

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sentenced to Twelve Months' Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

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. 23.]

JUNE 10, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

A LETTER FROM G. W. FOOTE.

DEAR AVELING,—As the rules printed on this meagre sheet do not respect the privacies of affection, I write to you instead of to Mrs. Foote. She will be able to see me in a day or two. The Governor will enclose a visiting card for her and yourself. Prepare her to meet me under most repulsive conditions.

The word "improper" in these rules has a very elastic meaning; it may be made to include anything the Visiting Committee dislike, and those gentlemen are my prosecutors, the aldermen of the City of London. I may not give you any account of my treatment in gaol; suffice it to say that I am subjected to the ordinary discipline of "convicted criminals" in the House of Correction, and what that is you may learn of Mr. Truelove. I must add, however, that I have received unflinching kindness from the Governor, Doctor, and minor officials.

I have lost about a stone in weight since my first night in Newgate, and about half of it here. Until a few days ago I suffered from painful diarrhoea. That has given place to low appetite and dyspepsia. It is not severe yet, but it gives me some alarm. I always thought my stomach invincible.

What plagues me most is a miserable lassitude proceeding from the enforced disuse of my faculties. No writing articles here, no public speaking (in fact I scarcely utter twelve words a day), no delight of battle; nothing but a lifeless monotony, in which the hours crawl by like an endless funeral procession. Yet my brain is as vital as ever, for it swarms with ideas, and my heart is stout. I am only going through a long, dark, dirty tunnel under the mountain of bigotry. Far ahead I see a faint gleam as of a silver star; and I know that at last I shall reach the end of this loathsome passage, emerge into the light and air of open day, live my old free strenuous life again, and once more join my comrades in fighting for the Cause.

The treatment I suffer as a common criminal is not calculated to convert Freethinkers. But if it were, there would still be a more powerful dissuasive. I hear a sermon every week. Then, too, I have been reading my beloved Shelley, the radiant seraph of our mundane heaven, and you know his influence. Here let me say that the Prison Commissioners, who came a fortnight ago, have allowed me to have unsceptical books. Enclosed is a list, which I know you will attend to. Perhaps I might have got some before by asking one of my prosecutors, but I would see them all drowned in turtle soup before I would ask them a favor.

[No. 96.]

I am exceedingly glad that our offence before Lord Coleridge did not turn on points of law. I feel that I was helping to make history in my speech. But why *my* speech? Ramsey shares with me. Making a speech was more in my line; I only brought my literary faculty to elaborate the sentiments and ideas which his own brave heart and common sense suggested to him.

I hope our party is making the most of the crisis. There is a sense in which the Blasphemy question is of supreme importance. If avowed (that is, honest) Atheists are driven from the door of the House of Commons by a Tory mob, they can retire to their fortresses of the platform and the press, and there organise and recruit for campaign after campaign; but if those fortresses are dismantled all is lost.

Some imagine that no paper will be molested unless it "go so far" as the *Freethinker*, and that Lord Coleridge's summing-up is a guarantee of immunity. I desire them to remember that other judges with stricter views may try future cases; and in some moment when bigotry is more than usually malignant and determined, and the Liberal press is afraid to expose its excesses, our whole party might find itself enringed with fire. We must show the old spirit—active, aggressive, defiant.

Kemp goes out on Friday. One honest man the less in this torment. Brave little man! I trust the Committee will arrange for his return to the shop after a good holiday. I long for news of Wheeler.

In conclusion, I lack words, I certainly lack space, to express my bitter hatred of the brutal creed which has plunged me for purification in this mud-bath of rascality.—

Yours ever,

G. W. FOOTE.

Her Majesty's Prison, Holloway,
May 24th, 1883.

HOW CHRISTIANS TREAT FREETHINKERS.

[Concluded from p. 170].

My daily routine, and I suppose that of my fellow-sufferers, though I never spoke to them again, was as follows:— 5.45, waking-bell. Make bed, wash, sweep out cell. 6, warder asks if you want governor, doctor, or chaplain. The last, of course, I never wanted to see. His hateful creed and his wicked profession, the wickedest upon earth (and I write this fresh from contaminating contact with thieves), had been the cause of our torture. The doctor, unfortunately, I very soon wanted. Two cleaners are in each corridor, who remove things and bring water. Quarter to eight, bell. This means breakfast. Gruel one pint; brown bread, 8oz.;

the bread hard, coarse, dirty. You have a salt-box filled once a week, and if the supply is exhausted—no difficult task—you have to depend upon the general munificence of your fellow-prisoners to make good your deficiencies. 8.45, bell for chapel. This affects each individual only every other day. A's and B's go one day, C's and D's the next. After chapel, or breakfast, if it is a no-chapel morning, comes "work." Picking fibre, which means plucking the short, frayed ends from cocoa-nut mats, and untwisting them to furnish material for the interior of mattresses. Perhaps they want us to reflect upon our latter ends. Once I had oakum or tarred rope given me by accident. 11.45,—these quarters are the only pleasant ones in these unpleasant quarters—dinner. *Monday*: English meat, cooked, 3oz.; or beans, 7oz. and bacon, 3oz.; potatoes, 8oz.; bread, 8oz.; for drink, as much water as you like. *Tuesday*: Potatoes, 8oz.; bread, 8oz.; soup, three quarters of a pint. *Wednesday*: Suet pudding, 8oz.; potatoes, 8oz.; bread, 4oz. *Thursday*: As Tuesday, with the alternative of rice for potatoes. *Friday*: As Monday, but colonial meat may be substituted for English. *Saturday*: As Tuesday. *Sunday*: As Wednesday, *i.e.* the worst in the week, as Sunday is to a Christian persecuting country, the worst day in the week. . . . 3, exercise: one hour or less, especially at the beginning of the time. 5.45, tea: as breakfast, except that only 6oz. of bread are forthcoming. 8 o'clock bell, get into bed. 8.20, must be in bed. 8.30, gas out.

