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Views and Opinions.

Reaction.

Soon after the War commenced we warned Freethinkers to be on their guard against, and to be prepared for, the reaction that was inevitable while the War lasted, and which might continue for some time after it had ceased. We have repeated that warning as events seemed to justify it, and if we recur to it now it is because the emergence of the National Mission of Hope and Repentance may be taken as an indication of the way in which the Churches hope to make capital out of the disaster which has overtaken civilization. And if the Churches could re-establish themselves—which for various reasons we believe they will quite fail to do—it would only be a case of history repeating itself. More than sixteen centuries ago Christianity found its way to power amid the ruins of a great Empire. The decay of the Roman Empire was vital to the welfare of the Christian Church. In the days of its health and vigour, Christianity could have gained no hold on that civilization. But diseases are incident to a weakened constitution—that of the body politic as of the individual organism. And the triumph of Christianity represented the inroads of disease on a society lacking the resisting power of complete health. That this phase will be repeated now we do not believe. But reaction is here, and it is the duty of Freethinkers to see that the Churches gain as little as is possible from this reaction.

* * *

Religion and Retrogression.

Truth to tell, it needed little prescience to foresee reaction. When the savage in man is let loose, it would be absurd to expect that the civilized human will not lose caste; and when no other way than that of brute force is left of settling differences, the finer and more delicate methods sink in the scale of values. Human life becomes of less value, save for the one end of taking life elsewhere; we become habituated to daily and lengthy lists of killed and wounded; and even the question of preserving our babies, or of getting more babies born, is discussed mainly with an eye on providing men

for the armies of the future. And as war dulls our feelings with reference to loss of life, so it makes the mass of the people careless of rights and privileges won for them by generations of fighting not less heroic than that of Gallipoli or of the Somme. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of the individual, even the old boast that an Englishman's house is his castle, goes by the board, and is justified by the one consideration that we are at war. Intelligent laymen note these things, and do not hide from themselves their evil consequences, even while they admit their necessity as temporary measures of safety. It is left for the clergy to see in such things, not symptoms of retrogression, but indications of a rebirth of religion.

* * *

When Religion Scores.

So far as a genuine revival of religion is possible, the Christian Churches are justified in seeing a promise of gain in conditions that threaten disaster to the higher social and intellectual life. Religion, it cannot be too often emphasized, is wholly at home in an uncivilized environment. Most powerful and least challenged where civilization is scanty or non-existent, every social and intellectual advance involves a modification of religious teaching and a limitation of its power. A consequence of this is that anything which lowers the level of life cannot but hold out the promise of gain to religion. Look at the way in which the Christian Churches, for example, leap at those disasters to which human life is subject. Let a man lose his wife or child, or be stricken with disease, let a community experience disaster through an epidemic or an earthquake, and religion is clamant in its appeal to minds out of balance through unexpected calamity. So in the case of a world-war—which involves an automatic retrogression to a lower state of being, a condition where the cultural forces of society are robbed of a large part of their efficiency—we have at once revived conditions that at least hold out the promise of gain to religious organizations. We have seen these atavistic symptoms in the almost boundless credulity that has characterized the public mind this past two years. They were indicated in the widespread myth of the Mons Angels, in the fantastic stories of shells which demolished whole villages but left untouched the village crucifix, and in the solemn proposal to erect wayside crosses along the country lanes, in order to please our soldiers when they return home chastened and purified by the life in the trenches and the wholesale butchery of modern battlefields. Last, but not least, we see the same symptoms in the National Mission of Hope and Repentance. All teach the same lesson—religion thrives best when it can appeal to minds temporarily or permanently released from the protective influence of a civilized culture.

* * *

The Clerical Game.

It is quite evident that all the Churches are hoping to gain some very material benefit from the present situation, and they are all laying their plans accordingly. Face to face as is the nation with the necessity for

educational reform, the clergy are already striving to gain a more secure foothold in the nation's schools. An attempt is certain to be made to arrive at some form of compromise between sections of the Christian Church, and it will require all our energies to defeat that. And we see from the *Christian World*, that in connection with the National Mission, some of the "Messengers" are entering Council schools in haranguing the children on the National Mission. In connection with the War, it is observable that although at the commencement the clergy were ignored by everybody, including the War Office, by sheer persistency and advertising they have forced themselves into public notice. Bishops—who by no possible combination of circumstances would ever see military service—strut khaki-clad before the public, their own importance to a nation at war is trumpeted by thousands of clergymen from thousands of pulpits, every action of note performed by an Army Chaplain is advertised with all the lavishness of a soup or pill testimonial, until there is set up in the unreflective public mind a hazy sort of conviction that in some undefined way the clergy and the Churches do represent an asset of value to the nation. It is the old game over again. An attempt to wrest advantage from a period of unsettlement, calamity, and general depression. * * *

Pious "Blather."

The National Mission itself is an illustration of this. Its avowed aim is the purification of English life; and we have had the Bishop of London sermonizing—not over truthfully—on the evils of drink and prostitution, as though their existence were unknown, and as though preaching would end them. It is, indeed, the uselessness of the Bishop's platitudes that strikes one more than his absurd attitudes, and his characteristic exaggerations. Drink and prostitution do not create our wrongly organized social life, they are its products. And the causes which produce them have no sturdier defenders than the clergy of the Church of England. What of the master evils of overcrowding, underpaid labour, inadequate education, and the like? What has the Bishop said or done that would remedy these things? Far from doing anything to remove them, he has publicly thanked God for the War, because it put a stop to strikes and disputes between classes in the State which were at least aiming at their removal. In the posturing of the archbishops and bishops we have no more than a gratification of the priestly itch for self-advertisement, and the desire of the Church for aggrandisement. Meanwhile, by giving numbers of people the notion that in helping the National Mission they are performing a social service, they are actually perpetuating social evils by a misdirection of attention and a useless expenditure of energy. The politician in the pulpit is silly enough, but the priest in politics is both absurd and dangerous.

* * *

What Freethinkers Might Do.

Fortunately for Freethought, the clerical game cannot be played to-day with the same ease and security as of old. And it is possible that the attempt to direct attention to questions of religion may have an opposite effect to the one intended. In calling attention to the place of religion in national life, the energies of very religious folk may be stimulated; but, on the other hand, the doubts of hitherto indifferent ones may find awakening in a way adverse to the Churches. It is certain that the only effect on Freethinkers will be to urge them to greater efforts, which will be needed if we are to successfully counter the clerical attack. And there is one fact that must be emphasized here. In spite of all the canting talk about Right *versus* Might, Might

is the one argument which appeals to the Christian mind. Freethinkers are snubbed, ignored, and insulted because they are believed to be too few to resist. One remedy for this lies in our own hands. That is to assert ourselves in our full strength. If the children of all Freethinkers were at once withdrawn from religious instruction in the schools, we are quite certain that it would have a powerful effect in altering opinion concerning Secular Education. If all Freethinkers made a resolute stand for their rights in every public capacity and on all public occasions, there would soon be a different attitude and tone used towards them. We are not a majority, true, but we might become a powerful minority. And a minority animated by Freethought ideals, and guided by the clearness of vision and sanity of view which characterizes Freethought, could not but prove a powerful force for good in the world's affairs.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Curse of Prejudice.

THE most difficult thing in the world to do even for a naturally honest man is to divest his mind of prejudice. Without in the least intending to be unfair, he is often guilty of the very worst form of injustice. This is what frequently happens in literature, in politics, and, particularly, in religion. Indeed, it may be legitimately averred that at the root of all prejudice is to be found a prominent religious element. Possibly, also, of all known religions, Christianity has the distinction of cherishing this fault in its most objectionable aspect. A Christian pronounces all religions other than his own false and pernicious. Toleration is not a Christian virtue, and Christians practice it because their confidence in their own religion lacks passion and fire. Persecution has always been regarded as a peculiarly apt and sacred expression of the will of God towards those who hold unorthodox views. Even so great a critic as Matthew Arnold was not free from Christian bias. Though he did a great deal towards the emancipation of his countrymen from the tyranny of tradition and superstitious beliefs by such excellent works as *Literature and Dogma*, *God and the Bible*, and *St. Paul and Protestantism*, he was yet, in a sense peculiar to himself, a Christian, and regarded Christianity as by far the best religion under the sun. This is specially manifest in his *Essay on Marcus Aurelius*, whom he admits to be "the most beautiful figure in history." Marcus Aurelius was a Pagan Emperor of Rome, yet this is how Arnold describes him:—

He was one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks, which stand for ever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have been carried, and may be carried again. The interest of mankind is peculiarly attracted by examples of signal goodness in high places; for that testimony to the worth of goodness is the most striking which is borne by those to whom all the means of pleasure and self-indulgence lay open, by those who had at their command the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Marcus Aurelius was the ruler of the grandest of empires; and he was one of the best of men (*Essays Literary and Critical*, p. 193).

