

# 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. 17.]

APRIL 29, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## TRIAL OF MESSRS. FOOTE AND RAMSEY FOR BLASPHEMY.

ANOTHER twelve good men and true have been placed in the three domino boxes, and the court is as crowded as on the trial of Mr. Bradlaugh. Our two friends with their rather substantial shadows in the shape of two warders are at the table immediately beneath the jury-box and in front of the bench. Faces, familiar at the other trials, as those of witnesses and onlookers, abound. Sir Heron Maxwell and a lady are on the bench ere Lord Coleridge enters.

Before the jury is sworn, Mr. Avory, who has Mr. Bradlaugh behind him, makes two brave but futile efforts in the legal sense. The Lord Chief Justice frankly declares that he knows nothing of the former trial at the Old Bailey, and is unable to acquiesce in Mr. Avory's suggestions.

Mr. Cluer rises to ask for a quashing of the indictment on the ground that the indictment was for a joint offence, and that as Mr. Bradlaugh has been found Not Guilty this indictment can no longer be proceeded on. The Lord Chief Justice ruling against him, Mr. Cluer puts another point in regard to the 2nd, 4th, and 6th counts. Finally, he tries on the 9th count in which the book of Revelations is mentioned, contending that no such book is known. But the Lord Chief Justice cannot know anything of the Bible in his judicial capacity.

The special jurors, who are waiting, experience a glow of hope as the Clerk of the Court tells them they may go until Thursday at 10. But the Lord Chief Justice dashes their hope to the ground by a few quiet words, and they have to dangle on. Mr. Maloney, in the absence of Sir Hardinge Giffard, stammers through his opening. Mr. Maloney is not always happy in his selection of phrases. His reminder to the jury that "prosecutions are happily rare in England," is a case in point. He calls the attention of the jury to the two chief points to be decided. (1) Is the paper blasphemous? (2) Did the two defendants publish the paper? Whilst in the former trial, the second question was the more important, in this case the first inquiry is the more momentous. Mr. Maloney is not a good reader. I wonder the late Mr. Starkie did not rise in his grave at the mangled reading of his definition of blasphemy. No attempt is made, says Mr. Maloney, to interfere with freedom of opinion or of publication. But there is, as usual, a "so long as." We may be free to speak or write, so long as we do not pass the bounds of decency and reason. The learned counsel forgot to point out who is to be the arbiter as to decency and reason. By a quotation from one of Mr. Symes' Atheistic sermons he shows that the defendants were conscious of the fact that they were blasphemous and, very properly, gloried in the fact. Then he refers to Mr. Foote's lecture at Tunbridge Wells on the occasion of Seymour's prosecution—a lecture that he had crammed with "blasphemy." He refers to Mr. Foote's challenge then to the bigots to prosecute, and adds, "And our answer (the bigots', by implication) is that Mr. Foote is here to-day." Mr. Maloney does much thumping on books, and papers, and desk, and becomes more than usually

incoherent when his leader enters and makes him nervous. Then he makes some more or less clumsy hits at Mr. Bradlaugh, who listens quite unperturbed. When Mr. Maloney, redder and more shifty-eyed than usual, sits down, the Lord Chief Justice asks for information as to the Old Bailey trial, the sentence, and the very crucial question whether at that trial and in that sentence the numbers at present under indictment were considered. Messrs. Avory and Maloney spar. The Lord Chief Justice points out that the two men are now on trial for an offence committed before that for which they are now in prison. The law's delay and the law's undue swiftness are here both evident. Then witnessing begins. Messrs. Frayling, Barber, Hadden, Kelland appear and go rapidly through their respective parts. The preliminary rehearsals at the trial last week enable counsel and witnesses to get swiftly through the work. Mr. Maloney has a wrestle with the Judge as to the admission of evidence dealing with later dates than that of the indictment, and is worsted. A fine difference is noticeable between Mr. Maloney and the Chief. "Foote," says the former. "Mr. Foote," says the latter, as a mild and gentlemanly corrective. Mr. Woodfall is the other barrister that has the questionable honor of playing a prominent part in the attack upon men for opinion's sake. Mr. Foote, holding a brief in his hand, barrister fashion, cross-examines Mr. Hadden as to purchasing *Freethinkers* and placing the dates of purchasing on the papers. He has caught quite successfully the forensic tone and the habit of repeating an answer that tells in his favor in a conciliatory and grateful tone. William Ramsey does a little cross-examination of the pasty-faced boy with the too-projecting nose, called Kelland. His aim was a wise one and reached. He makes Kelland admit that all the copies on which the present indictment rests were handed in to Justice North at the trial in respect to the Christmas Number. Mr. Foote then turns the unhappy Kelland, growing more and more pasty-faced, inside out on the point of his having seen Mr. Foote at Stonecutter Street, and the gay youth has to confess that he has contradicted himself on this vital point.

