

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY. THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



GOING TO GLORY.

The Murderer goes to Heaven and the Victim to Hell.—By Faith ye are Saved.

[No. 56.]



OUR INDICTMENT.

OUR INDICTMENT covers twenty-eight large folios, and contains sixteen Counts. According to the law we must pay for a copy of it; otherwise we should have to plead on it in Court without any preparation. A poor man who cannot pay for justice, gets none. In England there is one law for the rich and the poor, but as it costs a great deal there might as well be two.

The PREAMBLE charges us with "being wicked and evil-disposed persons, and disregarding the laws and religion of the realm, and wickedly and profanely devising and intending to asperse and vilify Almighty God, and to bring the Holy Scriptures and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt."

Some of this is true, some false, and some rubbish. We are not wicked; we do try to bring the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt; but we do not seek to asperse and vilify Almighty God. We disbelieve the existence of such a being; and even if he does exist, the Christians have so grossly aspersed and vilified him, that they have left us absolutely nothing to do in that respect. They have exhausted the resources of defamation. No sceptic could paint the Christian God worse than he is. James Mill well described him as "the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise." This statement is as strong as any we ever published, and as it appears in John Stuart Mill's "Autobiography," we earnestly recommend that book to the attention of any bigots who may feel inclined to walk in Sir Henry Tyler's footsteps and to prosecute what they cannot refute.

We are charged throughout the INDICTMENT with having committed our offences "to the great displeasure of Almighty God, to the scandal of the Christian Religion and the Holy Bible or Scriptures, and against the peace of our Lady the Queen, her crown and dignity." This is simply legal jargon, and means that we have, like Jesus Christ, blasphemed.

How did Sir Henry Tyler discover that we have "displeased Almighty God?" Has he had a vision, and is Tyler also among the prophets? And when did Almighty God give him power of attorney to defend his character? Where is the document, and who will prove the handwriting? Will the aggrieved deity appear in person and submit to cross-examination? If not the whole proceedings are an impudent fraud?

The First and Second Counts deal with the third and fourth paragraphs of Mr. Heaford's article on "Christian Humbug," in the *Freethinker* of March 26th. Count III., with the fifth paragraph of Mr. Foote's article on "General Joshua," in the number for April 9th. Count IV., with the Comic Bible Sketch, on April 23rd, entitled "A Carniverous God." Count V., with nearly the whole of Mr. Symes's sermon on "God," May 7th. Count VI., a large part of Mr. Symes's sermon on "God," May 14th; and Acid Drops 1 and 2. Count VII., another part of the same sermon. Count VIII., the second, third, and fourth paragraphs of Mr. Heaford's article on "What Must I do to be Damned?" May 21st. Count IX., a repetition of part of the same. Count X., the third paragraph of Mr. Heaford's continued article, May 28th. Counts XI., XII., and XIII., Comic Bible Sketch, May 28th, entitled "Divine Illumination." Count XIV., Comic Bible Sketch, June 11th, entitled "A Miss and a Hit." Count XV., *Freethinker*, January 29th. Paragraphs one and two of Mr. Foote's article on "Was Jesus Insane?" Acid Drops eight, nine, eleven, and twenty-four. Count XVI., Comic Bible Sketch, January 29th, entitled "The Kick Out of Paradise."

All our readers who have kept a file of the *Freethinker* will be able to make out the whole of the incriminated passages, and those who have not will probably be able to recollect them to some extent.

Our line of defence must be kept secret. We shall fight hard, give the prosecution as much trouble as possible, and try to make the revival of the blasphemy laws too expensive a game for those who may be anxious to play it. We fight for a solid victory—that is, to defeat Sir Henry Tyler, to keep out of gaol, and to carry on our work as before.

The real fighting will commence in November. Until then we shall be often skirmishing. Mr. Ramsey will be

defended by counsel; Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote will conduct their own case. As the expenses will be very heavy, we appeal to Freethinkers to support the Defence Fund generously, and, above all, *promptly*.

Personally, I am going in strong for law. My literary fare for some weeks will be Law Reports and Acts of Parliament. I intend to play the lawyer as well as I can in this case, and at the same time to prepare for an exhaustive address to the jury if we have to appeal to them for a verdict.

G. W. FOOTE.

PITY THE POOR CHRISTIANS.

A CASE has come under my notice (and that of thousands besides) during the past few years, which is calculated to wring the hardest heart and draw tears from a well-baked plaster-of-Paris image. It is the deep distress and utter destitution of my Christian neighbors, and of Christians in general. This destitution is of the completest character, and is most heart-rending to contemplate.

They have, it is true, a Bible, a Pope; cardinals and archbishops; parsons and officials out of number; churches, chapels, Sunday-schools in abundance; they have waggon-loads of pious literature, books, newspapers, etc.; relics by the hundred tons, and novelties in profusion; they have missions, home and foreign, day and night; they have a Salvation Army, a Weaver, a Bell, and Moody and Sankey to revive them; they have for defence a Varley, a Newdegate, a Churchill, a Wolff, and a Tyler, not to mention such champions as Brewin Grant, Sexton, and others. But with all this, and much more, the poor Christians are exceedingly unhappy. God is evidently chastising them; and we hope they and he too will be vastly improved by the process, for they both much need it.

1. Christians could once work miracles, and for many ages silenced objectors by supernatural legerdemain. That power they have lost, poor things. They cannot remove a mountain now, with faith, as big as the world, whereas formerly Mount Everest, or Aconcagua, would have leaped or danced at the sight of faith like a grain of mustard-seed.