Nothing could be fairer and more straightforward than that extract, and there is more to the same effect; but the beauty of this notable testimony is marred by the statement that "it is impossible to rise from reading Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius without a sense of constraint and melancholy, without feeling that the burden laid upon man is well-nigh greater than he can bear." It is difficult to realize how such an accomplished critic

as Matthew Arnold could have permitted so clumsy a sentence to fall from his ingenious pen. The phrase "well-nigh greater" is literally misleading. The burden which Pagan philosophy laid upon man was not quite but almost greater than he could bear; but judging by the history of Christendom, the burden which Christ lays upon man in the Sermon on the Mount is infinitely greater than he can carry, for no one has ever yet borne it. Why is it said to be impossible to read the best Pagan philosophy "without a sense of constraint and melancholy"? The following is Arnold's answer:—

The paramount virtue of religion is, that it has *lighted up* morality; that it has supplied the emotion and inspiration needful for carrying the sage along the narrow way perfectly, for carrying the ordinary man along it at all. Even the religions with most dross in them have had something of this virtue; but the Christian religion manifests it with unexampled splendour (*Ibid*, p. 187).

But it is an essentially untrue and misleading answer. It is perfectly true that Christianity supplies an overflowing abundance of emotion, but it is an emotion which, as a rule, has absolutely nothing to do with morality. No saints have ever been inspired to translate the Sermon on the Mount into conduct. What is the use of comparing Hebrew or Christian prayers with Pagan ones, when it is incontrovertible that no prayers possess any moral value whatsoever, and when it is recognized by all unbiased thinkers that Pagan morality is not one whit inferior to that displayed by Christians? Religious emotion, historically considered, cannot be said to have ever lighted up morality, or even to have given it either direct or indirect support. The object of religious emotion is not morality, but God and the unseen world, and, taken in this sense, "the Christian religion manifests it with unexampled splendour." Of this commodity Marcus Aurelius himself was generously endowed, and Arnold candidly admits that the emperor's own morality was not quite lighted up, but only suffused by it. A prayer of Epictetus is given as a sample of Pagan devout literature:—

Lead me, Zeus and Destiny, whithersoever I am appointed to go; I will follow without wavering; even though I turn coward and shrink, I shall have to follow all the same.

Arnold observes that the fortitude of that is for the strong, for the few; even for them the spiritual atmosphere with which it surrounds them is "bleak and gray." But, surely, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," is a Biblical expression fully as bleak and gray. The point, however, is that in both instances the emotion is wasted on a hypothetical being or beings, and exerts no direct influence at all upon morality. Indeed, it has often happened that those in whom the feeling for God and heaven was strongest were almost entirely devoid of moral elevation of character. Nor is there anything abnormal attaching to such a state of things. A text like this, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," or "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," if taken seriously, cuts the nerve of effort, and considerably weakens, if it does not utterly destroy, the sense of responsibility. In any case, there is no vital connection between religious emotion and the moral life of those who enjoy it.

We maintain that as moralists both Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are superior to the Gospel Jesus. On the subject of forgiving injuries, Epictetus, for example, says:—

Every matter has two handles, one of which will bear taking hold of, the other not. If thy brother sin against thee, lay not hold of the matter by this, that he sins against thee; for by this handle the matter will not bear taking hold of. But rather take hold of it by

this, that he is thy brother, thy born mate; and thou wilt take hold of it by what will bear handling.

Here Epictetus treats his fellow-beings as if they were constitutionally amenable to reason, and puts before them a rational defence of the forgiveness of injuries. Now, listen to the Gospel Jesus, who, on being asked whether an offending brother should be forgiven as often as seven times, answered:—

I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.

It will be seen at a glance that the Pagan philosopher's statement is in every way superior to that of Jesus. The former is an appeal to reason, while the latter rests on the mere word of the speaker, and has force only with those who are in a state of slavish subjection to him. The amazing fact, however, is that even the blindest and most passionate worshippers of Jesus are not distinguished exhibitors of the forgiving spirit. It must be frankly conceded that Matthew Arnold is not so monstrously unfair to the Pagans as are the average Christian divines. He says that Marcus Aurelius "incurs no moral reproach by having authorized the punishment of the Christians," or that "he does not thereby become in the least what we mean by a *persecutor*"; but he also contends that it was impossible for him to see Christianity as it really was, because the impression it made on the overwhelming majority of Roman citizens was that it was at once anti-civil and anti-social. Now, we are profoundly convinced that, if held in its primitive purity and simplicity, Christianity is essentially both anti-civil and anti-social. Surely, Arnold could not have read the bitter and venomous attacks which the Fathers were in the habit of making upon the Empire and its citizens, calling them both by the ugliest names in the dictionaries. It is, therefore, fundamentally false to represent the illustrious philosopher as unconsciously longing to be a Christian, or as being a Christian without knowing it. It is equally infelicitous and untrue to exclaim, as Arnold does, "What an affinity for Christianity had this persecutor of the Christians." It was only Matthew Arnold's bias for his own religion that impelled him to aver that though "we see him wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless, yet with all this, agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond." Without question, that is the case with every true man, even with Christians themselves oftentimes, which proves nothing more than that mankind is an up-springing, aspiring race, claiming perfection as its ideal, progress as its law, and endless struggle as its spur. J. T. LLOYD.

Freethought and Literature.

The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments are complete sceptics in religion.—*John Stuart Mill*.

Masters, who crowned our immelodious days

With flowers of perfect speech.—*William Watson*.

FRANCIS THOMSON was a poet and a Catholic, but his love of literature was superior to his piety, and he told the religious world a most unpalatable truth. At the beginning of his notable essay on Shelley he says:—

The Church, which was once the mother of poets no less than of saints, during the last two centuries has relinquished to aliens the chief glories of poetry, if the chief glories of holiness she has preserved for her own. The palm and the laurel, Dominic and Dante, sanctity and song, grew together in her soil; she has retained the palm, but forgone the laurel.

This fact has been denied again and again by journalists who have turned Christian for half-an-hour to earn money, and have succeeded so well at their sorry work

that the world would indeed be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of famous writers were Freethinkers.

William Shakespeare, the supreme glory of the world's literature, was a Rationalist. With the sanity of genius he manifests as much caution as courage in the quest of truth, and seldom indulges in acute perceptions at the expense of judgment. He fully realized the impossibility of solving the insoluble and knowing the unknowable. With regard to all speculative problems, he wisely suspends his assent. He belongs, emphatically, to the secularistic, as distinguished from the superstitious, order of intellect. In fact, his Rationalism is one of the chief causes of his artistic supremacy. In art and religion alike his instincts are positive rather than speculative. On the deeper grounds of religious faith Shakespeare's silence is most significant. Often as his questionings turn to the riddle of the universe, he leaves it an enigma to the last, disdainful of the common theological solutions around him. Hamlet, having seen his father's spirit, "piping hot from purgatory," speaks of death as "that bourne whence no traveller returns," and when he is himself dying, utters the significant words, "The rest is silence." Shakespeare's greatest tragedy, *King Lear*, the story "too deep for tears," is an impeachment of Providence, and the blinded Gloucester sums up his teaching in the biting lines:—

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods—
They kill us for their sport.

In the sonnets, where the Master unlocks his heart, orthodox dogmas are thrown to the winds, and the only god mentioned is Pagan Eros. Who but a Freethinker could have written the following lines, with "deaf" before "heaven"?—

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate.

Secularism dedicated Shakespeare's noblest thoughts and richest fancies, and whenever his mighty genius soars, the highest it reaches beyond orthodoxy, as in the suggestive lines:—

Nature is made better by no mean,
But Nature makes that mean.

The greatest of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors was Kit Marlowe. Intended for the Church, the study of theology only succeeded in making him a determined enemy of religion. Marlowe was, indeed, one of the proudest of intellectual aristocrats. Scepticism in him naturally took the form of contempt rather than of negation. His Freethought opinions attracted attention from the time he wrote of that Atheist, Tamburlan. A few days before his untimely death in a duel, Richard Bame, an informer, sent a note to the authorities concerning Marlowe's "damnable opinions and judgment of religion and scorn of God's Word." Only the poet's death prevented a trial for blasphemy and its then awful consequences, which, as in the case of Francis Ket, meant being burnt alive.

Robert Burns, the national poet of Scotland, was, like Paine and Voltaire, a Deist. Of other religion, save what flowed from a mild Theism, he scarce showed a trace. In truth, one can scarcely call it a creed; it is mainly a name for a sentimental mood, the expression of a state of indefinite aspiration. The Holy Willies of Orthodoxy have made the basest uses of this emotionalism, but Christians can hardly read Burns without unloosening the shackles of their gloomy faith. Hume's young Freethinking contemporary did not merely express his dissent from Calvinism; he struck at the very heart of the Christian superstition. He saw plainly that

the clergy trade on the fears of their followers, and he sounded a true note when he said, scornfully:—

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch to order.

The most sacred Christian beliefs were the subject of his attack:—

D'yrmples mild, D'yrmples mild, though your
heart's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three's ane an' twa.

He did not hesitate to poke fun at the Deity:—

O Thou wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thyself,
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for any guid or ill
They've done afore thee.

Burns has suffered grievously at the hands of hiccoughing Highlanders and maudlin ministers, but there is no mistaking the iconoclasm of his avowal that—

Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the supreme poets of the nineteenth century, was an Atheist, and his prose and verse is full of Freethought propaganda. For the philosophy in his writings he was indebted to William Godwin and the great French Freethinkers, and in his works Freethought stands "four square to all the winds that blow." In the great and splendid *Ode of Liberty*, Shelley writes:—

Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves
Hung tyranny; beneath, sat deified
The Sister-pest, congregator of slaves.

