

# 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. 18.]

MAY 6, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

## THE SUMMING-UP AND VERDICT.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25TH.

THE Court was almost as full as on the preceding day. Barristers especially were to the fore, anxious to hear the Chief Justice of England on the law of blasphemy. At 20 minutes to 11 Lord Coleridge commenced. The two "prisoners" (this, I think, for the first time), George William Foote and William James Ramsey, were charged—as all the world knows. Two questions—the frequently-recurring pair. But in this case the order of the two had to be reversed. First, was the publication proved? Here the judge went over ground familiar to those who had, in any sense, paid attention to the trial of Mr. Bradlaugh. Ground none the less very important as involving the narrowing down of the question of libel. Actual knowledge of the actual libel must be shown. The mere general connexion of a man with a paper is insufficient. He paid a passing compliment to the ability of both defendants, and called attention to the fact, that they had preferred to rest their case on the second branch of the inquiry. Still judge and jury had to consider this question of publication, and the evidence on this head was all one way. In regard to Mr. Ramsey, that gentleman practically admitted that he had sold the incriminated copies. The case was different with Mr. Foote. He had successfully disposed of Kelland's evidence. But Edward Whittle's evidence, uncontradicted, was enough to show that Mr. Foote, as he virtually assumed in his very able (this repeated) speech, was responsible for most of these publications.

Comparatively speaking, this question, however, was of less importance. Habit led Lord Coleridge into a phrase that his wonderful tact would, I should have thought, have forbidden. He spoke with a charming, unassuming grace of his judgment, exercised to the best of the power "that god had given him." Then he began to limit the meaning of blasphemy. Jewish blasphemy was eliminated first, in a passage of rare beauty full of teaching to the selfish Jews of the Baron de Worms type. Returning to his former idea, that Christianity might be attacked as the monarchical form of government might be, Lord Coleridge told with surprise, that 150 years ago, a man had been convicted for calmly discussing government, and arriving at the conclusion, that the hereditary principle was not the best. Quoting Starkie's much-quoted passage, the Chief Justice said, that without expressing any opinion as to the nature of the law, he should accept that as the law. Then followed a curious piece of reasoning, that seemed to me to have a suspicion of the casuist. It might be an advantage even to the people accused of blasphemy, that laws against this offence existed, for these would thus forestall the wild justice of a revengeful mob. Lord Hale was now considered. His case in condemning women as witches was parallel to that of many judges who had to administer laws that they liked not. With the question of the expediency or the incidence of these laws, neither judge nor jury has anything to do. The penal laws in force fifty or sixty years ago in Ireland,

unparalleled in the history of the world, had produced no effect whatever on the people. Persecution is an easy form of virtue. It is hard to live as in god's sight, quietly, unostentatiously. The particular form of zeal for god that takes the form of setting criminal laws in action against those who differ from us is easier. If all this is mixed up with personal and political motives, the most disdainful disapprobation is the due of those thus acting. The above passage is carefully commended to the notice of Sir Henry Tyler and Mr. Newdegate. A brilliant analysis of Mr. Foote's chief point, with more than one allusion to his ability, followed. Then came a declaration that the word "licentious" could not be applied to anything of Mr. Foote's writings. But his attacks differed from those of the most thoughtful antagonists of Christianity in manner. Yet many of the passages read yesterday, new to the speaker, were in no sense different from those in the *Freethinker*. If ever any of these writers who had used expressions of contempt and hatred towards Christianity came before him, they would receive neither more nor less than the justice he was now meting out to Mr. Foote; this with a parenthetical reference to the disagreeable nature of the position of all concerned in this case. The above passage is commended to "Dr." Wainwright. A discriminating laxity is the worst of all laxity in the law, but the conduct of others was not a palliation of an offence.

At 12.20 the jury went out, and many of the audience followed their example. The general feeling was that a verdict of Guilty was impossible, that one of Not Guilty was almost equally impossible, that a disagreement was probable. Later, the Chief hearing that this last consummation was most probable and having engagement elsewhere, gave a certain hour (unknown to the general public) upon which the jury, if still disagreeing, should be discharged. The hour came, and the men. They could not agree, and thus a second out of the three juries empanelled to try these anachronistic cases was discharged. The majority is two to one, and this in a Christian country and with juries theoretically Christian. A great victory! If there are thirteen men ashamed of themselves in England to-day, they must be the judge and the jury connected with the second trial. Not because of the verdict or of the sentence, so much as because of the indecent haste with which their conclusion was reached. The first and third juries deliberated long and then disagreed, the second in two minutes found a verdict of Guilty.

