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Views and Opinions.

On Finding God.

At the close of one of my recent lectures a lady, full of good intentions and loaded with tracts, sought me out. After one or two preliminaries she assured me that if I would only seek in the right spirit I should be certain to find God. I did not contradict her. Neither did I assure her, as some might have been in a position to do, that I had sought God diligently and had been compelled sorrowfully to abandon the quest. All that has happened to me is that I have never come across any indication of a God, I have never felt the need of one, and if there is a God, it has always seemed to me that it was his duty to look after me and not mine to look after him. If I had ever come across any indication of a God I should, I think, have paid it or him much the same kind of attention that I have paid to the existence of any other natural force with which I have become acquainted. It would have served exactly the purpose that any other force serves—something that helps us to explain the mode or significance of the operations that we see going on around us. After all, "God" is only a hypothesis, and whether a hypothesis is worthy of attention or not depends entirely upon how much better we can explain things with it than without it. "God" represents to the scientifically minded a kind of intellectual profit and loss account, and in my judgment it appeared the account showed more loss than profit. In intellectual as in business matters it is a good plan to cut your losses as quickly as possible.

* * *

Why "God"?

So instead of assuming the conventional attitude that I should be only too glad to find proof of the existence of a God, that I had sought him sorrowfully, but had to mournfully confess my failure, etc., etc., I told the lady that I was not at all interested in finding God because I really did not know what I could do with him even if I found him. So far as I can see, believing there is a God will not help me with a single thing in which I am interested. To believe there is a God "at the back of things" will not help me to understand the things themselves. Adding that phrase to them gives me no further information. If God is a fact of observation he adds only one more to an already bewildering multitude of facts; if I use him

at all it is only to place him in the series, and it is not an extension of the series but an understanding of it that I am after. I really do not understand what people have in their minds when they say I shall find great comfort in knowing there is a God. Again, it is not the truth of comfort I am after, but the comfort of truth. To seek the former is only to act as does the drug-taker. Cocaine, or alcohol, or many other forms of "dope" will give me comfort—for a time—but one pays a heavy price for them before long. Nor do I see how the question of comfort arises. I am not greatly comforted by being told of the discovery of a certain number of individuals where it was formerly believed none existed. I may be mildly interested, and even the interest will depend upon the extent to which they differ from the humans I already know. But a God! What on earth am I to do with one, even though one of my well-meaning friends succeeds in forcing one on me? Candidly, I do not know. For over fifty years I have managed without one. During all that time I have never felt the need of one, and I do not know what I could do with one now. I really have no use for one.

* * *

The God That Was.

Of course, the retort is easy. I am an abnormality, and must not measure others by myself. But am I really an abnormality? If I am, none of my numerous acquaintances seem to have noticed the fact, and so I meet the charge by saying that far from being abnormal I am pretty much as most intelligent persons are, for they do not seem to have any other use for God either. Once upon a time people seemed to have a use for God, and then there was a justification for finding him. At that time he sent diseases, and he also provided the antidotes. He made wars and he gave victories. He was responsible for harvests, he kept the planets in their places and guided the stars in their courses. He blessed those he agreed with and those who did not agree with him had to look out for trouble. In those days it was important to know God and dangerous not to be on good terms with him. But to-day things are different. I am not aware of a single responsible person who says that God is of any use in the directions in which he once did so much. If we tell them that God sends disease and provides cures, they simply smile. If we talk of him guiding the planets, they talk of the law of gravitation; and if we say that those who have found him are obviously better off than those who have not, they ask us to see if we can distinguish the one from the other by the application of that test. Even the weather gets on without him, for only two or three years ago it was said by no less a person than the Bishop of Chelmsford, I think, that to say—as some newspaper correspondents had said—God was responsible for a wet or a dry season was to make religion ridiculous. And that was the finishing stroke. For although the control of the planets, and the management of disease had been taken from God, he had been left with the weather. It was not much, but it was at least something. If that is taken away what is left? Nothing. There is nothing

for God to do, and an unemployed deity is the most ridiculous thing that this planet offers for contemplation.

* * *

The Conflict of Gods.

It is said that man has no rest till he finds God. On a general review that is untrue. Generally speaking, a believer in God is the most restless of mortals. It is quite true, as the advocates of the argument from universal belief urge, that man has everywhere managed to get hold of a God of some sort. It is equally true that no sooner has he found his God than his next step is to try to get rid of him; and the last step is more difficult than the first. But it is quite clear that the quarrels between the various sects, and the fight between "advanced" and orthodox believers are fundamentally a question of getting rid of one God in order to enthrone another one. The only man to whom God gives complete rest is the man whose brain has almost ceased to function with regard to deity. But if his brain continues active no sooner has he found his God than he wishes him different from what he is. Knowledge in other directions shows that he does not square with facts. A keener moral perception, a finer moral feeling induces man to wish his God were a little better than he is, and there sets in that process of refining and "restating" God with which we are all so familiar. But all this is only another way of saying that "God" instead of bringing rest to the active mind, is the cause of uneasiness. It is an unsound hypothesis, and no one can entertain a false hypothesis without finding it more hindrance than help. It does not square with the facts with which we are already acquainted; it is in conflict with new knowledge that may be developed. To say that man is always searching for God is to say that he is not satisfied with the one that tradition presents him with. The man who is really at rest is the one who takes "God" for what it is. He alone can proceed calmly with the search for a wider and deeper knowledge of things, because he has no other interest than the discovery of truth, and no matter where truth leads he is content to follow it.

* * *

God and Evolution.

It is an interested superstition that man feels the need for God, and it is significant that they who are most energetic in impressing this upon us are those who are professionally concerned that we shall find him. But the belief in God, the finding of God, is not a thing of yesterday. When the savage finds God—and it is he who made the original discovery and then transmitted it to us with a whole stack of other idle and harmful fancies—it was not because he went round hunting for him. The savage, indeed, did not find God, it was God who found him. The great desire of the savage is to get rid of his gods if he can, and if the missionary who visits him for the purpose of giving him another God of a little different complexion from the one he has, made an end of all the gods, there is not the least doubt but that he would be regarded as a genuine benefactor. But the world of spirits which surround primitive humanity is a source of real terror and discomfort, and the attention paid to the gods is an indication of the fear they inspire, not of the satisfaction experienced at having a long felt need satisfied. It is only at a much later stage, when man has become more civilized, has idealized his gods, and made them as presentable as he imagines a good human ought to be, that some begin to look for God. And that, one may take it, is just an easy way for some people to objectify their ideals and their hopes. It is part of the intense conservatism of people which forces them to cast even their ideals of the future into the mould provided by the past. And that god, when found, has no more likeness to the god of history and theology than

a horse-chestnut has to a chestnut-horse. For a God who is a God there is no need and no use to-day. Everything goes on without him. That is why I told my lady visitor with apparent flippancy, but with real gravity, that I did not bother about finding God because I had no use for him even if I found him. And to go round looking for a thing one does not need, and has no use for in any circumstance, is surely the most gratuitous form of folly.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Hell.

DEAN INGE regretfully declares that for more than half a century the belief in immortality "has lost its roots in the soul." "I am not speaking of the irreligious," he says, "but the religious." He frankly admits that in the teaching and life of Christian ministers the belief in a world to come is almost a thing of the past. In a paper read at the Church Congress of the year 1919, he used the following words:—

We had first a revolt against the doctrine of reprobation, and a shallow, good-natured assumption that even the wicked and impenitent will not fail of ultimate happiness. Then all reference to the future life gradually disappeared from popular preaching, except as a rather perfunctory consolation to mourners. I have noticed again and again how a congregation loses its interest in a sermon if one begins to talk about heaven and hell. Would any preacher who wishes to be "acceptable" choose the text, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"?

There can be no doubt that, speaking generally, Dean Inge's statement is perfectly true. For the majority of the clergy the hereafter has ceased to be of any practical account; but there are ghastly exceptions which are more numerous than some of us imagine. In the *Evening News* of February 26 we read that in Belfast there lives an extraordinary revivalist called Pastor Nicholson. His church is uncomfortably crowded with eager hearers, even the window-cills and gallery steps, as well as the aisles, being thronged. In the porch there are buckets of water and cups specially provided for women who faint. Now the question comes, why is that church so terribly packed with people, and why do women faint in it? Simply because Pastor Nicholson believes in a veritable hell and delivers, with appropriate intonations, gestures, and vigorous Bible thumpings, fire and brimstone sermons of the old Puritan sort. The preacher dislikes interruptions caused by fainting fits, and so he requests all women who think they may faint to leave before the sermon. Such are his outbursts of fiery eloquence, however, that scarcely a service passes without some cases of fainting, especially among ignorant and timid young girls.

There is another immensely popular revivalist who goes from city to city and from town to town preaching the horrible doctrine of hell-fire. He may be described as Gipsy Smith the Second, but is advertised as Captain Gipsy Pat Smith. The truth is that Gipsy Pat Smith joined the Army during the War as a private and played his part so well in the art of killing Germans that he rose to be second in command of his battalion. That explains his present military rank of captain. Well, Captain Smith is now a peripatetic revivalist who believes that a genuine religious revival can only be produced by preaching hell. He admits, with Dean Inge, that "the doctrine of hell is the most unpopular doctrine in the Church of Christ to-day." He even affirms that "the Church of Jesus Christ has ceased to preach the doctrine of a place called hell." The result of the dropping of hell by the Christian Church, according to the Captain, is seen in the moral depravity of the masses of the people and the

consequent deplorable drift towards crime of every kind. The only remedy, the only hope of saving the people from their sins, lies in a powerful revival of the fear of hell.

