

# 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 16, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC SKETCH.—I.



THE CLERGY—STOUT AND LEAN.

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers [in the Lord],  
See what a grace [of god] was seated on this brow [beater]

This is your vicar. Look you now what follows.  
Here is your curate; like a mildewed ear  
Blasting [and cursing] his wholesome brother.

THE REV. C. J. WHITMORE—COWARD.

THE Rev. C. J. Whitmore, of Kentish Town, published some time back a leaflet entitled, "What becomes of the Infidel Leaders?" The leaflet may be described as an attempt to obtain credit for Christianity under false pretences. The attempted deceptions of Mr. Whitmore have been exposed in the *National Reformer*, and on the occasion of my visiting Kentish Town for the purpose of lecturing in July last, I briefly exposed the falsity of the leaflet. As is my wont when I have to attack people, I sent a note stating my intention, and enclosing a card of admission for Mr. Whitmore and his friends to the lecture. The reply of this Christian gentleman follows.

88 Caversham Road, N.W., June 25, 1883.

Sir,—I received your note—by last post on Saturday night—proposing that I should leave my congregation on the following evening to listen to an attack you intended to make on some statements of mine in Milton Hall. But of course you never expected me to comply with such a very modest and sensible proposal. The only statements I have made in Milton Hall concerned my tract on "What Becomes of the Infidel Leaders?" I enclose a copy, and am ready to defend it in public discussion against any attack you may make when I can reply. If you allude to some other statements—made during years of writing, lecturing and discussion—I must ask you for particulars.—Yours truly,

C. J. WHITMORE.

The reader will notice that no word of thanks for my offer or for the admission card is in this letter and will do well to compare Mr. Whitmore's note with the kindly and courteous reply of Dr. Wainwright on a similar occasion. He will then see the difference between an ill-bred dissenting minister and a courteous clergyman of the Church of England.

My reply was as follows:

13 Newman Street, Oxford Street, W.

Sir,—Your discourteous letter, in reply to one from me that was, at least, not wanting in courtesy, has reached me. I

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told you that I was about to attack your utterances, as I make a point of doing this whenever I have to attack. I regret that Christian assailants do not adopt a plan that is, as you say, "modest and sensible."

No one knows better than yourself that the people whose names you mention are, in scarcely any cases, representative men—that because men have written in the *National Reformer* they are not necessarily Atheists—that Mr. Bradlaugh in the *National Reformer* has pointed out how misleading are your statements, and that for one Atheist turned Christian that you can produce or invent, we can show a hundred Christians turned Atheists.—Yours faithfully,

EDWARD B. AVELING.

The fourth letter was from Mr. Whitmore.

88 Caversham Road, N.W., July 17, 1883.

Sir,—Your first letter, sent to me at ten o'clock on Saturday night, asking me to leave my congregation the next evening to listen to you, met with quite as much courtesy as such a proposal deserved.

Why do you drag Mr. Bradlaugh's name into your second letter? Are you following the tactics of small boys who provoke a fight and then shriek for their big brothers to help them? Or are you afraid to risk the battle you have challenged without first bringing forward your "fetish" to frighten me? You speak of the "infidel leaders" I have recorded as not being "representative men." Afterwards, in the same letter, you insinuate I have "invented" them. How do you reconcile your own statements? Both cannot be true! If they were "men," how could I invent them? They were most gladly hailed as representatives while they remained infidels. This petty spite only disparages them after they renounced their infidelity. As to my inventing them, your insinuation is a contemptible falsehood, which anyone with a single spark of manliness in him would have scorned to have written. You affirm that my statements are "misleading." Why not show them to be so instead of railing at them? Do you expect us to accept your railing as proof? They were prepared for publication with the knowledge that the present temporary infidel leaders would do their utmost to discredit them. If they are "misleading," so much the easier your task to expose them, if you know how to do it! You write of "Christians turned Atheists," no Christian ever did yet! Our master knows and keeps his own. But if you allude to some self-styled "Christian leaders" who have done so, and you are proud of them, why not publish their cases as I have done on the other side? You might set forth the histories of "Holmes," "Hardy," etc., after they became Atheists, and a fragrant task you will have. But you dare not do it! Having thus noticed the contents of your letter, I call your special attention to its omission. It contains no reply whatever to my question: Are you prepared to attack any statements of mine in open public discussion?

This is my question. You have most carefully abstained from replying to it, nor have you ventured to send me the slightest particulars of the statements you impeach. But your followers, with or without your authority, are circulating the falsehood that I am afraid to meet you at the very time my offer to do so lies unanswered in your hands.

To defend myself against this untruthful aspersion, I hold myself at liberty to publish this correspondence.—Yours truly,

C. J. WHITMORE.

To this, coming as it did at a time busy with examinations, I replied by a brief letter of acknowledgment and the promise to write in detail when my time was less engaged.

The next stage in the controversy was the reception by myself of a letter from Mr. Jacob, of Liverpool, enclosing a copy of a letter from Mr. Whitmore to Mr. Jacob's brother, a clergyman of the Established Church. Of this I quote certain passages—

"I have delivered the lecture twice in London, once at Woolwich; but the only attempt that was made was to blacken the

character of the converts. Dr. Aveling attacked the paper in my absence—at one of his lectures here. I have challenged him to make his attacks in open public discussion where I can reply to him, but he is afraid. I have twice written to him personally, but he has crept out of it in each of his three letters in reply. It is an utter falsehood for anyone to say or write that I have ever at any time or place declined to state the names of the infidel leaders. I have supplied them to everyone without exception who has ever applied to me for them. That I have refused to reply to the scandalous black-guardism of the *National Reformer* is true, simply because I will not play Mr. Bradlaugh's game by writing in his filthy print. No man that had one grain of respect for himself would ever write a line for it. It seems to me that contempt is the only weapon left for a decent man to use. For many years I have been the subject of persistent attack, simply because I opposed their wickedness; and I have repaid the attacks by feeding and helping all the broken-down Secularists who have come to me when their own body left them to starve."