As to books. The first day I had none. Then came the literary trinity of the weakest and wickedest sort—the Bible, prayer-book, hymn-book. And this is all I had to read except the regulations as to diet in my cell. Outside my cell was another literary effort in the shape of a descriptive card, giving my name, religion and trade, summed up in one word, "Shopman," my offence, "misdemeanor," my sentence. As to the offence, some fellow-prisoner ranged face to the wall opposite my cell one day, and talking in slang intersprinkled with bad language and in a thick undertone with another companion in misfortune, spelling out the long word, communicated the fact that I was in for being a miser.

As to sentences. One month is a moon; two months are a drag; six months, a sixer, which reminded me of cricket; twelve months, a stretch.

The terrible monotony of this life told upon me. I asked the Governor to give me some occupation outside my cell. This, with every kindness, he told me was impossible until 224 marks were earned. In the first week, six marks a day are possible; in the second week, seven; in the third, eight. Sundays count. When a certain number of marks are gained a stripe is placed on the arm, and one may be made a cleaner, as I was. The work is very menial, very unpleasant, but anything for relief from the horrible sameness of cell-life. As a cleaner, one is out of the cell from 6.30 to 8, and sometimes again in the morning and afternoon. The exercise, when the due marks are obtained, is in the morning, and chapel hour is changed. In chapel two odd incidents occurred. A man named Freund (in for some religious riot in St. Paul's Churchyard), when the parson declared that everybody but himself had sinned, rose in his place and denied the soft impeachment. He was promptly marched off. On another occasion he stole a march on the chaplain, and before that whited sepulchre with side-whiskers came, shouted out that he had come to preach salvation and deliverance to the prisoners. I don't think any of them cared for salvation, but deliverance would have been very welcome. Mr. Freund did not appear in chapel again.

About a month after my committal low fever seized me, and I was in bed in my cell four days. I ask anybody to imagine what illness means between four hard, paperless, pictureless, white-washed walls, without a friend within hail. It was worse than the other morbid life. I tried to get back to the latter too soon. So pains in the limbs set in and I could not walk. I was ordered into the infirmary. There I was until my release. There I could talk without being ordered to turn my face to the wall. The diet was better: milk and beef-tea at first under the low hospital diet, and mutton chops under the ordinary. Chops had to be eaten with only a tin-knife and no fork. This is to prevent your committing suicide.

How drearily the days and nights dragged along! At last the day came for freedom once more. I left this dungeon to which Christians condemn Freethinkers with three thoughts strong in me. Sorrow for my companions, doomed to pine away many more months in the horrible [gaol; hatred of

the wicked creed whose wicked professors sent us there; and determination to attack that creed by blasphemy or any other honorable and effective weapon as long as I live.

HENRY A. KEMP.

MEMORIAL.

'To the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

"The Humble Memorial of the undersigned Sheweth

"That George William Foote and William James Ramsey were on Monday, March 5th, found guilty of blasphemy at common law and sentenced to imprisonment, respectively, G. W. Foote, 12 months; and W. J. Ramsey, 9 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.

BOYCOTTING THE POPE.

ONE never knows what to expect in these stirring times. "What next?" is a question all may put, but nobody can answer. Religion, at all events, is in a very bad way; and its professors and defenders cannot, it would seem, prevent the fact from being known. The Parnellites have not had time to cool down from the high temperature to which they were raised by the defeat of the Affirmation Bill before they are confronted with, for them, a far more serious crisis. The Holy Father *alias* the Bishop of Rome, *alias* successor of St. Peter, *alias* the Head of the Universal Church, *alias* god's viceregent upon earth—this aged individual has seen fit to denounce in strong language the Parnell testimonial and the doings of secret societies in Ireland.

Ill-natured Protestants will no doubt remind the Catholics that Popes have not always been opposed to secret societies (for example the Jesuits), nor have they invariably denounced assassinations. The story of St. Bartholomew's massacre, the dragonnades of the Huguenots, and other instances, may occur spontaneously to many.

But my object is not to bring up a long array of crimes against the Papacy—history contains such an array of portentous length; nor can Protestants boast of any better antecedents. I wish to note a point or two in this quarrel, for quarrel it is. Already there has been talk of boycotting the Pope in the way of refusing him Peter's pence, while Irish M.P.'s denounce the action of the Holy Father, and at the same time they try to excuse him on the alleged ground that he has been deceived, imposed upon, by one or more emissaries of the English Government, who have been sent to Rome for the purpose of misleading him! What will the Catholics say next? Deceive, impose upon the Pope! Where then is his infallibility? Oh! say they, the Pope is infallible only in matters relating to theology and religion. So that it seems to amount to this. The Pope is infallible when he is infallible; but at all other times and seasons he is as liable to be deceived as another man. It is only religious people who would be wise enough to adopt so splendid an excuse as that.

The Pope is infallible when it does not matter whether he is infallible or not—when he is in a region where no one can follow him—when he is uttering twaddle of no conceivable value to the world! But in a national crisis, when Ireland, one of his especial provinces, is almost in the throes of rebellion; when real guidance from any quarter would be an inestimable boon to the country, at such a time the Pope's infallibility lies dormant; at such a time he is open to snares and traps, and actually falls a prey to the wicked machinations of a Protestant Government! Such is the upshot of the silly pretence to infallibility, and the Irish M.P.'s are my authority for putting the matter in this fashion.

