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Views and Opinions.

The Bishop Explains.

We print in another part of this issue a letter from Bishop Frodsham in reply to a couple of paragraphs written in the *Freethinker* of July 15 on his reported speech before a Trades Union Conference. The Bishop now explains that his real purpose was to prevent the coloured man being exploited, and the white man depressed and oppressed as a consequence of that exploitation. That statement of his position we cheerfully accept, and, indeed, wish him every success in his endeavours. But the ground of our comment was concerned with a different issue from this, and it remains after Bishop Frodsham's explanation has been offered and accepted. The point to which we took exception was the off-hand classification of Chinese and Japanese as representing lower social organisms, and of all white people as belonging to a higher social category. We ventured to describe that classification as an impertinent one, and we believe it to be a dangerous one also, since it provides a moral and religious sanction for much that would not otherwise escape condemnation. The exploitation of the coloured man by the white in England or Australia we agree is bad, but we are not greatly gainers if, in protesting against that, we pave the way for the exploitation of the coloured people as a whole by the white races.

* * *

The Power of Difference.

Many years ago we remember how shocked we were on first seeing, in a certain city, the number of people who were minus shoes and stockings. The weather happened to be "dirty," and so by consequence were the human extremities. But a native of the city who was showing me round suggested that these people washed their feet more frequently than did a similar class in London. They got so dirty that they had to wash before going to bed. In London, where boots and stockings of a kind were worn, they might remain unwashed for weeks at a time. I saw the force of the

remark. It was not *more* dirt I was observing, but a different kind of uncleanness. It was more objectionable because of its strangeness. And it has crossed my mind since, that I was illustrating in myself a fairly common feature of the British outlook. To the average Briton abroad native food is so much "muck," native manners distasteful, native morals—so far as they are different from ours—lower than our morals. Our standard of excellence is fixed and unalterable, and it is British. We see degrees of moral value where we ought only to detect differences. Because the world takes its time from Greenwich, we assume that it should take its morals from Clapham? The average Briton is assured that British institutions are not only the best in the world for him but for others likewise. And this is not a pose, it is the expression of a sincere conviction. That is why we are convinced we are all over the world for the world's benefit. That is what lies at the back of the doctrine that it is our duty to carry our civilization and our religion to the ends of the earth.

* * *

Contact or Conquest?

The point of what has been said is in nowise affected by substituting the white races for the British people. It is an extension of the same mental attitude, not a justification. Because Chinese, or Japanese, or Hindoo customs and institutions are different from ours we assume that, therefore, they are lower than ours, and from that follows the inference that we are advancing "civilization" by forcing our institutions upon them. And, in doing this, we ignore all the factors, sociological and psychological, that go to make up the life of a people. We fail to realize that the question of the inferiority or superiority of Japanese and Chinese cultures to the culture of Western peoples does not properly arise. Many Japanese and Chinese institutions would not suit us, it is certain that many of our institutions would not suit them. In some things we might fairly count ourselves as beyond them, in other things they might as fairly count themselves beyond us. The contact of different cultures is healthy and helpful. The claim of superiority based upon difference only is essentially unhealthy. It gives a moral justification for the exploitation of these "lower" races, where, as in the case of Japan, they are not strong enough to resist by force. It forces a peaceful people like the Chinese along lines of militaristic development for the purpose of self protection—which can hardly be regarded as a proof that we are a higher social organism. And it is significant that this vicious theory of superiority receives at every turn the sanction, explicit or implicit, of Christianity.

* * *

Religion and Politics.