Among the places recently visited by Gipsy Pat Smith was the City of Bath, where he was well received and treated most generously by the newspapers. The multitudes flocked to hear him, filling the Theatre Royal to its utmost capacity. Of course, there were some Christians who disapproved of the mission, and among these was one clergyman at least, the Rev. A. Cunliffe Fox, B.A., who had the courage to preach a sermon in severe condemnation of it, of which a verbatim report appeared in the *Bath and Wilts Chronicle* of February 6. What the Captain wanted to secure from his audience was a definite decision for Christ, about which Mr. Fox spoke as follows:—

What are we to understand by a decision for Christ by show of hands in the superheated atmosphere of one of Captain Smith's meetings? There can be no doubt as to that, for the Gipsy has spoken, and his words have been set down in black and white. To decide for Christ is to accept the Gipsy's scheme for getting to heaven, which I suppose is the only ultimate alternative to hell. Here are his words, as I read them in the *Chronicle* (January 22): "The way of salvation is through Christ, the open door.....Sin has led us away from God, and Christ alone can lead us back.....And so Christ the Lord is the only ground of a man's salvation." And again, on another occasion, and also reported in the *Chronicle* (January 31): "If hell is not logical, and if this place called hell is not necessary, what was the place that Christ died on Calvary to save men from? What was.....the use of Christ dying on Calvary if he did not die to save men from some terrible place he called hell? The whole thing is a hollow mockery, and the whole death of Christ is a piece of force if he did not die to save men from some place he termed hell." Captain Smith appears to be strong on geography and also to be an out and out Materialist. He cannot disconnect himself from his mother earth. He cannot think of hell except as a place, and of salvation except as escape from a place.

Mr. Fox's sermon is exceedingly remarkable. The Gipsy finds hell both necessary and logical, and referring to this Mr. Fox remarks:—

Captain Smith's idea of necessity and of logic entitles me to say: There is no such place as hell, which is precisely what I do say. And one of my reasons for saying it is because I can conceive of no sin, and of no life of sin, that is deserving of the eternal torment of Christian hell. A month, or a day, in such a place, would exceed the deserts of any Christian monster you can name. The very idea of hell is damned by its utter and colossal extravagance, by its very excess of vindictiveness.

Describing the Gipsy's general message, Mr. Fox observes:—

Captain Smith says that we are all sinners and that we all need to be saved. He tells an audience of men that filled the Theatre Royal that they are all sinners, and they take it lying down, nay, appear to be flattered by the description. But how does he know that they are all sinners? Has he looked into their lives and studied their biography? Of course not, nor is it necessary that he should do that. For however excellent, however pure and sweet and beautiful the character of any one of them may be in other respects, it suffers from one great vital defect, which causes him to be a doomed man. He has got the taint of Adam in his blood, and that taint will send him to hell unless he accepts the mediation of Christ, who through his cleansing blood shed on Calvary is able to remove it and present him spotless before the throne of God. That is sin, the sin which only Christ can take away, and the penalty of which is hell; and I suppose that is the reason why Frederick Bywaters was baptized and confirmed and had the Sacrament of the Lord's Table administered to him in prison, and

I suppose the effect of this will be that he will be counted for "righteous in the other world, having made, in the eleventh hour of his life here, his decision for Christ.

That is ironic enough, and underlying it is common-sense. Mr. Fox is a Modernist who is on the right road, but as yet far away from the only logical and ethical destination. And after all the Gipsy is right. Supernaturalism is rooted and grounded in fear, and the loss of fear will eventuate in its death. We gladly give the modernists the credit of being actuated by the purest and noblest motives. To them the Creeds as they stand are as absolutely unbelievable as they are to Freethinkers, but they retain to a large extent the traditional phraseology, though they have stripped it of its traditional meaning for themselves; but while nominally remaining Christians they are in reality building the tomb of Christianity. They are converting God into a sort of vague, semi-impersonal being, or, to adopt Matthew Arnold's words, into "a power not ourselves which makes for righteousness," but makes for it mysteriously and imperceptibly. This is why Unitarianism has never achieved any signal success, and Modernism is only another name for Unitarianism. Such a system will never command the sympathy and support of comparatively ignorant and superstitious people. When God is no longer an object of fear he will gradually and quite naturally cease to be an object of belief. The inevitable trend of Modernism, as Bishop Gore truly says, is towards Atheism. Captain Smith is clever enough to perceive that hell is an absolute necessity if historical Christianity is to survive. The late General Booth admitted that he could not have carried on without the belief in the Devil, and no evangelical preacher will ever win the people unless he succeeds in engendering the fear of hell in them. The better educated and more cultured clergy do not believe in hell and the Devil, with the result that their churches are being deserted. All successful revivalists have found hell simply indispensable. With vivid descriptions of the torments of the damned in hell-fire in their discourses there are no empty seats in the buildings where they hold forth. Gipsy Pat Smith is obviously an exceedingly ignorant man, but he understands his job and does it very well.

Evangelistic meetings are pitiable spectacles. To attend one of them is to weaken one's confidence in the progress of the race; and as long as ignorance and emotionalism go hand in hand their success in cunning hands will continue. Our only hope is in the gradual diffusion of scientific knowledge among the masses. It is the clear light of knowledge that chases away the darkness in which superstitious fears thrive. The priests have always feared knowledge quite as much as their dupes have feared hell, for the former were fully aware that the coming of knowledge to the latter would extinguish the fear of hell in their hearts. The supreme need of our time is a sane and wholesome system of education which will confine itself to the impartation of secular knowledge untinged by a single shred of supernatural belief. It is for this we must continue to fight, for it is this alone that can put an end to the curse of revivalism which has never thriven except on ignorance and false fears. J. T. LLOYD.

Theism.

ÆONIAN darkness lifts; the sorry shade
Cast by the thought of that low-browed task-master,
That pasteboard spectre of the hectic eye
Whom the ape-man in his own image made—
That dream portentous, gravid with disaster,
Must fade away in reason's dawn, and die.

D. R. ROSS.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing.

CHILD: "What large teeth you have, grandmamma!"

WOLF: "All the better to eat you with, my dear."

—*Story of Red Riding Hood.*

THE clergy never tire nowadays of telling people that the brotherhood of man is one of the primary elements of Christian doctrine. They now ignore the Union Jack, which, for some years, was one of the sacred objects of worship. Forgotten are all the patriotic platitudes concerning the "God of Battles," and men are now bidden to turn their eyes to the figure of the "Prince of Peace." Christ, they tell us now, proclaimed: "Blessed are the peacemakers." The clergy have too short memories. They have never earned for themselves this benediction. It is true the Pope sought to impose what was called "the truce of God" several times during the late war, but it was a gesture of impotence. For nothing could be gained by postponing a fight to the death between embattled millions for a few hours on Christmas Day or Good Friday. Such minor palliations were of small account compared with the grim fact that the clergy never set themselves in opposition to militarism itself.

Turn to the history of our own country, and refer to the record of the Church of England since the Reformation. Britain has waged over a hundred wars, great and small. In every instance the Established Church has been the obedient, humble servant of the Government of the day. She blessed the regimental flags, fanned up the war-spirit, and sung *Te Deums* for victory. The Prayer Book, issued with the sanction of both Houses of Parliament, assumes always that justice is invariably on our side, and reminds credulous worshippers that: "There is none other that fighteth for us but only Thou, O God."

In the late war whole nations, professedly Christian, were engaged for years in wholesale slaughter. Europe was a steaming slaughter-house, in which perished the flower of the manhood of the Christian world. It is a complete indictment of the Religion of Christ, which then proved itself to be the most powerless and hypocritical thing on earth. The millions who professed to be followers of the "Prince of Peace" were entirely unaffected by his teaching. When passion or self-interest was aroused, every precept and every commandment was discarded and forgotten. Nor is this all, for a few persons were actually treated as criminals for attempting to take the Christian religion seriously, as the Quakers, and the Conscientious Objectors, in England, and a few Communists and Socialists in Europe and America.

So far as the prelates of the different Christian churches are concerned, the profession of Christian ethics is a mockery and a delusion. Whether they be Roman Catholic cardinals, Anglican bishops, Nonconformist divines, or ecclesiastics of the Greek Church, the fact remains the same. Professed followers of the "Prince of Peace," they blessed the standards of murder, and invoked the divine blessing on soldiers armed to the teeth. As for the brotherhood of man, no one remembering the awful treatment of Jews in Europe, and of negroes in America, to cite no other examples, can but see that Christian doctrines are of one aspect, but its practices of another.

The clergy are now very anxious to persuade everybody that they have had a very important share in the improvement of the condition of the people. They wish to forget the Great War and their own shameful share in it. Hence, we are not surprised at the inclusion in a Church of England hymn-book of some pathetic appeals to the sympathies of the British work-

ing man. Listen to the dulcet tones of the clerical syren:—

Sons of Labour, think of Jesus
As you rest your homes within,
Think of that sweet Babe of Mary
In the stable of the inn.
Think, now, in the sacred story
Jesus took a humble grade,
And the Lord of Life and glory
Worked with Joseph at his trade.

"Where are the snows of yesteryear?" Where are the hymns of hate, the songs of hell and damnation? Where are the fervent appeals to regard the Union Jack among the sacred symbols of our most holy religion? Without unduly labouring the matter, this change of front is disingenuous and by no means clever. Is it possible that the growth of the Labour Movement has actually frightened the Lord's Anointed, and they are preparing for that awful day when the Red Flag flies at Westminster? Someone ought to remind our pastors and masters that it is within the bounds of possibility that mediæval beliefs and creeds may be found quite incompatible with a system of government based on democratic ideals. With every generation the social conscience becomes quickened, and men no longer accept without question ideas which were taken for granted by their badly educated forefathers.

MIMNERMUS.

The Protestant Reformation.

VI.

(Continued from page 133.)

Everything was prepared for the blow struck by Luther—better indeed than he was himself; for it was well known that he began his attack on Indulgences with no expectation or desire of the total breach with the See of Rome which ensued.—Hallam, "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," p. 295.

Luther himself was frightened at the storm which he had raised. He wrote humbly to Pope Leo, trusting his cause in his hands. Leo was at first amused: "Brother Martin," he said, "has a fair wit; it is only a quarrel of envious monks." When the Theses [against Indulgences] were in his hands, and he saw that the matter was serious, he said more emphatically: "A drunken German has written them—when he is sober he will be of another mind."—J. A. Froude, "Luther," *Contemporary Review*, July, 1883.

