

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. 13.]

APRIL 1, 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.

JUSTICE NORTH.

SOME facts about this historical character may be of interest. Their accuracy is vouched for on testimony that appears to us impeachable. He is related to a firm of solicitors in Liverpool, and was trained for, and practised exclusively at, the Chancery Bar. The legal world had much difficulty in understanding upon what grounds he was promoted to the judicial bench. Possibly the Duchy of Lancaster influence was brought to bear upon Mr. John Bright and his in turn upon the Government. This seems the more likely, as tradition has it that Mr. Justice North is a Quaker.

On his first circuit he quarrelled with and reprimanded the Bar in one town, and was compelled to apologise to them in the next. He is further memorable as the judge that ordered a reporter who was reading a newspaper to

leave the court. The mere putting away of the paper was not regarded as a sufficient expiation of the offence.

The father of a child found dead was arraigned for murder. The death was shown to be due to accidental suffocation. The father when apprehended called to his wife "to chuck him his bloody coat." The counsel for the prosecution and for the defence alike made no reference to a phrase quite capable of a non-murderous explanation by any one who knew the habits of the poorer and uneducated classes. Mr. Justice North called attention to the phrase as important evidence.

His decisions have been frequently reversed on appeal. He condemned George William Foote, William Ramsey, and H. A. Kemp, respectively, to twelve, nine, and three months' imprisonment for blasphemy.

THE RIGHT TO BLASPHEME.

(Continued from page 90.)

UPON one sentence only that fell from the lips of Mr. Justice North do I propose to comment. It is the sentence in which he regretted that Mr. Foote had prostituted his talents to the service of the devil. The resuscitation of the devil in a court of justice in England in the year 1883 is as interesting as the resurrection of Jesus eighteen and a half centuries earlier must have been. The resuscitation and the resurrection are equally well founded on fact. The fact that the judge who sentenced our three friends to prison actually and veritably believes in the personality of the devil is of painful significance. It would be very interesting to know how far his belief actually goes, and whether cloven feet, horns, and a tail are articles of his diabolic creed.

The resuscitation of the devil is not, however, merely amusing. It is ominous as showing that the god-idea is not quite as dead as we had hoped. As long as we believed the devil to be comfortably dead and buried, and only its ghost walking at the Salvation Army's wake of religion, we knew that his companion, the deity, must also be moribund. For these two personifications of good and bad are as Siamese twins. They live and die together. The death of the one member of the abnormal pair necessitates that of the other. And after all, not even the remark of Mr. Justice North can galvanise the defunct devil into life again. He is dead and gone, and is only visible to the professional ghost-seers, the ignorant and the charlatans. He being dead, his companion is dying. Peace be to their ashes!

Whilst, on the whole, then, the dragging the devil into a court of justice is more amusing and encouraging than terrifying or convincing, one word in the same sentence calls for a stronger protest. It is the word "prostituting." Strange that Christianity has ever dared to call her freer, younger, purer Sister, Freethought, by such a name as harlot. They are sisters, though they are else so wide asunder, for they are both children of the thought of man.

Sad that not this once, but many times, the elder, more ill-favored sister, has with the lips on which the froth of death trembles named the younger, fairer, purer one, prostitute. In the streets of London not many nights past, I saw a woman reel out of a gin-palace. She was one that men with a wicked irony call "unfortunate." Drunk, with dress disordered, with dishevelled hair, turning grey, with eyes bleared and stained with alcohol, lips that trembled and were spotted with white drops of foam, with hands that were never at rest, she staggered out and struck against a young, fair, pure-eyed English girl who was passing swiftly along the crowded street. The hag turned upon her sister, little more than a child, and hissed out at her the foulest name that one woman can call another. And I thought of Christianity naming Freethought as prostitute.

When our turn comes, shall we be as these men? The hour strides on with a beautiful swiftness, when scientific thought, named in the domain of the speculative Atheism, will reign. A half-fear holds us at times that when we are in power we, like our predecessors, may be unjust. But the times and our creed give us hope. The time is later: our creed more human. I dare pledge the honor of our descendants in thought that when they are the most powerful in point of numbers their power will not be misused. The evil deeds done in the name of Christianity will not be repeated under the rule, fast coming, of Freethought.

With a feeling of relief we turn from the utterances of the judge to the brave, calm words of the Atheist. "It is worthy of your creed." The phrase will become historical. Imprisonment for opinion's sake is, in truth, worthy of the creed that has been murderous of men's bodies as well as of men's minds, from the first moment that power fell into its evil hands.

The nature of this creed is well shown in the paragraph that went the round of the press to the effect that "Dr." Wainwright and certain other kindred spirits purposed prosecuting such writers as Professor Huxley and Mr. Matthew Arnold. Nobody doubted the possibility of such a perfectly natural proceeding. The only doubt was as to the ultimate success of the measure. I am told that "Dr." Wainwright in some roundabout manner has contradicted the statement. We must have from "Dr." Wainwright—if it is possible—a straightforward denial, as circumstantial as the accusation, ere we can cease to credit the latter; and, for the satisfaction of honest folks, the denial should be corroborated by at least one or two men of credibility.

There is, of course, no fear of attack upon such writers against Christianity as those named. At tea-meetings and places where they sing, the like tea-cup valiant threats will be indulged. But as long as men blaspheme in half a crown magazines or seven and sixpenny volumes, not even the "City" will interfere. Prosecution only comes when the blasphemy in which the rich delight is brought to the poor in penny numbers every week.

EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.

(To be continued.)

ANOTHER proof that royal persons are beggars. They never improve and their constant cry is "Mend-I-can't."

