Domestic news I have none, except that we are all in very good health. Accept our congratulations at your liberation, and with love to all, I remain yours very sincerely,

F. H. MÜHLENBECK.

"Barkly East, *via* Wodehouse, Cape Colony,
November 2nd, 1883."

HERESY.—Mamma: "Do you know who built the Ark, George?" George (promptly): "Noah, mamma." Mamma: "And what did he build it for?" George: "For little boys to play with, mamma."

BISHOP WURTZBURG used to delight in telling a joke at his own expense. He was walking in a meadow, when he met a little shepherd lad. "What are you doing, my son?" said the Bishop "Tending swine, your reverence." "How much pay do you get?" "One florin a week." "I am also a shepherd," continued the Bishop, "but I have a much better salary." "That may all be, your reverence; but then I suppose you have more pigs under your care," replied the boy.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

Our next number will contain a letter from Mr. Foote; a paper on "The meaning of Christmas to the Atheist," by Dr. Aveling; and a report of the proceedings in connexion with the Testimonial to Mr. Symes.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

February 27, Hall of Science. March 2, Claremont Hall; 5, Hackney; 9, Milton Hall; 16, Manchester; 23, Plymouth; 30, Glasgow. April 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 24, Hall of Science; 20, Bradford; 27, Oldham. May 4 and 11, Hall of Science; 19, Huddersfield; 26, Leicester. June, N. S. S. Conference. All Sundays for which Mr. Forder had authority to make arrangements are now filled up.—All applications for lectures during March, April and May, to be made to Mr. Forder. Stamped envelope to be enclosed for reply. Mr. Foote can only lecture in the provinces on Saturday and Sunday during these months.

DR. E. B. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture on all Sundays in January at Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town Road.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.O. 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.

MR. W. J. RAMSEY'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 23, Manchester. January 6, Leeds; 13, Walworth; 20, Bradford.—Applications to J. T. Ramsey, 18 Pearson Street, Kingsland Road, E.

RECEIVED.—W. Eagers, A. Fremont, J. E. Lush, G. Brookes, Holy Ghost, C. Evans, M. C., S. Narroway, A. Theist, J. de Fraine.

C. FORSTER.—Thanks. Very good as far as it goes. But anything of the sort would have to be more elaborate and more elaborated.

E. EVANS.—You can best work for Freethought by diffusing everywhere its literature, and by sending to us, when you can, paragraphs like that received from you.

F. C. BLACKBURN.—Received. Will use enclosure.

L. W. LONG.—Received. Go on in your brave work, even if it is lonely. You are not in truth alone.

A YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Not worth while noticing the paper.

R. W. HARDING.—We believe the Rev. Jas. Yeames, who had so suddenly to decamp from Nottingham, was a prominent member of the Good Templars, and recently presented with a testimonial.

A. W. FREER, 5 Albert Road, Tamworth, notifies that he has a complete set of *Progress* for the year, which he will dispose of to the highest bidder, the amount to go to the Foote and Ramsey Testimonial Fund.

G. S. LAMBE.—It was undoubtedly a mistake of Mr. Hall's in substituting Goliath for Goliath's brother, on p. 364, and we regret not having rectified it before.

A. NEWCOMBE.—It is by no means all of the French workmen who work even for part of the Sunday. They have more holidays otherwise than their English brethren. 2. Read "A Happy Sunday," by G. Temple, the *Free Sunday Advocate*, and the *Sunday Review*.

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.

We notice with pleasure that the *Nonconformist and Independent* will reduce its price for the ensuing year. Although we differ *in toto* from its Christianity we admire Mr. Miall's paper for its energetic prosecution of the disestablishment crusade, and its able editorship places it far above the rest of the religious press.

At Bradford the borough members, Messrs. Forster and Illingsworth addressed their constituents last week. Opportunity was given for question. The members were first asked

by a gentleman on the platform, whether, if a bill were brought into Parliament for the abolition of the laws which make blasphemy punishable by fine and imprisonment, they would give the bill their support? Mr. Forster, in reply, said: "I am entirely opposed to punishing men for religious opinions. I should like to see what the actual bill is before I could say distinctly whether I could vote for it or against it; but I am opposed to any punishment for religious opinions." Mr. Illingsworth said his views ran entirely in the same direction.

H. A. HOPKINS writes a protest against Freethinkers being asked to lend help to providing Christmas dinners for destitute children and the like, and allow the so-called "missionaries," and other such humbugs, to get up the show and pocket some of the proceeds. Let Secularists seek the destitute themselves, and help them in their need with money or other help as they can, but give no help to the self-seeking theological crew who get up these cheap advertisements for their own aggrandisement.

On Sunday evening, Mr. and Mrs. Henry, with their daughter, will give a select musical entertainment at the Claremont Hall, under the auspices of the Finsbury branch of the N. S. S.

