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### Views and Opinions.

**An Old Game.**  
The falsification of history in the interests of Christianity is an old story. It began just so soon as Christians found it profitable, and it will continue until people are sufficiently informed to make it unprofitable. Every student knows, for example, that the picture drawn by Christians of pre-Christian times is a sheer travesty of the facts. Primitive Christians were not all, or even generally, pure-minded men and women bent on effecting the moral regeneration of the world. Nor was Pagan society hopelessly corrupt before Christianity appeared. The early Christians did not astonish the world by the austerity of their lives, but by their fanaticism and intolerance. Every student knows these things; but students—careful students—are few, and fools are many. So it pays Christian teachers to continue the old game of reckless misrepresentation. And so long as it pays it will be played. The clergy may overlook Proverbs, but they never forget the profits.

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**"Pagan."**  
An example of this falsification of history is seen in the use of the word "Pagan." Directly the War broke out "Pagan" became a descriptive synonym for Germany, in spite of the constant and fervent appeal of the Kaiser and German clergymen to God and Jesus, and the Christian belief of the German people. Here, again, was an illustration of the old policy of labelling everything that aroused dislike, or suggested evil, as non-Christian; so that by very contrast Christianity would appear pure and elevating. And it is worth noting that the word "Pagan" owes its ill flavour entirely to Christian prejudice. Originally it meant no more than a peasant or a villager, and it became, in a sense, identified with non-Christian because the worship of the old gods lingered on in the villages and country districts long after the more corrupt townsmen had been converted, without their being morally benefited by the change of faith. And nothing but Christian malignity and vilification has succeeded in turning a perfectly harmless word into a synonym for depravity and brutality.

### Might versus Right.

We were set writing the above because of a remark made by the ridiculous Bishop of London during an address in connection with the still more ridiculous Mission of Repentance and Hope. "We were out," he said, addressing a meeting at the Guildhall, "against the revival of the Pagan doctrine that 'might is right.'" There it is! All the great Christian nations of Europe are at war; each nation is appealing to the Christian belief of its people; and in the same sentence the Bishop himself asks for another million fighting men to be used to prove that might is not right. How otherwise will the War be settled? Does anyone deny that if the German might is greater than our might, all the "right" in the world will not hinder the Germans winning the War? Whatever be the rights or wrongs as to the cause of the War, its decision represents a question of might, and of nothing else. All the appeals for men, for money, for guns, means this. And—let us clear our minds of cant—by what "right" does any nation in Europe hold its possessions except by might? A people may deal with a subject nation wisely and justly, but its subjection is ultimately a question of might. And while the Bishop indulges in his slanderous rhodomontade, here is no less a person than Sir Rider Haggard, in a report to the Colonial Institute on "After-War Settlement," crying out:—

You might fill the world with Anglo-Saxon people if they existed and would only avail themselves of these stretches of territory that wait for them. The great need of the Empire to-day is population.....We are trying to hold it (i.e., a quarter of the earth) now with under 60,000,000 white people.

So that we must go on breeding more rapidly in order to hold more than a fourth of the earth. And we have in front of us the fact that it is Germany's increase of population that is one of the root causes of the present trouble. If this is not a question of might making right, what is it? Might is right to-day in the Christian world to at least as great an extent as ever it was in the days of Pagan Rome. \* \* \*

### The Real Teachings of "Paganism."

But in what sense did the "Pagans" teach or practise the doctrine that "might" is right other than it is preached and practised to-day, after centuries of Christian rule? We should dearly like the Bishop of London to tell us of those "Pagan" teachers who taught that "might was right." The statement is simply false. The "Pagans" taught it no more than Christians have taught it, and practised it no more than Christians have practised it. I do not know if Bishop Ingram has ever read Aristotle's *Politics*; but whether he has or not, there is at least one work of antiquity which gives the lie to his statement. The whole teaching of the *Politics* is in quite the contrary direction. And in the *Ethics* there is a constant insistence upon justice as the principle that should determine the relations between men. Or, if the Bishop cares to leave Aristotle, and turn to the dialogues of Plato, he will find whole sections in *The*

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*Laws, The Statesman, and The Republic*, taken up with a discussion of justice, with conclusions of a more rational and satisfactory nature than anything existing in either the New Testament or early Christian literature.

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#### Roman Law and Justice.

The evidence from Rome is still more striking. No country in the world—we make the statement deliberately, and do not exclude England or the British Empire—has ever affirmed more emphatically, or practised more thoroughly, the equality of all before the law than did the Roman Empire. The rights of citizenship were open to all within the Empire in a much more complete sense than is the case in the British Empire to-day. Rome admitted no bar of race, or creed, or nationality. Gibbon says emphatically, "In the eye of the law all Roman citizens were equal, and all subjects of the Empire were citizens of Rome"; and of the Antonines he says, "Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government." And Lecky, a witness by no means anxious to strain a point in favour of Rome, also says, contrasting the legislative efforts of Pagans and Christians:—

It was in the reign of Pagan emperors, and especially of Hadrian and Alexander Severus, that nearly all the most important measures were taken redressing injustices, elevating oppressed classes, and making the doctrine of the natural equality and fraternity of mankind the basis of legislative enactments. Receiving the heritage of these laws, the Christians, no doubt, added something; but a careful examination will show that it was surprisingly little.....The most prominent evidence, indeed, of ecclesiastical influence in the Theodosian code is that which must be most lamented.

It is worth while bearing in mind that the most deplorable periods of Roman corruption and partiality in administering the law were those when the Empire developed a taste for Eastern religions that culminated in the adoption of Christianity.

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#### Piety and Perjury.

But legislation was, in this case, only a reflection of the teachings of both Latin and Greek moralists. Epictetus taught the equality of all men, and said there was "but one thing of real value—to cultivate truth and justice." Cicero said that "to reduce man to the duties of his own cities, and to disengage him from duties to members of other cities, is to break the universal society of the human race." Seneca, Lucan, and Plutarch bristle with the same teaching, and the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius is as lofty an appeal to the moral sense of man as ever was made. But, as we have often said, men such as the Bishop of London know their audience. They know that such statements are received without examination and swallowed without reflection. They know also that Christianity has for so long controlled the avenues of information that these misrepresentations have taken the rank of established truths. During all its history, Christianity has lived by misrepresentation and slander. It has used these weapons against the living, and one can hardly expect Christians to be more scrupulous towards the dead.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### "The Psychology of Prayer."

In the *Baptist Times and Freeman* for September 15 there appeared a remarkable letter bearing the above title from the pen of Mr. H. Wheeler Robinson. We have read many books and pamphlets on prayer, but nothing quite so unique as this short essay has ever come our way before. We agree with Mr. Robinson that "prayer

is a very wonderful thing," but when he says that it is "more wonderful in its secret mechanism than the flight of the aeroplane or the dive of the submarine," we are bound to characterize him as an irresponsible romancer. The mechanism of most prayers is by no means a thing of which to be proud. Prayer is supposed to be a child's intimate converse with its Father in heaven, and usually such talk is devoid of mechanism. According to Mr. Robinson, there is some strange secret about the structure of a prayer, but wherein it consists we are not informed. In any case, what comparison can there be between "mechanism" and "flight" or "dive"? The most prominent feature of the article, however, is its wild extravagance. Take the following passage:—

Prayer is a great adventure, for it is the flinging out of the human personality into the unseen until it finds him who is invisible. It is "the only adequate form of the confession of faith," for it combines the feelings of piety and the choices of morality with the thought of theology, and welds them all into the unity of a personal act. We can never exhaust the meaning of prayer, for it covers all human life, and all that lies beyond human life.

Can you fancy a man flinging out his personality in search of God? Is it conceivable that an invisible being can be found in an invisible realm? We have yet to meet a person who has discovered God or seen the Invisible.

Most curious is Mr. Robinson's choice of language. He speaks of "the mystery of prayer when it climbs to God," and likens it to "the mystery of Nature which remains a science at the human end." We frankly confess that we do not understand such language, nor do we think that Mr. Robinson himself can make it intelligible to us. Nature is not a science at all, and so it cannot possibly "remain a science at the human end." Neither is prayer a science in any sense whatever. Science means knowledge, accumulated and established knowledge, or knowledge gained and verified by exact observation and experiment, especially as methodically formulated and arranged in a system. It is doubtless true that prayer enters into the experience of some people, but certainly not as science. It is utterly false to say that there is miracle in Nature. In its only theological sense miracle signifies an act of supernatural interference with some natural process, of the existence of which science knows nothing. Science is equally ignorant of "the spiritual transformations of prayer, wrought through the marvellous power of personality," and we confidently challenge Mr. Robinson to point out even one miracle in Nature. If "prayer takes the natural event and gives it a supernatural meaning," then prayer deserves to be condemned as a pernicious exercise. That it is pernicious is evident from the fact that it is alleged to know "that the normal is not the universal and not the ultimate." If we are to believe that testimony of prayer, it follows that the ultimate is the abnormal, the anomalous, the irregular. Does any sane person really entertain such a notion?