On the Thursday morning again the court was full. The enemy meant fighting still. One defeat among so many would not count for much. So Sir Hardinge Giffard moved for a new trial then and there. But Mr. Foote pleaded his physical weakness—very noticeable—as reason for adjournment until Tuesday. "In any other case, the rule is to take the new trial at once," said Lord Coleridge. "But this case is so special and the conduct of the prosecution has been so extraordinary, that I shall accede to your request." Then Mr. Foote asked for food of a nature suitable for brain-work. The Lord Chief Justice could not, though he would, effect this. Nor could even the Governor of the

Gaol. The Home Secretary alone was arbiter. But all due representation should be made in the proper quarter, and facilities for the preparation in regard to the trial that might be forthcoming, should be afforded as before. Then Sir Hardinge Giffard gives some suspicion—he is always open to suspicion—of the possibility of a withdrawal on the part of the prosecution. It leaks out, that the reason of the persistence of the prosecution is this. If they can get a conviction, Mr. Bradlaugh will forfeit his recognisances and have to pay the costs of six days' legal warfare. Hence not only the persistence, but the pretended clemency of Mr. Maloney on the preceding day, when he had hinted at the non-desire of the prosecution for a severe punishment. The prosecution is more anxious about one thing than even about punishment—and that is its own pocket.

On the Saturday, Mr. Maloney stated that the prosecution were willing to enter a *nolle prosequi* or, in plain English, to withdraw from the case. The Lord Chief Justice pointed out that as the case was nominally a Crown case, the Attorney-General must give his fiat to the same effect. At least one of the jury that could not agree is here; all the witnesses in the former trial are ominously present and a new jury ranged three deep. Are we to have a new trial, or will the prosecution by one more of their many ingenious, but not ingenuous devices slink out of their difficulty? Mr. Maloney has only this moment received from the Attorney-General a fiat granting the *nolle prosequi*. This is handed in to the Chief, who, in his most severe fashion, takes exception to the taking of his name in vain in the petition that had been sent in by the prosecution to the Attorney-General. According to the petition, drawn up, of course, by the prosecution, Lord Coleridge had stated that the prosecution was ill-advised. Every one knows that Lord Coleridge had said nothing of the kind, as with a scrupulous care, he abstained from saying a word either in one direction or the other. In the politest way, the Lord Chief Justice of England gives Mr. Maloney the lie direct. Of course, Sir Hardinge Giffard is not there. He leaves all the dirty work to be done by his junior, probably from the knowledge that he has had sufficient practice, and Mr. Maloney is a younger man.

The prosecution has failed. Ignominy has once again fallen to the lot of the Giffards and Tylers. After the disagreement of two juries out of three, the remarkable summing-up of the Lord Chief Justice, the whole tone adopted by him, the unscrupulous means used by the prosecution, the severity of the sentence from Justice North, the fact that the jury, who convicted, were astonished at the punishment inflicted, and that one of them, at least has signed a memorial for the release of the prisoners; after the statement that the health of the imprisoned men is suffering—surely Sir William Harcourt will see his way to a remission of the sentences.

EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.

### THE BLASPHEMY SENTENCE.

THE following letter from Admiral Maxse appears in the *Daily News* for May 1st:—

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘DAILY NEWS.’

“Sir,—Mr. Foote's brilliant defence last week will probably have awakened some fastidious critics to their error in having depicted him as a low and coarse controversialist, while Lord Coleridge's judgment will have convinced the public that had Lord Coleridge occupied the place of Justice North, the defendant would have escaped with a mild penalty. In the meantime, Mr. Foote continues to undergo what is virtually 'solitary confinement' in a cell, and is condemned to this punishment for a year. A more wicked sentence, or a more wicked law, than the one which Mr. Foote and his companions suffer from, is, in my opinion, impossible to conceive, that is to say in a country which professes to enjoy religious liberty. His crime consisted in caricaturing a grotesque representation of a religion which has certainly a higher side. People who are truly religious should be obliged to Mr. Foote, if he managed to shock some people concerning any feature of religion which is gross and degrading to that religion. I know something of Mr. Foote, and I am quite certain he would not say anything to shock a refined interpretation of religion. Refined Christians are anxious themselves to get rid of the excrescences of their creed. The question at issue really is as to whether a coarse picture of religion, and of one religion only, is to be protected by the State from

caricature, and from caricature alone; because it seems to be granted that an intellectual absurdity may be intellectually impeached. It is impossible such a monstrous doctrine as this can stand. It will pass away, and probably in a few years it will be remembered with some astonishment; but oppressive and persecuting laws are only got rid of by the spectacle of an impaled victim. 'By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track.' The impaled victim is now Mr. Foote. It is a disgrace to England that his solitary confinement—twenty-three out of the twenty-four hours are solitary—or, indeed, that any punishment whatever is possible for a man's style in religious controversy, and to a Liberal it is profoundly humiliating that such a proceeding takes place under a Liberal Government and without one word of remonstrance in the House of Commons. Where are the Radicals?—Yours obediently, FREDK. A. MAXSE.—April 30th.

### 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.

### ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN RACE.

A NEW CHAPTER FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IN the beginning god created the heavens and the earth and all the host of revolving planetary systems, with their myriad suns for light and warmth; and the earth had no shape and was empty, and the face of the deep was full of darkness: and god saw that it was good!

And god produced all manner of trees, shrubs, herbs, noxious and poisonous plants, by a bare *ipso dixit*, far out-rivalling the performance of Maskelyne and Cooke; and in order that they might be seen, he invented two lights—a Brush-light to rule the day, and a penny dip to rule the night, fixing them up in the sky, whence they are occasionally seen even in murky England. He made the rush-lights also: and god saw that it was good!

