

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sentenced to Twelve Months' Imprisonment for Blasphemous Libel.

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

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

Vol. III.—No. 12.]

MARCH 25, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

THE ASSOCIATION FOR REPEAL OF THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

It is urgently requested that all opponents of the Blasphemy Laws will at once Petition the Home Secretary for the release of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp.

W. SHARMAN, Hon. Sec. *pro tem.*

20 Headland Park, Plymouth.

MEMORIAL.

A MEMORIAL has been drawn up for presentation to the Home Secretary on behalf of a mitigation of the sentences on Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp. It runs as follows:

"To the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

"The Humble Memorial of the undersigned.
Sheweth

"That George William Foote, William James Ramsey, and Henry Kemp were on Monday, March 5th, found guilty of blasphemy at common law and sentenced to imprisonment, respectively, G. W. Foote, 12 months; W. J. Ramsey, 9 months; and H. Kemp, 3 months.

"Your memorialists respectfully submit that such an enforcement of laws against Blasphemy is out of accord with the spirit of the age, and humbly pray the mercy of the Crown in remission of the sentences imposed."

Friends will do good work by copying this out and obtaining as many signatures as possible to each copy. The Memorial and the signatures should be sent to the Home Secretary as speedily as possible. It is particularly requested that no other form may be used than the one given above.

THE CONDUCT OF THE "FREETHINKER."

The Committee of Management (consisting of six members) constituted for the purpose of carrying on the business affairs of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey during their imprisonment is now in complete working order. It consists of Mrs. Annie Besant, to whose clear head, tact and untiring energy much of our extrication from the labyrinth is due, Messrs. R. O. Smith, Hilditch, Grout, G. Standring, and Herbert. These names are a sufficient guarantee that the interests of our persecuted friends will be well guarded. Mr. Herbert is treasurer both as regards all business monies and as regards the Prisoners' Aid Fund. In this last all other funds are merged, and all subscriptions sent in under any name, for the help of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp, and those connected with them, are this week and will henceforth be acknowledged, under the heading Prisoners' Aid Fund, in this paper.

[No. 85.]

Mr. J. M. Wheeler, thanks mainly to the prompt action of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, is now cared for in Bethnal House, E. All payments are made as regards him for one month from the date of his removal thither. This event occurred on Tuesday, March 13th. Arrangements have been made to have medical testimony as to his condition forwarded to us ten days ere the month is concluded. The nature of that testimony and the further course of proceedings on his behalf will be published in the *Freethinker*. It is almost unnecessary to state that in the interim daily inquiries will be made as to his health.

The business at 28 Stonecutter Street will be under the management of Mr. R. Forder. To him all business communications are to be addressed. The literary conduct of the paper will be under my direction. All literary communications should be addressed to me at 13 Newman Street, London, W.

Besides those whose names are already mentioned, the thanks not only of myself but of all Freethinkers are due to Mr. Bracksted and to Captain Charles Bingham, who have been most earnest and most useful during the hurry and whirl of the past few days. Nor must Mr. Kemp, brother of one of the prisoners, who looked after the business at Stonecutter Street, until definite arrangements were made, be forgotten.

And now it is only necessary to appeal to all friends of progress to help. Their help can be given by purchasing (as many are intending) as many copies of the *Freethinker* and of *Progress* as possible—by distributing these among the unbelievers—by aiding the fund that ought to swell to national proportions ere the release of our friends—by memorialising the Home-Secretary for their release—by leaving no stone unturned to secure the repeal of these blasphemy laws that can break up our homes if they cannot break down our resolution.

EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.

THE RIGHT TO BLASPHEME.

AGAIN the Christians have been taking care of god. Poor god! The way in which these extraordinary persons take care of this extraordinary deity reminds us of the over-kindness of certain mothers. These in their excessive care of their babies, stifle them and wake up one morning to find the object of their solicitude dead.

Would such a spectacle as that witnessed at the Old Bailey on Monday, March 5th, be possible in any other civilised country than this England? Could the words of Mr. Justice North in condemning our friends have been heard, except with peals of derisive laughter, could his sentence have been heard without a cry of horror, uttered beyond the limits of the court, in any other civilised country than this in which we live? Small wonder that men and women present at that trial forgot what was due to the majesty of the law, and only recognised the revival of persecution for conscience sake in the year 1883

I have said that this sorry sight of three honest men, against whose conduct nothing is urged, sentenced, under a law that is an anachronism, to imprisonment for expression of opinion upon opinion could have been seen in no other civilised land than ours. In barbarous countries such a sight might be possible. Even if a like event occurred in an uncivilised land, what outcry would have arisen in all the English newspapers! A spasm of virtuous indignation would have distorted the features of Tory, Liberal, Radical papers alike. Imagine three men sent to prison in Benares for sneering at the car of Juggernaut with fanatics prostrating themselves beneath its passing wheels, and for picturing it as a one-horse omnibus with a drunken driver. Imagine three men sent to prison in Mecca for sneering at the Caabah, and representing it as a stone from a macadamised road dipped in ink. Imagine three men sent to prison in Rome for sneering at the host as it passed, and for drawing it as a loaf of musty bread. Yet it is for an offence, as it is called, on all fours with any one of these that our friends are in prison. Had that which I ask you to imagine occurred in India, in Asia, in Italy, every newspaper in this country would have burst out into righteous reproaches against Hindu, Mahomedan, or Roman Catholic. Yet when like events occur here, in our midst, at our very doors, almost all are silent. Truly we are a great people, if humbug is the touchstone. Our toleration like our charity extends beyond seas, but is dead at home.

A few newspapers have spoken honestly, humanly. But the most part either are silent or gloat, with no attempt at concealment of their joy, over the cruel sentences. "Questions like these try men." They find men wanting. But for this trial the world had never known the want of common courage, the want of common honesty, for which Mr. John Morley will be for ever infamous. With Mr. John Morley, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, I shall deal, possibly, in later issues, though after Mr. Bradlaugh's denunciation of the new member for Newcastle-on-Tyne, my task will really be that of picking up the fragments that remain.

The prosecution in this trial, so disgraceful to this century, was instituted by the Corporation of the City of London. Poor god! They tell me that in certain cases where some one cannot himself bring an action in law, it is brought by his next of kin. By inference, therefore, the next of kin to the deity is the Corporation of the City of London. It was bad enough so long as Mr. Newdegate and Sir Henry Tyler played the role of next of kin. But the City! *Pro pudor!*

These people seem to forget that Jesus Christ died on Calvary. I suppose they once had some dim glimmer of a knowledge of this fact. Yet even such a glimmer seems doubtful when we reflect that he endured buffetings, scourgings, a crown of thorns, death for the very offence for which our men are suffering. The punishment is lighter to-day, for the time is eighteen centuries and a half later. But the wrong-doing of those that persecute is heavier to-day, for the time is eighteen and a half centuries later.

