

# 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. 19.]

MAY 13, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

## INTERVIEWS WITH THE PRISONERS.

THANKS to the tender mercies of the prosecutors, our brave friends, G. W. Foote and W. J. Ramsey, have been able, during the last two or three weeks, to look upon other faces than those of prison officials and criminals. In court and in prison they have been allowed to see friendly faces, all full of admiration and affection for them, to hear free voices and to grasp honest hands. This has been without a doubt a great joy to them. But it is only an oasis in the desert of their life, and even we, who are not suffering as they are, can picture the desolate feeling with which, this momentary taste of liberty vanishing, they have gone back to the prison-cells again.

Of all that has passed at the interviews afforded them and afforded us by the consideration of the Lord Chief Justice and taking place within the gaol-walls, we cannot speak here. We can only barely state that the kindness of the Governor of Holloway, and of all his subordinates with whom we came in contact, made these interviews of a nature far less painful than they might have been. But in regard to that which passed between our friends and their friends in the Court of Queen's Bench, on the days of the two trials, we are at liberty to speak.

And first, as to their bodily health. Both are fairly well. Each of them is or was a very powerful man. Anyone who remembers our friend Ramsey struggling into Exeter Hall when the bigots held their meeting against Charles Bradlaugh, and recollects how he came in like a sort of human comet, the nucleus of a streaming and screaming tail of white-faced Christians, will bear us out in the above statement, as far as he is concerned. And George William Foote's robust mind has lodgment in an equally robust body. But the close confinement is telling on even their vigorous frames. Active-lived men suddenly condemned to inertness must suffer, and they are suffering. They cannot be broken down in one or two months, though even in this brief time, they can and they do show traces of wear and tear. But, in twelve months? Their indomitable spirit has triumphed over bodily and mental torture thus far. But only one-sixth of the time meted out by Justice North to George Foote has elapsed, and five-sixths are yet to come.

For details. Ramsey's eye has been bad, but is now sound again. The greatest difficulty is in regard to the food. Meat once a week, to the wild extent of three ounces, plus three-quarters of an ounce of bacon on another hebdomadal occasion is not enough for two strong, able-bodied, able-minded men. The three-quarters of an ounce of bacon ought to have no bone in it. Some idea of the plucky spirit of our friends, plucky without a tinge of affectation or ostentation, may be formed from the fact that Ramsey told me, very seriously but with a merry twinkle in his eye, that on his release he intended to bring an action against the Home Secretary, as one day he had a palpable fragment of bone in his bacon. During the trial-time, better food was allowed them on the strong recommendation of the Lord Chief Justice, but, as far as we know, they are now on the old rations once more. These rations both of them find

very difficult to swallow. George Foote told me that, knowing how essential it was that food should be taken, for health's and for the cause's sake, he had held his throat with the hand to keep the nauseous food down.

They do not forget us, any more than we forget them. Sunday night they know, by the clock of prison regulations, when the friends are leaving the Hall of Science, and their thoughts and longings and resolves go out to us then. Nor do they forget that in many another town besides London, at the hour of eight on Sunday, hundreds of men and women are passing from Freethought meetings homewards, and are thinking of the three prisoners in Holloway Gaol.

Do not let us forget that there are three. Truly, one of them is younger than the other two, has not made their name, has not come so prominently before the public, and, let us remember, has not seen friends, nor had the ambiguous luxury of appearing in custody before the Court of Queen's Bench on several different days. When the names of Foote and Ramsey are remembered by the historian of the future, and are blessed by the free children of that future, whose freedom they in part will have achieved, that of Henry Kemp must not and will not be forgotten.

The most noticeable thing about both our friends is their cheerfulness. No time is lost in weeping and wailing. Clear-headed, prompt, they discuss business matters as easily and calmly as if they were free. All the anxiety that they display is about others, not themselves. Their two chief concerns, after the home folk, are Messrs. Wheeler and Kemp. Everything must be done that is right for these. The paper and the magazine are much in their thoughts, but we believe their minds are at rest on this score. They know that the Freethought Party will not let them die.

It was a joy to see them eating on each day of the trials—square meals. The first of these was the first they had eaten for five weeks. To many the knowledge of the manner of life and manner of food has come as a surprise. Even Lord Coleridge appeared to be in the dark as to the treatment they were receiving. And not a few of those who have written most bitterly are shocked to find that the men they have denounced are suffering as if they were common felons. To ourselves, this is in one sense a minor matter. The punishment is the iniquity, rather than the manner of it. But those who are thus shocked at the extent rather than at the fact of the penalty, ought, at least, to have ascertained the nature of the penalty ere they approved it.

No confidence is betrayed in stating that the solitary confinement is for twenty-three hours a day, that the one hour of mockery of freedom is spent in the company of the dregs of our social life, that the dress is convict dress, brown coat, brown cap, check shirt, a blue stripe on the left arm, a numbered label on the breast of each; that they have been picking fibre and, for a luxury, mending shoes, that their books have been the Bible and after the first month a Colenso's arithmetic, out of which George Foote has worked countless sums.

