

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sentenced to Twelve Months' Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

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

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

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

THE HOLY GHOST'S ORCHARD.

"The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians v., 22-23).

THE holy ghost has now been in business as a fruit-grower for more than eighteen centuries. The three persons of the trinity have each in turn undertaken the cultivation of the earth, or a portion of it. The father confined his labors to a very small portion, but raised a plentiful crop of hatred, misery, wars, evil passions, and cruelty. The son, who succeeded him, uprooted as many as possible of the trees his father had planted, and disposed of them to the devil. He then retired from all active part in the business, which, however, is still carried on in his name, and left to the holy ghost the entire management. The first operation of the third person was to add very extensively to his land. In fact, he still displays greater anxiety to increase the number of his acres than to raise good fruit on those he already possesses; but of late he has not been able to transact much business in that way. His system of promising payment at a remote and uncertain date has gone much out of favor in the market.

The words at the head of this article are quoted from one of the earliest advertisements issued by him, and sent by an agent of his named Paul "unto the churches of Galatia" (Gal. i., 2). The crop was not then nearly ripe, and the demand for it was by no means great. Since then an enormous number of laborers have been employed in the orchard, but the result has not been by any means satisfactory. Many who formerly dealt with the holy ghost, finding the quality of his fruit to be very inferior, now purchase of other growers.

The first fruit on the catalogue is love. It has a pleasant, ruddy look and a sweet taste, but produces some remarkable effects when swallowed. First it causes an imaginary affection for an unknown being, whom the eater fashions in his own mind as a magnified portrait of himself. Then he begins to take delight in contemplating eternal torture as the future lot of all who do not resemble himself. It gives him immense satisfaction to think that those who differ from him in belief or practice will be well roasted in another world. If he has been well fed on love, and possesses the power, he will add poverty and imprisonment in this life. An under-gardener named John bestowed a great deal of attention on this particular fruit, and that there might be no mistake as to its quality he wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him" (1 John ii., 15).

The second kind of fruit grown by the holy ghost is joy. Those who feed on it rejoice in the lord, and sorrow in everything else. They are continually lamenting over the wickedness of the world, and shedding tears on account of their own depravity, and that of their fellow beings. Some, taking a large quantity with them, have fled into deserts, where they have devoured it in solitude, fearing their neighbors might rob them of some portion. Others have formed a common stock, and locked themselves up in large, strong, prison-like buildings for the same purpose. This fruit resembles in some respects an unripe plum, and from the long pallid faces, the nasal tones, and the sighs and groans

of those who eat freely of it, we may conclude that it frequently produces severe internal pains.

Peace is the third production of this orchard. It occasions men to enter into an alliance with god to make war on the human race. It contains a large quantity of acid juice which irritates the temper and makes the angry passions rise. When a large quantity of this fruit is imported into any country, it generally results in a military expedition. It produces an intoxication worse than that caused by spirituous liquors, and highly exciting to the combative propensities. It has been the cause of most of the cruel and bloodthirsty wars that have devastated the world. Those who eat it generally find that it leaves a great bitterness on the tongue.

Long-suffering comes next. It is of a very coarse nature, with a rough skin, and sour taste. It is, however, grown in immense quantities, as the holy ghost has a great many customers who purchase it wholesale. These are mostly wealthy people, who do not have it served up on their own tables, but give it away very freely to the poor. In times of scarcity and depression it is in great demand for this purpose. Tyrannical rulers have been known to maintain their authority entirely through their liberality in this respect. In spite of all this it appears probable that this fruit will in a little time be scarcely worth growing, as the poor are continually becoming more accustomed to reject it, preferring energy, a wholesome and agreeable root, possessing none of the narcotic properties which have been found to exist to an injurious extent in the other. This root they obtain at Mr. Humanity's garden, exactly opposite the holy ghost's.

Gentleness is consumed chiefly by the clerical profession, and those who publicly advocate Christianity. Popes take some of it before issuing bulls against heretics. Bishops generally eat a little when about to compose their pastorals, and in some places parish priests sup on it on Saturday nights prior to naming some of the members of their flocks from the altar the next morning. Preachers of all denominations feast on it as a preparation for the delivery of controversial lectures. I believe Publican Booth keeps some of it at his bar. It is occasionally supplied to judges at luncheon time, especially when blasphemy cases are being tried. I have an idea that those who, in the time of the apostles, spoke in unknown tongues had taken too freely of it, as one of its usual effects is to occasion people to exclaim, "Anathema, maranatha."

Goodness, although in the holy ghost's list, is not grown by him. Few of his customers care about it, and for those who do he obtains a small quantity from the garden of Humanity. It is generally observed in these cases that it loses much of its naturally excellent flavor through contact with the next article on the catalogue.

Faith is the special production of this orchard. It is perfectly useless, and unfit for food. It grows upon ignorance, a very high tree of remarkably hard wood, the branches of which are prejudices. Mr. Humanity's head gardener, Science, having lately obtained on some occasions admission to the orchard, has made several incisions in this tree with the sharp axe of knowledge. This has hindered the sap of bigotry from flowing so freely to its branches as formerly, and much of its fruit is dead. At one time faith was pretty uniform in quality, but for some centuries past there have been many varieties. Its effects, according to the last words of Jesus to his apostles as stated in Mark xvi., are most marvellous. Those who have it not "shall be

damned." Those who have it shall "cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." From this the Christian reader will perceive that, while there is a vast amount of difference of opinion here concerning the nature of faith, we shall all be together hereafter with a whole eternity at our disposal to hear arguments on every side.

Meekness has much of the nature of long-suffering, but in the place of its activity, possesses a sweetness which sometimes becomes nauseous. It is generally purchased for gratuitous distribution, and forms a very favorite dish for husbands to offer their wives. It is seldom much appreciated by those on whom it is imposed.