My reply to this elegant outburst will appear next week.

EDWARD B. AVELING.

### AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIANS.

I AM an Atheist and know no god. I have thoughts which I cannot hinder. I believe that Christianity has been a deep sore in the side of humanity, has stunted men's growth, hindered their knowledge, and prevented their happiness. I am no bigot and am willing to believe; but the truth as I know it is the only possible belief upon which I can rest satisfied.

You say that your religion is love, that your creed is charity, and that your life is immortal. These are statements I have not the power to believe. Are these statements honest which you make? I think not. Why? Because Jesus said, "Love your enemies." You have read his words daily for centuries, and call yourselves his followers, and you trade upon his name. In spite of his words you have persecuted, tortured and destroyed those who have not followed your practices. With these things before my mind I cannot believe you are honest.

You say that your creed is charity, yet you have made your poor-laws unjust and cruel. Your Master said, "Those whom god has joined together let no man put asunder," yet you have enforced the separation of honest old people who have asked of you charity. You have shown some charity by open acts that your names might be printed in public papers, but you have left the streets full of your poor who beg, singing your hymns to god the whole day long. You have professed to follow Christ and repeated his words, "Blessed are the poor in heart," and "Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink," while you usurped high offices and robbed the Indian of his wealth, and the worker of his wage until he died at your feet.

You have said that your life is immortal, yet you are ever in fear of death. You have pictured yourselves as the chosen of your god and have been indifferent to the sufferings which you said were in store for other men. You have clasped your hands in prayer asking forgiveness, and the next hour proclaimed your whitewashed sinfulness even though you were steeped in crimes.

These are but a few samples of your professions and ways. Many, too many, are the wrongs you have done in the past and are doing even to-day. You have imprisoned three men! For what? For theft or murder? No! For injuring men? No! For lying? No! For what then have you imprisoned them? For exposing your crimes; for showing the world your credulity; for breaking your power over honest men's minds, and for doing their utmost to relieve the world of your encumbering laws.

These men are our brothers. When you injure them we are injured. While they are in prison our minds are with them, and we suffer while we hope for their release. You ask of us to believe; you proclaim your power; you threaten us with their doom. You have proved your infamy to the world during these past six months, and you have expected to frighten a host of our men to your side. Have you done this? No! We hate you more than before. Not one has proved a hypocrite by joining your ranks. You have converted none; you have frightened none. You find us bold before your front, unflinching, and despising your horrid array of cruelty.

Do you still wish to win us to you? If so, be honest, be kind, be just. Christ was never so cruel as you. His aim was to do good; yours must be the same if you are to win us. Show us by your love, by your charity, and by your lives, that you are more noble and more good than others. But so far, O priests, O hypocrites, are you from this, that by your lives you prove yourselves the more unworthy.

You say we have destroyed your work; and so we ever must. You say we continue our attacks; and so we ever will until all men are free and the prison cell closes no more on men for conscience' sake.

M. H. B.

### JUMPING COMMENTS UPON THE BIBLE.

[Continued from p. 282.]

If Noah felt difficulty with the insects, what must he have felt respecting the largest of the beasts? There were giants on the earth in those days, and giantesses too, and they had to be got into the ark some way or other. Horses, cows, camels and elephants were not easily disposed of. Some of the giant birds might have exercised his skill—the moa, for example, not to mention the roo. Besides, the celebrated phoenix—in whom the Fathers believed as devoutly as they did in the holy pigeon, *alias* holy ghost—could have been embarked only as a unit, for a pair of them never existed. The dinothierium is estimated to have been eighteen feet long. He was probably fond of marshy ground, or may have spent his time much in the way the hippopotamus does. A pair of these, standing end to end, would reach thirty-six feet—about half-way across the ark. Themselves and their food and accommodation would require no trifling portion of the space available for the whole menagerie. Perhaps, however, like Milton's devils in Pandemonium, the animals in those days were not so rigid and exacting as now, and may have accommodated themselves to the space allotted them—

". . . the signal given,  
Behold a wonder! they but now who seemed  
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,  
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room,  
Throng numberless like that Pygmean race  
Beyond the Indian mount."

There is, at any rate, nothing in the world so handy as a miracle to help one out of a fix; and as Noah must have sorely needed a few of those accommodating events, of course, piety suggests that we suppose them, though we cannot prove them. Anything is better than common sense in expounding the Bible. No truly devout man ever tries that as a key to unlock its secrets and mysteries. God forbid!

The megatherium was an animal from 12 to 18 feet long, 8 or 9 feet high, and 5 to 6 feet wide behind. His tail, stout and strong, in proportion, as a kangaroo's, was six feet long, and his foot about a yard from heel to toe. It is supposed that he lived upon roots which he dug out of ground, or else upon twigs of trees. I should like to know how Noah found him employment for claws and jaws during the voyage. It would have been nothing to him to have scratched a few holes through the bottom of the ark.

The mylodon (11 feet long) and the glyptodon (9 feet long) must also have been preserved. The mammoth, which makes the elephant look like a good-sized calf in comparison, must have taken a large space; and he did not live upon nothing. A pair of these must have devoured many tons of vegetables during the year.

How did the patriarch manage the megalosaurus, a land lizard about 40 feet long, which very likely fed upon such smaller lizards as crocodiles?

