

# 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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SEPTEMBER 9, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## SECOND LETTER FROM MR. FOOTE.

*Her Majesty's Prison, Holloway, August 24, 1883.*

DEAR AVELING,—I write to you as before. Mrs. Foote quite understands why, and is content with seeing me.

Only a few hours ago I heard that Wheeler is once more ill. The news is a heavy blow to me. I thought he was perfectly recovered, and looked forward to meeting him unchanged; but now that prospect is full of gloom. A feeling haunts me that my presence might restore him, and this deepens my misery. Whatever bigotry might inflict on me, I am too proud to give it anything but scorn; but for his sake I could even supplicate pity from a North. He is endeared to me by fifteen years of pure and perfect friendship. But that is not all. He has always been a devoted servant of the cause. He was an ardent and profound Freethinker at the age of 18, and already a contributor to the *National Reformer*. Through all my struggles his generous aid was ever ready. He wrote for the *Secularist* and the *Liberal* from the first number to the last with scarcely any intermission. When the *Freethinker* started his pen was again at my service; and during what I may call the "prosecution months" he was more helpful than all others. Since he became my sub-editor he has, of course, received some remuneration; but all his previous work was done gratuitously, in the intervals of a never abundant leisure. For these reasons I desire that no necessary expense may be spared in his case. The outlay can be charged to my account. If my friend should die (these things are terrible, but must be faced) I wish him to be buried in a modest private grave at Highgate with every mark of honor. But may this tragedy of persecution be averted, and my friend restored to health and sanity; for the whole mob of political intriguers, city sharpers, legal vultures, and bitter zealots, who have wrought this mischief, are not worth one beat of his tender and loving heart.

I find I cannot at present say all I would of Sir W. Harcourt's amazing statement that I am imprisoned for "obscene" libel. I must leave the vindiction of my name to my friends until I am free to protect it myself. But I trust the Freethought party will weigh all the insults it has of late received, and reflect whether it is wise or manly to continue allegiance to a political party which is indisposed to allow Freethinkers any public rights except such as can be extorted and compelled. Voltaire always saw, what Paine perceived after many lessons, that Freethought must stand before everything else; and surely there can be little question of this when the orthodox majority is bent on active oppression, and the orthodox minority is prepared for nothing but formal and feeble protests. Our best resource is a scornful courage and a proud appeal to those great instincts of justice and fair-play which lie beyond priestcraft and privilege in the hearts of the masses. I do not, for

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instance, believe that the Blasphemy Laws will be repealed by any agitation; for never will orthodoxy agree to repeal them until they are useless. No, we must reduce them to futility by a vigorous propaganda of Freethought. For the first time juries have disagreed, and chances are already slightly against a verdict of guilty. Now the jury is the hand by which the enemy grasps us, and when we have absolutely secured the twelfth man we shall have amputated the *thumb*.

Although I cannot say I am ill, confinement is telling on me generally, and the horrible monotony of this life is very depressing. Yet by an exercise of will I manage to dwell mostly far above this human kennel and its mean distractions. The worst half of my journey is done, and the rest of the road, though rough, is all downhill.

I still go to chapel by way of inoculation. Besides, it's a change. After the sermon I often think, "Heavy tragedy all the week, and high comedy on Sunday."

Of my brother-martyr I know nothing. He is only a short distance away, but round the corner in another wing, and might as well be in Mesopotamia. My best regards to the poor old lady, his mother. She'll soon see her boy again. And as for a certain promise of mine, I can't hear of redeeming it for the next twenty years.

I suppose Mr. Bradlaugh is jaw-boning the Philistines with a better weapon than Samson's, and I am anxious to hear of the slaughter.

Holyoake's sputter, however virulent, would only amuse me if I could read it, for I don't take him *au sérieux* as you appear to. That he should attack me when his friends and employers have me safe in one of their prison hutches is characteristic. Leave him alone, and you will find the longevity of his new enterprise (I forget its number) correspond with its title.

I congratulate you on your conduct of *Progress*, and am afraid of coming to spoil your success. My thanks to the contributors, one and all. I don't know how the *Freethinker* is going on, but I have no apprehensions. It is my fixed resolve to make my terrible bantling a greater terror than ever. I have a plan for making the bigots rage impotently, and something also in store for the Tories. These and other projects revolve in my mind, often in the night watches, and are attaining to beautiful symmetry and clearness.

Enclosed is a further list of books, of which the Governor will kindly take charge as before.

I have applied for three visitors and an extension of time for the visit. If allowed, Mrs. Besant could come too. The Governor will signify how many can come on the back of the card when he sends it. With many thanks to yourself, and remembrance to my host of friends, north, south, east and west.

Yours ever,

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—I particularly wish to thank the Committee, and Mrs. Besant in especial, for all her kindness.

## JUMPING COMMENTS UPON THE BIBLE.

(Continued from page 274.)

And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark (Gen. vi., 19.)—My readers! I am puzzled and bewildered, for I do not see how Noah did what he was commanded. Some blasphemous persons will tell you that the flood was not universal; but such men are "clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," because they contradict the Bible, which says plainly that the flood should "destroy all flesh from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die" (Gen. vi., 17); "and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth" (vii. 4). Read the whole of the seventh chapter, and you will find it stated that this threat was executed to the letter—no living thing remaining except those in the ark! By-the-by, it seems rather unfair that all land animals should have been drowned, while those in the sea were not hurt, as verse 22 implies. Perhaps the "finny monsters of the deep" had not sinned, though, and corrupted their way. That is an interesting point for orthodox commentators to clear up. They have the holy ghost to guide them into all truth; he never assists me.

Noah took into the ark two and two of all flesh, and suitable food for them all; a stock of provisions for a year or more.