THE Rev. Stewart D. Headlam will lecture for the South London branch of the N. S. S., on Sunday (7.30), at the Angel Tavern, Lambeth Walk. Subject—"The Stage." This branch is looking out for larger premises. Freethinkers in the neighborhood will greatly help by joining this flourishing society at once. Membership, 1s. per quarter.

On Sunday Mr. Joseph Symes will deliver his last lectures in London at Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town. In the morning (at 11.30) his subject will be "Secularism: Past, Present and Future." In the evening (7.30) he will lecture on "Christian Absurdities at Christmastide."

MR. SYMES will probably leave England on the last day of the year. He will lecture in Plymouth before leaving.

WHAT DO WE OWE TO GOD?—III.

THE HOLY GHOST AND OTHER GODS.

ONLY two things are definitely recorded respecting god the holy ghost. First, that on the occasion of the baptism of god the son the holy ghost put in an appearance at the last stage of the proceedings in the character of a dove, and fluttered his, hers, or its applause over the ceremony; and, secondly, that while it is possible to get exemption from punishment for any crime committed against god the father, or the son, or the whole tribe of deities that have filled and darkened the horizon, there is yet one offence that will never be forgiven, and that is the sin of "blasphemy against the holy ghost" (Matt. xii., 31).

Alas! poor ghost, I am afraid I have offended thee. And then how do I stand? Am I doomed beyond the hope of reclamation? What then is the use of my paying my respects to Jehovah or Jesus? If I worship them henceforth in all sincerity and love it will be of no avail. I am lost and irretrievably doomed; and all I can do in the way of worship and prayer or work, on their behalf, will count as so much lost time and labor.

Leaving, then, the three-fold god of Christendom, we humbly approach the ethereal god of pure theism, and question ourselves concerning our indebtedness to him.

And at the outset we are up to our necks in difficulties. This god is declared to be a person, and yet he has not one of the attributes of a person. He sees, but he has no eyes; he hears, but possesses no organ of hearing; he talks, though he has neither a mouth nor a tongue. He feels without hands, smells without a nose, walks without feet, and understands without a brain. Yet he has a mind; indeed, he is all mind; and it is on account of this one attribute that we are said to be indebted to him for our existence, for out of this gigantic mind he is supposed to have wrought the universe and "all that therein is."

Alfirm as we will the indisputable fact of the imperishable nature of matter and force, we are nevertheless assured that the god of pure theism endowed them with this quality, and that to suppose them to have existed from all eternity, and out of their inherent properties, by means of combination, to have produced all the changes that have occurred in the world, is a stretch of the imagination of which only a crass materialist could be guilty.

Granting, without further preliminaries, the assumption of the pure theist, that god is the author of the universe, and that it is guided and directed by his almighty power, and that all that occurs therein is under his immediate cognisance and control, we shall be able to judge how far we are indebted to this deity only when we have looked fairly at some of the most important facts of existence.

Look first at the misery and suffering in the world. For instance, here is a blind man. Though he has always had two eyes, he has been sightless from his birth. For no crime that he ever committed in the world, he has been rendered deficient in the organ of vision; his chances of earning a livelihood are diminished, and he walks through the world in darkness and solitude with only the sound of loving voices occasionally to comfort him. But he is only one among thousands.

Here is a child that is born deaf. Not hearing any sounds, the child grows up and is dumb also. Through the world this deaf and dumb creature wanders; he hears not the sweet, melodious strains of music that charm the ears of others; he knows not the eloquence of spoken words; he passes through life hopeless—a life rendered dreary and painful to himself and a misery to those around him. But he is one among thousands of equally-afflicted brethren.

Here are the deformed of all kinds—the legless, the armless, and many who are afflicted in other ways. Here are the diseased, those who suffer for the sins of their parents. What do these, and such as these, owe to the almighty governor of the universe?

Or what shall we say of the poor who live in the filthy alleys and courts of our great cities, who hear nothing but loathsome words, see nothing but dreadful deeds, from the time they rise in the morning until nightfall? Do the poor owe their ignorance, which is the primary cause of their poverty, to the moral governor of the world? Or is it because god's representatives have neglected to direct these people into the narrow path of duty and righteousness, and considered more closely their own selfish comfort and gain?

What of the naked savage who is the prey of wild beasts, or the civilised man who is obliged to mow down his weaker brother in the mighty struggle for existence? What do these owe to the god of pure theism? Answer, theologian, or be for ever silent in the praises of your god.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

THE ROCK OF AGES.

At the final meeting at Wandsworth, Mr. Moody, with an ignorant sneer at science, said: "Christianity has dispelled more darkness in five minutes for man than all the modern philosophers could do in 500 years." Then he asked, "What could the geologist tell us about the rock of ages?" Undoubtedly to the majority of his audience this question was apparently a good conundrum, which, like most good conundrums, was given up. But the humble student of geology, not being desirous of emulating the Christian example, begs to offer his opinion concerning the age and structure of that remarkable formation.