Listen to his attack on the God-idea:—

What is that Power? Some moonstruck sophist stood
Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
Fill heaven and darken earth, and in such mood
The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
His likeness in the world's vast mirror shown.

Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for his Atheism, and years afterwards was declared by Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor, to be unfit to be the custodian of his own children on account of his heterodoxy. The poet's Atheism was never disputed during his unpopular days, when many persons were fined and imprisoned for selling his profane *Queen Mab*, which figured in many a trial for blasphemy. But when it was discovered that the star of a great poet had arisen, Shelley was falsely and impudently dubbed a Christian.

There is no doubt about Lord Byron's scepticism, for it peeps out everywhere in his writings. His dramatic poem, *Cain*, is a forcible and eloquent protest against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. *The Vision of Judgment* is startling in its blasphemy, and full of contempt for orthodoxy. *Childe Harold*, his noblest, if not his ablest, utterance, is full of nature worship, akin to that of the heretical Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose books were solemnly condemned by the Catholic Church. *Don Juan*, his masterpiece, is saturated with the spirit of the French Revolution. Byron had a strong sense that all forms of religion were of equal uselessness:—

Even gods must yield; religions take their turn;
'Twas Jove's, 'tis Mahomet's, and other creeds
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds—
Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is
built on reeds.

John Keats, one of the best loved of the English poets, was Pagan to the core. If there is a poet entirely uninfluenced by religion, it is Keats. He did not attack the orthodox faith like Shelley, or treat it with sarcasm like Byron, but he simply ignored it. With a mind aflame with impassioned loveliness, he turned his back on the

gibbeted god and ensanguined cross of the Christian superstition. To him it was abhorrent, and he ignored it as he would the horrors of a charnel-house. No troublous sounds from Gethsemane or Calvary trouble the serene harmony of his verse. *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, and the superb odes, might have been written by some old-word Pagan Greek under blue Ionian skies.

Leigh Hunt, the friend of Shelley, and Keats, and so many poets, was a Freethinker. Always one of the daintiest and most delightful writers, he shows an unexpected depth in such moments as when he is writing against orthodoxy. Like his own "Abou Ben Adhem" he could truly say:—

Write me as one that loves his fellow man.

Walter Savage Landor, "that unsubduable old Roman," as Carlyle finely calls him, was also a Freethinker. His *Imaginary Conversations* show clearly that his sympathies were Secular. The eternal arrogance of priests always aroused his opposition, and he was never happier than when loosing the barbed arrows of his scorn at the Church. The beautiful stanza, in his best manner, prefixed to one of his last books, epitomizes Landor's life and aims in four lines:—

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
Nature I loved; and, next to Nature, Art,
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

(To be continued.) MIMNERMUS.

The War in the East and the Failure of Christian Civilization.

A Lecture by G. W. Foote at Queen's Hall, W.
October 27, 1912.

Supplied by a Freethinker reader from shorthand notes taken at the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,—The founder of Christianity is alleged to have uttered a variety of maxims, moral advice, and ethical impossibilities. One of the last is "Love your enemies"—and whenever you meet a man going about saying he does that—beware! The man who loves his enemies is too good for this world, and I am not sure that they would not reject him in the next.

The greatest Secularist of Asia, Confucius, had this kind of thing brought before him, and he put it peremptorily aside. "If I love my enemies," he said, "what then shall I give to my friends? I give my love to my friends, and to my enemies I give justice." Christianity has always boasted of what it calls charity, which generally means in practice giving what you don't miss to somebody who is expected to think very highly of it; and, in short, we may almost say that the highest ethic of Christianity is to regard the poor as benevolent chopping-blocks for the rich. Give, give, give!

Now, the greatest gift you can give in this world is yourself, and if you give to those around you justice, consideration, kindness, you have done more than all the men in all the ages who have merely given material things to their friends and society.

"Love your enemies." I never made the attempt. I am a very peaceable man myself, and never go into a quarrel unless I am forced into it. In that respect I am rather fond of Polonius' advice to his son; and if an enemy of mine will walk down that side of the street, I will walk down this, and *vice versa*. But I could not love my enemies. What is the use of telling a man, when somebody is clutching his throat, not to swear, not to spit, not to do anything indecorous, but to remember the glorious command, "Love your enemies"! Why,

naturally, if you were in that situation, you would say, "Love him—get his fingers from my throat, and then we will see about the rest; but not while he is throttling me." Jesus Christ did not love his enemies. There is a parable ending with the words, "Those mine enemies, they would not I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me." Jesus, again, is called the "Prince of Peace." Yes, but did he not also say, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." And he kept his word there. There never has been a more detestably, hypocritical, sanguinary, recklessly brutal religion than that of the Cross; and when we hear from the King of Bulgaria and his priests, and the King of Greece and his priests that this is a crusade of the Cross against the Crescent, our minds may go back to the time not so far distant when dignitaries of the Catholic Church in Italy sent the young Italian men off to be mowed down by bullets and disease, telling them that it was a grand enterprise; it was carrying the Cross and civilization into a country where the Crescent and barbarism reigned supreme. Well, the young Italians went. A lot of them stopped there. Peace has been arrived at, which leaves Italy with something or other which she pretends to regard as valuable, although nobody would lend anything on it. What has the Cross done there? It has been the means of shortening the lives of men, women, and children in the most harrowing and disgusting sense. The world has gained absolutely no profit from it; it has been sheer loss on both sides. Both were animated by religion in the attack and in the defence; and, in short, wherever there is in the world a more than usually barbaric war, you may safely rely upon it that religion is at the bottom.

It must be admitted in relation to what they used to call the horrible Turk, that Christians have a remarkable way of loving their enemies. The average Christian knows nothing of history. History began with him when he started reading the morning newspaper, and if you tell him at one time the Mohammedans had a most magnificent civilization, while the Christians were plunged in the darkest intellectual ignorance and the grossest rights and practices of superstition, including the burning alive of heretics and witches—tell him that, and he will say, "Where did you read that; where did you read it?" In history. "Oh," he says, "what is that?" History—a long time ago. "Oh! but things were so different then." Of course they were. That is to say, the Mohammedan was the upper dog, and the Christian was the lower dog. Why, the Cross went down before the Crescent on hundreds of battlefields. And which side showed an example of civility? The Mohammedan. The Richard Lion Heart that we used to talk about when we were boys at school and wished to imitate, was just a common savage, who thought nothing of beheading prisoners by the hundred; and yet Saladin, the great leader and warrior and statesman on the other side, sent his own doctor when Richard was desperately wounded. Saladin was a gentleman, Richard was a Christian beast.

From the orange groves of Spain to the rose gardens of Cashmere, right across the north of Africa, and round into Asia, as far as India itself, Mohammedanism penetrated and everywhere set up civilization. Yet how long is it in our own country that the schools have come in to keep the Church company? Within the last fifty or sixty years, to any serious extent? Not the real education of the children, but who shall have the opportunity of stamping them with the branding irons of theology, is the aim here.

A few days ago I came across Sir Hiram Maxim, and he said to me: "I have lived in Constantinople, and the Turks are the only gentlemen there." It's a curious thing that while people live in England and believe

what the Churches say, the Turk is a terrible person, and all the Christians of that part are poor oppressed suffering victims. It is not true. Now, I will give you a little illustration of what one may call Mohammedanism sincerity and Christian hypocrisy. We shall probably hear more of the City of Salonika. That is one of the objectives of the soldiers of the Cross. And then, I suppose, if they reach there, there will be a high old quarrel between them and Austria as to who is to have it at the finish, for they love each other, and they all want the same thing, and being Christian they fight for it. Now, the Christians live in one half of the city of Salonika; the Moslems live in the other half. Christians believe in fire insurance! Mohammedans don't. They say, "Kismet, it is the will of God"—and if there be a God, that is the rational attitude. The Lord's Prayer says that we shall say to God—God who is the infinite creator and governor of the infinite universe—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Of course it will. How good of us to remind the Almighty that he has our concurrence. Fancy a little worm of the earth lifting up his head to the omnipotent, omnipresent God and saying, "Go it, I'm watching you"! Sir Oliver Lodge, the Rev. Principal of Birmingham University, actually declares that we have got to help God. Well, that is the lowest God that ever was pictured. And you find that Sir Oliver regards this as perfectly serious theology. We are to help God. Now the Mohammedan is logical. No fire insurance with him at Salonika. The Christian insures his buildings, and even his dwellings. There is rarely a fire in the Mohammedan part of Salonika; but one nearly every night in the Christian quarter. You can easily guess which believes in God the most. Curiously, enough, the Turk is the only gentleman in that part. If you want a bill discounted fairly and with a reasonable commission, go to a Turk; if you want to lose your money after you have parted with the bill, go to a Greek. And I remember, too, that Finlay, the historian of Greece, who was "heart and soul," as they say, in the Greek Revolution for Independence in the early part of last century, was obliged to put it on record that the Greeks butchered and tortured the Turks—men, women, and children—during the close of that struggle, when they had the opportunity, far worse than the Turks in the greatest heat of religious bigotry and racial hatred had ever treated them.

The fact is, the Christian has nothing to boast of in the matter of kindness to his opponents. Nothing at all. What was, perhaps, the vilest picture in all human history? The dealing of the Christian conquerors with the poor natives of America.