During the trial-time other books were allowed, and it must have been a great delight to them to read Matthew

Arnold, Huxley and Swinburne, instead of Moses and the Prophets. We shall even treasure as sacred the officially-stamped paper on which came the list of books they required for their defence.

But all that is over, and they are gone back to their loneliness. No friend, no book can cheer them. Only the dull monotony of prison life, hateful, irksome. If only our good wishes could pierce the solid prison wall! If only they knew for verity, as they know by surmise, how we admire them, honor them, love them—how many men and women all through England are weeping for them the tears they are too brave to shed—how many voices are adding their appeal to the outcry at the injustice of the sentence and are pleading for their release!

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.

### GOD'S INHUMANITY.

To speak of inhumanity as a characteristic of something other than human, may seem a sort of paradox to the pious and too simple-minded Christian. But to the Atheist, accustomed to "call a spade a spade," nurtured in the full free light of the religion of humanity, the term is admissible. Is it blasphemy in me to condemn god's inhumanity, placed as I am, minus a god, with no report of one save that which terrorised me when I was a child? Man is to me the first, the highest in the knowable world. All else than man is less than human. That which is less than man in the scale of existence, with no claim to a value equal to that of man may be worthy of his approval, his praise, his love, his care. But that which, while claiming equality with him is yet sunk below his level, and opposed in sentiment and action to the loftier ideals of his nature, is less than man, is inhuman. In the days before my Atheism I knew no god save Jehovah, the god of a barbarous race, and him I now deny. Brain and heart feel repulsion when I picture him, who was held up to my child-sense as immeasurably loftier than man, falling in maturer thought so far below those men standing in the vanguard of humanity, and filling the place of gods to me.

I CALL YOUR GOD INHUMAN.

Tell me not with upturned eyes of *his* love for you and for me. Tell me not of *his* mighty name traced out upon the ocean. Tell me not of *his* finger-touches on mountain-brook and flower. Tell me not in canting phrase, of *his* pathway in the clouds. Tell me not of the glittering gems *he* has scattered in far-off skies. This is the god you have made to yourselves and dubbed him truth and love! This is the noble and lovable god of the noble and lovable Paine! I have no knowledge of that god. I cannot see him in the wonderful and beautiful around me. I cannot hear his voice and footsteps on the wind. Who have lost the dark, grim god of boyhood, I, with my thinking fellows, dare to laugh at the old dead myth, but

I DARE NOT MAKE ANOTHER.

Yet suppose I assume your god's existence; assume the account I have of him is his or has his sanction; assume he made the world and called it good; assume he is all-wise, all-powerful; that the forces of nature are under his

control; assume he rules and plans and governs all; assume his "mighty arm" and "outstretched hand," whatever these may mean, can stay the winds and still the waves and damp to death destroying flames; assume his hand can stop the thunderbolt, avert the lightning, prop the tottering avalanche, hold back the blighting breath of pestilence, throw up the assassin's hand and slay famine; assume his will can water the cracking earth, or stem the onward-sweep of clouds; assume his hand can hold up the bridge that is falling, or stop the shrieking engine. Surely he who made the world can do all this, he who fills immensity, whose very will can

"Clutch a planet in its wandering course  
And swing it to its orbit."

If you say I assume too much, Christian, you are the Infidel. If you say I assume no other than the truth, I reply the over-burdened world is groaning beneath the awful weight of  
GOD'S INHUMANITY TO MAN.

You tell me this is a probationary state; that there is another world where wrongs will be righted and sufferings rewarded. Can harps and crowns and songs and palms and never-broken laziness, reward me for one galling day of suffering here?

The songs of human poets serve to soothe the chafings of our sorrow here. But will eternal "hallelujahs" repay me for the loss of my firstborn boy who died in cruel agonies; for the loss of the infant who never lived to learn the art of speech and never could do wrong, who never heard the name of god, and knew no saving Christ?

What will heaven's eternal rest be to the warrior of progress, who dealt hard blows on the pachydermatous hide of cant and wrong?

Was the tempting and cursing of the primal pair in Eden less or more than human? If myriads of people have suffered through two weak creatures yielding to the tempting trap laid by a god and fruit-baited, and if the grand and noble lives that suffer now be suffering for a fault not theirs, is this more or less than human? You tell me he provided a remedy; that Jesus died. So have died many better men who might have made less indifferent gods, and yet the world is suffering, and the thorns are only taken from the path towards the future by men who live apart from gods and saving christs.

In all the barbarous recital of your fettering book, god's inhumanity to man is the pith and marrow, and cheek by jowl with this goes, if we assume the deity of Jesus, the crowning unlovable act, the fall of a father's heavy hand upon his co-equal son,

GOD'S INHUMANITY TO GOD.

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

### ARRIVAL OF THE COBRA IN EDEN.

A TERRIBLE TRAGEDY.

Now it came to pass that the penny dip having disappeared from view, and the first faint beams of the Brush-light becoming visible on the horizon, the lady of Eden was intent upon preparing Adam's breakfast coffee, whilst the gentleman reclining under the shade of a Upas, was reading an early copy of the *Freethinker*. And lo! a visitor might have been descried advancing in dignified crectness towards the happy pair.