We here touch one of the roots of a vexed and complicated question. The nearest approach to modern Imperialism was that of the old Roman Empire. But Rome proceeded more by a policy of assimilation; between modern Imperialistic nations and their yellow, black, or brown dependents or subjects there is no assimilation, only the relation of superior and inferior,

or, thinly disguised, that of conquered and conqueror. One great cause of this distinction is Christianity. The religion of Rome was polytheistic and tolerant. The religion of the modern world is monotheistic and intolerant. With Rome, religion scarcely entered into its politics, and not at all into its dealings with subject peoples. "It was Christianity," says Lord Cromer in his *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, "and its offshoot, Islam, that created nations and introduced the religious element into politics," and while the first part of the sentence may be open to question the last is beyond doubt. It is significant in this connection that the Jews were the only people the Romans failed to assimilate, and that here the cause was the intolerant nature of their religion. The Romans would not, of course, have hesitated in saying that some communities were of a lower order than others, but they would never have drawn a line of demarcation based upon colour and have claimed the control of the world for the white races. Christianity, by becoming the adopted and official religion of the Western world, paved the way for this. Its native intolerance as a religion paved the way for intolerance in politics and sociology. It provided the religious sanction which intolerance and exploitation required for its perpetuation and ethical justification. And it is hardly surprising to find a Christian bishop calmly dividing the world into lower and higher social organisms, and placing in the first-named category peoples who were civilized when his ancestors were running round dressed in nothing but a costume of paint.

Brotherhood and Bunkum.

No religion has dwelt with greater strength, in theory, on human brotherhood; none has more thoroughly ignored it in practice. The development of the colour bar is a proof of this. All men are brothers, says the Christian. That is the theory. In practice it is the white man who is the divinely ordained master, the coloured man—yellow, black, or brown—the divinely ordained servant. And, as we have suggested, this intolerance in the sociological field is an extension of the intolerance native in Christianity itself. Says Lord Cromer, in the work already cited: "The dominant Roman and the intellectual Greek thought themselves, without doubt, very superior to the savage Gaul or Briton, and to the more civilized Egyptian or Asiatic; but in estimating his sense of superiority, neither appears, so far as I can judge, to have taken much account of whether the skins of the subject or less intellectually advanced races were white, black, or brown." This conviction can be seen developing in European policy as a direct offshoot of Christianity. The Christians were the superior peoples, the non-Christians the inferior ones. And as the Europeans became Christianized, and the overwhelming bulk of the coloured peoples remained outside the pale of Christianity, the road to a division based on colour became easy. There were, says no less a person than Lord Acton, writing of the fifteenth century,—

eminent divines who thought that the people of hot countries might be enslaved. Henry the Navigator applied to Rome, and Nicholas V. issued Bulls authorizing him and his Portuguese to make war on Moors and Pagans and seize their possessions and reduce them to perpetual slavery, and prohibiting all Christian nations, under eternal penalties, from trespassing on the privilege. He applauded the trade in negroes, and hoped it would end in their conversion.

"End in their conversion"! That has been the great sanction for Christian plundering in all parts of the globe.

Christianity the Enemy.

The intrusion of religion, and particularly the Christian religion, into politics always carries the same evils. It distorts activities, it narrows the outlook, and it covers with a halo of sanctity secular evils that would otherwise stand a better chance of exposure and remedy. The revival of slavery, it has already been noted, was "sanctified" by the desire to bring the "heathen" into the Christian fold. The activities of a class bent on the exploitation of "lower social organisms" are disguised by appeals to national sentiment and religious zeal. Persecution, again, which so long as it is unallied with religion tends to correct itself by the obvious injury it inflicts on a community, is made respectable by its alliance with religion, and raised from the level of a vice to the rank of a duty. In these, as in other directions, religion aggravates, justifies, and perpetuates by disguising the real nature of the process. A lie that is seen to be a lie stands self-condemned; it is the "lie within the soul," the lie which regards itself as the truth, which is the great danger. And of all the throned lies known to the world, none is so great as Christianity. For centuries it has been like a canker in the brain and a cramp in the heart of the Western world. Its domination of the world of political life has been one of the greatest curses of modern Europe. And its removal is an essential condition of a lasting and healthful reformation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Child's Thoughts on Religion.