Mr. Robinson tells us that "in primitive religions sacrifice is a prayer, often the most important element in prayer"; but that is not true. Sacrifice was introduced to make the prayer efficacious. The most conspicuous feature of prayer even now is petition, and the object of sacrifice was and is to induce the Deity to grant the petition. Sacrifice was a bribe offered to the Supreme Being. In Christianity, God's own Son is the sacrifice for whose sake prayers are believed to be heard and answered. Many present-day divines cannot accept the old idea of the suretyship of Christ, though it is a Scriptural idea. The New Testament openly employs the commercial term "bought" more than once in describing what the Redeemer did for his people, and it

used to be the universal custom to close every prayer with the words "For Christ's sake." Both in primitive religions and in Christianity, therefore, God is represented as giving in return for what he gets. Sacrifice is not a prayer, but it is regarded as putting the Deity in a favourable mood towards the prayers that ascend to his throne.

Mr. Robinson tries to justify his speaking of the psychology of prayer, not on the ground that "psychology can ever totally explain it, but because prayer is always a psychological activity." No doubt he is right, but he ought to bear in mind that all religious experiences and exercises belong to the department known as "Abnormal Psychology." In his fine work, *The Evidence for the Supernatural*, Dr. Tuckett says:—

The fact is that it is difficult to find one psychologist—that is a man who has made a study of the facts of mind—whose writings support orthodox ideas about the supernatural. Psychologists are nearly all unanimous in recognizing as unknowable what pure metaphysicians and theologians reckon to be *a priori* or necessary truths (p. 186).

In this connection the divines are very fond of quoting the late Professor James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, but they omit to mention that the great American philosopher was not a Christian, not even a believer in a personal God, and that, therefore, he was not likely to be an advocate of the practice of Christian prayer. In reality, it is wholly immaterial whether he was or was not, the only fact of importance being that there is absolutely no evidence that prayer has ever had the slightest effect upon the order of Nature. As Matthew Arnold affirmed long ago, the proof from miracles is non-existent, nor is there any other proof whatsoever. Mr. Robinson supplies us with nothing but bald assertions; and in his quotation from James there occurs no allusion to prayer at all. Here is a specimen:—

That which psychology calls the stimulus, the believer rightly calls God. He may work and speak through the providence of outward circumstance, or through the wholly psychical experience of the heart. But the end is the same—the realized fellowship of the soul with God. It is enough that he speaks, and that, as we listen, the many voices of the outer and inner worlds merge into his voice.

That is a characteristically theological utterance. It is simply taken for granted that there is a God and that he speaks, but not even a show of attempt is made to prove either. "Sometimes," says Mr. Robinson, "we are simply aware of his Spirit's presence." If he had said, "Sometimes we believe that we are aware of the Divine presence," we could have taken him seriously. Multitudes do believe in such a miracle, and their belief may be thoroughly sincere. Their fault is that they mistake belief for knowledge and indulge in pretensions which they cannot establish.

The conclusion to which we are irresistibly driven by the facts is that neither psychology nor any other science is capable of substantiating the theological claim that there is a God to hear and answer prayer. No God has ever granted the least sign of his existence. It cannot even be reasonably concluded that there is a power not ourselves making for righteousness, as Arnold held, or that, as James maintained, there is a beneficent stream ever flowing through the Universe. Righteousness is simply a social relationship for which we ourselves should be consciously making. They who pray address merely an imaginary projection of themselves, calling it God. In Mr. Robinson's language, they sling out their own personality and pray to it. It may do them a little good sometimes; but it is a shocking waste of time and energy, which we so much need for the practical work of life. We cannot afford to be in two worlds and live

two lives at one and the same time. At present this world and this life demand all our time and the activity of all our powers.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Collapse of the Churches.

Like a beautiful flower, full of colour but without scent, are the fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly.

—*Gotama Buddha.*

The heavens are empty and no sign  
Comes from the eternal silence.

—*Robert Buchanan.*

Christianity has not tried and failed; it has not even tried.

—*Joseph McCabe.*

EUROPE has been hurled by the ambitions and rivalries of its Hohenzollern and Hapsburg dynasties, and jealousies of its emperors who govern by "divine right," on to a slope slippery with the blood of millions. On that awful down-grade the nations are launched, and the voice of reason is but a child's whisper against the tumult of a hurricane. The countrymen of Moliere are cutting the throats of the kinsmen of Goethe, and the compatriots of Kossuth are disembowelling the brothers of Tolstoi. The women of Europe, "like Niobe, all tears," are mourning their dead. Think of it! Whole nations, professedly Christian, engaged in wholesale slaughter. Yet who can deny that if the commands of Christianity had penetrated in the least degree beneath the surface of human life, to make weapons of destruction would be viewed with abhorrence. Yet the flower of the manhood of the Christian nations of the world is spilling blood like water. From the Spree to the Elbe, from the Seine to the Neva, Europe is a slaughter-house. The death-moans of hundreds of thousands are drowned in the *Te Deums* of the victors, and the regimental standards are blessed in the name of the "Prince of Peace."

The terrible irony of it all! It is a complete indictment of the Christian religion, which has proved itself the most powerless thing on earth. The millions who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus are, practically, unaffected by his teaching. When passion or self-interest is aroused, every precept is forgotten. Even in the times of peace in every Christian country, side by side with the hypocritical pretensions of orthodoxy, will be found codes of legislation which violate every injunction of Christianity, and resemble only the *lex talionis* of the old Pagan jurisprudence, which demands an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

The effect of this divergence between precept and practice is seen when a few persons are treated as criminals for attempting to take the Christian religion seriously, as with the Peculiar People and Christian Scientists in England, and the Stundists and Tolstoyans in Russia. So far as the prelates of the different Christian Churches are concerned, the profession of Christian ethics is a mockery. Whether they be Catholic cardinals, Anglican bishops, or priests of the Greek Church, the fact is the same. The professed followers of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth, who had not where to lay his head, enjoy princely salaries and live in palaces. Even the Free Church leaders get what they can and follow their Saviour laboriously on the salaries of Cabinet ministers. Not one amongst them is better than the other. Some forgotten wit has said that "Singing psalms never yet prevented a grocer from sanding his sugar." This jest expresses in a pointed manner what may be said in all seriousness of the impotency of the Christian religion to affect ethical conduct. Christianity is no longer a serious religion; it is now a business, and is worked on purely commercial lines. Missions and meetings are advertised in the same way as patent medi-

cines or theatrical ventures. Revivalists and preachers adopt similar methods to music-hall artistes, with the same financial results. As for the dream of brotherhood, no man, remembering the prisoners for blasphemy, and the awful treatment of the Jews in the ghettos of Europe, can but see that Christian doctrines are of one aspect, but its practices of another.

Never, in the course of its contest with other religions or ideas, has Christianity turned the other cheek to be smitten. Not once in the realities of evolution has it manifested "good will to men" opposed to its own creed. In the past, the Church of Christ bribed the weak and killed the strong among her opponents. In the twentieth century she buys apostates all over the non-Christian world by means of medical missionaries, and at home persecutes unfortunate stragglers in the army of Freethought.

The Christian religion is not only a failure; it is a priestly robe covering a corpse. Mohammed has a direct influence over his professed disciples; Gotama Buddha still colours and controls human life; Brahma affects the lives of millions. Even the followers of Joseph Smith carry out Mormon teaching; but where in all wide Christendom is the Christian? The god of the Christians is not the sad-faced Nazarene, but the rubicund, self-satisfied form of Mammon, with the leer of the miser. There is no crown of thorns, and no spear-wounds in his portly side, but in the jewelled hands of the new deity are the money-bag and the whip. The purple robe covers the huge imposture of an organized hypocrisy. Could the pale shade of the poor Galilean carpenter, that slinks past the costly altar-rails, but speak, it would bewail an agony of spirit worse than that which drenched Gethsemane in blood. The dethronement of Christ is complete, and Christians now worship Mammon.

A wondrous God! most fit for those  
Who cheat on change, then creep to prayer;  
Blood on his heavenly altar flows,  
Hell's burning incense fills the air,  
And death attests in street and lane  
The hideous glory of his reign.

MIMNERMUS.

## Blasphemy.

THE positions held by Christianity have been alternately attacked by Freethinkers with the rapier of satire and the bludgeon of common sense. It would be difficult to decide which method has succeeded, but one or the other has forced the withdrawal of the ugly horns of the Blasphemy Laws. It is our present intention in this paper to shift the new point of blasphemy to one which is not distinguished by originality alone, neither is it one of a petty triumph over a sect still using the dialect of the Dark Ages. We should rejoice to make the approach to absolute truth with our opponents, or we mistranslate the meaning of Freethought; but whether they prefer to come with us or not is no great concern of ours.

Blasphemy presents to our mind a quarrel about words rather than things. Christians may trim their sails—they may offer us ten interpretations of one word, they may riot in disagreement in their own camp. But suppose we carry the argument into their stronghold; what do we find? In neat array, we discover the guardians of the spirit discussing balance-sheets, livings, and preferment with all the delicate precision of shareholders or anyone else interested in profit and loss, in terms of money. Our knowledge of the soul is extremely imperfect at present; but we confess that we receive no encouragement from those who, with their arms up to the elbows in gold, talk mysteriously of this ethereal part of our being. Again, we receive no inducement

from those who despise the body as part of their creed; and this point brings us immediately to our subject-matter.