And god said, let the waters bring forth fish and fowl, each after its kind; let the strong and voracious devour the weak and helpless; let there be great whales to swallow small Jonahs, and sharks with seven rows of teeth to mangle and munch my image, which I intend to form presently: and god saw that it was good!

And god formed all the beasts, reptiles, and creeping things of the earth, each after its kind, which have ever since unkindly devoured one another, and, not infrequently, the image that was to have rule and dominion over them: and god saw that it was good!

And god said, let us make man after our own image; and, sending his son to Paris for some of its noted plaster, he modelled the first man: and god saw that it was good!

And god planted a garden in Eden wherein to place Adam, whence ran a river, that divided into four heads, the first of which is called “Pison,” from which source well-nigh all the desolation and misery, which have so long afflicted a great portion of the earth, took its rise: and god saw that it was good!

And god brought Adam and all the beasts, reptiles, fish, and fowl, together with all trees, shrubs, and a specimen of each of the products of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms into the midst of the garden of Eden—Pickford's never before or since having so extensive a job on hand—and, lending Adam a “Universal Dictionary,” bade him give to each item its own proper name and definition: and

god perused the catalogue of names, and saw that it was good!

And god presented Adam with a spade and a hoe, wherewith to tend and keep the garden, expressing a hope that he would not turn out such a rake as to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; for if he should, Marwood would be summoned, and no judge or jury employed in the matter: and god saw that it was good!

And god said, It is not good that Adam should be alone. I will invent a partner for him. And he invited Adam to his sanctum to take wine and a mild cigar. And having mixed a soporific with the wine, a deep sleep fell upon Adam, and he slept; and god took his garden pruning-knife and adroitly severed Adam's tail (hitherto erroneously said to be one of his ribs), and formed thereof a woman; then kicking Adam in the ribs (hence the error,) he presented her to her lord and master: and god saw that it (but not he or she) was good.

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### S P E A K G E N T L Y .

A VERY SIMPLE BALLAD.

SPEAK gently—try to cultivate  
A philosophic calm;  
And let your warmest outburst seem  
A limpid flowing psalm.

Speak gently to the red-nosed man  
Who loves your crimes to tell;  
Puts you beneath th' almighty's ban  
And drives you straight to hell.

Speak gently—though he shouts at you,  
And worse than devil screams;  
He is in truth a gentle soul,  
He is not what he seems.

Speak gently to the lank and thin  
Who rob you of your rights;  
Who say that justice is a sin—  
These are their "pure delights."

Speak gently even to the fat,  
The Bishop and the Dean,  
They still have hearts though buried deep—  
And better days have seen.

Speak gently—or you may offend  
"The powers that be ordained,"  
And so within a prison cell  
Twelve months may be detained.

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### MR. FREDERIC HARRISON ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

MR. HARRISON'S address on the Blasphemy Laws at South Place Institute was, of necessity, an able discussion of the question of blasphemy in its legal, its philosophical, its moral aspects. It was an address that must do good. But the good it must do will be, I fear, more than counter-balanced by the evil that must follow from Mr. Harrison's defence of the Bible. As illustration of this, I point to an article in the *Christian World*, in which the most emphasis is laid, not upon Mr. Harrison's denunciation of the law, but upon his declaration in favor of the Bible. "He loathed and abhorred the deliberate purpose of any one to bring the Bible into ridicule and contempt. He himself read the Bible, and intended still to read it, and read it to his children, regarding it as one of the greatest books of the world, and a source of instruction and comfort to multitudes of mankind all through the ages." I am sure that Mr. Harrison has no conception of the almost infinite mischief that such words as these, from such a man as he is, must effect. These words will be quoted by Christians who will carefully ignore his other utterances. They will be cast in the teeth of those who are striving to lead men away from old superstitions. Mr. Harrison knows, as we know, that he would speak the self-same words of many another book; of Plato, of the Vedas, of Shakspeare. He and we know that the Bible is only to him an intensely human book. But the foes of mankind will recognise neither of these truths. They will read into his words their own superstitious reverence for the book as divine. They will exult in the fact that one of the best-known agnostics in England has told hundreds of people that he reads to his children

from the book that the unreasoning worship of the Christian Church has dignified, despite its obscenities. They will quote him as calling this book "a source of instruction and comfort." They, like him, will ignore that whilst it has been all this, the Bible has done more to enslave, to degrade the minds of men than any other book in Europe. This is the book to which the countrymen of Mr. Frederic Harrison are bound, as slaves are chained together. And when an effort is made to strike off the galling chains, men like Mr. Harrison are found rivetting them the more firmly on their unhappy fellows.

[EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc.]

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### THE CHRISTIAN'S DYING GOD.

FOR sixteen centuries Europe has been degraded and tyrannised over by creatures of Christianity's god. Bloody and foul was their rise to power, and hateful and cruel has been their rule. Victims innumerable have been tortured by the followers of Christ; thousands of men women and children have been murdered by holy wars, inquisitions and cruel laws.

Sixteen centuries of priestly rule well-nigh sapped the foundations of Europe's truest manhood. Truth was hidden by fear, love was quenched by falseness, and justice hardly ever showed herself through the ignorance of her administrators.