(1) BUTTERFLIES. For the cabbage butterflies (*Pieridi*) he must have planted a kitchen-garden in the ark; nettles would be needed for the *vanessæ*; the white admiral lives on honey-suckles when a caterpillar; the poplar butterfly must have horse-droppings; the purple emperor would require an oak tree or a gooseberry bush; the *satyridi* live upon grasses, elms, and hawthorns. Noah must have embarked a whole country for butterflies alone. I have mentioned only a few.

(2) MOTHS would be equally difficult to manage. The bee-shaped *sesia* lays its eggs on the bark of poplars, and the caterpillars eat into the tree. They remain caterpillars for two years, by the way; others must have flowers, the honey of which they sip while on the wing; another moth needs the *euphorbia* to feed upon; others, oleanders, though fuchsias are not refused on occasion; the squeaking death's-head moth needs the potatoe plant or the jasmine, though it does not object to a hive of honey; to satisfy another moth, Noah must have brought in a *Banksia* bush from Australia; the *lasiocampa* is said to live on heather; the *lackey* moth is fond of apple-tree leaves; the goat moth needs old trunks of elms or willows to excavate into galleries; the caterpillars of the *acronycta* are fond of the mosses and lichens which grow on trees, walls, etc.; one kind of *tortricina* feeds on green peas in the pods; another gets into apples and pears; another into plums; others into acorns and beech-nuts, chestnuts, etc.; some of the *timeidæ* moths are the pests that destroy garments.

(3) Among *hymenoptera*, some of the saw-flies want rose-trees for their eggs, etc.; another turnips; another firs and pines; the gall-flies (*Cynipsidæ*) need trees to puncture in order that galls may grow and protect their eggs and larvæ.

Ants are among the most interesting beings in the world. It would probably be of little or no use to take two of them into the ark. You need at least three to carry on the affairs of an ant-nest. The male and female of the common ants have wings, the workers none. The latter do all the work, construct the nest and keep it in repair, take special care of the eggs, removing them from spot to spot to keep them at the right temperature, rip them open to let the larvæ out at the right time, and nurse the young ones till able to do for themselves. Two of them could not construct a nest. Moses and the holy ghost did not know that. The mason ants and the miner ants would be as helpless in pairs as the little red ones.

The *formica fuliginosa* lives in old trunks of trees, which it tunnels in a most marvellous manner. Others get into the beams of houses and hollow them out. What Noah would have done with a few of those in his ark it is easy to imagine: he and his whole menagerie would have gone to the bottom, for they would have riddled his ship for him till it was no stronger than a handbox.

The *polyergus rufens* is a warrior ant. They are only males and females, and do no work. They make war upon the nests of the black ants, steal their larvæ, and carry them off to their nests, where the prisoners are reared as slaves and compelled to work for their masters. Certain American ants, also, are said to follow this trade.

Noah might have been at his wit's end with the Driver ants of West Africa. They range about in large armies; having, like the ancient saints, no certain dwelling place. They march by night. The army is divided into three groups, soldiers to attack and disable the prey, assistants to divide the prey into portable portions, and the laborers. They are terrible things, and few animals can resist them. They have been known to kill the python, the largest serpent in the country. When they enter a dwelling, mice, lizards, and cockroaches get out as fast as possible. They visit all dirty houses and towns where scavenging is needed. A few of those would have emptied the ark in a short time.

The excavating insects would have given Noah no little trouble. When adult they are strict vegetarians, and yet they have to provide for flesh-eating offspring. There are four species of them, which differ somewhat amongst themselves. The mother digs a hole in the earth, a tree, or wall. Having prepared the nests she attacks caterpillars, spiders, etc. These she stings, so as to disable and paralyse, but not to kill. The prey is placed in the nest and the eggs deposited. The young larvæ find ready for them living food as soon as they are ready to eat it, and the victim, though stung and half eaten, still lives till his enemy has had enough of him. Such is one of the ways of divine providence, though the writer of Genesis did not know of it. The *scolia* goes to even less trouble, for it finds a larva of a beetle in the ground, digs down to it, stings it so as to render it helpless and torpid without killing it; and then deposits its egg under the skin of its victim, which is by and by devoured by the young *scolia*. How did Noah manage for all these? Neither he nor his god knew anything of these matters. If they had they would never have undertaken to save the twos and twos of all flesh!

Need I mention the fact that bees also could not have been preserved without more than a pair of each species? I must pass over beetles, spiders, and other insects, and merely mention the fact that most insects have parasites, as well as many larger animals. Besides, why were some of them preserved at all? Fleas and bugs, the itch-insect, mosquitoes, *pediculi capitis*, locusts, ticks, phylloxera, the tsetses, etc.? And why were the tapeworm and the trichina preserved? Trichina usually enters the human system in underdone pork; I presume it entered the ark in Ham.

More than half of the insects taken into the ark might well have been excluded, and many of them would have been if there had been an enlightened superintendent appointed to oversee the embarkation. As it was, they were all taken in, and Noah must have provided them with sufficient food for a whole year and more. Those who know anything of natural history can well enough perceive that he must have carried in a slice of every country in the world, and must have had some means of reproducing all the world's various climates to keep his freight alive and well. This must have been a heavy task, for we must remember that during the whole year the ark was floating five miles above the old sea-level, for the flood was more than five miles deep, as we shall see later on; and though the rigors of this arctic temperature may have been slightly modified by the general rise of what then was the earth's surface, yet the cold must have been intense; and the wonder is that the whole concern did not get crushed amongst the myriads of icebergs which must have abounded. Of course, nothing is too hard for the lord—except to do a sensible thing.

Next week I must notice the larger animals that were saved in the ark.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

THE Earl of Kildare, summoned to answer a charge of burning down the cathedral of Cashel, defended himself by saying that he thought the archbishop was in it.