THE outty stool has been used in the Free Presbytery of Locharron. Two pairs of offenders have ascended its sad heights and had half an hour's sound rating at the mouth of the minister. And this in a Free (?) Church.

THE Rev. George Walker, of Halifax, has been indulging in a work of supererogation. Some months ago we had the pleasure of demonstrating that gentleman to be a coward. He has repeated the demonstration. Mr. J. Spencer, President of the Ovenden Naturalists' Society, at the end of a deeply interesting paper on "Religion and Science," spoke of Mr. Walker's folly and audacity—he might have added another word ending with "dacity"—in stating that Evolution had not a single fact to support it. He undertook to give Mr. Walker fifty facts out of the thousands that confirm the truth of Evolution if that gentleman would come to one of their meetings. Mr. Walker's reply is characteristic. He calls Mr. Spencer, by implication, a goose and a fool, evades the whole question at issue, and publishes his fear of meeting face to face the facts he falsely asserts do not exist. He dare not accept the invitation given to him by the Naturalists' Society of Ovenden.

MR. FOOTE'S ADDRESS TO THE JURY.

CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT, MARCH 5TH, 1883.

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

Mr. Foote concluded his address as follows:—You will remember hearing me ask one of the witnesses, Kelland, in whose employ he was, and his answer was Messrs. Batten and Co., solicitors. They are the solicitors to Sir Henry Tyler. Sir Henry Tyler is a man whose name you are somewhat familiar with by this time. All sorts of rumors have been flying about with reference to this gentleman. He has relinquished his position as president of the Brush Light Company. He is a man of excessive piety, although it is true the shareholders don't like him much. In the House of Commons he made himself especially obnoxious—not to Mr. Bradlaugh personally, but to the House generally, and the members of his own Conservative party marked their disapproval of his conduct by walking out of the House and leaving him alone, when he put his question, not in his glory but in his shame. He put questions with reference to ladies associated with Mr. Bradlaugh by ties of blood, knowing that—owing to the discreditable interference with the right of an English constituency—Mr. Bradlaugh would not be in his place in the House to speak, and knowing also that the ladies were not present. Sir Henry Tyler is a very pious man, who considers that blasphemy should be put down. He supported a former prosecution against the "Freethinker," but he was particularly careful to drag into the prosecution the name of Mr. Bradlaugh, although there was no evidence that he had been editor, publisher, proprietor, or in any way connected with it. Sir H. Tyler is a political opponent of Mr. Bradlaugh's, and Mr. Bradlaugh was therefore, in the most unwarrantable manner, involved in an expensive litigation. Mr. Newdegate was suing him at the same time for £500 not due and not yet paid. The suit was very protracted, and Sir H. Tyler and other personages thought if Mr. Bradlaugh could only be brought in Guilty of a blasphemous libel, and if the penalties of the statute of William IV. could be imposed upon him, he would not only be deprived of his position in the House of Commons, but would be declared without right for the rest of his life to be a party to any suit—so that this would be a disfranchisement under the statute, and Mr. Newdegate would get his £500 and costs. Sir H. Tyler is a political opponent of Mr. Bradlaugh's, and a political opponent of the most pronounced type; and when political opponents of the most pronounced type take to denouncing each other on a charge of blasphemy, you can understand very readily that the motive is not so much religious as political, and it is pretty sure that if they can only cripple him in a political point of view, they will not trouble themselves about his religion. Sir T. Nelson (the City solicitor) and Sir H. Tyler are working together amicably, and it occurs to me there may be a malicious motive behind this prosecution, a motive of political animosity, and that it is sought to strike at Mr. Bradlaugh through men known to be connected with him in public and other work. May it not be hoped by these very political adversaries, that if a verdict of Guilty can be snatched in this case, which is being hurried on with such indecent haste, it will be easier to get a verdict against Mr. Bradlaugh in the other case, and that then he may be crippled in political life—a desire that his enemies wish so ardently to see realised. I hope you will decide, whatever may be the opinions of the prosecutor or others in this case, on the strictly legal merits, without being influenced by any religious or political considerations. I hope you will show by your verdict that you are not going to allow yourselves to be made the prosecuting instruments in a political fight, but that you will let them fight it out in the arena of politics without recourse to the political weapons which they put in your hands, when they are afraid to strike themselves. Our indictment says we have done what?—we have done something to the displeasure of almighty god and to the danger of the peace. A breach of peace is a very serious and grave thing, and it quite justifies Mr. Justice Stephens in putting in a clause of reservation at the end of a sentence in which he disapproves of blasphemy prosecutions in his "Digest of the Criminal Law" (quotation read). Here we have one of the very highest judges, who says he thinks no temporal punishment should be inflicted on a charge of blasphemy unless it can be shown that the blasphemy tends to a breach of the peace. That is a perfectly reasonable reservation. Then if it be a reasonable reservation it is only proper that its condition should be fulfilled by the prosecution. There has been no evidence to show that anything we have done has tended to a breach of the peace. You must not understand as tending to a breach of the peace something which differs from what you hold and that you may dislike. Before you come to the conclusion that a thing has a tendency to a breach of the peace you must be perfectly satisfied it would lead to an actual breach of the peace. What breach of the peace could the offence with which we are charged lead to? There has been no allegation that even a crowd assembled to look at it. The "Freethinker" was exposed for sale in shop-windows, but the prosecution don't show that anybody was tempted to break a pane of glass in consequence. There has been no allegation of tumult in the street. Not even a boy has snatched another boy's hat over