Of Mr. Justice North I have little to say. Other men, abler than I, have spoken of him. History will record his name. It will be added to the list of those unhappy men who have had to administer barbaric laws from which, in all but the saddest cases, the better natures shrank. When one looks back upon these men, whom circumstances have placed in positions so terrible, when one thinks of Lord Ellenborough forced to sentence Eaton, of the former Lord Coleridge sentencing Pooley, one cannot but think of them as murmuring to themselves the sad lines of Guinevere—

"The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and form the years,
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine shall ever be a name of shame."

EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.

(To be continued.)

DEATH OF MR. ASHTON DILKE.—This sad event, the significance of which to English Radicalism can with difficulty be estimated, took place on March 12th at Algiers. The last time we saw Mr. Dilke was on the occasion of his leaving his sick-bed to speak at a Constitutional Rights meeting at St. James's Hall. We hope we may not be accused of too personal a feeling when we admit that our sense of the loss sustained is intensified by the remembrance that this brave man's place at Newcastle is taken by one so craven, so renegade to his quondam principles as Mr. John Morley.

MR. FOOTE'S ADDRESS TO THE JURY.

CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT, MARCH 5TH, 1883.

(For Full Report of both Trials see Special Notice.)

Mr. Foote continued as follows:—Some of those epithets which were applied to the Romans, were "servile;" "perfidious;" "bloodshedders;" "ignorant;" "wretched;" "exercised unnatural lusts;" "procuring abortion;" consecrate "brothels to divinities;" "brutish stupidity;" "ferocious;" "licentious people;" "bigoted multitude;" "savage tyranny of Roman Emperors." Here is a description of Christians:—[this will appear in Part VI. of the "Report of Blasphemy Trials," ready next week.] These are to be found in "Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History," and give a good idea of how Christians treat their enemies or those who differ from them in religion. [Mr. Foote next submitted, from the same book, Christian descriptions of ancient philosophers, heretics and their creeds, priests of other religions, description of Jews, Christian ridicule of other religions, Christian descriptions of gods of other people, and Christian descriptions of Roman magistrates, which will, we hope, be given in full in Part VI.] When one sees all the sects have been doing and saying of one another, one can only settle as to which to believe by adopting Voltaire's plan, who, when he saw two old ladies quarrelling said, "Well, I believe them both." In all ages contending parties have reviled each other. Lucian lampooned the Christians, and they were as severe on the Pagans. The "Octavius" of Minutius Felix is a dialogue in which, while Cæcilius (the heathen) complains that Christians spit on Pagan gods, Octavius (the Christian) satirises the Pagans for, of all things, what think you?—for worshipping the cross with a man upon it. Irenæus calls his opponents "slimy serpents" and many abusive epithets, and ridicules the *œons*. Tertullian abuses Marcion and Hermogenes, as will be seen in Gibbon's account of the Arian and Mother of God controversy. It was the same with Clement of Alexandria and other writers against heretics. A large number of Lollard ballads, writings, and prints were satirical, and in the times of the Reformation caricatures on religious subjects were common. Erasmus' "Praise of Folly," which was illustrated by Holbein, who caricatured the Pope, is full of gibes and sarcasms. This work, says D'Aubigné, did more than anything else to confirm the sacerdotal tendency of the age. The Catholics, said Erasmus, laid the egg and Luther hatched it. The Reformers were treated with the grossest abuse and scurrility, which they amply repaid. D'Aubigné, in his "History of the Reformation of the 16th Century," says:—"Luther's name resounded everywhere from the pulpits of the Dominicans, who addressed themselves to the passions of the people. They called the bold doctor a madman, a seducer, and a demoniac. His doctrine was cried down as the most horrible heresy. 'Only wait a fortnight, or a month at most,' said they, 'and this notorious heretic will be burnt.'" Luther wrote, but did not publish, a little treatise, "De Execrandâ Venere Romanorum," which, I think, had best be left untranslated. Luther was a Protestant, and Henry VIII. became a Protestant too, after quarrelling with the Pope because he would not gratify his lust by giving him a divorce from his wife (Catherine of Arragon). Luther said:—"I will not be gentle towards the King of England. At length I will show myself more terrible towards these furious beasts, who goad me every day with their horns. I will turn mine upon them. I will provoke SATAN until he falls down lifeless and exhausted. 'If this heretic does not recant,' says Henry VIII., the new Thomas, 'he must be burnt alive!' Such are the weapons they are now employing against me: the fury of stupid asses and swine of the brood of Thomas Aquinas." Luther often repeats such epithets of the Pope and other cherished persons. The polemics of Christians are full of abusive epithets towards those who differ from them. Hear what the Rev. Robert Hall in his "Modern Infidelity" says of infidels:—"They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (preface). Again, "Atheism is an inhuman, bloody, ferocious system, equally hostile to every useful restraint, and to every virtuous affection; that, leaving nothing above us to excite awe, nor round us to awaken tenderness, wages war with heaven and with earth; its first object is to dethrone god, its next to destroy man." Christian sects pay little attention to each other's feelings, and nothing to those outside of the churches and creeds. If you take up the journals devoted to the promulgation and maintenance of rival ideas, do not you find they are full of abuse of each other, the Protestant papers speaking of the Roman Catholics as being professors of a religion which they describe as the scarlet lady of Babylon. Do not they call Catholics idolators and blasphemers, and do not the Roman Catholics turn round and call the Protestants heretics and blasphemers? Do not men calling themselves the Salvation Army go about and use the symbols and the time-honored expressions of the creed, and associate them with the most brutal language of military camps; yet, because they wear the label of Christians, they are not blasphemers. Nobody in this country, whatever his religion, is called upon to respect the feelings of anybody else. It is only the Freethinker who is told to respect the feelings of people from whom he differs, and to respect them how? To respect not when he enters the

