

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.

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APRIL 22, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

TRIAL OF MR. BRADLAUGH FOR BLASPHEMY.

FRIDAY, APRIL 13TH, 1883.

THE court much the same as on the Tuesday save for the presence of the two Miss Bradlaughs and a change of ladies on the judicial bench. The calling over the names of the jurors was finished by 10.40, despite the lateness of one of the twelve. The judge entering and shaking hands with the solitary lady, Mr. Avory rises to suggest that as Mr. Ramsey in giving evidence on Mr. Bradlaugh's case may criminate himself the prosecution should accept a verdict of acquittal in respect to him. The Lord Chief Justice did not see the necessity for this, as he himself would stop any questions other than those bearing on the simple question of the connexion or non-connexion of Mr. Bradlaugh with the *Freethinker*. Hereabouts the Bench was additionally supported by the advent of the lady visitant of the Tuesday. Mr. Bradlaugh began by checking the issues of the two papers that were in evidence. In the course of the contest upon this the Lord Chief Justice used the words: "I have not the slightest wish to cast doubt on the perfect good faith of Sir Hardinge Giffard and Mr. Maloney, but—" All the world knows the meaning of such a remarkable phrase as this.

At 11 exactly Mr. Bradlaugh began to address the jury. He explained the exact position of the Freethought Publishing Company and of Mr. Ramsey. The latter was manager of the Company, but had, further, a private business. Norrish was both servant of the Company and helped Ramsey. The latter as manager was not in any sense entitled to publish or to print, but only to sell for the Company. Sir Hardinge had promised to produce Norrish and had broken his promise; and the reason of this was that Norrish would have confirmed the defence of the defendant. In the partnership-deed the two active members of the Freethought Publishing Company bound themselves to publish nothing save by mutual consent. The *Freethinker* was published by Mr. Ramsey as private publisher, not in his capacity as manager to the Company. Reviewing the history of the *Freethinker*, he pointed out that up to the end of November, 1881, the Company had published the paper. Then followed comment on the difficulty to himself and Ramsey in using the latter as witness, and a vigorous denunciation of the real object of the prosecution as a political weapon against the defendant, ending in a scathing attack upon Mr. Maloney, the bankbook-inspector and barrister. The Company distinctly refused to publish the *Freethinker* in November, 1881. The counsel for the prosecution had stated that a change took place in the conduct of the Company in that month because of certain questions asked in the House of Commons. Of this he had given no evidence, and as to this Mr. Bradlaugh practically gave Sir Hardinge Giffard the lie direct. To this process, however, and to the very valid reasons for it, Sir Hardinge is now accustomed. Sir Henry Tyler, M.P. and director (not after the shareholders' own hearts) of companies with uncertainly distributed dividends, came in for some fraction of the castiga-

tion he deserves. The registration supposed to have been made on account of the imaginary questions in the House of Commons was really made because until the month of November no such registration was possible. An attempt on the part of Mr. Bradlaugh to read certain depositions was frustrated by the Lord Chief Justice, and led to an ingenious double on the part of the defendant, whereby he communicated to the jury all the facts he wished to communicate, and cast even Justice herself into hearty laughter at the device. The bank-book hunt was denounced as dishonest and dishonorable and Mr. Maloney was compared with a detective. This is rather hard lines on the detective. The pretence that the hunt was to settle the question as to the constitution of the Freethought Publishing Company was shown to be false. The signature book would have been enough for that, but the ledger and the returned-cheque book were also inspected. Returning to the charge, or charges, against Sir Henry Tyler, Mr. Bradlaugh made his neatest point. Speaking of the attack of the gallant baronet upon two ladies, to each of whom he applies the phrase of the Duke in "As You Like It"—"Thou art thy father's daughter, that's enough"—he reminded the jury that not a single Conservative had supported Sir Henry Tyler on that occasion. Not even Sir Hardinge Giffard had stayed, and—the junior counsel for the prosecution had not the honor of a seat in the House. The letter of Messrs. Batten was stigmatised as indecent and impudent. The catalogue of the Company was considered next. No attack had been made upon the catalogue as inaccurate, and that catalogue contained no reference to the *Freethinker*. A passing touch as to the *Whitehall Review, England*—or any other disreputable paper—set the Court, in every sense, a-laughing. The paragraph in the *National Reformer* as to the *Freethinker* was read in a light very different from that thrown upon it by Sir Hardinge Giffard. Then came a very good dramatic point. Fixing his eyes upon one unhappy jurymen he pictured the possibility of one of the excellent twelve, on the Tuesday evening, declaring that Mr. Bradlaugh must be guilty because he paid the rates for 28 Stonecutter Street. By a shrewd use of parallelism, he assumed that the Right Honorable W. H. Smith was sent to gaol because Shelley's poems were blasphemous and Mr. Smith paid the rates for 183 Strand. Sir Hardinge Giffard had promised to prove that Mr. Bradlaugh was constantly at 28 Stonecutter Street. This promise had shared the fate of the majority of Sir Hardinge's promises and been broken. The end of the address was occupied with denouncing the prosecution as part of a vindictive series of attacks upon himself.