Mr. Whittle, senior, is a new witness in the Court of Queen's Bench. He brings about the discomfiture of Mr. Woodfall, who is brought up more than once very sharply by the Judge for asking improper questions. Questions, let us remember, that Mr. Justice North would have admitted with much approval. Both the young counsel for the prosecution are on their feet at once, and Mr. Cluer chimes in. Then comes a splendid sell for Mr. Maloney. The worry is all as to sending of proofs of the *Freethinker*. After much struggle, Mr. Woodfall asks, "Were any proofs sent from the office at 170 St. John Street?" "Yes, to Mr. Bradlaugh." This brings Mr. Maloney to his feet. An excellent mare's-nest is discovered. "Sent to Mr. Bradlaugh?" "Yes, but they had nothing to do with the *Freethinker*." Much laughter and reddening of the prosecuting face. Then after a little more sparring, Mr. Maloney receives one more rebuff and a most severe rebuke from the Chief. He is told that he has asked a question that "any man at the bar must have known was improper." I can give no idea of the stately severity with which Lord Coleridge gave the offen-

ing counsel a scathing castigation. Mr. Maloney must be as accustomed to rebuke and disapprobation from bench and bar as Sir Hardinge Giffard is to defeat by Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Whittle, junior, acknowledged printer of the *Freethinker*, follows. More checking of Mr. Maloney, who is abjectly deferential now. Great delight among non-legal souls to find that the Judge does not know the meaning of "pulling a proof." More proofs (no joke is intended) forthcoming of the difference between Justice North and Justice Coleridge. The latter watches the examination of the witness as if he were an advocate for both sides. He will not have general Malonic questions asked, and he protests against doing Mr. Maloney's work. Not because it is dirty work, but because he is the Judge, and Mr. Maloney is, by a remarkable courtesy, supposed to know the business of an advocate. During the examination of this witness, I catch sight of a face of the Kelland type, only a little older. It is that of the solicitor, Stewart, who has been mixed up with Mr. Newdegate in his running matches against time and Mr. Bradlaugh, and has helped that mute-like M.P. to his defeat and degradation, together with the loss of many thousands of pounds. Another tremendous shaming of the already-shamed Mr. Maloney occurs. "Why cannot this case be conducted as all others are?" The Chief had seen, "I have eyes," suggestions given by others and he was, in his calm, sedate fashion, most angry with the repeated attempts of Mr. Maloney to act in an illegal and unbecoming fashion. In the sternest of tones Lord Coleridge denounced this conduct as of a piece with the looking at a man's banking account by a counsel at the bar.

As the examination of Mr. Whittle ends at one, and no cross-examination follows, the Judge actually asks Mr. Ramsey if he wishes to address the jury or have his luncheon first. Think of such courtesy at the Old Bailey! Mr. Ramsey elects in favor of the luncheon. This discussed in various places and fashions, we resumed. William Ramsey read his address to the jury. I was sorry to see that only one or two of the twelve looked at him, as he read. Had I the duty of deciding as to the imprisonment of a man, I would give him all my ears and all my eyes whilst he was pleading for his liberty. Mr. Ramsey devoted himself mainly to the demonstration that blasphemy was universal, and made his best hit when he reminded the jury that the leading counsel for the prosecution, Sir Hardinge Giffard, had accepted office in the same Government with Mr. W. H. Smith, the defier of juries, the breaker of laws, in his business capacity as a publisher.

Exactly at two, Mr. Foote rose to speak. His earliest words were to the effect that he had learned how a criminal trial should be carried on. As he turned to the subject of Justice North, the placid voice of the Lord Chief Justice broke in upon him, "Mr. Foote, you must learn one lesson more. No judge can take notice of another judge's conduct—not even favorably." Then Mr. Foote passed lightly over the difficulties attending the preparation of a defence in prison and dwelt, with more emphasis, upon the striking fact that their blasphemy punishment was the heaviest for more than a century. Mr. Maloney met with his usual rough treatment in one excellent passage of sarcasm anent his denunciatory style and his "nefarious gains." Then the word "indecent" was dealt with on the lines upon which it has been dealt with in our recent pages. Next he showed the folly of these prosecutions and demonstrated the fact that every one concerned in the prosecution was a Tory and every one attacked was a Radical. An attack upon Sir Henry Tyler was noticeable for its neatness and finish, altogether different from, but not less effective than Mr. Bradlaugh's fiery periods. He finished this part of his oration by a withering comparison between the Peels and Pitts of the Tory party, and its Churchills, Newdegates, and Giffards to-day. Blasphemy was then considered, and the trial of Jesus was discussed. Ninety-nine per cent. of blasphemy is not a matter of fact, but of taste and feeling. Practically, he urged, you are asked if you like our writings, and if you don't, you find us guilty. It was shown that Mr. Justice North's definition of blasphemy varied at the first and the second Old Bailey trials and that the Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Stephen differed as to definition of the offence. Hence a man was at the mercy of the opinion of the judge and of the feelings of the jury. Therefore he tried to draw the minds of the jury back to the statute definition. He made use of the remarkable comment of the Lord Chief Justice to the effect that the fact that Chris-