They were butchered and tormented in unspeakable ways—millions of them wiped off the face of the earth in a few weeks—two great empires like those of Peru and Mexico—marked by certainly, in many respects, a peculiar but certainly a high state of civilization—utterly destroyed. Where the Inquisition raised its head in Spain, cruelty and bloodshed were the order of the day. If you want to read a burning page on that topic, read what the great Montaigne, the French essayist, says about it. Again, what lies in wait now behind the nations that are attacking Turkey? This thing is not a sudden uncontrollable outburst of resentment against Turkey. It has been very carefully managed. Ever since Turkey deposed that very clever devil—the late Sultan—ever since Turkey set up for herself a representative constitution, and got a constitutional monarch, and tried to set her house in order, all Christendom has been doing her mischief. Look at Italy's attack in the case of Tripoli. What ground for quarrel had she? It was a sheer act of brigandage. Behind the Turkish soldier there was the Arab of the desert, who came out of

nowhere and killed Italians, and went back to nowhere. But I say it was sheer brigandage. After the lapse of about twelve months there is talk about peace between Turkey and Italy. At the very moment these nations, who have no cause of complaint themselves, suddenly find that the wrongs of another people—the Macedonians—are absolutely intolerable. It has just happened then! At the psychological moment the mischief was one that men could no longer tolerate on the face of the earth. And what is the mischief? Why, the greatest mischief in Macedonia for years has not been the work of the Turk, but the work of Christian against Christian. The papers have been full of it from time to time, and now hostilities have broken out not one of the papers has the honesty to say what they printed in previous years and months, and what I am reminding you of now. Christian against Christian, and in that respect they have always been the worst butchers, for an infidel is not quite as bad as a heretic. You can say of the infidel, well, perhaps it's a case of ignorance, but of the heretic—he who enjoys your blessing—that horrible person is the worst of all. Why was that the psychological moment? Because in five minutes the European powers would have been diplomatically setting up some little scheme to tide over the present trouble, and when the great powers have taken that task practically in hand, the little nations of the Balkans would have had to keep quiet, for the dogs would have to slink home when the lions went out roaming. They did not wait for that. Resentment precipitated them—of course, without any previous agreement—all on the same task. The Turk was no longer to be tolerated. Do you think there was nothing behind that?

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The Chairman of the Congregational Union is not very cheerful about the religious prospect. In his address before the Annual Meeting at Birmingham, he said:—

We must not shut our eyes to the appalling ungetoverable fact that in Great Britain nine out of every ten of young people got no further education after the age of 14. The same was relatively true of religious education, as was shown by the fearful loss of senior scholars from the Sunday schools. The times had changed in our homes, changed at the family altar, and changed in the Sunday school. No sadder proof of that change could be given than in the fearful decrease of teachers and scholars as recorded in these early years of the twentieth century. The schools connected with the leading Free Churches of Great Britain showed a decrease in seven years (1908-14) of very nearly 250,000. Their own churches reported a decrease of 54,351. In other words, more than a fifth of the total loss. The Wesleyan Methodist Church had lost 68,117, but this was only 6.24 per cent., as compared with 7.18 per cent. in Congregational churches. Let them frankly admit that they must not place the chief blame on the schools, but on the Churches. It was the Church which had failed to keep pace with the times. It had lost sight of the child.

We believe this blame is largely undeserved. The Churches have not lost sight of the child. On the contrary, they have done what they could to capture the child. What has really happened is that a growing number of parents are beginning to perceive either the uselessness to children of religious instruction, or that it is an abuse of parental power to force religion upon children. And beyond that there is the pressure of contemporary life, which tends to undo much that church and chapel laboriously accomplish.

The Bishop of Peterborough says that "the Church is out for social reform, in the widest, truest, and highest sense—to cure the evils of intemperance, immorality, and other deadly sins." Hear, Hear! But we have heard the same tale so often. The Church is always out for this kind of thing, but the deadly sins remain, and the Church takes a rest, and then

comes out again. And so on, and so on. And there are always plenty of people foolish enough to be taken in by the old story.

Gunner Dibble, of Pontypool, had his life saved by carrying a Bible. Some shrapnel exploded near him, and a piece lodged in the book. Other pieces wounded him in five places. We do not know why it is assumed that the particular piece which lodged in the Bible would have killed him, seeing that the other five pieces failed to do so. Anyway, the moral we draw from the story is that in future Gunner Dibble should carry a Bible large enough to cover him completely. Then he would be quite safe.

We see that in a number of places the Salvation Army in France is engaged in selling tobacco and cigarettes to the soldiers. One can safely trust the Army to do trade wherever it may. We can be quite sure it will sell at a profit, and we should not be surprised to learn that it is making collections for the work.

What a pity we are not all in prison! Patriotism is the virtue of the hour, and, if we may rely upon the recent report of the Prison Commissioners, the inmates of our prisons have shown a conspicuous development of patriotic feeling. Indeed, if the War has failed to benefit the Churches, it has quite a different effect as regards our criminal population. Not alone have the inmates of our prisons decreased by one-half in number, but, says the report:—

One of the notable effects of the war on the prison population has been that the receptions are now for the most part confined to the physically and mentally weak. The general standard of physique is now much inferior to that of prisoners admitted into prison in normal times, while the percentage of strong, able-bodied men is comparatively small. There is every reason to believe that the country's call for men appealed as strongly to the criminal as to other classes, and if it had been possible to place under scrutiny every case admitted into prison within military age there is little doubt but that the vast majority of cases would have been found to be physically unfit. A young burglar, one of a gang of five, told the chaplain of a London prison that his four pals had enlisted: two had been killed, and two others wounded. He said he meant to go and "do his bit" as soon as he got out of prison—a promise which he faithfully observed.

Moreover, the prisoners have been unusually keen in performing war work. At Holloway, 80,000 mailbags were turned out, and not one rejected. At another large prison there was a larger output than in pre-War years, with less than half the number of prisoners. The report says:—

A curious little incident illustrating that the general exhortations to thrift do not pass unheeded, even behind prison bars, occurred at a prison where a prisoner offered to forgo as an economy the extra supper supplied for extra work performed. There is justification for the opinion expressed by one of our chaplains in a large convict prison that if those people who are disposed to grudge the use of public money to reform criminals had been working among convicts at the present time they would find good cause to reconsider their opinion. "It would," he says, "convince them beyond a doubt that under these broad-shouldered garments there beats many a heart still responsive to the loftiest sentiments of loyalty and patriotism."

It is evident that to be in prison is more beneficial than to be out of it. Inside the prisons the inmates are forgoing little comforts to help the country. Outside, from ship-owner to petty shopkeeper, the aim seems to be to get as much as possible by way of high charges. We suggest that probably the wrong people are in prison. It might be as well to exchange the present inmates for a few large contractors and merchant princes.

But the report of the Commissioners is highly suggestive in many ways. "In the matter of patriotism," says the *Daily Telegraph*, "the prison population can stand comparison with any class in the community." And it adds, "Religion has not moved them, civic duty left them cold." "The appeal of patriotism has succeeded where all others failed." That seems to us a very left-handed sort of compliment, since it would seem that by this method of elimination the patriotism expressed is of the kind that lives, not on

love of country, but hatred of some other country. On the other hand, if the *D. T.*, in its exaltation of patriotism over every other virtue, has overshot the mark, and the improvement in the conduct of prisoners is due to a genuine even though rudimentary sense of moral duty, the inference is that our prison methods are, normally, so badly conceived as to make criminals instead of curing them, while our normal social life is such that the person born with a flaw in his character has that flaw accentuated rather than corrected. And that is just one more proof of the small influence Christianity has exerted in the direction of the moral education of the world.

The semi-official telegram from Addis Abeba, saying that the Negus had been deposed and a woman ruler has been appointed to the throne of Abyssinia, reminds us that this little-known country is Christian. The history of that country is a complete disproof that Christianity and civilization go hand in hand, as is so often stated by orthodox apologists.

Scores of prominent clergymen have told us of the beneficial effects of the War on the life of the people. Here is one sample, taken from the *Daily Telegraph* of October 3, in the course of an account of the Zeppelin raid of the previous evening. The charred bodies of the crew of the fallen airship were in a barn guarded by a sentry. A lady standing by inquired, "May I go in? I would love to see a dead German." One wishes the name of that "lady" had been given full publicity.

Here is another example of the "moral uplift" of war from the *Daily Chronicle* of October 2, giving an account of the Bulgarian treatment of Rumanians;—

A regular massacre of the Rumanian civil population was organized, the Bulgarian soldiers, aided by the Bulgarian inhabitants, going from street to street, killing, maiming, and torturing as they went.

Some of those who escaped state that among the Bulgarian inhabitants—who took part were well-dressed women and "young men in light suits and straw hats," whilst the women incited their children to share in the revel.

Knives hatchets, anything with which torture could be inflicted, were employed, and teeth were freely used by the women.

Nameless horrors were performed by these fiends in human shape. Limbs were lopped off, eyes gouged out, or as many wounds as possible inflicted on their helpless victims."

Evidently the "moral uplift" of the War is as great with the Christian Bulgarians as with the Christian lady who wished to feast her sensitive eyes on the half-roasted body of a dead German.