If we correctly understand the activities of the spirit in the Platonic sense, they are three in number during the pursuit of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. The moral, the intellectual, and the æsthetic activities of the spirit would seem to strive for the Good, the True, and the Beautiful as their consummation. It must be noted that these terms are absolute, and by this third activity of the spirit do we bring the dogma of Christianity to the test in a trial for blasphemy.

The sphere of Freethought is not defined by any dogma; Buddhism may be contained in it, and Christianity may certainly find ample room for the exercise of its secular functions so long as the mental freedom of the individual is respected. As man is the highest form of life we know, we may safely assert, even as Freethinkers, that man's destiny is divine. The actions of all those brave men who have sacrificed their lives to the service of mankind prove it. Mental liberty was their watchword; it was no body and mind destroying of the human being that may be read in the fanatical dictum of St. Augustine, who would compel them to come in. Rather did they strive for everyone's right to stay out if they preferred. Writing on the religious persecution of the Albigenses, Professor J. M. Bury states that:—

They were the subjects of the Count of Toulouse, and were an industrious and respectable people. But the Church got far too little money out of this anti-clerical population, and Innocent called upon the Count to extirpate heresy from his dominion.....There were wholesale burnings and hangings of men, women, and children.

Beautiful men, beautiful women, beautiful children, were destroyed. Let Catholics and Christians of all sects prate to Freethinkers about blasphemy in *words* when this is their history in *deeds*. This is their history in the growth of mankind, whose destiny is divine. Can blasphemy be an adequate term to describe this destruction? The villainy becomes almost unutterable when we find the mainspring to be revenue; or, in other words, gold.

We now see, by the simple presentation of an ugly incident in history, in what measure Catholicism fails in the protection or tolerance of those made in God's own image. If in the physical sense they failed, how much more did they fail in their guardianship of the destiny of mankind? We cannot help feeling our impotence to describe our repugnance for these chartered religious bodies. With spiritual and temporal power in their hands, they must order the destruction of people because of lack of revenue. What celestial examples of restraint! What glorified deeds by spiritual bailiffs! And these weak, and Giordano Bruno shall tell us the measure of their power when strong.

Swinburne, in his essay on William Blake, has a characteristic note in connection with the Albigenses. He writes: "One may remark also, the minute this pagan revival begins to get breathing room, how there breaks at once into flower a most passionate and tender worship of nature, whether as shown in the bodily beauty of man and woman or in the outside loveliness of leaf and grass." Not even the invention of a religious monopoly can suppress the spirit of mankind in its quest of the Beautiful divorced of priestly mystery. It is true organized religion does attempt to do so, but in such a blundering and blockish manner that the hills and the mountains in history resound with the trappings of the coarse and ruffianly feet. Eternity registers all these reflections of the human race—and priests have ever been willing guides to lead mankind astray.

Against Freethought there is no case for blasphemy. If there were, the Christians have, by their history, no right to bring the charge; and they who have destroyed the flesh, or turned naked from its divine destiny, have their names written in crimson. Let their tears of repentance wash them out. That, again, is their concern, and not ours. The earth will be out of the sphere on the day that Freethinkers enforce common sense by burning, persecution, and massacre.

The persecution of the Albigenes happened in the thirteenth century; devilry let loose in the name of religion, and with it the blaspheming of the human race by destruction. Once again we would ask our readers to look on the activities of religion in modern times, remembering the oft-repeated charge of blasphemy levelled at Freethought. From the Bible we can say to them, "Physician, heal thyself." A light word dropped from our lips is seized upon, and we pay the penalty; but they, with their creeds, have crucified mankind, by their silence they agree to the destruction of the Beautiful, which is the human form, and their mouths are eternally closed to condemn those who work without their solemnity, their mystery, and their hypocrisy. The sweepings of the world will be hailed in the Christian camp; turncoats will be blessed and cursed by the various factors. To these shall Freethinkers say, "We do not blaspheme." Rather shall we reply, Ye blasphemed the spirit and the body by your past and present actions. Away from us, ye traffickers in the gift of life, for ye are no better to the human race than an old blind woman who tries to lead a child.

WILLIAM REPTON.

### Fragmentary Lore.

THE Elgin Marbles are but fragments of Athenian art, yet they fill their chamber in the British Museum with the hush of a grand awe. Even concrete commercial London is jealous of those abstract treasures of the Past, its worship for the most part conventional and second-hand; but the trend is toward true regard of the really great. And so with literature. We boast of the classics we have read in history, fiction, science, and philosophy; we all wish to be thought good, wise, great. But still, apart from the creators thereof, we are indebted to all the wise guides of the world to direct our minds to those words that breathe and thoughts that burn. It is a charmed atmosphere. To choose unaided and to choose aright is of itself genius. Genius is the lamp of wisdom. When that lamp is shattered, or has never been lit, then the world is dark indeed. The wish may be father to the thought; I dare not dogmatise; but it seems to me the trend is towards the light. Dim lamps of the dead sages mingle with the modern ray, and faintly, intermittently, illumine the pathways of to-morrow! Is it the Dawn?

My Old Book, quoting from the older *Spectator*, says:—

I consider a human soul, without education, like marble in the quarry; which shews none of its inherent beauties, till the skill of the polisher fetches out the colours, makes the surface shine, and discovers every ornamental cloud, spot, and vein, that runs through the body of it.

Exactly. But did not Ingersoll suggest that universities polish pebbles and dim diamonds? And one reflects that education may also reveal cloud, spot, and vein, the reverse of ornamental or useful; may, indeed, arm and set free "the very Devil in a man." And one has visions of some subtle, sneering, cruel conqueror, trampling on human rights, wading through slaughter to a throne, and demanding and receiving the slavish wor-

ship of his victims, who tame but one another still, and only unite in homage to this atavistic superman. Nevertheless:—

'Tis education forms the common mind.  
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

And I remember a verse that is *not* in the Old Book:—

By education most have been misled;  
They so believe because they so were bred.  
The priest continues what the nurse began,  
And thus the child imposes on the man.

Marble in the quarry! Yes, shapes of goodness, beauty, and utility, and formidable, frightful shapes that to carve is to curse the earth. But we must educate! And we can but hope and strive to the end that most of the shapes to come will be found on the side of the evangels of Reason and Humanity.

My Old Book further says (Baillie):—

The subject of a discourse being opened, explained, and confirmed; that is to say, the speaker having gained the attention and judgment of his audience, he must proceed to complete his conquest over the passions; such as imagination, admiration, surprise, hope, joy, love, fear, grief, anger.

Now, he must begin to exert himself; here it is, that a fine genius may display itself, in the use of amplification, enumeration, interrogation, metaphor, and every ornament that can render a discourse entertaining, winning, striking, and enforcing.

This is "giving away" all his secrets. But your true orator is the least conservative of men; and, besides, the "fine genius" is sometimes hard to find.

"Almost every object that attracts our notice has its bright and its dark side. He who habituates himself to look at the displeasing side will sour his disposition, and consequently impair his happiness; while he who constantly beholds it on the right side insensibly meliorates his temper, and in consequence of it improves his own happiness and the happiness of all around him" (*World*). Here are our old friends, pessimism and optimism; but I suppose the Freethinker, looking at both sides—or, rather, all sides—arrives at Meliorism, which he translates into hope and effort.

The Old Book instructed me—I may now instruct the Old Book; and I hope the veteran reader may not find the "fragments" too elementary. If he does, I have misjudged him. I am not necessarily begging the question when I say that Freethought is not confined to religion, but fills all the realms of reason and philosophy.

Speaking to a well-known writer in this journal, he told me he found perhaps most nutriment in fragmentary passages absorbed in fugitive moments at railway stations; for instance, in a sonnet, a poem, etc. But I am ending in apology, and my Old Book and I are too proud for that. More anon.

A. MILLAR.

### Drifting Backward.

THE claim that the War is making people more religious is often enough repeated in pulpit and press. President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, who has written some "Psychological Notes on the War," puts it another way. He says that the War is turning the people backward—that is, they are giving credence without stint to myths and miracles. We quote:—

Very interesting to the psychologist, too, are the striking illustrations of credulity, as instance the angels at Mons, who were said by so many to have actually appeared and turned the Germans eastward when they had their enemy in their power, stories which the Psychological Research Society has rather elaborately studied and which Machen has embodied in *The Bowmen*; the

false story of the Russian bells, of which *L'Illustration* printed a full account, that scores if not hundreds of them, to which the Russians attach an almost superstitious reverence, were taken from the churches overrun by the Germans and deposited in the public square of Moscow; the credulity with regard to the Russian army going from Vladivostok through England to Flanders; the persistent myth of a yellow French auto carrying a prodigious sum of money secretly and, by night through Germany to Russia, which caused watches to be set in many cities and caused the deaths of a number of men; the rumour that the Crown Prince had committed suicide; that the Kaiser was dying; that a great earthquake had overthrown the lions in Trafalgar Square in London; the Wolfe Agency's report that King George had been captured; that England had sought to buy with numberless donkey-loads of gold the allegiance of the Sultan; the stories of spies, fliers, of wounded soldiers who lived supernaturally with their limbs and, in one case, the head shot away.