Temperance is a very excellent fruit, but Humanity grows it of such much superior quality that the better class of buyers resort to its garden. Altogether, the holy ghost is on the verge of bankruptcy. Mr. Humanity intends taking his orchard, and will no doubt, with the help of his experienced head-man, Science, cultivate it to much better purpose. The ghost is no longer able to take any active part in the management of his business, having become very feeble lately. Some of his friends have presented him with a crutch constructed on a new principle, and called the "Revised Version;" but as he hobbles along no one could recognise in him the spirited young ghost who paid a notable visit to Nazareth nearly two thousand years ago. He has also entirely lost his voice, and his laborers are unable to hear his directions. It is doubtful whether he will remain to be buried in his orchard, or, returning to his former shape of a dove, take to himself wings and fly away to join with the other members of the firm in lamenting their ill-success.

C. J. BOWTELL.

CANON RAWLINSON ON EARLY MONOTHEISM.*

THE little book before us is one of the many evidences of how stupid even learned men can be when they devote themselves to supporting a superstition the world has outgrown. The series of tracts to which it belongs has been designed by the Religious Tract Society as an antidote to the scepticism which prevails in regard to orthodoxy, and with this view the services of the ablest clerical champions have been put into requisition. So shaky, however, are the evidences of Christianity, and these worthies have consequently to make so many admissions, that a course of reading of their tracts might well serve to indoctrinate with doubts any person who had hitherto been, like most orthodox Christians, an unreflecting believer. This is notably the case with this pamphlet by the Camden Professor of Ancient History. Its design is to support the belief in the supernatural character of the bible, because of the supposed monotheistic character of that curious collection of documents. Yet the Professor seeks to do this by showing that the ancient nations of Assyria, Babylonia, India, Persia, China, Egypt, etc., had a monotheistic belief conjoined and struggling with their polytheism; and as all of these were long antecedent to the Jew-books—the earliest writings of which cannot be dated with certainty before the eighth century before Christ (that is to say, at least seven hundred years after Moses)—he has to resort to the theory of a primitive revelation other than that given to the "chosen people." Of this "primitive revelation," it is needless to say, there is not the slightest particle of proof. It is evident, from the use of the plural word *Elohim* in the early Hebrew documents, that the original belief of the Jews was polytheistic. The phrase, "Behold the man has become as one of us," confirms this. Dr. Ignaz Goldziher, in his "Mythology Among the Hebrews," observes: "Such expressions, created by polytheistic imagination, were retained in the monotheistic stages, like the myth; they lost their original signification, and were used by zealous monotheists without any idea of the polytheism which had created them and had been expressed by them." The Jews, as abundantly proved by Dr. Kuenen in his "Religion of Israel," were polytheistic down to the time of the prophets. In the choice language of the "sacred" writers, they always went "whoring after other gods." And there is

every evidence that this polytheism was no innovation, but a survival of earlier worships. The Jewish conception of Jahveh and his relation to his chosen people is inapplicable, unless the god whom they now acknowledge to be the only one was at first one of many gods. The relation of their jealous god is, for instance, the same as that of Chemosh (who, in Judges xi., 24, is acknowledged as a true god) to the Moabites. Jahveh would never have been called the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would never have specially dwelt in Palestine, if he had been always held as the only true god. Mr. Bowtell, in these columns, has recently given such evidence of early Jewish polytheism from the biblical records that I shall only supplement his observations with the remark of Prof. Tiele, who, in his "Outlines of the History of Religion," declares: "It was not till the establishment of a priestly state by the small section of the nation who returned to the fatherland after the captivity that Yahveh was recognised as the only god."

Every investigation has served to confirm the opinion of Hume that monotheism slowly grew out of polytheism. To the mass of Christians yet the phrase "Mother of god," which dates from the older Paganisms, conveys no impiety, because they have not yet reached the conception of monotheism. The worship of patron saints is a relic of patron deities; faith in the trinity is a modification of tritheism, and the belief in a devil, who bags the most of the world as his own, is inconsistent with a pure monotheism. None the less, Canon Rawlinson is right in pointing out traces of monotheism among the ancient civilised nations; for they had only to arrive at a certain stage of civilisation in order to reach the only monotheism they did reach, viz. a belief in a supreme ruler. The gods are always created in the image of man, and man had only to attain the patriarchal or tribal stage, which necessitated the rule of one supreme chief, for him also to elevate the god of his fathers as a great god and a great king over all gods. Such monotheism as this by no means implies the conception of one universal force in nature. Canon Rawlinson is only absurd in attributing this belief to a primitive revelation, and stupidly absurd in supposing it supports the Jewish revelation, when he himself shows that monotheism was held in Egypt long before Moses learnt all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He is equally wrong in supposing that because such monotheism is early, that is to say early in recorded history, it is therefore "primitive." The fact is, of course, he comes to deal with the question believing in the late origin of man, and this precludes him from seeing the long vistas through which man passed before he had any recorded history. The believer in the descent of the whole human race from Adam, only some 6000 years ago, cannot possibly have any better conception of the origin of the various religions than that of a "primitive revelation," which was perfectly useless, since all the nations wandered away from it. To the evolutionist and believer in science such a view is monstrously absurd. More of the actual facts in regard to the origin of religions are to be found in the works of Tylor, Lubbock, Darwin, Spencer, Morgan, and McLennan, than are given in all the ponderous works of theologians from the days of Augustine to those of Rawlinson. In the crude fetishism and animism of savages, rather than in the records of civilised nations, are to be found the indications of early religious beliefs, and the barbarous beliefs and practices found embedded among the purer religious worships of the latter are not to be explained on the theory of any primitive revelation, but only as survivals of an earlier and more barbarous time. With regard to what was probably the earliest instance of monotheism, that of Egypt, Gerald Massey, in his learned work on "Natural Genesis" says: "When at last attained, the 'one god' of Egypt is as much a result of evolution and survival of the fittest type, as in the case of any other species, ranging through all the four series of elemental, stellar, lunar, and solar deities. The unity is final, not initial. The one god is simply the culminating point of all the immeasurable past of polytheism." Instead of a monotheistic instinct, or a primeval revelation of one god, mythology exhibits a series of types as representatives of certain natural forces from which the earliest gods were evolved, and finally compounded into a one deity who assumed their attributes and thus became the supreme being and god over all. Canon Rawlinson, in making polytheism a lapse from early monotheism, places the cart before the horse. In the history of man mythology arose out of typology, and religion was developed from the