2. Christians once had a Jesus, who was an all-sufficient Savior. But he is gone the way of all monopolies, and they have nothing left but his empty names and empty promises. He has either duped them or been duped himself; for nobody can say what is become of him.

3. They once had a Holy Ghost who, or which, was frequently "poured out" upon his followers. The last drop was thus disposed of many ages ago; and Christians cannot get any of the article now for love or money. It is true they pretend still to get some at times; but it is only a sham article. Like the nectar of the gods, it is denied to the people of to-day; and I will undertake to get a goblet of Olympian nectar to match any quantity of the Holy Ghost that Christians can produce!

4. The Christians once had a God—he, too, has completely evaporated. What it was, or what like, nobody could ever tell—at least, not since they distilled and spiritualised him. They should have left him as he was, as the Bible writers saw and handled him—a rough, fierce barbarian. In that case we should all have known what the Christians worship. Who knows now? Nobody. They have, in a sense, as many gods as churches or sects; indeed, every Christian has his own separate, personal God, if he has any at all. Godhead is a blunder, like the philosopher's stone, the elixir of immortality; a myth, like Tyler's honesty. The Christians have no God. Would he permit us to taunt them so, if they had? Would he not roll up his sleeve, as the Psalmist puts it, at us, if he lived and heard what we say? And would he not get himself a better body-guard than the present set of hypocrites who hold fast to their money-chest and call it the Ark of God? In the present state of things, any decent god or goddess, who comprehended the situation, would speak and let the world know what they wanted. No god does speak; therefore there is no god strong enough, good enough, wise enough to do it. Poor Christians! they have no god—are a kind of bastard Atheists who really don't know themselves.

5. Christians once had a heaven, a Paradise, a New Jerusalem, with river of life and tree of life; throne of

deity, all white, and its occupant same color from excessive age; beasts full of eyes before and behind; harpers "harping with their harps" (as if, forsooth, they could have harped with cymbals or tambourines!); and long-winded choristers who rested not day nor night from singing Holy! holy! holy! But that is all at an end. The throne is turned to dust and scattered by the winds; his Godship is turned to ditto, and the beasts, the harpers, and the choristers have "Gone where the good niggers go." Christians have lost all the heaven they ever had. What can they do? Why, keep silence, and not let their dupes, who expect a reward there, know anything about it.

6. Worse still, the Christians have lost hell, and the Devil and all the means and apparatus of diabolical and eternal punishment. Now this is an awful loss. No one will love their God now there is no Devil to frighten him to it; no one would go to their heaven except for fear of a worse place in hell. If hell does not exist, Christianity is unnecessary; if that fire be out, the Christian engine must stop, as soon as the momentum of the fly-wheel is expended. Besides, if there is no hell for unbelievers, where is the use of faith, patience, prayer, self-denial? Is it fair that the poor Christians should thus be deceived; and after striving to reach heaven, find that Freethinkers and heretics can get in as well as the most devout? Is it just that the poor dupes of the Gospel should pay heavy prices for front-seat tickets in Paradise, only to find that all classes of people, tickets or no tickets, can crowd in and sit just where they please? In their name I protest against this arrangement. If you have a heaven for God's favorites, shut up all the rest in hell, and then the Christians may be happy; but to call a public meeting where only a select number of tickets are issued is too bad. But what am I saying? The Christians have lost both heaven and hell; and I should think many of them would throw up all their interest in heaven rather than relinquish the hope of seeing their enemies roasting in hell! By the way, I wonder how Paradise Stock stands now in the market, and what the shares can be purchased at? The old Druids used to lend money on the strength of their faith in a future life, the borrower being bound to pay it back with interest in the other world. I wonder if any Christian will advance money on the same terms. I once invested in Paradise Stock. I have not been paid back what I deposited, and therefore the shares, with interest, must still belong to me. I'll sell them for five shillings down. Who offers?

7. But, worst of all! Christians have lost the power to burn people, to pull out their nails by red-hot pincers, to break their bones on wheel and rack, to roast them over slow fires, to shoot and drown them, to put them in stocks, slit their noses, cut off their ears, and show other little kindnesses of a like nature to the erring and unbelieving! What a loss! It would do one's heart and eyes good to see those "means of grace" revived, as we no doubt shall when the Lord in his mercy raises up a few more Tylers to convert sceptics from the error of their ways. At present the poor destitute Christians have not grace enough to go such lengths in the service of God, as their pious fathers did; rather, the wicked Secular power hinders them. And Christianity can never flourish except when inflicting or suffering persecution. Poor Christians!

JOSEPH SYMES.

A COMICAL CREED.

There are certain cantankerous critics who feel aggrieved at the tone of sarcasm and ridicule which we adopt in regard to the degrading doctrines of Christianity. Our candid friends are of two classes: (a) a few mild Freethinkers of the mamby-pamby type, and (b) a host of rabid Christians belonging to the genus bigot. Both upbraid us for the unhallowed levity with which we treat "sacred" subjects, and deprecate the scorn and contempt, the satire and ridicule, which we pour on the devoted head of orthodoxy. The Freethinkers chide us as impolitic and rash, and the Christians denounce us as outrageous and blasphemous. We confess we are quite impenitent notwithstanding every threat or entreaty to induce our conversion. To the Freethinkers we say that every weapon of attack, furnished from the amory of reason and ridicule, is of legitimate use against such an unscrupulous foe as the Christians, or against such a monstrously absurd faith as that of Christianity; and to the Christians we reply that

we could not laugh at their religion if that religion were not laughable, nor ridicule it without it presented to us ridiculous points; that we regard the dogmas and doctrines of their faith as so many grim jokes and solemn comicalities, worthy only of the fun and hilarity of all serious people. We shall therefore continue to shower down upon a religion so laughable and ridiculous, that steam of satire, that flood of ridicule, in which alone it should (in all rational minds) live, move, and have its being. We shall continue to poke fun at the solemn stupidities of the Christian superstition and to inundate every absurd doctrine, and every nonsensical page of the Bible with a perennial shower of ridicule. It is on the Solomonic principle, "Answer a fool according to his folly," that we take this righteous resolve to meet the absurdities of Christianity with the weapons of ridicule and contempt.