The cardinals, archbishops, and bishops of the French Church, are arranging for a pilgrimage to Lourdes after peace has been concluded. It would be far more to the purpose if these ecclesiastics assisted more actively the present "pilgrimage" to Berlin.

The Bishop of Hereford has celebrated his eighty-second birthday, and the Church papers are full of congratulations. Christians easily forget that some of the Old Testament patriarchs were playing leap-frog at that tender age.

The self-sufficiency of some religious folk is sometimes amazing. At a Peculiar People's harvest thanksgiving service at Southend-on-Sea, one of the elders said that no member of their body had been killed by Zeppelin bombs, and their farm-crops had been spared, thus showing God's care for his elect. The Peculiar People form one of the smallest religious sects, and their ideas appear to match their size.

The Nonconformist *Daily News* is whole-hearted in its support of the Church of England Mission of Repentance and Hope. In a leading article it says, "Those who cannot say 'Lord, Lord!' are summoned to this sacrament." Yet the Church of England herself has more need of repentance than the nation. The votes of the bishops in the House of Lords are unforgivable sins towards the democracy, and there is little hope of any change of policy.

At the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, Wigmore Street, London, an exhibition has been opened to illustrate the folk-lore of London, consisting of charms, amulets, and other objects used to avert disease, ward off evil, and bring good fortune. It is a complete proof that superstition exists in the metropolis of the Empire just as it existed in the Middle Ages

What reckless folk ecclesiastics are, to be sure. The Bishop of London said recently, that, after twenty years in his present position, he was £2,000 to the bad. Now his brother of Colchester says that he always paid his way until he became a bishop, and he has never paid it since. Pity the sorrows of the poor bishops.

What a game the Lord had with Rev. R. J. Campbell. According to his just published *Spiritual Pilgrimage*, it was "God's will" that took him to the Church of England, "God's will" that took him out and landed him in the Congregational Church, "God's will" that took him from there—assisted, as he says, by "other circumstances," and we expect it will be God's will that will send him eventually into Roman Catholicism. And, of course, it must have been God that was responsible for the *New Theology*, which Mr. Campbell now discovers was "crude," "badly proportioned," unhistorical, etc. Altogether, God seems to have been paying too much attention to Mr. Campbell—far more than he was worth. And when a god with a whole universe to look after concentrates on the City Temple and Mr. Campbell, there is no wonder that things are so badly managed in other directions.

But, oh, the conceit of it all! These men profess belief in a God who is the creator and ruler of a universe to which our whole planetary system stands as a grain of sand to a planet. In addition, they preach a doctrine of humility, of meekness, of self-effacement. They are worms grovelling in the dust, or motes flickering and flitting in a ray of sunlight. But if they move from this tabernacle to that, it is "God's will," God is guiding them. If they suffer from stomach ache, the Lord has placed his hand on them. And the more inherently insignificant they are the greater their importance in the eyes of the "Lord." For our part, if there is a God, we should not be surprised to learn that he has never heard of the City Temple, doesn't know of Mr. R. J. Campbell's existence, and doesn't care the value of an angel's moulted wing feather whether he joins the English Church or carries his "soulful eyes" straight to Utah.

We are pleased to see that some people beside ourselves estimate the Bishop of London at something like his true value. *Town Topics* supplies us with the following:—

The Bishop of London is a dear, good, amiable fellow, full of pluck and tremendously sincere, but from time to time he talks a lot of arrant nonsense.

He was boasting the other day about his celibacy and his purity of body. So an apple tree might boast that did not bear fruit, or so a milkless cow might preen herself. God sent the bishop into the world a man having certain responsibilities and functions. He gave him eyes to see and ears to hear with. What should we say of him if he told us that although he had eyes he had never opened them? We should say, "Silly ass!" God intended him to beget children to bear their share of the national burden. Because the Bishop of London has kept his precious body pure and has in consequence lived a wholly unnatural life, the country is the poorer. No son of his has taken up arms for the King; no daughter has helped to alleviate the sufferings of the sick and the wounded. He has, in his selfishness and his self-conceit, denied Cæsar his most vital tribute.

Possibly, however, the legend of the bishop's most conspicuous garment does not apply in Dr. Ingram's case.

This does really "touch the spot." We do not know what God intended Bishop Ingram for. It would, on the whole, be kinder to the Deity to suppose that he had nothing to do with the Bishop's appearance. But we do know that when a man uses celibacy and purity as equivalent terms, "silly ass" is about the only fitting expression. The serious thing is, however, not so much the asinine character of the Bishop's speeches, but that so many listen to him with approval. The quality of asinity is evidently very widely diffused.

We see from the *Evening Telegram*, Toronto, that the clergy out there are getting excited over the question of whether there is a hell or not. Such discussions serve to remind us how little removed from the mental level of a savage witch-dance are large numbers of Christians in all parts of the world, and that fact also helps to explain the occurrence of such things as the European War.

Father Bernard Vaughan says he wants to see "a new England with Christ in his place." Doubtless; and what he means is an England with the Roman Church in power. And the other Churches wish to see their own particular sect on top. To all of them the War is little more than an occasion that cunning may turn to a sectarian advantage.

After what has been said in these columns about the clergy and exemption, it is only fair to point out that the Secretary of the Conference recently sent a letter to the press stating that "The Wesleyan Methodist Church never asked for exemption on behalf of its ministers.....Further, the Wesleyan Methodist Church not only never asked for exemption on behalf of its theological students, but sent a strong official protest to the War Office against such exemption." If this is true, it makes the action of the other Churches, particularly the Established Church, the more contemptible.

A Mormon minister, summoned at Feltham as an absentee under the Military Service Act, pleaded that being a minister of religion he was not liable. The magistrate declined to recognize the Mormon Church as one to which the Act applied. And yet it is a Christian Church, and its characteristic teaching of polygamy has the strongest Biblical sanction.

Says the Bishop of Carlisle, "The Church has been extraordinarily dull in reading the signs of the times, and extraordinarily slow in supporting progressive movements in the direction of Christian brotherhood, just and fair dealing, and equal opportunities for all." This is only another way of saying that the Church has been all along playing the game of the vested interests of the country, which we have always said was so. And we do not think the Church is likely to alter much in the future.

The Church insists on the indissolubility of marriage, yet twenty-two divorces were made absolute in the Vacation Court on one day. Still another instance that the power of the Christian Church is waning.

At an Essex police-court a member of the Peculiar People, charged as an absentee, said that he belonged to the Army of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he could not desert. The chairman replied that the Tribunal had nothing to do with that army. The prisoner was fined £2 and remanded to await an escort.

What Secularists these Christians are! The Young Men's Christian Association has gone into the catering business, with other attractive side-lines, and the Salvation Army is grappling with the Chinese opium-dens. A newspaper paragraph states that the Salvationists have provided three beds for the opium victims. Three, indeed! What difference can this make to a social evil?

Mr. Hall Caine has published in the American press some eloquent articles on the ethical side of the War, which a Transatlantic journalist describes as "Christlike." As Mr. Caine is said to resemble Shakespeare facially, and now his utterances are considered "Christlike," he must be a very remarkable man.

The Sunday School Union is asking for £25,000 for a "crusade." The N. S. S. has never had as much as twenty-five hundred at one time to conduct its "crusade," but we can safely say that with a twenty-fifth part of what the Sunday School Union is asking for, we could do more injury to the Christian superstition in a year than all the Churches could repair in a generation.

IN MEMORIAM.

George William Foote.
Jan. 11, 1850—Oct. 17, 1915.

Editor of the "Freethinker" for the first 35 years of its existence.
Prisoner for Blasphemy.
President National Secular Society, 1890-1915.
Forty-five years a gallant soldier in the Army of Freethought.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 22, Sheffield; October 29, Barrow-in-Furness; November 5, Brixton; November 12, Glasgow; December 10, Leicester; January 14, Nottingham.

To Correspondents.

IN MEMORIAM.—In ever loving memory of my dear husband, G. W. Foote, who died October 17, 1915.—R. M. Foote.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 15, Glasgow; October 29, Sheffield; November 19, Birmingham; December 31, Abertillery.

H. SMITH (Aliwal N., S.A.).—Remittance received and parcel dispatched. Hope the selection will be suitable. What you say about the effects of missions on natives is not surprising. Others have given the same testimony. Thanks for good wishes. We frequently hear of you from other sources.

OLD N. S. S.—We note your suggestion that the Fund should be made an annual call, but our hope and ambition is to rub along without it. Thanks, all the same.

W. DODD.—Our best wishes to your soldier sons.

DENER.—We appreciate the point of your letter, but there is sound sense in the Scotch maxim that it takes all sorts to make a world, and one must bear that in mind when editing a paper. Still, we like to know what our readers are thinking about, and often find their suggestions helpful.

A. P. WYKES.—We are glad to have the appreciation and support of so old a member of the Freethought Party.

WATT-DAVIDSON (Paisley).—We share your appreciation of Mr. Millar's writings; so do numbers of our readers, as our correspondence proves.

A. F. PURDY (Melbourne).—It is quite impossible for us to offer any advice that would be of use to you without knowing local conditions. Under such conditions as you name it seems to us the best plan would be to call a meeting of those in sympathy with you, and talk over the matter. Something might arise from that, and you would then know on what amount of support you could reckon.