* "Present Day Tracts," No. 11.—"The Early Prevalence of Monotheistic Beliefs," by the Rev. George Rawlinson, M.A. The Religious Tract Society.

mythology; but to begin with a conception of one hidden god is to make religion precede mythology. Canon Rawlinson gives no evidence in this direction. What he does succeed in proving is simply that other nations arrived at the conception of monotheism before the Jews, and this, instead of in any way supporting the theory of divine revelation, given through the medium of the Hebrew race, is altogether fatal to its claims. J. M. WHEELER.

SAINTS AND SINNERS.—II.

NOAH AND THE GIANTS.

ADAM lived nine hundred and thirty years, and if, as some divines allege, the days in that early period of the world's history were long periods of time, who can estimate the æons and æons of ages that these years may have stretched through?

Following the first man down to the birth of Noah came a long line of descendants, the youngest of whom at the time of his death, Enoch, was three hundred and sixty-five years old, while the oldest, Methuselah, attained the ripe old age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years before "shuffling off this mortal coil."

These gentlemen must have been saints. Nothing concerning their actions is recorded, except in the case of Enoch, who took a walk with god and disappeared mysteriously. Nobody ever heard what became of him, and for all we know to the contrary he may even now be seated on a cloud waiting for an auspicious occasion to reappear among men.

But why should we assume that he went up because he walked with god, when we have bible authority for the statement that the deity is as often to be found in the lower regions as in the "mansions in the sky" (Psalm cxxxix). Besides, if god is everywhere, it is only rational to suppose that he is in hell as well as in heaven, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he is subject to the tortures of the damned as well as to the joys of the saved.

Lamech begat Noah, and saints soon passed rapidly away, and the earth became peopled with an ever-increasing multitude of "miserable sinners." This undue amount of wickedness began in this way. "The sons of god saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose."

The result of this unholy alliance was that giants were born, and every day the people became more and more corrupt; so that the Hebrew god, who was never noted for his great virtue, "repented that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

Only one man found favor in Jehovah's eyes, and that was Noah. The biographers describe him as a "just man, perfect in his generation." Heartily glad am I that these writers put in the phrase, perfect "in his generation." "His generation!" Wonderful indeed is the light these words throw upon the text. Certainly a generation when the earth was populated with giants, and the sons of gods amorously embraced the daughters of men and seriously corrupted their morals, could not have been an age when it was a very difficult task to be "just" or "perfect" in the biblical sense of the term.

There is a limit even to Jehovah's endurance of the wickedness of man, and so finding that all "flesh was corrupt," and that the earth was "filled with violence," the lord put his foot down sternly and formed a strong determination to stamp the evil out.

The mode in which he resolved to carry out his design was by a deluge to destroy "every living thing," and no one can doubt that the method would have proved perfectly effectual had it been properly carried out.

One family of sinners—though the father was a "perfect man in his generation," and, so far as we can ascertain, was only intoxicated once, when he behaved in a most unbecoming fashion—was allowed to survive the flood. And from these the seeds of corruption have been transmitted to every human breast, and although happily some seem to have had these sown in barren soil, or watered too liberally with the milk of human kindness, the earth has since been peopled with a few saints and a goodly sprinkling of sinners, whose struggles, crimes, jealousies, selfishness and heroism, have combined to promote the progress, though not the happiness, of the human family.

By the flood, old and young, rich and poor, good and

bad, were killed at one fell swoop. Jehovah had no mercy for the prattling babe at its mother's breast; no pity for the lover ready to sacrifice himself for his dear one's sake. He was equally remorseless in slaying all the animals in whom was the "breath of life"—though no bad thing is recorded concerning them.

Naturally, when the people had again grown in numbers upon the earth, they resolved unanimously to forestall deity should he attempt a second edition of the flood.

Being of one language—which one the biographer sayeth not—they doubtless at public meeting assembled, passed resolutions, or rather an amendment to the Universal Flood's Act, brought in by King Jehovah, seconded by Prime Minister Noah, supported by the whole of his virtuous family—the animals, insects, birds, snakes and other creatures, brought into the ark, assenting—and having probably with a few priestly dissentients carried the amendment, commenced to put their revolutionary scheme into definite shape by making bricks, beginning operations by laying the foundation-stone of a city and tower "whose top should reach unto heaven."

Vile sinners these! Consummate knaves! They little thought that King Jehovah (more elevated than the House of Lords) would soon come down and confound their knavish tricks, scattering his enemies over the face of the earth.

Having had the awful intelligence communicated to him that the people had commenced building operations—who the common informer was the lord alone knoweth—Jehovah betook himself down to the people's House of Commons (the earth) and found that the information was perfectly true—that the amendment had really been carried. Speechless with indignation, his eyes darting out of their sockets, his eyebrows lowered with desperation, Jehovah began mysteriously to confuse their tongues. As the biographers have not told us how this was effected, we are each left to formulate a theory for ourselves.