tianity is part of the law of the land does not debar criticism of it as of any other legal question. A little later, Mr. Foote quoted extracts from Leslie Stephen, Charles Darwin, Huxley, Maudsley, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Grote, Lord Derby, Matthew Arnold, John Morley, Lord Amberley, the Duke of Somerset, Shelley, Swinburne, James Thomson (B.V.), George Eliot, Renan, anonymous writers, Ingersoll, as instances of blasphemy in high places. No attempt was made by the Lord Chief Justice to check him as by Justice North. A good point was made by the reminding the jury of the fact that the Church had now Darwin's body and nothing else. But these men were not attacked. They had not to stand their trial for blasphemy. A very good quiet point was the descriptive touch of Herbert Spencer as not a humorist. He pleaded that there was injustice in the writer in the penny papers carrying off as a scapegoat into the wilderness of Holloway Gaol the sins of all the cultured agnostics of the day. I wonder if I was wrong in thinking that the Chief Justice was quietly amused with the Arnoldian comparison of the three persons of the Trinity to the three Lord Shaftesburys. But the reflexion most present to my mind was that of the novelty with which the majority of the jury heard these blasphemous libels read, and of the value of the reading of them in public. The attack upon Mr. John Morley was, in its measured and impressive dignity, not unimpassioned, the best piece of pleader's speaking in either of the trials. The pictures of god were not of an almighty deity but of the mythological, brutal god of the Jews. Three-fourths of our poets are blasphemers, and two fine passages from Swinburne were read.

Next he touched the question of ridicule, used, as it had been, by all controversialists, and then that of the outraging of opinion. "The late Mr. Starkie" led to some good-humored banter on the idea of a man going to gaol on the opinion of a defunct gentleman. Blasphemy is a relic of ecclesiasticism, and is on the decision of more than one judge an attack on the Established Church. An appeal was, therefore, made to any of the jury holding beliefs other than those of that Church to remember the wrongs done to their ancestors in thought. Every man has right to protection of person, property, character. Not one of these had been assailed. Nothing that had happened had tended to a breach of the peace. The phraseology of the indictment was only another mask for intolerance. They want to punish us not for attacking religion but for inciting to a breach of the peace. "Take them at their word," he cried. The law of liberty was assailed. His only feeling was less a personal one than one on behalf of thousands of his fellow-men. The day darkening, as some rain fell without, added to his last words even more solemnity than their impressive nature and his earnest manner gave them. It was twenty minutes to five when he ended, and the Lord Chief Justice, laying stress upon the very striking speech to which they had listened, adjourned the case to Wednesday at 10.30.

EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.—The legend of the transfiguration records the miraculous appearance of Moses and Elias conversing with Jesus on a mountain, followed by a voice from heaven, announcing the father's approbation of the son. But as Jesus never revealed the miracle to mankind, and Peter, James and John, the only witnesses, are absolutely silent on the subject, why should we accept the credibility of improbable and unattested phenomena?—"The Evolution of Christianity," p. 240; 1883.

The chief power of established error lies in its hereditary control of the great social ceremonies of life. It presides at the baptismal font, at the marriage altar, at the grave; when its hold upon those epochs of family life is loosened it will fail. And that time will come when all liberal men and women are perfectly consistent in life and in death, resolutely refusing to have their children subjected to an ancient exorcism, to pronounce the false formulas of a sacramental marriage, or permit over their dead bodies the rites and conjurations of superstition. To every man his mental and moral life is the most momentous part of his existence. If he takes care that the earnings of his vigor and industry shall bequeath happiness to those who succeed him, vastly more important is it that he should take care that his moral and mental possessions shall bear blessings to those who inherit them. Let him dread to bequeath superstition as much as consumption!—*M. D. Conway.*

## PLAGUING THE EGYPTIANS.

Scene 1.—The Murder. A Hebrew and an Egyptian discovered quarrelling.

HEBREW: Twenty per cent! I couldn't do it at the price. Only twenty per cent. It's a robbery!

EGYPTIAN: I tell you that that is good interest, and I won't give any more.

HEBREW: You won't. Oh, S'help me! Well, look here, if you don't give me more, I'll— [strikes him with umbrella].

EGYPTIAN: A blow! [rushes at Hebrew, gets him under, and gives him a sound thrashing].

*Enter Moses from next street.*

MOSSES (seeing fight): Halloo, what's this—an Egyptian killing old Abe Levi? That won't do. If there's nobody looking I'll give that Egyptian an unlucky tap. [Looks up one street and then up another, and seeing that nobody is in view, Moses stabs the Egyptian in the back and bolts.]

*Enter another Egyptian.*

EGYPTIAN: Ah! the old Jew thinks I didn't see him—but I did; and I'll hunt the villain down, and cursed be he who tries to prevent me. [*Exit*].

Scene 2.—A Field. A burning bush discovered enjoying himself.

*Enter Moses, exhausted.*

MOSSES: I have done the bloody deed. I left the Egyptian weltering in his gore. [A pause. Sees bush]. What is this I see before me—the smoke before mine eyes. Come, let me clutch thee.

BURNING BUSH: Touch me not so near, thou son of a Jew. Down on thy knees, for the place whereon thou stand'st is muddy ground. Worship me; for—though I don't look like one—I am a god.

Mo.: You are? Pardon me—what's your name?

B. B.: Soft—methinks I smell the morning air. [Beckons Moses to him.] Here's my card.

Mo. (amazed). Reads card). Indeed! I know the firm well. I offer you my services. I'll be your traveller.

B. B.: Just what I want. And you're just my man. I heard you say you killed an Egyptian. Good fellow. Just my sort. I want you to kill many. Don't murder them right off—that's too vulgar. Torment them, plague them, so that they die—die the death of the damned. I hate them.