WHEN the Duke of Ormond was viceroy, in the reign of Charles II., he was interviewed by a suitor for court-favor, who said, "I have no friends but god and your grace." "Poor man," replied Ormond, "you could not have two friends in the world who have less interest at court."

## HAS CHRISTIANITY BEEN A CURSE TO THE WORLD?

THE history of Christ is involved in mystery. Where he was born is not known. When he was born is equally obscure. That the Christ of the New Testament ever existed at all is a question long set at rest. Such a being could not possibly have existed. That a person called Christ, around whose history and career have clustered a number of extravagant mythological fancies, once lived in Palestine, and made himself notorious by his eccentricity and paradoxical notions, is quite probable. That he essayed to reform the ideas of his time, and aroused against himself the suspicion of the powers in authority and the ignorant fanaticism of the people, is also consistent with probability. The question, however, here demanding cursory notice is, have the doctrines of the Christ depicted in the New Testament improved humanity or retarded civilisation?

Men of the world at the present day are not Christians. Their profession is negated by their practice. Were they to adopt the principles enunciated by the eccentric being pictured in the synoptics they would soon find themselves inside the walls of the workhouse, or require the special attention of the medical gentlemen who have made phases of cerebral aberration their specialty. It is a fact, recognised by the medical fraternity, that districts in which religious enthusiasm exists on a large scale, are generally if not invariably distinguished by numerous instances of insanity. Some instances corroborative of this generalisation have been afforded to the public only recently where the Salvation Army and kindred institutions have flourished for a time.

The essential doctrines of Christianity where they have been acted up to in anything like a literal sense, have proved enormously potent for mischief. Christianity, like other creeds professing to be derived from an infallible source, produces three distinct effects upon those professing belief in its dogmas.

(1) It encourages the spirit of intolerant dogmatism. When an individual is under the impression that he or she has the truth and that no one, except those holding the same opinions, can possibly be right, the result is an assumption of superiority not always based upon a foundation that will stand investigation. Dogmatism and ignorance are closely allied, and when you find a dogmatic Christian rejoicing in the assumed infallibility of his theology, you will invariably find a shallow-pated ignoramus whose intolerance of liberal views is in exact proportion to the superficiality of his intellectual acquirements. Dogmatism is a detestable trait in human character even if it can justify itself by an appeal to a brilliant record, and that Christianity fosters and encourages its cultivation is a statement testified by innumerable and ever-recurring instances.

(2) Christianity is the foe of intelligent co-operation. It, in place of promoting social harmony among men of all shades of opinion for the promotion of human welfare, isolates men of different views. Really Christian men, following the precepts of their "divine" master, hold the idea of co-operation with avowed and unflinching heretics, for useful purposes, in abomination. This explains the reason why, when heretics have ever broached any scheme for the amelioration of existent conditions, they have had obstacles thrown in their way by their Christian brethren. Christianity is broken up into innumerable sections. The members of each section are not only bitter against the pioneers of Freethought, but are ever busy railing against the members of other sections differing from them on unimportant points.

(3) Christianity encourages persecution. No sooner does a man give to the world the result of his untrammelled thought than he is picked out by the followers of the lowly Nazarine for a butt at which they can throw their verbal mud-balls. Christians find justification for this execrable policy from the recorded sayings and doings of the visionary who cursed barren fig-trees and commanded his followers to sell their clothes and buy a sword.

Christianity, therefore, encourages dogmatism, isolation and persecution. Has Christianity been a curse to the world? For eighteen hundred years, wherever it has gone it has left a trail of blood and darkened the soul of man by deeds of savagery, infamy and heartless cruelty.

W. IRVING.

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN AFRICA.

A CAPTAIN of the First West India Regiment has just given to the world his testimony concerning the success of Christianity in portions of Africa.

His book, "The Land of Fetish," deals with the regions around the Gambia. It must be the reverse of encouraging to those who supply the funds for the promotion of the study of ancient Hebrew literature and morality amongst the blacks, and a proper comprehension of the gods described therein by the colored races. A Christian critic urges, in excuse for the failure of the glorious gospels, that in such an unhealthy and unattractive region it is not to be expected that the best specimens of laborers for the master's vineyard can be procured. Such a statement lets a sidelight upon the motives of the missionaries; but Freethinkers, however, have yet to learn that Christ or any of his apostles ever taught that the best men were to be sent to the most healthy places, while the worst go to those regions where the most energy and perseverance are required.

The converts made by the missionaries are splendid examples of the power of the gospel. Captian Ellis says of the monarch of Bonny: "King Pepple is like the average of Christianised negroes in West Africa. A few years ago he was expelled from his kingdom by his subjects, on account of the trouble he was bringing on the community by his habit of obtaining goods from the traders, and then repudiating the debt; and went to England to spend the money with which his peculiar method of doing business had provided him.

In England he was baptised by the Bishop of London, and made much of by indiscriminating persons.

Before leaving England he induced several credulous Englishmen to accompany him, promising them high and lucrative positions about his court and person. After having made elaborate preparations, and being put to the expense of the journey to Bonny, one can imagine the feeling of these men on finding the palace consisted of a mud hut and the kingdom of a few acres of swamp, even in which limited monarchy his authority was *nil*. In 1876 Pepple returned to England to try his old plan of obtaining goods on credit, and was again treated as a great African potentate, being entertained by the Lord Mayor, and his daily doings being duly chronicled by the press."

A similar characteristic result of Christian teaching is shown in another locality. Captain Ellis visited old Calabar with a guide, who pointed out to him the doors of the granaries of honest Mohammedans, which were merely bolted; and a piece of paper inscribed with a verse from the Koran was fastened to each as a protection from thieves. The following conversation ensued:—

"These are very foolish people, sar," said the guide.