Why should we spare the consciences of the men who are so ready to vilify and to persecute us? Where is our obligation to deal gently and gingerly with a stupid, irrational faith which has ever used its brute force against the progress and reform of the world? Wherefore should we make the Christian religion an exception to the good old rule that superstition should be ridiculed, as well as reasoned, out of existence? Can it be denied that the Christian religion is a tissue of stupidity, a series of pious puerilities? And if, as we opine, a truthful reply to this query can only be given in the affirmative, how shall we restrain our risibility when a faith so farcical is palmed off upon us as a solemn verity? Shall the sacred twaddle talked by the priestly parrots and pious jackdaws of Christian orthodoxy receive a lesser measure of contempt and ridicule than that which Christians themselves were wont to deal out to the superstitious frivolities of classic paganism? If we would effectually destroy the virus wherewith the Christian superstition has poisoned the life-blood of humanity, we must ridicule as well as reason against the grotesque folly and egregious absurdities of Christianity. We must excite the derision of mankind at the notion of their deified triplicate-unity, at their absurd Trinitarian-arithmetical puzzle which, in defiance of reason and common-sense, they revere as their deity, at the absurd notion that this god, after idling away an eternity of sloth and solitude, suddenly burst into a fit of creative activity, and by the mere fiat of his will, called forth the universe into existence out of the barren womb of nothing, much after the style of a conjuror at a village fair; that he condemned the race of mankind to a life of sin and misery here, and hell and damnation hereafter, as punishment for Adam's awful crime in eating the fruit of a forbidden tree; that he selected as his chosen and peculiar people, a race of rascals and ragamuffins; that his friends and favorites were rogues and vagabonds; that the best way he could contrive to save a world, made wicked by his own criminal folly, was to put himself, or rather one of his *alter egos*, Jesus Christ, to a cruel and lingering death; that notwithstanding this suicidal act, only an insignificant portion will ever be saved; and that all those who never heard of Christ, or have rejected him as unworthy of their acceptance, will—despite the merit of a good life made beautiful with love, peace, and usefulness—infallibly go to hell when they die, and be for ever with his Satanic majesty. We claim that these ideas—which are the current coin in the realm of orthodoxy—are not only unreasonable but ridiculous; not only contemptible but comical; and are only fit to be scoffed and laughed at. We also claim that the propounders of these notions are the foulest blasphemers in the world, because they ascribe to the Deity crimes and follies beneath anything possible to the lowest and most barbarous savage. And lastly, we maintain that we who laugh and jeer, and flout and gibe at the sanctified stupidities of the Christian superstition are truer friends to humanity than the benighted bigots who accept as sober fact the fictions and fables of faith, and who, in the fervor of their intemperate zeal, are prepared to inflict the grossest injustice, the stupidest prosecutions, the cruelest persecutions upon all those who flee from the Sodom and Gomorrah of Christian orthodoxy to the Zoar of Freethought.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

A LAD the other day rushed into a German pig-stickers for a pennyworth of black pudding made from the blood of Jesus. "Don't keep it, my lad," said the shopman. You will doubtless obtain some from the Catholic priest, for they manufacture a large quantity of Christ's blood.

ACID DROPS.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury visited Cetewayo to bespeak his consideration for the missionaries in Zululand. We fear the dusky monarch will only have too good reason to consider them. Zululand will soon be exploited by missionaries, rum, guns, and disease. Christianity will make the poor Zulus go mad and bite each other. That is its universal effect.

ONE of Booth's officers at Bristol goes by the name of "Dancing Frank." He performs every Sunday in the Circus to a large and admiring audience. His latest feat is remarkable for its pious emulation of David's antics before the ark. Nimble Frank puts one corner of a handkerchief between his teeth, holds out the opposite corner at arm's length, pretends to think the clean-boiled rag a violin, and dances about as though playing on it. One of the "Army" goes by the name of the Prodigal Son, and he recently presented a calf to his fellow calves—or, more scripturally, swine. The animal was exhibited at a penny a head, and finally devoured at a nine-penny tea. To finish the comedy the Hallelujah lasses, with their tambourines, gave a very successful imitation of a nautch dance. Altogether it was a fine spree, and we dare say the Lord is delighted to observe that, while Tyler and Newdegate avenge him on his enemies, his lighter-hearted friends "go it blind" like the gay and festive cusses they are. We have very serious thoughts of going over to the other side, so that we may blaspheme to our heart's content with the most perfect safety.

In November a Baptist convention is to be held in Cincinnati to try to settle the much-vexed question as to issuing a version of the Bible which shall be distinctively Baptist in its use of "immerse" instead of "baptise." It may yet become necessary for every sect to have a version of the New Testament for themselves.

At Hanley (Staffordshire) Police Court, the Rev. T. Salmon, vicar of New Chapel, was summoned for kissing a girl and making her cry. He squared the matter by paying the complainant five guineas. The rev. gentleman (?) got off easier than Jacob, who had to serve fourteen years for his Rachel.

BLASPHEMY is being performed under the very nose of the Pope. At the Costanzi Theatre, Rome, a play has been produced entitled "Maria di Magdala." It represents Mary Magdalene and the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity as lovers. The Church has taken too many liberties with the Christian legend itself to relish this revised version on the stage.