place of their worship, not when he stands side by side with them in the public streets in the business or pleasure of life, but to respect their feelings even when he reads only what is intended to be read by Freethinkers without even knowing that a single pair of Christian eyes is to scan the page. Is not that similar to what is attempted here? I think you will agree that it is. Whose feelings have been outraged? Would it not have been well to have put some one in that box who was prepared to swear that his feelings had been outraged? With the wealth of the Corporation of the City of London a quantity of any feeling of outrage against this or any other publication can be manufactured. Whose feelings have been outraged by the publication which lies before you? It bears its name outside; there is nothing surreptitious about it; anybody who purchased it would do so with his eyes open; those who purchase it must want it; it is not thrust into his hand by some one who said, "I am a Freethinker, I want your feelings outraged, your sense of decency scarified, and therefore I put this into your hand." Nothing of the sort has been done, nothing of the kind has been proved. Those who purchased the paper have done so by going for it into the shops themselves. Whose feelings therefore have been injured? Nobody's except those who went into the shops to purchase copies of the paper to prosecute, and whose feelings are not worthy of your consideration. Come for a moment to the question of ridicule. Take the comic papers. They contain sometimes ridicule of a serious nature. You must never suppose because a man pulls a long face that he is wiser and better than others. You must never imagine because a man has a serious look that his judgment is better than that of a happy-looking person. Often the finest wit in the world has been summed up in an epigram, and some of the greatest men who have ever contributed to the liberal progress of mankind have been men of wit, and they have been hated by their opponents because they had no wit of their own. The only thing that made Voltaire hated was his wit. Only recently one of the comic papers went to the length of representing Mr. Gladstone as "No. 1," that the detectives are looking after. Did the Liberal Party on that subject say "We want a summons against the editor of that paper because our feelings have been outraged and ridicule employed against us?" They would never be so stupid, because they employ ridicule too, and therefore, they can retaliate with the same. Gentlemen, really, if Freethinkers cannot employ the ridicule with which they are assailed, it is so much the worse for those who differ from them. In politics we can ridicule people. In science we can employ ridicule, and so in social matters and everyday life. Why is this? Because in all those departments of human activity the freest play of mind is allowed, and if you admit that any controverted points of religion may be discussed, you cannot debar ridicule as one of the methods of argument. Ridicule is employed not only by comic papers, but by daily papers and serious writers. If a man comes before you with some silly proposition, and you show him how ridiculous it is, the consequence is that he begins to recognise its absurdity. Suppose you were to take the case of one of the pictures called "A back view." Looked at from the point of view of the Freethinker, it is absurd. Looked at from the point of view of the simple credulous Christian, whose state of mind is like that which allowed the Christians of the middle ages to depict god and Jesus, and even Jesus and the holy ghost, and the virgin, and the saints and archangels, in pictures and on walls, it may be impressive; but looked at from the point of view of the Freethinker, putting the plain matter of scripture before you, you reduce it to an utter absurdity. For it is preposterous in an age like this to believe such a thing, when the foundations of the old faith are disrupted in an age full of scholarship, to believe in writings written by no one knows whom, at a time no one knows when, and at a place no one knows where. It is impossible, I say, that any one can believe in the old Hebrew myth ridiculed in that picture. Can you believe that god the infinite, the spirit of the universe, as you are bound to believe he is if you are theists, ever stopped on the top of a hill and sent down an invitation to a man to come up and stay a few days with him? Can you believe that that god talked to that man face to face as a man would to his friend? Can you believe that the deity asked him to let him go and destroy his own people, his own creatures, and that the man kept him back? Can you believe that deity put that man in the cleft of a rock, put his hand over the rock, and then took it away and allowed the man to see his back parts? I shall not trouble you with any comic extracts from the Bible, but I might give you plenty of illustrations of ridicule from the Bible. Don't you remember that altercation that took place between the prophet Elijah and the priests of Baal? They built altars and they called respectively on their gods. The priests of Baal cried and cut themselves, but the fire would not come. What did Elijah do? Did he say "I have been reading your philosophical treatise on the subject of Baal, and I find there a difficulty in the way of accepting your creed?" Did he say "there are controverted points which I think we ought to dispute about and settle"? Nothing of the sort; he turned to them with the gravest irony and said: "Where is your god? Is he asleep? Has he gone on a journey?" Gentlemen, that is the language of ridicule, and if what the learned counsel for the prosecution has told you to-day be true, the priests of Baal would have been perfectly justified in turning upon the prophet Elijah and settling him upon the spot; but they seemed to have more

sympathy than even the learned counsel for the prosecution. Ridicule is only irksome to priests and preachers of religion. They are the only people who ask to be protected from ridicule. Did you ever hear of a man going to a court and asking for a summons for ridiculing an astronomer? Did you ever hear of a summons being applied for for ridiculing a geologist? You never heard of such a thing as an astronomer, a geologist, chemist, or man of science, asking to be protected from ridicule. If you went to a physiologist like Professor Huxley and laughed at the truth of his deductions he would say "Laugh away, but it doesn't touch the truth;" therefore he would never think of seeking protection. Why?—because he has got the truth, and the truth can protect itself. These men don't dread ridicule because they know they have the truth and can prove it to every inquiring mind. It is only priests and preachers of religion who claim protection. I am a Freethinker, but I know my Bible well, and perhaps knowing it so well has made me a Freethinker; and I know, gentlemen, the life recorded in that book of the founder of Christianity. I know, gentlemen, whatever failings or flaws Freethinkers may think they find, not so much in his character as in his teaching, and which I can quite understand as he was not in the possession of the knowledge of to-day, yet we can say this, that he never gave any instructions to his disciples to bring men who differ from them or who would not receive their doctrine before the magistrate. He never told them to spend their money in employing learned counsel to prosecute those men before the judges and juries in order to cast them into gaol or cripple them by fine. He tells his disciples all were to agree together, and that the separating of the wheat from the tares was to be left to a greater wisdom than theirs. From the Atheist point of view that is the true doctrine. Surely god must know his need! Surely he is powerful enough to avenge an insult against himself! Surely the all-searching eye of him, who you believe can pierce into the recesses of other men's hearts and know all, must disapprove of avenging his insulted majesty by bringing an impeachment against men such as befits those who lived in barbarous times, and who were excluded from the light of science and scholarship which we enjoy to-day! It is only priests and teachers of religion who claim protection, because they feel that their authority depends upon privilege. They feel that unless they make a bold stand for their hold upon law, their hold upon the people may slip. They feel that it is necessary to guard their dogmas from the rough approach of common sense, and therefore those laws are always enforced in their interests. I ask you whether it is not a ghastly mockery to say that after 1800 years of Christianity, which is supposed to be divine, there are men who not only disbelieve it, and men in growing numbers who disbelieve it, men who can actually assail it as they think in the interests of the salvation of mankind, that there should be such a prosecution as this? Surely the god who said, "Let there be light and there was light," when he sent religion, would know of its effect upon the world: and the fact that the world is not convinced is to my mind conclusive proof that god has not spoken, for if he had no one could have resisted his voice. Why may not Christianity take its chance? If it is argued against let it defend itself, not by the policeman's truncheon; let it defend an artistic or intellectual attack by intellectual or artistic weapons, and not confess itself beaten and then rush to drag its adversaries before judges, just as the Jews and Pagans dragged Christians when they could not put them down. The time has passed for certain ideas to be privileged, and every doctrine must take its chance. You will find that we are charged in the indictment with "publishing blasphemous libels against the Christian religion, to the high displeasure of almighty god, to the scandal and reproach of the Christian profession, and against the peace of our Lady the Queen, her Crown, and dignity." The high displeasure of almighty god is a matter you will not touch. If you believe in god, and the words of your oath imply you do, then you know he is omnipotent, that he is all-seeing, that he is all-wise, all-just, and you must leave to that high tribunal the punishment or the forgiveness of any offence against itself. It has often been said in books of law that it is not for the protection of god, or even for the protection of the Christian religion as such that these blasphemy laws are applied, but to prevent the scandalising of the name of almighty god, which tends to a breach of the peace. That is the last clause stated here. The high displeasure of almighty god we dismiss. The reproach to the Christian religion we may also dismiss pretty briefly. As a matter of fact, the reproach to the Christian religion is being carried on to-day by the leading scholars and scientific men, not only of England but of every country in the civilised world. It is as well you should reflect upon this. I have already mentioned certain names selected by the Protestant Prosecution Society to be proceeded against: Professor Huxley, Professor Tyndall, Mr. Morley, and others. These men are all writing to the scandal of the Christian religion. Is it not a greater scandal to religion to say it is false than to laugh at it? Is it not worse to call a man a liar than to laugh at him? There can be no greater offence to Christianity, if it is to be fenced about by law, than that which nine-tenths of the leading writers in every country are committing. The clergy bewail it every year; the bishops are constantly lamenting the decline of religion, and one of them has said that god is being pushed from our popular life, and that the intellect of the nation instead of supporting the