For the following hypothesis I alone am responsible. These "wicked sinners" had probably, on beholding Jehovah making his appearance through the clouds, put their thumbs to their noses and extended their fingers at him, some probably being rude enough to put out their tongues. This unseemly conduct so enraged the Hebrew deity that he waxed wrath against them, and in return they spoke in more forcible language than they were accustomed to address him, supplementing their statements with such vigorous, and impolite adjectives, that it might naturally have been mistaken for a "new tongue;" and thus the confusion is explained.

But if the theologians think that deity did in reality cause the people to speak new languages and stop their work, they are welcome to their theory. There is only this difficulty about it—that is, that not only would each one not understand the other, but, speaking a new language for the first time, none of them would understand himself. Language is only learned by experience, and experience, I am sure, will teach every man that my theory is much more rational than that of the theologian.

ARTEUR B. MOSS.

WHO ARE THE BLASPHEMERS?—The real blasphemers are those who believe in god and blacken his character; who credit him with less knowledge than a child, and less intelligence than an idiot; who make him quibble, deceive, and lie; who represent him as indecent, cruel, and revengeful; who give him the heart of a savage and the brain of a fool. These are the blasphemers. When the priest steps between husband and wife, with the name of god on his lips, he blasphemes. When, in the name of god he resists education and science, he blasphemes. When, in the name of god, he opposes freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, he blasphemes. When, in the name of god, he robs, tortures, and kills those who differ from him, he blasphemes. When, in the name of god, he opposes the equal rights of all, he blasphemes. When, in the name of god, he preaches content to the poor and oppressed, flatters the rich and powerful, and makes religious tyranny the handmaiden of political privilege, he blasphemes. And when he takes the bible in his hand, and says it was written by the inspiration of god, he blasphemes almost beyond forgiveness. Who are the blasphemers? Not we who preach freedom and progress for all men; but those who try to bind the world with chains of dogma, and to burden it, in god's name, with all the foul superstitions of its ignorant past.—G. W. FOSTER, "Arrows of Freethought," p. 48; 1882.

MR. FOOTE'S RELEASE.

ACCORDING to the prison arrangements, Mr. Foote will be liberated soon after 8 a.m. on the morning of Monday, February 25. Brakes will start from all the London Secular and Radical Societies to Holloway. Mr. Foote will proceed to the Hall of Science, where a breakfast will be provided. Tickets, price 2s. each, can be had from R. O. Smith at the Hall of Science. A banquet will be held, and the testimonial presented to Messrs. Foote and Ramsey on Wednesday, March 12, Mr. Bradlaugh in the chair. Intending subscribers should send their contributions to Mrs. A. Besant, 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, London, N.W., before Feb. 20.

ACID DROPS.

M. MASSFNET's much-talked-of opera "Herodiade" has just been successfully brought out for the first time in Paris. In this opera the gospel story is finely travestied, St. John the Baptist being made a lover of Salome, the daughter of Herodias.

THE following advertisement appears in the *Guardian* for Jan. 30:—"Work for God.—Will any Christian lady help a widowed clergyman in his parish work and with a young family, in return for kind home only? Must be genial, active and musical. Vicar, 1 Legge Lane, Birmingham." The way in which the vicar identifies himself with the deity is very characteristic of the cloth.

AT St. Matthew's Church, Sheffield, there has been another row. Mr. Omomaney, the ritualistic rector, is an advocate for free pews, but in this, as in everything else, he is opposed by Mr. Wynn, the people's churchwarden. Last Sunday Mrs. Rose, formerly superintendent of the Sunday-school, upon going to her accustomed pew, found it occupied by some friends of the vicar. She thereupon appealed to Mr. Wynn, who, together with some friends, summarily ejected the sitters by the collars. One, however, made a vigorous resistance, hitting out freely with her umbrella. During the scene one of the congregation arose in the centre of the church, and in a loud voice recited the text, "My house is called a house of prayer but ye have made it a den of thieves."

THE New York *Christian Witness* published the Ten Commandments the other week, and now Texas papers are reprinting them under the headline of "A New Heresy," and crediting them to the *Witness*.

THE author of "Some Literary Recollection" in the *Cornhill* tells a funny story of a service held at Bowness Church, in the Lake District. There had been a great deal of dry weather in the South, and an Oxford man in the pulpit began to read the Prayer for Rain, when the clerk pulled at the skirts of his surplice. "You must not read that, sir," he whispered; "we don't want it." "But it's a prayer for good harvest, my man," reasoned the clergyman. "That's just it; the visitors are our harvest, and we want none of your rain."

THE *Christian Intelligencer* thinks "there is no more beautiful sight than a congregation assembled in families—father, mother and children seated together in pews;" and, it might have been added, all asleep.

A BROOKLYN jury has found the Rev. Mr. McCarthy, Roman Catholic priest guilty of criminal assault on Miss Bridget E. Cronin, Roman Catholic dupe, and awarded her six cents damages. What a valuable character a Roman Catholic must have!

ONE of our American contemporaries gives currency to this rich little story:—When Lord Coleridge was at Boston Hotel a hall boy was detailed to attend to his commands, and was instructed that when he knocked at his door and his lordship inquired "Who's there?" he was to answer, "The boy, my lord." The first time he knocked he was nervous and excited, and in answer to the Chief Justice's "Who's there?" faltered out, "The Lord, my boy!"

A LATE "dear hearer" who has had much experience of "the cloth" sends us an interesting account of how he became a Secularist through too much insight into clerical matters. He asks:—(1) Did your readers ever know a rector who was satisfied with his curate? (2) Did they ever know a curate

who spoke well of his rector behind his back? (3) Did they ever know a parson who was not terribly "over-worked," or one who acted as if he felt anything of the joy which is supposed to accompany the "service of god"? (4) Did they ever know a popular curate, dining out five evenings of the seven who did not constantly complain that he never had an evening to himself because of the engrossing duties of his office? (5) Did they ever know a parson who would forgo a party of lawn tennis, a concert, or a feast, for the sake of his sick poor, or to secure time for the study of science and real inquiry into the grounds of religion?