Authorities differ as to the length of the iguanodon. Mantell thought it must have been 70 feet long; Professor Owen brings it down to 30 feet. But its thigh-bone is 4 feet 8 inches long. Fancy four of those tremendous lizards (megalosaurus and iguanodon), beasts 15 to 20 feet high, and more than double that length, and broad in proportion—fancy them, I say, having a fight in the ark, or running about to catch such prey as crocodiles and alligators—scores of tons of flesh and bones bouncing about on the floor of Noah's box! And how would elephants, tigers, lions, behave when such a row was forward?

It is all very well, of course, for divines to assume that the giants above named were extinct before Noah's day. They may say so if they will; but what extinguished them? I will give my own inspired opinion; and whoever

shall receive it shall save his soul alive. My own view is this. That when Noah undertook to get pairs of all the animals into his ark he assumed obligations he never contemplated. When he blew his whistle as a signal for them all to appear, away they came, each pair bringing a full year's provisions with them—the elephants had theirs packed in their trunks, of course, and the kangaroos came with their pouches full; the rest brought their stock upon their backs. But when Noah saw the number of animals approaching, the hundreds—where he had bargained, as he thought, for twos—when he beheld the enormous sizes of those above named, he cried out, “O lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived (Jeremiah xx., 7). I will back out of the bargain. It would take fifty arks to stow away all this rabble; and who, I should like to know, would risk his life in a box for a year—for ten minutes even—with all these ferocious beasts?” And it came to pass that the lord answered and said unto Noah, “I also am greatly amazed at the multitude of living things and at the greatness of them. Go to, therefore, shut the giants out and let them drown, for it repenteth me that I made mammoth, and megalonyx, and mastodon, and megalosaurus, and iguanodon upon the earth. Lo, I will even put my hook in their nose and my bridle in their jaws, if I can, and lead them back by the way they came, and thou shalt see them no more for ever.” So Noah was comforted. Is it not written in the book of Jasher and in the visions of Iddo the seer?

And thus those enormous animals became extinct, and their carcasses were buried in the strata of the earth as a warning to all beasts, lest they also should eat and drink and grow too large, and thus provoke the lord to cut them off from the face of the ground. “He that hath ears to ear, let him hear.”

I have no wish, my reader, like commentators in general, to bore you with further remarks tending to expose the absolute absurdity of the flood; though the subject might be pursued to a very great length, and every step would only tend to show how totally false or mythological is the narrative. Even Christians themselves are beginning to throw ridicule upon it. Just recently they have spread reports of the finding of the ark on Ararat; and one American journal has discovered that it was insured in a New York office as a vessel to convey passengers and animals, owned by Noah and Sons. Whether the menagerie was insured has not yet been ascertained. When sacred subjects such as this can be so treated in common newspapers, honest men may rejoice to think that malice and stupidity will not much longer send men to gaol for doing what their Christian neighbors do, viz, ridiculing the holy and ever-blessed revelation god gave to the world to enlighten and save mankind.

Pray don't forget that the flood was universal; the earth was encased in a shell of water, like an orange with its rind, like the fruit with paste in an apple-dumpling. This shell of water covered all the highest mountains, and they are over five miles in perpendicular height. Next week we will inquire into the quantity of water required to drown the world, and speculate a little on the wisdom of so expensive and clumsy a method of gratifying vengeance.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

## REVIEWS.

Our Corner for September (Freethought Publishing Company, 63 Fleet Street) is an excellent number. The taste that cannot find something suitable in the varied contents must be of a very eccentric order. Perhaps the most noticeable things in addition to the articles that are stock ones, but not the less interesting on that account, are an article on Caves by Mr. Horner, and one on Woolwich Arsenal by Hypatia Bradlaugh: the former by reason of its intrinsic merit, the latter in addition, as the name that it bears reminds us how the younger Atheists are gradually working their way into the forefront of the battle.

The Christian Creed, or What it is Blasphemy to Deny (63 Fleet Street), by Annie Besant.—A timely reprint of certain articles in the *National Reformer*. This Part I. only deals with the Old Testament, and is written in Mrs. Besant's most trenchant and merciless style. The vile creed of Christianity is exposed in all its indecent wickedness. Every hater of the accursed thing should arm himself with this pamphlet. The nationality of the writer shows itself characteristically in the humorous touches that abound.

## SOME REMARKS BY A SEEKER FOR TRUTH.

WHETHER right or wrong, I fear I am hardly competent to judge; but my inclinations and reasoning powers induce me to side with the Freethinkers in the struggle which is being, and I believe will be, carried on for a long time to come between Freethinkers and the supporters of revealed religion. At the same time, as I am anxious to support nothing but that which I believe to be true, and founded on truth, I shall always listen with avidity to anything that can assist me in the pursuit of truth, or enable me to avoid error in every form. And if at any time the advocates of revealed religion can convince me of the truth and reasonableness of their tenets, I will, without shame or other feeling than one of joy, embrace such tenets.

The foundation of all revealed religion is, I believe, the placing of an implicit faith in teachings derived from books which are stated to have come into the hands of man in some mysterious manner—such as the Bible of the Christian, the Koran of the Mahomedan, the Shastras of the Hindoo, the writings which Joe Smith discovered for the Mormons. Having selected one of these books or writings, I am bound where I cannot comprehend its meaning, or where it appears to be contradictory in itself, to be guided by a class of men, set apart, or who have set themselves apart, and are given, or have assumed, authority to expound these doctrines; but whose agreement amongst themselves on intricate points is replaced by discordance. Now, premising that the doctrine of a future state and an eternal life is not proved nor disproved, I will, for the sake of argument, take it for granted that it is an established fact. Then the importance of this matter is so great that it would be futile to place any consideration for the temporary state in which we exist in the balance against it. It is only by prolonged thinking that an ordinary mind can form even a vague idea of eternity. Time is only comprehended by comparison; but with eternity there is no comparison. Hundreds of millions of centuries are no greater by comparison with eternity than the hundredth millionth part of a second; and the importance of man's eternal existence, when balanced against this mortal life, can only be imagined in the same way.