"Are they? How?" asked Captain Ellis.

"They put dem writings on the bolts and then think nobody can open the doors."

"Oh!" exclaimed the captain.

"Yes; and them Maudingos won't touch them when they are left so—they 'afraid to," continued the guide.

"You're not afraid, I suppose?"

"Me? no; I don't care for grisgris. By'mby I show you my farm: when these foolish people sleep on dark night I take as much corn as I want for planting time. They think it must be the devil," and he chuckled at the joke.

"What religion are you, then?" asked the captain.

"Oh! I belong to the Wesleyans."

"Ah! I thought so," added Captain Ellis.

Speaking of English missions, he says they are complete failures. The Germans do better, because they teach the natives industrial occupations, whilst the English are, apparently, most successful in inculcating into the native mind an ambition to follow that line of roguery which prevailed so considerably amongst Old Testament heroes.

W. J. STUDDARD.

THE *Republican*, for September, has a good cartoon on its front page, embodying (literally) the method in which the land, as held to-day, crushes rather than supports the people. The most interesting thing in an interesting number is the memoir of the veteran reformer, E. T. Craig. Mr. Standing's humor comes out in a part parody of "Home they brought her warrior dead," too good not to be quoted in full:

"A DOMESTIC IDYLL.

"Home they brought her warrior—drunk:

She nor wept nor uttered sigh;

And her maiden's watching said—

A great many things that the pressure on our space precludes us from publishing."

MR. J. E. LUSH writes us that a few days ago he "dispatched a memorial to the Home Secretary, as dictated in the *Freethinker*, signed by seventy memorialists. It was headed by a Congregationalist minister, and contained the names of two Unitarian ministers as well."

## ACID DROPS.

CHARLES SPURGEON has been giving vent to his feelings with regard to the continued imprisonment of the men who at Strome Ferry prevented the dispatch of railway-trucks which had been filled with fish on the Sabbath. Mr. Spurgeon says "These men conceived that god's law was about to be broken." It is a pity they couldn't see that "god's" fish might be spoiled through delay in transit, thereby making less food for the poor.

SPURGEON says: "Would that we had a people in England good enough to be capable of this Scotch crime." It is lucky for him that we have not. Fancy a fanatical mob hurrying to the gasworks and stopping the men working on the Sabbath to supply gas-light for his Tabernacle. Or imagine a mob of fanatics stopping the tramcars conveying Spurgeon's worshippers to their god. No one can deny that (before Spurgeon's temporary removal to Exeter Hall) hundreds of his congregation arrived by tramcars. There could be seen a regular collection of holy books in the hands of the passengers. And there was "such a getting downstairs" when the cars stopped at Spurgeon's gospel-academy. And yet our worthy gospel-monger would perhaps like to have the council of the Sunday League butchered on the front steps of his tabernacle next Sunday morning.

We recently suggested that Jahveh should destroy a continental theatre on the Sabbath by way of keeping up his reputation. He will have a splendid opportunity on Sunday for taking summary vengeance on those who have dared to desecrate his day. Mr. Spurgeon will be preaching at Exeter Hall on the day in question. Platform tickets, 1s.

TEMPERANCE is an excellent virtue. It is a pity that this virtue is not practised by the advocates of teetotalism. Few more sadly comic spectacles have been provided us of late than that of a wealthy miller of Salisbury and his vulgar guest, Mr. R. T. Booth, marching with bottles to the river, and pouring into its waters the wine that might have been a life-giving medicine to poor sick folk in hospitals. R. T. Booth is evidently anti-Christian. Christ turned water into wine. Booth turns wine into water.

In the month of August Wantage held its annual flower-show. Mr. J. R. Holmes, secretary, exhibited a floral device of scarlet and white flowers, surrounded with ivy-leaves. The subject was "*Ecrasez l'infâme*." Voltaire's immortal phrase was translated by the Rev. Dr. Camerelli, "Crush the infamous Christ." Then the Rev. Dr. Camerelli and the vicar of the parish, the Rev. James Macdougall, flew at the device (which was eight feet long and two feet broad) and tore it down, jumped on it, and threw it into a muck-hole. Mr. Holmes rescued his device, but the clergymen evidently thinking it a device of the evil one, assailed it with sticks, flinging it to the ground, and gave the device in charge to a policeman. Camerelli shook fists, wanted to horsewhip and called Mr. Holmes a blackguard. Macdougall was livid. Later the Rev. C. A. Joy saw the maltreated device. The French had to be translated to him. He then wanted to kick Mr. Holmes off the ground. But Joy is a cripple and Holmes is a strong young man. Hence neither kicking nor horsewhipping came off. Other translations volunteered by the parishioners of the amiable and able Christian clergymen were, "Crush Christ," "Christ is infamous," "There is no god."

A CAPE TOWN despatch says:—"Dr. Maurice Davies, a well-known London clergyman, who was one of the clergy of Dean Williams, and belonged at Grahamstown to the party which separated from the Church of South Africa, was dismissed by the dean and vestry for alleged immoral conduct with a girl who was one of his parishioners. This was commented on in a paper alleged to belong to or inspired by the dean. Mr. Davies brought an action for libel therefore against the dean, which he won in the magistrate's court. The decision, however, has been reversed on appeal by the superior court, the presiding judge of which characterised Mr. Davis as a "wicked, immoral and profligate priest."

THE *Naval Brigade* for August has reached us. It is edited by Miss Wintz, who does not wince apparently when she issues as her frontispiece a picture of Nelson looking at the signal to cease action with his blind eye. Doubtless Nelson was very brave, and even, from the point of view of carnage, wise in ignoring the orders of his superior officer. But practically he lied on this occasion, and Miss Wintz (to whose lord lying lips are said to be an abomination) ought to know better than teach sailors to be untruthful. As however she reprints Mr. Whitmore's falsehoods about secular leaders she gives yet further encouragement to untruth.