At the time when Luther nailed his Theses against Indulgences to the Church door he was not the obscure unknown monk that popular Protestant accounts often represent him to be:—

Throughout a large portion of Germany his attainments were already conceded, as his rank in his Order and his position in the University show.¹

The Theses, or their general contents, immediately circulated through the various universities and from them as centres, in all directions. It was a live subject, the most pressing question of the hour; people were only waiting for someone to bell the cat. As Dr. Fleck (who gave the inaugural discourse when the University of Wittenberg was founded in 1502) says: "Well, the man has at last come!"

Luther himself was unprepared and even startled by the reception accorded to his Theses. "In fourteen days," says Luther, "they flew all over Germany." "In four weeks," says his contemporary, Myconius, "they were diffused throughout all Christendom, as though the angels were postmen."² A remarkable result in those days of slow communication.

The Dominicans were the first to enter the field against Luther. Tetzel himself was a Dominican and

¹ Jacobs, *Martin Luther*, p. 78.

² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

through him the Order itself was attacked. Albert, Archbishop of Mayence, sent a report of the movement and the actions of Luther to the Pope, but Leo X, was a humanist, and favoured the utmost freedom of opinion, so long as the revenues of the Papacy were not seriously affected or its orderly government disturbed; moreover, he was greatly occupied with other affairs. He read the Theses with the eyes of a man and a friend of letters rather than those of a Pope and was secretly amused at the agitation of Albert and the Dominicans. He thought the Augustinians were jealous of the Dominicans and it was all "a quarrel of envious monks." But the Dominicans clamoured for active measures, and an effort was made by Silvester Mazzolini (better known as Prierias, the name of his native place), a learned Dominican who held the office of official censor at Rome, to rouse the Pope from his indifference. The Pope entrusted Prierias with the task of giving a learned opinion on the questions involved. Prierias had already made a study of the Theses, and he tells us, in proof of how easy it was to refute Luther, that it took him only three days to draw up the opinion which was immediately printed and put into circulation (June 1519). Prierias, quite correctly, saw the fundamental question at issue was the authority of the Church and of the Pope as head of the Church. He treats the German monk with great contempt, employing alternately mockery, insults, and threats. He is "curious to be informed for certain whether this said Martin was possessed of an iron nose or a brass head which no one could break?" He lays it down that no person has a right to understand the Scriptures otherwise than settled by the Roman Pontiff, and roundly declares:—

Whoever does not trust in the doctrine of the Roman Church and of the Pope, as the infallible rule of faith, from whom the Holy Scriptures themselves derive their force and their authority, is a heretic.³

Measuring Luther by the standard of morals at Rome, he says that if the Pope was to bestow a good bishopric and a plenary indulgence for the repair of his Church, Luther would extol the virtues of the Indulgences which he now denounces. "If the property of dogs is to bite," said he to Luther, "I much fear you have had a dog for a father." He is astonished at his own condescension in taking notice of this rebellious monk, concluding with the ominous threat that the Roman Church—

Can restrain with secular arm those who, having at first received the faith, have turned away therefrom. This Church is not bound to employ many reasons in order to oppose and overcome the persons of rebels.⁴

No idle threat coming as it did from the Roman censor.

Prierias boasted that it took him only three days to confute Luther. In his reply Luther says that he was only two days in answering Prierias, and declares that he takes his stand on the word of God, the whole word of God, and nothing but the word of God, and thus was the issue joined; the matter in dispute was shifted from the efficacy and sale of Indulgences, which now became a side issue, to the far more serious question of the authority of the Church and the Pope.

At the beginning of July 1518, Luther was summoned to appear within sixty days at Rome to stand his trial, but in view of the notoriety of Luther's acts and teachings, more severe proceedings were set on foot, even before the sixty days were over. These measures are given in the Brief of August 23, 1518, sent to Cardinal Cajetan, the Papal Legate at the Diet

of Augsburg. Cajetan was to have him brought to Augsburg; should force have to be used, or should Luther not recant, then Cajetan was to hand him over to Rome for trial and punishment. Should it be impossible to procure his appearance at Augsburg, then he and his followers were to be publicly excommunicated, and the authorities in Church and State were to be forced, if necessary under pain of interdict, to seize and deliver up the excommunicate. Probably the Papal authorities congratulated themselves that they had now disposed of Luther's business, in the same way that they had disposed of Hus, Jerome, and Savonarola, and the end would be the dungeon and the stake. In this, however, they reckoned without the Elector, Frederick the Wise, of Saxony, whose subject Luther was, and who demanded a trial before Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg and would not consent to sanction any other measures. In the end Cardinal Cajetan conceded this. Thus the way was paved for Luther's historic trial at Augsburg.

In the spring of 1518 Luther wrote his *Resolutions*—in latin—which dealt exclusively with the defence of the Theses but in a much more hostile tone towards the Indulgences. In them he says:—

It makes no impression on me what pleases or does not please the Pope. He is a man like other men. There have been many popes to whom not only errors and vices, but even enormities (*monstra*) were pleasing. I attend to the Pope as Pope, *i.e.*, as he speaks in the laws of the Church, or when he decides in accordance with them, or with a Council, but not when he speaks out of his own head.

Together with his *Resolutions*, Luther published two letters, one to the Bishop of Brandenburg, the other to Pope Leo X, in which he asserts his readiness to listen to Leo's voice "as to the voice of Christ, who presides in him and speaks through him." He begs the Pope to deal with him just as he pleases:—

Enliven me, kill me, call me back, confirm me, reject me, just as it pleases you.⁵

Very different from the defiant tone of the *Resolutions* addressed to his friends and partisans. Even Mr. Jacobs, who has written a life of Luther entitled *Martin Luther, the Hero of the Reformation*, is staggered by this flagrant contradiction, for after quoting from the defiant *Resolutions*, he observes:—

To the Pope he writes with a reverence that would be unintelligible if it were not the rule that in all progress there is, in every sincere student, a strange combination of contradictory principles.....No words of submission could be more emphatic than those with which he [Luther] closes (p. 96).

A singularly feeble apology for his hero.

At the end of September, 1518, Luther set out for Augsburg, where he arrived with an imperial safe conduct, on October 7. He started on the journey—which with the exception of a few miles, he accomplished on foot—with great inward tremors, and was a prey to the same violent agitation at Augsburg. At a later date he attributed this to the influence of a demon. It was only during this journey that Luther became aware of what a celebrity he had become. At Nuremberg friends noticed that his coat was shabby and provided him with a new one. At Augsburg his unexpected arrival was the sensation of the hour. Everyone was eager to see and hear him. Writing to his friend Melancthon, he says:—

The only thing that is new and wonderful here is that the town rings with my name. All want to see the man who, like a new Herostratus, has kindled such a big blaze.

W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

³ D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁵ Grisar, *Luther*, Vol. I, pp. 335-6.

Death of Mrs. Ingersoll.

WHOEVER passed through East Twenty-first Street at Gramercy Park on the afternoon of Sunday, February 4, must have seen a long array of cars parked on the north side of the street, east and west of No. 117, and observed that the large flag in the Park was half-masted on its tall staff. Those who came in the cars had been the friends in life of Eva A. Ingersoll, whose funeral they had come to attend, and the flag had been lowered in her honour. The funeral was announced as private, only the relatives and closer acquaintances being summoned, but one arriving at the hour set found the rooms already filled, and numbers came later to stand uncovered while Dr. John Eliot of the Ethical Society paid his tribute, in the name of those present or absent, to the woman who had been so favoured in life and who was so honoured in death.

Mrs. Ingersoll died on the morning of Friday, February 2, and lay in her coffin in her home, in the midst of her family, until the funeral hour on Sunday. Meanwhile it was not a house of ostentatious mourning. No terror of death chilled the surviving members of the family as they sat or moved about the coffin. Conversation was not hushed. Messages of condolence were received and read by the grandchildren or daughters seated near-by, as though "mother" were one of the listeners and would have an interest in them. Mrs. Ingersoll was eighty-two years old. Her death was an event for which she and they were prepared. Inordinate and inconsolable grieving over that which was timely in the order of Nature would have had her disapproval, and it was so felt by members of the family.

The coffin rested near the front windows of the parlours in the Ingersoll house, only partially visible for the flowers that covered it, on the afternoon of the funeral, and Dr. Eliot stood beside it while delivering his brief address. What the speaker had to say necessarily included much about the distinguished man who, with her who lay there, had founded the home of which she was the head. It was here, with this woman and her children, that Ingersoll found the ideal home that inspired the sentiments regarding the family life which are many times expressed in his writings. From this home, then, over which Mrs. Ingersoll presided and which she had built, there had gone forth more of that sentiment for the improvement of family life everywhere than from any other household in the world. Dr. Eliot spoke of the impartial hospitality of the Ingersoll house, where all were treated like royalty. He had seen Mrs. Ingersoll leave her place at the head of her table to welcome the most distinguished visitors, and also to receive with equal cordiality the unknown, the poor soldier, even the coloured one. This woman without superstition, as her husband called her, a woman without fear, with charity for all, exerted an influence for good that had made her life forevermore a blessing to the world and to all among whom she lived and who may come after her.

Among the attendants, who numbered above one hundred, were many with well-known names: Edwin H. Blashfield, Julia Marlowe, E. H. Southern, Francis Wilson, Dr. Royal S. Copeland, Dr. and Mrs. Albert Shaw, Judge George W. Maxey (of Scranton, Pa.), Albert Morris Bagby, Prof. and Mrs. David S. Muzzey, Mrs. Harriot Stanton Blatch, Mrs. James Lee Laidlaw. The absent were represented by letters and telegrams. Letters were sent by Ida Husted Harper, Mary E. Bond Foote, Eustace Conway, Mrs. Henry Villard, Adolph Lewisohn, Henry Bergh, Robert H. Ingersoll, Albert Bigelow Paine, Hamlin Garland,

Eugene V. Debs, I. Newton Baker (who was Ingersoll's faithful secretary for many years), and scores of others. A telegram came from Dr. John Emerson Roberts of Kansas City, who said:—

My sympathy for yourself, and congratulations for your mother. If there is another life, she is now with him whom she worshipped and adored. If there is not, her longing and lonely heart will know loneliness no more for ever.