F. B. B., writing to the *Rock*, contends against substituting "periods" for "days" in the Genesis account of creation. He asks: "What were the sun and moon, and fishes and fowls, and beasts created for but for man." So it is absurd to suppose they existed long before he appeared on the scene. Moreover, God instituted the Sabbath because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Exodus xxxi., 17). F. B. B. is evidently of the old school and unused to accommodating the ancient records to modern thought.

THE Virgin Mary has been up to her old tricks again in the Franciscan Church, Athlone. The clergy in charge keep her statue there veiled during the day; but it is exposed to public view, for a consideration, in the evening. Many persons declare that they have seen the eyes move, smiles play about the lips, and the hands and limbs move about and assume various coquettish attitudes. On Sunday it is said a light shone from the roof on to her, or the statue's head. We are not informed whether it was the electric or the lime light that was used. The fame of these manifestations has gone abroad through all the land, and multitudes of the halt, the maimed, the deaf and the blind, are crowding to the church and being relieved there of their infirmities. If the Virgin stays long enough it is expected that all the woes of Ireland will soon be cured, and she will have no further need of hospitals, prevention of crime acts, juries, or landlords.

THE most immaculate Virgin has also turned up again at Lourdes. This time it was to utter through the lips of her statue an emphatic condemnation of the French Republic. It is interesting to note that the Mother of the Eternal God and the Fourth Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity speaks French with the finest Parisian accent.

THE scandalous way in which City of London charities have been misappropriated is a matter of common knowledge. In the columns of the *Islington Gazette* Mr. Hull has been calling attention to a similar instance in that district. An estate, which when the leases fall in, will produce many thousands a year, was left a good while ago for the benefit of

the poor, but, in consequence of a provision in the will that certain charges for the costs of masses for the soul of the dead were to be paid for out of the legacy, Bishop Wilson appropriated it to build and support the district churches on the plea that the bequest was a religious one and left for church purposes.

THAT dear old lady, the *Church Times*, gives several reasons why the Bible should be deemed the word of God. First,—Men were ready to die for it. Quite true. And now they are ready to *live* for it, some of them very handsomely. "Men do not die for an imposture," says the *C. T.* This is absolutely false. Men will die for anything, and every superstition in the world has had its martyrs. Second,—It answers the cravings of Humanity. False again. It only answers the cravings of those who have been nurtured on it. Five hundred million Buddhists, two hundred million Mohammedans, and some more hundreds of millions of other creeds, will have nothing to do with it. Of the three hundred million Christians who swear by it, the *C. T.* allows that "Some, alas! know little, and practically attend little to its precepts." *That's true* anyhow.

THE old lady goes on to ask where we can find a poem to rival Isaiah? Well, the Book of Job, which isn't Jewish at all, beats it. A poet called Shakespeare, too, wrote some plays which are generally considered the finest poetry in the world; and another called Shelley, wrote some lyrics which have never been surpassed. The *C. T.* evidently knows a lot about poetry and poets, for she tells us that Goethe founded his thoughts directly on the Bible. This is fresh news indeed. We suppose the *C. T.* does not know that Goethe said there were four things he detested—garlic, tobacco, bugs, and the Cross.

THE Rev. C. B. Brigstock says that Atheism is unworthy the attention of any intelligent man, and then confesses himself an idiot by preaching a sermon on it, which he publishes for other idiots.

THE *Christian* has a long article on "Giving," in which it complains that the people don't give the clergy as much as they should. Ten per cent. is the smallest proportion of their incomes due to the Lord—that is, to his priests. It is the old, old story. "Hear my children," said the Italian monk, "what the church-bells say—*Dando, Dando, Give-Give, Give-Give.*" That is the cry of the priests all over the world.

MAJOR COURAN states that "lapsed masses, dangerous classes, ruffians, and outcasts of all kinds, are the very material out of which to enlist recruits for the army of Christ." We quite agree with him.

OUR Christian contemporaries are extremely fond of similes, but they don't always use them properly. For instance, one of them gives an account of the mission work at Margate, and adds that "fruit has been reaped in the conversion of souls." We never knew that fruit was reaped before.

SOME of the prayers besought in the *Christian* are very funny. One is "For a young man, converted last year, who is terribly afflicted by the Evil One." Well, if that's the result of conversion, it's evidently a bad business. We wonder what the Devil does to the poor young man. Does he come at night and stick pins in the bed, pull away the pillow, fill the room with sulphur, and send a lot of little devils scampering along the walls?—Another is that Cetewayo may return to Zululand a child of Christ, and carry the Gospel message to his subjects. We suspect that Cetewayo will carry back quite other things: some fine blankets, and several bottles of whisky. Perhaps he wouldn't mind a little Communion wine.

ON the occasion of the opening of a new organ in Sheffield, recently, the Archbishop of York said that it was all very well to say we did not need music to worship Almighty God. This was very true, but people might as well say we can give up our own fine houses and music. Yet we had these, and should also offer the best of our things to God. We should not study our own comfort without thinking of what was seemly towards God. His Grace apparently suggests that his deity is actuated by a similar vulgar vanity to that which reigns in the houses of the fashionable world.

THE greatest care is to be taken of the souls of our soldiers out in Egypt. A cargo of Wesleyan, Catholic, Presbyterian, and other clergymen, has been sent out as per invoice furnished by Mr. Childers. Thereabout *Vanity Fair* tells a story of a clergyman who, finding all his exhortations fail to bring the men to take the Sacrament, spoke to the Brigade-Major, after which he had plenty of applicants, for the soldiers were told off to take the Holy Sacrament in sections. Thus is the blessed cause of religion served in the army.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures twice to-day (Sunday, September 3rd) in London: Morning, at 11.30, Midland Arches; Evening, at 7, Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville, N.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

September 5th, Walworth; 10th, Hall of Science, London; 17th, Hall of Science, London; 24th, Nottingham.