R. DE BURGESS.—Received, and will appear as early as possible.

L. CHEETHAM.—Thanks for letter re "Another Converted Atheist." Your experience in that quarter is not surprising after what we have learned elsewhere. For the moment, however, we prefer to keep your letter private. It may prove useful later.

W. CLOGG.—Pleased to hear from an old friend. Thanks for congratulations.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance, N. S. S. Secretary, acknowledges:—A. B. Moss, 2s. 6d.

J. W. SILKSTONE (Toronto).—There seems great need for Freethought propoganda in your locality. Pleased you find the *Freethinker* "a weekly joy."

J. CLOSE.—We agree with you that "the Freethought cause has never been lacking in men of pluck and intelligence." The rest is rather too personal for comment. We can only say that we hope we deserve a part of the good things you say.

H. MAINS.—Pleased to know that you have found our pamphlet on *War and Civilisation* so useful.

S. G. HARRIS.—We have written more than once on the what is called the religious instinct, and we may again when the occasion presents itself. But an "instinct" to be genuine must be common to a species. And the fact of so many being without it, is con-

clusive evidence of its non-existence. What your friend calls an instinct for religion is no more than a product of education.

A. J. FINCKEN.—We needed no assurance from you to know that the old cause is as dear to you as ever. Pleased your son had no trouble with his affirmation on entering the Army. We shall hope to meet him again when peace returns.

F. W. HALL (Manchester).—You will see we have taken your suggestion concerning affirmation. We intend letting it appear from time to time.

L. OWEN.—Thanks for anecdote, but we regret it is rather too lengthy for a paragraph.

G. REDDING.—By all means call on us when your next leave is granted. We shall be pleased to see you, but your best plan will be to advise us of your coming. Papers will be useful—one, specially so.

A. A. J.—Very welcome. Will be used next week. Pleased to learn that you "read the *Freethinker* weekly with increasing pleasure and profit."

J. HUDSON.—Thanks. Next week.

J. G. FINLAY.—Pleased to receive your "hearty appreciation" of our "past work." We keep on doing our best, and there is some amusement even in troubles, if one looks at them from the proper angle.

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

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

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

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

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.

Our Sustentation Fund.

We have made good progress towards wiping off the deficit incurred during the past year. The letters we receive continue to be of the most encouraging kind; if any fault is found, it is that we waited a year before asking for assistance. Our defence is that we would much rather have done without it, and so put off asking as long as possible. And we felt confident that when help was needed it would be forthcoming.

Most of the subscribers have suggested that a larger sum than is required to wipe off the deficit should be raised, in order to prepare for losses in the immediate future. And it cannot be ignored that so long as the present conditions obtain, some weekly loss is inevitable. In this matter, however, we are quite in the hands of our readers. If more than the actual sum required for the moment is raised, the balance would form a sort of reserve fund against any loss that may occur. One always works easier with that assurance in hand.

No letter received has given us more pleasure than one from our old friend Mr. Walsh, and those of our readers who know the circumstances under which it is written will be as much interested as we are in the following passages:—

No one who loves the *Freethinker*—and after all the *Freethinker* stands unflinchingly for "the best of causes"—can read the history of the struggle to keep it going during the past year without feeling a proud admiration for the tenacity and courage of the editor and his staff.So far as the *Freethinker* is concerned, "We seek for truth," and in waging a strenuous and ceaseless war against superstition we are as truly serving humanity as Lincoln saved America from the degrading system of slavery.

Just now those sappers of our strength, the parsons, are conducting a raging, tearing propoganda to revive the corpse of a creed outworn.....Most assuredly will they set men and women seriously thinking on the fundamentals of religion. Here, it seems to me, is a

great opportunity for Freethinkers to spread the truth. They could, for instance, purchase a parcel of pamphlets and *Freethinkers*, and drop them in letter-boxes, 'buses, and railway carriages. We need, above all, the missionary spirit in all our members.

Mr. E. D. Side, member of a family sturdily united in the Freethought Cause, sends us good wishes in our "uphill fight," and "Congratulations on having kept the flag flying so magnificently during the War."

H. C. S. writes:—

Please accept the enclosed bi-weekly subscription to the "*Freethinker* Fund." I am sure all Freethinkers will realize the importance of keeping the paper not only "going," but more vigorously, in these reactionary times. I should like to see, not only the deficit covered, but a substantial fighting fund in hand.

E. B. says:—

I have the pleasure to enclose a cheque for a guinea to your Sustentation Fund. This is the amount of my regular subscription to the late President's Honorarium Fund. How you have done what you have so brilliantly accomplished is a marvel to me.....I trust that there are brighter days in store for you and the valuable *Freethinker*.

Mr. J. Hudson writes:—

I wish your fund every success. Your courage and ability place Freethinkers under such a debt of obligation that they really ought to see to it that there are no financial worries to take off any of the delight of your work."

Mr. S. Clowes says:—

The odds against you are great, the struggle is hard, but determination, born of a just cause, ought not to hear the whisper of defeat.

SECOND LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £74 18s. 6d.—S. Gimson, £2; Mr. and Mrs. Harden, £2; Mrs. M. McDougall, 10s.; F. W. Walsh, 1s.; S. Clowes, 5s.; Mrs. Cowdroy, 2s. 6d.; L. Gjemre, £10; Jersey, £1; W. M. P., 4s.; E. B., £1 1s.; J. W. Soper, 5s.; Mrs. A. Slack, 5s.; H. C. S., 1s.; J. W. Wood, 10s. 6d.; J. G. Finlay, £2; Greevz Fysher, £1 1s.; J. H. Waters, 10s.; A. A. J., 5s.; J. G. Dobson, 5s.; A. Delve, £1 1s.; J. B. Middleton, £2; T. Robertson, £4; F. Lonsdale, 2s. 6d.; C. Hemway, 2s. 6d.; D. D., 2s.; James Davie, £5; F. Massey Crosse, 10s. 6d.; W. R. Munton, £4; Mr. and Mrs. Bowman, 5s.; G. L. Alward, £2 2s.; E. Parker, 5s.; E. Raggett, £1 1s.

Sugar Plums.

There was a very large audience at the Birmingham Town Hall last Sunday evening to listen to Mr. Cohen's lecture on "Woman and the National Mission." It was the largest meeting Mr. Cohen has yet had, and the audience appeared to be interested in the subject from beginning to end. Debate is not allowed at these Town Hall meetings, but there was a rapid fire of questions after the lecture had concluded. Some of these were wide of the mark, but the Chairman, Mr. Willis, wisely gave plenty of latitude, and everyone was content. That is one benefit of having a chairman who knows how to be firm or indulgent as occasion demands.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd opens the winter lecturing season in Glasgow to-day (Oct. 15) with two lectures, morning and evening. His subjects will be seen from our Lecture Guide, and we hope to hear of large meetings. On Monday evening Mr. Lloyd visits Falkirk, and lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Grahamston, at 8 o'clock; subject, "The Futility of Trust in God." Freethinkers living within a few miles of Falkirk ought to be present in good numbers.

A correspondent informs us that in the midst of his last received copy of the *Freethinker* he found a particularly stupid Christian tract—doubtless stuck there by the newsagent from whom the paper was ordered. The tract was solicitous in an

inquiry about how the reader would face death, but, says our correspondent:—

It was not likely to influence an old soldier who has seen so many die. In India there are no R.A.M.C., each regiment supplies men enough to nurse the sick under the directions of the Doctors and Sisters. Between '04 and '03 I was an orderly in the Military Hospital at Lucknow, and saw about 50 men die there; out of all that number only one made any reference to a life after, and this amongst all believers. In the present War I tried to enlist at Clapham in the Surrey Yeomanry, but was rejected as unfit; before seeing the Doctor papers were made out, and I declared myself an Atheist. The Non-Com. was astonished, and asked if I did not think it would be nice to have a Christian burial if the worst happened. I replied, that as that does not appeal to me now, I do not think it will quite so much then.

So our unregenerate friend goes on reading his *Freethinker*, and wishes the editor and staff well. Thanks.

Another correspondent, also in the Army, in sending us a religious paper, with marked passages, says:—

As regards the paragraph that the attitude of many soldiers to religion "seems indefinite," I, as a soldier myself, can vouch for the truth of *that* part of the paragraph! The attitude of the majority of soldiers to religion is very indefinite indeed! Many of my companions, if not actual Freethinkers, are only *nominal* Christians.

Certainly, when a religious writer is forced to describe the attitude of soldiers towards religion as "indefinite," one may well assume the existence of a favourable attitude towards Freethought.

Captain E. H. Griffin, the writer of the article on "Africa and Islam" in our issue of July 9, has just been awarded the military medal for bravery. He "worked incessantly under heavy fire, showing an absolute disregard of danger."

Liverpool has not yet become able to recommence lecturing this year, owing to some difficulty in securing a suitable hall. A meeting of members of the local Branch is to be held at the Clarion Cafe, 30 Lord Street and 25 Cable Street, on Saturday (Oct. 14), at 7 o'clock, to consider matters, and we hope that all who can attend will make a point of being present.