The War surely has given the all-round liar his opportunity. A myth that President Hall probably deems it prudent to omit from his list is the one which appears with many variants that the German and British shells spare Catholic images, especially the crucifix. It turns up in the correspondence of Karl H. von Wiegand, who is published as representing the New York *World* at "German Headquarters, near Gommecourt," as follows:—

Returning we passed a huge cross, with a life-sized figure of the crucified Christ, of which there are so many at the cross-roads on the Somme battle line. *British shells had made a circle of craters around the cross and its semi-circular hedge, some within a few feet, but not a fragment had touched the cross.*

This myth, the relation of which casts suspicion of falsity on all Von Wiegand writes, is fabricated to carry the impression that the image of Christ is miraculously protected by God. God did not protect Christ himself; he allowed the sentient body of his only begotten son to be torn with nails and pierced by a spear; but from the insensate image, or idol, which is incapable of feeling a pang, he turns away the shell that, at worst, could inflict only a few dollars' damage to the image as property. Meanwhile, the human beings he made in his own life and likeness, are torn to pieces by the war missiles. So careful of the man-made idol, so careless of the God-made product. It is like a man exposing his own child to horrible suffering and death, and performing wonders to save the child's rag baby. The War was not required to produce such instances of Divine imbecility; they are the perennial product of faith. The War only multiplies them, and sends the people backward mentally at a more rapid pace.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

#### FROM MESOPOTAMIA.

We've marched nigh on an 'undred mile  
Across the bloomin' sand;  
We're jest about as thirsty as  
A regimental band.  
(I wish I'd never seen this 'ell-  
Ish Heaven-forsaken land.)  
The flies is gnorin' orf our 'eads,  
An' chewin' up our feet;  
The Colonel's face is red an' blue  
An' bustin' with the 'eat.  
(Is language is enough to make  
The blinkin' Turks retreat.)  
An' this is where old Adam lived  
Along o' Mother Eve!  
Well, I'm no Doubtin' Thomas, but  
I'm darned if I believe  
That they was *really* 'orrified  
When told to pack an' leave!

—*London Opinion*,

## Acid Drops.

Bishop Taylor-Smith, Chaplain-General of the Forces, told the Church of England Men's Society at Manchester that "the war had revealed conspicuously the spiritual poverty of the Church." We fancy they will bear up against that kind of poverty so long as the other kind doesn't trouble them.

At the same meeting the Dean of Manchester, Bishop Welldon, said there had been in the last fifty years "a marked intellectual decline in the clergy of the Church of England." He also said that "the working man was asking to-day, 'Is it compatible with an almighty and all-loving God that the world should now be a veritable Hell, and how is it that nineteen centuries of Christianity did not prevent the most horrible of all wars in human history?'" We should have liked to have heard Bishop Welldon's answer to this question; but all he said was that "the Church needed more intellectual power to meet such questions." Exactly; but if the inquiring working man has to wait for a reply until the Church gets greater intellectual power, we are afraid he is in for a long wait.

The National Mission of Repentance and Hope is being advertised like a patent medicine, and the preliminary speeches of the missionaries are receiving very kind treatment from the Press. So far, the outpourings have been concerned with national "sins." Apparently, to err is human; but to get well paid for pointing it out is divine.

When Christian ministers agree with rival organizations their equanimity is wonderful. Writing of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope, the Rev. W. T. Ball, an Essex Congregationalist minister, says, "If I cannot pronounce the Anglican Shibboleth I can join hands with them in fighting the common foe." Indeed! Brother Ball overlooks the fact that ministers of all denominations are "too proud to fight."

We see that a German Professor, a Dr. Welker, has been advocating the legalization of polygamy as a means of replenishing the population after the War. In this he is supported by several others. Now, we advise these gentlemen that if they wish for unimpeachable Christian authority for this step, they cannot do better than appeal to the Bible. It is no use going to Pagan Greece and Rome where monogamy was the rule, the Bible is the place where polygamy is general. And they may enforce their position by men such as Martin Luther, John Milton, and Bishop Burnet, all of whom were emphatic that neither the Old Testament nor the New contained a prohibition of polygamy.

The *Daily Express* is responsible for the statement that Herr Trumper, a Hamburg clergyman, declared recently:—

Know, all Germans, that if you continue thus to spare the enemy, God himself will brand your attitude as one of sinful disobedience to his holy will.

There is only one thing to be said on behalf of Herr Trumper, and that is, being a clergyman he will be quite ready to preach the exact opposite of this when a suitable occasion presents itself.

The *Church Times* says that the fact of another clergyman having gained a Victoria Cross quite puts Mr. Ben Tillett and those who supported him at the Trades Congress out of court. But Mr. Tillett did not complain about the parsons who went to war, it was about those who stayed at home. His complaint was the exemption of a whole class, and in that we fancy the majority of people are with him.

From the report of the seventeenth general meeting of the Vereeniging Estates, Ltd., South Africa, we take the following suggestive sentence:—

The improved working conditions at a higher rate of wages and the better housing have resulted in making the colliery more popular with the natives, and a great number is now recruited voluntarily.

The italics are ours. It is good to know that a number of natives are now recruited voluntarily. But we imagine that it will come as a surprise to many to learn that *forced labour* is in vogue in South Africa. To others, this information will not be so new.

According to the September issue of the *Record*, a journal devoted to Home and Foreign Mission Work of the Free Church of Scotland, thirty churches in Edinburgh decided to dispense with Sunday evening services during August on account of small attendances. This in Scotland! And still we hear of the revival of religion.

The Bishop of Willesden thinks that children should be taught to say as a grace, "Thank God and the Royal Navy for my good dinner." Now, we wonder which the Bishop of Willesden would really put his money on if he were compelled to make a choice between the two? We haven't the ghost of a doubt that he would back the Navy, and let the other party go.

There is nothing very spectacular in providing for the aged, and pretty actresses and fashionable ladies cannot pose for the camera in the act of offering them cigarettes and chocolate, as is the case with wounded soldiers. So perhaps it is because the poverty of the aged is such a common thing in Christian countries that it took about one hundred years of agitation, dating from Paine's plea for old age pensions, to get the thing legally established. Also that may be the reason why it took two years of agitation to get the Government to agree to an advance on the five shillings per week although it involved less than the cost of the War for a single day. And now we learn that although a little advance had been promised in August, nothing has yet been paid. It is still to come. The Christian consciousness is a rare and tender plant.

Mr. H. G. Wells is so very pious in his latest novel that the *Observer* remarks, sarcastically, that the popular novelist has "drafted the prospectus of a new religion." As it is only in the pages of a romance, it does not much matter. All's well that ends wells.

Mr. H. G. Wells says, "In England we have domesticated everything, we have even domesticated God." Perhaps this is why Mr. Wells gushes about "God" in his latest novel, for circulating-library readers dearly love the domesticities.

"Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God and been found by God he begins at no beginning, he works to no end," says Mr. H. G. Wells. Unhappily for Mr. Wells, there are so many religions and gods are so cheap.

"The religion that is wanted," said the Bishop of Stepney, "is one that will not play the fool with us." This is a hard saying, for Christianity, with its fairy tales and serried ranks of spinsters, will hardly fill this bill.

The following is from the *Sunday Pictorial* of Sept. 24:—

"I do not know you. You must go to a clergyman to whom you are known," said Mr. Hedderwick at North London yesterday to a Canadian woman who asked the magistrate to sign her passport, so that she could get back to the Dominion.

Applicant replied that she had not been in the habit of attending church.

Mr. Hedderwick: You might get your friends to make a declaration.

Applicant: I have no relatives on this side, only my niece, who is here.

Mr. Hedderwick: Does she go to church?

Applicant: I am afraid not often.

Mr. Hedderwick: You see how useful it is to attend church. I do not know you, so I cannot sign it.

The request for identification was, we suppose, right and proper, but why this special reference to a clergyman, and advice to attend church?—In nine cases out of ten a recommendation from a clergyman is of very little real value, and the advice to attend church is quite out of place. It is

regrettable that magistrates do not better appreciate the nature and function of their office.

Lord Kinnaird, speaking at the opening of Dundee's Annual Christian Conference, said "We were conscious that God was working out a plan in a way different from what we had expected." This, we assume, is Lord Kinnaird's way of expressing surprise at the behaviour of Providence. Doubtless many other pious souls have expected God to do things in a different way from that which has been manifested.

At the same meeting, the Rev. W. Macintosh, of Glasgow, said he had been struck "at open-air meetings in London, conducted by Atheists, that they get their own way, and that nobody puts up an argument in defence." We can assure Mr. Macintosh that it was not always thus. Christians did put up an argument, once upon a time, but experience taught them wisdom, and they discovered there was no argument to offer. Hence their silence.

"Colonel" Kitching, of the Salvation Army, says that the organization "has important ramifications in Germany as in other countries." Still another proof the Germans are Atheists!

A daily paper states that the average Englishman is distrustful of emotion and display. Yet quite a large number of respectable tradesmen confess themselves "miserable sinners" in church on Sundays.

From the *Farmer's Weekly and South African Journal*:—

HOME FOR FEEBLE MINDS.

Could any reader tell me of a home, not an asylum, for a partially deformed and feeble-minded boy, where he could be taught a trade and be kindly treated? There was such a home in Grahamstown many years ago, connected with the Church of England, but I have forgotten the name of it.—"M.D.C." O.F.S

In connection with the Church of England! Reads a trifle sarcastic.