Mo.: I will.

B. B.: Nay, swear it.

Mo.: Swear it. Oh s'help me.

B. B. (disappearing): Enough, Moses. Adieu. Remember me. [*Exit*].

Scene 3.—The Great Plague. Pharaoh's Palace. Egyptians and Israelites discovered enjoying themselves. A knock is heard at the door.

*Enter Moses.*

PHARAOH: What Jew is this that comes here?

Mo.: O most gracious king, I come from a great business firm, and I want to see if I can supply your majesty with our first-class 12/6 trousers; and if you'll buy a few dozen pairs of them my dear—I mean your majesty—daresay the firm will let you have them for sixpence less.

PHA.: What firm did you say?

Mo. *whispers*.

PHA.: Hum! I don't know it. The trousers look very well, though. I think I'll have a thousand pairs or so, and supply my subjects with them.

Mo.: Thank you, your majesty; they shall be sent with all haste. (*Aside*) Now to carry out my lord's diabolical scheme. I'll torture them; I'll give them a plague of parasites. (*Exit* Moses.)

[A day elapses.]

A van-load of unmentionables arrives, and the Egyptians put them on.

PHA.: What noise is that I hear? It is really too bad after I have generously supplied my subjects with clothing that they should make this horrible noise in my palace.

*Enter* SERVANT: Your majesty, your majesty! I have come to tell you that your subjects are being eaten alive—

tortured. The trousers you were good enough to give them—

(Servant whispers in Pharaoh's ear.)

PHA. (incredulously): Goodness, good gracious!

QUICK CURTAIN.

A. B. Moss.

## A CHAPTER FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Now it came to pass in the reign of Tic Voria, queen of the lost tribes of Israel, that the angel of the Lord appeared unto Etoof, the son of Esnes, in a flash of inspiration by day saying:

Arise, O Etoof, and attend unto my words, for great art thou among men, and thy name shall be called Lufrednow, the Ecnirp of Pluckiness:

Behold now, thus saith the lord, I have seen how faulty was my last essay to establish a universal religion which should bring peace on earth and good will to all men; and I have determined to displace it for another, as I displaced Judaism for Christianity!—Selah!

Now therefore, thus saith the lord, arise, O Etoof, and proclaim my new gospel to all the ends of the earth, and to the middle of the centre thereof. On the seventh day of each week (known as Thor's Day), thou shalt issue a portion thereof, and shalt call its name "*Eerf Reknihit*" (for I intend to remove the bands of bondage from the brains of my people), at the price of one penny per issue, bearing the image and superscription (*i.e.*, the penny) of Tic Voria.

And it shall come to pass that after many times and seasons of publication thou shalt awaken the wrath of Relyt, the king of Gubmuh, and De Newgate, the Papist, who with the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, together with the Drol Royam, learned in the astounding laws of Tic Voria, who crushed and annihilated Laugh Darb, the champion of my people!

And these shall hale thee to the judge whose blood is cold as the North wind, and will prove a very Thorn in the flesh to thee, O Etoof [but his time is short!] He shall scow-beat thee with words, reply to thy sense senselessly, and cause the nations to believe they are living in the fifteenth century of the era named after my son.

Yet fear not, O Etoof, for we are with thee: our pens and our mites they shall comfort thee; and we will move upon the muddy waters immersing the muddled brains of the people, and dredge the same till they become clear as crystal, and they shall see and acknowledge with weeping and strong crying that the lord hath indeed sent thee, O Etoof, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of my people the Eerf Sreknihit.

Be not dismayed, O Etoof, neither let thy heart be troubled within thee, for the lord shall raise up to thy aid an exceeding great army, the troops of Truth and Justice, and these shall demand thy liberty—at the hands of Superstition, Ignorance and Malice, the triune tyrants of humanity who hold the keys of the bottomless pit of persecution, into which they would fain cast every upright and true friend of humanity.

Yea, I will blow upon them with the breath of wisdom, and wither them with the scorn of the next generation, and their name shall be a sign of hissing for all nations so long as the earth endureth.

But thou, Etoof, shalt emerge from the darkness in which they shall unrighteously entomb thee, to shine forth as the glorious sun in the Sweet South, giving life, health, joy, and comfort to myriads yet unborn.

Then arose Etoof, the son of Esnes, and did according to the command of the angel, that all might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet Paine and divers other Prophets of old time.

And it happened even as the angel had foretold; and behold, Etoof is suffering imprisonment—for truth and conscience' sake, whilst the preachers of ferocity, foulness, and falsehood, are clothed in fine linen and fare sumptuously every-day!

WILLIAM DE CARLE.

—COLERIDGE'S waste thoughts would have set up a dozen of your modern poets.—*J. H. Frere*.

WHY do you talk of Conservatives? A Conservative is only a Tory who is ashamed of himself.—*Ibid*.