the subject; there has not been a single blow struck, not a single disturbance or obstruction of thoroughfare; and if that be so, and there be no evidence tending to show anything to the contrary, you ought, considering there has been no breach of the peace, and no probability of any breach of the peace occurring, to pronounce your judgment on this very reasonable reservation, and say, that as its conditions have not been complied with, you will not give a verdict of Guilty but one of Not Guilty, and show that the time has arrived for the abolition of temporal punishment for a spiritual offence. There is good reason to believe that most people of any liberality of mind object to prosecutions of this kind. Dr. Hynes stated, on the 19th of May, 1819, that these Acts being enforced against Richard Carlile and others, did not stop the publications. He further said that Christianity disclaims them, that reason was every day gaining ground, and that they ought to abandon those prosecuting statutes, fit only to bind demons. Jeremy Bentham, in his "Letters to Count Toreno on the Proposed Penal Code of the Spanish Cortes," speaking of blasphemies, said: "To no end could I think of applying punishment in any shape for such an offence." Bentham further speaks of "the liberty of the press as the foundation of all other liberties." Let me give you the opinion of Professor Hunter, Professor of Roman Law at University College, London. Professor Hunter, in a letter to the "Daily News," says: "The English law on the subject of blasphemy is a relic of barbarism and folly. It owes its place in our law-book simply to the fact that it has been a dead letter. To enforce it is to invoke all that is just and honorable in public opinion to demand its destruction. It is a weapon always ready to the hand of mischievous fools or designing knaves." I don't know in which category he would place this prosecution, whether that of mischievous fools or designing knaves. Buckle took exactly the same view. Mill, in an article on Religious Prosecution, in the "Westminster Review," July, 1824, shows that "the line between argument and reviling is too difficult for even legal acuteness to draw; that he who disbelieves and attempts to disprove Christianity can put his arguments into no form which may not be pronounced calumnious and illegal; and that therefore the only mode of securing free inquiry is to tolerate the one as well as the other." He also says: "To declare that an act is legal but with the proviso that it be performed in a gentle and decorous manner, is opening a wide door for arbitrary discretion on the one part and dissatisfaction on the other. The difficulty is greatly increased when the act itself is offensive to those who sit in judgment upon the manner of its performance."

Carlyle, in "Sartor Resartus," says: "Wise man was he who counselled that speculation should have free course, and look fearlessly towards all the thirty-two points of the compass, whithersoever and howsoever it listed." Sir W. Harcourt, replying to Mr. Freshfield, said: "I think it has been the view for a great many years of all persons responsible in these matters that more harm than advantage is produced to public morals by Government prosecutions in cases of this kind." Again the Home Secretary, in reply to Mr. Redmond, observed: "I stated the other day that I thought it not wise to proceed legally against such publications." Mill speaks of the injustice of debarring "a man who may have a comprehensive and vigorous, though a vulgar and coarse mind, from publishing his speculations on theological topics because his style lacks the polish of that of Hume and Gibbon." Again, says the same writer: "If the proposition that Christianity is untrue may be legally conveyed to the mind, what can be more absurd than to say that to express that proposition by certain undefined and undefinable selections of terms, shall constitute a crime?" No infidel so-called—a name every Freethinker disclaims—would disclaim any such protection as that which Mill pleads for. All we demand is equality—equal right with all our fellow citizens. We are with them citizens of one State, and should be equal in the eye of the law. Our lives are as public as other men's, and is it found we are worse than other men? In the case of Mr. Bradlaugh, you know that everything that malice could invent has been invented with reference to him since he was elected to represent Northampton; but although the fierce light of scandal has beaten upon him, yet even scandal, however vicious, and calumny however unfounded, has never been able to fasten upon a single foul spot in his life which could be held up for the reproach and the indignation of mankind. Our lives are as good as the lives of others. Our doctrines may be different, but they are ours. If we speak in our homes, nobody need cross the thresholds; if we write in papers we don't give them away—people who want them must buy them. Everybody outraged has his remedy: he need not buy our paper; he need not listen to our doctrines or read them; and why should people who did not force their publications on him not be allowed the enjoyment of their tastes? There is one thing I wish to call your attention to, and that is that these prosecutions never succeed. It has been said that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. Although one doesn't want to pose as a martyr, still this prosecution is nothing less than martyrdom. It is not we who stand here of our own free will; it is not we who sought incarceration ever since Thursday in the dungeons behind. We would much rather have been about our business and our pleasure. We only wish for freedom to do what we think is right. These prosecutions never succeed; it is impossible that they should. In his article in the "Nineteenth Century," Mr. Leslie Stepien says, and says truly, that there is only one form of persecution that you can justify on grounds of policy