The *Daily Chronicle* states that "the American revised version of the Decalogue, omitting the 'arguments' from the first five commandments, recalls Clough's version adapting them to modern principles:—

Thou shalt have one God only; who  
Would be at the expense of two?  
No graven images may be  
Worshipped—except the currency.  
Swear not at all; for, for thy curse  
Thy enemy is none the worse.  
At church on Sundays to attend  
Will serve to keep the world thy friend.  
Honour thy parents—that is, all  
From whom advancement may befall."

The *North Mail* for September 28 reports Miss Booth-Cliborn, of the Salvation Army, as saying that she remembered asking "a great infidel," who was converted by the Army, what caused his conversion. And he replied, "It was your joy. You had no homes, no money, no comforts..... What made you so happy?" We should dearly love to have the name of that "great infidel." It would be rude to suggest that a lady is not speaking the truth, so we console ourselves with the reflection that departures from the path of rectitude are not limited to "mere man."

The *Daily News* reports on the raid of September 23:—

One remarkable incident of the raid here concerns the fate of a little Wesleyan chapel. This building was practically demolished, only a portion of one wall remaining. And on the centre of this piece of wall there remains unscathed the text; "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

Quite remarkable; but there were others. The *Daily Mail* of September 25 reports that a chapel was burned out in a Midland town as a consequence of the raid. And in another

case we heard of two children being killed, and a cat, in the same house, "preserved." The ways of "Providence" are as unaccountable during Zeppelin raids as at other times.

Ordinary folk are annoyed that the clergy of all denominations have evaded military service. The heirs of the apostles ought to be combed out, they think.

A public-house at Lindfield has been transformed into a church-house. A cynic might say that this was a change from spirituous to spiritual intoxication.

Provincial newspapers frequently deal with serious matters utterly ignored by the metropolitan press, which primarily concerns itself with sensational items and large circulations. The *Southend Standard* has raised the question of the social status of civil marriage and suggests that the community should invest such functions with more "solemnity and interest, as they are equally important as those celebrated before an altar." In this matter it will be well to imitate the example of our French neighbours, who have long made civil marriages quite imposing social functions.

In an account of last week's Zeppelin Raid, the *Daily Telegraph* said that in an East Midland Town "a small Primitive Methodist chapel was fairly hit by an incendiary bomb, which wrecked most of the interior of the building and set it on fire." At best there can be only a High Church or Roman Catholic moral in this incident.

Outside a large church, the other day, we saw a poster containing a quotation from Lord Roberts to the effect that what was needed was England on its knees. That, we quite believe, expresses the desire of all the Churches. Get a man on his knees with his eyes shut and everything is—religiously—possible.

The language of the clergy and their satellites is getting more sulphurous. The Rev. Professor Irvine, an American, speaking at the National Brotherhood Conference, said "the fiends of hell were coming up against them." This is the language of Billy Sunday, and not that of civilized persons.

In an interview published in a Sunday paper, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, speaking of present-day plays, says "The Bible cannot be called a 'clean' book in the sense that the revue manager claimed that his entertainment was 'clean.'" A palpable hit at some clerical critics of the theatre.

The Secretary of the Charity Organization Society writes, in the *Daily Telegraph* of September 28, that in the Administrative County of London "no fewer than 2,368 agencies" for the distribution of charity are on the Society's books. And there must be a very large number of small ventures that are not registered in this way. At any rate, the figures given are suggestive. Few people realize the extent to which charitable relief has become almost a profession. These societies mark, not alone an appalling number of people who from some cause or other look for charity, but also a large number who live by its distribution. If paying salaries to individuals engaged in this work were forbidden by law, or if the whole thing were taken over by the State, it is probable that we should soon see a diminution in the volume of relief required, or in the number of those engaged in it. And we are quite sure that a number of clerical gentlemen would have to seek some other avenue of employment.

That is one aspect of the matter. But there is another. What can be done by organization this War is showing everyone. But it is a striking commentary upon the ethical value of Christian training that it is only for war that Christians have brought this capacity for national organization into operation. Ready as ever to organize for the purpose of destruction, Christians show themselves quite unready to organize on the same scale of effectiveness for the purpose of saving life or developing it. And the little relation there is

between this organization for war and a sense of social duty or social well-doing is shown by the readiness of most people—from the shipowner down to the small shopkeeper—to fleece the community to the uttermost halfpenny. One is reminded of Ruskin's comparison of the mediæval crag-baron with the modern bog-baron. And the plundering of mediæval society by the feudal lord and that of modern times by those who control the markets, are two forms of the same thing. It is in these directions, quite as much as in the more obtrusive fact of war, that the decisive failure of Christianity as a moralizing and civilizing force is seen.

The much-advertised mission of Repentance and Hope has started, and in the metropolis the Bishop of London has been holding open-air meetings at Tower Hill and other places. A newspaper report states that "a cornet-player led the singing." It all sounds like the swan-song of the Christian religion.

The Americans are supposed to be a very energetic and enterprising people, and the Episcopal Church is creating a sensation in Christian circles by revising the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament. It is a pity that our American friends did not take Thomas Paine's advice and revise the Christian religion; but we must be thankful for a very sma beginning.

The Rev. D. Ewart James, an Essex Congregational minister, says "the world is not perfect yet, for neither God nor man had finished making it." The reverend gentleman has noticed that Christendom is not a garden of love.

The bachelor Bishop of London is girding at the writers of "lecherous and slimy" plays. As he is fond of poking his nose into nastiness, let him read the Old Testament. He will find modern playwrights are saints by comparison.

High church dignitaries in Rome are protesting vigorously against the costumes of the Italian ladies. The Bishop of London and other English ecclesiastics are similarly perturbed about British morality. What high-minded gentlemen they are, to be sure. And in the midst of a great European War, too.

The Bishop of London says that one of the objects of the National Mission is to bring about a better understanding between capital and labour, and that the Church would preach justice between employers and workers. As the Church is a wholesale employer, we may expect that the salaries of curates, organists, choir-singers, and charwomen will undergo a generous increase, and that the archbishops and bishops will no longer riot in princely salaries.

#### WHY THE PARSON PREFERRED THE GOOSE.

We are indebted to the Vienna *Arbeiter Zeitung* for the following charming story of village life in the Prussian province of Pomerania: In this village it is an immemorial custom that the pastor receives a fat goose, or, in default of a goose, a present of four marks, for every child he confirms. The confirmations take place on Palm Sunday, but the geese are presented to the pastor in autumn when they are fat—and the money also.

As geese are now very scarce and costly, the gardener S., lately sent his lately confirmed little daughter to the pastor with four marks, and received the following reply: "On my reminding you of your duty to send me a confirmation goose for confirming your daughter, you have sent me instead four marks. I return the money, as I do not require money at present, and demand from you a live goose, not as a present, but as part of my pastoral stipend. Should you neglect to fulfil my request, I shall be obliged to report the matter to the authorities. If you have not geese of your own you can buy one at Emma K.'s, as she has still some left. But you must see to it at once."

As geese in this fat land of Pomerania cost only four marks in peace time, and have now reached the price of 50 marks, the pastor's letter is not without a certain charm.—*Daily Chronicle*.

### Our Sustentation Fund.

THE detailed account of the position of the *Freethinker* given last week renders it unnecessary to write at length now upon the same topic. As will be seen below, there has been a very gratifying response towards wiping off the deficit on the year's working; but even more gratifying has been the appreciative and encouraging letters written by subscribers. Most write expressing surprise and pleasure that the deficit is not greater, bearing in mind the increased expenses; some hope that I will keep the Fund open while the War lasts, in order to provide against recurring losses; and all write in warm appreciation of what has been done. One does not, of course, work for appreciation, but it is welcome and cheering when it comes.

By way of acknowledgment, and because we feel readers will be interested, we venture on a few excerpts from letters received.

Mr. H. Jessop, in forwarding a subscription of £25, writes:—

I am delighted to see what a successful year you have had against such odds. Every Freethinker must feel proud of your leadership. I hope you will be able to raise £300, which will meet present requirements and leave a small reserve to work on.

Mr J. Newton encloses cheque, and says:—

You have presented a most remarkable statement of accounts under an abnormal combination of adverse circumstances, and I am sure that on a return to normal conditions, such forethought and ability as this has required must be rewarded with success.

Mr. W. Mumby hopes that more than meets the immediate necessities will be subscribed, and adds: "It is intolerable to have to expend all the brainwork and effort in editing such a paper as the *Freethinker*, and at the same time to have the anxiety and carking care of debt hanging round your neck."

M. C. Heaton, in sending "a working man's contribution," hopes that other working men will also contribute.

M. P. W. writes:—

I wish to express my admiration for the bravery and devotion with which you undertook the editorship. I desire also to congratulate you on the marked success of your work.

An Old N. S. S. member says:—

Should you need more money later, do not hesitate to ask for it, as plenty of the supporters will be ready to assist, and I will send more later if all goes well.

Mr. J. Close writes:—

You deserve the thanks of all who have the welfare of the *Freethinker* at heart.

C. W. B. suggests letting the Fund remain open till the end of the War. We are afraid this is too indefinite a period with a war which threatens to become a national institution.

An old friend, Mr. A. J. Fincken, writes wishing good luck, and adds:—

To some of us who remember the early numbers of the *Freethinker* and its long struggle, and who look upon the present issues, what reader of other papers can have so much to be grateful to those who have helped to make it the high class paper that it is as we lucky readers of the *Freethinker*?