Among other telegrams, of which there were a great many, were those signed by Edgar Lee Masters, Minnie Maddern Fiske, Ellen Glasgow, Thomas Mott Osborne, Nelson A. Miles.

The ceremonies at the crematory were attended only by members of the family.

Mrs. Ingersoll was one of the Parker family whose members are associated with American history from the earliest days of the Revolution, and if her own biography could be composed from recollections and tributes of the hundreds who enjoyed her friendship and hospitality, it would make a great book. There is no home in America into which Robert Ingersoll's words in behalf of women and children and the home life have penetrated, that does not owe her a debt of gratitude. No other life could bless her as she has blessed this. She has not gone to her reward. She had it in the fruits of her life here.

Truthseeker (N. Y.).

The Pioneer.

(DEDICATION OF "NATURAL GENESIS.")

At times I had to tread
Where not a star was found
To lead or light me, overhead;
Nor footprint on the ground.

I toiled among the sands
And stumbled with my feet;
Or crawled and climbed with knees and
Some future path to beat. [hands,

I had to feel the flow
Of waters whelming me;
No foothold to be touched below,
No shore around to see.

Yet, in my darkest night,
And farthest drift from land,
There dawned within the guiding-light;
I felt the unseen hand.

Year after year went by,
And watchers wondered when
The diver, to their welcoming cry
Of joy, would rise again.

And still rolled on Time's wave
That whitened as it passed;
The ground is getting toward the grave
That I have reached at last.

Child after Child would say—
"Ah, when this work is done,
Father will come with us and play—"
'Tis done. And playtime's gone.

A willing slave for years,
I strove to set men free;
Mine were the labours, hopes, and fears,
Be theirs the victory.

—Gerald Massey.

Acid Drops.

After her experience in the law courts it is probable that Dr. Marie Stopes will have a little more sympathy with the fight put up by Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant on the question of what is now called birth control. It is quite certain that her case benefited greatly from the number of eminent doctors who came forward, and it is equally certain that had not Bradlaugh and Besant done what they did to bring the subject before the people Dr. Stopes would have had to fight alone, and in that case the result might have been very different. Her assumption of divine inspiration in her campaign is very amusing—although to the psycho-analyst it is very suggestive, especially when taken in connection with the nature of her propaganda and her sense of religious illumination. For the rest, we suggest that her writings would gain in force and precision if they were strictly limited to the question of birth control and its advisability and shorn of the wholly unscientific character of many of the theories advanced. A book never gains by being encumbered with a number of irrelevant details. Luckily for her the opposing counsel were not students of science.

Once again we must emphatically protest against the attitude of those, among whom we fear we must place Lord Chief Justice, that the subject of sex must be dealt with only as a subject to be whispered about between married people. The assumption that a girl of nineteen or twenty years of age is entirely ignorant of sex matters everyone must know is ridiculously false. A case of that kind is a rarity, and if it were true there would be so much the greater need for their education in this direction. The attitude of this class of people makes sex an unclean subject, because it is labelled as such, and that one may as well hang a dog as give it a bad name is as true of subjects as it is of people. Bradlaugh, Besant, and Marie Stopes did not make the subject of the relations between the sexes unclean or suggestive, that has been done, and is still being done, by all who say to the world that the subject is one that must only be whispered about because of its semi-indecent character. What clean-minded people have to fight against is the unclean atmosphere generated and sustained by Christianity and by those affected by it. To the pure everything is impure, is the rule by which the class of people to whom we have referred appear to be guided.

"To robbers of God: this box is cleared daily," reads a notice over the collection-box at St. Luke's Church, Kingston. This will hardly frighten those bold Christians who contribute brace-buttons and counterfeit coins.

Thieves who stole a bicycle belonging to the Rev. A. E. Tomkin, vicar of Belmont, Sutton, left in exchange a broken machine with only one wheel. The Vicar may realize that prayer cannot make a bicycle wheel.

The Dean of Manchester says that Christianity is "a splendid and jolly religion." So it is—for the parsons—and there are 50,000 of them.

Westminster City Council has appointed an inspector of public morals at a salary of £4 a week. This does not appear to be a testimonial to the work of the clergy and the police.

"I have in my Bible class a number of men who acted as gunmen. They are going to be Sunday-school teachers," says the Rev. J. Redmond, rector of Ballymacarett, Ireland. A Christian Press, which gets so excited concerning Socialist Sunday-schools, passes this without comment.

According to the *Sunday Express* a "blasphemous" picture is being exhibited at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York. The picture represents prominent American

Prohibitionists interrupting the marriage feast of Cana, where Christ turned water into wine. Christ is surrounded by the Prohibitionists who are protesting against his miracle. One of them is pointing accusingly to some jugs full of wine, and a prohibition policeman is standing in the doorway. This will shock many people, but after all, it is what we expect would have happened had Jesus been in New York to-day and tried to perform an alcoholic miracle.

One of our readers informs us that there is a bit of the "true cross" in a Roman Catholic church near Mansfield. We do not doubt it. There are so many bits of the true cross about that it must have had the miraculous quality of multiplying itself. Still, believing in the true cross is not a bit more wonderful than believing in many of the other things that go to make up Christianity, and it seems very fastidious after swallowing so much to make a fuss over some chips of wood.

At Johannesburg the Council has been discussing under what conditions sites should be granted to the native Christians for them to build churches on. One of the members of the Council said that it was asking for trouble to give them sites. At Kilspruit there had been very undignified scenes. "One side wanted to sing Presbyterian hymns, the other Wesleyan tunes. Free fights took place and became the order of the Sabbath." Quite a pretty picture of the humanising tendency of Christianity. Presumably the blacks who do get converted take their religion rather seriously, and what is a broken head or two when the interests of true religion are at stake? It is only a lukewarm faith that counts such things as of consequence where the interests of true religion are in question.

The *Daily Telegraph*, referring to the recent weather, which has changed from Arctic severity to spring-like mildness, says some caustic things about the "Weather Juggler." Where does that editor expect to spend eternity?

Dean Inge, in a more than usually jocular vein, advises "the disciples of Tolstoy" to go and "live in Ireland." The Tolstoyans might tell the Dean to go to Jericho.

The Dean of Manchester declares that Jesus Christ was a typical working-man. According to the Gospels he made more speeches than he made chairs and tables.

Mother Paulina, Superior of the Community of St. Katherine, Fulham, has reached the ripe age of 100 years. The Vicar of Harrow, who has attained 70 years, is resigning his benefice and also his position as Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral. The job of following in the footsteps of Christ does not appear to shorten life.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has recommended ventilation and the prayers of a [Christian?] clergyman to get rid of the spook which has an expensive habit of breaking furniture. Very well, if such a prayer is of any value, the creed of the prayer must be supposed to be true. Then its commands are to be obeyed. In the middle ages the "Holy Office," which was to maintain that same creed in its original purity, would have sent Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the (presumably) Protestant clergyman who was to turn exorcist, to the stake for heresy or for communicating with devils. He would have been in scarcely less danger from the Act of James I (1603), by which it was a felony to "employ, feed, or reward any evil or wicked spirit." So we must leave the distinguished author invoking the aid of the Christian Church which, in the days of its power (Catholic and Protestant), would probably have consigned him to the flames or to the gallows. Even now, he may be "preached to death by wild curates."

Christian charity is a fearful and a wonderful virtue and redolent of humanity. This is how some Christians

do good by stealth. We quote from the *Daily Telegraph*: "The Dowager Duchess of Abercorn, wearing an embroidered black crêpe-de-Chine dress with ermine outlining the bodice and a black toque, was 'at home' at Beauchamp Place for a sale of work on behalf of charity." The humility appears to be with the dressmaker, whose name is not mentioned, and the charity with the editor who printed such nonsense. Perhaps the paragraph was paid for.

Without hurting the feelings of our Christian friends, we might suggest that they are very human, and their human needs are no different from ordinary people. Prebendary Carlile requires a cottage by the sea, furnished for the summer months, for overworked evangelists. If any Freethinker is big-hearted enough to oblige, he may complete the foolery by supplying it rent free if possible as per advertisement, and then reflect that these people live by faith. It is pathetic, but actions always speak louder than words.

The series, entitled *The Outline of Literature and Art*, in fortnightly parts may be recommended. To write no worse about them would be to state that they are better than a flood of missionaries to the east. In this series Canon Barnes discourses on "The Story of the Bible." This courageous gentleman writes, "It would be foreign to our present purpose to discuss the Christian faith." Later we find him selling fish in this style: "That Christianity conquered the Roman Empire was a blessing to mankind." The publishers might at least exercise a little discrimination in their choice in this matter. A writer on the Bible ought not to be one who lives on it.

"I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog," remarked one of the principals in Mark Twain's story of the Jumping Frog, and after carefully studying a picture in the *Times* of the King of Norway watching a ski contest, we are compelled to make the same remark—with variations. The king, we note, is standing with his face turned towards the thing he is looking at. He is standing on both feet, and he has both eyes open. So far as can be seen he acts much as any other person would act if he wanted to look at anything. If he were standing on his head, or seeing through his ears, the portrait would be interesting. As it is we don't see any p'int about this king different from any other person. Perhaps we are to feel surprised at a king behaving like an ordinary person. Perhaps it is the purpose of the *Times* to demonstrate the poor intelligence of its readers, for it is certain that readers must be interested in looking at such very ordinary and, apart from noticing that a king looks at things in the same way as does a dustman, uninteresting photographs.