SOME children take to religion much more readily and much more intensely than others. This is to be accounted for partly by inherited temperament, and partly by the kind and quantity of education brought into play, while others are prevented by the great law of heredity from taking to it at all. It is often asserted by the divines that man is a being of whom religion is a fundamental characteristic, which proves that it cannot die. Just as hunger is a permanent factor in the upward movement of mankind, so is religion, we are assured, an ineradicable instinct of the human mind. Such is the theological theory; but in practice it entirely breaks down, and is abandoned even by its most resolute champions. That theory is tacitly denied by all the advocates of religious instruction in day-schools, their chief argument being that if children are not religiously trained they will certainly become Atheists. Nevertheless, there are children who almost seem to have an instinct for religion, which is the outcome of many generations of favourable heredity and environment. Even in their case, however, a godly upbringing is an indispensable condition of their adoption of a religious life. We have known exceptionally pious parents who sorrowfully complained of the distinctly anti-religious disposition manifested by their offspring. But in the present article our concern is with a boy between eight and fourteen years of age who was brought up in a characteristically Christian home, and who, being passionately in love with his parents, developed an early passion for their religion. He was spoken of in the community as the youthful divine. The brand of theology which he affected was ultra Calvinism, which he delighted to defend against all and sundry attacks. He could discuss God and his decrees with much greater familiarity than he could his own father and his affairs. The Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and Justification by Faith, were the grandest of all realities to him. In his imagination there lay vivid pictures of the triune God seated on three great thrones, with God the Father in the centre, and Gods the Son and Holy Ghost on either side. Christ had offered himself up as a propitiation to

Eternal Justice for the elect only, of whose number he verily believed himself to be one. Occasionally, the doctrine of predestination disturbed and puzzled and confounded him not a little, but he invariably found ample satisfaction in the thought that the Sovereign of the Universe had a right to do as he pleased with his own wayward children, the exercise of mercy being purely optional with him.

This was, in truth, a vital point. The Arminians argued that it would have been essentially unjust of God to foreordain eternal life for some and eternal damnation for others; but this boyish theologian averred that predestination was justified on two grounds: God, being supreme, had a perfect right to do what he liked with his own property, and besides, all mankind, in consequence of the Fall, fully deserved eternal perdition. Calvin emphasized "not only the freedom, the unmerited character, of grace, but equally the *sovereignty* of God in the bestowal of it," the idea being "that apart from this sovereignty in the selection of the subjects of it, grace would not be grace." Such was the boy's creed, which in his early teens he treated as absolute truth revealed by God to his chosen vessels.

All the children of men were doomed to eternal death, but God, in his infinite mercy, had elected a certain number to eternal life. For these Christ had died on the Cross, thereby paying in full all their debts to Divine justice; and by accepting Christ as their surety these would certainly be saved. The bulk of the people among whom the boy's lot was cast were orthodox Calvinists; and their constant anxiety was whether they were among the elect or not. This was the point that troubled them by day and by night, and it drove one or two of them to stark madness. The boy himself had hours and days of doubts now and then; but he held on to his creed with all his might and main, his city of refuge being the conviction that whatever God did was right, simply because he did it. It was a laughably absurd position for a sane person, young or old, to occupy; and there are many present-day Christians who vainly imagine that now it only marks a stage in theological evolution; but, as a matter of fact, Calvinism is by no means dead, and is still professed by thousands in the very form in which it flourished among Presbyterians and others sixty and seventy years ago. Moreover, we are firmly of opinion that Calvinism is not one whit less believable than Arminianism, or any other form of supernaturalism. The belief in the invincible sovereignty of God logically lands its possessor in Calvinism. The fact that the whole system is nothing but a horrid dream by no means destroys its logicity.