Quite suitable to the period of the National Mission, when everyone is exhorted to pray unceasingly, we publish this week *Prayer; Its Origin, History, and Futility*, by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. There is no need for us to say here that the pamphlet is a very thorough piece of work. Mr. Lloyd's name on the title-page is sufficient guarantee of that. But we bespeak for it a very wide circulation amongst both Freethinkers and Christians. Belief in prayer is a subject on which Christians are very open to attack, and much useful propagandist work may be done by the aid of this pamphlet. It is attractively got up, with cover. The price is twopence. Postage one halfpenny extra.

The following communication from South Shields ought to have appeared last week, but it did not reach us until late Tuesday evening, by which time the paper was "made up":—

South Shields meeting to celebrate the Bradlaugh Anniversary and N.S.S. Jubilee proved fairly encouraging, and promises to result in an accession of two members, writes the Secretary. The five speakers who took part in the Conference covered a wide field, extending as far as early experiences in Leeds and reminiscences of Newcastle in 1845. The Branch itself has existed since January, 1881, and the present Secretary, who has already given his 31st annual report, received the books from the late John Sanderson. Mr. Thos. Coulson was the first local chairman, and Mr. J. Hannan, who presided over the latest gathering, is a worthy successor. The next meeting is to be held on November 5, and representatives are invited from other Tyneside centres.

From the *Literary Guide*:—

Mr. Chapman Cohen has published two arresting and useful penny pamphlets, intended for wide distribution, on the subjects of *Religion and the Child* and *War and Civilization*. They are both trenchantly written, and admirably adapted for propagandist purposes.

Once more freethinking France has led the way. By a unanimous vote the French Chamber has decided to repair at the national expense all the damage done to private property by the War. The Chamber rightly treated such damage as a national, not an individual, responsibility. But then France is not pestered with ecclesiastics sitting in the legislature in virtue of their priestly functions, nor does the parson strut across the political field monopolizing attention there as here. With less piety and fewer parsons, Britain would be an infinitely better country than it is.

A number of letters—dealing with our Sustentation Fund and other matters—are unavoidably held over until next week.

Two Early Religious Cults.

ALTHOUGH the fear and worship of the ghosts of the dead have enacted a tremendous influence in the genesis and growth of theology, it can scarcely be claimed as the only agency in its evolution. As Frazer, Westermarck, Crawley, and other eminent anthropologists have demonstrated, other causes have been operative in the development of religion. Generally speaking, as we descend from partly civilized, through barbaric, down to savage life, the more superstitious man is seen to be.

The concept of the supernatural seems to spring out of primitive man's misconceptions concerning his surroundings. Influences that are known or suspected of exercising powers for weal or woe over human affairs have been endowed with spiritualistic attributes all the world over by savage peoples.

Man, ever since his advent on earth, appears to have been a born metaphysician, and his crude and ignorant guesses still retain their place, sometimes in a scarcely transformed state, in the theological dogmas and observances of the most advanced communities.

The panorama of reproduction, that majestic spectacle of Nature's prodigal fecundity, has powerfully impressed itself on the mind of untutored man. The multiplication of living forms, both faunal and floral, appeared remarkable in its mysteriousness to all observers in lower stages of human development. And even in our enlightened times, and in the most favoured countries of Western Europe, procreative phenomena exercise a potent spell over the imagination of the vast majority of the people. Apart from rural fancies, in large urban areas ideas of a character most extraordinary are widely cherished concerning sexual matters, while among the rustic population superstitions most weird and wonderful obtain complete credence.

Our immediate attention will be restricted to a few of the customs and beliefs associated with the generation of human beings, and to the attitude of early man towards the animals surrounding him. Opinions may differ as to the strictly religious origin of that promiscuity prior to marriage which prevails among several savage stocks. The sexual license which accompanies the festivals of backward races was not unknown to the cultured peoples of the past. With the ancient Israelites it was customary, and it has come down to us in a mitigated form in carnivals, holy fairs, and other commemorations of the countryside. And that these performances were distinctly religious, both in origin and development, seems more than a plausible conjecture.

At what period of human progress the generative organs began to be connected with the birth of children can only be surmised. Reliable authorities have established the fact that the primitive tribes of Australia are so wedded to their belief that sexual congress is in no way associated with reproduction, that they smile at the

suggestion that these phenomena stand related as cause and consequence. But, so far as is at present known, all uncivilized races elsewhere have reached sound conclusions on the subject, and the generative organs have become objects of religious adoration in many lands.

The early missionaries were practically unanimous in viewing such religious manifestations, when they met with them in Africa, India, and elsewhere, as melancholy evidences of the fall of the heathen from an original state of grace. But Darwin has changed all that. The religious observances and traditions of the uncivilized were at one time stamped out without mercy, but they are now treasured and preserved as invaluable records of a past condition through which the most cultured European races have slowly and painfully risen. Subsequent to his perusal of an epoch-making work on mental development, Darwin stated, in his *Origin of Species* (6th ed., p. 428):—

In the future I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be securely based on the foundation already well laid by Mr. Herbert Spencer, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.

All psychical phenomena, including supernatural beliefs, were henceforth to be accepted as aspects of evolutionary growth. No longer is it scientifically reasonable to regard the morals and fashions of alien races, past or present, merely from a narrow semi-puritanical standpoint. As that splendid Greek scholar, Jane Harrison—a woman who has distinguished herself in a realm which was until recently regarded as the sole prerogative of man—so justly says:—

Continuous evolution leaves no room for revelation, sudden and complete. We have henceforth to ask, not when was religion revealed or what was the revelation, but how did religious phenomena arise and develop? For an answer to this we turn with new and reverent eyes to study "the heathen in his blindness" and the child "born in sin." We still indeed send out missionaries to convert the heathen, but here at least at Cambridge, before they start, they attend lectures on anthropology and comparative religion. The "decadence" theory is dead, and should be buried.

We need not be revolted at the realism of savage art. To the artists there was probably nothing indecent in what they portrayed. Members of the human framework were valued for various reasons. The skull of a foe confers upon his savage slayer both intellect and strength. That great muscle, the heart, when devoured, evolves valour; and the all-potential reproductive organs are, among rude peoples, sacred enough to swear by.

We cannot with certainty say that phallic worship has at any period been universal, yet it has exercised considerable sway in religious evolution. That it was not a truly primitive cult is suggested by the discovery that it is almost, if not entirely, unknown among the least advanced races. Ratzel, Spencer, and Gillen, and several other leading authorities, are silent concerning it. It cannot be said that its presence has been proved among the natives of Central Africa, Central America, and other places. So far as available information carries us, it appears a fair inference that the cult of the phallus is invariably associated with a moderately advanced stage of development. It is also probable that the profound ignorance of the meaning of the sexual act still shown by Australian aborigines represents a stage of culture much more widely diffused before the intervention of the white man in the affairs of savage communities.

Professor Toy thinks that "the best examples of a half civilized phallic cult is that which is now practised in Yaruba and Dahomi, countries with definite govern-

ment and institutions." This cult is attached to the worship of a god who apparently presides over births. The Sanskrit scholar, Professor Hopkins, in his *Religions of India*, shows that in the great peninsula phallic rites form an important part of religion. Certain obscene ceremonies are connected with this cult, but the Hindoo linga is normally venerated as a divine influence which promotes fertility, especially by the females, who implore its assistance. The suppliants approach the object of their worship in a spirit of pure reverence and esteem.

Phallicism has enjoyed considerable power in Japan, and the male emblem of fecundity is widely distributed in the islands, despite the vigorous efforts of the Government to suppress this form of worship. But of its introduction into Japan, or of the history of its native growth, no records remain.

This mode of Nature worship was most elaborately developed by the ancient civilized peoples. Herodotus encountered it in Egypt, where he saw processions of females who carried little phallic images and sang hymns in honour of the deity of procreation. Similar testimony is supplied by Plutarch, who regarded the images as the representatives of Osiris. Toy concludes that, although the phallus was sufficiently realistic, "it appears to have been regarded simply as a physical part of the god or as an emblem of him; there is no evidence that worship was addressed to it in itself."

The Semitic races were probably phallic worshippers, although some critics consider the evidence inconclusive. Not that the ancient Jews and their neighbours were on a higher ethical plane than the refined Egyptians. Indeed, their practices indicate a far inferior scale of morality. Among other experts, Peters, in his *Religion of the Hebrews*, has submitted abundant evidence of the wide prevalence of sacred prostitution in old Israel. The Greeks and Romans also possessed their phallic cults, which met with a general acceptance among the more unenlightened masses, and long survived the overthrow of Paganism. Under the Christian dispensation they took the form of an appeal to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and for many centuries retained their crudest manifestations throughout Catholic Europe. With all religionists—savage, barbaric, and semi-civilized—the main motive remained the same, and there is no material differences between the devices of the wild African phallic worshipper and the methods employed by the ignorantly pious Christian to secure the blessings of fecundity.

Primitive man dimly recognized his relationship to the lower animals, and the moving creatures, so like himself in many ways, appear to have arrested his attention and aroused his wonder long before he meditated over the mystery presented by the brilliant orbs of heaven or the sparkling stars. His interest in the towering mountains and the rivers that ran an endless journey to the sea was also of a later growth. The forest afforded him shelter and furnished him with food. The trees were smitten by the lightning and swept by the storm, but his own emotions were not by them reflected, and they caused him little fear. Far otherwise was it with the animals around him. Like himself, they wandered in the woods; many were stronger than he. They shared with man the qualities of courage, anger, ferocity, craftiness, deceit, and the deepest cupidity. In several directions their powers outran his, and the savage solicited their favour, or tried to outwit or circumvent them.