Edward Whittle, armed with business-looking books, proved that he printed for Ramsey and the Company, and that the two accounts were entirely distinct; that the incriminated numbers of the *Freethinker* were printed by him for, and paid for by, Ramsey and Ramsey alone; that in November, 1881, a letter was sent by the Company declining to publish the paper. Mr. Whittle gave his evidence in chief very quietly and easily. Cross-examined he irritated Sir Hardinge Giffard by replying to one of his inquiries, "Yes, and you heard me say so." Sir Hardinge was very slow in his cross-examination, apparently for the reason

that Whittle was like Christ—"the Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." He was succeeded by his foreman as general corroborator. Charles Herbert affirmed after some little difficulty, resulting from the clerk handing him the form for religious objectors to the oath. He showed the independency of the two accounts. An inquiry of Sir Hardinge Giffard spoiled Mr. Herbert's chance of lunch. That gentleman had to take a cab instead of a meal, and fetch more big books. Then more slow cross-examination, and Mr. Bradlaugh decides not to call Foote or Ramsey, and Sir Hardinge by an incautious phrase alters that decision to his cost, as I think. George William Foote is called. Then comes a pretty quarrel, likely to be historical. At last Mr. Foote declares that an oath as an oath is not binding upon him. Mr. Bradlaugh asks two questions. Is your name George William Foote? Are you one of the defendants in this case? Upon this very slender examination in chief, baffled Sir Hardinge rises to cross-examine. Question No. 1: Were you the editor of the *Freethinker*?—I decline to answer. Then comes a wordy warfare between the judge and the counsel, and at last, under restrictions, the cross-examination continues. More Princes of this world and Christs, especially the latter.

Mrs. Annie Besant is then called. To her the invocation of the deity is nothing. Any promise is binding. The deed of partnership is read. The two women on the bench were greatly interested in the woman in the witness-box. The younger took furtive snatches of observation. The elder was more undisguisedly interested. I suppose they were titled ladies of high degree or else they would not have been where they were. But, very assuredly, their names, and perhaps the names of their husbands, will be forgotten when that of the woman at whom they gazed is not only historical but beloved. The examination by Mr. Bradlaugh was very telling, and that by Sir Hardinge scarcely less effective. "Why did you cease to publish it?" "Because it was illustrated," was the dry answer. The lengthy cross-examination and re-examination were followed by the calling of W. J. Ramsey. By this time Lord Coleridge was quite *au fait* at the dexterous form of the question requisite to meet the accurate views of atheists. Ramsey was very cool and gave Sir Hardinge Giffard, who was more than usually brutal, more than he received in the way of hard-hitting. Ramsey's evidence closed the case for the defence. It was now 3.30, and as the Lord Chief Justice was in some bodily ill-health, the Court rose. Rose literally. For when Lord Coleridge had risen from his seat and all of us were also erect, as in duty bound, a number of points had to be discussed, and they were discussed under the curious condition of everybody being on their legs. The trial of Mr. Bradlaugh was adjourned to the next day. That of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey was adjourned, at their request, until Tuesday, April 24th. The judge ordered that every facility should be given to both prisoners for the preparation of their defence, and when it was suggested that the two men already suffering were not needed on the morrow, the Lord Chief Justice, with a kindly smile, said, "Oh, they can come up." And thus was secured another day of break in the terrible monotony of prison life.

Saturday was the third day of the trial. Mr. Bradlaugh opened the day with a very clear speech on the evidence given the day before. Only twenty minutes were occupied by this speech. Sir Hardinge Giffard was in excellent acting form. His assumption of injured innocence was quite pathetic, and he has rarely done anything more ingenious than his dexterous turning the attention of the jury to the nature of the *Freethinker* and the similarity between Mr. Bradlaugh's case and that of a man upon whose premises nitro-glycerine was found. Reviewing the evidence piece by piece he then delivered himself of an appeal to the religious passions of the jury that he well knew would be far more effective than any argument addressed to their reason. This appeal was followed, inconsequently, by talk about the business books and by the giving of reasons for the non-production of Norrish. The reason was that the evidence was sufficient without him! At which some smiles were almost perceptible on the faces even of certain of the jury. At 10 minutes to 12 the Lord Chief Justice began his summing-up. The questions were (1) was the *Freethinker* blasphemous, (2) was Mr. Bradlaugh responsible for its publication? As to the first, no question could be that the

paper was blasphemous. Not on the ground often urged. Lord Coleridge held that an attack upon Christianity *per se* was not blasphemy. Were this so, no attack upon any legal arrangement in our country would be possible. Monarchy, primogeniture, the marriage laws are all on this showing, not to be attacked. In language of exquisite polish and voice of remarkable beauty, the Lord Chief Justice dealt with the immense difficulty attending upon a case where men known, strongly liked and disliked, are concerned. I have rarely heard utterances more dignified, more beautiful than the words in which all this was couched. This serene, stately man, with his calm, clear thought and calm, clear words, seemed as if hardly belonging to the hot turmoil of our nineteenth-century life. It was a positive relief to see him pause and raise a glass of some liquid to his lips. One had the satisfaction of knowing that he was human. Reference to the seventh section of the Newspaper Libels Act was made and to certain judgments of the late Lord Justice Lush, to make it wholly clear that it is necessary to prove actual, personal knowledge of the particular libel published, and that a mere general responsibility for the paper as a whole is not sufficient. Then with a very noble declaration of his own feeling as to the moral side of the question and a curiously touching half-regret that he had spoken with so much fervor, the Lord Chief Justice, with startling impressiveness, urged upon the jury the entire dismissal of all this from their minds and the concentration of all attention on the solely legal aspect of the question. The *prima facie* evidence against Mr. Bradlaugh was noted. Against it he had called certain witnesses, whose evidence Lord Coleridge reviewed in detail. Then he drew to an end with another reminder as to the essential distinction to be drawn between general attacks upon Christianity and attacks that might be called nuisances, and the further distinction between the mere general responsibility for a paper and the actual injunction to publish particular libels. The summing-up closed at 1.25.