We have stated that the boy under consideration was sometimes painfully haunted by doubts and fears; but neither the doubts nor the fears cast the slightest suspicion upon the truth of the Christian religion, but rather upon the reality of the popular belief in it. To him, through all his teens, and for a few years beyond them, Christianity appealed as tremendously, even terrifically, true. What he doubted very often was whether professing Christians really believed its cardinal doctrines. According to the doctrine of election, God had determined, from all eternity, "whom he would admit to salvation and whom he would condemn to destruction." Consequently, in every age and country the non-elect have been a host whom none could number, with the inevitable result that hell was inhabited by countless millions of doomed souls in torment. The mere thought of such a fact was unspeakably appalling, and to the boy it was a source of indescribable grief and pain. He knew that from every family in the neighbourhood some were already in "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Of this heartbreaking fact ministers of the

Gospel were specially aware; and yet he found that in practice they totally ignored it. They seemed to enjoy life as if there were no such place or state as hell. He could never forget once listening to an unusually terrifying discourse by a popular preacher on the text, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" and immediately after delivering it the man of God partook of a luxurious meal, and spent the whole evening telling tales, cracking jokes, and laughing merrily with a company of friends. Such behaviour convinced the lad, who was only twelve at the time, that the sermon just delivered had not been taken seriously by the minister and his jovial friends, though it had filled his own heart with blood-curdling terror. From that time onwards there gradually grew within him the feeling that, by the majority of its professors, religion was treated with criminal lightheartedness. Neither heaven nor hell had any significance to them except for an hour or two at church or chapel once or twice a week. During that brief period they verily believed and felt that the Gospel message was solemnly true, and should be heeded for the soul's eternal safety; but in their ordinary intercourse with the world they did not appear to retain any recollection whatever of it.

When he was about half way through his teens, our young friend made a startling discovery. He had been brought up to believe that sermons, like marriages, were made in heaven. Preachers were the successors of the Old Testament prophets, and in the pulpit acted simply as God's spokesmen. In the prayer immediately before the sermon he had frequently noticed that they made this petition: "O Lord, speak thyself to these people to-day; use us as thine ambassadors." But in his fourteenth year he had the privilege of a long conversation with a young minister who had just taken over the pastorate of the church of which he was a member, in the course of which the admission was made that a discourse cost a certain number of days' hard work. Then it occurred to him that to pray for a sermon already written out and committed to memory was an act of disgraceful hypocrisy, a gross insult to the Almighty, and a species of fraud played upon the congregation. Subsequently, he had no difficulty in accounting for the fact that some sermons were so much better or so much worse than others. Everything depended upon the preacher's general gifts and special qualifications for his office, but chiefly upon industry or indolence.

Up to his twenty-sixth year our hero continued to be a valiant champion of orthodox Calvinism; but disturbing questions kept forcing themselves upon his mind, such as, Does God really hear and answer prayer? Did he send his only begotten Son to die for the elect in a lost and ruined world? Does the Holy Ghost dwell in the hearts of the redeemed, and lead them along the devious paths of life? At first the mere presence of such queries in his mind frightened him; but by degrees he developed the courage to face them, and the mere act of facing them made him strong. Finally, all questions were reduced to one, namely, Does God exist, and what evidence is there that he does, or does not? For many years this question remained without a definite answer. The head said, "There is no God"; but the heart stubbornly went on giving the head the lie direct. In the end, head and heart came to terms and kissed each other, with the result that storm was followed by a great and songful calm, and that even doubts and fear vanished, and serene confidence began to reign supreme.

Many children have had to pass through similar experiences. Very pleasant are the dreams which the fancy weaves while Monarch Reason sleeps, and some go through life cherishing them as blissful realities; but happy are they at whose doors hard problems knock so

loudly that the Monarch awakes and drives the dreams away as so many illusions and hallucinations. Whenever that awakening occurs, whether early or late in life, Theism makes room for Atheism, dream-life ends and real-life begins. Usually, persons who pass through such experiences make excellent Freethinkers; and for them there is absolutely no possibility of a return to the old life and its exploded beliefs.

J. T. LLOYD.

Throwing Out the Sandbags.