## A BLASPHEMOUS SOCIETY.

For real, right-down, unadulterated blasphemy, commend me to the religious body calling itself the Daily Prayer Union. The quarterly paper of this extraordinary, this shocking body has come into my hands. It is worthy of comment, not only as it is delightfully comic, but also because of its rank blasphemy. Heading the paper is a quotation from Psalm lxxxviii., 9, "Lord, I have called daily upon thee." It is necessary to remind the members of the Daily Prayer Union that in the same psalm the lord is reproached for casting off souls and hiding his face, despite the daily prayer. Perhaps, in consequence of it, for 12,000 of these people calling every day must be as great a nuisance as a tax-collector. As 12,000 have already joined the union, and as a card is sent to each on receipt of 1d., as I have reason to believe that each card is sent for 3d., we have £25 falling into the hands of the Rev. H. L. Harkness, of Worcester, in return for a very small outlay. As probably each member takes in this precious quarterly paper, and as Mr. Harkness makes up the whole number without paying for any literary assistance, as he appeals for prayers and subscriptions, we may probably congratulate Mr. Harkness on a considerable addition to his stipend. To this no one can have any possible objection other than that which moves one at the sight of a dispenser of quack medicines making a fortune.

I could wish however that Mr. Harkness were a little less vague. Thus one of the objects of the union is "prayer for the holy spirit throughout the world," and one of the promises made by members is "to pray every Sunday for all the members." "Prayer for" can only have one of two meanings—prayer on behalf of, or prayer that some one or some thing may come. If Mr. Harkness means the former, he is a blasphemer, for he is enjoining prayer on behalf of god. God truly needs it, and that badly. But to recognise the parlous condition of god is to blaspheme. If Mr. Harkness means the latter, the members are to pray that they may be visited by 12,000 people every Sunday. Or by 12,001, throwing in the holy ghost. Or, perhaps, 12,003, as he would possibly bring the other members of the Long Firm with him.

Another ambiguity. "Members promise to pray daily to be filled with the spirit." This is a prayer for alcohol. It would recommend itself to the intoxicated. Yet another is the resolve to translate prayers by the Rev. A. Dallas and Miss Marsh into foreign languages. These fulsome follies would be as exotics. They could only be perpetrated in English.

Five prayers to the holy spirit are given. They are one-sixth of a book "which I have lately printed . . . 4d." If the book has a good circulation the holy spirit will have a monotonous time of it. One prayer is for "might in the inner man." This sounds like a prayer for improved digestion and goes well with the prayer to be "filled with the spirit." Then Mr. Harkness wants to comprehend the breadth and length, and depth and height. He had better pray to be able to comprehend ordinary arithmetic. Anybody but an habitual prayer to holy spirits would know that depth and height are the same thing. Then he wants to "be filled with the fulness of god," which sounds hungry and seems blasphemous. He is a little more modest in the next outburst, as he only asks for "as large a measure of thy fulness as it is possible for a man to possess." He addresses the holy spirit as the leader, as if he were the front horse in a team of three. I suppose god the father would be the near horse from his proverbial meanness and god the son was the off 'un, when he thought he was forsaken of his father. More blasphemy occurs when Mr. Harkness assures the holy spirit, "I come to Thee unholy." He may mean the "unholy" to qualify the "I." In that case, it is to be regretted that he is not more punctuateable.

Certain requests for prayer follows. One is for "a strong faith, to take god at his word." The requester has evidently an eye to the fitness of things. A faith so strong as to kill common-sense, man's natural revolt against a lie and the repugnance to infamy, be it of man or god, is necessary to take the horrible Bible-god at his horrible Bible word. One person has large desires. He asks for prayer on behalf of "the conversion of a family." If this be answered the amiable injunction of Christ as to hating one's

father and mother, and sister and brother, will be unnecessary for one family, at least. A good illustration of the fatuous futility of prayer is afforded by No. 3 of the "requests." For the recovery of an invalid son; or if god should will it otherwise, that his mind may be kept in perfect peace. Clearly god's will is the arbiter and man cannot influence it—no, nor men, even 12,000 *per diem*. A geographical prayer for the islands of Magdalen, as strongholds of Popery, shows the tolerant nature of these daily blasphemers. Surely prayers for Magdalen should go through Mary, especially as the islands lie *in mare*. Prayer is asked for a brother who has lost his reason (no wonder, if one of his family has gone into the union), and for a member "suffering deep mental depression" (probably from reading one of the quarterly papers). The last request is for prayer, that "a Member may be a holy, happy, and useful Christian." Is the "member" a "leg"? I have a shrewd suspicion that these "requests" are manufactured by Mr. Harkness, as editors of incipient journals make up "answers to correspondents." The only thing wanted is a column of answers to prayers, and these Mr. Harkness could invent as easily as the requests.

EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.

## MEMORIAL.

"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.

## REVIEW.

*Difficulties of Belief*, by COLONEL INGERSOLL. William Morrish, Narrow Wine Street, Bristol.

ANOTHER of the pamphlets that the great American orator sends across the Atlantic as, let us hope, scouts and skirmishers before he marches hither himself. It abounds in the power and wit and humor that are so characteristic of Ingersoll. Certain passages are of especial interest in the light of recent events:—

"The Bible can't stand to-day without the support of the civil power. No religion ever flourished except by the support of the sword, and no religion like this could have been established except by brute force."

"Does an Infinite Being need to be protected by a State Legislature? If the Bible is inspired, does the author of it need the support of the law to command respect? We don't need any law to make mankind respect Shakespeare. We come to the altar of that great man and cover it with our gratitude without a statute."