Raising his hood in token of respect to the lady, who invited him to a seat on the garden-roller, he indulged in the small talk of primæval times. Observing the luscious fruit of the tree of knowledge, he asked the lady to gather some for herself and for him. To this the lady replied: "We may eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden excepting that to which you have taken a fancy; the proprietor of the garden has told us that on the day in which we shall taste thereof, he will hang us without judge or jury."

And the Cobra, now lifting his hood in surprise, said: "Stuff! ye shall not surely die. Behold now, I will put you up to a wrinkle. The proprietor knows that if ye eat and digest that fruit ye will be as wise as himself, and he cannot stand competition. Take my advice and make an apple-dumpling for the family dinner."

And the lady arose and did even as the Cobra had suggested; and behold Adam was overjoyed at finding that his wife really understood something about cookery. But even as they swallowed the last piece of apple-dumpling, their

eyes were opened, and they saw that they as well as the table were naked.

The lady fled in terror to the nearest fig-tree, plucked some of its leaves, tore a thorn from a gooseberry-bush, plucked from her head some hair for thread, and made for herself and Adam two lovely aprons, the remains of which may now be seen in a glass case in the Vatican at Rome.

And it came to pass as they were walking up and down the garden, proudly surveying their new uniforms, that they heard the voice of the proprietor of the garden, as he took his evening walk after his siesta in the heat of the day. "Adam, where art thou?"

And Adam answered: "We are shirtless and shiftless, and have hidden ourselves."

"Hast thou eaten of that apple-dumpling I saw thy wife making?"

"The lady thou didst manufacture for me, gave it me and I did eat."

Then the proprietor said unto the lady: "What hast thou done?"

"The Cobra put me up to a wrinkle and I cooked."

Then the proprietor spoke to the Cobra, saying: "Cursed art thou above all cattle, thou meddlesome muddler; upon thy belly shalt thou trot for the remainder of thy days." And to the woman he said: "I will greatly increase thy sorrow and trouble; in misery and wretchedness shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be a bond-slave unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee!"

And to Adam he said: "Cursed be the ground for thy sake; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth, and by the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, and from thy toil and labor shall the kings and the priesthood, and the aristocracy (whom I will raise up) live luxuriously in honor and glory, for I am a just and beneficent being, and will stand no nonsense in my garden."

Then the Cobra put on his hood and departed, whilst Adam and his wife hung down their heads in terror, and were stricken with amazement.

WILLIAM DE CARLE.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S PARADISE.

THE glowing colors in which the future abode of the faithful is painted need not be recapitulated here. All this has been dinned into our ears ever since childhood; and I for one must frankly confess I am about as wise as ever I was at the advanced age of four or five.

How many orthodox Christians are really clear as to what the heaven for which they strive is to be like? They will tell you it is a place of infinite bliss (which is of course a matter of taste) where no sin can enter (do they exclude card-playing and late suppers?) and where we are to spend day and night singing the eternal praises of the most high. But here the tale ends, and we are prohibited from inquiring further as to the special enjoyments and privileges we are to expect up above.

We will take advantage of the Freethinker's license, and examine a little the habitation into which the just and good (according to Christian ideas) are comfortably pitchforked after their demise, and no questions asked.

The first point arises: Are we to retake our earthly forms when rising on the great judgment day? Or are we to assume some other form at the present moment unknown to us? Or are we to have no form at all, but wander about like true "shades," invisible to ourselves and to one another? Let us consider.

Suppose we regain the features with which we died. In that case, the endless diversity of human visage will be reproduced. We shall see faces beautiful as day, together with the naturally deformed and distorted countenances we are constantly meeting down below. Sparkling eyes, exquisite limbs, and clustering hair, will intermingle with bent backs, maimed bodies and bald pates. But then, if we retain our sense of sight or at least our faculty of distinction, shall we not remark the difference between the old woman and the young girl, the intelligent European and the ugly negro? If so, facial charms will captivate the two sexes as before. "Love's young Dream" will become the order of the day, for we shall have plenty of leisure between the hymns to cast sheep's-eyes and interchange significant whispers, and heaven will be filled, in the end, with the same complement of blighted lovers, aesthetic damsels, and frumpish old maids.

Impossible! is the indignant cry of our astute ecclesiastics, who *never* make a mistake. Under such circumstances—riches being unknown, as of course they must be—the ugly would stand at a disadvantage with their handsomer companions, which is incompatible with a heaven of perfect equality. Clearly then we must all appear the same to each other. The logical sequence is unmistakable. We can have no perception of *personal* beauty.

And what of the mental qualities, a matter of infinitely greater importance? The answer is simple. *They cannot exist.* The repeated assertion that "before god all men are equal," arbitrarily precludes any possibility of mental as of physical superiority. In this unmatchable heaven, the immortal Shakespeare will be undistinguishable from the common murderer, who, condemned to the gallows, confesses and repents of his crimes, and is without delay wafted into the presence of the blessed.