Man soon endowed the animals with his own soul. He saw himself in his uneasy dreams with living human and animal associates. His dead parents and companions came again in his sleep. He saw his own shadow cast, both in the sunny day and the moonlit

night, and he also noticed his other-self reflected in the stream. What more natural, then, than to assume that his shadow, shade, or spirit departed from its bodily tabernacle, temporarily in slumber, and permanently at death? What applied to him applied with equal cogency to his animal kindred. Beasts possess souls which survive bodily death, and sometimes are said to return to life again in their former haunts. To many savages the social life of lower animals is similar to their own.

From this assumed kinship arises the belief in the transformation and transmigration of faunal organisms. Among the aborigines of Australia, with savage tribes in Africa and America, such superstitions are general, and were probably at one time universal. The belief survives in the faith of modern India, and it formed the basis of the old Greek transformation legends. It lingers in Europe still, as the stories of the swan maiden and the werewolf witness.

The worship of animals led to the evolution of animal deities; and the later semi-anthropomorphic gods of ancient Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt were represented in composite form as half-human, half-beast; while in the land of the Nile cats, dogs, and other animals were devoutly worshipped by the people.

The attitude of our remote ancestors to their animal neighbours is still shown, although in a manner more refined, by the traditions and practices of rural life. Certain birds, such as the stork and the swallow, are still regarded as God's special favourites, and are free from molestation in consequence. Then there is the common custom of telling the bees of the death of the master. It is believed that the bees will refuse to labour for the new master if this precaution is neglected. The lamb and the dove enjoy a certain semi-religious respect in many Christian lands. During the Middle Ages, and quite down to modern times, animals were considered, even by the educated classes, as responsible both legally and ecclesiastically for their supposed crimes and misdemeanours against Church and State. On this point copious evidence of the most amazing character will be found in that very remarkable volume, Mr. E. P. Evans' *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*.

T. F. PALMER.

The Dreadful Discovery.

PHILOSOPHER, theologian, metaphysician, sociologist, and scientist, Professor Peep sat very thoughtfully sipping China tea in his small study, with an enormous volume open upon his knees. Behind him might be observed a collection of small idols, witch-charms, Devil's whips, etc., gathered together from heathen lands.

"Riddle of the ages," murmured Professor Peep, as he replaced his cup of tea upon the table-edge and filled a pipe. "Maybe that I, after many countless ages of doubt and uncertainty, am destined to solve the dark problem." He turned the pages of his note-book and smiled. "There can be no doubt whatever. I have made no error in my calculations. The time is undoubtedly ripe for synthesis. I shall proceed very cautiously. Let the Bishop come with me, if he so desires, I have no fear—none whatever. He may deride my thesis, laugh at my calculations, treat my scheme with clerical contempt, but my conclusion—ah! that he will be unable to ignore." The Professor chuckled softly to himself and flipped over the pages of his note-book rapidly until he came to a chart. This chart, or plan, consisted of a rough drawing of five oblong buildings, all situated about five hundred yards apart.

The Professor had connected these buildings with a dotted line; this represented the track which he had taken upon his tour of investigation, and over which ground he intended to take Bishop Blinde in order to convince him of his thesis. The Professor had reduced a tolerably lengthy paper to a single sentence: "The Demolition of Dogma and the melting-pot of creeds, follows immediately upon the commercialism of buns, cakes, chocolate, and weak tea."

A Week Later.

"You will observe," remarked the Professor to Bishop Blinde, "that the area covered by the five huts is relatively small. The distance between St. Paul's Cathedral and, let us say, Westminster Abbey or the Oratory Victoria is, beyond all question, approximately invalid. Never before in the history of the religious life of man have such religious tabernacles of antagonistic creeds been so closely placed. Observe; here we have the Salvation Army Hut, now crowded with nearly a thousand worshippers, all testifying to their faith by eating cake, chocolate, and buns, and by drinking what the soldiers call 'the best cup of tea in the camp.' We will return later in order to hear their Te Deum and Mass. Almost next door you will observe the Church Army Hut, likewise crowded with worshippers, also employing the same gastric faculties; while on our near left you will note the Young Men's Christian Association Hut—the largest of them all. These, you will remember, are the Temples of Christ. I will now draw your attention to the more secular aspect of the camp. On the right we have the Canteen—'wet' and 'dry'—and opposite is the Regimental Cinema, crowded with the devout admirers of that pantomimic genius, Charlie Chaplin. We shall now retrace our steps to the Salvation Army Hut in order to hear their hymn of praise to the Lord. Here we are; listen!" Professor Peep drew the Bishop close to the corrugated iron wall of the hut and stood silent.

"Blood and Fire," muttered the Bishop, irritably, "I shall not remain long listening to vulgar Low Church drivel."

"Listen!" commanded the Professor, grasping the Bishop's arm tightly. "They are commencing." A faint tinkling on a piano became audible—

Tum-te-tum-tum-tum,
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum,
Tume-te-tum-tum-tum-tum.
He's a Rag picker,
A Rag picker,
All the livelong day...
Mister Moses—he composes.
Makes nordinary ditty,
Sound so pritty...
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum-tum-tum.

The Bishop snorted indignantly. "The rowdiness of the Salvation Army is notorious," he remarked.

"Follow me," said the Professor, quietly. They walked about two hundred yards to another hut and stood listening. "This," remarked the Professor, "is the famous Y. M. C. A.—listen!"—

Tum-te-tum-tum-tum,
Te-tum-tum-tum,
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum-tum-tum.
...Mister Moses—he composes.
Makes nordinary ditty...
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum-tum-tum.

"Take me to the Church Army Hut," muttered the Bishop, feebly, clinging to the Professor, "so that I may hear music in keeping with our Sacred Church. I am faint with desire to hear the pealing organ crashing forth, 'Nearer, my God, to Thee.' Lead me to the Church Hut.....I beseech you....."

Professor Peep did as he was requested, with a sad

smile. "Listen!" Again they stood silently against the corrugated iron hut, and listened—

Tum-te-tum-tum-tum,
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum,
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum-tum-tum.
Mister Moses—he composes.
Makes nordinary ditty,
Sound so pritty,
Like nobody can.
Tum-te-tum-tum
Tum-te-tum-tum,
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum-tum.

"You see, Bishop," remarked the Professor, "there is only one really vital religion among the mass of men—it is a combination of buns, cakes, chocolates, fags, and ragtimes. The Church is a phantom, an abstract illusion which has no real existence apart from those who make money out of it."

"Take me back to Mayfair," moaned the Bishop, weakly—"Back to Mayfair."

Professor Peep chuckled and lit his pipe. "The game's up, Bishop," he said. "I shall publish my report to-morrow."

Bishop Blinde made no reply, but hung upon the Professor's arm like a piece of wet string. From the distance came a grand chorus, wafted towards the departing couple by an evil breeze—

Tum-te-tum-tum-tum,
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum,
Tum-te-tum-tum-tum-tum-tum.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

The Right to Affirm.

By the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 affirmation may take the place of an oath in courts of law and in all other places where the taking of an oath is necessary.

Affirmation may be claimed on one of two grounds. (1) On the ground of having no religious belief, (2) on the ground of an oath being contrary to one's religious belief.

A judge or other official may ask on what ground affirmation is claimed, but no further question is warranted, and all such additional questions should be respectfully and firmly declined.

In all cases where any trouble or difficulty occurs it would be well to inform us of the circumstances at once.

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Mr. John Pollitt, of Failsworth, Manchester, which occurred on Saturday, September 30, after a few weeks' illness. Mr. Pollitt was a member of the Failsworth Secular School for upwards of sixty years, and worked hard and continuously to promote its interests. He filled every office in connection with the School with credit to himself and it. He was one of the most beloved of the sons of men. The "best of causes" always lay very near his heart, and his whole life was devoted to its service. His funeral took place on Wednesday, October 4, in the presence of a great concourse of friends and admirers, when a Secular Service was very impressively read by Mr. James Pollitt, President of the School. J. T. L.

The ashes of Mr. Seth Swale, after cremation at Sheffield, were deposited in a vault at Chesterfield Cemetery on Monday, October 9. The chapel was crowded with friends and workpeople of the deceased Freethinker, when Mr. F. J. Gould read a memorial address, recounting the zealous co-operation of Mr. Swale with the militant propaganda of Bradlaugh, Watts, and Foote; his political and social enthusiasms; his honourable career as an employer and man of business; his worth as a father, and the recent celebration of his Golden Wedding. Mr. Swale was 77 years old. F. J. G.

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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate, "Creation or What?" Opener, J. K. Harris.

OUTDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, Percy Wilde, a Lecture.

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

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller, "Brook Kerith"; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Some Queries"; 6.30, Messrs. Beale, Saphin, and Hyatt.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation Street): 7, F. E. Willis, "The Tottering Creed of Christianity."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram Street): J. T. Lloyd, 12 noon, "The Descent of the Holy Ghost and its Sequel"; 6.30, "The Futility of Trust in God."

FALKIRK (Co-operative Hall, Grahamston): Monday, Oct. 16, at 8, J. T. Lloyd, "The Futility of Trust in God."

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