To-day we deplore the superstition and ignorance of mankind, but hope and work for liberty's cause, and drive into oblivion those ideas which have so long cursed humanity. In doing this we help our brothers who are in the grasp and keeping of Christianity's slaves, whom its god has taught the art of torture for the demonstration of his loving kindness and forgiving mercy.

The reign of fear has passed, men's minds are no longer to remain stunted by phantoms of unknowable gods and indescribable devils; for Yahveh has become too old to attend to this world's affairs, and no new god can be installed upon his throne, as heresy is abroad among millions who have learned the secrets of their past servility. Mankind is rising, Science is advancing, education and Freethought are spreading; a new era for man has just begun.

Yahveh who performed wonders in past ages for his faithful slaves, is no longer able to perform his old miracles of plagues and famines, feasts and suppers; he has been driven from his throne by Galileo and the noblest and bravest of men; he is wandering homeless about, supported upon his crutches of ignorance and superstition, unable to shield himself against the attacks of man's ridicule and truth.

Yahveh the great, the strong, the changeless and the wise, is no longer able to screen himself behind clouds and rainbows, whence he could send thunder and lightning to appal the cowards. He has been forced to face the *Freethinker's* shafts of ridicule and the philosopher's science, by which he has suffered so seriously, that his favorites have undertaken his defence by using his old persecuting weapons of prison torture and earthly punishment to assist in effecting the purposes of hell.

Yahveh is now dying fast. Education and Science are ringing his death-knell as he totters upon his crutches to his doom, for ever to be gone. The wise have forsaken him, the brave have defied him, and he is passing where none but bigots, superstitious, ignorant and servile shall remain with him until his career has closed. As he totters along his followers defend him, they use wealth and privilege to resist the attacks of argument and truth. They dare not assail his opponents bravely, they only unsuccessfully attempt to destroy a few of the more advanced heroes among men, in order to give a short time longer for their idol's decease.

Alas! poor Yahveh, it was said thy power was mighty and thy deeds were great, that thou wert constant and unchangeable, that thou couldst send forth fire and sword to remove thy foes, that thou couldst drown them with thy rains and send plagues and famines to destroy them. But now, oh Yahveh! thou art helpless; even thy defence has passed from thy hands to the hands of thy followers, who are too weak to use those unwieldy weapons which thou wert wont to use in the days of thy strength. Thy defence has therefore to be maintained by money-grubbing knights and attorneys, while the vast multitude of thy followers cry

to another upon bended knees for knowledge, bread, and even faith in thee.

Yahveh thou art dying fast, thy deeds have been bad and thy weapons failed thee. Thou art tottering to thy doom. Speak, therefore, if thou thinkest thy ways were just or bad—for thou art upon thy trial before mankind for blasphemy—that men may know thy failings, and be guided aright against suffering for thy sake!

LUCIFER.

## ACID DROPS.

FRIENDS who visit the *Freethinker* office should have a look round the corner in Farringdon Street, at number 89. The shop is just opposite the Memorial Hall. At 89 sermon-mongering goes on. You can buy sermons printed, lithographed, or in manuscript. "Very choice," "original," "in a large bold hand," are some of the advertising epithets. Date and place, when and where they have been preached, are given, so that the wary parson may not fire them off in ears or years that have heard them before. Some of the ears that have listened must be long enough to annihilate space, however. "Several hundred in a plain writing, price one guinea per hundred," is interesting. After getting rid of a guinea's worth, they change them for another hundred at a payment of a few pence. Cheap as dirt!

MR. E. A. FREEMAN (the historian), in his new book on America, tells of some valuable historical information which he gathered in a negro Methodist meeting-house. The sermon treated largely of Herod the Great. He told us, says Mr. Freeman, "that the will of that prince was taken to Rome to be probated by Augustus before the Sanhedrim." No doubt the auditors thought the minister was speaking of things truly divine, and our own opinion is that his information was as truly historical as that which is revered as holy writ.

THE merry May meetings are on us once more. The Strand is permeated with an atmosphere of whitechokerism. Portly gaitered bishops jostle lank Scripture-readers at the entrance of Exeter Hall, whence emanates the odor of a sanctity so strong as to over-power Rimmel across the road. By some noses, however, the incense offered up at that sacred shrine is declared to be a distillation of Cant. A good deal will be heard during this month of the glorious spread of the blessed Gospel, but little of the crime and misery which underlie Christian civilisation, little of the necessity of propping up the Gospel with the policeman, the gaol, and the paraphernalia of the law.

OF the spread of Christianity in India the Baptist Missionary Society has begun to boast, and we expect to hear the same chorus from all the collection-seeking missionary societies. But will they enlighten their subscribers as to the class the converts are derived from and the motives for which the Gospel is embraced? Those acquainted with India know that the conversion of educated Hindus is as rare as that of educated Jews, and the common term "rice-Christians" indicates the source and real strength of the new religion.

MR. W. W. KENSSETT writes to us that the Rev. P. H. Wickstead charges us with misrepresentation of him in our issue of April 22nd. We would suggest to the Rev. P. H. Wickstead that a charge of misrepresentation is better made to us personally than behind our back. Our authority was the report of the meeting of the Unitarian Association as given in the *Inquirer*. Mr. Kenssett states that Mr. Wickstead only wished to have the protest against the blasphemy laws placed first, in the petition, and did not desire to appeal against those laws and be silent as to the imprisonment of our friends. We willingly accept the explanation, though we still think that even in the petition the prayer for the freedom of the particular men in prison should precede that for the repeal of general laws.