The entire early training and life of England's higher ecclesiastics seem to render the majority of them incapable of taking in facts patent to everyone else.

—*The Duke of Argyll.*

The divine stands wrapt up in his cloud of mysteries, and the amused laity must pay tithes and veneration to be kept in obscurity, grounding their hope of future knowledge on a competent stock of present ignorance.—*George Farquhar.*

THE attacks of the Freethinkers on the church balloon are beginning to tell heavily, and the ecclesiastics are getting nervous and are throwing out the sandbags in a frantic endeavour to escape. Recently the House of Convocation of Canterbury decided to abandon Psalm lviii., and to eliminate the worst features of some of the other sacred lyrics attributed to King David. The clerical manœuvre will not save Christianity, but it is hoped that, for a time, the Freethought sharpshooters will be evaded.

The ruse is a smart one, but it will not serve for long. The Psalms are an integral part of the Bible, and David, "the man after God's own heart," is too closely allied with the legendary figure of Christ to be thrown thus rudely to the rubbish-heap without disastrous results to orthodoxy. It is not only a desperate policy in the particular instance, but a precedent which will exert, in the long run, anything but a happy effect on the Christian position.

The Psalms were written many centuries ago, and have been regarded by many as the inspired utterances of God ever since. For the future Psalm lviii. will not be printed in the Psalter "as appointed to be read." The Convocation of Canterbury has so decreed, by forty-three votes against thirteen, and the ecclesiastics have dismissed King David as though he were so much war-time beer or racing. Now what is wrong with the 58th Psalm? It is a comparatively short one, but Convocation says it is "un-Christian like in character," which is a polite way of expressing that it is entirely out of harmony with modern humanistic ideas. This is how Psalm lviii. runs:—

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

It will be seen that the ecclesiastics have not selected the worst utterances in the Bible. Other Psalms are open to the same grave objections, as, for instance, the inspired cursings in Psalm cix.:—

When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

And, again, in Psalm cxxxvii.:—

Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Observe the ecclesiastics have themselves started to pull the Bible to pieces, and have begun with the Psalms.

King David thus comes in for tardy, but none the less deserved, rebuke. For David is now seen to be a barbarian, and the champions of the Bible are obliged to throw the Oriental savage overboard in order to absolve their Deity from the vices and crimes of his favourite. Let there be no mistake about this. The remarks of that accomplished scholar, Ernest Renan, are so apt that they deserve to be quoted:—

We shall see the brigand of Adullam and Ziklag assume gradually the airs of a saint. He will be the author of the Psalms; the sacred chorægus, the type of the future saviour. Jesus must be the son of David! The evangelical biography will be falsified in a multitude of points by the idea that the life of the Messiah should reproduce the traits of David's. Pious souls, while enjoying the sentiments, full of resignation and tender melancholy, of the finest of liturgical books, will fancy themselves in communion with this bandit. Humanity will believe in a final justice on the testimony of David, who never thought of it, and of the Sibyl, who never existed. O the divine comedy.

It would be a thankless task to enumerate the false, foolish, and wicked features of the Holy Scriptures, but the sacred volume is full of barbarism from cover to cover. From the first error in Genesis to the final absurdity in Revelation, much of the writing is of pathological interest, although presented in exotic forms of verse. In many places in the Old Testament the writing is filled with the turmoil of battle, the champing of horses, the flashing and bickering of spears. Only on rare occasions does the still, sad voice of humanity make itself heard. As for the New Testament, the highly evolved moral perceptions of to-day are shocked beyond expression at the awful doctrine that countless millions of mankind will suffer eternal punishment. It will be seen that it is not theology which purifies humanity, but humanity which purifies theology. Man civilizes himself first, and then civilizes his gods, and the clergy walks at the tail of the procession and takes the credit and the cash.