There is one other aspect of current newspapers worthy of a word, and to which we were glad to see the *Observer* calling attention. And this also has to do with the quality of the illustrations offered. Portraits of famous men and women, of famous places, of rare discoveries, we can all appreciate, but a large number of the illustrations offered are more on the mental level of a child's spelling book. Thus, Mr. Lloyd George arrives in London, and we are straightway given an illustration of a man stepping out of a train. A grower produces an extra large potato, and a picture of a potato accompanies the letterpress. An aeroplane travels at a record speed, and there is a blurred outline of a stationary aeroplane in the clouds. And so on through an endless series. Now, in a child's picture book this is quite proper, for the education of the child must proceed through both eye and ear. But in a newspaper intended for adults such a policy can only be dictated by the fixed conviction that the public is mainly in the childish stage of mental development. This, we know, was the late Lord Northcliffe's policy, who avowedly ran his papers by catering for the less thoughtful and less educated portion of the public; and if warranted by the facts the outlook is anything but cheerful. For this kind of theory, when applied to adults does not educate—it results in a progressive deterioration. To gain a larger circulation newspapers are forced into a com-

petition of imbecilities, and the thoughtful and intellectual journal finds it more and more difficult to keep itself alive. Looking at the pictorial portions of the current Press, we agree with the *Observer* that we are not very far from "The cat is on the mat" stage.

There is a revival going on in Belfast, and some of the papers report that "a wave of honesty" is sweeping over the city. Bearing in mind the very religious character of Belfast, it is not very complimentary to the influence of Christianity that many of its residents should display honesty, but the defenders of Christianity often say more than they are aware of.

We are not at all surprised at Belfast being swept by an epidemic of this kind. Bearing in mind the kind of religious education current, the ignorant superstition that prevails, and the state of the city during recent years, there is provided admirable material for a reaction of this kind, and it is only what we should expect to find that among the converts are quite a number of "gunmen." When the attraction of the revival is over they will no doubt return to something of the kind to which they have been accustomed, and in any case the emotional strain of the religious warfare that has been going on is enough to provide a scientific enquirer with an explanation, even though the newspaper stories contain nothing but the truth.

One of these days the general public may face the question of how it comes that Christianity so often appeals to men of thoroughly bad and mean character? The evangelist—who is, when honest, as ignorant as those he converts, and when he is not quite careless as to the character of his converts, so long as he can parade them and receive his capitation fee—will put it down to the glory and power of God. The psychologist will want something far more tangible than that. He will search, and he will find, in this phenomenon an indication of the fact that Christianity makes its appeal to what is coarse and brutal in man rather than to that which is really refined, and so may gain a temporary success among those to whom a higher appeal would be powerless.

We like the action of the mothers—or at least 200 of them—in New Jersey. According to a Central News message the Chief of Police threatened to close down the cinemas on Sundays. On this these 200 mothers informed him that if this were done they would go upon church strike and would not attend a place of worship till they were reopened. As a consequence the cinemas remain open. We have often said, the only interest of the clergy in the question of Sunday is to see that there is no competition with their own places of business, and anything that threatens their trade must be met. Closing places of amusement on Sunday is only one method by which they hope to force people into church. If this cannot be done they care very little what is done on Sunday or any other day. One day it will be seen quite clearly that this pose of the clergy as animated by an unselfish desire for the good of the public is like the Standard Oil Company claiming to be a philanthropic institution. But they have practised the pose for so long that we expect by this time many of them believe it themselves.

Majority rule is purely a political maxim. It is inevitable here because it is the lesser of evils. But in intellectual matters the rule of the majority should be strictly taboo. For it means here the rule of the more ignorant and the less informed over the wiser and the better informed. Were truth always, or even generally with the majority progress would be a simple and easy matter. But new truths are nearly always with the few. It is for this reason that the interference of the State in intellectual matters should be within as narrow limits as possible. Its duty should be to keep the ring, to see that to each is given the opportunity to express the truth as it is seen. There is scarce an instance where the interference of the State in intellectual affairs has not proven itself disastrous.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

R. H. L. (Blackpool).—Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. We agree with you that the trade in mascots reflects the poor quality of our culture. The mascot is no more than the charm, or magical amulet, under another name. Its use in all circles, from the throne downward, shows what a deal of the savage is still active in our "civilized" society. It is also an indication of the fight that Freethought has to wage.

W. BOWEN.—Mr. Cohen could find a date to visit your place if enough persons could be found to look after the local arrangements. A date towards the end of April could be managed if you would write soon.

H. M.—Please send on the MSS. We are always pleased to receive articles that are likely to be of use to us, particularly from new writers. We cannot, of course, promise to print an article until we have seen it.

C. HYDE.—We are very appreciative of every effort made by our friends to gain new readers. We do not, however, think that the offer of prizes would yield any particular result, nor do we care for the idea. Those who value the *Freethinker* are not likely to be tempted to do more than they are doing by the offer of a prize. We like to think that our friends are made of better stuff than the opposite of that would imply. Those who have their heart in the work give all they can to help. We believe that is true of both the staff and the bulk of its readers; and we also like to think that, in the best sense of the word, they are well repaid for their endeavours.

The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to the office.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press" and crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "*Freethinker*" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—

The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

Foreign and Colonial.—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 11) Mr. Cohen will visit Leicester and will speak in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, at 6.30. We have no doubt there will be the usual good attendance.

Mr. Cohen had a pleasant and well attended meeting at Stockport on Sunday last, and thanks to the energetic propaganda being conducted by the local branch there is a growing interest being taken in our work there. The members of the Branch are conducting a systematic distribution of specimen copies of the *Freethinker*, and this can have but one effect. Steady and persistent work is the one thing that tells in Freethought work, and we are

pleased to see that this young Branch of the Society realizes this so well. We wish them the success they richly deserve.

May we take this opportunity of again calling the attention of the Society's friends to the fact that the funds of the National Secular Society are now legally secured by Trust Deed. A bequest to the National Secular Society is now, therefore, as safe as one to any of the Free Churches—whose funds are secured by a similar Deed. Mr. Cohen has already received notice of several wills drawn in favour of the N.S.S. since the establishment of the Trust Deed, and there are doubtless some of which he has not heard. But we have no hesitation in saying that this particular disqualification under which the movement has for so long suffered is now at an end. What remains is the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws and the elimination of religious teaching from State schools, and the success of the campaign in these directions will be largely determined by the extent to which the Society is supplied with the sinews of war.

Members of the National Secular Society (headquarters) are reminded that the Society's books close for the year at the end of the present month. Those who are still in arrears with their subscriptions will oblige by remitting as early as possible. At its last meeting the Executive discussed the coming summer season's campaign, and it is hoped to keep two, and perhaps three, lecturers constantly at work in different parts of the country. This will, of course, mean a considerable expenditure, but it must be faced if the work is to be done. How much more the National Secular Society undertakes must depend upon the amount of financial support it gets, and there are plenty to see to it that the Society does not want in the direction of funds if they will only do so.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures at Birmingham to-day (March 11) in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, at 7 o'clock. His subject will be "The Fear of Death." Birmingham friends can do a useful bit of work by making the meeting as widely known as possible.

The Bill for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws was re-introduced into the House of Commons on March 1 by Mr. Harry Snell. There the matter rests for the moment, but the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws is leaving nothing undone to keep the matter in front of the public. A Parliamentary agent is looking after the Bill so that no opportunity may be lost of advancing it, and an attempt is being made to get a similar Bill introduced into the House of Lords. There is a great deal of work going on beneath the surface, and much that cannot at present be made public. It is not expected to get the Bill passed easily or at once, but the more publicity it gets the better.

When the Bill comes nearer the stage of being passed into law than it is now, we may rest assured that the enemy will do all he can to prevent it. The most effective way of countering this is the widest possible publicity concerning the nature of the Blasphemy Laws and the injustice of their maintenance. For that reason we impress upon all our readers that everything and anything they can do in this direction will tell when the critical moment arrives. We would also remind them that we have a quantity of Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on the Blasphemy Laws still on hand, and they put the case for their abolition in a nutshell. The price of the pamphlet is 3d., but we will send twelve copies for 2s. 6d., post free.

We are glad that our recent note on the quality of Gerald Massey's *Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ* has had the effect of introducing the pamphlet to new readers. Massey's presentation of the case for the origin of Christianity in the mythology of ancient Egypt is certainly a strong one, and forms a very convincing treatise to put in the hands of a Christian reader. The pamphlet is published at this office, price 6d.

We have received the following resolution from the South London Ethical Society *re* Sunday games :—

That this meeting of members and friends of the South London Ethical Society, being of opinion that the opening of the public parks for Sunday games has been a wise measure, records its appreciation of the work of the London County Council in so providing, protests against any movement being made to rob the people of this privilege, and calls upon the Council to resist any such reactionary attempts.

We hope that our London readers are bearing this matter in mind. The question will come up for consideration in a couple of months and it will be for the Council to receive as many expressions of opinion as is possible.

We again call attention to the fact that all publications of the Pioneer Press may be ordered through any bookseller or newsagent in the kingdom. We state this in answer to several enquiries and for those who wish to avoid the trouble of writing to the office and save the expense of postage.

We are pleased to hear that there was an improved audience at the meeting of the North London Branch of the N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club) to listen to a discussion between Mr. J. W. Graham Peace, of the Commonwealth League and Mr. T. F. Palmer on "The Land Question." Both speakers acquitted themselves with ability. To-day (March 11) the speaker will be Mr. J. H. Van Biene, who will lecture on "Pricked Bubbles." There is no lack of these, and there is no shortage of bubbles that need pricking. Mr. Van Biene is, we understand, a very able speaker, and we trust there will be a good gathering to hear him.

The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe is a well-known and striking work by Dr. Draper, and we are publishing, so soon as it can be run through the Press, one of the most telling chapters in the book as a pamphlet, which will be sold at twopence per copy. This is being done at the suggestion of a friend who is taking care that in these times of trade depression the Pioneer Press is not losing by the venture. The chapter depicts the state of this country as it was after centuries of Christian domination, and it offers a very effective reply to the claim that Christianity has aided the course of civilization. We think this pamphlet will prove a very effective piece of propagandist literature, and we trust it will get the circulation it deserves.

Fetishism and Idolatry.

III.

(Continued from page 140.)