Can this have a beneficial effect amongst the Irish people? They have long been under the thumb of the Pope. Here is a grand "eye-opener" for them. Freethought must reap

the benefit. Impostors never fall out with their dupes without advancing truth and enlightenment. In this case, I sincerely hope the Irish, who have been deceived so long by impostors of all sorts, may achieve liberty not only from aristocratic rule, but more especially from that priestly degradation and misery in which they have lived for so many ages. If the quarrel between the Pope and Parnell shall have led to this grand issue, I will admit that even a Pope may not be an absolutely useless being.

But there is another side to this business, and that is a purely political one. What right has the Pope, an essentially foreign potentate (rather, the shadow of a potentate), to interfere with the politics of this kingdom? And where will it end, if not rebuked? What will the Pope do next if not properly snubbed for his action now? Are we to have one head of the State or two? Are we to be governed by constitutional power or by a priest, and that priest a foreigner? A set of Protestant bishops, though Englishmen, are unbearable. Must we have saddled upon us a foreign bishop also, a bishop who represents the cruel, inhuman, treacherous policy of the Vatican? It behoves Englishmen to answer these questions practically; and Freethinkers at least must expose and denounce this Papistical insolence.

JOS. SYMES.

C O R N E R E D .

In my time I have heard and taken part in a good many debates on theological subjects, and I have often been amused at the devices adopted by those who, defeated intellectually in the encounter, have done their level best to wriggle out of the absurd position in which they had placed themselves, or in which they had been put by their adversaries. Manifestly, it would be nothing short of arrogant assumption to suppose that Freethinkers have never found their match in the controversial arena. As a rule, however, Freethinkers have it all their own way, because, after all, there is nothing so reasonable as the plain unvarnished truth; nothing more mystifying, stupid and incredible than theology. The theologian has a very difficult position to maintain, and unless he is clever and ingenious in stating his case he can be very easily cornered by the Freethinker. But if the Christian theologian stands at a disadvantage in an open encounter with an opponent, he has ordinarily many advantages which the Freethought advocate cannot claim, and which I hope he will never try to obtain. In the pulpit the theologian is a monarch. His authority is supreme. He can dogmatise on points in dispute, anathematise his opponents, and make effective appeals to the feelings of his congregation. Nobody dares question his pretensions. The Church has chosen him as her infallible oracle; when he has spoken the organ plays, and the good, prayerful people wend their way severally to their homes.

What a poor parson's life would be if he were incessantly pestered by that strange, inquisitive sort of individuals who never seem satisfied with the "clearest explanations" of "scriptural truths," I am afraid even to contemplate. He would not be able to attend the mothers' meetings and advise them to lovingly persuade their husbands not to go to the theatre, but to come to the prayer meeting, which would be held in the vestry-hall in the evening; he would find no time to go to the annual Sunday-school treat and play "kiss-in-the-ring" with the pretty girl teachers; he would not even be able to pay his weekly visit to the churchwardens, who take such a deep interest in church work; he would have to be for ever in his study "searching the scriptures" with a view to finding an answer to those sceptical mortals who are always puzzling themselves, and other people, with Biblical and theological conundrums.

I remember that when I found my mind was undergoing a transition in regard to religious matters, I proposed to put a number of questions to the superintendent of the Sunday-school at which I was a teacher, and if I could not get a satisfactory answer to put them subsequently to the rector for further elucidation. My superintendent told me that all my questions were taken from "Tom Paine" (as a matter of fact they were not), and that if he were in my position he would not let such a man disturb his peace of mind; that he had once read Paine's "Age of Reason," and it made little or no impression on him.

Well do I remember the effect these remarks had on the members of the young men's Bible class to which I then

belonged. Most of these pious young gentlemen thought that "our superintendent" could demolish with greatest ease imaginable all the arguments of a thousand men quite as clear-headed and good-hearted as the illustrious Thomas Paine. They did not see that the superintendent was cornered. But he was. He could not answer the questions. And the rector could not answer them, and they remain unanswered to-day for a very obvious reason—they are unanswerable.

One of my friends invited me to tea and tried to convert me; but the tea did not wash away all my objections to Christianity, and I came away a stubborn unbeliever. On my way home I thought it was rather shabby behavior on my part to accept a friend's hospitality and then have to confess that I remained of the same sceptical opinion still; so I made it a rule never to accept Christian invitations to tea for some years after.

On one occasion, I asked an out-door preacher a question concerning Voltaire, about whom he had been speaking; and he answered me immediately by saying: "We will now sing the 144th hymn." He was cornered. I remember also reading of a Freethinker who attempted to deliver a lecture in a very pious neighborhood. The Christians brought a German band to answer him.

And now to-day, in the House of Commons, when the bigots are intellectually defeated, they stir up Irish hatred and kindle religious fanaticism, and bring a lot of blue-coated gentlemen with truncheons to put the Atheist out. The bigots are cornered.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

F R E E D O M .

MEN whose boast it is that ye
Come of fathers brave and free,
If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are ye truly free and brave?
If ye do not feel the chain
When it works a brother's pain,
Are ye not base slaves indeed—
Slaves unworthy to be free?
Is true Freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake;
And, with callous hearts, forget
That we owe mankind a debt?
No! true Freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free!
They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who will not dare
All wrongs to right, all rights to share.

[Lowell.]

S K E L E T O N S E R M O N S .

IX.

"And the magicians . . . brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt."—Exodus viii., 7.

1.—Talents of wicked often misdirected. . . . Land being already "covered" with frogs, magicians should (and no doubt could) have driven them away. . . . Providence led them to make matters worse.

2.—Irreverence of magicians in competing with god. . . . God's no doubt the superior frogs. . . . Competition due to Satan's jealousy.

3.—Great inconvenience of plague of frogs. . . . Cheapness of specimens for vivisection no consolation. . . . Saint Patrick's time was not yet come. . . . Neither god nor the magicians plague us so now. Thank god! Ditto the magicians!