This decision to excise a portion of "God's Word" from the Psalter is not a paltry matter. For the Bible is not an ordinary book. It is stamped as God's Word by Act of Parliament; it is forced (including Psalm lviii. and other unseemly passages) into the hands of children at schools; it is used as a fetish for swearing upon in Courts of Law and Houses of Legislation. Men and women have been robbed of their children in its name, and excluded from public positions. And people are still liable, at law, to penalties for bringing it into "disbelief and contempt."

Yet it is as plain as a pikestaff that Freethought is slowly forcing the Church into a dangerous position, and the clergy are in a desperate plight. They are throwing the sandbags away. At present, it is true, the process is confined to the Old Testament; but, before long, the process will have to be extended to the New Testament. When it is completed, the Christian Religion will be a thing of shreds and patches. Then the Bible will take its proper place beside the other Sacred Books of the East, and the clergy will have to look for honest employment. The eviction of David is the beginning of the end.

MIMNERMUS.

A claim has been paid by an insurance company to a church damaged in a recent air-raid. This is an ironic comment on the clerical trust in Providence.

The exploitation of the docile public in the name of the War goes on apace. At a popular seaside resort a flag-day has been announced for the Young Women's Christian Association.

Socialists, Freethought, and Religion.

THE question whether a Christian can accept the conclusions of modern Socialism and still retain his religious beliefs has been the cause of countless arguments and disputes since ever I became acquainted with the opinions of Socialists and Freethinkers.

Looking back over the controversies which have been waged round this supposed problem, I find that the disputants may roughly be divided into two camps—on one side Freethinkers (many of whom are Socialists), who believe that the idea of the intervention of God in the affairs of this life is the greatest delusion of the human mind, and who contend that men must first think rationally about the problems of existence before an economic revolution of any value can be accomplished. On the other side we have the militant Socialists (many of whom are avowed Freethinkers), who believe that wage-slavery is the root of all our social troubles, and that most progress will be made by concentrating the attack on the economic basis of capitalism, the religious difficulty being left to right itself when men are "economically free."

As one who is both an Atheist and a Socialist, and has devoted some twenty years to the diffusion of Socialistic ideas, and comparatively little time to the furtherance of Freethought, I cannot be called a "bourgeois Freethinker" who has been "led astray by the remarks of pseudo-Socialists"; yet if there are "Rationalist superstitions as well as Christian" (Where are they?) there is profound intellectual dishonesty manifested by most Socialists towards religion, which attitude is frequently associated with the repudiation of militant Freethought.

Now, it is conceivable that in the time of Jesus, some Jewish tribes, and later the early Christians, lived a sort of Socialistic-Communitic existence, which was not incompatible with their religious professions. But the simple-minded Essenes had not the advantages of German kultur; so, not having read Karl Marx, the structure of their society was not on a "sound economic basis." To be serious, no parallel whatever can be drawn between the social relations of small groups in primitive times and the complex social system of our day, which is practically universal. "Scientific" Socialism is comparatively modern, and dates from the time of Proudhon, Lassale, and Marx. The works of the last-named form the basis of the leading Socialist parties in the world. In fact, the theories of Marx are generally accepted by Socialists with as little question as Catholics would give to a papal pronouncement; indeed, it would seem that there are Socialists as well as Rationalist superstitions!

My purpose is not to discuss Marxian theories, but to show clearly, however much we may juggle with terms, that to believe in "the materialistic conception of history" is to disbelieve in every conception of God and other-worldliness. Now, there are men of scientific training who profess to accept Darwinism, and yet remain Christians, but we cannot have it both ways; evolution and special creation are diametrically opposed. Similarly, men may believe in a sentimental brotherly love sort of emotional Communism and the world beyond the skies as well; as a matter of fact, God and mawkishness go very well together. But Marx teaches that whatever form of supernatural belief is in existence is simply a reflex of the prevailing material conditions of the epoch; or, in other words, that all religion is made by man, and varies with the changes in the economic basis of society. I have never met a Marxian Socialist who was a professing Christian, yet I have known scores

who "hedged" beautifully when reasoning with religious persons, and who have manifested a respect for religion and the "ethical teaching of Jesus" which they certainly did not feel, under the impression that such form of Jesuistry was "good propaganda."