IT is to be regretted that aristocratic beggars are not more careful in their selection of the people of whom they beg. We are constantly receiving begging letters from the Earl of Shaftesbury or Lord Kinnaird, or some equally pious person of title. Lord Kinnaird wants us to subscribe to a mission to fallen women. The object is more lordable—we mean laudable—than are many others. But one sentence in his letter reads: "A large number of portions of Holy Scripture, prayers on cards, and tracts have been distributed and thankfully received and read." We returned Lord Kinnaird's circular with the following letter:—

"MY LORD,—I return you the circular (1) because I am a poor man and unable to afford any other than private charity; (2) because well-intentioned as, I am sure, are your efforts, I

cannot associate myself with any movement on behalf of the welfare of humanity that uses means so immoral as the Holy Scriptures or as prayers.—Faithfully yours, EDWARD B. AVELING."

THE success of the blasphemous papers has brought another into the field. *Joyful News* is its name. Its front page is made hideous by a portrait of the Rev. Peter Mackenzie, who looks like a cross between a butcher and Mr. Spurgeon. We quote one extract from *Joyful News*:—

"MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ONLY.

"A poor widow in Northamptonshire relates a singular incident in answer to prayer. Just before Christmas she had not sufficient bread to eat. She was in distress; she prayed that the hunger and craving for food might be taken away. Her prayer was heard. She has never been hungry or felt a craving for food since; and, besides this, she is filled with love to god and souls. She has not one doubt. She is now striving hard, and not in vain, to bring sinners to Jesus. She is brim full of joy and praise. Her house is open for the preaching of the Gospel."

Dr. Tanner and Baron Munchausen, please copy.

ON Monday, at the Derby Police-Court, a man named Henry Millington was summoned for assaulting his wife. In defence the husband stated that the woman was a member of the Salvation Army, the house was dirty, and the children neglected, while the mother stopped out every night until twelve at the meetings. With his wife there was neither "cleanliness nor godliness." The case was dismissed on account of the provocation the defendant received.

THE *Christian Herald* supplement for April has the following: "A minister visited in prison a young man of his congregation who had been convicted of forgery. The heart-broken parents had begged him to call, hoping the peace of the Gospel might reach even his gloomy cell. As the minister kindly greeted him the youth scarcely replied, but gazed with a sort of defiance. He began giving the mother's tender message, with the interest all the Church felt in his welfare. At last the prisoner broke out, 'Do you know that you yourself are to blame for my being here?' 'What have I done?' replied the astonished pastor, striving to understand his strange language. 'I began the miserable business,' returned the youth, speaking very loudly, 'in your Sunday-school. Don't you remember the Sunday-school Bazaar and Fancy Fair, when they first set up a raffling, and hid a gold ring in a loaf of cake? Just for sixpence, too, I got a whole box of little books. I was pleased with my good fortune, and went in afterwards for chances. Sometimes I gained and sometimes I lost. Money I must have for gambling and lotteries. I was half mad with excitement; so I used other folks' names, and here I am. Don't let the Church depute you to commiserate me! They may thank themselves! *Their raffling has done it! It has ruined me!*'"

IN the Edinburgh United Presbyterian Presbytery, the Rev. R. Gemmell appears to be considered an obstructive nuisance. At a recent meeting, being dissatisfied with the minutes, Mr. Gemmell claimed "in the name of the king of truth, that they record the whole truth;" whereupon the moderator, the Rev. G. S. James retorted, "you are acting in disloyalty to the king of kings, the king of truth" (laughter and cries of order). After a vain attempt to expel Mr. Gemmell, that gentleman insisted on reading a document, which began: "In the name of the lord Jesus Christ, king of kings," and again the report tells of "laughter and uproar."

AT a banquet in Glasgow, the Rev. Dr. Lees thus catalogued the virtues of the Scotch clergy: "Fidelity in duty, their love for one another—(laughter)—the readiness with which they turned one cheek when smitten on the other—(renewed laughter)—and when it was wanted to disendow them of their cloak, the readiness with which they parted with their coat (laughter). . . . They were truly national, as national as the Scotch fiscal or convention of royal burghs—(renewed laughter),—or haggis—(cries of oh, and laughter)—or whisky—(renewed cries of oh, and laughter)—and other institutions of which Scotchmen are so justly proud."

OUR knowledge doth but show us our ignorance. Our most studious scrutiny is but a discovery of what we cannot know. We see the effect, but cannot guess at the cause. Learning is like a river, whose head being far in the land, is, at first rising, little and easily viewed: but still as you go, it gapeth with a wider bank, not without pleasure and delightful winding, while it is on both sides set with trees and beauties of various flowers. But the farther you follow it, the deeper and the broader tis, till at last it unwaves itself in the unfathomed ocean: there you see more water, but no shore, no end of that liquid vastness.—*Fellham's Resolves.*

## SPECIAL NOTICES.

A Full Report of the Two Trials of Messrs. G. W. Foote, W. J. Ramsey, and H. A. Kemp, for Blasphemous Libel in the Christmas Number of the "Freethinker," is Now Ready in Seven Parts, price Twopence each; neat wrappers. Part VII. also contains Prison Notes by G. W. Foote.