Christian religion is arrayed against it. What greater scandal can there be than that? I can understand the logical bigotry of the men who want to prosecute leading blasphemers. John Stuart Mill, who was brought up without any Christian belief, whose father said that the idea of deity which the Christian religion taught was the highest conception of wickedness—John Stuart Mill disbelieved Christianity. He has left it on record in his autobiography, and in the "Essays on Atheism" published since his death. Those are two instances. Herbert Spencer speaks in the freest way in his books about the Trinity, in which one person is offended for the sins of persons outside the Trinity, and another person of the Trinity makes atonement, and yet all three are one. In his "Sociology" he cites many instances of the lengths to which bigotry and credulity have gone. He illustrates the absurdity of the Trinity by three persons endeavoring to stand on one chair. If the "Freethinker" made a drawing of that kind to show the absurdity of the Trinity it would be a blasphemy, but a Christian, although a philosopher, is not a blasphemer when he gives the illustration I have mentioned. As reading quotations is a weariness of spirit to the reader and listener, I shall only trouble you with a few, but I shall run over the cases of one or two men outside the churches, and I will go to two dead men besides John Stuart Mill. I speak of them as of to-day because their writings are of to-day, and the spirit of their works lives with us. You have heard of Shelley's "Queen Mab." That work has been sold for a generation and is being sold now by the leading publishers of England and America. No person would think of prosecuting for the sale of Shelley's "Queen Mab" now, and yet it is full of the completest dissent from, and reproach to, the Christian religion and all religion. I don't propose to read you any extract from that. Mr. Foote having referred to Byron's poem in reply to Southey's, in which the king is described as slipping into heaven, and concluding with the lines—

"When the tumult dwindled to a calm,
He left him practising the Hundredth Psalm,"

he remarked that nobody ever thought of proceeding against the sale of Byron's works. He next proceeded to refer to Professor Huxley's works, and quoted the following from his "Lay Sermons": "The myths of Paganism are as dead as Osiris or Zeus, and the man who should revive them, in opposition to the knowledge of our time, would be justly laughed to scorn; but the coeval imaginations current among the rude inhabitants of Palestine, recorded by writers whose very name and age are admitted by every scholar to be unknown, have unfortunately not yet shared their fate, but, even at this day, are regarded by nine-tenths of the civilised world as the authoritative standard of fact and the criterion of the justice of scientific conclusions, in all that relates to the origin of things, and among them, of species. In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of modern physical science, the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox." Having referred to the "Evolution of Christianity," from which he read an extract, Mr. Foote read the following two quotations from "Mill on Liberty": "No Christian more firmly believes that Atheism is false, and tends to the dissolution of society, than Marcus Aurelius believed the same things of Christianity; he who, of all men then living, might have been thought the most capable of appreciating it. Unless anyone who approves of punishment for the promulgation of opinions flatters himself that he is a wiser and a better man than Marcus Aurelius—more deeply versed in the wisdom of his time, more elevated in his intellect above it—more earnest in his search for truth, or more single-minded in his devotion to it when found; let him abstain from that assumption of the joint infallibility of himself and the multitudes which the great Antonius made with so unfortunate a result. . . . The man who left on the memory of those who witnessed his life and conversation such an impression of his moral grandeur, that eighteen subsequent centuries have done homage to him as the almighty in person, was ignominiously put to death, as what?—as a blasphemer. Men did not merely mistake their benefactor; they mistook him for the exact contrary of what he was, and treated him as that prodigy of impiety which they themselves are now held to be, for their treatment of him." Mr. Foote also quoted in support of his argument from Mr. Leslie Stephens, who, in the current number of the "Nineteenth Century," contended that there ought to be no interference with expressions in papers or from platforms of opinions on religious matters, even when expressed in an abusive or ridiculous manner, because everybody had the remedy in his own hands.

Mr. Justice North: Be good enough to tell me the name of the book you are now quoting from?

Mr. Foote: "Essays in Freethinking," my lord. He proceeded further to refer to Professor Huxley, who, speaking of the story of the creation, said: "There are those who represent the most numerous, respectable, and would-be orthodox of the public, and are what may be called 'Adamites,' pure and simple. They believe that Adam was made out of earth somewhere in Asia, about six thousand years ago; that Eve was modelled from one of his ribs; and that the progeny of these two having been reduced to the eight persons who were landed on the summit of Mount Ararat after a universal deluge, all the nations of the earth have proceeded from these last, have migrated to their present localities, and have become converted into Negroes,

Australians, Mongolians, etc., within that time. Five-sixths of the public are taught this Adamitic Monogenism, as if it were an established truth, and believe it. I do not; and I am not acquainted with any man of science or duly instructed person who does." Mr. Foote quoted from Mr. Matthew Arnold, who said that the personages of the Christian confession and their conversations were no more a matter of fact than the persons of the Greek Olympus and their conversation. Viscount Amberley, speaking of the incarnation of Jesus, says: "That some among these many female followers were drawn to him by that sentiment of love is, at least, highly probable. Whether Jesus entertained any such feelings towards one of them it is impossible to guess, for the human side of his nature has been carefully suppressed in the extant legend." Again, the same writer remarked: "Of the god of Israel, one of these two charges he cannot escape. Either he knew when he created Adam and Eve, that their nature was such that they would disobey, or he did not. In the first case he knowingly formed them liable to fall, knowingly placed them amid conditions which rendered their fall inevitable; and then punished them for the catastrophe he had all along foreseen, as the necessary result of the character he had bestowed on them. In the second case, he was ignorant and short-sighted, being unable to guess what would be the nature of his own handiwork; and should not have undertaken tasks which were obviously beyond the scope of his faculties." He did not believe in the perfection of the character of Jesus even as a man, and he believed the gospel narrative not to be divine but to have been put in human form. Professor Clifford, and the Duke of Somerset might be added to the list of writers he had quoted from. Those should satisfy them that belief in the old testament as a piece of mythology was common in the highest circles of literature, and though they had not been made the subject of reproach, yet those who expressed the same thing in plain language, by plain illustration, were prosecuted. The defendant quoted a very amusing passage from the works of Colonel Ingersoll, to show how ridicule was used, and went on to ask, why are we singled out for prosecution?