Taking the doctrine of revealed religion as founded on the Bible, I believe it teaches that unless man has faith, implicit unquestioning faith, during his short existence on this earth, *eternal torment* awaits him. Ponder well the words *eternal torment*, of which the greatest eloquence and most expressive language in the world can convey to the mind but a feeble idea. This state of things is terrible beyond comprehension—the more we think of it the more horrible does the prospect seem. We are placed here for a few short years, and, if during that fleeting period we cannot muster faith sufficient to believe in some incomprehensible doctrine, consider the result—*Eternal damnation! Eternal torment!* A thorough realisation of such a belief is sufficient to unhinge the mind.

Perhaps in my next assertion I am stating something that will not meet with general assent. I can only say that it appears to me to be the case, *i.e.*, that the more developed and the more inquiring the human mind becomes, the more difficulty it finds in receiving, even if it ever honestly and without hypocrisy can receive, the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. It is only by the superiority of man's mental development that he is distinguished from other species of animals. God, in bestowing on him eternal life, is supposed to have endowed him with this superior mental development as his distinguishing mark; and it is mainly by grades in this mental development and mental culture that men differ from each other as they do so widely. Is it not therefore monstrous to think that god, who is represented as the embodiment, the fountain of truth and justice, should bestow a greater share of his distinguishing mark upon a man, knowing it will handicap his chance of attaining the enormous blessing of eternal happiness, and facilitate his descent to the horrible and appalling penalty of eternal torment? For although it may be disputed, I again say that the higher the order of intellect the greater difficulty, nay, the greater impossibility, exists in receiving the dogma of salvation by faith alone. And *vice versa*, the lower the order of intellect, and the more nearly the man approaches the brute, the more ready he is found to believe in the mysterious, the incomprehensible, and supernatural; and the more abhorrent the teaching is to reason, the more attraction it has for these last.

Brought up a member of the Church of England, I have repeatedly listened to discourses on the Biblical words, "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that find it; but narrow is the way that leadeth to salvation, and few there be that walk therein," or something to that effect. Preachers generally favor the assumption that perhaps one in a hundred or one in a thousand—they are vague and contradictory on the matter—may chance to attain and follow the narrow path. In addition, according to Christian teaching, man's eternal existence is but the breath of god. Now listen! Can we realise the state of the case? This god, the fountain of truth and justice, bestows, by his breath, by his fiat, on 1,000 innocent unoffending bodies (for the unborn baby must be allowed to be free of sin in itself) *eternal life*, well knowing by his omniscience that 999 of the 1,000 are doomed to eternal hideous torture. What a shuddering horror to contemplate! 1,000 to 1 against winning is terrible odds; but that is nothing compared to the awful alternative of losing. What then? *Eternal inconceivable torture*. This is the loving mercy of the Christian god of truth and justice. Man, without any volition on his part, is called into existence, gifted with eternal life, allowed a few short years to make up his mind among contradictory dogmas and teachings, and if he fails to secure the winning ticket in this terrible lottery, with these accumulated odds against him—perpetual eternal misery and torture are his fate.

Supporters of Christian revelation may deny the foregoing in part or wholly, but their written works and sermons show it is their teaching; and even if they disavow such teaching their Bible gives authority for it; whilst any day we can go into churches and still hear such instruction.

There is a scriptural text very often quoted against Freethinkers: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no god." There is not much in it; it certainly contains the abuse and insult that are usually substituted for argument by the meek and lowly Christians. Still, for the sake of argument, we'll admit it to be true—say it is "The word of god." Then this god—the bestower of eternal life—made the non-existent unoffending fool, endowing him with immortality, and placing him in the peculiar predicament that his chance of anything but damnation under any circumstances is very remote. Then this just and merciful god denounces him as a fool for saying there is no god. I can't see that he is much worse off than the remaining 999 of every 1,000 who may have believed in god, but who, according to Christian teaching, must go to hell for all that.

I have heard that some of the African tribes worship the spirit of evil. I think I could safely challenge them to draw a blacker picture of their evil deity than Christians draw of their god of love and mercy.

Christians claim to have in their ranks men of superior education, great natural powers, and scientific attainments. Perhaps they may have; but men of science, as a rule, are rather luke-warm Christians; and I doubt if many men of real education and great natural powers support the Christian teachings as received by the masses; and I fear, although I wish to be charitable, that where an example of a great educated man supporting such teachings is shown me, there is a something behind—an ambition to be attained, or a luxurious living to be retained, or a party to be served; or, what has an immense influence on a great mass of mankind, the existence of a false shame which precludes his admitting that for years he has been a dupe or the guller of dupes; that he has been so slow in comprehending the truth, or has so long practised a course of dishonesty and hypocrisy by denying the truth though knowing it, and supporting falsehood for selfish motives.

Christians, in support of their doctrines, assert—although the assertion no more supports the Christian than the Mahomedan doctrine—that man, in whatever state found, has always expressed a belief in some form of religion. This I emphatically deny, and need only look around me to demonstrate its falsity. In every civilised country in the world there are large numbers—I am proud to say, containing amongst them the most powerful intellects, the most enlightened minds—who openly disavow belief in any form of religion. And, I hope, the time is rapidly approaching when a great enlightened mass who now from motives of policy keep silence, will take courage, and speak, and stand by the truth. Then will the world acknowledge that if it be a crime to think freely it must be a merit to think like a slave.

A. LEWIS.

## ACID DROPS.

A CONDITIONAL Immortality Association exists, and has actually been discussing the question of eternal punishment. A company for buying the site of the Garden of Eden and an association for showing the relation of the three balls outside a pawnbroker's to the doctrine of the trinity, are in process of formation.