X.

"And the four beasts said Amen."—Rev. v., 14.

1.—Church a fraternity without caste prejudices. Rich and poor, learned and ignorant, men and beasts, are all on a level—all levelled down.

2.—Despise not humble offices. . . . Beasts perhaps could not have engaged in prayer, but could at least say Amen. Do not be too proud to follow your spiritual advisers.

3.—Consider the prayerful spirit indicated in text. . . . O that we were all beasts! Amen.

THE PRAYER FOR PARLIAMENT.

WE should have thought a Parliament that contained Mr. Warton was past praying for. Yet every time that body meets, the sleek chaplain pounds out the following mass of folly. We append certain explanatory and explain-a-liberal-notes:—

“Almighty god, by whom alone kings reign, (1) and princes (2) decree justice; and from whom alone comest all counsel, (3) wisdom, and understanding; we thine unworthy (4) servants, here gathered together in thy name, (5) do most humbly beseech thee to send down thy heavenly wisdom from above, (6) to direct and guide us in all our consultations; (7) and grant that we, having thy fear always before our eyes, (8) and laying aside all private interests, (9) prejudices, (10) and partial affections, (11) the result of all our counsels may be to the glory of thy blessed name, (12) the maintenance of true religion (13) and justice, the safety, honor, and happiness of the Queen, (14) the public wealth, (15) peace, and tranquillity of the realm, and the uniting and knitting together of the hearts (16) of all persons and estates (17) within the same, in true Christian (18) love and charity one towards another, (19) through Jesus Christ our lord and savior (20). Amen.”

(1) And Queens also, unhappily. (2) Especially our talented and chaste Prince of Wales. (3) And a great many too many of them. Hard lines on god, ascribing specially to him the presence of all the lawyers in the House. (4) Hear, hear! It will be observed that the prayer introduces its solitary “here” here. (5) And in the House of Commons. (6) Here every one looks up at the roof (stage direction). (7) As if they were a company of physicians. (8) Messrs. Newdegate and Callan sometimes see two “fears.” (9) All railway directors with Sir H. Tyler at their head very earnest here. (10) Mr. Newdegate and Mr. Samuel Morley now remark, Amen! (11) Mr. John Morley smiles faintly. (12) First the blessed name, which might be supposed able to take care of itself. (13) Second, religion; third, justice which is prayerfully and accurately distinguished from religion. (14) Fourth, the Queen. (15) Fifth, after god, religion and the Queen, the people as a whole. And even here their wealth is placed before their peace or tranquillity. (16) National picture for the National Gallery, say by Mr. Frith, of everybody’s heart tacked on to everybody else’s, like a stick of cat’s meat. (17) A supplication for the knitting together of estates, is a prayer for land nationalisation. (18) Baron de Worms groans. (19) Duets of Amens by Mr. Gladstone and Joseph Cowen, Messrs. Forster and Healy, Sir William Harcourt and anybody in the House. (20) Chorus by Jews and Agnostics.

ACID DROPS.

IN the journals of Caroline Fox there is preserved one of those random speeches which show Carlyle’s lack of religious mooring. Speaking of the “wretched mistakes” which different ages make concerning their Greatest, he said, “Why, the Jews took Jesus for a scoundrel, and thought all they could do with him was to nail him up on a gallows. Ah! that was a bad business; and so he has returned to heaven, and they go wandering about the streets buying old clothes!” It was truly a “bad business” that the working out of the divine plan of salvation should depend upon a “wretched mistake.”

THERE seems to be a storm pending in the Free Church of Scotland—the cause of the elemental disturbance being a proposal to introduce instrumental music in worship. According to Dr. Begg and other stormy petrels, the very constitution of the Church is threatened. The Emperor Nero was also deeply concerned about musical instruments when his empire was on the eve of disintegration. Is it a historic parallel?

EVERY observer knows upon what slight causes vast issues may depend. That the great day of wrath and the collapse of the universe should follow upon the introduction of organs into the Free Church of Scotland is, however, a proposition so startling that a sceptical southerner might pause before acceding to it until well assured that Dr. Begg not only legitimately deduced it from Holy Writ, but has an assurance of the infallibility of his interpretation by a telegraphic communication from heaven.

A FREE CHURCHMAN will never think of questioning Dr. Begg. He knows that the eating of a little fruit led to the damnation of myriads of souls and the assassination of a deity; and although the world has waited a good while since

it was first prophesied that the sun should be darkened, the stars fall, and the earth end with a general combustion before some of those standing round should taste of death, the introduction of the organ may just fill to the brim the cup of iniquity, and induce the long-delayed second advent of the party who is to come “like a thief in the night.”

A MAN of the world acquainted with science and abreast of the thought of his age who takes up the account of the proceedings at the General Assemblies in Edinburgh must be forcibly reminded of the chattering of Dead Sea apes trying to warm themselves over the ashes of the fires left by departed travellers. Such a splutter and cackle over things which need concern no sane mortal is surely not heard outside a menagerie.

THE Christian Evidence Society held their annual meeting last week at Exeter Hall. The society, says the report, has delivered numerous lectures in infidel halls, and out of doors. These lectures consist, in the main, of abuse of Secularists. No converts are made. The chairman, Earl Carnarvon, admitted that infidelity was greatly spreading, yet he believed that to be a sign that Christianity was greatly progressing. Who shall say that faith is dead? The chairman would have made a good Early Father. His logic is about on a “par” with the rest of the Christian Society, from Augustine to Dr. McCann.