if you believe in the principle which underlies it, and that is extermination. Heresy may be treated by the orthodox Christian as he pleases, but then you cannot stamp out the disease by attacking a person here and there; unless you can stamp out the germ you can do nothing. You cannot crush out a party which numbers its tens of thousands by prosecutions of this description, while adherents are found from one end of the country to the other; you cannot crush out a party here whose representatives in France are actually in possession of the governmental affairs of that country. You cannot expect to crush out a party so multitudinous as that unless you exterminate it. It is impossible to succeed thus. In attempting it you would only deal a blow at your own faith and general liberty, and as for the men who are thrown into gaol or crippled by fine, do you think your treatment would strongly and favorably impress them with the reasonableness of your faith? You don't teach in that way now. You cannot, as in the old days, thrash ideas into children with the stick. The policy doesn't succeed; and endeavoring to thrash Christianity into people by means of a foulsmoke prison and a crippling fine, is worthy only of the times when the policy was adopted of enforcing argument on children, as it has been aptly described *a posteriori*, instead of trying to put argument into the child's brains through the eyes and ears. Gentlemen, that policy will not succeed, and you must know that it won't. I ask you by your verdict of Not Guilty to show that you believe it, and to send us back to work, to take our part in the business of life, and to do what is incumbent upon us in our relationships as brothers, sons, husbands, citizens. Gentlemen, carry your minds back across the chasm of eighteen centuries and a half. You are in Jerusalem. A young Jew is haled along the street to the place of judgment. He is brought before his judge. There is nothing repulsive about his lineaments. People who knew him—not the people who were prosecuting him—loved him; and their verdict after all is the right one. There is even the fire of genius smouldering in his eyes, notwithstanding the depressing circumstances around him. He stands before his judge; he is accused—of what, gentlemen? You know what he is accused of—the word must be springing to your lips—Blasphemy! Every Christian among you knows that your founder, Jesus Christ, was crucified after being charged with blasphemy; and, gentlemen, it seems to me that no Christian should ever bring in a verdict of blasphemy after that, but that the very word ought to be wiped from your vocabulary, as a reproach and a scandal to Jesus Christ. Surely, Christians, your founder was murdered as a blasphemer, for, although done judicially, it was still a murder. Surely you will not, when you have secured the possession of power, imitate the bad example of those who killed your founder, violate men's liberties, rob them of all that is perhaps dearest to them, and brand them with a stigma of public infamy by a verdict from the jury-box! Surely, gentlemen, it is impossible that you can do that! Who are we? Three poor men. Are we wicked? No, there is no proof of the charge. Our honor and honesty are unimpeached. It is not for us to play the Pharisee and say that we are better than other men. We only say that we are no worse. Our honor and our honesty are unimpeached. What have we done to be classed with thieves and felons, and dragged from our homes and submitted to the indignities of a life so loathsome and hideous, that it is even revolting to the spirits of the men who have to exercise authority within the precincts of the gaol? You know we have done nothing to merit such a punishment. Therefore you ought to return a verdict of Not Guilty against us, because the prosecution have not given you sufficient evidence as to the fact; because whatever shred there is to gain from the decisions of judges in the past must be treated as obsolete, as the London magistrate treated the law of maintenance. On the ground that we have done nothing, as the indictment states, against the peace; on the ground that our proceedings have led to no tumult in the streets, no interference with the liberty of any man, his person or property; on the ground, gentlemen, that no evidence has been tendered to you of any malice in our case; that there is no wicked motive animating anything we have done; on the ground, if you are Christians, that the founder of your own creed was murdered on a very similar charge to that of which we stand accused now; and lastly, on the ground that you should in this third quarter of the nineteenth century, assert once and for ever the great principle of the absolute freedom of each man, unless he treat on the equal freedom of another, to assert the great principle of the liberty of the press, liberty of the platform, liberty of free thought and liberty of free speech. I ask you to prevent such prosecutions as are hinted at in the *Times* this morning; not to allow sects once more to be hurling anathemas against each other, and lying to the magistrates to settle questions which should be settled by intellectual means and moral suasion; not to open a discreditable chapter of English history that ought to have been closed for ever; but to give us a verdict of Not Guilty, to send us back home and to stamp your brand of disapprobation on the prosecution in this case, which I say is in certain interests of religion, which is degrading religion by associating it with all that is penal, obstructive, and loathsome; to stamp that prosecution with the brand of your condemnation; to allow us to go away from here free men, and so make it impossible that there ever should again be a prosecution for blasphemy; and have your names inscribed in history as the last jury that decided for ever that great and grand principle of liberty which is broader than all the skies; which is a principle so high no temple could be

lofty enough for its worship, so broad that the earth could not afford a foundation for it, which is as wide and high as the heavens,—that grand principle which should rule over all—the principle of the equal right and the equal liberty of every man. That is the principle I ask you to lay down by your verdict of Not Guilty, and thus close this discreditable chapter of prosecution once and for ever, and associate your names on the page of history with liberty, progress, and everything dignified noble and dear to the consciences and hearts of men.

During the address of Mr. Foote which occupied three hours in delivery, there were frequent bursts of applause, which were promptly suppressed.

Mr. Ramsey also addressed the jury at some length, dwelling with great force on the illiberal nature of the prosecution, and asking the jury to record a verdict of Not Guilty—[full report in Part VII. of "Blasphemy Trials."]

Mr. Justice North: Gentlemen of the jury it is now the usual hour, six o'clock, for the rising of the court. Would you prefer that I should address you now or to-morrow morning?

The Foreman of the Jury: We should prefer your lordship to proceed now.

(The Summing-up will appear next week.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

MY DEAR SIR,—I must write and express my indignation at the iniquitous sentence which has been passed on you, and to assure you of my sympathy in the suffering which an unjust and persecuting law has inflicted.

Your imprisonment only affords another instance of the effect of creed in supernatural religion, as opposed to creed in the sufficiency of the human conscience to regulate conduct.

I understand you are put into prison because you have caricatured a book that claims supernatural origin in the minds of the many, but which you are conscientiously convinced is of purely human origin.

The ground and doctrine of all religious persecution is that the majority are possessed of a special revelation, which it is blasphemous to speak profanely of. According to this, the religion of the minority is always heresy, as yours is now, and for this you suffer the utmost martyrdom which society can at present impose.