At the same time, the sentiment of *remorse* being inadmissible in the celestial regions, we must for the convenience of these latter gentry (remember we shall all be treated with equal impartiality), lose every remembrance of our former earthly existence—for can the merciless extortioner, mindful of his former misdeeds, confront the widow and orphans he has systematically plundered and reduced to beggary; and can the general face, without shame and confusion, the thousands of poor soldiers he has without compunction sacrificed, in order to gain some useless victory whereby he might be extolled and lauded to the skies?

Again, how is our happiness possible (unless every feeling but that of callous, all-pervading selfishness is extinguished) were we to miss some dear friend, some one we loved and honored, and remember how, less fortunate than ourselves, he was cut off without time for repentance and thrust into that fiery hell of weeping and gnashing of teeth? Fancy yourself bowing before the loathsome deity, who could conceive and execute the fiendish idea of immortalising myriads of our fellow-creatures for the mere sake of gloating over their unspeakable misery. There is no alternative but to forget our past history, our former attachments, everything but the blank meaningless present. We should even fail to recognise those of our friends and relations in heaven like ourselves, for those peculiar characteristics which rendered them dear to us would have vanished when they were metamorphosed into immortals, the very image and counterpart of the millions of other immortals. Then the young wife who expires in her husband's arms with a fond hope that they may meet again as man and wife in heaven, is cheated in her expectations. Brother and sister, father and child, must be strangers to one another, and the sweet promise of future reunion turn out after all but a vile mockery, a wretched jugglery of words. We do meet, but how! Spare me such *Wiedersehen*. Thus incapable of friendship, love, and every sentiment good or bad, we are left to wander aimlessly through space, ignorant of our past lives, our present whereabouts, our own names and our own identity. What a consummation!

Truly, if there were any man against whom I bore exceptional malice, I would pray nightly for the "salvation" of that man's soul!

SANS BARBE.

(To be continued.)

THE PRIEST.—These are, indeed, various circumstances incidental to the present stage of civilisation, which still preserve to these superstitious men a certain share of their former power. But there can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that the days of that power are numbered. And when their reign is brought to a final close, there will then for the first time be allowed to proceed without interruption the successive epochs of that moral and intellectual development, which we have every right to suppose will at length conduct the human race to a state of happiness and virtue, which a fond imagination loves to ascribe to that primitive condition of man, of the innocence and simplicity of which we, however, have no better evidence than what is to be found in the traditions of the theologian, and in the dreams of the poet.—*Henry Thomas Buckle*, "Miscellaneous and Posthumous Works," vol. i, p. 250; 1872.

IBID.—Doctrines being made the bond of union of a powerful body of men, whose only legal title to the enjoyment of wealth, honor, and influence is adherence to those doctrines, there must of necessity exist a bitter hostility against every man who shakes the blind confidence of the multitude in the supposed sacredness of those doctrines.—*Rev. Blanco White*, "The Life of J. B. White, written by himself," vol. ii, p. 114; 1845.

## TURKISH BATHS AND CHRISTIAN CLEANING.

SCENE.—A Turkish Bath in this most Christian land.

Enter a member of the Salvation army. Collapse of all the attendants. Never saw such a sight before. Member unclothes. Second collapse of attendants. Never saw such a sight before. Proprietor sends out for fresh supply of brushes and towels—thinks of advertising for more assistants—has a nightmare of next quarter's water-rate.

*Several hours later.*

Salvationist just beginning to look dingy. He addresses the Shampooer, in gasps:—

"Young man, aren't you proud?"

"Not a bit. The smallest gratu——."

(Hastily) "No, I don't mean that. Aren't you proud of being like Jesus?"

"What?"

"Yes, dear fellow-sinner. You wash the body. He washes the soul. You cleanse from earthly stains, he from 'eavenly. You use water. He uses blood. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin and shampooing after a temperature of 200° cleanses from all dirt."

"I like him? Oh, no! Any fellow's blood make any fellow clean? In the language of my profession—Sham! Pooh!"

## FOR EVER WITH THE LORD.

For ever with the lord  
I have no wish to be;  
I've no desire to wear a crown  
Through all eternity.  
I have no wish to dwell  
With Christ the lamb of god;  
Eternal rest is all I want  
When underneath the sod.

I do not wish to wear  
A robe of spotless white,  
Nor dwell with beasts all full of eyes,  
Who rest not day and night.  
An Atheist I am,  
And have no cause to fear;  
I want no home beyond the skies—  
My only heaven is here.

For ever with the lord!  
What happiness! what joy!  
To dwell with men like Abraham,  
And David and Lefroy;  
And other friends of god,  
From Adam to Guiteau—  
I'd rather be with men like Mill,  
Although he's gone below.

For ever with the lord!  
What happiness untold!—  
To look from heaven down to hell,  
And evermore behold  
Our good but sceptic friends  
We always loved so well,  
Writhing in pain and misery  
Down in the depths of hell.

Away then with the creed  
Of superstitious fear.  
Let each Freethinker do his best  
To stay its wild career.  
And each one while on earth  
Will meet with his reward,  
And have no wish to dwell in heaven  
For ever with the lord.