THE Rev. Luke Rivington, an extreme Ritualist, “protests in the name of all that is holy, in the name of the brotherhood of man, and the fatherhood of god, against the idea that it can be right to treat a man who has convictions about god which his parents do not possess as though he were no longer of the same flesh and blood. We ought to endeavor to influence public opinion against the cruel social penalties with which religious convictions are treated amongst the Hindus.” The words quoted were recently spoken at a missionary meeting in Bombay, the Bishop presiding.

LET us change the latitude, the hemisphere, the country. Let us read these words of a Christian priest in Europe instead of Asia, in England instead of India, and alter one last word. In fairness that would be called common but for its rarity in this Christian country, the clergy of this land and such amateur clergy as Messrs. Samuel Morley, Varley and Co., ought to repeat these noble words. They should protest in the name of all that is holy, in the name of the brotherhood of man, and the fatherhood of god against the idea that it can be right to treat a man who has convictions about god [even if they be negative ones] which his parents do not possess as though he were no longer of the same flesh and blood. We ought to endeavor to influence public opinion against the cruel social penalties with which religious [speculative] opinions are treated amongst the—Christians.”

WHEN I DIE.

FRIENDS, when I die,
Let no priest be nigh!
Freethought psalms you shall sing for me;
Freethought gospels of liberty
You shall read; thus will I die,
And no priest shall be nigh!

Friends, over my grave
Let no priest wave
His hand. Freethinkers gather round,
Lay me in our mother-ground;
And bedded thus, no priest shall wave
His hand o'er my grave.

SOUTHSEA.

BLASPHEMY IN THE LONDON STREETS

ON the wall of a new church at the entrance to Battersea Park, are two boards bearing the inscriptions: “New Church of All Saints, Battersea;” “Rubbish Suot.”

In Lower Sloane Street, a pious tinman suspends pails and baths from a rail upheld by two posts. On one post a board has it: “The wicked cannot live;” on the rail over the tin, is “Guilty before God;” on a board at the other post, “Saved by Blood.” This can’t all refer to the tins.

In Great Dover Street, Boro’, a pious barber has his shop-front covered with huge placards. On these may be read: “The wicked shall be cast into the lake of fire;” “Singeing 3d.”

In the S.E. district, a coffee-house keeper has the following, piously and thriftily exposed: “Behold the lamb;” “Mutton, large plate, 8d;” “Come buy and eat, without money and without price.”

MORE FISHERY EXHIBITS.—Joseph the carp-ent; Mussels, by Samson; the whelk-home prodigal; cod (in three ways); (h)addock-tor of divinity; Aaron’s rod; and salt-Peter, the kipper of the keys of heaven.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

In an early issue we hope to publish a Portrait of G. W. Foote, with a short notice of his work.

A Mass Meeting will be held in St. James's Hall, Piccadilly, on Wednesday, July 11th, to protest against the imprisonment of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey.

DR. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture in the Assembly Rooms, Grosvenor Street, Manchester, on Sunday, June 10th, Subjects:—11, "Christ and Bruno;" 3, "Origin of Life;" 6.30, "Evolution and God."

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.—Mark Nixon, C. Deane, T. A. Butler, P. Knowles, Tutor, E. Hatzfeld, W. Irving, A. F. Stone, J. W. Lubbock, J. Edward Carter.

BOXER.—No: a scriptural scrap does not mean to us the fight between David and Saul, or the wrestle between Jacob and Jehovah's unknown.

G. A. PODLE.—Write to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street. We do not teach languages or shorthand in science-classes; only natural science as it is called.

FITZROY.—We have not the least idea as to the means by which, or the words with which the gentleman you name took his own life. God took his own life once with the words, "My god, my god, why hast thou forsaken me?"

C. BUCKNELL.—A Secularist is one who attends only to the life that he knows is his or other people's. He has nothing to do with another world of which there is no evidence. An Atheist is like the Secularist, but does not believe in a god. All Atheists must be Secularists. All Secularists are not Atheists. An infidel by derivation is a person without faith. But the word is usually restricted to those not holding a particular faith, e.g., the Christian, which by the way is not very particular. We are Atheists and therefore Secularists. We repudiate the name Infidel though our foes give it to us.

CHECKWEIGHAM has for sale in aid of the Prisoners' Aid Fund, the following numbers of the *Freethinker*: Vol. I., Nos. 11, 12; Vol. II., Nos. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 34; Vol. III., Nos. 10, 12, 19, also Christmas Number, 1881. Also the following numbers of the *Secular Chronicle*, which he will dispose of to the highest bidder. Each number contains a portrait and biographical sketch of eminent Freethinkers: Vol. VIII., Nos. 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27; Vol. IX., Nos. 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22; Vol. X., No. 1; half of the proceeds of the *Secular Chronicle* to go to the Prisoners' Aid Fund.

AGENTS wanted in every town of England for the sale of the *Freethinker* and Freethought literature.

FORWARDED memorial with seventeen signatures from J. Robinson.

FERGUS SUMMERSGILL.—Your news is encouraging. We need not tell you not to relax your efforts.

ADDITIONAL AGENT.—F. Charters, 7 Albert Road, Bexley, Kent.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE recently published "Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development," by Francis Galton, author of "Hereditary Genius," contains a dissertation on theocratic intervention and the objective efficacy of prayer. Mr. Galton contends that if prayer has anything more than a subjective value its effects should admit of proof by statistics. The mere glance at such a method will convince anyone of its negative results. Sovereigns and rulers are the most prayed for of any class of the community but have by no means a pre-eminent immunity from sickness, danger and sudden death. The clergy so praying and be-prayed for, are certainly a long-lived class, but this is sufficiently accounted for by their strict abstinence from over physical or intellectual exertion.