(To be concluded next week.)

ACID DROPS.

An appropriate quotation from Dryden's "Don Sebastian," Act I, Scene 1, might be used by Freethinkers when arraigned before the tribunals of this free country. "Good, my lord; take pity on a poor man in this world and damn me in the next." If they will only cease from troubling us here, we'll take our chance of the hereafter. On reflexion, that last sentence is a little ambiguous, for if our biblical knowledge does not fail us, it is the "wicked" that "cease from troubling," and that is only in another and a worse world. Verdict: Mixed.

It is a bitter reflexion that the memorials for getting our friends out of prison have to be presented to an official called with nomenclatural irony the *Home Secretary*.

The temperance folk, with doubtless the best intentions in the world, are doing their cause and that of Christianity no little harm. We will forgive them for injuring Christianity, but so good a cause as that of temperance ought not to be made to suffer, either by its exaggeration as total abstinence or by its association with the name of Mr. Spurgeon. It is a pity also that Mr. McCree should talk about "clearing wine out of the chapel vestries." Whither? Into the communion cups? Your Savior's first miracle was the turning water into the wine that you would clear out, and your most sacred rite is the drinking, as he drank, of wine.

WHAT has the City Corporation done that the *Daily News* should be so rude? It heads a paragraph with the words "The Aldermanic Vacancy." Evidently the editor has been looking at the faces of the Corporation.

"WHEN I speak of Hinduism having been threatened by Christianity, I am not thinking of the modern missionary, who, harmless and unheeded, stands, a living parody on Wisdom, at the corners of the streets, reviling, in bad Hindustani, a creed he does not understand. Only yesterday I was reading in Rousset's delightful book a description of the impression produced upon that acute observer by the sight of a missionary denouncing idolatry, in loud, shrill tone, in the heart of Benares, a few paces from the Fountain of Wisdom and the idol of Siva. In the storm of reviling, in the very holy of holies, the Hindu listened unmoved, apathetic, tolerant. Hinduism is in no danger from Protestant missions such as we see to-day."—The *Pioneer* (India), February 6, 1883.

The following remark was heard at Tunbridge Wells during a discussion on the prosecution of the *Freethinker*. A half-intoxicated defender of the faith quoth, "Well, I don't think much of this circular (Secular) Society; any fool ought to believe in a human being." *Ex uno disce omnes.*

SPECIAL NOTICES.

A Full Report of the Two Trials of Messrs. G. W. Foote, W. J. Ramsey, and H. A. Kemp, for Blasphemous Libel in the Christmas Number of the "Freethinker," is being issued in Twopenny Parts. Now ready, Parts I., II. III. and IV. in neat wrappers. Parts V. and VI. in the press.

All literary communications are to be addressed to the Editor of the "Freethinker," 13 Newman Street, Oxford Street, W.

DR. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture at Manchester on Sunday, March 25th.—Subjects: 11 a.m., "Freedom in England;" at 3 p.m., "Pedigree of Man;" at 6.30., "The Right to Blaspheme."

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor as above.

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.—Minnie Pierson, Passive, Thomas Bride-White, F. J. Gould, L. W. Hutchings, C. J. Welton, T. Francker, W. Webster, William Mortimer, One of Us. Joseph H. Rogers, H. Seymour, Horatio Bottomley, N. J. Baker, Oliver Sherlock, J. S. Redlands, C. Lewis, Elias Hisps, W. J. L. Anderson, W. H. Morrish, T. D. Hatfield, Bessie Williamson.

A. SIDDALL.—Thanks to you and your friends for your suggestions. They will be duly weighed and probably not found wanting. Glad to hear of your efforts on behalf of the Defence Fund. Equally sorry that Jacob Bright, M.P., declines to do anything in the matter. By this declining he shows a declension that is melancholy in connexion with the name he bears. Let the score of your members who have written to your local representatives, to the Premier and to the Home Secretary, become a hundred and hundreds if possible.

ESINDRINHADU (we think), Glasgow.—Utilised. Couldn't you have a *nom de plume* less heart breaking to composers?

D. EVANS suggests that every reader of the paper should take two copies weekly (there is no *a* in this word) as he himself will. The only emendation we venture to make on this is the insertion of the words "or more."

F. J. COLE, College Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk, sends 1s. out of the 15s, a week that have to support ten people, and says he will send 1s. every fortnight if he has to go without his small piece of meat on Sundays.

LIBERTY.—Thanks for your promise to take several copies a week. We hope your example will be followed in the interest of your *nom de plume*.

C. ADAMS.—We shall be glad if you will put your suggestion of a weekly subscription on the part of every *Freethinker* into personal practice and induce others to do likewise.

J. E. GARRER.—Many thanks for your acquiescence as one of Mr. Wheeler's friends in the present arrangements.

W. E. SNELL.—A postal wrapper is quite sufficient to enclose the *Freethinker* for post. The paper is not prohibited by any law, and its distribution is no more an offence than it would be in the case of the *Rock*.

MUNACTHIE.—(1) As far as we know none has appeared. (2) No. (3) Cuttings having reference to the *Freethinker* are always useful and welcome.

P. C. SMITH.—The *Freethinker* will certainly continue to exist. Imprisoning man will not render god safe.

GEORGE WHITE.—If your discussion was public, the persons you name had a right to be present. If it was private, their presence was an impertinence. In either case, we are glad to hear that they were dumb in the matter of argument.

L. W. HUTCHINGS.—Thanks. We wish we had room for your excellent communication. The *Weekly Dispatch* and the *Spectator* were bravely honest.

W. P.—We have written to you. It is pleasant to find *Freethinkers* in advance of their time. But to read as a heading to a letter that is received on March 16th, the date March 18th, is a little confusing.

A FREETHOUGHT RECRUIT.—Many thanks. We want more of you.

W. MARTIN.—Thanks for promise of 10s. a week for six months at least. It would be best as a subscription to the *Freethinker*.

H. TAYLOR will take one quire of *Freethinker* and subscribe 1s. weekly.

G. A. GASKELL.—Thank you for your brave letter in your local paper, and your promise to take thirty copies of the *Freethinker*. The promise is the more welcome as the direct result of this persecution, for we believe we are correct in regarding you as a new subscriber.

A THEIST.—We hope you may be able soon to write these two words as one.

CHAS. LEWIS.—Glad to hear that the sale of the *Freethinker* has trebled in Crewe since the prosecution.

W. B. COLUMBINE.—We hold over reference to your letter till we see if the *Christian World* inserts it.

H. SEYMOUR.—Your letter to Justice North, though excellent, is too long for insertion, and you have written it on both sides of the paper. It would do good work if its recipient took the trouble to read it.

X.—We hope we shall have the strength to carry on the work. We ought to be able to do so considering that the whole strength of the Freethought party is at our back.