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

## DR. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture three times on Sunday, May 6th, in the Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool:—at 11, "Freedom in England"—3, "The Pedigree of Man"—7, "The Recent Blasphemy Trials."

## CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor 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.—E. Thiers, C. B. B., J. C. Woodhead, Silo, G. Allbeury, M. H. Buntun, John W. Lubbock, Diogenes, Buchnell, Escrinador, Achilles, C. K. Laporte.

WODEN.—A little too long; send stamps, please.

J. G.—"Bible Lies" hardly as good as the Bible lies themselves. Try again. The sonnet is hardly up to our form.

BRUNO.—Letter received and utilised.

JOHN BROTHERTON.—The contrast between your education and the Christian want of it is a contrast between the two creeds.

W. J. HARRISON, Ponder's End.—The person who informed your local bookseller that she is liable to a fine of £50 for selling the *Freethinker*, was, not to put too fine a point on it, a bookseller seller. As he sold the bookseller, we hope she will retaliate by selling the *Freethinker*.

W. COSFORD.—God may be too wise to err, though we always thought it ought to have read, "Two eyes to her" (*vide* Matt. i., 18). That he is too just—or three just, as he's a Trinity—is shown by his invention of a devil to tempt and a hell to punish. Just so!

J. M. WHITHAM.—The Lord Chief Justice cannot set our friends free. The Home Secretary only can do that.

J. NEEDHAM.—Your plan seems good; but we attack hell-fire rather than earth-fire, and your suggestion had better go to Captain Shaw.

PAN.—The Bible god incited to many more murders than O'Donovan Rossa or James Carey.

S. S. S.—Received and utilised.

THOROUGH FREETHINKER.—Received. Glad to hear that you are taking four copies instead of one. The only objection to your name is that all Freethinkers are "thorough."

KATE BUXTON.—Atheists are not necessarily Atomists. The only thing they have necessarily in common are the first two and last three letters.

R. GOTSLEY.—The Agnostic is one who does not know whether there is a god or not. The Atheist is one who does not believe in a god, but of course does not say there is no god. The Agnostic is an Atheist spoiled by respectability. The Atheist is an Agnostic made aggressive by earnestness. With reference to Mr. Spencer's views we are ourselves agnostic.

MEMORIAL with 284 signatures from Huddersfield, received and forwarded to the Home Secretary.

A MEMORIAL with seventy-five signatures has been sent to the Home Secretary by Mr. Robert Jacques, of Middleton, West Hartlepool.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Englishman—Salisbury and Winchester Journal—Bird of Freedom—Inquirer—Truthseeker—Liberal (Australia)—Kansas Liberal—Wednesday Weekly News—Morpeth Herald—Thinker (Madras)—Woman's Suffrage Journal—Philosophic Inquirer.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

The Borough of Hackney Workmen's Club have issued books at two shillings each, containing twenty-four penny tickets, to be sold for "the support of the victims of the Blasphemy Acts." Anyone able to help by selling these can

obtain them from Mr. Stacey, 90 Scawfell Street, Hackney Road.

MR. WILLIAM IRVING, of Hanley, Staffordshire, has issued a very thoughtful and interesting pamphlet, called "A Few Words about Charles Bradlaugh, M.P." The pamphlet is not in any sense a biography. It is a very able and favorable criticism. Every one who admires Mr. Bradlaugh should invest one penny in these eight pages. If they do, Mr. Irving will have a large order. The publisher is G. E. Farmer, London.

*Health* is a weekly journal of domestic and sanitary science, edited by Dr. Andrew Wilson, Mr. Conway's curate that is to be. It is very readable and ought to be very useful.

ON Monday, the 7th inst., the Rev. Minor Canon Shuttleworth, M.A., whose honest letter we published last week, lectures on "Fear God, honor the King." Place, 73 Old Street, City Road (Hall of Science friends, please note); time, 8.20 p.m. Those who cannot fear god and do not honor the monarch will do well to attend and listen carefully to so kindly and able an antagonist and friend as Canon Shuttleworth.

A GOOD deal of theological heat was imported into the debate on the Affirmation Bill. Mr. Gladstone's speech, however, was worthy of his best days, and, founded on the rock of principle, stands out amid the insolent bigotry of a Cross, the snarling puppyism of a Churchill, and the recreant rancor of a Torrens, like a mighty tower too lofty and strong for the petty blows of bigotry.

If Mr. Gladstone is prepared to stand or fall by the Bill, the Lords might throw it out and welcome. Their interference with the right of admission to the other House would not prevent Mr. Bradlaugh taking his seat, but would be another nail in their own coffin.

DAUDER's novel, "L'Evangeliste," satirising the Jesuit-like doings of the Salvationists and others in Paris, has been translated and published by Messrs. Chatto and Windus under the title of "Port-Salvation." Our readers may be interested to know that Mr. Foote contemplated writing a translation of this work immediately upon its first appearance in French.