October 1st, Claremont Hall, London; 5th, Hall of Science, London; 8th, Leeds; 12th, Hall of Science; 15th, Halifax; 19th, Hall of Science; 22nd, Manchester; 26th, Hall of Science; 29th, Portsmouth; October 30th and 31st, Southampton.

November 5th, Heckmondwike; 12, Liverpool; 19th, Hall of Science, London; 26th, Claremont Hall, London.

December 3rd, Huddersfield; 10th, Bradford; and 17th, Grimsby.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Publisher, 15 Harp Alley, Farringdon Street, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9 South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS:—G. H. Warburton, Observer, R. Walker, J. S., R. S. B., E. Harvey, H. L. B.

A REFORMED WESLEYAN.—Thanks; we shall be glad to hear further from you.

JNO. SANDERS.—We are much obliged to you for your trouble.

G. GRIFFITHS, newsagent, 32 Oldham Road, New Cross, Manchester, sells the *Freethinker*, which can be obtained any time after five o'clock on Thursday.

BOTH SIDES.—Thanks for your good wishes. We shall be ready for any issue, knowing that in the long run our cause must triumph. Canon Farrar will be dealt with in our next.

J. B. S.—We shall be very pleased to see your MS., but cannot promise insertion before inspecting it.

F. J. TAYLOR.—We think your previous letter was so worded as to lead to our misinterpretation of your position. Under the circumstances further discussion seems undesirable.

MR. RICHARDSON, 14 Lad Lane, Manchester, supplies the *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature.

E. SMITH.—Collecting-lists sent. We thank you for causing "a little stir" in Derby by distributing copies of the *Freethinker*. We need all the help our friends can give us to extend our circulation in face of the determined opposition we have to meet.

H. B. DRYSDALE.—You are quite wrong in saying that Christianity gives immortality. If we are immortal, it is a natural fact, and our belief does not affect it. Our experience has been that the blessed consolations of your creed are utterly worthless. You bewail your losses and cry over your griefs just like other people. We are quite content to "reap what we sow," but we certainly think hell is a trifle too hot for any sins we have committed. How is it that you pious folk always fancy some *one else* is going to be damned, and never *yourselves*?

IN answer to numerous correspondents we beg to state that "J. W." has obtained the numbers of the *Freethinker* he required.

F. M.—We are always glad to receive good jokes.

WORKING FREETHINKER.—Your joke was put with the rest and will appear in due course. We mean to keep up our "unflinching Freethought energy" as you call it.

S. C. FOX.—The copies were already supplied. You are doing the right thing. All Freethinkers should study and improve their minds. It isn't enough to be simply an anti-theologian. When fictions are gone, the reality remains.

G. HAWKINS.—Cuttings received with thanks.

W. H. HARRIS.—Too late.

M. SOUTHERN.—We thank the Leigh friends.

W. H. J.—Next week.

C. DURRANT.—The Kilburn Branch deserves the success it appears to obtain. We hope that your large sale of the *Freethinker* has something to do with it. Our readers will doubtless notice that this journal is sold at 11 Andover Place, Kilburn. Thanks for the cuttings.

M. P. J.—There is truth in what you say. The Tylers and Newdegates help our cause mightily without meaning to do so. Jokes are always welcome.

C. LONGLEY.—Writes that he sold 162 copies of the *Freethinker* last Sunday at Mile End. One member of the Finsbury Society has sold hundreds of copies on Blackfriars Bridge. Any disengaged Freethinker, who doesn't mind the work, could easily add a few shillings a week to his income in this way.

J. SOUTHON.—We are glad to hear that the Mansfield friends don't mean to be defeated. No doubt a hall can be procured elsewhere.

J. MEYERS.—Too late. We are sorry to hear of your being persecuted; but persevere.

S. C. C.—Booth's Army isn't worth all our time.

OWING to press of matter all subscriptions to the Defence Fund stand over till next week, when everything will be acknowledged up to date.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE *Jewish World* calls attention to the fact that the Syrian Colonisation Fund, recently called into existence by Lord Shaftesbury and others of the pious lord's way of thinking, has not as yet received the slightest support or encouragement from Jews, although avowedly established in their supposed interests. The Jews are in no haste to fulfil prophecy by going back to Jerusalem. It contains too many fleas and too few Gentiles. The Jews prefer living on the stranger rather than having to live on each other in the barren country which the Bible, surely in sarcasm, describes as flowing with milk and honey.

It will be indeed a great day when the Messiah comes in clouds and glory and the Hebrews all go back to the valley of Jehosophat. In consequence of a divine revelation through the medium of the *War Cry*, which announces the speedy approach of the great day, we are having a balloon prepared to migrate heavenwards. We mean to offer Sir Henry Tyler a seat in the car.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Jewish World* writes: "Many who should be among the leaders of our community, and who ought to show a better example, are daily marrying Christians. I do not blame the younger so much as the elder members of such families, for if they were to withhold the large dowries reaped by such happy bridegrooms we doubt whether such marriages would take place. What will be the end of this? If we unite with other creeds then farewell to Judaism. As for the other restrictions to our faith they are already disputed and disregarded."