In the sixteenth century Mr. Justice North would have ordered you to be burnt with perfect equanimity, not because he would have been a worse man than he is now, but because he would have expressed the spirit of an age when popular intelligence was less and popular superstition was greater than it is now. I take it that your disbelief in what you regard as human impostures and fables is as precious to you as is the religious belief of the most devout Christian in the country; and that, in fact, your disbelief may be called your religion, as it is inseparable from your belief that a more exalted ideal of human life may be obtained by the destruction of supernatural creeds. "No man can disbelieve without believing," says Archbishop Whateley.

You are therefore imprisoned in the year 1883 on account of your religious belief. Such a fact would be stupefying if one did not know how wickedly men will behave to each other when they can do so in the name of god. Perhaps it is fortunate for Freethinkers that they can invoke nothing higher as a motive to conduct than the human conscience.

These words but feebly express my sympathy. I shall be happy on my return to England to join in any agitation or movement that is got up in your favor—whether to obtain your release from prison—to indemnify you for the losses you have incurred from this affair—or to cause the law which has been exercised against you to be consigned to the museum of obsolete instruments of torture, moral or physical, by prison or by rack, into which modern men look with horror and disgust—almost incredulous that their fellow creatures, claiming heart and claiming brain, can have ever discredited a decent religion by such barbarous means.—I am, yours truly,

FREDK. A. MAXSE.

Hotel de l'Ermitage, Hyièrs (Var),
France, March 17, 1883.

PRISONERS' AID FUND.

S. Kaufmann, 6d.; W. Able, 2s. Per Alex. Orr: A Friend, £3; — McLush, 1s.; John Lucy, £3 3s.; Mr. C. Bassid, 10s. Per "Seehell": Mephisto, 3s.; Imp, 3s.; President, 2s. 6d.; I. Brunney, 1s.; R. Carlile, 1s.; B. C., 1s.; F. C., 1s.; G. B. Epworth, 3s.; H. H., 1s.; J. Wilson, 6d.; J. W. J., 6d.; G. M., 3d.; Anon, 2s. 3d. Per J. W. Crowther: Halifax Branch of the N. S. S., £1 11s.; Profits on papers, etc., sold at Miss H. Bradlaugh's lecture, 5s. 3d. Per J. Cartwright: Wednesbury and District Branch of the N. S. S., 10s. Per J. W. Stansfield and Burton: J. G., 5s.; A. Cornish, 1s.; T. Palmer, 6d.; — Marston, 1s.; E. Randle, 1s.; Collected, 14s.; G. Boss (weekly),

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

ACID DROPS.

THERE is, alas! some hope for the Salvation Army. Mr. Spurgeon has declared against it. Having secured not a few gold fish from among the ignorant folk—the fishing-ground of the Christian anglers—he objects to Mr. Booth obtaining so many flat-fish. Neither of them can hook one of the genuine Freethinkers. These latter, as temperate creatures, do not need S. and B.

"Dr." WAINWRIGHT is said to have declared to one of that enterprising race, reporters, that the statement as to the Society for the Suppression of Blasphemous Literature having in mind (its own) the prosecution of Messrs. Huxley, Spencer, and so forth, is a fabrication. We are told that he knows nothing of such a society. That "Dr." Wainwright knows nothing on any particular subject is not surprising. And that he would use any means to injure thought that he cannot understand is shown by an extract now quoted from a report of a lecture of his in the *Islington Gazette* of March 6th: "The cry should go up to the Government, 'In the name of that Lord and Savior who is King of Kings, we demand that the Jesuits, who are subversive of all law and good government, because they are the very upholders of the system accursed of god, because they are employed now as in ages past in bolstering up a system of sin, must and shall go out of England.' (Applause.) This, however, the Protestant Institute could only do by being animated by a truly Protestant spirit." We have no sympathy with Jesuits. But the coarse bitterness of "Dr." Wainwright's attack shows that he would have England cleared of all but himself and his companions in misery. As to "Dr." Wainwright's denial that can only be accepted when it is as public as the accusation.

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., IV. and V. in neat wrappers. Part 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 on Sunday, April 1st, at the Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Sheffield.—11, "The Right to Blasphemy."—3, "The Pedigree of man."—7, "The Uselessness of Christianity."

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.—G. McDonald, W. Zans, Escudrinador, Henry Cockshaw, J. R. Waller, T. Thurlow, George Bent, Beowulf, E. W., William Hitchman, M.D.; W. E., John Kingsbury, C. W. Faith, Walter Riddell, R. W. Holloway; S. Kaufmann, Charles Baker, H. Pash, Passion, Æneas, T. W. Grove, Chairman Leeds Branch N. S. S., Excel, T. A. Clarke, Passivo, A. Orr, D. Evans, John Brotherton, T. D. Hatfield, C. Harding.

A. J.—J. H. Green's "Short History of the English People" (Macmillan). We have no price list; all remainders sold.

C. K.—With much delight we read that you "formerly indifferent to religion, have been brought to the right way of thinking by Justice North," and that you "will in future distribute six copies of the *Freethinker* weekly."

D. M.—Your advertisements come to 4s., kindly remit balance.

FRANK.—Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp, are not treated so well as Colonel Valentino Baker. An offence that was even disgraceful enough for the army to expel the offender, was only punished by the law as a first-class misdemeanor. A joke at the expense of Christianity is regarded as equal to a first attempt at burglary, or four times as bad as the kicking of a woman to death.

EGIS.—We are glad you think it significant that our acceptance of the post of interim editor of this paper, occurs simultaneously with the publication of our translation of Ernest Haeckel's "Pedigree of Man." "Perilogy" was used by Haeckel as early as 1869.