A PRIEST, who gave his name before the magistrate at Marlborough Street as Hall, but who was charged on the police-sheet as Joseph Harmer, was fined last week for being drunk, violent, and disorderly in Regent Street. He was fined 40s. or a month's imprisonment.

THE *Echo* says: "The Working Men's Protestant League have passed a resolution expressing their 'deep sense of the eminent services of Sir Stafford Northcote in resisting the introduction of an avowed Atheist into the House of Commons.'" But can anyone tell us who are the members of the Working Men's Protestant League? We expect that, like the Working Men's Conservative clubs, they are made up of clergymen, aristocrats, and exalted shopkeepers.

REV. R. R. COUSENS, rector of Newcastle-under-Lyme, has had his fingers rapped for trying to further introduce religious teaching into the board schools of that town. All the members of the schoolboard voted against him, with the exception of the Catholic member, Father Maguire, who preferred to remain neutral.

WAH SIN LEE, a Chinaman, who has saved over £3,000 whilst engaged in the laundry business, has applied for admission to the Cornell University. He says that he has been converted to Christianity, and that he intends to go out as a missionary to China. We wonder if he expects that washing his fellow celestials in the blood of the lamb will prove as lucrative as the other laundry business.

WRONG IDEAS ON THE BIBLE.

I CAN see easily enough that if I wish to profit by this tour, and come to a correct understanding of the matters of interest connected with it, I must studiously and faithfully unlearn a great many things I have somehow absorbed concerning Palestine. I must begin a system of reduction. Like the grapes which the spies bore out of the Promised Land, I have got everything in Palestine on too large a scale. Some of my ideas were wild enough. The word Palestine always brought to my mind a vague suggestion of a country as large as the United States. I do not know why, but such was the case. I suppose it was because I could not conceive of a small country having so large a history. I think I was a little surprised to find that the grand Sultan of Turkey was a man of only ordinary size. I must try to reduce my ideas of Palestine to a more reasonable shape. One gets large impressions in boyhood sometimes which he has to fight against all his life. "All these kings." When I used to read that in Sunday-school, it suggested to me the several kings of such countries as England, France, Spain, Germany, Russia, etc., arrayed in splendid robes ablaze with jewels, marching in grave procession, with sceptres of gold in their hands and flashing crowns upon their heads. But here in Ain Mollahah, after coming through Syria, and after giving serious study to the character and customs of the country, the phrase "all these kings" loses its grandeur. It suggests only a parcel of petty chiefs—ill-clad and ill-conditioned savages, much like our Indians, who lived in full sight of each other, and whose "kingdoms" were large when they were five miles square and contained two thousand souls. The combined monarchies of the thirty "kings" destroyed by Joshua on one of his famous campaigns only covered an area about equal to four of our counties of ordinary size. The poor old sheik we saw at Cesarea Philippi with his ragged band of a hundred followers, would have been called a "king" in those ancient times.—*Mark Twain*: "New Pilgrim's Progress."

A WEATHER-BEATEN trapper was recently seen sauntering along the main street of a western village. Pausing in front of a little meeting-house, he went in and took his seat among the congregation. The preacher was discoursing on the text of "the sheep and the wolves," and had evidently been drawing a contrast between the two subjects. He said: "We who assemble here from week to week, and do our duty, and perform our part, are the sheep. Now, who are the wolves?" After a pause the trapper rose to his feet, and said: "Waal, stranger, rather than see the play stopped, I will be the wolves!" The preacher was vanquished.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

February 27, Hall of Science. March 2, Claremont Hall; 5, Hackney; 9, Milton Hall; 12, Hall of Science; 16, Manchester; 23, Plymouth. April 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 24, Hall of Science. May 4 and 11, Hall of Science.

DR. E. B. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) lectures on Sunday, Feb. 10, at Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town Road. Morning (11.30), "Origin of Man: his structure;" evening (7.30), An Evening of Readings and Music. On Thursdays, Feb. 14, 21, 28, Hall of Science, at 8.30; "Tennyson's Poetry."

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.

MR. W. J. RAMSEY'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 18, Luton. Open for engagements any Saturday or Sunday in the provinces, or any night, excepting Wednesday, in London and vicinity.—Applications to W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

RECEIVED.—J. Proudfoot, K. Lichtabelle, W. Macintosh, J. J. Standing.

G. FULLER.—The price of the text from Paine is 1s., post free.

J. BELL.—Mr. Bradlaugh goes to take his seat in the House on Monday.

R. HOLT.—All who desire to welcome Mr. Foote should be at Holloway by 8 o'clock on the morning of Feb. 25. Tickets for the breakfast should be secured early.

G. N.—Your sonnet dedicated to Mr. Foote does credit to your feelings, but is scarcely up to that high standard of choice expression which is necessary for that difficult form of verse.

A SUBSCRIBER.—If you have the address of the party you can summons him in the town where he now resides.

E. PORTBURY.—Orders for literature should be addressed to Mr. Ramsey.

A. KAY.—We commiserate your case, and would advise you not to get in the power of the sharks again.

W. CLAYDON.—Faustus Socinus, or Socino, was born at Sienna in 1539, and died in Poland in 1604. A biography of Socino is given in Vol. VII. of the "Harleian Miscellany," and in E. Tagart's "Sketches of the Lives and Characters of the Leading Reformers of the Sixteenth Century." A translation of a work of his, entitled "A Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion," was published in 1732; but the most of his heterodox works are only in Latin.

C. O. L.—We do not think there is any Freethought society at either Cheltenham or Gloucester. We shall be glad to hear of your forming one.

R. WISE.—The Adventists are an American sect who believe in the near coming of Jesus. They are also known as Millerites, from one Wm. Miller, who in 1831 proclaimed the near personal coming of Christ, and had a large following. Miller prophesied this long-delayed event would come off in 1843. Above 200 ministers embraced his views. Cumming and Baxter play the same game here.