S. J. BELLCHAMBERS.

## ESAU, ISHMAEL, S'ATAN.

THREE characters wrongly estimated in the past and only gradually rising to the true height of appreciation to-day.

Esau was cheated by his brother Jacob, rejected by his father Isaac, and is respected by all people of decent feeling to-day.

Ishmael was ousted for the sake of his brother Isaac, was rejected by his father Abraham, and founded the great Arab race, our guides in early science.

Satan was dispossessed for Jesus' sake, was cast out of heaven by his father, and introduced mankind to the tree of knowledge.

## ACID DROPS.

STAGES through which god's naming goes. Jehovah—Yahveh—Yahoo—Yah! The last is the most modern way in which god is mentioned.

A MAN named Godfrey, who was apprehended at Swansea, where he was an active member of the Salvation Army, being known as "Lieutenant Baker," has at Bradford been committed to prison for deserting his wife and family. The "General," however, persists that no officer is criminal.

THE attention of Mr. Newdegate, Sir H. Tyler, Justice North, and other orthodox Christians, is called to portions of the speech of Mr. G. C. Whiteley, at Cannon Street Hotel, on disestablishment. Speaking of a Bill on this subject he said: "They had been approaching the citadel for years, now it was time they made the attack. He knew there were some who were waiting, expecting disintegration from within, or that the walls would fall on the blast of a trumpet." And then he blasphemously said: "This Jericho policy would not do in the nineteenth century." Cheers and laughter greeted this portion. Is this how Christians are treating the former exploits of their god? Are his doughty deeds, and those of his followers who blew the loud blasts, to be simply used for the amusement of his followers to-day? Observe the jeering tone of the remark that the policy of getting god to help men won't do in the nineteenth century. Such an admission is a direct implication that god has not kept pace with Evolution, but has become so weak that his believers would rather shift for themselves.

"SIR HENRY CROMWELL was twice married, and the death of his second wife, in 1592, was the occasion of proceedings for witchcraft, which form a significant indication of the condition of public opinion on the very threshold of the great puritan revolution. Some peculiarities of the poor lady's illness aroused suspicion of evil spirits at work. The doctors and attendants could not understand the symptoms, which were not in accordance with the legitimate course of disease, and therefore must needs put them down to preternatural influence. Suspicion fell on one John Sumwell, with his wife and his daughter Alice. They were all three lodged in gaol, and the mother, broken down by misery, confessed impossible guilt. According to the law, the property of the condemned wretches was forfeited to the lord of the manor, and Sir Henry founded with it a lectureship in the parish church for the delivery of an annual sermon against witchcraft. The vigorous survival of so cruel a superstition, at a time when the opposing forces of political light and darkness were being silently marshalled for a deadly struggle, should be a warning against a thoughtless use of nineteenth-century standards in judging people of these days. Is the sermon still preached? If not what is done with the money?"

## REVIEWS.

*Martyrdom and Servetus.* By the Rev. HERBERT V. MILLS, Minister of the Free Christian Church, Colne.

A MAGNIFICENT piece of outspokenness by a Christian against the recent sentences for blasphemy. We quote:—"I believe blasphemy to be as impossible and as absurd as the charge of witchcraft. To stigmatise as a blasphemer every man who opposes the established and popular religion of the day, is to make the chief merit of all great lives, blasphemy. If this is blasphemy, then Christ was chief amongst blasphemers. . . . Their charge is 'blasphemy,' their imprisonment is for 'blasphemy.' That, and nothing else. And if we take anything else into consideration we shall forget our duty." The pamphlet, that ought to be read for its remarkable account of Servetus, and its bold denunciation of Calvin, as well as for its noble pleading for freedom's sake, is published by R. Hyde and Sons, *Times* Office, Colne.

A Unitarian gentleman has sent us one hundred copies of the above pamphlet for the benefit of the Prisoners' Aid Fund. One copy can be sent post free for 1½d. in stamps.

*Blasphemy* (an appeal to clergy and people). By the Rev. THOMAS HANCOCK.

ANOTHER excellent and timely protest by a Christian against the persecution of us who are not Christians by the Tylers and Giffards, pseudo-Christians. We are not clergy. But we are people, and we ought all to read this appeal.

A LITTLE fellow, whose brother had died, could not swallow the parental assurance that god would take Johnny out of the ugly black box in the terrible hole, lying night and day in the cemetery outside the town. "He has no tools," cried the boy. Alas! god has too many tools only too likely to do his dirty work. Two lovely examples are Newdegate and Tyler.

## 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, Now Ready in one pamphlet, price Sixpence. It contains 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 in the Hall of Science, Old Street, City Road, on Sunday, May 13th, at 7.30—subject, "Freedom in England!"

## CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

RECEIVED.—R. J. Smith, Basford, F. W. H., J. A. Butler, John Smith, W. T. S., Southern, R. Grange, C. Hughes, R. Louis Cockbain, Thomas Lane, C. J., M. H. Banton.

F. H.—I should think one's own was the easiest language to learn. One has so much more practice at it. Next to that, we think German is most easy, as most closely allied to English.