WM. MYALL, writing in the *International Review* on "The

Influence of Secularism in Religion," says: "Notwithstanding the general laxity of faith which we have noticed as one of the characteristics of the age, the moral sentiment of to-day is unquestionably broader and better than at any previous period. There is more charity, more sympathy, more love and tenderness, a greater desire to know the truth and be guided by it, a stronger hatred of injustice, tyranny and wrong, and a deeper love of the true, the beautiful and the good than ever was known before." But morality is not Christianity. It is common to all religions—to Judaism, to Mohamedanism, to Buddhism, as well as to Christianity. That which makes one religion differ from another is its dogmas. The fundamental principles of morality are everywhere and at all times the same, but the dogmas of a religion are the religion itself. And this is especially true of Christianity. It exists only in its dogmas, and without them it loses its significance and identity.

Two statues of the great Freethinking brothers, Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, have been erected in front of the Berlin University, and were unveiled last week.

THE *Jewish World* reproduces an anecdote illustrative of the saying of John P. Robinson, he who said they didn't know everything down in Judee. Montesquieu once asked a very orthodox Israelite why he made use of a razor to cut the throats of his fowls. "Because," replied the Jew, "Moses orders us to use an instrument which cuts perfectly clean, without mangling." Montesquieu placed a magnifying-glass before the razor. The Jew looked and saw a thousand dents on the edge. "Accursed sinner that I am!" he cried, wringing his hands, "how often have I transgressed the sacred law." "Console yourself," answered the author of the "Esprit de Lois," as he handed the Jew back his razor, "Moses had no magnifying-glasses."

AN American theologian informs us that when Moses saw a certain portion of Jahveh in the cleft of a rock "it was with the achromatic eye of faith." It was with a similar instrument that Professor Woodhead, of Colney Hatch, discerned the other side of the moon.

Grand news from Hastings! Mr. Alfred King, the well-known Atheist, known as well for the breadth of his views as the height of his hat, has been elected member of the Hollington School Board at the head of the poll. The rector of the parish was a poor third. "*E pur si muove.*" For the benefit of Mr. King's clerical antagonist we translate—"And still it moves." One Galileo made the remark and it is even now true of the world of Freethought.

ON Saturday, June 9th, at 8.30, Mr. Joseph Symes will lecture in the Newington Hall, York Street, Walworth Road, on "The Defence of the Prosecuted Freethinkers." Our South London friends should try to be present.

SERMON ON DESIGN BY A TAPEWORM.

A PATRIARCH of the Taniad family thus addressed a congregation of his relatives:—

"My dear children: Of late I have been sorely grieved to learn that some among you have so far fallen from grace, as to even question that the world was made for our special benefit and use; and that others, wallowing in the filth and mire of infidelity, have blasphemously insinuated that other animals were, equally with our elect race, protected by the divine father. In order to revive your feeble faith, and to inspire you with becoming feelings of gratitude, it is necessary that I should recount a few of the manifold evidences of special design in favor of our chosen race.

"Our kind father has provided for us a home free of rent, and exempt from city, county and state taxes and special assessments, to which our title is clear and indisputable. Our peace of mind is never disturbed by the visits of landlords, pedlars, book, tract, or sewing-machine agents, and we can never have the bills of tailors and other insolent people flouted in our faces. We are never annoyed by the threats of the hireling of a soulless corporation to turn off the water or gas.

"What does it concern us whether the price of coal goes up or down, since our great protector has arranged to keep our domicile at the uniform temperature of 98° Fahrenheit in winter and summer? We have no stoves to set up, no stove-pipes to clean and fit together, no ashes to remove, no fires to build, no pipes to thaw out, and no water-backs to explode. When the heat of the summer sun is too powerful, the great designer has provided that our host shall perspire freely and thus keep our habitation cool; but when, in winter, our host is chilled and perchance partly frozen, our snug apartments remain warm and cosy. Our food comes to our

bodies already digested and in solution, so that without the effort of a gland or a muscle we absorb it. The serenity of our minds is never disturbed by the sight of the unpaid bill of a grocer, baker, or butcher. We are not even obliged, like the inferior animals, to chew or swallow our food, and hence, by this providential arrangement, are exempt from the bother of jaws and throat, and by this circumstance enjoy perpetual immunity from toothache, dental operations, tonsillitis, mumps, diphtheria, whooping-cough, croup, and such other maladies as those poor creatures possessing these crude and beastly organs suffer from, from infancy to old age. Having no stomachs, because we need none, we are free from nausea, nightmare, and dyspepsia. What a world of blessing do we here recount! Having no eyes, because we need them not, we are exempt from all the ophthalmias, cataracts, and squints, which abound so much among the lower animals, and, besides, are free from the annoyance of wearing goggles and spectacles. The twinges of pain from corns, and pangs from tight shoes, and the shame of shabby clothing are sensations foreign to our race.

"It is well known that our host is sometimes addicted to the use of pungent spirituous liquors, which would, if brought into contact with our more refined and sensitive bodies, render life a burden or even impossible. But to guard us against the brutal instincts of this creature, the creator has placed between his mouth and our abiding place a great pouch or stomach, beyond which these filthy and deadly liquids can never pass. How blind is he who cannot see the finger of providence in this arrangement! Had the creator permitted man to acquire an appetite for sulphuric ether, chloroform, kerosene, oil of turpentine, etc.—substances not so readily removed into the blood by this great pouch, the stomach,—our existence would have been impossible.

"Our host is fond of pumpkins, but, most providentially for us, dislikes pumpkin seeds, which, as you all know, would cause wholesale destruction to our race. He feeds freely upon the plants of the field, taking them as it would seem, almost at random, yet how carefully he avoids the ferns so deadly to our constitution. He even regards the pomegranate as a luxury, but detests the rind, and loathes the bark of the root, either of which, as you know, would be fatal to our existence. He delights in mulberries, but has no inclination to feed upon the bark of the tree. He might, indeed, intentionally or by accident eat of many fruits, flowers, and barks injurious or fatal to us, but an ever kind and watchful providence has not only given these things a disgusting taste or odor, but, as a rule, has caused them to grow only in the most out-of-the-way places, as among the equatorial mountains of Africa, or in the Phillipine islands, so that our host is very unlikely to ever see them. Who cannot see the finger, yea, the hand, and even the whole arm of providence in this?