These are but a few of the many kindly phrased letters received, and we think readers will be as interested in them as we are. We must leave others for notice until next week. For the present we can only say to all, "Thanks."

The following are the subscriptions to date:—

	£	s.	d.
J. A. Fallows ... ..	10	10	0
F. W. Hall ... ..	10	0	0
H. D. Jones ... ..	0	5	0
Argumenticus ... ..	1	0	0
W. H. Hicks ... ..	2	2	0
T. C. Riglin ... ..	0	2	6
J. Pendlebury ... ..	3	0	0
J. Withy ... ..	1	1	0
R. H. Side ... ..	2	2	0
E. D. Side ... ..	2	2	0
J. Hudson ... ..	0	10	0
H. Jessop ... ..	25	0	0
Deneb ... ..	0	10	0
C. Heaton ... ..	0	2	6
W. Mumby ... ..	5	0	0
J. Newton ... ..	1	1	0
W. P. M. ... ..	1	0	0
W. Clogg ... ..	0	5	0
C. W. B. ... ..	2	0	0
Old N. S. S. Member ... ..	0	10	0
T. T. ... ..	0	2	6
A. J. Fincken ... ..	2	2	0
Mr. and Mrs. Gorrie ... ..	1	0	0
J. Close ... ..	0	4	0
A. R. Wykes ... ..	0	10	0
T. Bowlen ... ..	1	0	0
A. J. Batteson ... ..	0	5	0
J. G. Howarth ... ..	0	2	0
W. Dodd ... ..	0	10	0
W. B. O. ... ..	1	0	0

Total £74 18 0

C. C.

### C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 8, Birmingham; October 22, Sheffield; October 29, Barrow-in-Furness; November 5, Brixton; November 12, Glasgow; December 19, Leicester; January 14, Nottingham.

### To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 8, Leicester; October 15, Glasgow; October 29, Sheffield.

G. A. JACKSON.—Your communication received. Our complaint is not against its abuse, but its length. Can't you concentrate a little in future? We don't mind such letters in the least. The opinion of our readers concerning us seems to fluctuate between describing us as a "heaven-born" genius and an incurable idiot; and if ever we are too impressed by the one view, we can always contemplate the other.

A COPY of the *Freethinker* has been returned to us as wrongly addressed. It was directed to Pte. A. Cleaver, 7130, B. Co., 1st Queen's Batt., B.E.F., France. Perhaps some of his friends can give us the correct address.

J. PAULTNEY.—Sorry that want of space prevents our publishing your communication on Spiritualism.

D. McLEOD.—We will forward any letters that may arrive. Pleased to hear that in France, while Christianity is converting Christians, Atheism is also converting them; which is what many of our readers tell us.

T. W.—The instructions of the War Office on the question of Affirmation are plain enough, and any obstacle to your affirming must be due to the bigotry or stupidity of the officer in charge. For your information, and for that of others, we append the following from the "Recruiting Instructions" dated Feb. 12, 1916, No. 10:—"Oath of Allegiance.—It is notified for general information that any man who from religious or conscientious principles, or otherwise, objects to taking the oath of allegiance on attestation, may be attested by making a solemn affirmation to serve." That, we should think, is clear enough for anyone.

A. J. MITCHELL.—You must have quite a lot of spare time on your hands for writing. Pity you put it to such poor uses.

T. EDMUNDS.—You say you would not mind, as a Christian, destroying half of what is generally known as Christianity. We are pleased to hear it, and, as we do not like to be outdone in generosity by a Christian, we will cheerfully add the other half to the scrap-heap.

R. HEUGHAN.—We do not quite follow you in some parts of your letter, but we are quite with you in wishing to make the N. S. S. a real force in the country. It is because we have that end in view that we are striving to open up new centres of activity and increase the membership of the Society. We gather, in addition, that one of your desires is to see the N. S. S. put forward a definite social and economic policy, and that, we are afraid, is beyond the scope of "practical politics." Our immediate and urgent work is to make Freethinkers. All else will follow.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Rosine Mapp, 5s.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

## Sugar Plums.

The first move was taken in the fight with the London County Council last Sunday. Dating from September 30, the Council decreed that no literature should be sold in the Parks at public meetings. Thanks to the initiative of the N. S. S. and to our leading article of June 11, public attention was drawn to the matter, and a Committee of representatives from a number of Societies formed. The outcome was the resolve to defend the freedom of public propaganda. The first move was made last week. Miss Vance (Parliament Hill) Mr. J. Neate (Victoria Park), Mr. Henley (Brockwell Park) and Miss Kough (Finsbury Park) sold literature, and their names and addresses were duly taken by the Council's officials. If the Council felt that we were only "bluffing," they will now know that we mean business. The fight is none of our seeking, and we would much rather that it had not occurred. But it has been forced upon the N. S. S., and most certainly the N. S. S. will not run away. What action the Council intends taking—if any—remains to be seen. There may be a stiff fight before us; but that is a matter which will not disturb the sleep of many Freethinkers.

To-day (Oct. 8) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Birmingham Town Hall. The meeting has been well advertised, we understand; but we hope that local friends are doing their best to see that this very large hall is well filled. We are always sure of a good audience there; but it should be better than good. Admission is quite free, so that there is no bar to anyone coming. There will be a collection to defray expenses, and generous visitors will have the opportunity of paying for their seat in that way.

Mr. Cohen's meetings at Abertillery on Sunday last were completely successful. In the afternoon the hall was filled, and in the evening many were compelled to stand. Both lectures were followed with the closest attention, and the visit confirmed our impression that South Wales is one of the most promising fields at present for Freethought propaganda. For that reason we should like to see Freethinkers in Swansea and Cardiff make up their minds for work during the coming winter. Perhaps some who read this may take the hint.

To-day (Oct. 8) Mr. Lloyd lectures in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. We know how much Mr. Lloyd's lectures are appreciated by the Leicester folk, and we have, therefore, no doubt of a meeting such as the lecturer deserves. The lecture commences at 6.30. We are pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd had two very large meetings at Failsworth last Sunday—larger than any of his pre-War audiences.

The many friends of Captain Latham, who was recently wounded in France, will be pleased to learn that he is rapidly recovering, and hopes to soon resume active duty. We sincerely hope that Captain Latham's good fortune will continue to the end of the War, and that we may have the pleasure of once more meeting him in the flesh.

We are asked to announce that the Metropolitan Secular Society will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, October 11, at Canton Hall, at 7 o'clock. The meeting is open to members only.

## Talks With Young Listeners.

### XVI.—Prophets.

OF Samuel the Rain-maker and King-maker we have heard, and now we will take a quick glance at other prophets.

When the tribes of Israel were marching to Canaan, in the days of Moses, the people of Moab hired a prophet to curse the Hebrews with an evil spell. He was quite willing, and set out on his ass towards a hill on which he was to stand while reciting the terrible ban. But Yahweh, sword in hand, barred the path. The ass saw God, and stuck fast; the man saw nothing, and beat the poor animal till it was forced to protest.

"Why thrash me?" asked the ass; and a little dialogue went on between man and beast, until Balaam (such was the prophet's name) suddenly caught sight of Yahweh, and felt foolish. The end of the adventure was that the prophet was obliged to bless the Wandering Jews, saying:

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

You will remember "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin"? One day, he was burning incense, and the sweet smoke was curling round the shiny, golden calf at Bethel, when a prophet appeared and, in a loud voice, cursed the altar in the name of Yahweh. Having done this errand, he turned to go home. Yahweh had strictly bidden him to stop at no place in Jeroboam's country, not even to drink water. Nevertheless, he stayed the night at the house of a friendly prophet whom he met, and sallied out in the morning riding on an ass.

Yahweh's lion sprang from a wayside bush, and, with one enormous blow, felled the disobedient prophet to the earth; and passers-by beheld a most curious scene—the dead man prostrate, the ass standing meekly by, and the lion keeping guard, but not offering to touch the corpse further. The lion was in too serious a mood to think of meals, for he was anxious that people who came along should learn the lesson of obedience to Yahweh.

The third prophet who shall cross our little stage to-day is Elijah.

Elijah's hair seemed to blaze round his head in plentiful rays, and, in truth, he looked very much like a Sun-God.

"As sure as Yahweh is alive," cried he to Ahab, King of Israel, "no rain shall fall for more than two years."

The King was a worshipper of Baal, and Baal and Yahweh were foes.

Elijah did not suffer the pangs of hunger, as many others did in those years of drought and famine. Ravens brought him bread and flesh in their beaks each morning, and these obliging black-feathered servants came again with food each evening; and for drink the long-haired prophet went to a wady. When the brook dried up, he journeyed till he met a pale and haggard widow, gathering sticks for her hearth-fire. She was about to use the last handful of flour in her barrel, and the last drain of olive-oil in her vase, for a last supper for herself and little boy; and then she must face starvation. However, the man of Yahweh assured her the flour would never lack, and the oil never fail till the Lord sent rain. In the widow's cottage Elijah dwelt a good while, and he slept on a simple bed in a loft, which he reached by a ladder. On this bed he laid the widow's son one day. The boy was dead. But a prophet of the Sun-God could, of course, give warmth to the chill of death itself, and when Elijah lay on the lad's body, the soul of the child flickered again into the flame of life, and the

prophet carried him down the ladder to the delighted mother.