"Think of the way in which they have supported the Bible! They've terrorised the old with laws, and captured the dear little innocent children and poisoned their minds with their false stories until, when they have reached the age of manhood, they have been afraid to think for themselves. Just see in some countries what the Blasphemy Laws are now, by which they guard their Bible and their god. Every honest man should see to it that these laws are done away with at once and for ever."

THE following resolution was passed last Sunday night at Swaby's Debating Room, Mile-End Road, E., with one dissentient: "That this meeting is of opinion that the recent sentences passed by Justice North on Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp, for blasphemous libel are both unjust and tyrannical; and we are further of opinion that the revival of the Blasphemy Laws is to be deplored, inasmuch, as we regard them as a menace to freedom of speech and press, and out of harmony with the spirit of the times. We, therefore, urge upon the Government the imperative necessity of their immediate repeal."

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 Now Ready in Seven Parts, price Twopence each; neat wrappers. Part VII. also contains Prison Notes by G. W. Foote.

A Verbatim Report of the Latest Trial for Blasphemy (that of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey), before the Lord Chief Justice, will be issued in one pamphlet, price Sixpence. It will contain the evidence, the speeches of the two defendants, and the summing-up of Lord Coleridge.

DR. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture three times on Sunday, April 29th, in the Secular Hall, Birmingham:—at 11, "Freedom in England"—3, "The Pedigree of Man"—7, "The Recent Blasphemy Trials."

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.—R. Kerr, Sphinx, C. B. B., Confab, Henry Webster, J. C. Woodhead.
- A HATER OF BIGOTRY.—With reference to the deputation, not yet. Shall be glad to receive profane jokes.
- E. JOHNSON forwards memorial with 242 signatures.
- BEN. INGHAM takes four copies weekly. He wants to know the number we print each week. We do not comply with his request for fear of terrifying the Christians and for fear of making our friends slacken their splendid efforts. Let everybody imagine that we are not printing half as many as we ought to print, and at once double the number of copies he takes. We may, however, whisper confidentially that the circulation of the *Freethinker* is far greater than what it was before the prosecution.
- H. CROFTS.—We are too grateful to the Lord Chief Justice for his scrupulous and noble fairness to carry out your suggestions, though they are not without merit.
- R. GILLIAT.—Not quite usual.
- C. HUGHES.—Thanks; we have used your Pearl.
- MEMORIAL received from Frank Gibson with 12 signatures.
- ÆNEAS.—Try Messrs. Johnson and Co., 170 St. John Street, Clerkenwell.
- J. H. ROGERS.—Thanks. Utilised your well-chosen cuttings.
- MRS. SCHNETLER.—It is not worth noticing.
- E. J. SEAMER forwards memorial with 26 signatures.
- Two illustrated Bibles are to be ballotted for, for the benefit of the Prisoners' Aid Fund and the Walsall Sunday Reading Room. Tickets sixpence each. Secretaries of secular societies, associations, clubs, etc., can obtain twelve tickets on sale or return of John Milton, Haydn Sanders, or E. A. Scholey, Sunday Reading Room, 68 Dudley Street, Walsall.
- CONFAB, St. Helen's, reports memorial with 22 signatures.
- W. RAINFORD.—I shall reply to Mr. Harrison next week. It is very sad that such a man as he, whose words have weight, can speak of the Bible in terms of unreserved commendation.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Froo Press—Penny Pictorial World—Truth (Pittsburgh)—Kansas Liberal—Philosophic Inquirer (Madras)—Western Daily Mercury.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The Guild of St. Matthew is making itself an enviable name. It appears to be a body of religious men that are tolerant. Under its auspices a lecture will be given at 73 Old Street, E.C., on "Christ and Freethought," by the Rev. C. W. Stubbs. Date, April 30th, time, 8.20. Free and full discussion is invited. This is the noble Guild that has issued an appeal on behalf of the Affirmation Bill, and a memorial on behalf of our imprisoned friends.

The Rev. Frederick Relton, a courteous and cultured gentleman, lectured recently at the Walworth Freethought Institute, on "Christianity its own Evidence." Following

the true scientific method, he collected facts, he drew inferences, he verified the inferences, and arrived at the conclusion that Christianity was the real religion. Mr. Arthur B. Moss then went through the process commonly called "hoisting the engineer by his own petard." By collecting facts, drawing inferences, verifying the inferences, Buddhism, Mormonism, Spiritualism, Secularism, can all be proved as "their own evidence." All these "isms" exist. The question is which squares best with our nineteenth-century life.

THE "FREETHINKER" PROSECUTION.

LATEST NEWS.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25.

2.45.

As we go to press we hear that the jury have retired, and have not yet agreed as to their verdict.

A MODERN MOSES.

The average Christian has long given up the idea of celestial visitations occurring in these days. He is content to argue that although all things are still possible with god, the almighty has in the past done sufficient in that line to render any further display unnecessary. Nevertheless there remains some "salt" in the earth—a remnant to whom their blessed lord has seen fit in his bounteous kindness to themward, to manifest his power by paying them an occasional visit. We have received from one of these highly favored ones, full and minute particulars as to how the lord appeared to this his beloved, and as to what he revealed. Our informant is not a person one would expect to find affected with god on the brain. He is capable of driving a keen bargain. He has laid up a goodly share of treasure in this world; yet he is on the most intimate terms with the deity, as the following dialogue may serve to show.