At 2.15 we were all sitting or standing, as the Fates favored us, the Lord Chief Justice or England in his place. The jury returned for inquiry. They wanted to see the partnership-deed of the Freethought Publishing Company. His lordship handed them the document, expressed his desire to explain to them any points that wanted clearing up; reminded them once again, in terms most solemn, of the momentous consequences of their verdict, especially if it should be one of Guilty. Within a very few minutes of their renewed departure, they returned. At the foreman's decisive Not Guilty, a great shout broke from the gallery devoted to the public. It was natural, but it was not right. Whether when a great wrong is done outcry is a duty in a court of justice may, perhaps, be open to question. When justice is done and when a great victory is gained, no question can exist. Our duty then is dignified silence in a court of law. Lord Coleridge was justly angered. He partially rose from his seat and commanded the officers to bring before him any one thus offending again. Then the cheers of the crowd outside broke on our ears. Outside, cheering was right enough, and outside it was splendidly hearty. Crowds were in waiting to congratulate Mr. Bradlaugh on another of his victories over Sir Hardinge Giffard—they must be growing quite monotonous to Sir Hardinge. In the Court the congratulations were for the most part, quiet, firm grasps of the hand and "I am so glad." But the finest touch was in the words of the two men who were even then going straight back to prison. The first words of George William Foote and William James Ramsey to me were in each case, "I don't care a bit now how my case goes." And as they said this, for the first time in all the three days, tears were in their eyes. The men who had never flinched when they were attacked and condemned to imprisonment, gave way for a moment when their friend was safe. Brave hearts!

WHEN some centuries later, Christian priests sat in the seat of kings and wielded more than legal power, the orthodox instincts of Tertullian and Augustine demanded their legitimate satisfaction. Then came a time during which the sun was blotted out of heaven, and the unclean fungus of superstition spawned everywhere under the baneful atmosphere of religious terror. All unusual phenomena, comets, eclipses, pestilence, were taught to be judgments inflicted by an angry god, or plagues wrought by devils. The flood-gates were now opened, and the foul stream of cold-blooded and calm malignity could overspread the earth unchecked.—*Westminster Review*, 1865.

GIORDANO BRUNO.

O FIERY-SOULED and daring-hearted lord
Of all the martyrs of the whole wide world,
Thou by whose hands the banner was unfurled
By priests and despots utterly abhorred,
To which each true man consecrates his sword ;
Bruno, the flames that round thy body curled
After thy taunt was at thy tyrants hurled,
Gleam through the years and make thy name adored.
They could not fright thee with the Church's ban,
Dungeon nor torture could thy spirit tame,
Nor hell on earth wring from thee plaint or cry ;
No weeping woman or disciple came,
None shared thy seven-years' Gethsemane :
Alone thou stoodst against all men for man.

G. W. FOOTE.

BUSINESS ASPECT OF THE ATONEMENT.

It is not polite or safe to ignore an argument simply because it is crude and popular, and would not find a place in a serious treatise. A good example of this class regularly makes its appearance during free conversation on the subject of the Atonement. On the sceptical side it is argued that this transaction, were it not part of a religious creed, would meet with the spontaneous reprobation of all thinking men, and that no parallel to it can be found in human affairs. Then comes the popular retort that business cannot be carried on without credit and suretyship, and that a surety's payment of debts which he did not incur, is precisely parallel to the death of Christ for sins not his own. Shallow enough, no doubt and hardly worth the name of argument, but anyone who has had experience of popular discussion will recognise this as a fair specimen of what does duty for reasoning. In politics or business such aimlessness would not be tolerated, but in theology minds are generally slow to wake and readily lulled to sleep again. It is of course true, and indeed inevitable, that in human affairs there is much suffering on the part of the innocent. When a man becomes bankrupt innocently other persons share the ruin which overtakes him, while the fraudulent bankrupt often manages so that the innocent alone shall suffer. This being so, suretyship becomes a very useful precaution, but it is perfectly clear that if honest men could have their will, no surety would ever be involved in loss. However it occurs, the injury of the surety is looked upon with regret. Suppose a poor man unable to obtain a house without first providing security for the rent, finds himself at termday unable, owing to sheer misfortune, to meet his liability, or that a rogue who is under similar obligations, makes a moonlight flitting with the rent in his pocket—in either case it is obvious that something abnormal and regrettable has occurred. In both cases the surety would suffer in order to avoid what is considered a greater evil, viz., either a fraud upon the landlord, or the homelessness of the would-be tenant. How different is this from the supposed suretyship of the son of god! In that case there is no inevitable evil, for we are dealing with omnipotence. There is nothing abnormal or accidental, for nothing can be more deliberate and certain than the will of the supreme being. Yet we find the almighty deliberately exacting from his son as a kind of *ex post facto* surety, a debt which he might easily have collected from the true debtors. Thus, from Christ's point of view, the whole affair was a huge injustice and a terribly bad example to the nations of the earth. We waive the incidental absurdities which present themselves from other standpoints. It were to inquire too curiously to ask if it were an immortal who died. It would perhaps be somewhat demoralising to infer a theory of punishment, divine and therefore faultless, from the father's treatment of Jesus. Suffice it meantime to point out, that they profane the name of "business" who attempt to defend the Atonement as a business transaction. With all our tricks of trade we have not sunk so low as that.