THE *Edinburgh Review*, in a paper on the persecution of the Jews, truly states that "proselytes from Judaism are very rare." If the new Jerusalem does not descend until all the sons of Israel are enlisted under the banner of the cross, its advent may not be expected until the Greek Kalends, at the present rate of progression.

THE application for tickets to the meeting of the Liberation Society was immense, and bespeaks something more than a desire to hear John Bright. If, as the highest legal authority states, the proposition that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of England can no longer be maintained, it is surely time the disestablishment and, what is still more important, the disendowment of the State Church are set about in earnest.

Now is the time for all our friends to send in memorials to the Home Secretary. The following letter addressed to P. A. Taylor, Esq., M.P., speaks for itself:—

"67 Myddleton Street, E.C., April 28th, 1883.

"SIR,—Will you be kind enough to present the memorial enclosed herewith to the Home Secretary; also call his attention to the third name attached thereto—viz., that of James Stewart, the same being the signature of one of the jury that convicted Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp. He signs on the ground that he considers the sentences passed upon them to be extremely severe, and he further assures me that all the jury were of the same opinion at the time. By so doing you will greatly oblige,—Yours most respectfully, H. E. SMITH."

THE *Referee* says: "If Freethinkers wish to show to what an extent popular prejudice has been used against them, and how severely they have been treated, they cannot do better than widely circulate copies of Foote's speech, if possible, printed verbatim."

THE *Bromley and West Kent Telegraph* says: "Foote is a very able man. He comes from Plymouth, and he has won his way to the front rank in the Secularist army by sheer force of character. We were once present at a debate where he took, among others, the agnostic side. He was more forcible than elegant, and was sometimes even rude; but he certainly towered over his fellows, and he made more 'points' than any of them. A Canon and a Professor, the latter a Fellow of the Royal Society, were his opponents, and both bore testimony to the ability with which he conducted his case."

THE *Manchester Weekly Times*, of April 28th, says: "The trial will probably become memorable for a very powerful

speech delivered by the defendant Foote. . . . He argued his case with consummate skill."

THE *World* says anent Lord Coleridge's charge: "The cardinal fact to be borne in mind is that there has ceased to be anything penal in attacking religion itself, and that the one thing which cannot be done with impunity is to outrage respectability. To defend respectability, therefore, and not to protect religion, must be the object of the law in future."

SARTOR RESARTUS.—OUTSIDE MOODY'S CIRCUS.\*  
(A Lyric for Sankey-Music.)

Earth with poisons in sweet flowers,  
Air with deadly plagues in showers;  
Ocean's murderous expanse,  
Heaven's deceitful countenance—  
All around in ev'ry State  
Sternly whisper—*god is hate!*

Want and woe from vales and hills,  
Cry in brooks and by the rills—  
Despite zephyrs and each bird  
By the gentler springtide stirred;  
These are heralds of *man's* fate  
Clearly echoing—*god is hate!*

All our hopes and fears impart  
To the yearnings of the heart—  
That the only peace still lies  
In our human sympathies;  
All around in ev'ry State  
Bear true witness—*god is hate!*

W. H.

A "LITTLE GOD."

THE Hebrew god was never a very big fellow. He was conceived by a little mind, and was never much bigger than the man who made him. It was an easy matter to squeeze his small proportions into a box called an "ark;" and one man could, without much difficulty, convey him, wheelbarrow-fashion, through the streets.

On one occasion the little god nearly toppled, over his poor head being seriously imperilled.

Ages after, when the human mind had developed, the idea of god's size increased; so that those whose minds had most expanded found that they had no room for the idea of god at all. But even in enlightened times little minds were found to be plentiful, and small-brained people always carried their little god about with them.

No place was too sacred for an exhibition of this little deity; and no time inappropriate.

One took his little god to business with him, and presented a view of him for the admiration of his customers when he wanted to increase his trade; another took the dear little creature to the social gathering with him, that people might see what a good little man he was; a third introduced his little god into the political assembly, and declared that all who were in favor of admitting a large-minded man into the Legislative Chamber wanted to throw the dear little deity out of the window, and seemed to fear that the little god would offer no resistance.

At length there arose a lot of people who said that they did not believe in, or care a jot for, the little deity; and the little-minded ones got savage, and said that such persons deserved to be hanged, and that a nation of unbelievers in the "little god" would promote nothing but anarchy, bloodshed and ruin.

But the large-minded ones were calm and unmoved, and treated tacit and open condemnation alike, with deserved contempt.

One day, while a pious religionist was exposing his little pet deity to the wondering gaze of a multitude of followers, a rude Freethinker elbowed his way through the crowd, and having looked upon the "little god," his risible faculties were so excited that he went into a fit of uncontrollable laughter, which produced such an effect on the little deity that he immediately fainted, and despite the persistent efforts of the pious, gradually sank into the silent and dreamless sleep from which there is no awakening. Strangest of all, is the fact that no one mourned his loss; and many years after a monument was erected—not to the memory of the little god—but to that of the bold Freethinker who caused his death.

A. B. Moss.

\* *Inside Moody's Circus* are reiteration and reverberation, "god is love."—(Sans Tache).