The land was in a sore plight, and even the King had to roam from place to place, seeking water for his horses and mules; and he scowled like fury when he came across Elijah.

"Troubler of Israel," he shouted.

"It is you who are the troubler, you worshipper of Baal!" retorted Elijah.

The prophet then issued a challenge. Let two bullocks be killed for sacrifice on two altars, and let the rival Gods be asked to set light to the offering. This contest was agreed to, and a tremendous crowd of people watched the result.

Four hundred prophets of Baal slashed themselves with knives, in order to move the heart of Baal, while Elijah stood by mocking.

Then his turn came. After flooding the altar with water, as a rain-charm, he appealed to the God of Abraham—the Sun-God and Storm-God of Horeb. Fire flashed from the dome of heaven, and licked up the whole bullock and all the water. This was a signal for the killing of the four hundred men of Baal. The wind blew ugly black clouds up, and a mighty torrent of rain fell, and the folk rushed to shelter like frightened hares, crying out that Yahweh was certainly the one true God.

Whatever his faults may have been, Ahab was an heroic warrior, and died in his chariot fighting against the Syrians.

Ahab's son took no more notice of Yahweh than if the fire had never descended, nor the four hundred prophets been slain in order to teach them the truth; and he copied "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." He even sent soldiers to arrest Elijah; but the prophet called down heavenly fire, and consumed a hundred of them at a stroke.

Not long afterwards, Elijah took his friend and pupil, Elisha, to a quiet spot near the River Jordan, and prepared to mount upwards to his Sun-God. A chariot of fire, drawn by horses of fire, rolled towards him. He leaped in, and soared to the sky, and vanished. As he rose, his mantle wafted from his shoulders, and was picked up by Elisha, who thus became his successor.

I suppose it was this same chariot which appeared in the old Greek myth of the Sun-God and his beloved son, Phaethon. This precious youth, having been promised anything he liked by his father, Sol, stupidly requested that he might drive the chariot of the sun for a whole day. The horses got out of hand; the fiery car tumbled out of its proper road; much of the earth was scorched, and the people of Africa were turned completely black; and, as you know, the Africans have kept that colour to this very day. Phaethon was pitched headlong into the River Po, in Italy; and so he also, like some others we have heard of, was taught a lesson.

Elisha is our fourth prophet. Wearing Elijah's mantle, he astonished the countryside with his feats, such as turning salt water into fresh, making an iron hatchet swim on the top of the water, shifting the disease of leprosy from one man to another, and so on.

Passing through a village one day, he was kindly bidden to share a meal in a wayside farmhouse; and, as oft as he came that road, he gladly visited the farmer and his good wife. The friendly couple set apart for him a small room, which contained a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick, and here, they said, he might rest or sleep when he would. A few years glided by, and Elisha counted the place as a sort of home.

On a hot day in the season of harvest, the farmer's little son ran to and fro in the field, gaily watching the men reap the corn.

"My head, my head!" he cried suddenly, and men

stopped reaping at the pitiful sound.

"Carry him to his mother," said the farmer, anxiously, to one of his labourers.

His mother laid him on her knees, and her heart ached as she saw his life ebb out, and at noon he died; and she placed him on the couch of the man of God, and shut the door, and went out. She saddled an ass, and a servant rode it, while she sat behind.

"Fast, fast!" she bade.

She saw not the hills, nor the grass, nor the bloom of the flowers, for she seemed to see only the dead face of her son.

The prophet, looking from the window of his house on Mount Carmel, saw her coming.

"Quick!" he said to his man. "Run to meet the farmer's wife, and ask her if all is well."

"Yes," she replied in a very quiet tone, "all is well."

When she got to Elisha's door, she lit from the ass, and bent down, and held the prophet's feet, and he could see she was in deep grief.

"Gird your loins," said Elisha to his man, "take my staff; go to the lady's house, lay the staff on the child."

The man tucked up his loose robe into his girdle, and shot off, bare-legged, down the hill-side. Old Elisha walked after, and the poor mother sat on the ass behind the servant.

"The child did not wake," reported Elisha's man, as he came to meet them on the way.

The prophet went into the small room and shut the door. For a while, all was silent. Then the mother heard a sneeze. Simple as the sound was, she knew it came from her child. Seven sneezes!

Elisha called her in.

"Take up your son," he said.

She fell at his feet in a low salaam, and took up her child, and went out with a heart full of joy.

When Elisha was ill in his last sickness, the King came to see him, and wept over him, saying:

"My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

He meant that the prophet had been a power amongst the people, as a chariot was for warriors.

Elisha tested the King, first by telling him he should beat the Syrians, and then by telling him to smite the ground with a bundle of arrows.

"Smite like a victor, O King!"

The King smote three times; and the old prophet cried out:

"Why only three? Why not five—six?"

Thus the aged patriot died; and it is said that, even in death, he was a power; for as some men bore a corpse to burial, they saw Moabite raiders approaching, and dropped their burden in a cave where Elisha's bones reposed; and the dead man, as soon as he touched the bones, came to life again, and was, no doubt, much surprised to find himself in this peculiar position.

You will see that the Hebrew prophets spent much of their time in telling folk of their sins, and warning them of pains and dooms. For my part, I wish they had oftener praised the honest people, instead of showing so much zeal in threats and fault-finding. But some folk love to spy out their neighbours' sins, and make their flesh creep with talk of judgment and terror.

F. J. GOULD.

## A New Poetess.

*Myrion and Other Poems.* By Adelaide Eden Phillpotts. Published by Cecil, Palmer & Hayward, London.

MISS PHILLPOTTS, daughter of Mr. Eden Phillpotts, the distinguished novelist, who is himself a poet, is to be

heartily congratulated on her first little book of poems. She is a born poetess, with a splendidly vivid fancy, gambolling about at will among "airy nothings," and giving them "a local habitation and a name." The longest poem is the one that gives its title to the book, and it is on the whole the best. Its opening flights of fancy are exceedingly daring and beautiful, and there is much real music in the lines. We listen to choruses of dreams, moonbeams, and shadows; and dawn introduces herself thus:—

I breathe the melody of morning wind  
And whisper to the earth, "Awake! awake!"  
The pearls that tremble on my soft grey wings  
Shall soon be blushing with the rosy morn.  
She comes! My little golden sister comes,  
And I, a shadow to her loveliness,  
Melt in her arms.

Miss Phillpotts has a special aptitude for dramatic art. Most of the pieces in this, her first published work, are essentially dramatic. A high ethical note is often sounded in these fine poems, but the authoress is at her best in purely imaginative excursions. Take the following Song as a sample of her art:—

I will sing as the wind doth sing,  
Wailing and shouting and whispering,  
Wanton and wild—on a tireless wing,  
I'll sing, I'll sing.

I will weep as the moon doth weep,  
Whose tears steal down when the world's asleep,  
Drenching the valleys and ocean deep—  
I'll weep, I'll weep.

I will sigh as the sea doth sigh,  
When wavelets sink on the sand and die,  
And the little shells go tinkling by;  
I'll sigh, I'll sigh.

I will call as the rivers call,  
Whose voices are fragments of music all;  
Like the cool, clear song of the waterfall,  
I'll call, I'll call.

We sincerely trust that Miss Phillpotts will find a large and appreciative public, and that the present effort represents but the firstfruits of an abundant harvest of still riper and sweeter songs in the not distant future.

J. T. L.

### Among the Branches.

THE indoor work, foreshadowed in my report some few weeks ago, has, in many instances, taken definite shape, and some events will have already taken place when these lines are read.

Mr. Cohen's successful visit to "Welsh" Wales is reported in another column.

Our Birmingham Branch, from whom the idea of "Bradlaugh Sunday" first emanated, celebrated this event on Sunday, September 24, at the Market Assembly Rooms. Appropriate speeches were made by Messrs. Fathers, Williams, and Willis, and enjoyable items, musical and otherwise, were rendered by the Misses Paton and Smith, and by Messrs. Hackett and Sterling. On Sunday last, Mr. Williams opened the indoor session at the King's Hall, Birmingham with an excellent lecture to an appreciative audience.

The difficulty of obtaining halls having been overcome, Sheffield, so recently visited by the raiders, will now be visited by the reasoners, and on October 22, Mr. Cohen will lecture at the Foresters' Hall, Trippett Lane, followed, on October 29, by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. It is the duty of all "saints" in and around Sheffield to put themselves into communication with the Secretary, Mr. Thos. Dennis, 38 Giffard Road, Heeley, and personally take a hand in advertising these meetings, by word of mouth and by distribution of the printed announcements to be obtained from him.

Glasgow, having just closed its successful out-door meetings in Jail Square, has commenced its winter session. Mr.

Lloyd visits the Scotch stalwarts on Sunday next (October 15), and will be followed shortly by Mr. Cohen.

Our Tyneside friends have set the splendid example of an open Conference on October 1, at Victoria Hall Buildings, South Shields, and are fortunate in securing the assistance of veteran Secularists in their forthcoming propaganda.