OTHER specialties of the *Naval Brigade* Notes are ungrammatical writing and the use of the word "nice." In five

successive paragraphs the latter word occurs four times. The paper notices the *Freethinker* very favorably. We quote part of one paragraph: "I hear on good authority that infidel papers and tracts are being widely circulated through secret agents on shore and afloat. Let everyone keep our friends in the navy well supplied with some of the many nice publications so easily obtainable now-a-days. Apply, Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street." The address is slightly altered.

"WHEN rogues fall out honest men come by their own." When the army falls foul of the religious people we may rejoice. We print from the *Broad Arrow* part of an article on the recent disgraceful case at Devonport:—"All downright wickedness is not done by the red-coats. Stiggins may turn up his pious eyes and denounce the depth of iniquity to be discovered even in a drummer-boy. Wesleyan local preachers may continue to caution their dear Christian sisters against the wiles of the Devil in a red jumper, and Glengarry cap to conceal his horns; but for the future we shall hold that the soldier in South Devon at least is no longer to be considered the gay deceiver, and we shall credit the Plymouth and Devonport papers with having made known to the world once more—yes, once more—the black-coats, as a rule, are the villains of the social drama. . . . Some hoary-headed old vagabond in the rank of elder or deacon is every now and then detected and exposed in corrupting the innocent of the flock. It has, however, been reserved for a South Devon class-leader and Wesleyan local preacher to show up in all its ghastly hideousness the intimate connexion between cant and crime, the blasphemous phraseology of the black-coat seducer, even when virtually detected in his villany and practically admitting the truth of the vile heartlessness with which he is charged."

SCENE at Bournemouth. Outside a church on the Christchurch Road.

*Devil-dodger* (to passer-by): "My friend, will you not enter the house of god?"

*Passer-by*: "Who says it's god's house?"

*D. D.* (pointing to inscription over door): "My house shall be called the house of prayer."

*P. B.*: "You forget the rest of the verse. 'And ye have made it a den of thieves.' Good day."

The other day at Calne Petty Sessions a man named Durham was fined 5s. for not sending his child to school. The fine not being paid a distress warrant was issued but not enforced, the furniture being only worth a few shillings. The defendant was earning 11s. a week, had a wife and six children to support, and paid 1s. 9d. per week for rent. The Rev. Mr. Goddard, a Wiltshire clergyman, with a comfortable benefice, who sat as chairman, ordered the case to stand over for a month so that the fine might be extracted from the man's harvest earnings. This clergyman is like his God—hard hearted.

"STANDS Scotland where it did?" Unfortunately yes, and it appears to be likely to continue standing where it always has in regard to Sunday observance. Its position is in the very front rank of the army of bigotry, far behind the rear of that of Progress (the principle, not the magazine), and the former army is halting while it for the most part impotently hurls its darts at the soldiers of the latter as they march on.

LAST Tuesday, at the Inverness Police Court, Nathaniel Macdonald, a shepherd, was called to answer a charge of having infringed a section of the Inverness Burgh Act by driving a number of sheep through the streets of the burgh on the Sabbath day. When Nathaniel's name was called he did not appear. His bail was declared forfeited, and a warrant granted for his apprehension.

A SHORT time ago General Booth exhibited at his meetings, especially at Exeter Hall, one Jane Johnson, aged 84, who had been imprisoned 200 times for drunkenness. Booth said the Salvation Army had converted her and made her a sober hallelujah lass; and she testified to his audience that fact. The other day she determined to return to Leeds, her native place; but she also returned to strong drink, and was found surrounded by a mob of boys; and eventually brought before the magistrate, to be let off on her own recognizance to be of good behavior for three months. Perhaps what made her go wrong again was hearing of the wealthy miller's (of Salisbury) waste of good wine.

A DISTRAINT for rent took place on Monday at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Hartlepool. Of the goods put up for auction several sacred lots were sold, though they scarcely fetched the price of salt. A large brass crucifix from the centre of the altar went for 8s. Some holy water, vat, and a gong were knocked down for 2s. 2d.; an oaken lectern went for 1s. 2d.; and fourteen paintings representing the stations of the cross fetched 2s. each. The chalice, etc., were seized by the auctioneer's men and about to be removed, but the priest dared them to take these very sacred things away. They were allowed to remain. This sale must be a knock-down blow to the heavenly host, particularly to Peter.

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

Next week the illustrations in the "Freethinker" will be resumed. We shall also publish the correspondence between Dr. Edward Aveling and the Rev. C. J. Whitmore.

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

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture in the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, City Road, on Sunday, September 9. Subject:—7, "Blasphemers, Past and Present: Shelley and the Poets."

## CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, 13 Newman Street, Oxford Street, London, W.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post-free to any part of Europe, America, Canada, and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

RECEIVED.—H. C., G. Holden, Harry, T. R. Hinde, William Dolan, C. J., William J. Studdard, J. W. Butt, W. B. Thompson, Balaam's Ass, H. G. Swift, K. O'Keeps.

N. S.—Contributions to our paper may be unsigned or signed with *nom de plume* or with initials. We only require for ourselves the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. EDWIN FARRINGTON.—You have done well in your discussion with the Rev. C. J. Whitmore. He is not difficult to defeat except for his unscrupulous nature and his ill-breeding. Still, the complete victory you have won over him is very creditable. It shows how just is our cause when an atheist, so young as yourself, is not only more courteous and polite than a minister of the gospel, but is better read and more logical.

HARVEY CAMERON.—Very glad to have a letter occasionally from you. Should like to have one once a month if we can.