Even the leading exponents of Socialism have been guilty of this form of kow-towing to the Church, and if I had a narrow Protestant outlook I would be suspicious of them as "emissaries of Rome." Take the following, for example, from a pamphlet by the late James Connolly:—

.....So far from it being true that Socialism and Atheism are synonymous terms, it is a curious and instructive fact that almost all the prominent propagandists of Freethought in our generation have been, and are, most determined enemies of Socialism. The late Charles Bradlaugh, in his time the most aggressive Freethinker in England, was to the last resolute and uncompromising in his hatred of Socialism; G. W. Foote, the present editor of the *Freethinker*, the national organ of English Secularism, is a bitter enemy of Socialism; and the late Colonel Bob Ingersoll, the chief apostle of Freethought doctrine in the United States, was well known as an apologist of capitalism.

Now for an example of evading the point at issue, of mental twisting, and the wilful creation of a prejudice against Freethinkers, this excerpt from the work of a Marxian Socialist would be hard to beat.

"Are Socialism and Atheism synonymous?" As we well ask, as Connolly knew, if capitalism and theology are the same thing! The question at issue is, "Does a belief in Socialism imply a disbelief in religion?" and he answers by telling us that most prominent Freethinkers are anti-Socialists! There's a Catholic answer for you. But, for very obvious reasons, Connolly does not tell us, what would be of some consequence, *how many leading Socialists are Christians*; and we are led to infer from the fact that prominent Freethinkers have been opposed to Socialism—that, indeed, Atheism and anti-Socialism were synonymous.

It must here be noted, that while insisting on the importance of presenting their doctrines in their own way, many Socialists are perpetually having a tilt at Freethinkers and their methods, while very few are to be found who dare openly to attack Christianity as a buttress of Capitalism.

This "respect" attitude is nauseating in the extreme, especially as the Socialists invariably get nothing but abuse and misrepresentation from Christians for their pains. To my mind it is unthinkable that an educated Socialist can seriously listen to twaddling lectures and "ethicking" from clergymen, and treat these utterances with more deference than he can accord to the reasoned works of Freethinkers.

In another portion of the same pamphlet which I have been quoting (*The New Evangel*), in dealing with a Father Finlay's views of Socialism as expounded before the students of Maynooth Union, Connolly says:—

We heartily allow that no man in Ireland outside the ranks of the adherents of Scientific Socialism, can bring to bear upon questions of political economy, and the effect which theories of political economy have had upon the industrial life of the people, such a wealth of knowledge as the reverend gentlemen whose paper we are now discussing.

This would lead us to expect some high-brow goods from the first economist in Ireland (barring the "adherents of Scientific Socialism"), instead of which we get the old drivel about a man's right to do what he likes with his own, Socialism having broken down wherever it has been tried, etc.; which creates in my mind the suspicion that the *savants* of Liberty Hall may, after all, be small potatoes intellectually.

The historic Encyclical of Leo XIII. on the Labour problem was a very feeble contribution to the literature of political economy; but we are assured that Father Finlay, on another occasion, laid before the Dublin Statistical Society "an exposition of the evolutionary nature of the Socialist doctrine, its historical derivation and material basis, *which is not at all compatible with the crudely false conception of Socialism.....*" served up to the young priests at Maynooth. Now, Leo, being the head of the Church, was worth answering, however silly his economics—besides, he may have meant well; Father Finlay certainly didn't mean well, and why an insignificant clergyman convicted of wilful misrepresentation should be treated seriously and politely is beyond me.