POSTCARD from Glasgow received—name indecipherable from treatment in transition. Apparently John — something.

G. McDERMOTT, Charles Lewis, George King.—The monies to which you refer are not individually traceable, but as some pounds were found in Mr. Wheeler's possession when he fell ill, it is more than probable that your amounts are included in this money.

As we go to press we hear that Mr. Wheeler is considerably better.

MANY correspondents remain unanswered from want of space.

PAPERS RECEIVED:—The Hulme Gazette and Advertiser, Manchester—Islington Gazette—Evening Citizen, Glasgow—Daily Mail, Birmingham—Boston Guardian—The Pioneer—West Sussex Gazette—Oxfordshire Weekly News—Echo—Bradford Observer—Truthseeker, New York—Thinker, India—Anti-Christian, India.

SPECIAL.

EVERY friend of Freethought should be converted—Earth forbid, not in the vulgar sense of the word—but converted into an amateur newsagent. As many copies as possible of the paper should be purchased weekly by every *Freethinker* for distribution. The cry ought to be that of the daughter of the horse-leech—"Give, give, give,"—to everybody you come across.

There is no necessity for, there is really no possibility of, any scare on the part of the trade. The prosecution fondly hoped to frighten honest men and women from selling the *Freethinker*. We use the word "fondly" in its Shakspearian sense. For the benefit of the prosecution, who as the Corporation of the City of London cannot be suspected of understanding the Shakspearian sense any more than the common-sense of things, we explain that "fondly" means "foolishly." The persecutors were reckoning without their host—or rather without *our* host—the host of brave friends who will undertake to sell the *Freethinker*. A list of agents who have promised to supply the paper follows. It only includes a mere fraction of the men willing to help, and we shall be glad to have a further list of names for next week's issue. The following agents will supply the *Freethinker* :—

John Campbell, 71 Mundella Road, New Road, Battersea; A. Gates, 1 Pressland Terrace, Kensal Road, N.W.; D. Evans, 83 Raiton Road, Herne Hill; F. J. Cole, College Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk; J. Wilks, 129 Manchester Road, Bradford; G. Griffiths, 32 Oldham Road, Manchester; F. Rayner, 31 Orchard Lane, Southampton (any evening after 7 o'clock); J. Cottrell, 98 Huntley Street, Tottenham Court Road; E. Tomlinson, King Street, Camden Town (opposite the Public Baths); Jacob Barlow, 48 Alsen Road, Seven Sisters Road, Holloway; H. Taylor, 4 Trothy Road, S.E.; W. H. Morrish, Narrow-wine Street, Bristol.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE lion may on occasion lie down with the lamb. At all events, the interim editor of the *Freethinker* may lunch, side by side, with the Lobb. Mr. Lobb is one of the members of the London School Board (Hackney), and has a keen scent for anything like a job in connexion with that body. Some of the irreverent propose to call him a Job-lobb, as they had colds in their heads. He is also proprietor of the *Christian Age*. We were therefore pleased to hear him denounce the folly, and worse than folly, of his Christian age—the time, not the paper—in persecuting the *Freethinker*.

ARCHIBALD SIDDALL, of Manchester, tells us that nearly twenty *Freethinkers* of the Hulme Branch of the N. S. S.

have written respecting the sentences on Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp, to the local M.P.'s, to Mr. Gladstone, to Sir W. V. Harcourt. This is good work. *Every Freethinker throughout the kingdom should go and do likewise. Let each reader of these lines now this instant seize pen and paper and indite.*

MR. S. HARTMANN orders thirty copies a-week of the *Freethinker* until further notice. To all our readers we remark Luke x., 37. To save our readers the trouble of handling an objectionable book we may state that the verse in question contains the four words that occur in line six of the preceding plum.

At a meeting held in Chambers Street Hall, Edinburgh, the following resolutions were adopted: "This open meeting of Edinburgh citizens, without expressing any opinion as to the contents of the *Freethinker*, condemns the prosecution of that journal as a dangerous revival of laws framed in a spirit of persecution and now out of harmony with enlightened opinion, and resolves to take all lawful means to obtain a repeal of the statutes relating to blasphemy; and, considering the severity of the sentences on Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp, the circumstances attending their trial, and the invidious character of prosecutions for blasphemy, this meeting approves of a memorial being presented to the Home Secretary praying for a remission of the sentence."

THE Rev. Theodore Cuyler, of America, complains that adults are rarely inveigled into the church. We were going to place this under Acid Drops, but the news is good enough to be regarded as a Sugar Plum.

MR. CHARLES BRADLAUGH lectured on Sunday morning last at the Hall of Science on Blasphemy. In the course of the lecture he denounced Mr. John Morley for cowardice and Sir Henry Tyler for his conduct in regard to public companies in the most uncompromising fashion. The large audience endorsed his attacks with the emphasis of cheers.

At South Place Institute, J. Allanson Picton, M.A., will give a course of lectures on Tuesday evenings, April 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, and May 1st, 8th, on "Lessons from the Rise and Fall of the English Commonwealth." With a view to extending the advantages of these lectures to working men and women, the committee have decided to issue tickets, admitting to the gallery, at one shilling for the course or threepence for any single lecture, and they request the assistance of secretaries of working men's clubs and trade organisations in making these lectures known amongst their members. Tickets may be obtained of any member of the Lecture Committee, at the Institute on the evenings of the lectures, or upon application by post to the hon. sec., Conrad Thies, 76 Graham Road, Hackney, E. We shall be glad to supply any of our readers with tickets for a course that from its subject and from its deliverer promises so much of instruction.

THE "LONDON FIGARO" ON ROYAL PAUPERS AND ON PERSECUTION.

THE *London Figaro* has always been notable for its fulsome sycophancy to royal persons. It did much to alienate the sympathy of kindly and forgiving Englishmen from the exiled betrayer of his country, whom men called Napoleon III., when the traitor sought the hospitable shores of the country from which he had sallied forth in 1839 to commence the infamous career that ended with Sedan. In its issue of March 17th, the *Figaro* does as much as its small circulation permits to extend Mr. Illingworth's excellent phrase "royal paupers." Of course it does this good service, under protest in bad English. The *Figaro* is good enough to point out the kind of subjects that subjects in another sense may, by permission of the *Figaro*, criticise. The season of the year in which the Queen holds Drawing Rooms may be discussed. In its condemnatory defence of royalty the *Figaro* forgets the advisability—necessity would be the wrong word in connexion with the *Figaro*—of accuracy. It tells us that "The Prince, whom Mr. Illingworth invited Parliament to apply the test of the workhouses to, is perpetually interesting himself in movements having in view the mental and moral improvement of the community." "Perpetually" is good.

Another sentence is worth quoting. "It is not debatable whether the royal family shall be suitably maintained or whether they shall be treated as mendicants." The writer forgets that the royal family are treated as mendicants; forgets that they are mendicants, and mendicants of that kind which is at once the most shameful and the most

shameless. For they are of the type of mendicants that look upon the charity extended to them as their right, and that misuse the money that is given to them.