J. P. BREAME takes five *Freethinkers* in place of one.

W. H. SPIVEY.—Glad to hear your members are resolved to subscribe a weekly sum to the Fund.

Two friends in Wednesbury have promised to take in eighteen *Freethinkers* every week.

MR. B. L. COLEMAN, of Sandwich, owns a wall and intends to post on it two copies of the *Freethinker* every week for the next six months. He will also subscribe 8s. per week until our friends are free.

FRANK will take four copies a week of the *Freethinker*.

G. C. suggests that every one connected with the Freethought party should give even the small sum of one penny per week.

DAVID SMITH, A. GILLESPIE, W. MORTON.—See answer to George King and others, last week's *Freethinker*.

J. W. HACKETT.—Thanks to you and your brother, for the promise to take two copies each of this paper.

JOHN CLAYTON.—Our friends were not sentenced to hard labor.

PAN.—Very good. We are like Oliver Twist, and ask for more.

J. A. SLATER.—You will see our answer to Charles Lewis and others in last week's paper, that will apply also to you. Your cheque has been found and paid in.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The Birmingham Daily Mail—The Hastings and St. Leonard's Observer—The Torquay Times (unmarked)—The Hampshire Independent—The Portsmouth Pioneer—The Gazette—The Wiltshire Country Mirror—The Reading Observer—The Scotsman—The Staffordshire Sentinel—The Salisbury Times.

J. BROTHERTON.—The Secular Song-book is out of print.

W. H. MORRISH.—Many thanks.

W. DE CARLE.—Stamps received.

W. HOPPER.—Received. Please write only on one side of the paper.

THE POSITION OF AFFAIRS.

No intimation has as yet been received as to any remission of the sentences on Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp. This should urge all their friends to multiply the petitions in favor of mitigation a thousandfold. The subscriptions to the Prisoners' Aid Fund are coming in steadily. As it may be many months ere all our friends are freed, the plan adopted by many Freethinkers—that of a weekly subscription—seems excellent. The adoption of such a plan would not prevent donations as well. The paper has sold well hitherto, and the promises to take in two or more copies each week are increasing in number. We earnestly hope that our readers will not forget the magazine *Progress*, now ready. Mr. Foote had its interest at heart to a degree only second to his interest in the *Freethinker*.

As many inquiries are addressed to us in regard to the position of the prisoners, we may say that they are in Holloway Gaol, that they wear the convict garb, have the hair cropped closely in convict fashion, that their diet, their bed, their hours, are those of convicts, that they cannot see any friends until three months have elapsed, that they can neither write nor receive letters, that they are only allowed such books as the chaplain selects. And this is their punishment for ridiculing god in 1883!

"FREETHINKER" AGENTS.

John Campbell, 71 Mundella Road, New Road, Battersea; A. Gates, 1 Pressland Terrace, Kensal Road, N.W.; D. Evans, 83 Railton 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, Narrowwine Street, Bristol; Maltock, 20 Marlborough Road, Chelsea; Noble and Coyle, 9 New Bond Street Place, Bath; A. Hilditch, 5 Cromer Street, Gray's Inn Road, W.C., and Clerkenwell Green on Sunday mornings; Mr. Seymour, 1 Wood Street, Tunbridge Wells; G. Crookson, Platt's Common, Barnsley; Midland Railway Arches on Sunday morning; H. Markell, 117 Pembroke Road, Kilburn, and every Sunday morning in the Elgin Road, Maida Hill.

SUGAR PLUMS.

At the Midland Railway Arches, on Sunday morning, April 1st. at 11, the open-air work of the North London Branch of the N. S. S. begins; Mr. Arthur B. Moss lectures.

OUR readers will be pleased to hear that Mr. J. M. Wheeler was sufficiently recovered to go down to his friends in the country on Monday, March 26th.

At the Southampton St. Mary's Liberal Association, Mr. W. C. Austin proposed: "That this Association desires to express its regret that Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp were convicted of blasphemy, and would respectfully urge upon the Home Secretary the desirability of his remitting the whole, or at least the greater portion of the term of imprisonment to which they have been sentenced." The discussion was adjourned.

BUFFON, the naturalist, propounded views on the coming into being of organic bodies, much akin to those now prevailing. The disapprobation of the Clerical Faculty, compelled him to submit a document of recantation. His views are published *in extenso* in the *Revue d'Anthropologie* for January last.

PROFESSOR MIALL, of the Yorkshire College, lecturing recently on Charles Darwin, remarked:—"Had Darwin lived 300 years ago he would have been burned—(laughter)—200 years since he would have been imprisoned, or banished; 100 years ago he would have been turned out of society; while in the generation that followed he suffered a few slight social disabilities, and was subjected to much criticism and ridicule." —*Leeds Mercury*, March 8th, 1883.

THE Commission of the Free Church of Scotland are of course active in petitioning against marriage with a deceased wife's sister. But just now they are more especially exercised over Sunday trading, for a new General Police Bill is impending, and "it would be absolutely criminal on the part of the people of Scotland," if they do not insist now on having such misdemeanants dealt with by the public prosecutor, and fined at least a pound for each offence. It will be understood that this proposal does not mean that newspapers and railway trains must purchase the privilege of Sabbath breaking. These and other *large* enterprises will be unmolested, while the monopolists and mystery-men are meanly playing the spy over the premises of the humble purveyor of that recognised means of grace, the pungent peppermint. This is surely black ingratitude on the part of the clergy, for by the aid of that favorite and fragrant stimulant, many a sermon has been endured with at least external decorum and some internal comfort. The practical question is, whether a revival of bigotry will benefit the languishing Sustentation Fund. If so, well and good for the present; but if not, it will be a grand testimony to the growth of rationalism that it is making itself felt even within the Free Church of Scotland.