BISHOP BURNET, in his "History of our own Times," mentions a Dr. Case who wrote a book entitled, "The Angelical Guide; showing men and women their lot and chance in this Elementary Life." The work is very astrological and profound. For instance, the author states that "Adam was created in that beautiful place called Paradise, about the year before Christ, 4,002, viz., on April 24, at twelve o'clock at midnight." Nothing like accuracy!

THE *Daily News* correspondent wires from Africa that Mr. Shaw, the missionary, was on board the "Taymouth," proceeding to Cape Town. He had been two months a prisoner on board the French flag-ship, and complained bitterly that he was denied all papers and books, except the Bible. This was rough on the missionary with a vengeance. What a wag of an admiral M. Pierre must be! Yes, Mr. Shaw, it was cruel treatment, particularly only to let you have the Bible. But what is it to twelve months in Holloway Gaol, with twenty-two hours confinement out of every twenty-four—and the Bible?

THERE are certain professions that *ex officio* demoralise men. That of the clergyman is one. Most of the persons who enter this disreputable calling have had the ordinary education of an ordinary gentleman. But not infrequently the calling gets the better of the education. Recently an Atheist was in a shop at Kingston-on-Thames, waiting, we hope with exemplary patience, until the amiable but overtaken proprietress could attend to him. To them enter a clergyman. The reverend gentleman, ignoring the presence of another man and of three women waiting to be served in the shop, swooped down upon a bottle of ink and tendered his florin for change. Were it possible for any one other than a clergyman to have acted so rudely, we believe that the woman in the shop would have made him wait his turn. But the white-chokered cad received the usual civility, that is servility, and was attended to before his betters.

CONVERSATION snatches outside a photographer's window in Regent Street:—

*First Lady*—"Dear Canon So-and-So. Isn't he like our savior?"

*Second Lady*—"Oh he is a dear fellow. Oh, you sweet one!" The last remark is addressed to the portrait.

OUR friend Captain R. H. Dyas sends us the following cutting from a Republican journal published in Rome:—"A priest was not long ago occupied in celebrating the rite of holy communion when a woman, bearing a tiny baby-boy in her arms, presented herself amongst the group of pious Catholics that knelt around the altar's rails in anticipation of the sacred food which, as your readers are probably aware, is, according to Romish custom, placed directly in the mouth of each communicant by the officiating priest. As the latter approached the woman just mentioned, her child extended its little hand towards the glittering plate on which the "body of god" was carried, so that the priest was compelled to draw back lest the said body should be overturned or contaminated. In vain the worthy man and the mother strove to appease the *enfant terrible*, who soon began to give audible as well as visible signs of his resentment. So that at last the poor priest, driven to desperation, exclaimed: 'Non toccarlo, figlio mio; è cacca!' (Don't touch it my child, it is . . . excrementum!)" The word "cacca" is extensively used by nurses and children in Italy to express anything too nasty to be touched.

HERE is an extract from a prayer offered on August 26 at the Gospel Temperance Hall, Holloway Road:—"O lord a man put into my hands a paper called the *Freethinker*, but thank 'gord' I am past Freethinking into free grace. Do thou O lord destroy these men."

MR. BARSTOW, of Clerkenwell Police Court, appears to be an excessively ill-bred person. Because a youth of about 15 stated that he was a Freethinker Mr. Barstow laughed aloud. Would this badly-behaved magistrate laugh aloud at a Christian of 15? It would be an interesting inquiry to find out at what age Mr. Barstow became a confirmed—not curmudgeon but—member of the Church of England.

A FACETIOUS old lady, speaking of a very rambling sermon she had just heard, said that if the parson's text had the small-pox his sermon would never catch it.

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture in the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, City Road, on Sunday, September 16. Subject:—7, "Blasphemers, Past and Present: Mr. Matthew Arnold and Others."

## 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.—Balaam's Ass, Blitz, F. H. F. Denver, Paul Power, Gordon Swift, M. H. Bunton, Thomas Williams, Frank E. Higgins.

NOTTINGHAM.—That is the way to fit yourself for writing and lecturing. Spend the whole of your time in studying scientific and anti-theological subjects. That will enable you to fill up the ranks and fight against the abominable creed.

TREPEN.—We never attack any one—not even the Prince of Wales—without grounds more relative than hearsay. Our authority is that of an eye-witness. Our informant is willing to give you chapter and verse if you wish it. Thanks for your other suggestion.

J. E. LUSH.—The principles of the Land Nationalisation Society are excellent.

THE *Freethinker* and *Progress* can be obtained at G. Griffiths's shops: 66 London Road, 1 Victoria Arcade, 32 Oldham Road, Manchester.

WILL any railway servant who is a Freethinker communicate with us in confidence as to the pressure brought to bear upon his class by the religious bodies? We shall be glad to receive copies of the *Railway Servant's Chariot*, or any other religious periodical of a kindred nature.

H. M.—So many thanks. May we ask your position in the army? It is rare to find one of your profession a Freethinker.

A. T. WRIGHT.—We will use your article.

T. P.—Hardly quite up to form. Cannot you put them into shape a little more? Cost of publishing could be ascertained by writing to R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, stating length of book.

DIODENES.—The trial did not come off. You will find the answer to your inquiry as to Mr. Seymour in Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet on the law of blasphemy. We should be very grateful to receive the articles you offer.