J. BROTHERTON has Nos. 9, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, Vol. I.; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, Vol. II. of the *Freethinker* to dispose of. Half the proceeds to go to the Prisoners' Aid Fund. Who bids?

H. WEBSTER.—It is the usual form. We have now a large number of them.

H. TRICKE.—Secularism is the working for earth and man only. RECEIVED memorial with twenty-seven signatures from Donald MacRae.

WARRINGTON.—Thanks for money. We should be glad if you could combine your goodness in this way, with the taking your two dozen *Freethinkers* weekly. The support of the paper is only second in importance to that of the man.

RECEIVED memorial with thirty-three signatures from J. C. McCleery. J. H. ROGERS.—The degree is one not obtained by examination, and as far as our information goes is a purchased one.

J. H. R. has a copy of the *Freethinker* of May 28th, 1882 (one of the prosecuted numbers), and will sell it for the benefit of the Fund.

A. B. C.—Excellent, but ancient.

A. SWINNEY.—Too long.

J. GAULDING.—No one is more conscious than Lord Randolph Churchill of the disgraceful antecedents of his family. He is trying to keep up the family reputation, not unsuccessfully.

MEMORIAL received from John Alexander, 89 Kingsley Road, Maidstone, with twenty signatures.

THOMAS CATLEY.—Glad to hear from you again.

M. H. BUNTON.—You are not troublesome. You are most useful to us in our work.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Thinker—Herald of Health—Truthseeker.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THE first number of the *Liberal*, a weekly democratic organ, promises well. It is very outspoken and yet never passes the limits of fair and decent criticism.

OUR excellent monthly contemporary the *Republican*, keeps up its level of thoughtful and yet humorous writing, and is this month of especial interest as containing a portrait and biography of William James Ramsey, imprisoned for blasphemy. In noticing this periodical we feel that have written a Contemporary Review.

EVEN unco' guid Scotland is shocked at the torture of our friends. The *Glasgow Evening Gazette* has a letter signed "A Member of the U. P. Kirk," and containing this sentence: "I think it monstrous that any honest man—whatever his opinions may be—should be dragged from his home and friends, shut up in gaol, and fed on coarse food, which can

only be taken by those accustomed to it; and that this should be done in the name and for the sake of Christianity is lamentable to think of." With this honest man's church it will be more UP than ever, the longer our friends are in prison.

THE *Nottingham Guardian* says: "As we regretted the beginning of these prosecutions, so we regretted that a judge could be found to make them the occasion for such remarks, and for such a sentence as came from the mouth of Mr. Justice North. Not only is the prosecution abandoned, but the sentence in the old one is, we sincerely hope, in way of being revised, for the Home Secretary is inquiring into the health of the prisoners." This is the paper that spoke of Mr. Foote as "a vulgar ruffian," a few weeks back.

To be noticed in papers specially devoted to some particular order of thought or of thoughtlessness is a great argument that you have made your mark. The *Sportsman* of Saturday last has two references to Mr. Foote. In the Looker-on's notes we read "That the libel defence is clever; that there is no love lost between the judges." The libel defence is that of the editor of this paper. The judges are Lord Coleridge and Mr. Justice North.

FREETHINKERS living in Holloway or its neighborhood, are earnestly requested to attend the Freethinker's Hall 48 Alsen Road, Holloway, on Sunday evenings at 7.30. Lectures are given every week. If only for the reason that our friends are imprisoned in Holloway Gaol, Holloway men and women should attend. It is a narrow-way that leads to eternal life. Let it be a hollow-way that leads to the better temporal life of man.

THE Affirmation Bill is rejected by a majority of three. And yet Mr. Bradlaugh will sit and vote in the House of Commons, or a good many thousand men "will know the reason why."

## SKELETON SERMON.—V.

"The Lord is a man of war." Parallel passage; Prince of Peace, *alias* Christ one-third of the Lord.

Firstly.—The lesson to be learnt.—Fight, annex other countries. Justify propagation of Christianity by the sword. Origin of Jingoism lost in the mists of the Pentateuch.

Secondly.—God's nature.—Man of war. Ironclad. Hardness of heart. Getting rusty. Early rustiness when he ordered murder of women and children (1 Sam. xv., 3,) or of lower animals (Ex. ix., 3-6). Connexion between holy ghost as part of a man of war and holy stoning ship's decks. For holy stoning see Numbers xv., 35, 36.

Thirdly.—Application to modern life.—Consistency of members of Peace Society (the virtue, not the burglar). Explanation of fondness of House of Lords for wars. The lord is a man of war. Topical reference to Lord Wolseley, Salvation Army, War Cry.

Fourthly.—Personal application.—Lord, man of war. Let us all strive to be man of war's men. Join navy. Let each become a-sailor (of Christianity). Reason why Christians are so often charged for a-salt.

## SKELETON SERMON.—VI.

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the lord god make coats of skin and clothe them."—Genesis iii., 21.

Introduction.—God's providence . . . Coats provided as soon as they knew they were naked. Friend in need.