W.

At a meeting of the New Commonwealth Club, Bethnal Green, on Friday, April 6th, a resolution was passed condemning the prosecution of the *Freethinker*, and urging the Home Secretary to remit the unexpired portion of the terms of imprisonment to which Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp have been sentenced.

HELL-PROOF.

DELIBERATELY and fearlessly I defy the Christian's hell and laugh blasphemously at the cruel, fiendish idea which has caused so much pain and misery in the world.

Freethinkers to a man are against the policy of dynamite and nitro-glycerine in this world and hell-fire and brimstone in the next. They detest those persons, whether numbered among men or gods, who, being unable to convince their opponents by argument or persuasion, seek to dissolve them into their original elements by a process approaching closely to spontaneous combustion.

Once I believed in the reality of hell; believed that the largest number of human beings were destined to suffer unutterable agony everlastingly in flames that were never quenched, in company with a gentleman in black, who acted as eternal stoker.

But some friends died whom I loved, and I could not bring my mind to believe that they had gone to hell, though I knew they neither believed in Jesus nor had been baptised; but I consoled myself with the thought that perhaps after all god might have mercy, and after a brief punishment let them join their friends in the land of angels, harps, and glory.

Soon, however, the light of freethought shed its lustre upon my mind, and I have since kept my eyes open to see if I could find some means of trampling out hell's cruel flames, or of discovering something by means of which man's soul might be rendered proof against god's scheme of eternal torture.

At last the remedy has come. My first thoughts were to take out a patent for it, to advertise my discovery in the *Christian World*, and consent to make it known to any reader who would send five shillings in stamps. Being a born philanthropist I soon decided to adopt a more generous course. "Ah," thought I, "the *Freethinker* is prosecuted just now, and Christians will be sure to be anxious to see what the wicked things are, that it is alleged have been—and still are—printed in its columns. Among the other wicked things why should not the recipe against hell-fire appear?" "I shall," I resolved, and forthwith I sat me down to write.

Why this quivering and shaking? and, anon, why this glow of pleasure? Am I indeed to be the savior of man kind? Yes, indeed! Tell it not in Gath, whisper it not in the ear of Justice North; but prate it about the streets of London and the provinces, that hell-fire may for ever be defied with impunity.

Give heed all ye who desire your soul's salvation, and to all who turn scornfully away, I say ye deserve the judgment. In black upon white this is the prescription against the burning flames of hell. Recently there has been discovered—it is not for me to say by whom—what is called the "Asbestos paint." Anything or anybody well coated with this paint persistently refuses to burn.

Some buildings were, a short time ago, made the subject of experiment. The one that was covered with the new paint successfully resisted the flames; the other was soon consumed to ashes. Now if man desires to be hell-proof he has only to cover his body or his soul, or both, with a good substantial coat of Asbestos paint, and he can defy hell, devils, gods, and the general army of theological quacks; and if he feels thankful for such important information, let him remember that he found it in the columns of the *Freethinker*, and that the doctor who advised the prescription was

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

PEARLS OF BLASPHEMY.

It is evidently that, strictly speaking, blasphemy can only be committed by a person who believes in the existence and in the attributes of the deity he impugns either by ridicule or by reasoning. An Atheist is wholly incapable of the crime. When he heaps epithets of abuse on the creator, or turns his attributes into ridicule, he is assailing or scoffing at an empty name—at a being whom he believes to have no existence. In like manner if a Deist, one who disbelieves in our savior being either the son of god or sent by god as his prophet upon earth, shall argue against his miracles, or ridicule his mission or his person, he commits no blasphemy; for he firmly believes that Christ was a man like himself, and that he derived no authority from the deity. Both the Atheist and the Deist are free from all guilt of blasphemy, that is, of all guilt towards the deity or towards

Christ.—Lord Brougham, "Men of Letters of the time of George III."

ON the one side, you have the Christian terror-stricken by the presence of an unbelief, which would take from him and his children faith in providence, hope of immortality, and even what he believes to be the basis of morality. On the other side, you have the Freethinker suffering injustice from that Christian panic; his argument answered by vituperation; his position that of a Lazarus, allowed only the crumbs fallen from the Christian's table. "Reconciliation!" shouts the Christian; "would you have me love a man who denies my god, turns my pearl of price to ashes, and saps the foundations of Christian order?" "Reconciliation!" cries the Freethinker; "how can I come to terms with a man who has his hand at my throat? So long as your god makes my honest thought a statutory offence, takes away my child, refuses me civil rights because I speak my truth, denying is the alternative of hating him. Withdraw thy hand from me, let not thy dread make me afraid; then call and I will answer!" There is more reason in this reply of the Freethinker than the Christian admits. . . . I do not call supernatural beliefs insane; there is a sense in which the influences of art are supernatural, but the fury of fanaticism against heresy, all attempts to answer argument with penalties are a kind of madness, none the less when there is method in it. In a rational mind it will inspire compassion for those who know not what they do, and a profound horror of the one thing that turns hearts to stone—superstition.—*Monsieur D. Conway*, "New Views of Natural Religion," No. 9 of "Lessons for the Day."