As fetishism leads to attempts to overcome the adverse forces of nature, so idolatry leads to statuary. Compare the statue of Hoa-Haka-Nana-Ia from Easter Island, placed outside the British Museum with the Dionysos from Posilipo within. The long evolution of the religious idea and its expression in sculpture are there. The God of the savage is a gigantic monster, the God of the Greek an ideal man. Yet at bottom the one is as human as the other. Catholicism has preserved many of the customs of fetishism, its holy water, its beads, chaplets and crucifixes, are fetishistic. Consecrated medals bring in a good revenue to the Church, and so do such shells as are sold by the thousand at the shrine of St. Francis of Assisi. The scapular and rosary are developments of the string of bead amulets, and both are supposed to endow with mystic protection and virtue. Relics are fetishes, and curious ones still exist, as the Holy Sweat, the Holy Coats at Trèves and Argenteuil, and in the old days there was the Holy Prepuce as Leo Allatius mentions. This treasure was possessed, in the fourteenth century, by the abbey church of Coulombs in the diocese of Chartres, France. The sacred relic had the power of

rendering sterile women fruitful—a virtue of which the pious monks were pardonably proud. It also induced an easy delivery. Our Henry V demanded the relic for the sake of fair Kate, and it was brought to London; but it was subsequently returned. So great an attraction did not go without rivals, and like relics were shown in the Cathedral of Puy, the Collegial Church of Antwerp, the Abbey of our Saviour at Charroux, and the Church of St. John, Lateran, in Rome. These holy relics had as adventurous histories as ever did the Braganza diamond, but it would take me out of my path to dilate upon them here (See Remondino's *History of Circumcision*).

Just as the lamb was substituted for human victims, so dough or wax figures in the form of a lamb were substituted for the animal. *Agnus Dei* medallions, alleged to be made from the paschal tapers consecrated by the Pope at Easter, are revered by all good Catholics and are presented by the Pope to distinguished persons. They are supposed to possess the power of preventing thunder, dispersing storms, averting shipwreck, securing against fire, and repelling the Devil and his angels. In short, they are, like the old fetish amulets, charms against evil spirits. The Romish clergy derive much pecuniary profit from selling the *Agnus Dei*. To this Béranger alludes in *La Mort du Diable* :—

Il est mort! disent tous les moines
On n'achètera plus d'agnus.

The doctrine of the real presence is pure fetishism. It is defined by the ablest Catholic theologians as the concentration of spirit or deity in one point—a definition which exactly suits the fetish worshipper.

Herbert Spencer, in his *Sociology*, observes :—

Sahagun and Herrera describe a ceremony of the Aztecs, called "eating the god." Mendieta, describing this ceremony, says: "They had also a sort of eucharist. They made a sort of small idol of seedsand ate them as the body or memory of their gods." As the seeds were cemented partly by the blood of sacrificed boys; as their gods were cannibal gods; as Huitzilopochtli, whose worship included this rite, was the god to whom human sacrifices were most extensive; it is clear that the aim was to establish community with him by taking blood in common.

Mr. Andrew Lang in his *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (ii, p. 73), remarks :—

The custom of god-eating is common among totemistic peoples, who, except on this solemn occasion, abstain from their totem.

What is Ritualism but a survival of image and symbol worship, as sure a remnant of fetishism as the Kaaba or black stone that the Mahommedans kiss at Mecca? Pilgrimages which have revived so much among Catholics in connection with the worship of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes and elsewhere, follow from the fetishistic belief in the greater efficacy of prayer, if offered at particular spots and before particular images. One image cures the toothache, another the croup, and so on. If but symbols, why is one more healing or holy than another? The devotee believes the image works the cure. The worship of the Sacred Heart, which is likewise extending in modern Catholicism, is also a revival of fetishism; for the heart, though a symbol of divine love, is supposed to be the actual material piece of flesh, with wounds upon it, the vision of which was given to the blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque in 1673. Mr. Leland, in his *Gipsy Sorcery*, p. 42, writes :—

In the year 1880, in one of the principal churches in Philadelphia, blessed candles were sold to the congregation under guarantee that the purchase of one would preserve its possessor for one year against all diseases of the throat.

The attitude of kneeling at prayer is a survival of prostration before an earthly chief. "Ritual," as Mr.

Lang observes, "is preserved because it preserves luck." Any breach of custom is regarded as disastrous. "Amulets," says Dr. Tylor, "are still carried in the most civilized countries of the world, by the ignorant and superstitious with real savage faith in their mysterious virtues, by the more enlightened in quaint survival from the past." The Bible is the Protestant fetish. I remember how, when a boy, it was the common belief at school that dreadful penalties would fall upon any lad who should use the leaves of the sacred book for an unworthy purpose. Some soldiers yet carry it in their bosoms when they go into battle as a protection against bullets. Keeping the family Bible as a household god and reading it with the idea of special holiness being imparted, and the ceremony of kissing the greasy covers of the book in law courts, are evident relics of early superstition.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be Concluded.)

Desperate Fellows All.

A VIEW of the modern realist novelists, which is not unlikely to be held by the novelists as well as the public, is that they are really rather terrible fellows. They see through the trappings of life to its realities, and they do not fear to express what they see so very clearly. In the result it is assumed that the public is shocked out of its complaisance with life, and the novelist has done a good work in assisting evolution.

The public, with the exception of the small circles which admire these novelists, and even the latter are inclined to the view that these writers are "lads," are certainly shocked by some of the things propounded. Some of the themes are indeed little short of disgusting, dealing as they do with the over-sexed and with moral maniacs, rather than with normal types of modern mankind.

The creed of the cult is a "fearless facing of the facts of life, and a frank expression of them." It believes that it is stating the truth, whereas it is only describing one of the faces of truth, the single face which she shows to them, which is probably quite different from the face this coquette has shown to their neighbours. This creed by which they are guided is supposed to be a modern discovery, but if it is a discovery at all, it is no more modern than the novel.

To-day the fashion is for little action and the microscopic examination of emotion, points of view, situations, trivial in themselves but important to the actors. From Henry James to Joseph Conrad and through the lesser stars in the constellation of novelists, the same thing is found. It is not possible to think that the greater men think themselves tremendously shocking. They reflect what they perceive, and it is received with the acclaim that always greets a new angle of perception which is sufficiently real to be recognized. There are, however, others who are so certain of their mission to reform the world that they observe an attitude of shocking its complaisance. The world is indifferent, and they would make it take notice of these things, elements of its life, which it tacitly and tactfully avoids bringing into the bright light. They are the desperate fellows of twentieth century literature. Conscious of something not altogether right, they set out to prove all things wrong, and in the result achieve a disproportion in the elements of their characters, which is immediately seen to be untrue and is regarded with distaste by the public.

Such novelists show a false psychology. They are not following the line adopted by the great satirists, or by the early novelists. It is not, of course, essential

that they should. The course of evolution demands new forms and new developments, but generically they are the same, and it is therefore unnatural that they should desire to be such desperate fellows. Defoe, for instance, probably did not write *Moll Flanders* from a desire to shock. He painted a picture of one side of contemporary life much in the way perhaps that the modern analytical novelists do. Possibly also he wanted to impress upon his audience the necessity for some change, but his proportions were those of the average man, than which nothing is more remote from the supposedly "brilliant" fiction of to-day.

Similarly the *Adventures of Clarissa* may reasonably be assumed to have been a faithful delineation of a part of manners and life of the time, but it is nevertheless to be doubted that such adventures were ever the general experience of unhappy femininity, and it is quite certain that Richardson did not intend to convey that they were. His main idea was to inculcate a lesson, and if his improbabilities and unrealities could be believed, he would have succeeded.

The process of caricature is well understood, and it has had the most excellent results, but these moderns are not conscious of caricature, so that even here they fail to convince. Dickens was conscious of a desire similar in texture to their own, although the reforms he wished to bring about were of a different character. That he succeeded is certainly because his realism of portraiture was so complete as to arouse indignation, an emotion that is capable of humane use. It should, however, be noted that it is not an emotion that can usually be directed against one's self.

The modern is so very anxious to remove the indifferent complaisance of the world that his best endeavours of realism have an air of unreality. It is not possible to give credence to many of the characters of such writers as D. H. Lawrence and Gilbert Cannan. They do undoubtedly exist, but they are sufficiently unusual to be quite easily regarded as non-existent, and their tremendous concern with their own development is so emphasized as to be unconvincing. Sex, of course, plays a large part in the life of man; it plays a much larger in the life of woman. These people, therefore, seem a little unreal in that they are so fearfully concerned with their sex. Most men find a much simpler and less absorbing method of dealing with the problems presented to them by their environment and constitution; and life goes on in its usual humdrum way.

The fallacy of the process of reasoning by which it is hoped to shock the individual out of his stagnation is simply that the average individual is indifferent to most things. If he is shocked by someone, something, or some series of events which are outside his general experience he will express disgust, but unless there is some clearly defined reason why he should feel angry, he will be angry only with the person who has shocked him. Consequently the reformer who desperately shocks is no reformer. He is simply negative. He does not do what he is trying to do, either as expressing himself, or as impressing his audience.

Indignation towards the individual cannot be aroused within the personality. The ego is too strong. It would be lost if it doubted itself, and that is what these desperate fellows are trying to shock humanity into believing is not the case. Their story that life is complex is very true, but it is not so complex as their adventitious aids would have us believe, and finally most men, being normal, find their happiness, if they can discover it, in simplicity. Consequently the professional "shockers" are ineffective. They need to refer to the past, and they will learn how much easier it is to be adequate to their desires by an examination of the normal, instead of being completely absorbed in a presentation of the abnormal, who obviously must fail to be convincing or real.

G. E. FUSSELL.

"God's Methods"—A Reply.

MR. J. T. LLOYD is asking for a few more comments from me relative to his criticism of my book, *The Mystery of the Ages*, in his "Rejoinder" in the *Freethinker* of March 4, 1923 (pp. 130-131).