COMING EVENTS.—The Archbishop of Canterbury is going to live on five hundred a year, and devote the rest of his fifteen thousand to maintaining Christianity instead of maintaining himself. Cardinal Manning intends to present a petition to Parliament, praying that the people may not be allowed to read the Bible, or that all passages praising good wine and inciting to drink may be eliminated therefrom. The Bishop of London, having provided handsomely for all his relatives, means to present the next rich living that falls into his hands to the Rev. S. D. Headlam. The Bishop of Manchester is about to publish a volume on late marriages, with an appendix on Communion wines. Sir Henry Tyler has invited Mrs. Besant to dine with him next Thursday, and specially requested her to bring the dog. Mr. Newdegate has asked Mr. Bradlaugh to drink zedone with him on the same day, and to bring a first instalment of that £500 wrapped up in a page of the Speaker's Commentary.

THE Rev. H. Grattan Guinness, the well-known anti-Atheist, is enjoying a tour through northern Europe. At Berlin he has made inquiries as to its "spiritual state," and he finds that with a population of 1,145,000 there are only forty-five churches with an attendance of less than 30,000.

MR. GUINNESS'S logic is peculiar. He traces God's hand in the Franco-German War, which "overthrew the greatest Catholic power in Europe." He does not see that the victorious nation has gone on steadily strengthening in infidelity. The Lord did not show very much sagacity.

A PIOUS contemporary informs the world that one of its correspondents has calculated that ten tracts given away every day amount to 3650 in a year. What a head for arithmetic that man must have! We wonder if he could tell us the exact number in leap year.

THE Congregationalists of the United States have lost 2,635 members during the past year. Of 297 churches, 119 did not make a single new member.

IN Hanover there is a population of 150,000, and church accommodation for only 15,000.

MAY I suggest to the person who is responsible for the advertising of the services at the Bristol Cathedral, that he might with advantage leave out the names at the end of the lines given announcing the anthems. The following, which I extract from an advertisement in the *Bristol Times and Mirror* of the 15th inst., read, to say the least of them, somewhat peculiarly. I give the complete list for the week:—Thy mercy Ousely; If we believe Goss; Lord, for Thy tender Farrant; Rejoice in the Lord Humphreys; Great and marvellous Monk; Lift up your heads Gibbons; Blessed be Thou Kent; Holy, holy, holy Crotch; I will lift up C. Whitfield; This is the day Green.—*Truth*.

THE Positive School, 19 Chapel Street, Lamb's Conduit Street, opens on Tuesday, September 5th (24 Gutenberg, 94), when Dr. Congreve will deliver an address in commemoration of Auguste Comte.

THE Philosophical Society of Berlin are about to issue a number of popular volumes dealing with philosophy. One of the first of the series will be an account of Herbert Spencer and his philosophy, by Herr Michelet.

DESPITE her strictures upon American affairs, the late Harriet Martineau is not without honor in that country. A monument is to be erected at Boston to her memory at the cost of the women of the United States. The American sculptress, Miss Annie Whitney, has been trusted with the model, which will be executed in marble.

THEME, WITH VARIATIONS.

THEME.

"For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii., 25).

VARIATIONS.

1. For it is easier for the kingdom of God to pass through a camel's eye than for a needle to enter a rich man. [Not if he sits down on the bald end of the needle, however.]

2. For it is easier for a camel to enter the kingdom of God than for a rich man to go through a needle's eye. [Especially if the rich man be fat and the needle a fine-eyed one.]

3. For it is easier for a needle's eye to enter the kingdom of God than for a rich man to go through a camel. [Were the camel as succulent as turtle, and the rich man an alderman of the City of London, he would "go through" the camel or "bust" in the attempt.]

G. S.

SAMBO'S ORIGIN.

WHY some men are black, others white, quite amazes
The masses not posted in lingo of "blazes;"
The reason is plain, and 'tis now my intention
To clear it all up, minus human invention.
Satan sat on a cypress in Eden's green garden,
Doing his level best his sad heart to harden
Against his great Master, who had just entered in,
To make the first man, without shame, sense, or sin;
Nick looked with surprise as the moulding went on,
And guessed Adam's form would become quite the *ton*;
His spirits, grown jealous, prompted him quick
To try the same dodge, and he did it quite slick.
He turned out a figure resembling young Adam,
Took one of his toe-nails and made him a madam;
But his mind and his soul were soon on the rack,
For *his homo* had turned out confoundedly black!
The reason was plain, and it kindled his ire—
He'd just come from hell, and been stoking the fire,
And having no soap, was as black as ten tinkers,
Which "set off" on his *homo*, barring his blinkers!
A river was running near by where he'd made him—
"Jump in and wash, Sambo!" Satan then bade him.
But Sambo, no spaniel, did not take to the water,
In fact was not like Mr. Beckwith's fair daughter.
Then Satan, in wrath, kicked him sharp from behind,
And the palms of his hands o'er the sands sharply grind,
With the soles of his feet, as he slid in the river,
Taking clean off the soot—but, Lord! he did shiver!
'Till Nick took him out, and thus to him said
(As with his hot hands he patted his head,
Which curled it like wool, as it does to this day,
Proving what I write true, what'er some may say),
"Sweet Sambo no water will take off this black,
And I can't stop to scrape you, for I must go back
To my legions in hell, for they know I'm away,
And the mice when the cat's out are devils to play.
So farewell, dear Sambo, when you're sent down to hell,
As I made you myself, I will then wash you well."
Then off went Old Nick on a cloud grand and brave,
And Cant seized on Sambo and made him a slave,
'Till Freethought arose, Cant's humbug to smother,
And made of poor Sambo a man and a brother.