SEVERAL friends unable to contribute otherwise to the Foote and Ramsey Testimonial Fund, have sent parcels of books to be sold for that purpose. They comprise—Parker's "Natural Philosophy for Beginners," illustrated; and Guyot's "Earth and Man," also illustrated; bound in cloth, the two, post free, 2s.; *Our Corner*, complete for the year, post free, 2s. 6d.; *Progress*, complete for the year, post free, 2s. 6d.; also "The Devil's Pulpit," 2 vols. in one, 2s. 6d.

E. W.—Stamps should be sent with any manuscript you desire returned. Your tracts are calculated to do good.

It is particularly requested that all orders for literature should be sent to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 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.

A VISIT TO MR. FOOTE.

HAVING obtained an order for a special visit, I went to Holloway on Tuesday and saw Mr. Foote. He is looking quite well, and is evidently in the best of spirits. He wishes to be remembered to all our friends, and hopes to see a large

muster on the morning of the 25th. I told him that some of the clubs were thinking of having a band outside the prison, but he hopes they will not, he would prefer that the welcome should be of the same kind as that which greeted Mr. Ramsey. He is looking forward with increasing impatience to the time when he will be once more a free man.

J. T. RAMSEY.

[Mr. Foote protested to Mrs. Besant in the strongest way against the proposal as to a band, and said that he should refuse to leave the prison if any such folly was perpetrated.]

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Finsbury Branch of the N. S. S. has engaged several brakes to start from the corner of Swinton Street, Gray's Inn Road, for Holloway Gaol on the morning of Mr. Foote's release. Seats can be booked (1s. each) at Mr. Hilditch's, 7 Cromer Street, King's Cross.

ON Sunday evening some members of the South London Branch will give readings and recitations at their meeting room, Angel Tavern, Lambeth Walk. This branch is also organising a brake party to Holloway on the 25th inst., which will probably start from Mr. C. Smith's, Roupell Street, Blackfriars Road.

It is requested that all societies who intend sending delegates to welcome Mr. Foote will at once send in their names, and a list will be published, together with the places whence brakes will start for Holloway.

WE hear that "Butcher" Varley will lecture at Lambeth Baths on Wednesday evening next. Freethinkers in the district might do well to attend and hear that person's sketches of low life, on which he is a very good authority. Ladies not admitted. No discussion allowed.

THE Central London Branch hold their next social gathering at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening. There will be some good music, and dancing will be kept up till 1 a.m. During the evening a testimonial will be presented to Mr. Ramsey for his past services as secretary. Tickets (price 6d.) may be had of the committee or at the hall.

A LEAFLET issued from Glasgow gives on one side "An Atheist's theory of things," contributed by J. P. Gilmour; and on the other "A Theist's theory of things," by J. J. Brown. Such a plan is eminently designed to stimulate thought and free discussion.

WE reprint this week, in pamphlet form, two essays by Mr. Joseph Symes. One from *Progress*, entitled "The Political Powers and Duties of Freethinkers." The other from this paper, entitled "Substitutes for Religion." The two essays in one pamphlet, price one penny.

THE *Gartenlaube*, a South German periodical, is about to publish the autobiography of the great German poet and Freethinker, Heinrich Heine, written during the last two years of what he called "that long disease—his life."

OLD Socialists and others will be interested to learn that Miss Dale Owen, a granddaughter of the founder of English Socialism, lectures next Sunday before the Progressive Association, Islington Hall, Islington, on "Robert Owen and the Experiment at New Harmony."

THE Buddhists of Japan are taking steps in active opposition to the endeavors of Christian missionaries. A training school for the indoctrination of young Japanese in Buddhism has been established. A Buddhist journal advertises Paine's "Age of Reason" as an annihilating answer to Christianity.

THE success of the Milton Hall Sunday science [school], exceeding as it does the most sanguine expectations of the committee, should stimulate other societies to commence a similar utilisation of the Sunday as speedily as possible. The number of the pupils enrolled is over 300; and as these are sufficient to tax the energies of the teachers, further applications for admission must be deferred until next session. The work done was throughout of a most satisfactory and practical character. In botany flowers were dissected, and in chemistry the experiments were actually shown, and not merely talked of. The teaching was thoroughgoing, and the pupils interested and attentive. The West Central Sunday science classes held at 47 Huntley Street, Tottenham Court Road, are also reported as a grand success. Here we believe a few more pupils can be taken. In Battersea, Mrs. Sowden and friends teach over 60 pupils every Sunday afternoon in the elements of

science, and a library is being established. We hope these endeavors will lead to the establishment of other and still larger Sunday science schools, for which there is evidently a demand even beyond our capacity to supply.

THE POST-OFFICE AND THE PROSECUTION.

I HAVE received the following letter from the Postmaster-General:—

Dear Sir,—The Postmaster-General has made inquiry on the subject of your letter of the 22nd inst., and in reply desires me to say that the usual course was followed in supplying the police officer with the name of the postman upon whom a subpoena should be served to prove the delivery of letters at Mr. Foote's house. Notice of a subpoena is given to the superior officer of the postman whose evidence is required, and it is the superior officer's duty to satisfy himself by just such questions as appear to have been put in the present case who that postman is. As regards the last part of Alford's evidence, as it appears from the printed slip attached to your letter, Mr. Fawcett has ascertained that no instructions were given by Alford's superior officer on the subject of Mr. Foote's letters. It was, as Alford now admits, at the suggestion of the police officer that he made a memorandum of their delivery; and for this irregular proceeding Mr. Fawcett has caused him to be cautioned.

January 31, 1884.