Probably the first particles that formed the basis of this structure, after being held for some time in suspension in the muddy and crude mind of primitive man, were deposited in the neolithic age. Very slowly it increased in size by the accretion of further superstitious crystals; but its proportions were not by any means extensive. During many centuries it remained almost stationary in size, until the leader of a wandering eastern tribe added considerably to its bulk by purloining matter from other similar rocks, not considered by Mr. Moody as rocks of ages, and so contrived to obtain for himself a bulky pedestal, from which he directed the actions of the people.

Finding the rock business a successful speculation, he imparted the tricks of the trade to a select few. They—the tricks, not the select few—were handed down from generation to generation, with much advantage to the tricksters, but considerable detriment to any who objected to the business.

The most wonderful additions to its bulk were brought about in comparatively recent times. Some eighteen and a half centuries ago, a Jewish enthusiast, a well-meaning man, gathered around him a small band of followers, who absurdly enough imagined him to have some peculiar affinity with the rock. Owing to the ignorance of the times, these

followers gained some influence; and amongst those coming under their influence was a rather clever debater named Paul, who, according to Dr. Andrew Wilson, was subject to epileptic fits. He, by his debating powers and skill as a letter writer, persuaded a large number of persons to place themselves beneath the shadow of the rock and add whatever they could to its now enlarging proportions.

250 years later a monarch named Constantine imagined this rock might be of considerable utility in hiding his terrible wickedness and aiding his tyrannical oppression. By the shedding of much human blood he firmly cemented the rock in Europe; and other monarchs and persons desirous of gaining power imitated him.

Then the rock began to attain gigantic proportions, reaching its greatest size in what are known as the dark ages. During those ages its mighty shadow obscured the light of truth and reason, hid the glory of art, and darkness was upon the face of the earth. A few noble and daring spirits bravely struggled to regain the light and break away a portion of this awful thing. But the blind and ignorant were content to grope on, those in power feared for their seats, and the lives of the daring few were crushed upon the rock. But their efforts were not in vain. A few bright rays had shone upon the face of man, and again the desire for light was awakened. The good fight was continued, fragments of the rock were detached and crumbled into nothingness. Even the band increased, until in our days the desire for light has been caught by the passionate singer—

"Light, light, and light! to break and melt in thunder
All clouds and chains that men in bondage bind."

The intellectual Titans of to-day, Spencer, Haeckel, and Huxley, are all aiding the destruction of the rock; some unfortunately fearing for their own welfare in the danger from falling fragments. But whether with fear or with courage, the charges of moral dynamite they have laid, assisted by the mighty lever of Darwin, are destined to overthrow the rock, and in place of its mighty shadow, the full, free light of truth will shine forth, and men will rejoice in a day of freedom, justice, and brotherhood.

HADA.

DIED FOR SCIENCE.

(A Freethought Recitation for Christmas-tide.)

'MIDST the many tales of glory
Borne along the wind and tide—
Lifeboat deeds and "fireman's story"—
Let me tell how Thuillier died.
To his surgery at Paris,
On the sultry, summer air,
Came the sick'ning sound from Egypt,
That "the cholera was there."

Men were stricken down by hundreds,
Europe watching, held her breath;
Watched aghast the fearful slaughter—
No man dared to fight with death.
Then he rose from out his study,
Said good bye to child and wife;
Clasped them to his heart that evening,
And went forth to yield his life.

Gave his life for lives of men,
Went to die as scientist;
Not a hope of heaven prompted
Him, the calm, brave atheist.
Never had he prayed to god,
Or worshipped 'neath a church's dome;
His deity, humanity,
And for heaven his peaceful home.

Next at Alexandria landed
In the horror of the fight;
Thro' the days of burning fever,
Thro' the sultry, summer night,
All the soul within him wondered
At the thought of what had been,
If, instead of god's religion,
They had taught men to be clean.

Then he wrote those wondrous letters
From within the plague-struck town;
Wrought his name its lurid glory
And his fame its deathless crown.
Worked and mused, and lived each day for
Dying and for future men;
Till strength failing, calm he whispered—
"So the end is coming, then!"

One last thing he had to finish,
Once again to cry aloud
Unto France and all the wide world
For this stricken, dying crowd.
So his last report was written,
And he firmly signed his name,
While the sickness was upon him,
And the death-mists in his brain.

Then he wandered to the window
Gazed upon the moonlit town;
On the rigid corpses lying
Just where they had fallen down.
"Moi!" he said, his head down-drooping,
"Mort pour la science!" Silent, then
With a stiffening of the muscles
Louis Thuillier died for men.

E. O. C. JENKINS.

MAN, GOD'S CREATOR.