"But sometimes the lord chasteneth even those whom he loveth. When, therefore, for our spiritual improvement, the lord permits disease to overtake us by reason of some folly or malevolent act of our host, he does not abandon us entirely, but only seemingly withdraws, as it were, behind a cloud. When our bodies are racked with pain, we should often be unable to maintain our positions had not infinite wisdom surrounded our heads with anchors which, despite the weakness of our bodies, hold us against all the assaults of our enemies. Had these anchors been made of silver, copper, steel, limestone, or horn, they would sooner or later have been corroded or softened by the action of the gastric juice, and thus all hope for our race would have vanished; but there again the omniscient chemist interposed and gave hooks of flint, proof equally against the acids of the stomach, and the alkalis of the bile and pancreatic juice.

"In few, if in any other animals on the face of the earth are the relations of the sexes so beautifully and harmoniously arranged and established as in our species. The expense and agony of courtship, flirtations, mothers-in-law, marital infelicities, heart-breakings and separations, are impossibilities in our divinely-organised societies.

"Much more of like import might we recount to you, so as to increase 'the difficulty of disbelief,' but enough has been said. Only among the lower animals, as in the case of man, do we find an occasional example of one who would argue with, or even raise his puny arm against god. Let it never be recorded that one of our race was guilty of such blasphemy."—*H. D. Garrison, in Radical Review.*

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

MATTHEW possibly wrote his gospel about the year 38 in Judea. Mark did not write his until the year 65, according to most commentators, at Rome. Luke wrote his two years before Mark in Greece; and John is supposed to have written his in Asia Minor about the year 97.

It is strange that "inspiration" should forget to inspire Mark with that with which it inspired Matthew, and should forget to tell John what it told Luke. There was plenty of time: twenty-five years between the first and second book; two years between the second and third, thirty-two years between the third and fourth. Undoubtedly inspiration blessed Luke "above all other men," for he has really more matter in his gospel than either of the others.

Luke alone records the conception of Elizabeth (chap. i., 5—25). He wrote sixty years after this miraculous affair, and one wonders Matthew didn't get hold of the scandal.

Luke alone records the salutation of Mary (i., 26—38).

Luke alone records Mary's visit to Elizabeth (i., 39—56).

Luke alone records the birth of John the Baptist (i., 57—79). Possibly this is because Luke was the only medical man, and god thought he would put all these indecent details in doctrinal language.

Matthew mentions an angel's visit to Joseph (i., 18—25). The other three know nothing of his mysterious visitor; but Luke is even with him in chapter ii., 8—20, where he scores up the angels' visit to the shepherd.

Matthew (i., 18—25) and Luke (ii., 1, 7) mention the birth of Christ; Mark and John know nothing of it.

Mark and John know nothing whatever about the circumcision of Christ, mentioned in Matthew i., 25; Luke ii., 21.

Neither Matthew, Mark nor John knows anything of Christ's presentation in the Temple, which Luke records (ii., 22—30).

Luke alone mentions Christ as going to the Passover when twelve years of age (ii., 40—52). Matthew, Mark and John pass over it.

John records the behavior of Christ at the "wedding carousal" at Cana (ii., 1—12). The others were so shocked at his advocating intemperance, that they don't put it in.

John alone records Christ's noted discourse with Nicodemus (iii., 1—21), where Old Nick asked rude questions.

John alone records that Christ baptised in Judea, when John the Baptist asserted his superior power (iii., 22—36).

John alone records Christ's limited display of mercy by picking out one sick man from a number, and curing him only at Bethesda (v., 1—16).

Luke alone records the raising of the widow's son from the dead. None of the others mention it (vii., 11—17).

Matthew alone records Christ's outburst of temper, at the failure of his schemes in certain cities (xi., 20—30).

Luke alone records the behavior of Christ in the Pharisee's house with Mary Magdalene (vii., 36—50).

Luke alone records the noticeable incident of a woman "bawling" after Christ in the street (xi., 27—28).

Luke alone records Christ's bad breeding when, invited to dinner with a Pharisee, he went with dirty hands and insulted his host when he got there (xi., 37—44).

Luke alone knows that Christ gave "divine" instruction to the multitude (xii., 1—59).

Matthew alone knows that Christ went on a walking tour through Galilee (xi., 1).

John alone records a long discourse of Christ in the synagogue at Capernaum (vi., 22—71).

Both Matthew and Mark record the instance of Christ being asked for signs, as if he were a public-house broker (Matthew xvi., 1—4; Mark viii., 11—12).

Mark alone records Christ as having cured a blind man by spitting in his eye (viii., 22—26); and as having cast out a deaf and dumb spirit (ix., 14—29).

Matthew is not ashamed to record the "plant" of Christ, about the fish with the tribute money (xvii., 24—27).

Luke alone records the sending of the seventy disciples (x., 1—16).

John alone records Christ's journey to Jerusalem to the feast of the tabernacles (vii., 2—55).

John alone knows all about the woman taken in adultery (viii., 2—11).

John alone records Christ's discourse with the Scribes and Pharisees (viii., 12—59).

John alone knows that Christ cured a blind man (ix., 1—11).

Finally, to show how Luke was "blessed above all men;"

Luke alone records the return of the seventy disciples; Christ's instruction to a lawyer; that Christ taught his disciples how to pray; the restoration of a woman; that a certain question is asked Christ; the transaction of Christ when he actually eat bread with a Pharisee.