In Manchester, for a variety of reasons—one of them, unfortunately, being the precarious state of health of its Secretary, Mrs. C. Pegg—continuous active propaganda has not been possible for some time. But the vigorous work in which our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Pegg, took so prominent a part in former days, has left its mark, and the city of "cotton, twist, and twill" has a very large number of unattached Freethinkers, who will undoubtedly join up when the fresh effort the Executive has under consideration is inaugurated. Manchester has paid its compliment to our first great leader by placing Walter Sickert's full-length portrait of "Mr. Bradlaugh at the Bar of the House of Commons," presented by the late Mr. F. Smallman, in the Art Gallery of that town, and it is for the descendants of those who profited by Charles Bradlaugh's advocacy and example to add their tribute to his memory by carrying on the work to which he devoted his all too brief life.

Last, but not least, in London a course of lectures has been arranged at the Avondale Hall, Brixton, Mr. Cohen opening the session on November 5. The Camberwell and North London Branches are preparing for weekly in-door meetings, the latter having commenced proceedings at the St. Pancras Reform Club on Sunday last with an excellent debate, followed by a useful discussion.

The Branches carrying on propaganda in the L.C.C. parks will continue as usual during October, at least, weather permitting. It was hoped that an amicable understanding between the L.C.C. and the societies that sell literature would have been arrived at before the first Sunday in October, but as the Council have not acceded to the request of the Joint Protest Committee in this matter, the sale of literature was proceeded with on Sunday last, and the names and addresses of the sellers were taken.

Halls are still most difficult to obtain, and friends may do the Cause a service by reporting to me particulars of any suitable for our lectures that might be hired in and around London. This favour would be greatly enhanced by the presentation of one suitably equipped to seat about a thousand people, ready to be planted in the heart of our big city! If forwarded at once, carriage will be cheerfully paid at this end!

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

### Correspondence.

#### THE WAY THEY HAVE IN THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Since I last wrote to you I have left the Army (time-expired), and re-enlisted. I thought you would like to hear my story. As an old soldier, I think I know how and what to do. When I attested, after being called back to the Colours, they never troubled to swear me in, so I never got the chance to affirm. I was then given a railway ticket, and ordered to join a reserve Brigade. I was then posted to my sub-section, and my sergeant, after asking for particulars about my previous service, asked me what was my religion. I told him I had no religious belief—that I was an Atheist. Said he: "But come, ———, you know that you have to have a religion in the Army." I begged his pardon, and told him he was thinking of voluntary enlistment in time of peace, when they rejected a man without one. I then produced a copy of the *Freethinker*, and showed him the Principles and Objects, on the last page, and told him that was my belief. Anyhow, to get over his difficulty, he put me down as Jewish (without my consent). Being an experienced artillery driver, I passed out in a week, and was drafted down to Woolwich. I arrived at Woolwich, and, before being posted again, I was once more asked my religion. I answered, "An Atheist." The clerk looked at his companion, and said, "What shall we put down for him?" "Oh, put him down nil."

I thought I was getting on fine now, but I was mistaken. A fortnight ago I reported sick, and on my sick report they had got me down C. of E. (Church of England). I asked for an explanation, and was told they had me down as C. of E. at the Battery office. I have only one remedy. I am not likely to be ordered to church while I am here in Woolwich; but as soon as I am, I shall see my section officer. If this is no use, I shall make it my business to see the chaplain, and ask him if it is his wish to have me in his church. If he gives me no satisfaction, then I am sure he will get none. I once told a chaplain I enjoyed his sermons because they made me laugh. And this is my only weapon: they can't stand laughter.

I am going back to France in a week or two, and I hope I shall get the *Freethinker* as regularly as I did before. While closing, I wish to thank you for an enjoyable evening at the Queen's Hall last Sunday. Although I have had the pleasure of hearing you and Mr. Lloyd lecture at Manchester, I had not heard Messrs. A. Moss and H. Snell or Mrs. Bradlough Bonner before. I am afraid I was out of bounds on Sunday night, but it was worth it. Hoping you will excuse my troubling you with my experience.

FREETHINKER.

### "A QUESTION OF LOGIC."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* for September 24 your correspondent, H. C. Hebbes, does not illustrate his contention by citing any definite passages from your usually consistent publication, so one feels diffident in taking up the cudgels on its behalf, or, rather, on behalf of its contributors who are, as a rule, admirably lucid. It seems to me that he somewhat confuses cause and effect. As far as I have understood your attitude to the Christian superstition the position is this: The great army of priests and parsons, with their far-reaching organizations, have influenced for nearly two thousand years the great mass of European peoples. They claim that their God is omnipotent and ordains all things for the highest well-being of his creatures; yet the result at the present time is, as your contributor says, "Armageddon." If this is the outcome of such a lengthy trial, it seems to prove, from the point of view of a thoughtful and reasoning Rationalist, that the Christian religion is a dismal failure! But, it seems to me, this position is by no means inconsistent with the statement that "Christianity is an ever-dwindling force"; for as you have, in season and out of season, consistently held, *Freethought*, with its basis of Secular Education, has never had a fair trial, and so its effects are not so apparent; though, in proportion to its declared adherents, its influence upon the uplift of humanity is vastly greater than its opponents are prepared to admit, but not yet great enough to have prevented the deplorable conflict in which the nations of Europe are now involved. Cannot Mr. Hebbes see that the fact that it can "logically be urged that the social life of the world is better to day than at any previous time in the history of mankind" is a fact in spite of the "deadening influence of the Christian religion over the masses"? Has the impetus for any great social uplift originated in the Churches? Has not, almost universally, and in spite of violent opposition from the Churches, those ideas of most great social reforms emanated from those who own no allegiance to Religion, save to the Religion of Humanity? What is the supreme Christian ideal, without the acceptance of which all else is in vain? Stripped of all verbiage is it not this: Man can do nothing of himself! Does not such an idea inevitably tend to sap self-reliance and produce a deadening influence on the unthinking masses? And let me here say the "unthinking" are by no means confined to those who are usually designated as "the masses."

KEPLER.

### "REPENTANCE AND HOPE" AND CONDEMNED CLERICAL SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Now that the Bishop of London is not sitting on the stool—but ostentatiously standing on the stump—of "repent-

ance," surely the time is opportune for bringing to the notice of his lordship the foul political scandal of the 124 clerical schools in London, which have been condemned by the Board of Education. And as this great church mission of repentance and hope now being carried on is a national mission, readers of the *Freethinker* in districts outside London might also draw the attention of other high ecclesiastical leaders to the innumerable other clerical schools throughout the country which have been, or ought to be, condemned by the Board of Education. Let it be borne in mind, too, that those schools are supported wholly out of public funds, and that by the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903 the denominations are responsible for the proper condition of the buildings.

Further, I submit that the time has now fully arrived when those Rationalists who, at the election of 1906, supported Labour, even in the belief that they stood for such fundamentals of democratic education policy as Secular Education and public control of State-supported Education, should now take stock of their position and ask themselves how far such support has been justified. They should also take steps to ascertain the reason of the silence of Leaders and the General Committees of the Socialist and Trade Unionist movements concerning the scandal of the condemned clerical schools in London, particulars concerning which can be read in an official L.C.C. report for May 26 (No. 33). Trade Unionists and others who may find it difficult to get access to this report will find an article by myself on the subject in the *A. S. G. Journal* for June, 1915, although it is only fair to add that I have been told that my article understates the horrors of the scandal.

As a not altogether unrelated subject, the question of the filched wealthy educational endowments might also be forced well to the front during the Church's "mission of Repentance and Hope."

Mr. Lansbury's "National Labour Weekly," the *Herald*, tells us a great deal about the mission. I wonder if any readers of the *Freethinker* can induce Mr. Lansbury to tell us in his paper something definite about the condemned clerical schools and the wealthy educational endowments which the Church has stolen from the poor, for whom they were originally intended.

M. BRIDGES ADAMS.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 28.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Leate, Neate, Quinton, Roger, Samuels, Thurlow, F. Wood, Miss Kough, Mrs. Rolf, Miss Stanley, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Parent Society and for the Camberwell, Glasgow, and North London Branches.

A letter from the London County Council, warning the Society that, in accordance with their decision to withdraw permits, no literature could be sold in the L.C.C. parks after September 30, was read. It was also reported that a courteous letter from the Chairman of the Joint Protest Committee, appealing to the Parks Committee "to preserve the *status quo ante*" until the final decision of the Council had been given, had been without effect.

After discussion, it was resolved unanimously: "That the sale of literature be continued, and that all Branches holding meetings in the L.C.C. parks be instructed to this effect."

Correspondence from Manchester, relating to the difficulties of continuous propaganda there, was read, and it was resolved that arrangements for the resumption of indoor work be left in the hands of the President and Secretary.

Successful lectures on September 10 and 17, and also the Commemorative Meeting at Queen's (Minor) Hall, were reported.

The Secretary was instructed to make inquiries for suitable halls for winter propaganda, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

## 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 postcard.

## LONDON.

## INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Neary's, 94 Lordship Road, Church Street, Stoke Newington): 11.30, Business Meeting; Election of Auditors, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Freethought and Patriotism." Opener, H. V. Storey.

## OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Hooper, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, R. Miller, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, H. V. Storey, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "What Must We Do Now?" 6.15, Messrs. Beale, Saphin, and Smith.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): 7, C. Cohen, "Woman, the Bible, the Bishops, and the National Mission."

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