*Christian*.—Can you tell me how a man feels who has confessed all his sins and wickedness to god, and has been washed and made white in the blood of the lamb?

*Freethinker*.—Can you tell me how a man feels who has let slip his reason and imagines himself in that condition?

*C*.—I thank the lord I have taken up my title-deeds to glory; he showed them to me himself. Ah! the blessed lord has appeared to me more than once.

*F*.—When and how?

*C*.—One day he walked by my side up this hill to my own house.

*F*.—And he looked like—

*C*.—Just like a man; like me, only golden. He had a crown of glory above his head and a shepherd's crook in his hand.

*F*.—Did anyone else see him?

*C*.—No, it was with me as it was with Paul.

*F*.—Have you ever heard that the devil can take the form of an angel of light? How do you know it was not the devil?

*C*.—By his majesty and by what he told me. One morning before I had any breakfast, as I was reading a psalm, his hand struck the book; and a voice said to me, "There are your title-deeds for glory!" I shouted "Hallelujah" all that day till nine o'clock at night. The wife could not get on with her work.

*F*.—No wonder. Good morning.

[The above is actual fact. The conversation took place in Lancashire.]

CONFAB.

WHAT MUST IT BE TO BE THERE?

THERE are thousands of half-crazy individuals on this earth whose whole and sole idea seems to be how they can reach the right path leading to a so-called heaven, but who somehow generally manage to drop into lunatic asylums as makeshifts for half-way houses. They swallow every word of the Bible (without even reading it) and pray, moan and groan until they get almost as thin as one would imagine spirits to be—while they at the same time hate, persecute, and imprison those who happen to differ from them—feeling assured that by these means they will attain their object. Yet they are in no particular hurry to leave "this wicked world," but greedily keep their heavenly home in reserve for the time when they think they will have to go somewhere else.

They are welcome to go to their heavenly abode. We have not the slightest wish to accompany them—not only for the

reason that we have enough of their antics on this earth. We should find the journey rather tedious, and our reason tells us that we should fare worse in this Christian heaven than we do here.

The various sects are at loggerheads as to what state they will be in when they get there. No doubt they will be in a heavenly state. While some Christians imagine they will arrive there in a spiritual form, others undoubtedly expect to retain their bodily form. The Protestants in their creed say that they "believe in the resurrection of the body," and numerous passages from scripture may be quoted in support of this theory.

Supposing it to be true that they do retain their bodily form as they leave this earth, we should like to know how the extremely pious missionaries—who have been trying to convert the savages, but the savages instead have converted them—into food—will look when they reach their heavenly abode—for surely they will go if any do. Why, their own fathers wouldn't know them. It is no use the Christians trying to get out of the difficulty by saying that the missionaries will take the form they were in before being eaten by the savages; they might as well say that an adult Christian who had lost a leg when a child will have it fixed on when he gets to heaven. It wouldn't match, and how awkward it would look for an angel. But the Christian would perhaps "borrow" a leg from a Secularist down below. Yet the Christian would hardly be so generous as that, because by so doing he would deprive the Secularist of his quantum of pain in hell through being minus a leg. It is certain, therefore, that if the Christians go to heaven they must arrive there in the same form as they leave this earth—that is, the faithful who die of cholera, small-pox, dropsy, jaundice, or any other complaint; or blown to pieces, mangled or decapitated—will appear at the throne of glory in the same state as they leave this earth.

According to this "resurrection of the body" theory, children who have died through teething will have to finish their agony in "the place where there is no pain"—they must cut their teeth or they won't be able to eat their manna. Do the children grow to manhood and womanhood? If they remain children there must be in heaven a large supply of nurses for those unfortunate babes whose mothers have gone to "the other place." Will the child who died in the time of Noah be the same age in heaven as the child of this generation? If not, the former must have done cutting its teeth by this time. If the infant is still growing it would be worth while going to heaven—to see this infant prodigy. But, mind, we shouldn't care about stopping there.

Will men retain their proclivities for lying, cheating, and persecution of each other as they now do on this earth; and will the "man after god's own heart" retain his proclivity for murder and other sins?

Coming to the more serious part of the question, will the godly husbands who have been married several times have all their wives—godly ones of course—following them about the throne of glory? And what is more serious still, will all the mother-in-laws be keeping their eagle eyes on the holy husbands? And will the father-in-laws have their mother-in-laws closely watching them, and so on back to the time of Mrs. Noah? O what must it be to be there!

Supposing no one enters heaven until the last great day, there are one or two questions which necessarily arise—we intend no pun. The maddest Christian does not pretend that we grow older while in the grave, therefore we should like to submit the following. If a young couple get married, and the husband dies at the age of 22, the wife lives to 70, and they both manage to squeeze into heaven after Judgment Day, what a strange couple they will be—with a difference of about fifty years. Or *vice versa* imagine a young female angel with a good old Christian of eighty winters for a husband. We think the Christian couples after reading this will try and leave this earth as nearly as possible at the same time, so as to be more suited to each other in their new home.