PURSuing the same thought to the Old Testament, I discerned there also no small sprinkling of grotesque or immoral miracles. A dead man is raised to life when his body by accident touches the bones of Elisha; as though Elisha had been a Romish saint, and his bones a sacred relic. Uzzah, when the ark was in danger of falling, puts out his hand to save it, and is struck dead for his impiety. Was this the judgment of the father of mercies and god of all comfort? What was I to make of god's anger with Abimelech (Gen. xx.), whose sole offence was having believed Abraham's lie, for which a miraculous barrenness was sent on all the females of Abimelech's tribe, and was bought off only by splendid presents to the favored deceiver. Or was it at all credible that the lying and fraudulent Jacob should have been so specially loved by god more than the rude animal Esau? Or could I any longer overlook the gross imagination of antiquity, which made Abraham and Jehovah dine on the same carnal food like Tantalus with the gods;—which fed Elijah by ravens, and set angels to bake cakes for him. Such is a specimen of the flood of difficulties which poured in through the great breach which the demoniacs had made in the credit of Biblical marvels.—*Professor F. W. Newman*, "Phases of Faith," 1881.

SOME of the prophets of the Old Testament presented symptoms which can hardly be interpreted as other than the effects of madness; certainly if they were not mad, they imitated very closely some of its most striking features. Jeremiah, under the influence of the prophetic spirit, procures a linen girdle and puts it around his loins. He then takes a long journey to the Euphrates to hide it there in the hole of a rock; returns, and again after many days takes another long journey to the same place to take the girdle out of the hole, when he finds it had begun to get rotten and to be good for nothing. Ezekiel takes a tile and portrays upon it the city of Jerusalem; then he lays siege to the city on the tile, builds a fort against it, and casts a mound against it, and sets a camp against it, and battering-rams against it round about it; then he takes an iron pan and sets it for a wall of iron between himself and the city, and lays siege to the pan as he had done to the tile, and for a long time he lies upon his left side before the tile, and then upon his right; he eats from time to time barley cakes which he had baked with cow's dung. The first command had been "Thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man;" but in consequence of his protest it was said, "So I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung and thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith." On another occasion he removed his household goods in the twilight by digging a hole through the wall of his house with his own hand, and carrying away some of his furniture on his own shoulders, in sight of some of the Jews who came to see the strange things he was doing. Isaiah loosed the sack-cloth from his loins, put off his shoes from his feet, stripped himself naked, and for a time walked, naked and barefoot, under the influence of the prophetic spirit. Hosea declared that he was commanded to take a wife of whoredom; and accordingly did so.—"Responsibility in Mental Disease."—*Henry Maudsley, M.D.*

ACID DROPS.

MR. JUSTICE NORTH has been transferred to the Chancery Division from the High Court of Justice. A significant comment on Mr. Justice North's recent method of dispensing—no, we omit the "with"—justice.

At the meeting of the Unitarian Association, Dr. Carpenter is reported to have "hoped that the council would not take steps against the punishment of indecency." This was in a debate upon brave Mr. Sharman's motion that a memorial to the Home Secretary asking the release of our friends should be promoted. Here is an instance of the very thing against which we protested recently. Dr. Carpenter has, doubtless, been misled by the use of the word "indecent." Our paper has been, and I hope, always will be, objectionable to bigoted Christians; but it never has been, and never will be, objectionable on grounds of morality or social decorum. We repeat that we leave to the Bible the horrible task of corrupting the mind of youth by obscenity.

At the same meeting the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed "thought the alteration of the law should be the first point." But Mr. Wicksteed is not in prison, nor has he dear friends there.

MESSRS. JOHNS AND WILLIAMS, agents of the Church Missionary Society, flog one girl to death's door and another beyond that portal. Earl Cairns defends the Church Missionary Society.

JAMES CAREY, whose name will ever be more infamous than Joe Brady's, was a member of a religious society and received the Holy Communion regularly.

MR. MONTEAGLE's letter of questions to the Archbishop of Canterbury has elicited the following reply:—

"Lambeth Palace, S.E., April 3rd, 1883.

"Sir,—I am directed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of vituperation couched under the form of questions, and bearing date the 2nd instant.—I remain, yours faithfully,

"(Signed) RANDALL T. DAVIDSON, *Chaplain.*

"Walter H. Monteagle, Esq."

A more honest answer would have been: "I have not time to answer your questions. Had I time, I have not the power to answer them in any way that would not be a disgrace alike to myself and to my religion."

SATURDAY'S *Evening News* is kind enough to go out of its way to give us an advertisement in these terms: "A scurrilous French pamphleteer, styling himself Leo Taxil, whose productions are of the *Freethinker* type, was yesterday condemned, for libelling two monastic orders, to pay 12,000*l.* damages, with costs, and to defray the expenses of the publication of the judgment, making in all about 20,000*l.*"

WHEN certain people fall out—we know the proverb. The Bishops and the Booth have fallen foul of each other. Birds have fallen low indeed, when the words "fallen fowl" can be used in connexion with these two, too busy B's.