LORD COLIN CAMPBELL advises us to get rid of the delusion that "the Boers are the most harmless because they happen 'to be the most Bible-reading nation.'" It is interesting to remember that it was to an African potentate her Majesty made the memorable statement that the Bible is the source of England's greatness.

"'MAJOR' and Mrs. Tucker have returned to Lahore on a second visit; and to give an idea of what the native community think of the Salvationists, we may mention that the native clerks in a large office at Lahore asked for leave from office a little earlier than usual to witness the *sooang*, literally the pantomime!"—The Pioneer.

CHRISTIANS DOING THEIR OWN BLASPHEMY.

MONOPOLIES used to be many, and they are not yet dead! Christians are bitterly opposed to blasphemy—when it comes from one outside their own ranks. Yet their whole life is as full of blasphemy as their glorious old Bible. That is probably the most blasphemous book ever penned; and if there had been a god of any respectability or regard for his character, he must long since have utterly repudiated that book and its friends and defenders.

But I wish to cull a few scraps of blasphemy from books written by Christians, published by them, and allowed to circulate in this land where, we are told (falsely), Christianity is part of the common law. One of the most interesting antiquarian works I have ever seen is Didron's "Christian Iconography," published by the well-known H. G. Bohn, London, 1851. The second volume, I am told, never appeared. I think the illustrations ought to be reproduced in the *Freethinker*—they are delightfully, shockingly full of blasphemy. And their value lies in the fact that they are all copied from ancient cathedral windows, ancient manuscripts, and other Christian sources. They show to a demonstration how piety, unchecked in its growth, develops naturally and inevitably into rankest, rudest blasphemy. If Christians had never been checked by satire and the fun of sceptics, in what a state of barbarism they would now be! We are their best friends, if they only knew it. But just as the bigots crucified Jesus, so they do all they can to crucify us; and their bitterest sufferings arise from their inability to carry out their aims.

Part II. of Didron's book is entitled "The History of God." The writer says: "The rank assigned to god the father in early Christian monuments is frequently not very honorable, the son taking precedence of the father. . . . In the north porch of Notre Dame de Paris, of which the period is about the end of the thirteenth century, the presence of god the father is intimated only by his hand displayed in one of the bands or cordons of the vaulting at the point of junction (*brisure*) or apex of the wall, while in an interior cordon the sun (*sic*) is placed before him. In the south porch the head of the father is given, but on the exterior cordon of the vaulting, where it is exposed to all the injuries of rain and wind, while mere angels are placed in the inner cordons and sheltered from the action of the weather. On the left door of the west porch the father is altogether omitted, while the figure of the son is full length, and the size of life. . . . In the door on the right the figure of the creator is completely banished to the exterior and

least honorable cordon, and even placed in a narrow and inconvenient situation just at the intersection of the pointed arch; god the son, on the contrary, is placed in the interior, carefully protected from the effects of rain and wind. . . . Ample space might have been found in a lower cordon for the holy ghost, but the holy ghost also has been sacrificed by the artist, who has filled the vacancy in preference with a large angel. . . . In the sculptures of Notre Dame de Paris we can indeed discover but little reverence for the father eternal; but, on the other hand, a thousand tender-nesses are lavished upon the son; his are all the honors, his the glory and the triumph."

All this, I must say, is too bad. "No one," as Judge Huddleston would say, "can doubt that this is blasphemous." No wonder France has been so often deluged with blood during the past centuries! No marvel that both Thiers and Gambetta died suddenly! That blasphemous Notre Dame is the cause of it all. I wish that building were in England! Then our Wainwrights, public prosecutors, pious government officials, Tylers, would very soon raze it to the ground. In the name of god the father and the holy ghost I protest against this shocking indignity; and I call upon the son to share his excessive honors with the other two!

But stay! My religious fury has run away with me. I am become corrupted, I fear, by the example of the times. When I think of blasphemy my piety boils and bubbles at seeing my blessed deities (who cannot defend themselves) outraged, or one of them getting more honors than another, or the old ones thrust aside for the young upstarts! There! I am better after that outburst of devotional fervor. And now coolly I may say that the sculptors of Notre Dame were no worse than—not half so bad as—our rulers and bishops, and parsons and persecutors of to-day, here in England, mind you! For here, by Act of Parliament, you may blaspheme (that is, deny the divinity of) the son and holy ghost, and be blameless. In fact, you may dispense with all three gods and the whole of Christianity, provided that you (1) get a Government licence to do so—that is, be friendly with a parson, and give a little money to church restoration; (2) enter into holy orders or join the Salvation Army; (3) persecute some unpopular heretic or call poor people the "unwashed"; or, best of all, throw up the old Trinity entirely, and enter upon the devout worship of the blessed and ever-adorable trinity in unity of Wealth, Cant, and Mrs. Grundy.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

COMMENTS OF THE PRESS AND COMMENTS ON THE COMMENTS.