D. EVANS.—"Convocation Chant" will appear.

B. STEVENS.—We do not undertake to return rejected contributions. Both the articles have been read, but were hardly up to our standard.

G. HENTON.—The Rev. John Hammand is at once so ignorant and so untruthful, that it is not worth while noticing him; besides, the lies of his ignorance were published in the *Primitive Methodist*, and no educated person reads that.

F. J. WALLER.—We will think about republishing Christian Carols. We know nothing of the "Forbidden Book." There seems, unfortunately, little chance of our editor being released before the expiration of the twelve months.

AN anonymous writer, who signs himself "the one who made the remarks at Milton Hall," is asked to communicate with Dr. Edward Aveling.

A. R. CARTWRIGHT.—Good, but a little too heavy for our columns.

C. I. PHING.—Received. We fear the other articles have been received by Mr. Wheeler. They have not reached us. Ere you see this the account of the Freethought Congress will be public.

THOMAS BELL.—The only thing you can logically infer from the Old Testament account of the creation is that the writer knew nothing whatever of the lower animals. No mention is made of any animals lower than the Mammals, save in the vague phrase, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life." The writer only knew such animals as are known to the non-scientific observer of to-day. The whole of the lower classes of animals comprised under the sub-kingdoms, Protozoa and Cœlenterata, and all the world of microscopic things were not known to the writer of Genesis.

TRUTHSEEKER.—You'll see that we used the extract from the paper you sent us. We shall be always glad to hear from you, or any of your brother-sailors who are Freethinkers.

G. H. MAPLETON.—If you write to the manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, you will be able to obtain the title and index for your numbers of *Progress*.

THE interim editor of the *Freethinker* will be glad if all who have occasion to write or print his name will put it in the form, Dr. Edward Aveling, as there happen to be four Dr. Avelings in London.

SANDERS.—The Index of the *Freethinker* was in course of preparation by Mr. Wheeler. We hope it may be completed ere long. We are obliged for your suggestion on behalf of *Progress*.

L. B. PAGE promises to take two copies instead of one of the *Freethinker* when the illustrations are renewed. We wish the *Freethinker* had more Pages.

W. H. MORRISH.—Received. We will review your work.

R. S. RILBECK.—Thanks for suggestion for cartoons. Probably it will be used.

FRIENDS desirous of aiding the circulation of this paper can obtain thirteen copies of back numbers for sixpence. By the new parcel post 3 lbs. can be sent for 6d.

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AGENTS wanted in town and country to sell this paper and other Freethought literature.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

At the sitting of the International Congress of Freethinkers at Amsterdam last Sunday, Dr. Ludwig Büchner and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh made earnest speeches on behalf of the recognition of the political and social equality of men and women. A motion was adopted expressing the indignation of the Congress at the persecution of the Jews, and inviting all Freethinkers to unite in opposition to persecution for matters of belief. It was decided to contribute to the fund for the erection of a memorial to Giordano Bruno. The next Congress is to be held at Brussels. The proceedings closed in the afternoon.

MR. ECROYD, M.P., spoke words of wisdom recently at Blackburn, though their good effect was partly spoiled by the addition of others of unnecessary fear. He said: "The pride of scientific knowledge led its possessors to regard religious faith as superfluous. In France, where this condition of things was most developed, the spirit of popular restlessness was such as to threaten dreadful consequences for Europe. Two nations in France were struggling for the mastery—the Catholic people of rural France and the populations of the great cities, who had dethroned god and put away from them the Christian religion; and he contemplated the future of that country with awe, anxiety and wonder, as to how the struggle would end. Politics were part and parcel of the religion of a Christian man." We should have omitted the first three words, and though he may be, we need not be alarmed at the spirit of popular restlessness. The consequences following from that restlessness will only be dreadful to the tyrants of the people. The despotism of capital will have to go down before the resistless rise of popular knowledge and indignation. That, with the dethronement of kings and priests already largely accomplished and to be fully worked out, is "how the struggle will end."

THE Rev. C. J. Whitmore must be growing used to castigation. Before he was taken in hand by Dr. Edward Aveling, a young Atheist, Edwin A. Farrington, 15 Compton Street, W.C., overcame an honest man's repugnance to coming even in epistolary contact with unpleasant things, and entered into a correspondence with the coward minister. Edwin Farrington completely worsts Mr. Whitmore. The rout is so thorough that we are inclined, if we can find space, to reprint part of the correspondence with a view to strengthening the opinion formed by all decent people of the shiftiness of that reverend defamer.

THE present Home Secretary is Professor of International Law at Cambridge. He has recently appointed a deputy to do the work he himself never does. As he was bound to give a certain number of lectures, our virtuous Home Secretary has been in the habit of inviting his friends to dinner at Cambridge, and then adjourning to the lecture room for the necessary period. The lectures have never been given, and Sir William Harcourt has drawn a heavy salary under false pretences.

THE *Westminster Review*, No. 127, has a very timely article on "Blasphemy," called forth, of course, by the recent *Freethinker* prosecutions. We submit the proposition that the law of blasphemy may be altogether omitted from our new penal code. Every right-minded man will, of course, heartily condemn all outrageous and insulting attacks upon the opinions of others. But is it wise to treat as a crime what, after all, would be better described as an offence against good taste? No doubt, feelings may be outraged by such attacks, but feelings may be outraged in many ways, and it is impossible to invoke the criminal law to prevent it.—*Nottingham Guardian*.

MR. FOSTER, of the Salvation Army, Long Eaton, states: "That he was told by a nurse attending dying Christians, that they were the greatest cowards in time of death, and that their deaths were horrible in the extreme." In Salisbury, recently, he called on his god, and god answered his prayer by killing several town's people. He acknowledged at the meeting that god's holy spirit could not work on the hearts of people while Freethinkers were present.