RIGHT ONWARD.

RIGHT Onward! right onward! behind the works finished,

A few tired toilers have lain down to rest,

But forward the work seems untouched, undiminished;

There are waters to wade, there are big waves to breast;

There is fighting to do, there are foes to overcome;

But fight on in concord, and always remember

Each blow snaps a fetter from nations to come.

Right Onward! right onward! stay not for fond partings;

Lose not the fair hours by the graves of your dead;

Waste not your best nerve in fond sighings and startings;

March on in the track where brave thinkers have led.

Up, up with your arms and march on to the battle—

The day will be hot and the contest be long;

But while the darts drop and the dark missiles rattle,

Go on to the conquest with music and song.

Right Onward! right onward! your foes fill the passes;

Untruth and Injustice, Crime, Ignorance, Vice;

They lurk on the edge of the sloughs and morasses,

Dressed out in deluding and sombre device.

Turn not from the path to the past dead or dying,

There are flowers in the track Progress makes for her feet;

Ye may cull them and strew them as winged hours are flying,

But still be "Right Onward" your song loud and sweet.

Right Onward! right onward! the time is advancing—

The night shades are low'ring, the sun has gone down;

But still on the white road your armor be glancing,

And still throng recruits from each hamlet and town;

Oh! woe to the foe who would bar us from freedom;

Away with the tongue that forbids us to speak;

They who will not move on, hurl aside; never heed them—

While we battle on and fight for the weak.

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

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.

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

DR. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture in the Secular Institute, East Parade, Huddersfield:—at 11, "Freedom in England"—3, "The Pedigree of Man"—6.30, "The Right to Blaspheme." Sunday, April 22nd.

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.—W. Potherick, F. A. White, Henry Richards, Esq., M.P., Joe Phipps, Abaden, R. H., G. Leslie Mackenzie, S. J. Bell.

ANENAS.—Kindly repeat the question.

chambers, Edwin Brown, A. B. C., A. P.

R. ANDERSON.—To Home Secretary, with a note saying what it is. You are doing well.

HERBERT.—"J. S. Mill on Blasphemy" is now ready; it is one of the cheapest pamphlets issued from our office.

ERRATUM.—In the concluding verse of "Christian Humanity," by William Hitchman, M.D., the quotation marks should not have appeared on page 117 of last issue.

SAMUEL ROSS, 51 Wordsworth Street, Bradford, has spare copies of the *Freethinker* ever since it was started, which he will dispose of to the highest bidder, giving half of what they realise to the Prisoners' Aid Fund.

S. P.—May you live another thrice twenty years to carry on the good work!

JOHN L. GARRATT reports memorial with 250 signatures.

J. PHIPPS.—We have no right to interfere with meetings of the Salvation Army. We can stay away. If we go, we have no business to disturb, nor even speak, unless invited.

J. C. STANSFELD.—Your letter is excellently outspoken. Its length prevents us from publishing it. The same reason may have influenced others.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—West Sussex Gazette (not marked)—Aberdeen Daily Free Press—Evening Gazette, Aberdeen—The Thinker (India).

SUGAR PLUMS.

Our issue of next week will contain a full account of the third trial of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey for blasphemy in the *Freethinker*.

The counties of Devon and Cornwall are active with the Memorial. More than fifty copies have already been sent thence. True Britons!

PROBABLY in Whit week a great meeting will be held to protest against the imprisonment of our friends for jesting.

Now that the verdict as regards Mr. Bradlaugh has been given we may say that all the barristers or other ornaments of the legal professions that spoke to us while the jury were away—and the number was not small—were very strong in the opinion that there was no case whatever against Mr. Bradlaugh and that only one verdict was possible. That verdict was Not Guilty.

Le Journal d'Italie says: "From a very interesting letter which we have received from Capt. Richard Dyas, author of the English work "Upas," we understand that the persecution by Protestant piety of Freethought in general and of the *Freethinker* in particular, rages from bad to worse. One sees that monarchies resemble each other, and that England, in

the matter of religious fanaticism, is no better than the rest."

The only reason ever discovered for the retention of the House of Lords. Its legal tribunal has saved Mr. Bradlaugh from an infamous wrong and the English nation from infinite disgrace.

MR. SAMUEL MORLEY gladdens us by reference to "the mass of the London population who are standing aloof in an attitude of opposition or indifference to religion." "He would be the wisest man and would confer the greatest blessing upon London who would suggest some method by which, without denunciation or dogma, the people could be won to a better life." Why does not Samuel Morley's wise god do the work? Is it not disgraceful that god thus neglects London? But whilst god is shirking his work, man is toiling. He is teaching his unhappier fellows, slowly, that the only hope of living better lives is in education, in science, in honesty to man, Samuel Morley! in casting off this despicable, disreputable god-theory, in working for man's good and for this world.

A LETTER TO THE HOME SECRETARY.

THE following letter has been sent to the Home Secretary by the well-known African traveller, friend of Winwood Reade, C. K. Laporte:—

Burlington Villa, Birkdale, Southport, W.