Another peculiarity about this Christian heaven. Sons and daughters will be older than their own fathers and mothers. If a married man dies at the age of 30 and leaves children behind him, it is possible they will reach the age of 60 or 70, and if the children get to heaven they will have quite a youthful father, and perhaps a grandfather younger than themselves; or if a mother dies at the age of 23, she would, under the same circumstances, have a white-haired old gentleman for a son, perhaps about 50 years her senior.

There are hundreds of other questions arising out of this resurrection and heavenly absurdity, but we will conclude for the present by asking if all the street barrel-organs will be utilized so as to have all the music by *Handel*, and also whether each nation will sing in its own language. If so we may again exclaim, O what must it be to be there! A. WATKIN.

A FEW days ago a barrister was conducting a case in a London police-court, when, in order to emphasise a statement, one of the witnesses on the other side said, "It's as true as there's a god in heaven!" To the amazement of the magistrate, the learned counsel very coolly replied, "That would in no way convince me of its veracity!"

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY TACTICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Some one has kindly sent me a copy of the *Freethinker* of April 13th, containing some remarks on my address at the Hall of Science. Now I have no objection to them, nor should I trouble you about them on my own account, but perhaps, in justice to others you will allow me a few words.

I could not have been so disrespectful to the audience or to the Christian Evidence Society as to come unprepared as the writer seems to think. My notes were carefully considered; those which I joked about not reading easily being merely added thoughts. Nor did I go over any part twice. I did not say that I would not speak of Christianity, but only that I was going to lead up to it instead of from it, so that the subject should strictly be called "Common-Sense and Christianity." I defined "Common Sense" as the faculty by which we believe in the existence of an eternal world and of ourselves; and I tried to show that this same faculty forces us to believe in god, the Trinity, and the Atonement.

I think that this was enough ground to go over in sixty-five minutes; and I have good reason to believe that what I said was by many both understood and appreciated.—Apologising,

I am, yours truly,

GEORGE HARWOOD.

Brownlow Fold Mills, Bolton, April 18th.

### LETTER TO CANON SHUTTLEWORTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—In common with the great body of Freethinkers I entertain the greatest admiration for the few Church of England clergymen who have had the manliness to protest against the wrong that has been perpetrated in the name of the Christian religion upon those who are the foes only of the creed, and not of the various religious bodies. Amongst those especially deserving our thanks are the Rev. S. D. Headlam and the Rev. Canon Shuttleworth. The latter gentleman in his protest, however, used words in reference to one of our number who is at present in gaol for conscience' sake which I could not let pass unnoticed—feeling convinced that the Rev. Canon's description of Mr. Foote as "a half-cultured man," could only have been through ignorance of Mr. Foote's splendid qualifications.

I wrote to the rev. gentleman upon the subject and received the following reply, which you may deem worthy of insertion in next week's issue.—I am, dear sir, yours truly,

HENRY WEBSTER.

111 Clifton Street, E.C., April 19, 1883.

MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your kind and cordial letter. I am glad to think that what I said in the discharge of my duty as a Christian priest meets with the approval of those who have revolted from a creed which has been made abhorrent to them by such action as these blasphemy sentences.

I am sorry I should have done Mr. Foote unconscious wrong; and I am obliged to you for setting me right. I was endeavoring to heighten the contrast between Mr. Foote and Mr. Matthew Arnold, and you will, I think, see the point of my expression "half-cultured" in this connexion.

The Lord Chief Justice's remarks have put a somewhat new complexion on the matter.—Sincerely yours,

W. L. SHUTTLEWORTH.

6 Amen Court, E.C., April 18, 1883.

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

PROFANE JOKES.

A MAN from Woonsocket was obliged to make a visit to Boston on some business. He timed his visit so as to be able to hear a lecture of Mark Twain's. By some misunderstanding the Woonsocket man mistook the day of the lecture, and happened in on one of Joe Cook's lectures. He listened to the long discourse without discovering his mistake, thinking all the time that the lecturer was the famous humorist. On his return to Woonsocket, his family questioned him as to the lecture—"Was it funny?" was asked. "Wall," slowly replied the traveller, "it was funny, but it warn't so darned funny!"

ACCORDING to report, a most horrible discovery is said to have been made by the Old Testament revisers. The word "rib," in the second chapter of Genesis, used in describing the creation of Eve, ought more correctly, to be rendered "tail." This is, indeed, confirmation strong of the theories of Darwin. Again, the "ravens" which fed Elijah were not ravens at all, but "gipsies," and so another cherished delusion is dispelled, and the historic value of Sir Frederick Leighton's picture of "Elijah and the Ravens" is seriously impaired. Let us hope the reports are only iconoclastic inventions!—*Truth*.

WHY are Jesus and John the Baptist like *b* and *a* in the binomial theorem?—One must increase, the other decrease.

MISTRESS.—You tell me you *have* heard of Christmas.

Servant.—Ou ay.

Mistress.—And you cannot say why we should hold it sacred?

Servant.—Na, mem.

Mistress.—Our Lord and Savior was born on that day. Did you never hear of Easter?

Servant.—Na, niver.

Mistress.—Terrible! Can you think of no reason why we should hold Easter sacred?

Servant.—May be, it be the *De'il's* birthday. [Collapse of instructress].

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