"It was obvious almost from the first that Mr. Justice North had taken a very strong view of the case. We simply state a fact, and with no wish to provoke a feeling of disrespect for the Bench, when we say that his conduct throughout was colored with partisanship."—*Birmingham Daily Mail*

"Doubtless, it is much more painful to our feelings to have our religion insulted than to have it delicately bantered; but is the pain an act may give us the true measure of its criminality? It is very painful to our feelings to have a man come to dinner with dirty face and hands and using coarse forms of speech, but however much annoyance that might cause us, no one would think of making conduct of that kind criminally punishable. . . . But considering the extreme severity of the punishment inflicted for publishing what no one was compelled either to see or read—and this makes a most serious difference between the case of blasphemy and that of any act of public indecency which is necessarily seen by all within the range of eyesight—no one will be able to avoid comparing what Mr. Foote has done, with what more refined assailants of the Christian faith have done without the smallest risk of prosecution, and asking whether the difference does not really consist much more in the difference between the education of the different assailants, than in the difference between their desire to wound."—*Spectator*.

"The language, conversation, and demeanor of those in the gallery were a disgrace to a professedly civilised people."—*Letter in Kentish Mercury*.

To this anonymous libeller we give the most unqualified contradiction. We challenge him to produce a single case of ill-language or ill-behavior on the part of any Free-

thinker present at the trial. The outburst of cries, though unusual, was the natural exclamation of a number of men wronged and shocked at the evil being done. The disgrace to a civilised people was not in the conduct of the inmates of the gallery. It was in the fact that such a trial, such a verdict, such a sentence, are possible to-day.

"But that it should be in the power of any bigoted members of society, however honest and well-meaning they may be, to cause annoyance by their foolish attempts to imitate the now universally condemned defenders of the old-world creeds is an anomaly in our time and altogether preposterous. We dare maintain that the prosecution was a grievous infringement of that liberty of conscience for which heroic martyrs suffered in the early days of the Christian Church; and, in later times, in the opening scenes of the great protesting reformation."—*Glasgow Evening Citizen*, March 6th.

"When Mr. Foote was committed for trial, he was liberated on very easy bail. But when the jury failed to agree in his case, and when, presumably, he stood in a somewhat stronger position than when he was committed, Mr. Justice North refused to let him out on bail.—*Echo*, March 3rd.

"If this is so, no man whose opinions diverge from orthodoxy to any large extent can count himself safe. No matter how reverently and cautiously he may express them, no matter how they may seem to himself and to some considerable class of his countrymen to make not against, but for, religion, he is at the mercy of a fanatical prosecutor, a bigoted judge, and an orthodox jury. . . . The success of the Conservative party in keeping Mr. Bradlaugh out of the House, the expressed and tacit support which they have received from timid Liberals, the acquiescence of a large class in the community in a grievance which did not touch themselves, have taught religious bigotry what a power it still is in the land."—*Liverpool Daily Post*.

"We hope that Mr. Labouchere will succeed in obtaining at least a partial remission of the sentences passed upon the proprietors and staff of the *Freethinker*. Such prosecutions can do nothing but harm to religion. The offenders deserve no sympathy, but it is absurd to treat coarse attacks on Christianity in cheap newspapers as penal offences when the foremost magazines of the day teem with attacks less scurrilous, but equally bitter and far more mischievous."—*The Methodist*.

"A sentence very calmly and considerably passed by Mr. Justice North . . . For pay, wicked men will readily do the work of the devil. . . . The systematic reading and study of the Bible—the secret of England's greatness—the education of the young in the principles which have proved the bulwark of our country, will be our only safety against the perpetuation of the race of infidels of the kidney of Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp." [Selah.]—*Wiltshire County Mirror*, March 13th, 1883.

"He (Mr. Brookfield) was sure that they all read with the greatest glee how Mr. Foote and his associates had been sent into retirement—(cheers)—to reflect upon the fruits of philosophy. (Cheers.) He hoped they would send several more to keep them company—(cheers)—and, if they would send one of the members for Northampton," etc.—Meeting of the Junior Conservatives.—*Hastings and St. Leonard's Observer*.

Some of our Hastings' friends ought to interview Mr. Brookfield.

"If we are to protect opinion all round, what is to become of the Englishman's boasted liberty of speech?"—*The Gazette*.

"He had been shocked with the extent to which blasphemous Atheism had been circulated in pamphlets and books among the working-classes in a town like Reading."—*The Reading Observer*. Thanks! so much!

"The laws of blasphemy were conceived in the age of the rack, the scaffold, and the stake. They are the survivals from the spirit of persecution which made England an Inquisition Chamber."—*The Salisbury Times and South Wilts Gazette*.

"Matters of opinion cannot be worked out by shutting up the individual, emanations of the mind cannot be quenched by criminal prosecutions. . . . The remarks of Justice North read like an extract from a monkish journal of the middle ages. . . . The *Freethinker* trial has shown that godly people do not necessarily in becoming religious, cease to be noodles."—*The Portsmouth Pioneer*.

ECHO DEAR.

FREE, as e'en the air that bears them
Echoed to the distant ear,
Busy thoughts are ever flitting,
Flitting! (and Echo answers "'itting").
Yes! and *hitting*, Echo dear!

Hitting hard the coarse beguiler,
Striking hard at gilded peer,
Stabs the hypocrite reviler,
Reviler! (Echo answers "'viler').
They *can't* be *viler*, Echo dear!

The wolf enacts the lamb and passes
Preaching heaven—living *here*.
Chuckling as he brims his glasses
Glass's! (Echo answers "'asses")
Well they ride them, Echo dear!

How we've nursed that hellish system!
"Priest and parson, crown and peer!"
Trodden upon—we've—yes, we've kissed 'em!
Kissed 'em! (Echo answers "'hissed 'em!")
Alas! we didn't, Echo dear!"

Send us out the Church Goliaths,
City vermin, ugh!—so near!
We dursn't touch 'em minus pliers—
Pliers! (Echo answers "'Liars!")
Yes, they are that, Echo dear!

EDGAR T. BENTON.

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