J. W. GRAUSHAW.—Dr. Edward Aveling has the idea of publishing some of his lectures under consideration.

A. R. ANDREWS.—MS. to which you refer is in our hands and may be used.

C. TAYLOR.—Glad you have added the important "a" to your theism.

WM. SEMBERY writes that "since Mr. Foote has been in prison I have taken four copies (instead of one) of the *Freethinker*," and now that the illustrations are to be resumed has "ordered six copies, thinking this is the best (although small) way to show my love to our friends and for the good of the cause."

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.

It is particularly requested that all orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, to whom all Post-office Orders should be made payable. Considerable delay and annoyance are caused by the disregard of this rule. In remitting stamps halfpenny ones are preferred.

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

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. HUGH SANDERS writes us a strangely inconsequent letter. He disapproves of the policy of the *Freethinker*; he knows of no one in its favor. Fortunately its circulation of many thousands shows that a few Freethinkers approve. He then says he and his friends will discontinue circulating it; and in the same breath adds that they will redouble their efforts in defence of its publication. A still stranger piece of inconsequence is the offer to find "men to stand republication of the number for which Messrs. Foote and Ramsey are in prison." This we do not want. We want men to use every effort to make the paper, when we hand it over to G. W. Foote, more flourishing than when he left us; and not men in this hour of danger and difficulty who will carp and object instead of presenting a full face to the foe.

MR. BRADLAUGH, writing with reference to a suggestion in the *Saturday Review* that, backed by "a straggling and harmless little mob," he had in the last session levied his "accustomed toll on the time of the nation," says that, "If the *Review* would prefer that the 'mob' should be harmful instead of harmless, its preferences may possibly be gratified before the struggle finishes. I have nearly exhausted every

fashion of obtaining justice, and the people are not disposed to be insulted because they have been law-abiding." He further, in reference to a statement that it is not to be supposed that "Mr. Bradlaugh will stop the way" in Parliament next year, says: "Unless the house gives me my seat, or my constituents ask me to resign, I shall stop the way next year far more vigorously than ever. Patient waiting has little effect on the House of Commons."

MR. GEO. CALDWELL, I.R.C.S.I., sends us a copy of a very earnest letter sent by him to Mr. Gladstone on behalf of our friends in prison. If Mr. Gladstone were true to the principles by the profession of which he obtained office, some good might come of the letter.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a cutting taken from this week's number of *Punch*, and says: "Had a like sketch appeared as one of the 'Comic Bible Sketches,' opponents of Freethought would most certainly have judged it very improper. Do you think our genial friend is inoculated?" The sketch is that of St. Anthony's first cure of soles, and is charmingly blasphemous.

THE following letter, sent by our earnest friend, Arthur Hunt, to the *Nottingham Journal*, was refused insertion:—

"Sir,—I read your article on 'Blasphemy' in your issue of yesterday, and was pleased with the liberal spirit it displayed; but I should like to call attention to one statement which appears in it. You say, 'It is no doubt a matter for deep regret that the feelings of mankind should have to be outraged by the language of the few.' How deep a matter for regret is it that the feelings of the few should have to be outraged by the language of the many! Surely the few, who are the weaker, require the more protection. As Professor Huxley has pointed out, Christian people blaspheme science with more arrant blasphemy than scientific men have ever hurled at the slowly-retreating ghosts of superstition. Is it not harrowing to the feelings of the Positivist, the Secularist, or the Unitarian, to hear the doctrines of the divinity of Christ, of the fall of man, of the atonement, of eternal punishment cried forth in the streets on Sunday, and forced into the passive, listening ears of little children? Is there no generosity in the many? It is not necessarily true that the many are right and the few wrong. In Newton's day the many did not believe in the laws of gravitation. Newton did; but he was not wrong for all that. There are some people—Huxley, Tyndall, Haeckel, and others—who have risen above the mists of superstition and who stand in the broad light of day; and there are millions of Mahomedans and Buddhists whose feelings Christians outrage with impunity. Of course the few are getting grand enough not to care for the outrages of the many; but still they like a little generosity."

MR. GEO. LUNN writes from Liverpool that the contents bills of the *Freethinker* and *National Reformer* are being exhibited, thanks to his energy, in a shop in one of the best positions in the town, where they attract the notice of numbers of people. Twenty copies of the Christmas Number were sold, and the weekly sale of the *Freethinker* now is six dozen.

THE West Central Branch of the National Secular Society meets at the "White Horse," Castle Street, Oxford Street, W., every Sunday evening at 7.45. Admission is free. On Sunday next Mr. Edwin Farrington reads the correspondence that has passed between him and the Rev. C. J. Whitmore.

## THE REV. E. J. BECK AS GOD ALMIGHTY.

THE Rev. E. J. Beck is not a mere servant of god almighty. He aspires to the place and function of his master. Edward Clare is the Freethinking landlord of the New Dock Inn, Neptune Street, Rotherhithe. He is brave and humane. By consequence he does not love the thieves and robbers who, plundering humanity, call themselves the clergy. Edward Clare has the artistic sense and puts it to use for the good cause. He draws anti-theological cartoons and fearlessly exposes them in his window. Recently he exhibited one of which the following is the subject. A woman, boy and girl, poverty-clad, and a clergyman passing by. The woman points to texts on the wall. "He that giveth let him do it with simplicity" (Rom. viii., 12). "Feed the flock of god which is among you, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (Peter v., 2).

The occasion of the cartoon. A sea-faring man left some years ago money to provide forty widows with forty loaves each Sunday morning. The forty women have to attend church and hear a sermon before receiving the charity, possibly with a view to diminishing their appetites. Surely a simple, kindly act of this nature might be carried

out without forcing upon the recipients a religious service. We commend to the Rev. E. T. Beck, the poem, "Holy Cross Day." As Mr. Beck must be a man of no culture—the letter we shall quote directly is our warranty—we inform him that the poem is by Robert Browning, and is to be found on page 280, vol. iv. of the 1882 edition of Browning's Poetical Works. We quote its heading.