April 16th, 1883.

TO SIR W. VERNON HARCOURT, Secretary for the Home Department.

SIR,—In the name of justice, reason and sanity, I beg you to cause the release of G. W. Foote, W. J. Ramsey, and H. A. Kemp, recently committed to prison for blasphemy, which in our age is no longer a crime. It strikes me that in cases of blasphemy *no wordly power* ought to prosecute, because no wordly power is threatened. The Bible-god, if he cares aught for his dignity, ought to vindicate his own cause, or, in case he is too busy, depute the Holy Ghost to do the business for him. It is the height of madness in man to take up the cudgels on behalf of an unknown quantity, the existence of which *cannot even be proved*. It is worse than fighting *for a shadow*.

This prosecution is a blot upon the civilisation of the 19th century, and the retention in custody of these three men will *brand with infamy* all those who were instrumental in causing them to be deprived of Liberty.

I have the honor to remain your most obedient humble servant,
CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE, *Littérature*.

REVISING THE BIBLE.

"You see," said the boy, "pa has been reading out of an old back-number Bible, and ma and me argued with him about getting a new revised edition. We told him that the old one was out of style, and that all the neighbors had the newest cut in Bibles, with dolman sleeves, and gathered in the back, and they put on style over us, and we couldn't hold up our heads in society when it was known that we were wearing last year's Bibles.

"Pa kicked against it, but finally got one. I thought I had as much right to change things in the revised Bibles as other fellows had to change the old one, so I pasted some mottoes and patent medicine advertisements in it after the verses. Pa never reads a whole chapter, but reads a verse or two and skips around.

"Before breakfast the other morning pa got the new Bible and started the ten commandments and some other things. The very first thing he struck was: 'Verily I say unto you, try St. Jacob's oil for rheumatism.' Pa looked over his specks at ma, and then at me, but I had my face covered with my hands sort of pious. Pa said he didn't think it was right to put patent medicine advertisements in the Bible, but ma said she didn't know as it was any worse than to have patent medicine notices next to Beecher's sermon in the religious paper. Papa sighed and turned over a few leaves and read: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his ox, if you love me as I love you no knife can cut our love in two.' The last part was a motto that I got out of a paper of candy. Pa said the sentiment was good, but he didn't think the revisers had improved the old commandment very much.

"Then pa turned over and read: 'Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and keep a bottle of Reed's Gilt-edged tonic on your sideboard, and you can defy malaria and chills and fever.' Pa was hot. He looked at it again, and noticed that the tonic commandment was on yellow paper, and the corner turned up; and pa took hold of it, and the paste that I stuck it on with was not good, and it came off; and when I saw pa lay down the Bible, and put his specks in the case, and reach for the fire poker,

I knew he was not going to pray, and looked out of the window, and yelled dog fight, and lit out, and pa followed me as far as the sidewalk, and it was that morning when it was so slippery, and pa's feet slipped from under him, and he stood on his neck and slid round on his ear, and the special providence of sleet on the sidewalk saved me. Say, do you believe in special providence? What was the use of that sleet on the sidewalk if it was not to save sinners?"—*Peck's Sun*.

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW.

LIFT up your voices loud in praise
Of god the just; nor let his ways
To you seem strange: from high to low—
Praise god from whom all blessings flow.

Praise him for famine and distress,
Praise him for all things (more or less).
Praise him for grief, praise him for woe—
Praise god from whom all blessings flow.

Praise him for storms and too much rain;
Praise him for hunger, thirst and pain;
For all calamities we know—
Praise god from whom all blessing flow.

For devils, demons, ghosts and ghouls,
For bigots, hypocrites and fools;
For priestly humbug, pomp and show—
Praise god from whom all blessings flow.

Those who believe his holy word
Will be for ever with the lord;
But those who doubt will go below—
Praise god from whom all blessings flow.

The man who's murdered, sad to tell,
If unbelieving, goes to hell;
The man that kills to heaven will go—
Praise god from whom all blessings flow.

I have no wish to join the crew
Of craven curs—god's chosen few;
My heaven is here on earth below—
Praise god from whom all blessings flow.

S. J. BELLCHAMBERS.

SKELETON SERMONS.—III.

LUKE vi., 29.—“*And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other.*”

And.—Far-seeing nature of Jesus. Recognised the irritating possibilities of Christianity. Salvation Army. Skeleton Army. Free fights.

Him.—Note scientific accuracy of Christ. Only one man could smite on one cheek at one time. Disposal of all objections as to the want of scientific knowledge of Jesus.

Him.—Man, not woman or boy. If a boy, *and small*, hit him back. If a woman, throw crockery or kick. See Police-Court cases.

Smiteth.—Possible reading “smacketh.” Then double meaning. May mean “spank” or “kiss.” If latter for “him” read “her,” and obey the general injunction.

One cheek.—More scientific accuracy. Must be on one cheek or else friendly action. To touch both cheeks is equivalent to chucking under the chin. Christ well up in the meaning of cheek. This one of the rare particulars in which Christians follow him.

The other.—Not the same one. Avoid repetition. Variety is charming. Consistency of Christians. When they have given you one piece of cheek they are always ready to offer another.

Conclusion.—To the unbeliever: don't hit a Christian, especially if he is six feet high. To the Christian; show cheek even under the most adverse circumstances.