Head I.—Dignity of labor. Nine tailors make a man. No false pride in god.

Head II.—God's use of means. Might have made good coats of nothing as well as of skin. Law of parsimony excludes unnecessary miracles. No mere display.

Head III.—God's responsibility. Might have kept them ignorant of nakedness, therefore morally bound to clothe them. Consider consequences. Utilitarianism.

## SKELETON SERMON.—VII.

"Meddle not with them that are given to change." Proverbs xxiv., 21.

Introduction.—Avoid carnal prejudices. . . Aspirations for improvement misleading. . . Human reason a divinely contrived trap.

I.—Men should have faith. . . Text does not condemn all change, but only human effort. . . Necessary changes will come in god's providence. . . Be patient.

II.—Avoid even appearance of evil. . . . Be not content (e.g.) with keeping out of politics, but do not even speak to politicians. Lose no chance of counteracting Radicalism.

III.—Changes are reflexions on ancestors. . . . Honor father and mother. . . . Whatever is, is right.

#### PRISONERS' AID FUND.

For the support of the families of the men now in gaol, for the protection of their interests, and for the aid of any others who may be in similar case; any balance to be used in the discretion of the Executive.

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

PERSECUTION.—Persecution has its origin *morally* in the disposition of man to domineer over his fellow creatures; *intellectually* in the assumption that one's own opinions are infallibly correct. We know very well how children are apt to behave when arguing some question of no great consequence. Their little passions warming with the discussion, they pass from argument to abuse, they call each other hard names, and at last they begin to pound each other. Now, the spirit which prompts a child to pound his companion who resists him in argument is identical with the spirit which prompts a man to calumniate, torture, burn, or otherwise put down and injure his neighbor who refuses to reverence the things which he himself deems sacred.—*Professor John Fiske, "North American Review,"* p. 12; January, 1881.

#### A PARSON'S FAITH IN GRACE.

A FEW days ago a minister on one of the Western roads sat down to dinner at a station restaurant, and, bending over his plate, murmured a silent grace.

"Always do that?" inquired a rough-looking specimen who sat beside him.

"Yes, my friend," replied the dominie; "I never miss returning thanks to the giver of all mercies. You don't know how much good it does."

"Does it do the grub any good?" asked the stranger, becoming interested. "If it was going to do any good at all I should wish it to commence with the grub."

"It certainly does," returned the parson, earnestly, hoping to make a convert.

"Think that piece of bootleg has been benefited?" and he pointed at the dominie's dish.

"I think so," said the preacher, sincerely; "I think there is no doubt about it."

"And is it a thing you can make work right straight along, or is there a limit to the game?"

"It never fails," persisted the minister, who had an especially nice steak before him.

"Then!" exclaimed the stranger, grasping the parson's plate and substituting his own dish of doughnuts and beans, "you pray this business of mine up to a square meal, while I get away with the grub already sanctified. Go it stranger! don't leave off a lick on my account, and if you make the raffle you can bet your eternal fortune is made right on the line of this road! And any man what can tone a bean dinner up to a satisfying meal can't go broke in this country, not while the raw material holds out and my mouth is in order!"

But the parson finished the beans and doughnuts in silence, and the stranger wrapped up the "sanctified grub" with the further suggestion that if the dominie missed his grip on that plate there were plenty more beans in the cellar for him to practice on until he struck the combination.

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#### FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THE question was raised whether morality can exist without religion. Not much difficulty in answering this question will be felt by those who, from the conduct of these rude tribes, turn to that of Europeans during the Christian era, with its innumerable and immeasurable public and private atrocities, its bloody aggressive wars, its ceaseless family vendettas, its bandit barons and fighting bishops, its massacres political and religious, its torturings and its burnings, its all-pervading crime, from the assassinations of and by kings, down to the lyings and petty thefts of slaves and serfs. . . . Conversely, as these uncultivated tribes prove, no matter how devoid they are of religious beliefs, those who, generation after generation remaining unmolested, inflict no injury upon others, have their altruistic sentiments fostered by the sympathetic intercourse of a peaceful daily life, and display the resulting virtues. . . . What a pity these heathens cannot be induced to send missionaries among the Christians!—*Herbert Spencer, Contemporary Review, 1880.*

**CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY (!).**—A Christian may be also a philosopher. But to talk of Christian Philosophy is an abuse of language. Christian Philosophy means Christian Metaphysics, and that means the solution of metaphysical problems upon Christian principles. Now, Christian Principles are but the Doctrines revealed through Christ; revealed because inaccessible to Reason; revealed and accepted by Faith because Reason is utterly incompetent. So that metaphysical problems, the attempted solutions of which by Reason constitutes Philosophy, are solved by Faith; and yet the name of Philosophy is retained! But the very ground-work of Philosophy consists in reasoning, as the ground-work of Religion is Faith. There cannot, consequently, be a Religious Philosophy: it is a contradiction in terms. Philosophy may be occupied about the same problems as Religion; but it employs altogether different criteria, and depends on altogether different principles.—*George Henry Lewes*, "The History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte," Vol. I, p. 409; 1880.