"HOLY CROSS DAY,  
"On which the Jews were forced to attend an Annual  
Christian sermon in Rome.

"Now was come about Holy Cross Day, and now must my lord preach his first sermon to the Jews: as it was of old cared for by the merciful bowels of the church, that, so to speak, a crumb at least from her conspicuous table here in Rome should be, though but once yearly, cast to the famishing dogs, under-trampled and be-spitten upon beneath the feet of the guests. And a moving sight in truth, this, of so many of the besotted, blind, restive and ready-to-perish Hebrews! now maternally brought—nay (for he saith, 'Compel them to come in') haled, as it were, by the head and hair, and against their obstinate hearts, to partake of the heavenly grace. What awakening, what striking with tears, what working of a yeasty conscience! Nor was my lord wanting to himself on so apt an occasion; witness the abundance of conversions which did incontinently reward him: though not to my lord be altogether the glory."—*Diary of the Bishop's Secretary*, 1600.

To establish our two propositions: (1) that the Rev. E. T. Beck is an uncultured person; (2) that he aspires to replace god almighty (deceased) in Rotherhithe, we present the following letter:—

"The Rectory, Rotherhithe, Sept. 1, 1883.

"Sir,—Walking past your house a few minutes since, my attention was drawn to a caricature you have placed in the window of your establishment. I hereby request you to remove it immediately on receiving this letter, unless you desire me to take further proceedings. It ill becomes you, sir, as a new comer into our parish, to amuse your customers by lampooning your neighbors and turning my religion into ridicule.—Yours truly,  
E. J. BECK.

"To the landlord of the New Dock Inn,  
corner of Neptune Street."

The sublime impertinence of the "I hereby request you to remove it immediately" is as amusing as the impotent and impudent threat of "further proceedings." But the last paragraph is the most interesting. There is a school-boy proverb anent a cap that fits and permission to wear it. Mr. Beck, in the most delicious manner, puts upon his own foolish head Mr. Clare's excellently-made cap, and by writing the letter calls attention to the perfect accuracy of the fit.

Observe also the self-complacent arrogance of the "my religion." One would think that Mr. Beck had a monopoly of religion. Probably "one" does, and that one is the rector of Rotherhithe. And yet he is hardly to be counted as only one. He is so clearly one beside himself, with rage. Still, as he believes in the doctrine of the trinity these numerical difficulties are easily surmountable by a man whose income is reported to be £1,700 a year. If Mr. Beck had a monopoly of religion it would certainly be like a certain brand of champagne—dry monopole; unless his foaming at the mouth made it moist.

Mr. Clare will, of course, take no further notice of this impertinent person than is implied in the forwarding to him a copy of this article, in placing the *Freethinker* that contains it as prominently as possible in Rotherhithe and in producing and exhibiting as many more cartoons antagonistic to and in ridicule of the pretensions of the clergy as he can devise.

EDWARD B. AVELING.

#### ADDITIONAL AGENTS FOR SALE OF "FREE-THINKER."

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#### A CONVOCATION CHANT.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO MR. GILBERT.)

("Cantuar Warblette.")

WHEN the enthusiastic stormer of the Devil's citadel,  
Who delights in good old Church of England rule,  
Is environed by the forces of the daring infidel,  
His display of temper's anything but cool.  
When Colenso at the Pentateuch was smashing  
And demolishing its truthfulness like fun,  
And the atmosphere was charged with dogmas clashing,  
An archbishops lot was not a happy one—Oh!

*Chorus of inferior clergy—*

When ecclesiastic duty's to be done, to be done,  
An archbishop's lot is not a happy one, happy one.

"Cantuar"—

When Dissenters, all our dignity are bent upon destroying  
And curtailing our emoluments so fair;  
Disestablishment's the means to gain their end that they're  
employing,

And Deceased Wife Sister's Bill's another snare.  
When Salvation Army Booth gets all the coppers,  
And his hallelujah soldiers all the fun,  
Who can wonder if the pious press tells "woppers,"  
And exaggerates the little good we've done—Oh!

*Inferior clergy—*

When ecclesiastic duty's to be done, to be done,  
An archbishop's lot is not a happy one, happy one.

"Cantuar"—

Fifteen thousand pound's a tangible inducement notwithstanding,  
Why resistance should be offered tooth and nail,  
To all projects for th' establishment's disruption and dis-

banding,  
Though perchance our rhetoric will not avail.

When accused of blocking useful legislation,  
And denounced as daily diatribes have done,  
It is painfully apparent that the station  
Of a primate isn't undiluted fun—Oh!

*Inferior clergy—*

When ecclesiastic duty's to be done, to be done,  
An archbishop's lot is not a happy one, happy one.

"Cantuar"—

When the florid farmers sternly and indignantly refuse  
To disburse us our divine appointed tithe;  
But declare it all extortion and ridiculous abuse,  
Would decapitate us even with a scythe.

When the Ritualists by chopping and by changing,  
Still contrive to have their little bit of fun;  
And the Church beneath two rival flags is ranging,  
An archbishop's lot is not a happy one—Oh!

*Inferior clergy—*

When ecclesiastic duty's to be done, to be done,  
An archbishop's lot is not a happy one, happy one.