SKELETON SERMON.—IV.

LUKE vi., 39.—“*Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?*”

I. *The questions.*—Christianity very questionable.

II. *The answers.*—No. 1. A blind person could draw up a window blind. The “blind” of a three-card-trick man leads the blind.* These exceptions to general rule. 2. Not

* Have known blind conductor lead an orchestra of blind musicians.

necessarily. May be no ditch. One blind man may hold on and listen for the other.

III. *The leading.*—Men of lights and leading. Cat's meat men carry lights. Carnivora of locality follow. Blind dog might lead blind man. Especially if latter a professional beggar. Classical reference. Leda and swan. Let this be a leader up to joke. Leda—swan—leader—dux—ducks. Work it up. Leading strings—first violins. Atheism misleading. Hence increasing number of woman-Atheists. Weep here.

IV. *The ditch.*—Ditch handy. Bountiful Providence. Why ditch? Why not pond? Might be drowned in pond. Mercy of god. Wet or dry ditch? According to weather and degree of sinfulness of the fallen. Picture discomfort of two blind men mixed up in a wet ditch. Also priest seeing four feet projecting from ditch and then passing by on other side (Luke x., 31). Point out that he might think they were fore-feet. Couldn't help a quadruped out. Send for the nearest pound. Animal clearly forfeit.

V. *The rescue.*—Enter the good shepherd, a Samaritan, an unbeliever. Helps them out with crook. Game at blind hooky.

VI. *Moral.*—The ditch is human depravity. Pitch into it.

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SWEEPINGS FROM AN OLD BOOK-SHOP.

PAR BIBLIOPHILE D'HERBERT.

AN upright minister asks, *what* recommends a man; a corrupt minister *who*.

ANY fellow can find water by digging for it; but they are gifted persons who, while they are walking, can point out the hidden spring.

IT is not always he who reads the most knows the most: the butterfly sucks as many flowers as the bee.

A MAN may have no more idea of poetry than a snail of a fine prospect.

IT is with turnpike roads as with governments: the worse the roads the heavier the toll; the worse the government the more oppressive the taxes.

QUIN used to say that every king of Europe would rise with a crick in his neck on January 30th.—(Charles I. beheaded, January 30th, 1649.)

CROMWELL, OLIVER, the Protector, was born in the town of Huntingdon, on April 25th, 1599. His father was Robert Cromwell, a cadet of a family possessed of a baronetcy, and his mother was a daughter of Sir Richard Stewart. When he appeared first in the Parliament he seemed to have a person in no degree gracious, no ornament of discourse, none of those talents which use to reconcile the affections of the standers by; yet as he grew into place and authority, his parts seemed to be raised as if he had some concealed faculties till he had occasion to use them; and when he was to act the part of a great man, he did it without any indecency, notwithstanding the want of custom.—*Lord Clarendon*.

HE was an enlightened internal reformer, and established many ministerial improvements which subsequent governments were compelled unwillingly to follow.—*J. Hill Burton*.

HE (Cromwell) is stated to have said: “I intend to be a hedge-hog and roll myself up in my own prickles: all I regret is that I am not a porcupine, and endowed with the property of

shooting them to annoy the beasts who come near enough to annoy me."

WHEN men ask me whether they may take an oath in their own sense, 'tis to me as if they should ask whether they may go to such a place upon their legs; I would fain know how they can go otherwise? Now oaths are so frequent, they should be taken like pills, swallowed whole; if you chew them, you will find them bitter; if you think what you swear, 'twill hardly go down.—*John Selden.*

PUBLIC INTEREST.—All might go well in the commonwealth if every one in the Parliament would lay down his own interest and aim at the general good. If a man were sick, and the whole College of Physicians should come to him, and administer severally, haply so long as they observed the rules of art he might recover; but if one of them had a great deal of scammony by him, he must put off that, therefore he prescribes scammony; another had a great deal of rhubarb, and he must put off that, and therefore he prescribes rhubarb, etc., they would certainly kill the man. We destroy the commonwealth, while we preserve our own private interests and neglect the public.—*Ibid.*

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PROFANE JOKES.

A LITTLE girl reading the Bible aloud to her old grandmother, said: "And these five children Milcah bore." "Read that again, daughter," said the old lady, whose hearing was not good. "And these five children Milcah bear," read the girl. "There, that will do," said the grandmother; "they might milk a bear my dear, but they could not milk a boar."

"WHAT is promised to the righteous?" asked a mild and amiable Sunday-school teacher of a small child at the far end of her class. "Eternal bliss," quickly responded the child. "Quite right my dear child," said the mild and amiable. "And now tell me what is promised to the wicked." "Eternal blister, ma'am."

"How is it," asked a clergyman of a member of his congregation, "that you always sleep when I preach, while you are awake and attentive whenever I invite a friend to preach for me?" "Oh," was the reply, "when you preach I know it's all right, but I can't trust a stranger."

WE always have considered fish provocative of thirst, but didn't expect to find our opinions confirmed by the New Testament. There it is, however: Luke iii., 5, mentions "Booz which was the son of Salmon." But the inspired writer must surely have made a mistake when, a few verses further on, he speaks of "Heber, the son of Sala." We thought the good bishop died years before G. A. S. was dreamt of.

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