W. D.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.—An Anderson gentleman has a little daughter that is exceedingly bright and witty for one of her years, and a few days ago, when the minister dined at her father's home and asked the customary blessing, she bowed her youthful head very low till the holy man had finished, and then, turning to him, asked, "You don't say that like my papa does." "How does papa say it, little one?" asked the proud father, who was anxious for his child to "show off." "Ah, you come in and look at mamma, and say, 'This is a — of a dinner for a white man to eat!'" The child was hurriedly taken from the table, and when she came back she looked very repentant indeed. But the meal was eaten without further comment.—*American paper.*

CHILDREN'S PARTY.—The following additional sums have been received: J. H. W., 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Payne, 4s.; Sir H. Tyler, 2s.

BLASPHEMY BY THE DUKE OF SOMERSET.

As the *Freethinker* is now being prosecuted for blasphemy, we have taken the trouble to cull a few extracts from the Duke of Somerset's book on "Christian Theology and Modern Scepticism," to show what a Conservative peer *can do in that line without being prosecuted.*

"The foreknowledge which selected Judas as an apostle suggests other moral difficulties which it is painful to reflect upon. In these instances the conduct ascribed to the divine Being appears to be irreconcilable with the eternal principles of justice and of benevolence. There is a discord between religion and morality."—Page 40.

"This controversy in the early Church necessarily qualifies our belief in apostolic inspiration. Those persons who maintain that the apostles were miraculously endowed with all knowledge essential to the promulgation of Christianity must equally deny history and controvert Scripture. The apostles were, it is said, men of like passions with ourselves; it must also be admitted that they were men of like limited knowledge. We see in their vehemence the tongues of fire, but we look in vain for the holy inspiration."—72.

"Assuredly the book of Acts bears false witness against a Christian apostle."—85.

"After wandering through the maze of legend, of philosophy, of history, and of criticism relating to the source of evil, to the Devil and his works, the conclusion is that all these doctrines belong to the imaginations of men, and cannot be ascribed to the word of God."—110-111.

"The disbelief of the Jews in Jesus was indispensable to the scheme of the Atonement. This observation suggests endless difficulties."—136.

"In vain preachers now exhort to faith, and in vain they denounce infidelity; some stronger law overrules mankind, and everywhere as experience advances faith recedes. The first element of faith is belief. Is belief, then, in itself a virtue? Philosophers, historians, scientific teachers, all our modern instructors warn us against facility of belief, which they delate to be the chief obstruction to knowledge, the bane of science, and the source of innumerable calamities."—144.

"During the first centuries of Christianity, speculative dogmas and verbal subtleties constituted the chief matter of religious thought. The Fathers of the Church seem to have emulated the old philosophers of Greece in their love of disputation, and no sooner had these controversialists folded up an incomprehensible dogma in unintelligible words, than the ignorant multitudes of Alexandria, of Constantinople, and Milan, adopted it as the holy symbol of Christianity. Intense feelings of fanaticism were engendered, and populous cities were excited to tumult and bloodshed by conflicts upon questions which no man living could understand."—153.

"When we look back to those controversies of early times we are surprised and shocked at the profane audacity of these churchmen. If any theologians in the present century had constructed creeds subdividing the Deity into persons, and then deciding upon their relationship, equality and consubstantiality—the presumption and impropriety of such vain conceits would have offended the whole Protestant world."—154.

"Educated and merciful men believed that they were doing what was agreeable to God when they delivered over a heretic to the fire, and thus gave him a foretaste of that penalty which, according to their belief, awaited him to all eternity."—158.

"The Reformation brought no immediate relief to suffering humanity. The Reformers affixed the charge of heresy to any opinion which differed from their own. . . . Under this definition of heresy the fires of martyrdom were piled up afresh, and men who had denounced the assumption of infallibility by the Church of Rome, now pronounced judgments as if they were themselves infallible."—159.

"To heresy we are indebted for a large portion of our civil and religious liberty."—160.

"It has been often observed that amidst the complex dispensations under which society has worked out its progress to a higher state of civilisation, heresy has performed an important part. We pray indeed for unity of faith; but the variety of our beliefs supplies the best security for our mental freedom, and perhaps also for our religious advancement."—161.

"Where infallibility is not claimed, heresy cannot be reasonably imputed. Thus in Protestant communities, under the combined influence of milder manners and of modern thought, the word heresy has become obsolete; it has been altogether banished from civilised society and placed in the index of prohibited expressions."—161.

What will Sir Henry Tyler say to this? Will he prosecute the Duke of Somerset and his publisher, or will he leave that to Messrs. Bradlaugh, Foote, and Ramsey? MARS.

THE Rev. B. Wilder says "God only requires common honesty." Judging from the accounts of his dealings with which we have been favored, we cordially agree that common honesty is the one article he stands most in need of.

A LAY FROM AN EARTHLY LYRE.

Oh, there are *lyres* in heaven, you know,
Right close to the white throne,
Yet I'll not *lie* if you'll *stand* this
Sweet lyric of my own.

I'd sing of how God made the world,
From a great deal of nought,
And thus it was a *naughty* world—
O what a *naughty* thought!

I'd tell of Eve, and Adam too,
In Eden's garden fair;
And how God let one *apple* be
The ruin of the *pair*.

We know that now mankind fell trees,
But it was different then,
For, wondrous and inspired fact,
One tree did fell all men.

I'd sing of Noah and the Ark,
A subject never *dry*;
Of how a (*n*)arrow-memoried God
His *bow* put in the sky.

So that he never might forget
The promise he had vowed
To water his flock never-more
(He'll never be allowed).

I'd tell how faithful Abram bade
His handsome wife to lie,
So she might lie with Egypt's king—
You know the reason *why*.