THE other day at Nottingham, a girl named Agnes Sharpe, a Roman Catholic, who was called as a witness in a case at which reporters were not present, refused to take her oath on the Bible, but would do so on a Roman Catholic Douai Bible. Eventually she offered to affirm by the sign of the cross, in the name of god the father, son and holy ghost. The magistrate then asked her to hold the Bible in her hand and make the sign of the cross. This she refused to do, as she set no value on their Bible. The case was adjourned in order to get a proper version of the holy book from her bishop.

## DR. WAINWRIGHT AND ATHEISM.

DR. WAINWRIGHT challenged to discuss the relative merits of Atheism and Christianity, declined to do so on the ground that he had never lectured on that topic. In order that he as a champion of one portion of Christianity against all others and Atheism may have the opportunity of bringing his views before an audience not necessarily prejudiced in his favor, Dr. Aveling offers to discuss with Dr. Wainwright on either of two subjects on which the latter has already spoken in public. He has forwarded the following letter to Dr. Wainwright:

"13 Newman Street, W., Aug. 29, 1883.

"Dear Sir,—I shall be very glad if you can give me an opportunity of discussing with you in public either of the two subjects on which you have been recently lecturing: 'The Sophisms of Unbelief' and 'Bible Triumphs Scientifically Based.' If this is impossible will you use your influence with the Protestant Institute to induce them to let me give a lecture on either of these subjects? I am sure both the Institute and yourself are anxious to get at the truth of these matters, and will agree with me that this is only possible after hearing both sides of the question. I hope I may not be wrong in saying that you personally will vouch for me as one who will discuss and lecture on these momentous topics with courtesy and consideration for those who differ from me in opinion.—I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

"EDWARD B. AVELING."

"The Rev. S. Wainwright, D.D."

## THE ORIGIN OF WORSHIP.

THE Scripture says "The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom." According to our religious teachers wisdom consists in sacrificing the certainties of this life for the uncertainties of another, in neglecting the real to cultivate the impossible, in leaving the substance to grasp at the shadow. If this be wisdom we may admit that it originates in the fear of the lord.

When first the human being evolved from a lower form of animal his primary experiences were of evil influences. He found himself constantly exposed to danger and pain. He knew that to maintain his own existence he was compelled to inflict suffering. He observed other animals and learned that suffering was the common inheritance of all. He was unacquainted with the physical laws which govern the universe, and in his early attempts to account for what he saw around him, he was led to suppose the existence of some malevolent being who exercised over him a tyrannical power similar to that which he himself exercised over those whose strength was inferior to his own. For this creature of his imagination he entertained no sentiment but that of terror. He sought to propitiate him, not by the moral regulation of his own life (for he had no reason to suppose that to be pleasing to him), but by abjectly bowing down and adoring. If the poor wretch desired any good or feared any evil he prostrated himself before this terrible monster and begged a favor or a mercy. Had he endowed his deity with an attribute of justice he would have stood erect and demanded a right. The mean flattery which a slave offers to his oppressor was the first idea of prayer, and what it was in the beginning it is now, and ever shall be.

After a while man began to think it probable that his deity would require something more from him than words. He tried to discover what he could do to please him. His first idea of god was that of a tyrant who took pleasure in the abject submission of a slave; his next was that of a monster who delighted in cruelty. He imagined that by helping to satiate this taste he might himself to some extent escape injury. Therefore he erected altars and deluged them with the blood of the innocent. Of these two parts, prayer and sacrifice, religious worship has been in the main composed. There never was a religion without both. If Christianity does not prescribe the slaughter of bulls and goats, it is because it recognises a sacrifice to have already taken place so outrageous in its atrocity that all others by comparison shrink into nothing. Christianity has offered to this bloodthirsty god a draught from the veins of his own son, whose moral perfections it declares to be infinite. The same idea of god remains, although his injustice is called justice, and his cruelty, mercy. And the spirit of his worship is still the same, as abject as ever in its slavery, as ready as ever to pander to his vile lust for blood.

Persecution is the natural result of the frame of mind thus engendered, and we find it existing in all religious

bodies in exact proportion to the amount of belief. They who believe the most are most ready to persecute, and *vice versa*. Only by erasing the god-idea from the minds of men and leading them to see that truth, before it can be found, has to be sought in the light of science by methods that we know, and is never revealed to us by a being of whom we know nothing, can we help to bring about that happy period when the human race shall be free to search for truth, and having found it, to make it known without fear of the dungeons of the inquisition or the cells of Holloway Gaol

E. J. BOWTELL.

## WHY SHALL YOU PRAY.

HEARKEN! rough and weary toilers—  
You who toil in field and mine;  
You who slave in labors' quarries  
Where never light of sun can shine—  
Ask your weary, aching bosoms,  
By the fangs of hunger torn,  
Can you toil in sweet contentment,  
Praising god both night and morn?

Can you praise him? Can you love him?  
He who made you what you are;  
Born in most accursed thralldom,  
Freedom but a rayless star?  
Oh! my brothers, be not blinded  
By the curse of faith and prayer—  
Turn your thoughts from heavenly dreaming,  
Man's cries find no answer there!

Prayer but bows the head more meekly  
To receive the dastard blow—  
"Turn your cheek, the other also,"  
Is the answer in your woe.  
Prayer is but a hope, born sightless,  
Calling men from earth and life,  
From its beauties and its sunshine,  
Coward-like to flee the strife.

Forget your slavish prayers, my brothers!  
Work and fight, and pray no more—  
Work to hurl base wrong from power,  
Need for praying then is o'er.  
Turn not to the distant morrow,  
Hurl your hymns and prayers away;  
Make the earth your wished-for heaven,  
Sing the hymn of present day!