The same paper, in an article headed "Foote and Bradlaugh," is as immoral in its teaching as it is in its dealing with Royal paupers. In excellent keeping with the whole tone of the paper are the references to "the convict Foote" and "the fellow who was sent to gaol the other day"—to the "gang" who protested in the Central Criminal Court against an infamous sentence. Equally in keeping is the deliberate falsehood as to Mr. Bradlaugh and his "private brougham." Perhaps "deliberate" is an ill-chosen word. When a person does any particular thing or any not very particular thing very frequently, he ceases to do it deliberately. All this indecent rejoicing over the imprisonment of a man for the expression of his opinion on speculative matters, all this more than hinting at the thirst on the part of the *Figaro* for Mr. Bradlaugh's incarceration, comes rather unhappily from a paper whose editor was sent to gaol not so long ago for malicious libel of living persons. George William Foote has twelve months for ridiculing a dead man and a dying creed. The former editor of the *London Figaro* had six months for libelling living men and women.

EDWARD B. AVELING.

PRISONERS' AID FUND.

Minnie Peirson, 6d.; G. P., 1s.; Liberty, 1s.; T. J. Cole, 1s.; W. Taylor, 1s. 6d.; William Paul, 5s.; C. J. Welbon, 10s.; Thomas Davies, 2s.; A. H. Guest, 10s.; Two Priesthatters, 1s. 6d.; W. P., 5s. Friends in Sale who love fair play, £1 5s.; Rochdale Branch N. S. S., £1 1s. 6d.; F. Smallman (second remittance), £2; ex-Catholic, 1s.; E. Honoré, 6d.; P. Honoré, 6d.; M. Honoré, 6d.; John Scott, 10s.; S. H., 10s.; A. Mackinnon 10s.; F. C. Blackburn, 2s. 6d.; C. Randle, 1s.; J. Marston, 3d.; J. Capenhurst, 1s.; W. Payne, 3d.; J. Cartwright, 1s.; A. Cornish, 1s.; M. Bunton (second week), 9d.; Iota, 10s.; E. H., 10s.; R. G. W. (second instalment), 1s.; M. D. (second), 1s.; T. S., 2s.; N. J. B., 5s.; A. McNish, 5s.; J. W., 5s.; W. Allen, 1s.; Jas. Walker, 6d.; J. Crofts, 1s.; T. M., 2s. 6d.; W. Martin, 10s.; S. Turner, 1s.; One B., 6d.; T. S. S., 10s.; C. G., £1.; C. Sykes, 1s.; C. Bantsen, 6d.; W. Belby, 1s.; — Sound, 1s.; a Friend, 3d.; Subscriber, 3d.; D. Ive, 6d.; C., 6d.; C. Origden, 4s. 3d.; J. Kitsen, 1s.; W. Cooper, 6d.; P. Holmes, 1s.; A. Brown, 1s.; H. Andrews, 1s.; B. Sawden, 3d.; T. Wheelhouse, 6d.; W. Whitney, 6d.; — Saphos, 2s. 6d.; J. Coppen, 6d.; J. Barlow, 6d.; A. Barlow, 6d.; Mrs. Barlow, 6d.; Miss Barlow, 6d.; — Dewar, 5s.; — McGregor, 1s.; — Dunne, 6d.; H. T., 6d.; W. B., 1s.; H., 3d.; — Wood, 1s.; — Cameron, 2d.; A., 3d.; — Beaumont, 2s.; — Kahne, 5s.; — Seldford, 6d.; — Thomas, 5s.; — Croughan, 1s.; — Simpson, 2s.; — Orr, 1s. 6d.; — Curtis, 1s.; C. Clarke, 1s.; — Hilson, 2s.; — Hurst, 1s.; — Bruce, 6d.; — Shorburn, 1s.; — Hay, 1s.; — Chambelen, 6d.; — Fraser, 1s.; — Turnbull, 1s.; — Main, 1s.; — Small, 6d.; — Turpie, 3d.; — Scott, 2s.; — Shier, 6d.; — Brown, 2s.; — Hest, 6d.; — Taylor, 2s.; J. R. N., 6d.; — Sate, 1s.; Miss Lees, 5s.; — Marshall, 6d.; — Muir, 1s.; S. H. Gritton, 2s.; H. Gritton, 1s.; M. Gritton, 6d.; E. Gritton, 6d.; C. N. Atkinson, 2s.; C. Dearden, 3d.; D. Kelly, 6d.; Ellen Hall, 6d.; J. M., 6d.; S. W. H., 6d.; E. S. Atkinson, 6d.; a Friend, 6d.; D. Burns, 3d.; J. Short, 6d.; God, 3d.; J. Bunting, 6d.; J. B., 6d.; J. Murray, 6d.; C. M. A., 1s.; Bill Sykes, 6d.; Personni, 2s. 6d.; J. M., 1s.; H. C. W., 1s.; Daniel O. Maudsley, 5s.; A. J. Slaney, 5s.; Robert Nelson, 5s.; collected from a few Christians in a cigar-ash tray, 6s.; M. J. W., £1; — Jordan, 2s.; — Oswald Price, 1s.; D. B., 6d.; J. F. B., 6d.; Wm. Henderson, 1s.; Richard Henderson, 2s. 6d.; G. Henderson, 5s.; R. Henderson, 5s.; Wm. Henderson, jun., 1s.; Mrs. Henderson, 1s.; J. Henderson, 6d.; A. Shiel, 5s.; J. Bowman, 6d.; Wm. Bowman, 1s.; C. Bowman, 6d.; R. W. Bowman, 1s.; R. Weatherburn, 2s. 6d.; M. Weatherburn, 2s. 6d.; Ann Weatherburn, 6d.; Mrs. Weatherburn, 1s.; A. Brydon, 1s.; T. Hornsby, 2s. 6d.; Wm. Robinson, 2s.; a fund of which some of above are members, 11s.; George King, 2s.; George King, Junr., 2s. Per R. Forder: — Johnson, 2s.; W. Randall, 5s.; G. Arnold, 6d.; H. C. (Colno) £5; J. Walker, 2s. 6d.; Working Man, 6d.; J. Robinson, 1s.; J. Cory, 6d.; W. Martin, 1s.; J. Liddle, 6d.; E. Ellsmore, 9d.; S. Gilders, 1s.; Crabtree Brothers, 2s. Per H. Smith: H. Coventry, first donation, 1s.; R. Hodges, 1s.; D. Idincom, 1s.; Mrs. Watts, 6d.; J. Rubin, 6d.; E. Leheup, 1s.; R. Howe, 1s.; Tom Curtis, 1s. 3d.; J. Sunderland, 1s.; G. Risley, 1s.; J. Lockson, 1s.; — Allen, 1s.; D. J. Munro, 6d.; H. Coventry, second donation, 1s.; — Lowry, 2s. 6d.; M. D. 2s.; R. G. W. 2s.; Old Bailey, 1d.; J. Marriott, 1s.; — Hartmann, 10s. 6d. Per H. E. Herbert: J. Gibb, 1s.; G. Welsh, 6d.; H. S., 2s.; J. F. Trew, 1s.; C. Alston, 1s.; F. Edgeley, 6d.; S. Frow, 6d.; J.