I must confess myself somewhat sceptical about this explanation. Whoever accepts it must believe that the postman committed wilful and deliberate perjury in the witness-box, and in the presence of the detective who instructed him, for he distinctly swore, and reiterated it, that it was his superior in the post-office who gave him the instructions to watch Mr. Foote's house. Is it likely he would so perjure himself and run the risk of getting into trouble with his superior for it when he could have absolutely nothing to gain by so doing? Note also the vagueness of that portion of the letter—the postman “now admits.” Admits to whom? I should like to see his written report on the matter. Why did not the postmaster interfere when the police constable instructed the postman? He knew that it was absolutely illegal. And for what has the postman been “cautioned”? For committing perjury? A very small punishment for such an offence; but perhaps perjury is a very small offence in the eyes of Government. Certainly falsehood is natural enough to one one of its members. And why has the postmaster not even been “cautioned” for permitting the detective to “instruct” the postman?

The whole matter has a very ugly look. It shows clearly enough to what length the Government officials are prepared to go in assisting by illegal means in the prosecution of Freethinkers. It is no use mincing the matter. We are practically outlaws. Any bubble company promoter may rake up some barbarous old laws against us, and make sure of having both legal and illegal help from every Government official. The admission of the letter-carrier's testimony was a gross violation of the principle which governs every court of justice excepting the one over which Justice North presided, and even he would not have admitted the evidence had he not had Freethinkers for trial.

Even the police who served the witnesses with their subpoenas seemed to be aware of the fact that there was no need to confine themselves to legal means, for I actually found two of them in a public-house, where they had taken a witness whom they had just served with a subpoena. They had given him money and were treating him to drink, and questioning him as to the evidence he should give.

I have sent the following to the Postmaster-General:

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your reply to my inquiry, from which I gather that the letter carrier, Alford, committed wilful perjury in the witness-box at my trial; I also gather that he has been “cautioned” for the “irregularity.” I beg to ask whether the department intend to prosecute Alford for perjury, or whether the Postmaster-General is of opinion that a “caution” is sufficient punishment for that description of crime?—Your obedient servant,
W. J. RAMSEY.

WHAT cock crew so that all the world heard him?—The one in the ark.

“THE judgment of heaven was upon them, sir,” said a Tory bishop, speaking of the Regicides to Quin, the famous actor. “The judgment of heaven was upon them—almost all of them came to violent ends!” “So, my lord,” replied Quin, “did almost all the apostles.”

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SECULARIST?

(Concluded from p. 38.)

If the foregoing arguments and conclusions are well founded we have reached the important result that a Secularist, though *ex necessitate rei* a Freethinker, is something more than a Freethinker only—something more than an anti-theological iconoclast, and may be either an Atheist or a Freethinker somewhat less advanced.

Having then indicated what a Secularist is not, let us proceed to point out what a Secularist is. A Secularist is one who believes—

1. That the chief duty of man is to make the best use of this life for his own welfare and that of others
2. That humanity more needs and deserves our service and has higher claim on our labor and love than any actual or problematical god has, or can, or ought to have.
3. That the promotion of man's welfare in this world is of more immediate practical necessity and therefore of greater moment and higher importance than the promotion of his problematical welfare in any possible or probable future life.
4. That the true road to human welfare consists in the practice of morality, and that any happiness (so-called) procured by any violation of the rules of virtue, is to be deprecated as injurious to the general happiness of mankind.
5. That morality has its true basis in utility, which determines the goodness or badness of human actions according as these promote, or tend to promote, the general welfare of mankind.
6. That it is the daily duty of man, and his prime object of life, to endeavor to increase the sum of the general good and to diminish the amount of general evil by moulding all his actions in strict accordance with the law of utility.
7. That in living for the good of others we are, in the highest sense of the term, living for the good of ourselves and making the best use of this life.

This is the creed of the Secularist. But does the mere intellectual apprehension of, and adhesion to, these propositions suffice to make a Secularist? We trow not, any more than the mere acceptance of Freethought or Atheism. We must again insist that Secularism is something more than a mere posture of the intellect towards certain moral formulæ. Secularism implies not only the acceptance of the foregoing principles, but the consistent practice in daily life of the same. Therefore—

8. The Secularist is one who, embracing the above principles as true, bases the conduct of his life thereupon.

Having now ascertained what constitutes a Secularist, we have only to append a few remarks upon the characteristics of Secularism.

Secularism seeks to promote, not the glory of god or the posthumous felicity of man, but the welfare of mankind in this life. It is, in no ignoble sense, of the earth earthy, of humanity human. It is, in short, the religion of humanity, as opposed to the cultus of deity. The criterion of Secularism is experience, its method reason, its standard utility, its object happiness, its ideal humanity. The virtues are of the essence of Secularism, because related to man's true happiness, like cause to effect. The fruits of Secularism may be seen in “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report” (Philip iv., 8).

In these days of orthodox disruption, when heterodoxy is compelling, by force of facts, the surrender, one by one, of the antiquated dogmas of a discredited delusion, born of ignorance and bred in the lap of superstition, Secularism, as a rational humanistic system of ethics, is the one thing needful to give authority to the dictates of morality. Whilst theology held her fair form entwined in its slimy coils, her divine voice sounded too often on deaf ears, dull heads, and duller hearts. To-day she is free, rescued from her fiendish oppressor by the gallant knights of Freethought and Secularism. In the temple of Secularism she is goddess supreme, and in that sacred fane alone, not in the dark dungeon of theology, will be found her worshippers, who substitute humanity for god, earth for heaven, and virtue for faith; who dedicate their lives to the lofty purpose of leaving mankind the legacy of a noble example fruitful of noble deeds

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

EVOLUTION AND MORALITY.

(Concluded from page 39.)