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REVIEW.

Marriage and Divorce. By ALFRED E. GILES, Hyde Park, Mass., U.S.A.

A SHORT pamphlet of sixteen pages, showing more than traces of wide and deep reading, showing also a just appreciation of the difficulties surrounding the great matters that give the title to the book. Whilst apparently having some vague belief in a god and in a heaven, Mr. Giles has only one touchstone for social questions: the happiness of sentient beings. He attacks the clergy fiercely, but not unfairly. He quotes with approval from Mr. Jamieson. "The clergy a source of danger to the American Republic." "Ecclesiasticism in State matters always has meant, and always will mean what it is—tyranny." He writes himself, "that clerical selfishness, arrogance, oppression, and other powers of darkness, with Episcopal and Catholic ecclesiasticism, threaten American civil and religious liberty." The pamphlet, though dealing with the relations of the sexes from the American standpoint, is a human book and may be advantageously read by all nationalities.

CORRESPONDENCE.

PRISONERS' TREATMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—I think the plan of giving the facts of the prison treatment very useful and suggestive. When I visited Carlile in the Compter, he wore his usual clothing. When I visited Heywood, ex-mayor of Manchester, in the New Bailey Prison, in 1832, imprisoned for selling unstamped papers, he wore his usual dress. So when I saw Fergus O'Conner, in York Castle, he wore his green dress coat with brass buttons. The increased severity and harshness should be rung in the ears of the Ministry, till their consciences are reached by the outcry against harsh persecuting bigotry.—Yours faithfully,
E. T. CRAIG.

WE hear from H. A. Kemp that he is very ill. He has been suffering much pain, and has only been able to get about by means of bath-chairs. The doctor has now ordered him to keep his bed as he is on the verge of rheumatic fever.

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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C. HERBERT, *Treasurer*, 60 Goswell Road, London, E.C., to whom all remittances should be sent. Collecting sheets will be sent to any Freethinker on application to 28 Stonecutter Street.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THE ultimate ground for any belief, should be understood to be the fact that it can stand the greatest possible discussion from any possible point of view. And for this reason, I confess that I am quite unable to accept the excuses put forward, in the case of the recent sentences for blasphemous libel. So far as the offenders were brutal or indecent in their language, or obtruded insults on "unwilling ears and eyes," I of course admit that they were acting wrongly, and may have been obnoxious to the strongest possible language of moral reprobation. But it seems impossible to reconcile the infliction of a severe punishment, with the theory that the manner alone was punishable and the matter perfectly justifiable. If I sincerely hold that a man is right in expressing his opinions and attacking my own as long as he does it decently; and further, that he is not only exercising a right, but discharging a duty in attacking what he holds to be a mischievous error,

I find it very hard to say that he ought to be punished merely for the manner. Of course an insult to any creed in such a time and place as to provoke a breach of the peace, should be restrained like any other provocation of the kind; and the measure of the appropriate punishment depends upon the tendency to produce the specific result. But in this case it is clear that the evil is simply the injury to the feelings of believers. Now it is in the first place clear that a man may say things in all seriousness which hurt my feelings all the more because they are decently expressed. If I am seriously persuaded that Mahomet was a vile impostor, I can hardly convey my opinion to a Mahomedan in an agreeable way; and yet Christians will admit that it may be my duty to convey it in proper time and place. It is very difficult, to say the least, to distinguish between the intrusive offensiveness of certain opinions and the accidental aggravation in the mode of utterance, and difficult, therefore, to punish the offence without punishing the legitimate utterance. And hence, in the next place, it seems that the offensiveness of manner belongs to that kind of immorality which can best be suppressed by public opinion. . . . If, in short, we really and sincerely held that the utterance of all opinions, orthodox or the reverse, was not only punishable but desirable; and wished to restrain only that kind of utterance which is needlessly offensive—whether to Christians or infidels—Protestants or Catholics—we should, I imagine, be forced to the conclusion that criminal laws should not be called into play to punish people for outrages upon good taste, but only for directly inciting to violence. The fact that an opinion is offensive to a majority, is so far a reason for leaving it to public opinion, which in most cases is perfectly capable of taking care of itself; and we are certainly not impartial or really tolerant till we are equally anxious to punish one of the majority for insulting the minority. But I am straying too far from the general question; and only wish to point out that a hearty acceptance of the principle of toleration, and a genuine recognition of the fact that a man is entitled to more than mere impunity when he attacks an established creed, would lead to some practical consequences not yet recognised.—*Leslie Stephen, Nineteenth Century*, April.

THE *Quarterly Review*, for April, 1879, says in a destructive criticism of certain Bible prayers: "The *Speaker's Commentary* most strangely avoids reference to the famous passage in Joshua, which was used to crush Galileo. Of course it is scarcely within the limits of sanity that it can now be quoted to prove the revolution of the sun around the earth; but the question still remains, whether we are bound to believe on the statement of the sacred historian, that the rotation of the earth was really arrested for 'about a whole day.'"

PROFANE JOKES.

THE TRUEST TEXT IN THE BIBLE.—"The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad" (Hosea ix., 7).

LONG-FACED PARSON (to little girl): Mamma will soon leave you. God is calling her from you. *Little Girl*: Then god's a brute.

THE profane often jest in an unfeeling manner about Noah's drunkenness. But the real scriptural explanation is that he lived in the time of the deluge, when every body had several drops too much. Our irreverent young man suggests that after such a lot of water the old cockalorum deserved a little wine.

OUR irreverent young man wants to know if Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan are not literary pirates—not of Penzance. He hears they pretend that *Patience* is theirs, and he always thought it was *Job's*.

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