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### A LETTER FROM THE FARLEY LIBERAL ASSOCIATION, AMERICA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—We wish to give expression to our sympathy and indignation by subscribing for your paper. Will you please communicate with me in regard to price per year and how we shall get the money to you. The imprisonment of Mr. Foote ought to arouse the world to the duties and dangers of the hour. *Shame, shame* that men should still be sent to prison on account of their religion. Liberal friends, our hearts are with you, and we will give you what support we can.

W. GILMORE, President.

### LETTER FROM A NEW SUBSCRIBER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am not an Atheist—on the contrary, I have the most profound conviction of a future state of existence, but there is stuff so vile and bad in a book called the Bible, that I was induced from curiosity, after the prosecution of my friend Mr. Charles Bradlaugh by the "common informer" Tyler, to read your paper. Therefore please enter my name as one of your subscribers. I have not read the alleged blasphemous libel, yet after the filthy romance of Lot and his daughters, I am convinced it must indeed exceed Dean Swift at his worst if it surpasses the horrible tale.

Perhaps, for the edification of your readers, you will allow me to republish the alleged libel upon which the infamous Judge Wetherall, forty-one years ago, in my native city, Bristol—sentenced Charles Southwell, "a gentleman," to twelve months' imprisonment in the common gaol.

It was as follows: "That revoltingly odious Jew-production called BIBLE, has been for ages the idol of all sorts of block-heads, the glory of knaves, and the disgust of wise men. It is a history of lust, sodomies, wholesale slaughtering, and horrible depravity, that the vilest part of all other histories collected into one monstrous book could not parallel! Priests tell us that this concentration of abominations was written by a god. All the world believes priests, or they would rather have thought it the outpouring of the devil!"—I am, sir, faithfully yours,

CHAS. ATTENBURY

11 Blandford Square, Regent's Park, N.W.

April 17, 1883.

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

WHILE the Israelites were in Goschen we find chief place given to one of the oldest Semitic deities, El Shaddai the strong or mighty one, a god not beaming with the sunny grace and gladness of some of the Aryan deities, but a fierce and withering desert-god, awakening awe, but never love, in his worshippers. When afterwards his name gave place to Yahveh (commonly spelt Jehovah), loftier ideas had risen about him, but he remained the same stern and dreadful one, whom none could look on and live; who rode on the clouds, announced his approach in the thunder-clap, and appeared amidst fires and lightnings; to whom was dedicated and often slain the first-born of everything—in short a sun-god. Long after the Israelites had left Goschen they continued to appease him with horrid rites and to ascertain his will by lot and sooth-saying; the old notions about him enter into the latest form in which their sacred books are cast. He is there spoken of as acting like a man, walking in a garden, coming down from the sky to spy out what people are doing, writing with his finger, repenting that he had made man, acting, too, as a *bad* man, approving cunning and deceit, commanding the slaughter of women and children, and praised as a "man of war," at whose bidding the revolting cruelties of the Israelites under their chieftains and kings were committed.—*Edward Clodd's* "Jesus of Nazareth," 1880.

"I LOOKED again, and for a good while," he says, "at Dolce's portrait of the eternal father, for it is a miracle and masterpiece of absurdity, and almost equally a miracle of pictorial art. It is the all-powerless, a fair-haired, soft, consumptive deity, with a mouth that has fallen open through very weakness. He holds one hand on his stomach, as if the wickedness and wretchedness of mankind made him qualms; and he is looking down out of heaven with an expression of pitiable appeal, or as if seeking somewhere for assistance in his heavy task of ruling the universe. You might fancy such a being falling on his knees before a strong-willed man, and beseeching him to take the reins of omnipotence out of his hands. No wonder that wrong gets the better of right, and good and ill are confounded if the supreme head were as here depicted, for I never saw, and nobody else ever saw, so perfect a representation of a person burdened with a task infinitely above his strength. If Carlo Dolce had been wicked enough to know what he was doing, the picture would have been a most

blasphemous satire, in the very person of the almighty, against all incompetent rulers, and against the rickety machine and crazy action of the universe. Heaven forgive me for such thoughts as this picture has suggested!"—*Nathaniel Hawthorne.*

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PROFANE JOKES.

"You may entertain angels unawares," muttered a sturdy Sabbath beggar to one who refused him a drink of cider. "Angels don't go about drinking cider on the Sabbath," was the retort.

Was Eve's bridal dress a bear-skin? And when her husband remonstrated did she say, "I don't care A-dam?"

The deacon's wife wanted to jot down the text, and leaning over to her scapegrace nephew, she whispered, "Have you a card about you?" "You can't play in church," was the solemn, reproving answer; and the good woman was so confused that she forgot all about the text.

Our irreverent young man says he doesn't care so much about the perfect e-quality in heaven. It's the perfect she-quality he wants. His sister demurs; but as she is demure, that's natural.

SALMI MORSE, after battling with all sorts of difficulties, recently secured a hearing for his Passion Play in New York, giving a private rehearsal, for which a great many invites were issued. Nobody seems to think much of Morse's work now that it has been seen. One day while Morse was looking on and stage-managing a rehearsal he espied a dozen men grouped together. "Who are these fellows?" he impatiently inquired. "Oh," was the reply, "they are the twelve apostles." "Twelve," roared Morse—"twelve! Not enough, not enough! Get forty at once!"—*Referee.*

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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