"God created man in his own image." (Gen. i., 27.)

IN this text the bible, according to its usual custom, would deceive us. It was not god who created man in his own image, but man who made god after his likeness.

Untutored savages have constantly imagined the existence of deities, whom they have endowed with a superabundance of their own worst qualities. The particular monster worshipped by the Hebrews in the wilderness was no exception to this rule. He has been brought down to our own time, but so changed by the experiments of civilisation that his own fathers, were they now in existence, must fail to recognise him. God became human as man distanced the brute in the great race of life.

No wild African tribe, let loose upon a peaceful community, would be half so cruel, bloodthirsty, and dangerous as the horde of run-away thieves and murderers Moses led from Egypt. And like themselves was their god, the scape-goat, whose command was the excuse for their abominable crimes. Of this god they appeared to have known but little previously to the appearance of Moses as a medium between him and them. They had heard perhaps that Abraham had selected him from among the gods of his father Terah, as the especial patron of his family, but the selection had brought them no great advantage, for they had been in bondage in Egypt, and after their deliverance thence, they found their position so little changed for the better that they longed to return to their slavery. But Moses made them many promises in the name of the lord. He promised them that they should gratify their savage malice by wholesale slaughter, and their covetousness by seizing on their neighbor's property. He went up into the mountain of Sinai to get further instructions from god, and all the people were ordered to stand afar off. Before he went "he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here, until we come again unto you; and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; if any man have any matter to do, let him come unto them" (Exodus xxii., 14). "And Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (v. 11). The people seemed to have come to the conclusion that as Moses had gone to visit god and had not returned, both had gone off together, perhaps in search of some civilised nation on whom to bestow their patronages. Anyhow they thought themselves deserted, and set about finding or making substitutes for the absentees. They had been long accustomed to obey Moses, and remembered his last instructions. They went to Aaron, "and said unto him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Exodus xxxii., 1). It appears from the following verse that all the people, their wives, sons, and daughters wore gold earrings, which, as there were no jewellers' shops in the wilderness, must have been the same they had previously, by divine command, stolen from the Egyptians (see Exodus xi., 2, and xii., 35-36). Of these Aaron made a calf, and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Israel." Aaron was evidently of the same opinion as the rest, that Moses had departed. He was quite willing to rule the people in his brother's place, and he thought a calf could do as much good as Jehovah. He might have done a great deal less harm, but unfortunately Moses returned, and took prompt measures to re-instate himself in his former position. He called together the sons of Levi

and said, "Thus saith the lord god of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor" (xxxii., 27). "And there fell of the people that day 3,000 men" (v. 28). Yet Moses left his own brother Aaron unpunished, although he was the very man who had made the calf and proclaimed it to be the god who had delivered them. And as Moses did, so did Jehovah, for partly with jealousy of the calf, and partly with intoxication at so copious a draught of his favorite liquor, human blood, his divine intellect got so muddled that he "plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made" (v. 35).

E. J. BOWTELL.

(To be concluded.)

PROFANE JOKES.

HORNE TOOKE ON THE TRINITY.—Horne Tooke once complained to an orthodox friend of his about the self-contradictory doctrine of a trinity. "Not at all contradictory," said his friend, "it is only like a thing that I have just seen in the street—three men riding in one cart." "It would be more to the purpose," answered Tooke, "if you had seen one man riding in three carts."

THE first mention of cricket was when Paul stood up before the eleven and was bold (bowed).

THE good parson (to applicant for instruction in the night-school): "Have you been confirmed, my boy?" Boy (hesitating): "Please, sir, I don't know." Parson: "You understand me. Has the bishop laid his hands on you?" Boy: "Oh, no, sir, but his keepers have, sir, very often."

A CONCEITED young country parson, walking home from church with one of the ladies of his congregation, said, in allusion to his rustic audience, "I preached this morning to a congregation of asses." "I thought of that," observed the lady, "when you called them 'beloved brethren.'"

A MINISTER in Scotland was preaching his farewell sermon, and took for his text, Acts xx., 22; "I go bound in the spirit for Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me." "Ah!" exclaimed one of the elders, who was not much concerned at the ministerial change, loud enough—"Weel kens he that the stipend is fifty pun better whaur he's gaun than it is here."

THE FAITH CURE.—"Have you ever tried the faith-cure?" asked a long-haired, sallow-faced stranger, addressing a gentleman who sat behind him in a street-car. "I have," was the answer. "Do you believe in it?" "I do." "May I ask, then, of what you were cured?" "Certainly. I was cured of my faith!"

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Edited by

G. W. Foote.

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

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The God-Idea, by J. H.
Henry Irving and his Critics, by Edward B. Aveling.
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Printed and Published by Edward B. Aveling, D.Sc., for the Pro-
gressive Publishing Company, at 28 Stonecutter Street,
Barrington Street, London, E.C.