D. EVANS.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### A LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In return for many pleasant half-hours spent in reading the glad tidings of approaching freedom in thought, I would contribute my mite in the form of a trifling bit of news as to the progress of the battle of truth in "god's country," as Americans are fond of calling the land blessed by the absence of an authorised legal deity. We are not at a standstill, though you do not see much evidence of violent agitation in the American journals. The process is going on so quietly that the hard-kickers among the theological hypocrites do not know which way to strike or what particular person to aim at. They are in fear of burning their fingers if they meddle, and are wise enough to keep to their legitimate business as conductors on the tram-line to heaven—they collect the fares and do not ask unnecessary questions. Perhaps you have not heard that rather clever remark of the Harvard man concerning our Yankee churches? "There are three principal sects in America. In the Presbyterian Church a man's belief must be orthodox; he may live and act as he pleases. The Unitarians insist on a man living a virtuous life, and are not particular about what he believes. In the Episcopal Church a man can both believe and act exactly as he pleases, so long as he dresses well." This may give you some little idea of the state of our prayer-mills. But for you to appreciate the small improvements we are making it will be necessary for me to mention one or two details of the practical working of our system of evolution.

We are gradually converting Sunday from a day of constraint into a day of rest. The last Sunday afternoon I spent in New York was partly occupied in witnessing a game of base-ball between teams of counter-jumpers, who appeared to enjoy that variety of rest from their labors. In the evening I smoked a cigar and drank a "lager" at a "sacred concert," where we listened to a very fair orchestra giving some good selections of the Gounod and Mendelssohn style. A man can do that sort of thing now in New York, but he cannot take his mother or sister with him. The women are not yet emancipated.

Another of our "points" is to educate the people up to the grand principles of science and evolution, the conservation of energy, the infallibility of nature's laws. Every blow spent on that wedge makes another breach in the foundations of the temple of dogma; and the wide-awake portion of the community are well aware of the fact, and are beginning to hitch their stools nearer to the door of the said temple, so as to be able to "get out before the rush," when the old place begins to crack.

Still we have no objection to letting the old Church die a natural death. It was necessary in its day—the old folks like to go—it pleases them to think they are going to have a nice picnic in heaven pretty soon, and we let them alone. We don't argue the question much, out of respect for their sentiments; but we don't go to church ourselves!—Yours, in hope for better times,  
HARVEY CAMERON.

New York, August 31, 1883.

### "THE BIOGRAPHY OF SATAN."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Regretting Mr. Downton's letter did not appear before, I take the earliest opportunity of replying to his remarks.

He asks: "Is an infinite and all-wise god to be brought before the tribunal of a reason born of evil?" and "who shall question the will of an all-wise creator?" No one would question the will of an all-wise creator, if such a being existed; but if we are to know anything of Mr. Downton's god it is only by the use of that knowledge which, according to Genesis, is devil-born. I am quite willing to admit that if there be such a thing as a devil, and the third chapter of Genesis is true, the knowledge I possess is the gift of Satan, and to him only am I thankful. But that knowledge is thus alluded to by god: "Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil."

Mr. Downton will remember that I was criticising Dr. McAuslane's remarks, who says of Satan: "He had an understanding which could make an instant reception; a judgment which could make an immediate decision. . . . he was thoroughly competent to march across the broad fields of intelligence and reap the luxuriant harvest," and he was capable of "complete sympathy" with his father. If then Satan was capable of all this, and imparted so much intelligence to man that he became "as one of us," man is competent to judge of his peers.

Suppose a man constructed a piece of mechanism subservient to his every petty whim. If by any means that work became possessed of a like intelligence to its maker, man might be surprised, but the mechanism, having the knowledge of good and evil, would in all probability use it.

Every scientific inquiry must *per se* be a questioning of the divine will, and every invention and discovery which mitigates the curses pronounced on man is more than questioning—is defiance.

Trusting you will favor the exercise of my devil-born function by insertion.—I am, etc.,  
W. J. STUDDARD.

### "THE DOCTRINE OF FATALISM."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A Fatalist has put me *hors de combat*. I could distinguish a slight difference between the doctrine of philosophical necessity and that of fatalism, but upon further consideration I find the distinction is not real. Dr. Travis's teaching respecting man's power to form his own will, will not, I find, bear the test of examination. And so I confess my error, and cry, "Peccavi." When a man recognises he has made a mistake in thought he should acknowledge it. There is no loss of dignity, but a positive gain in doing so.—Yours truly,  
A. B. MOSS.

### PRISONERS' AID FUND.

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### THE VILLAGE PATRIARCH.

(A Sketch, founded on fact.)

HE sits beside his cottage door,  
The Bible on his knee;  
He is a holy man, though poor,  
Esteemed for piety.

He reads aloud, his looks are mild,  
And people passing near,  
By his celestial form beguiled  
Can scarce repress a tear

For one more "given to the lord."  
Go, find him, ye who can;  
Then join with me in one accord  
And bless this holy man.

But darkly fall the shades of night,  
The man of god "makes tracks;"  
He stows the Bible out of sight  
And taketh up his axe.

He wanders forth into the night  
To do some action good;  
And labors hard till morning light,  
"Prigging" his neighbor's wood.

On every rugged son of toil  
Suspicion sets its mark;  
And every one's suspected vile—  
Except the Patriarch.

X. R.

### PROFANE JOKES.

"PAPA," said a little boy, "is god everywhere?" "Yes, my son." "What, in the teapot?" "Yes, my son. Why do you ask?" "Because I wondered if that was why aunt's tea always smells of spirits."

A PASTOR encounters a small boy breaking the sabbath, and solemnly asks: "Do you know where boys who play marbles on Sunday go?" "Oh yes, sir. Some go on the common, and the rest down by the river!"—Another moral lesson wrecked.

At a village church in Essex, the clerk, who was reading the lessons, came to the well-known passage, "The wicked shall flourish like a green bay tree." Some irreverent joker had pasted the printed word "horse" over "tree;" and the clerk rendered the passage thusly: "And the wicked shall flourish as the green bay horse—tree—no—horse. Damme, it is horse!"

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Edited by

G. W. Foote.

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

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Importance of Principles (translated from the French), by C. Mismar.  
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