**MIRACLES.**—If Christianity rests on the credibility of miracles, and eternal happiness or misery is contingent on faith in Christianity, how unfortunate for mankind that the great miracle of resurrection could not have been postponed to the nineteenth century when scientific investigation could fully attest the marvellous event, and some modern Lazarus, travelling as a public lecturer from city to city, could carry conviction to the minds of even the most sceptical.—"The Evolution of Christianity," p. 245; 1883.

**PRIESTS.**—The whole history of priesthoods, of whatever age, country, or religion, shows those bodies to be by their very nature and constitution utterly and irredeemably selfish, making their own aggrandisement, individually or corporately, the one object and aim of their policy.—*Edward Maitland*, "By and By," Vol. III, p. 5; 1873.

**ABUSE OF HERETICS.**—This is certain, that as bad things were said of the primitive Christians by Jews and heathens as ever were said of the ancient heretics by Catholics. Modern reformers have been treated just in the same manner. And no wonder, since there have, in every age, been men so attached to their present interest as to value the emoluments connected with old establishments more than truth. Such men will always represent every attempt towards a reformation, as proceeding from wicked and impious dispositions, and will cry down the promoters of it, as heretics, and as men of the most abandoned and evil principles.—*Dr. Nathaniel Lardner*, "History of Heretics," Works Vol. VIII, p. 308; 1838.

## PROFANE JOKES.

An old vendor of oysters got converted the other day. His first sermon was on Luke xix., "Thou art an austere man."

**MORE PROOFS OF EVOLUTION.**—The Israelites had to make their own tail—of bricks. They made it themselves. No outside power helped them. The Egyptians, even, didn't care a straw.

The Bible talks of hewers of wood and drawers of water (Joshua ix., 21). Our irreverent young man says that in his lodgings he has a ewer of water and a set of drawers of wood. The old book wrong again!

**PRONUNCIATION** is everything! A distinguished Anglican prelate—an eminent hater of Rome—was not a little upset on recently visiting some humble cottagers in his neighborhood, of whose orthodoxy he had hitherto felt secure, to behold, hanging on the wall, a highly-colored representation of the late venerable Pope on his knees before the Virgin, with the words "Ave Maria" in gold letters beneath.

"Hallo, my good woman," exclaimed the reformed divine; "what have you got there?"

"O, please, very reverend, Jenny bought it at the fair. I hope there's no 'arm."

"That depends. First tell me, do you clearly understand what it means?"

"Oh that do I."

"Then explain."

"Well, you see, very reverend, the old gentleman he's in love with the young lady; and small wonder, for she's as pretty as spring. But she, bless her, feels no way inclined to accept of him, with his white 'airs and his many years, and she's a tellin' him of some friend o' hers—who's most like a score or so more on in life—will suit him twice as well; and she says 'Have Mariar.'"

Mr. H. E. SMITH, whose letter to Mr. Taylor we published last week, has received the following reply:—

"22 Ashley Place, S.W., May 1st, 1883.

"Dear Sir,—I am requested by Mr. Taylor to say, in reply to your letter of the 28th ult., that he has with much pleasure done all that you desired.—With compliments, faithfully yours,

"J. B. GRANT.

## H E A V E N.

ONE Sabbath eve, while passing through a crowded thoroughfare (it was half past eight, and people were wending their way homeward from their respective places of superstitious worship), fancy struck me, and I mused; gazing in the passing faces I reflected. Gay maidens, grave husbands, merry wives, sighing lovers, coy sweethearts, all were there; some commenting on the text, others on the preacher, the church, and organ, Mrs. So-and-So's new bonnet, &c. How many, thought I, of this Christian crowd will gain admittance to the Christian heaven; and "what must it be to be there," mingling with that motley crowd of intellectual paupers and cringing cowards pacing the aurine floor amid a chorus of psalm-chanting cherubim, heavenly harps, and pedantical saints strolling on the lawn in front of the throne, walking carefully in dread of a "keep off the grass!" from god, or a "kick off the grass" from his son; sneaking behind a jasper pillar, to avoid meeting with a man whom you had wronged in this world; sitting in a corner moulting your feathers. By dint of great zeal you may be an assistant surgeon, or nurse to the St. Christ's Hospital for broken wings; perhaps apprenticed to the firm of God, Christ, Holy Ghost, and Co., Hellmakers, Fire and Brimstone Importers. "What must it be to be there." Driving down the central, street, drawn by the grays (grace) of God, calling at Smith's Harp and Lyre Store (plenty of liars in heaven) to get your harp tuned, or at Brown's Saints Crown and Diadem Factory to get a larger size crown (head having swelled, caused by the vacuum within), or if you have won a bet at a flying match, redeeming the pawned watch at the brokers. Looking over heaven's wall and seeing the sceptical and unbelieving scorners roasting in hell—enjoying the rich, spicy odor arising therefrom. "What must it be to be there." I thought of these things; and if heaven was the place prepared for the devil and his angels methinks I should try to be very good. If feather (ever I mean) I get taken there it will be against my will, and I shall try hard to resign. "Anywhere, anywhere, out of" that "world."

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