At last, however, the study of human history and the criticism of the needs of human society reveal to inquirers that the evolutionist's morality must be Utilitarianism. They question him, and he answers that he does desire all men to act always and altogether as consistent Utilitarians. He points out that as "god's" ten commandments and Catholic prohibitions have completely failed to make men adopt a social mode of life, external authority can be dispensed with. He shows, also, how Utilitarianism appeals to man's universal habits of shrinking from pain and of seeking pleasure; and that a responsive answer is and must ever be given by man to that appeal. The "mirror is held up to human nature," and we are told that happiness—that is, a constant state of pleasurable sensations—is the one thing needful, the one blessing which all consciously or unconsciously seek.

The evolutionist then explains the laws regulating the social organism, and proves that man is most useful, and therefore himself happiest who exercises care for others, and not merely for self. We are told that it is almost an instinct with some highly civilised men and women to be "altruistic." He bids us try by personal experience whether in the long run the practice of altruism does not become easy, and that of selfishness hard.

And the evolutionist reminds all doubters of the pain which they will feel if they act unsocially. He says: "The social instincts within you will torment you long after your acts of wrong are committed." Then he points out how useful it is that rules essential to the happiness of the social body should be binding on its individual members; how, especially, it is a useful law that each man's liberty should not be curtailed in any way whatsoever as long as he is not infringing on another man's liberty.

Again, the evolutionist contends that the infliction of pain upon others without justifiable cause, as well as interference with freedom of action or of speech, is certain sooner or later to bring about social degeneration, and that this, in its turn, means discomfort and insecurity to the individual. And we learn yet another point about our new morality by the frank avowal of the evolutionist, that so long as he is consistent with his opinions he cannot blame in the vulgar sense of the term; he—and therefore we—must only discourage. For, he asserts, in justification of this mental and moral attitude, that men's acts of cruelty and their other unsocial doings are the necessary, that is, natural, result of heredity and of defective education, or of these combined with other circumstances, other influences unfavorable to morality's growth.

He teaches, moreover, that the past misdeed cannot be undone, and that the only "forgiveness of sins" is the feeling of satisfaction which will accompany future righteous acts. Plainly, then, we see how the application of the evolutionist's principles tends to the prevention of crime and makes the way of transgressors hard. We understand now that society does well to punish offenders, yet that all punishment, if it is to be useful, if it is intended, in other words, to check the infliction of pain and the creation of discomfort, should be remedial, not vindictive. "Nemo prudens punit quia peccatum est, sed ne peccetur." With Seneca, the evolutionist is of opinion that punishment is an evil only admissible for the purpose of preventing greater evils. Being too human, too intent upon promoting the art of social conduct to advocate acts of vengeance, he aims at the improvement of the criminal by means of education and judicious restraint rather than by capital or corporal punishment.

We will mention just one other point. The evolutionist dissuades men from calling their unsocial brothers by such names as "depraved villains," "fallen wretches." Criminals are not to be considered enemies to society because they are "bad men;" we are to think them "bad" because their actions jeopardise the unity and stability of the social fabric. Above all, therefore, we must refuse to believe in any insuperable "hardness of heart." For have not we ourselves as well as our forefathers "grown out" of many evil practices and ideas? And will not our descendants by increasing in exact knowledge increase in social goodness? They assuredly will. Let us, then, rejoice to feel that

"While we labor and abstain,
Our labor in our lord, Humanity, is not in vain."

J. E. B.

PROFANE JOKES.

Who was the greatest speaker mentioned in the bible?—Samson, for he "jawed" a thousand men to death.

AMERICAN EPITAPH.—"Sacred to the remains of Jonathan Thompson, a pious Christian and an affectionate husband. His disconsolate widow continues to carry on the tripe and trotter business at the same place as before her bereavement."

SHOWMAN at the Derby: "Here, my lads, is King Solomon, with one eye fixed on the almighty and the other humorously regarding the Queen of Sheba."

SOMEONE remarked that D.V. means the same as providence permitting. "Then," said the old man, "Let's have some eau D.V."

"I TAKE my tex dis morning," said a colored preacher, "from dat po'tion ob de scripature whar de postol Paul pints his pistol to de Fessions."

"WHAT is a miracle?" inquired an Irish peasant of his priest. The priest lifted up his foot and gave the peasant a sharp kick—"O murther," cried the peasant. "Did you feel that?" asked the priest. "Sure and I did," said the peasant. "Well, it would have been a miracle if you had not," said the priest.

A PROVINCIAL obituary notice reads—"He was consigned to a roasting place with his fathers." The reporter wrote "resting place," but the compositor improved it.

TALK AFTER CHURCH.—"Well, Laura, give me a short sketch of the sermon. Where was the text?" "Oh! I don't know—I have forgotten it. But, would you believe it, Mrs. V. wore that horrid bonnet of hers! I couldn't keep my eyes off it all the meeting time. Miss P. had on a lovely pink one, and Miss T. wore a new shawl that must have cost at least £10 10s. I wonder her folks don't see the folly of such extravagance." "Well if you have forgotten the sermon, you have not the audience. Which preacher do you prefer—the old one or Mr. A.?" "Oh, Mr. A., decidedly! He is so handsome and so graceful—what an eye, and what a splendid set of teeth he has!"

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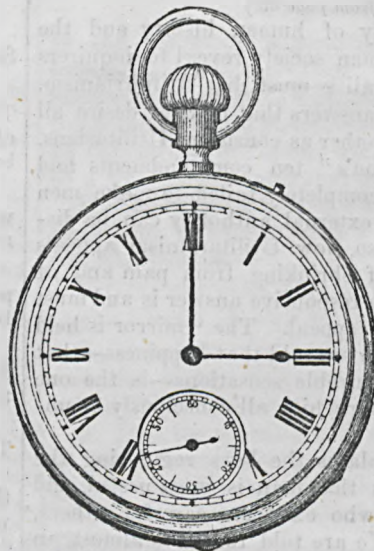
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