Atkinson, 1s.; W. Lyles, 1s.; F. J. D., 6d.; W. and H. Matthews, 2s.; a Friend, 1s.; Sympathiser, 3d.; W. Morgan, 1s.; F. Claydon, 6d.; A. Trevillion, 2s.; G. F. Braybon, 2s.; X., 1s.; W. C. Scrivenor, 2s. 6d.; Sympathetic Christian, 2s. 6d.; A. E. G., 3d.; T. O. C., 1d.; C. Welch, 6d.; — Ellen, 6d.; — Fosskett, 1s.; W. Priddle, 2s.; per Mr. Reeves, £4 15s. 3d.; per Mr. Barlow, £21 18s. 3d.; J. T. H., £1; — Vacher, £5; D. B., 5s.; W. Schweizer, 2s. 6d.; V. L. Rokicki, £1; L. B. Page, 2s. 6d.; G. V. Ball, £1; W. Bunton, 1s. 6d.; Miss Railton, 6d.; — Golby (for thirteen weeks), 13s.; per J. Anderson, G.B., 5s.; — Deane, 10s.; Miss Howell, £10; Ball's Pond Secular Society, £1; Hater of Religious Persecution, £1 1s.; W. S. Fatfield, 6d.; E. Greeves, 1s.; Jacobs and Robinson, 5s.; D. B., 6d.; a Friend, 6d.; Mrs. Singer, 2s.; — Ginsberg, 1s.; J. Spencer, 5s.; J. W. Walker, 2s. 6d.; R. A. Jackson, 7s. 6d.; J. Irving, £1; J. R. Logan, 5s.

Erratum. — John Price, Stockport, in *Freethinker* of March 4th, should have been John Price, Southport; and, last week, Jesus, 1d., should be 1s.

Collecting sheets will be sent to any Freethinker on application to 28 Stonecutter Street.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The following is one of the many letters received that from the simplicity and earnestness of their tone are at once a command and an encouragement:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—I am sending you a P.O.O. for the sum of £2 7s. for the *Freethinker* Defence Fund. The collecting list will show how the money has been collected. We should have sent some money before this time, but we have only been working about half time. If the pits are on working again we will not forget to send more, for we have great sympathy for those three brave men who are suffering for the great cause—Liberty. I think we may safely trust you to do your duty; I hope we will try to do ours.—I remain, yours sincerely,

WM. ROBINSON.

Cramlington, Northumberland,
March 13th, 1883.

COMMENTS OF THE PRESS AND COMMENTS ON THE COMMENTS.

"WHILE decorous comment will be as free as heretofore, a wholesome restraint will be placed on the publication of such ribald stuff as Mr. Foote and his allies compiled for the delectation of Christmas Readers."—*Graphic*.

The phrase "ribald stuff" is less a criticism than an exclamation of pain. And the pain is in this and other kindred cases due not so much to the hard hitting at Christianity as to the underlying consciousness that Christianity deserves the hard-hitting. Touching the matter of ribald stuff for the delectation of Christmas readers, has the editor of the *Graphic* ever read the account of the first Christmas, in Matt. i., 18—25, or in Luke i., 26—44? We decline to print the passages in question (and questionable) on the same ground as reporters omit certain portions in divorce cases.

"Speaking for ourselves, and with every deliberation, we have no pity whatever for men who, dissatisfied with the simple profession of disbelief on their own part, began a series of vile attacks upon the belief of others. . . . And the most determined opponent of Christianity, if he be a gentleman also, would be hardly prepared to say that the punishment inflicted on Foote and the others was in excess of their demerits."—*Referee*.

An attack cannot be called vile when the thing attacked is believed by him that attacks to be injurious to man, and when the weapon used is only ridicule. We are prepared to introduce Mr. Sampson to as many gentlemen who are determined opponents of Christianity and who consider the punishment excessive, as he can bow to in the course of an average working-day. Nay, more, we will introduce him to a practically interminable series of Christians who are of the same opinion in this matter.

"It does not interfere in the least with true freedom of discussion, while it protects from insult and outrage the faith which is cherished as the dearest and holiest of objects by the great mass of the people of this country, and which is interwoven with all our institutions, and is the very foundation of our system of Government. . . . There is undoubtedly at the present moment a great deal of sympathy amongst the working-classes with infidel principles; publications advocating them are eagerly bought, and lectures and public meet-

ings, intended to promote them, are largely attended in London and the large towns, where the more violent and offensive the statements are, the more warmly are they approved."—*Kentish Mercury*.

We are told that this paper is the organ of Baron de Worms, the Jew.

"The behavior of Mr. Justice North in the recent trial for blasphemy reminds us of nothing so much as the demeanor of the judge in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' on the occasion of Faithful's trial. He did not actually say to the defendant, 'Sirrah, sirrah, thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place,' but all that he did say shows that this was substantially the view he took of the case and of the deserts of the defendants. Nothing could be more arbitrary than his conduct in refusing to admit them to bail when the first jury disagreed and had to be discharged. Not having been found guilty, they were in exactly the same position as before the trial, and yet he thought proper to prejudice their case in the eyes of the second jury by treating them as already condemned culprits. . . . Force is no remedy even against ridicule, and only serves to render more ridiculous the cause which is compelled to appeal to it for support. And not only is it no support to the side which invokes its aid, but it greatly strengthens the opposite party. . . . During the last few weeks the sale of the *Freethinker* has increased enormously, and there can be no doubt that it will continue to be secretly circulated."—*Tyneside Echo*.

There is only one error in the above. The *Freethinker* will be circulated openly.

THWAITES' LIVER PILLS

Are acknowledged to be the best Family Medicine in the World by the many thousands that are using them in preference to all others. It is almost impossible to enumerate in an advertisement what they are good for; it would take up too much of your time to read it, and after you had read it you might say it was only advertising puff; but I ask ONE TRIAL of the LIVER PILLS; if not better than any you have tried before, I cannot expect a continuance of your custom. I recommend them for *Indigestion, Loss of Appetite, Dizziness, Biliousness, Costiveness, Nervousness, Palpitation of the Heart, Piles, etc.*, all of which are, in many cases, caused by the Liver being inactive, or what we call a sluggish Liver. Try some of the LIVER PILLS as soon as you can, as they are pure Herb Pills, and may be used at any time by anyone without any change of diet or danger of taking cold. Prepared only by GEORGE THWAITES, 2, Church Row, Stockton-on-Tees. Sold at 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per box, or by post for 15 or 36 Penny Stamps. A Price List of Herbs free.

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