I'd chant of upright Jacob, too,
And all the Bible story,
Of Moses, and that virtuous lot
Now gone to God and glory.

The mystery of the Trinity
I'd make you to believe,
You should conceive the Holy Ghost
As Mary did conceive.

I'd tell how God a nation chose
To love and favor well;
But science-ignorant, he knew not
That the *dew* always fell.

O Christian! your *prophets* love
Or dread your soul's dread *loss*;
And do not cross a cross-killed God
By throwing down your cross.

O bear your cross, yet don't get cross,
You'll soon cross "over there."
Your *soul* be saved, yourself be *healed*,
Where *awl* at last is "fair."

I'm rather sceptical, you'll see,
Yet knowledge I desire;
And if I use my reason's *light*,
Your God will find me *fire*.

And may be I'm a bad young man,
With Adam's great crime tainted,
P'raps I'm green, too, and therefore can't
Be black as I am painted.

If Adam sinned for me, now I
For him will also sin;
And sure by putting out one's thoughts
One can't be taken in.

But pull along your ship of sham,
With priestly wooden *skulls*,
You'll cow no more offending calves
With angry papal bulls.

WITTIVON.

A YOUNG lady who has no objection to the revision of the New Testament, writes to say that the phrase "purple and fine linen" conveys no idea of luxury to her mind, and she suggests, as an improvement, "sealskin and black velvet."

"WELL, Jack," said a young fellow to a friend who had that day visited the British Museum, "what did you see?" "Well," said Jack, "I saw the jaw-bone that Samson slew the Philistines with, Aaron's rod, and other antiquities mentioned in Scripture. But what pleased me most was to see the napkins and feeding bottle of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION.—From the Queen of Sheba to Queen Victoria, from Solomon to Mr. Robert Lowe, the course of this world has developed a steady progress in civilisation, with which progress Christianity has had nothing whatever to do.—*H. W. Pullen*, "Modern Christianity a Civilised Heathenism," p. 51.

OF WHAT USE ARE MIRACLES? AN ORTHODOX TESTIMONY.—This fact, however, that the kingdom of lies has its wonders no less than the kingdom of truth, would be alone sufficient to convince us that miracles cannot be appealed to absolutely and simply, in proof of the doctrine which the worker of them proclaims; and God's word expressly declares (Deut. xiii., 1-5) a miracle does not prove the truth of a doctrine, or the divine mission of him that brings it to pass.—*Dean Trench*, "Notes on the Miracles of our Lord," p. 25.

THE PART OF PHILOSOPHY.—Let us emancipate ourselves from vain and foolish fears, and as vain and foolish hopes, and be sure that he that has not philosophised himself into ease, will know none. Religion will take a thousand shapes to fright him; ghastly in all, she will torment his days, and his nights will be still more hideous. The parson gets on, when the nurse gets off (unless he rides double), and the saddled beast is guided about at will. But philosophy builds that liberty, that repose, no alarm approaches, nor terror shakes; and the greatest good is wisdom.—*Peter Annet*, "The Resurrection of Jesus Demonstrated to have no Proof," p. 52; 1774.

THE EVANGELISTS.—Nor is it possible to criticise the four Gospels without seeing that the writers were utterly incompetent for the task of history and ignorant of its requirements. They are not even aware that when they attest marvellous events, the reader will need to be informed who is the writer, when and where he lived, and what are his sources of knowledge. This alone gives us the measure of their dangerous simplicity. They evidently calculate on unlimited and indiscriminating credulity in the reader. Just look at the first chapter of Matthew. It invests dreams with divine sanctity, and gives no hint when a dream is to be accounted folly and when it is a divine revelation. No one, then, any more than now, believed all dreams to be divine. It reports a dream which (it says) occurred to Joseph, before the birth of Jesus, as basis for believing in a physical miracle of cardinal importance. If a modern writer dealt with us in this style, he would meet only indignation and contempt.—*Prof. Francis Wm. Newman*, "Religion not History," pp. 17, 18; 1877.

PROFANE JOKES.

AN EASY CREDITOR.—The parson extended the box to Bill, and he slowly shook his head. "Come, William, give something," said the parson. "Can't do it," said Bill. "Why not? Is not the cause a good one?" asked he. "Yes, good enough; but I am not able to give anything," answered Bill. "Pooh! pooh! I know better; you must give me a better reason than that." "Well, I owe too much money. I must be just before I am generous, you know." "But, William, you owe heaven a larger debt than you owe any one else." "That's true, parson; but heaven ain't pushing me like the rest of my creditors."

During a clerical conference, the following conversation was heard between two newsboys: "I say, Jim, What's the meaning of so many ministers being here all together?" "Why," answered Jim, scornfully, "they always meet once a year to swap sermons."

In the castles and palaces of the ancient nobility of France, the tapestry frequently presents memorials of their pride of ancestry. On the tapestry at the Duke of Choiseul's is a representation of the Deluge, in which is seen a man running after Noah, and calling out, "My good friend, save the archives of the Choiseul family."

SHUTTING HIM UP.—A jovial artist was painting some divine, who felt it incumbent upon him to give the painter a moral lesson at one of his sittings. Somewhat in awe of the artist, he began rather nervously; but as the knight of the brush painted away without any sign of annoyance, he gathered courage as he proceeded, and finally administered a pretty good sermon. He paused for a reply, and confessed afterwards that he never felt so insignificant in his life as when the artist, with the urbane but positive authority of his profession, merely said, "Turn your head a little to the right, and shut your mouth."

WHAT NEXT?—Minister (reading in Church)—"Man shall not live by bread alone." One of 'em (rousing from slumber, indignantly): "I should think not, neither! what 'ud become o' the butchers?"

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