H. GORDON SWIFT.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE DIVINE BURLESQUE."  
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Haydn Williams, after knowingly misusing the word "obscene" in his original correspondence, published previously on this subject, for the sole purpose, apparently, of prejudicing the minds of those who had not read the number of the paper in which my sketch appeared, now asserts that my "explanation," as he terms it, is misleading, since I quote only some of the lines from the latter part of the "Divine Burlesque." I really quoted the only lines which bear on the text in the slightest degree; but I have no objection to quote those following.

If it be true, as the Bible states, that the maternal parent of Mr. Williams' savior was found, before her marriage, to be (in the holy and therefore not "obscene" phraseology of that book) "with child of the holy ghost," I want to know wherein lies the greater impropriety. In the inspired narrative, or in the allusions made by me to the matter? What are those lines which are so objectionable to our Christian friend? After the verse which I quoted in my previous letter, god the father says (you see I do not deem them unjustifiable)—

"Enough, no more, I think the story  
Scarce fit for saints in glory;  
What more to say? Both gods and men will go it,  
Only they don't care that the world should know it."

I make god the father try to keep the subject in the dark as much as he can, crediting him with conduct different from, and better than that described in the Bible. It is a matter for regret that the god of the Christians should have descended so low as to commit an act common enough, alas! among men, but which is rather more reprehensible in a god, however young and giddy he may have been at the time.

But I may here tell Mr. Williams that it is not we, of the *Freethinker*, who "invent" lewd jokes and make use of *double entendre*. "We, of the *Freethinker*," merely call attention to the fact of the lewdness and immorality of his book, and shall continue so to do till its influence for harm has ceased. And when our Christian critic comes to talk of a lack of literary

culture, it is necessary to remind him that one cannot touch pitch without the risk of becoming defiled. As to comparing the Bible with modern sanitary works: the one contains much useless filth, the others are devoted to the inculcation of beneficial cleanliness.

H. J. BECKWITH.

### "THE DELUSIONS OF THEOLOGY."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you allow me a short remark on Mr. A. B. Moss's "Delusions of Theology?" Mr. Moss says: "And fatalism is equally delusive." Yet he says: "In all physical phenomena it is admitted that each effect is preceded by a cause, without which it would not have happened and with which it was bound to happen." What is this but fatalism? Unless Mr. Moss believes that, man "is the first cause!" How can man be a creature of circumstances, and yet be one of the most potent circumstances? Man must be either "caused or not caused;" he cannot be both! A wave cannot both be active and passive. If a wave must be created by a force, its motion is not self-created, but only imparted; its motion must cease when the impelling force ceases to act on it. No wave can move of its own accord; neither can a man act unless compelled or moved by circumstances, *i.e.* fate.

32 Berwick Road, Walthamstow,

A FATALIST.

August 29, 1883.

### "THE BIOGRAPHY OF SATAN."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Relying upon your well-known kindness and courtesy I have taken the liberty of questioning one or two points in the article on the subject at the head of this paper which appeared in a recent issue of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Studdard appears to have studied the doctrine of god's salvation through the light of a considerable amount of that knowledge which he tells us "Satan bestowed on mankind as a great gift." He speaks sarcastically, but there really is a great deal of this devil-given wisdom and knowledge spreading among our fellow men. What I wish to ask him is this. Is an infinite and all-wise god to be brought before the tribunal of a reason born of all evil? Are the actions of a living deity, the head and maker of all mankind, to be governed by a "maxim" current among the same?

Mr. Studdard informs us that, "Had god been aware of the maxim of to-day—If you want a thing done, do it yourself—he would never have sent one portion of his creation to work in another portion." Who shall question the will of an all-wise creator? Man will construct a piece of mechanism and cause that work of his hands to do his will, subservient to every petty whim. What feelings of indignation would fill his breast were that work to question the right of its maker to bend it to his superior power.

Trusting you will forgive the encroachment upon your valuable space, and favor this brief letter with a place in your journal.—I am, etc.,

E. J. DOWNTON.

[The above letter, which refers to an article published some weeks back, has only just reached Dr. Aveling, it having been in Mr. Wheeler's possession.]

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The right to say and print what we think, is the right of every free man, a right of which we cannot be deprived except through the exercise of the most odious tyranny. Sustaining the liberty of the press is the foundation of all other liberties; it is through it we mutually enlighten one another.—*Voltaire in Exile.*

THE man who does a good act only to secure heaven is a selfish sneak.—*John Peck.*

## PROFANE JOKES.

BISHOP, to sporting curate during the cricket season: "Wonderful things accomplished by Grace." S. C.: "Yes; only fancy 200 and not out." (The bishop meant the grace of god).

A WESTERN minister told the trustees of his church that he must have money. "Money," said one of the trustees; "you preach for money! I thought you preached for the good of souls." The minister replied, "I can't eat souls, and if I could it would take a thousand such as yours to make a meal."

SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher: "What do you think Jonah was doing or thinking about when in the whale's interior?" Young American: "Wal I guess he was kinder looking around to see what chance there was of converting that darned whale into cod liver oil; or calculating about running it ashore, and setting up a whale-bone store."

At a recent missionary meeting in New England much was said relative to the Bible and the efforts of missionaries to send it to the uttermost parts of the earth. In due course the Rev. Mr. ——— was asked to pray, and prayed thus: "O lord! we thank thee for thy word as it is given to us; and although it is not the original copy, still we consider it a very good edition under the circumstances. And although thou hast made the earth and caused it to revolve with incredible velocity, and although our missionaries are scattered over the surface thereof, yet thou hast so nicely balanced the centrifugal and centripetal forces that, as yet, not a single brother has been thrown from the surface."

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