He asks me, "How can God's Truth as expressed in the Bible be inerrant if the language is fallible?" Quite easily, I answer, only it would be a clearer question if he would substitute the word "through" for "in." If Mr. Lloyd will ask his question thus I can tell him the reply as follows. Truth is a thing which exists independently of all words, languages, or books. So does the human mind; therefore it is quite possible for truth to reach and enter the mind or "inner life" of man, and be grasped and understood by it without and apart from the intervention of either words, languages or books. When this happens it is sometimes called "inspiration." If men have this "inspiration" from God, then under its influence or guidance the words which they speak or write, although fallible and imperfect, can by the infinite skill and wisdom of God be adapted to convey His Truth to mankind, that is to those amongst mankind who do not wilfully oppose the truth. This explains the Bible statement that "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," "moved" meaning the same thing as "inspired." In spite of Mr. J. T. Lloyd's professed unbelief, this can be done, and has been done, for "all things are possible with God." He can even so reduce the workings of evil that good results from them instead of bad. Nevertheless we are warned "not to do evil that good may come."

It is stating the case very crudely merely to say that "the Bible is a revelation of God's Truth," when the fact is that "God's Truth" exists independently of the Bible, and there is much more of it than is revealed through the Bible, which to the glory of God, being a mass of imperfect, fallible human language, is so wonderfully and skilfully manipulated by inspired men that it becomes, as I said, a vehicle by God's appointment for the conveyance of His Truth to all those who will receive it thus. The revelation of error is also conveyed to men in a similar manner through the evil inspiration of the Devil, who can foul human language and turn "the truth into a lie," as he did when he tempted Christ by means of biblical language.

I beg to differ from Mr. Lloyd's statement that "you cannot take the revelation into your house and leave the words outside." *You can.* And therefore I deny his statement that "If revelation there be it is absolutely inseparable from the language which gives it expression."

There is revelation which is separable from the language which gives it expression, for the inspired "Holy men of God" had the revelation *before* they gave it expression in language, whether verbally or in the written language which we call the Bible.

On the Devil's side also similar revelations of sin and error are made to men of evil will, who also use vilely manipulated language for their expression.

With regard to the theory of evolution, Mr. Lloyd on this as well as on other points withdraws a good deal of what he said, which shows how necessary it was for me to reply to his criticism of *The Mystery of the Ages*, but he now charges me with "throwing enormous discredit upon the Creator" (a Being in whom he does not believe), by my representing that a degenerate pre-historic race of sentient beings was once in existence upon the earth.

Apparently to Mr. Lloyd belief in the existence of the Devil and his hosts of darkness throws discredit upon the Creator. Mr. Lloyd rather stultifies himself here because (1) he does not believe a Creator exists,

and (2) because—given that He does exist—Christ taught the existence of the Devil and his crew as a fact, and He would not discredit His Heavenly Father.

Finally, in regard to Mr. Lloyd's question as to why I take any interest in geology, "because the story told by geologists is a distinctly evolutionary one," I may as well say that I do not pin my faith to scientific theories which are admitted to be such by their authors—"geological theories" included.

There are methods of studying geology, and astronomy also, which may yet result in the explosion of many scientific theories, and Mr. Lloyd seems to have discovered one of them in my book, which results in showing forth that there is a so-called "evolution" downwards, rather than upwards, though I call it *degeneration*. Indeed, this is just what a vast portion of the creation of God is suffering from, because self-will was preferred to the Divine Will in ages long gone by, and by many is preferred still.

B. N. SWITZER.

In Memoriam.

EUGENE HINS (1839-1923).

It was with the profoundest regret that we English Freethinkers heard last month of the death of M. Eugène Hins at the advanced age of eighty-three. The customary stereotyped phrases of condolence are, to my mind, singularly cold and lifeless in the face of the one great reality—death, with its accompaniment of irreparable, if inevitable, bereavement. Our heartfelt sympathy with Miss Jeanne Hins whose devoted care did so much to lengthen her father's days, will be best expressed by a personal tribute, by a simple record of the impression made upon an English Freethinker by the distinguished leader of Belgian Freethought. I may mention perhaps that I knew him only through his written word; but, as with every absolutely sincere thinker you could not help but feel that the complete man was there beneath the writing. In it there was none of those mental reservations, those hedging, hesitating clauses which inevitably come to the surface when a man is not quite certain where he stands, or when, as it too often happens, he is anxious to please all parties. The simple, clear, nervous and alert style was obviously the man himself. It was the expression of a mind nourished in the great tradition of French prose, the tradition of Montaigne, Voltaire and Renan.

The long and strenuous life that has just passed away will remain one of the greatest examples we have of a noble and consistent idealism. It should, indeed it must, give a strong lead to those of us who hold, as one of the younger disciples of M. Hins has said, that life is worth living only when it is consecrated to the disinterested quest of truth. The great task of this liberator of the human mind was the mental, moral and material regeneration of man. He was a Socialist, I understand, in the sense that we are all Socialists nowadays. But certainly not in the restricted meaning of the word implied by the "materialistic conception of history" of our Marxian friends. For him, as for those of us who do not agree that Spencerian individualism is a dead letter, Socialism meant simply the transforming of social life. Economic progress is not by any means the whole of the matter, the individual mind must be liberated from its bondage to ancient errors and illusions. This liberation, Hins believed, was to be brought about mainly through general education. His best and most strenuous work was shaped on these lines. His professorial courses of lectures on contemporary and mediæval history, together with his articles in *La Pensée*, of which he was the founder and director, laid the solid foundation, in many a young mind, of right thinking in sociology and ethics.

His erudition had admirable breadth and solidity. It was aerated, so to speak, by wit, irony, and that smiling cynicism which those of us who have the wisdom of the serpent use as a bulwark against the blundering onslaughts of ignorance and foolishness. He had something even more precious—the gift of humour, without which the biggest mind is incomplete. He did not take either

himself or his principles too seriously, holding them lightly and loosely, recognizing the value of an alternative in intellectual as in other matters. There was as little dogmatism in his mental make-up as there was in Renan's; but, like Renan, he could be aggressive in a polite manner and defend himself "with a noble impatience against universal credulity." Indeed, he was as fine an example as we could have of the complete Freethinker, of what Mr. Robertson calls the modern humanist.

GEORGE UNDERWOOD.

"Artifex" and the Atheist.

THE *Manchester Guardian* is nearly always well filled with solid and seasoned matter by able and well-balanced writers, amongst whom "C. E. M." holds an enviable place. "Artifex" represents the Church, and with genial superiority and delicately gloved hands pats rebels and Atheists kindly on the back telling them to be good boys, recommending the law to let them alone as a too negligible quantity to be a menace to either Church or State—or should I say the State Church? In the issue of January 26 "Artifex" deals with the "red" Sunday-schools and, unlike some other defenders of the faith, does not "see red," but stoops indulgently from his complacently conventional altitude, with the magnanimous smile of the man of God we all know so well, which is so irritating to the mind poised and cleared and calmed, ennobled in the vigorous atmosphere of militant, all-round Freethought. "Artifex" may not have the *Freethinker* in mind among others—though doubtless he regards even it as of small consequence—when he says:—

Who remembers the sort of stuff sold in small book-shops and newspaper shops in East and South London in the early 'eighties of last century?

Some of us remember even poor Gott who, with others, has become historic; and have forgotten many thousands of the orthodox; but who, we may suppose, are now sitting there where we infidels "dare not soar," congregated in the New Jerusalem!

"What is the reason for this?" (the dying away of the red Sunday-schools, etc.) And "Artifex" goes on to say:—

A man is either religious, in which case he believes in God, or he is not religious, in which case he does not bother about the matter one way or the other. If so startling a paradox may be permitted, a man needs to be fundamentally religious to make a good Atheist....All the real Atheists I have ever known have been Jews or Scotsmen. They have, that is to say, belonged either to the most intensely religious, or to the most profoundly theological nation. Your true Atheist is the sort of man who, two or three generations ago, would have been a church elder, and might have disinherited his son over some fine point of Calvinistic theology, or turned his daughter out of the house for doubting the truth of Supralapsarianism. That type is non-existent in England and, I suspect, getting rarer in Scotland....If the British Empire Union will let them (these schools and cults) alone they will die a natural death.

The Canon—I mean "Artifex"—concludes:—

There must be much undeserved misery to make men and women listen to such stuff for a moment.

To which we might merely add: There must be a great deal of comfortable stupidity to enable the mind to endure the thin flapdoodle of the Churches.

One may note in passing that in the mind of "Artifex," which reflects a very common religious opinion, the sincere Christian makes the best Atheist. Are we to suppose from that that the sincere Christian is a crude person, and the up-to-date Christian neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor guid red herrin'?

The Canon—I mean "Artifex"—has certainly amused us, but he has not puzzled us with "Supralapsarianism." We know the word—after we looked it up in the dictionary—it means "one of that class of Calvinists who believe that God's decree of election and predestination was made before the fall of man." The opposite, "sublapsarianism"—what hair-splitters and head-splitters!—were these theologians, and yet the type is not extinct.

A. MILLAR.

Correspondence.

MIND IN NATURE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have been looking forward with interest to the final instalment of Mr. A. W. Malcolmson's reply to my letter, in which he intended to deal with the question of "Mind working in the whole universe." Perhaps, as I have already suggested, other engagements have not left him time to attend to the matter; so perhaps I may be allowed to avail myself of the opportunity of indicating a few more points whereon he may meditate before completing his reply.

In his previous letter he confuses issues, introduces irrelevant matters, and seeks to enliven his subject, as he thinks—though in my opinion he destroys the whole significance of his argument—with sportiveness and jest. These things are not substitutes for arguments; they cannot convince any but those who are already convinced but dare not bring their convictions under the searchlight of logic and truth.

To me the question has become simplified by his admissions in his last epistle. He admits that he is a slave to the law, like every other atom in Nature. He admits that the law rules the universe, and indirectly admits that blind matter is not the source of the whole emanation, but that the source is something that has law inherent in its very nature, and which has been styled by Haeckel and other biologists as "Law-Substance." So far, however, we agree that the law predominates in matter, force and energy.

I said, moreover, that the scientific world also believes in Monism, and therefore in one design and one mind. Mr. Malcolmson was shrewd enough to understand the trend of my logic and took the only course open to him—that of denying the existence of Monism in Nature; but he must know that the best brains of the pulpit to which he belongs, and Haeckel is one of them, have been compelled to believe in Monism.

Mr. Malcolmson, however, nothing daunted, seeks to substantiate his disbelief in Monism by referring to the inconsistent working of Nature. I admit that a hundred and one workings of Nature do involve things which to the average mind are inexplicably inconsistent; but the progress of scientific investigation and study has explained to us many things. What seemed absolutely inconsistent yesterday, is to-day inconsistent no longer, and I might add that to-day's inconsistency of conduct does not necessarily negate the unity of the source of that conduct. We observe two inconsistent things done by the same person, and we know, if we reflect, that it is either on account of our want of appreciation of apparently inconsistent actions, which are not really inconsistent, and which on further investigation prove to be consistent, or that it is due to the ignorance and thoughtlessness of the person who acts thus inconsistently. In both cases the one mind can give rise to two actions which are seemingly or really inconsistent.

Is not our own mind a wonderful repository of things which are absolutely inconsistent? Grief and happiness, pain and pleasure, laughing and crying, levity and seriousness, spring from the same mind; wherefore the various inconsistencies in Nature referred to by Mr. Malcolmson as negating the theory of Monism do not really help him. The question, as I have said before, has become simplified. Every biologist—every educated Freethinker must believe in the predominance and rule of the law over matter. Monism may well be considered as another admitted reality borne out by a mass of complementary evidence; for every atom in Nature bears relation to every other atom.

If the working of the law in all human experience—as I have illustrated in my first letter—can only be traced to mind, why may not the same logic be applied in the working of Nature?

True logic compels us to believe in the existence of a Mind that has given the law to the whole of Nature. That is—"God in Islam."

KHWAJA KAMALUDDIN.

The Mosque, Woking.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
MARCH 1, 1923.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, occupied the chair. Also present: Messrs. Corrigan, Moss, Neate, Quinton and Rosetti. Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. New members were received for Glasgow, Greenside, Leeds, South London, West Ham, and the Parent Society.

Correspondence having been dealt with, Mr. Rosetti submitted the report of the Propagandist Committee held on March 1, recommending that arrangements be made for the Summer Freethought Mission at Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Plymouth, Stockport, and Swansea, and that Mr. Whitehead's services be utilised in London during May. Mr. Atkinson, of Greenside, to be engaged for a six week's mission on the Tyneside, commencing May 1, and the plan submitted to be carried out on the entire responsibility of the Executive, under the supervision of the President and Secretary. The report was adopted unanimously.

It was also resolved that South Place be engaged for four Sunday afternoons during April, and the Stratford Town Hall for March 25.

Invitations for the Conference had been received from Leeds and Manchester, and the Secretary was instructed to inform the Branches and to obtain all notices of motion for the agenda.

The President reported the proceedings of the Blasphemy Committee, and that the Bill was expected to be re-introduced in the House of Commons that evening.

The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE,
General Secretary.

Birmingham Branch N.S.S.

THE Annual Dinner of the Birmingham Branch took place on the 24th ult. at the Crown Hotel, Corporation Street, and was well attended.

Mr. F. E. Willis presided, and Mr. Chapman Cohen (President of the N.S.S.) was present as the guest of the Branch.

The toasts, "The N.S.S. and its President" and "The Birmingham Branch, its Officials and Lecturers," were given and suitably responded to by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Clifford Williams, and Mr. Melton.

The musical part of the event, fittingly arranged by Mr. W. Simpson, Jr., left nothing to be desired. The whole proceedings passed off in a delightfully pleasant manner.

J. PARTRIDGE.

We have a further word to all sorts and conditions of libellous Christians. Where are the evidences of Atheistic cruelty? The humanest of the Roman emperors were those who were least under the sway of religion. Julius Cæsar himself, the "foremost man of all this world," who was a professed Atheist, was also the most magnanimous victor that ever wore the purple. Akbar, the Freethinker, was the noblest ruler of India. Frederick the Great was kind and just to his subjects. But, on the other hand, who invented and who applied such instruments of cruelty as racks, wheels, and thumbscrews? Who invented separate tortures for every part of the sensitive frame of man? Who burnt heretics? Who roasted or drowned millions of "witches"? Who built dungeons and filled them? Who brought forth cries of agony from honest men and women that rang to the tingling stars? Who desolated Mrs. Besant's home? Who killed Charles Bradlaugh? Who sent the present writer to a twelve-month's death in life in Holloway Gaol? Who burnt Bruno? Who spat filth over the graves of Paine and Voltaire? The answer is one word—Christians. Yet with all this blood on their hands, and all this crime on their consciences, they turn round and fling the epithet of "cruel" at the perennial victims of their malice.—*Freethinker*, April 26, 1891.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on post-card.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Mr. Joseph H. Van Biene, "Pricked Bubbles."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W.9, three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate), 7, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Steps from Capitalism to Socialism."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Professor Graham Wallas, "Creative Thought."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "The Fear of Death."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Shop Assistants' Hall, 297 Argyle Street): 11.30, a Lecture. For particulars see Saturday's evening papers.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (2 Central Road, Duncan Street, Shop Assistants' Rooms): 7, A Public Lecture by Rev. H. T. Runacre, preceding Musical Concert.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "The Psychology of Faith."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Cromford Court Café, Cromford Court, Market Street): Mr. P. P. Corrigan, 3, "The Follies of the Faithful"; 6.30, "Much Ado About —."

STOCKPORT BRANCH N.S.S. (191 Higher Hillgate): 2.30, Mr. H. Boden, a Lecture. Questions and discussion. All invited.

BOOKS WANTED.—Several copies, prompt cash. *Anacalypsis*, Higgins; *Ancient Egypt*, Massey. All Early Freethought Works. Foote's *Romances and Heroes*. Robt. Taylor's, etc.—Write, H. GREEN, Bookseller, 66 Knights Hill, S.E.

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

LONDON.

E.—E. T. Pendrill, 26 Bushfield Street, Bishopsgate. M. Papier, 86 Commercial Street. B. Ruderman, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. J. Knight & Co., 3 Ripple Road, Barking. W. H. Smith & Son, Seven Kings Railway Station Bookstall. W. Holt, 617 Lea Bridge Road, Leyton. H. W. Harris, 22 Chant Street, Stratford.

E.C.—W. S. Dexter, 6 Byward Street. Rose & Co., 133 Clerkenwell Road. Mr. Siveridge, 88 Fenchurch Street. J. J. Joques, 191 Old Street.

N.—C. Walker & Son, 84 Grove Road, Holloway. Mr. Keogh, Seven Sisters Road (near Finsbury Park). Mr. West, New Road, Lower Edmonton. T. Perry, 17 Fore Street, Edmonton. H. Hampton, 80 Holloway Road. M. A. Gremson, 23 Westbury Avenue, Wood Green, N.22.

N.W.—W. I. Tarbart, 316 Kentish Town Road. W. Lloyd, 5, Falkland Road, Kentish Town.

S.E.—J. H. Vullick, 1 Tyler Street, East Greenwich. Mr. Clayton, 11 High Street, Woodside, South Norwood. W. T. Andrews, 35 Meetinghouse Lane, Peckham. W. Law, 19 Avondale Road, Peckham.

S.W.—R. Offer, 58 Kenyon Street, Fulham. A. Toleman, 54 Battersea Rise. A. Green, 29 Felsham Road, Putney. F. Locke, 500 Fulham Road. F. Lucas, 683 Fulham Road.

W.—Mr. Fox, 154 King Street, Hammersmith. Mr. Harvey, 1 Becklow Road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Baker, Northfield Avenue, West Ealing. Thomas Dunbar, 82 Seaford Road, West Ealing.

W.C.—J. Bull, 24 Grays Inn Road.

COUNTRY.

ABERDEENSHIRE.—J. Grieg, 16 Marischol Street, Peterhead. BARROW-IN-FURNESS.—J. Jowett, 56 Forshaw Street. E. L. Jowett, 84 Dalton Road.

BATH.—C. F. Sutton, 16 Union Passage, and 10 Abbey Churchyard.

BECCLES.—C. Chase, Station Road.

BIRKENHEAD.—Mr. Capper, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight.

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker"—Continued.

- BIRMINGHAM.—J. C. Aston, 39-40 Smallbrook Street. A. G. Beacon & Co., 67 & 68 Worcester Street. F. Holder, 42 Hurst Street. Mr. Benton, High Street, Erdington. Mr. Kimber, Ash Road Post Office, Saltley. Thomas Smith & Sons, 19-21 Corporation Street.
- BOLTON.—E. Bassett, Church Street, Westhoughton. W. Atkinson, 364 Blackburn Road. Mr. Sims, Bradshawgate. Mr. George Bennett, Great Moor Street.
- BRADFORD.—Messrs. H. Beaumont & Son, 37 & 71 Sticker Lane, Laisterdyke.
- BRIGHTON.—W. Hillman, 4 Little Western Street.
- BRISTOL.—W. H. Smith & Son, Victoria Street.
- BROXBURN.—Misses Wallace, Main Street.
- CARDIFF.—W. H. Smith & Son, Penarth Road.
- CARSHALTON.—Mr. Simmons, 29 North Street.
- CHATHAM.—T. Partis, 277 High Street.
- CHELtenham.—S. Norris, Ambrose Street.
- CULLOMPTON.—A. W. Clitsome, The Square.
- DERBYSHIRE.—Mr. Featherstone, Chapel-en-le-Firth. Mr. Poynton, Market Hall, Derby.
- DUBLIN.—Mr. J. Kearney, Upper Stephen Street.
- DUNDEE.—Mr. Cunningham, St. Andrew's Street. "The Hub," High Street. Mr. Lamb, 121 Overgate.
- EDINBURGH.—Walter P. Cumming, 4 Roseburn Terrace, Murrayfield.
- EXETER.—T. Fisher, 37, South Street.
- FALKIRK.—James Wilson, 76 Graham's Road.
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