I might understand the deferential attitude towards the platitudinous vapourings of professional dealers in superstition if a good percentage of Socialists were believing Christians, but there are scarcely any Christians in "the movement"; or, if the "social teachings" of Jesus had any value to-day, but very little study is necessary to discover that the Saviour as a social reformer is decidedly unconvincing. There was an excellent pamphlet on *Jesus as Social Reformer* by Charles Watts—which I hope is still obtainable—dealing with "Christian" Socialism in a masterly manner.

What, then, are the reasons why Socialists, who are nearly all sceptics, are generally so afraid of hurting the feelings of the Christians?

Making all due allowances, the chief reason is moral cowardice. To be an Atheist is still in many quarters "synonymous with" being a villain, *and will be so, so long as we are afraid to admit our opinions.* Then there is the mistaken idea of tactics. It may be easier to get a man to change his politics than to discard his religion; but rest assured, comrades, that "converts" from the Christian fold will require a sound "atheistic basis" before the cause can profit. Yes, I agree that before Socialists capture the Church, the Church will capture Socialism.

So long, then, as bodies of organized Socialists protest that the teaching in their Sunday-schools is not anti-Christian (we shall be delighted to prove that if Christian, it must be anti-social), so long as it is a commonplace that "A true Christian must be a Socialist," and that "The Socialist Party of Ireland prohibits the discussion of theological or anti-theological questions at its meetings, public or private. This is in conformity with the practice of the chief Socialist parties of the world....." Well, well so long as Socialists adopt that attitude towards *any* question, they well deserve to be regarded with suspicion by all lovers of freedom of thought.

J. EFFEL.

Correspondence.

REPRISALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hope I am not more bloodthirsty than the average Freethinker, it distresses me to see any kind of pain or suffering, and I cannot take the life of an animal, however necessary, without feeling pity. Yet I am strongly of opinion that we ought to retaliate on German towns, preferably such as Essen, as a reprisal for their attacks on London and other British towns. This would make it clear to the High Command that such warfare was not a paying proposition, and, moreover, was one in which two could take a part. If this plan was adopted, a large number of German guns and aeroplanes would be kept at home for their own protection, and to this extent be prevented from doing harm to us. Directly they ceased to attack open towns we should let them understand we were willing to do the same. War is a brutal business, but self-preservation is the first law of nature.

S. SODDY.

NEW MANCHESTER BRANCH: AN APPEAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—We must have a considerable increase if the new Branch is to be the success we anticipated when we commenced organizing work last March. We have an active committee, but if serious work is to be inaugurated in the coming winter, it is imperative that we should have more members.

Freethinkers do not need telling of the difficulties confronting new organizations like ours, and I am sure it is only through pen laziness that I have not received more applications. The purport of this letter, therefore, is to appeal to the large audiences at Mr. Cohen's last lecture in Manchester to send me their names without delay, when membership forms will at once be sent them for completion. I am making this appeal through your columns in the confident anticipation that the Freethinkers of Manchester and district will rally round us with the object of founding our new Branch upon a firm and enduring basis.

H. BLACK, Hon. Sec.

446 Great Cheetham Street East, Higher Broughton.

COLOURED LABOUR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The severe strictures you made upon me in your last issue appear to have been based upon a very contracted account of my speech to the Council meeting of the General Federation of Trade Unions in Gloucester upon the advisability of watching carefully the movement towards coloured labour in this country. The most misleading contraction was the omission of the word "social" before the word "organisms." Possibly the illustration from biology may not commend itself to you, but I think you will allow that it is not insulting to the other races who are likely to be exploited for industrial purposes to say that their social conditions are such as to make it possible for them to sell their labour at a figure which would be disastrous to the social aspirations of the industrial classes in this country. This was the essence of my warning, which was based upon intimate knowledge of the effect of coloured labour upon white labour in several parts of the world.

I am sufficiently a believer in free thinking and free speaking that I never resent others differing acutely from me, and saying so without ambiguity or conventionality, but I dislike being condemned for something which I have not said, and never dreamed of saying. Moreover, I consider my warning to be of much importance to the welfare, not only of this country, but of the world; and not only of white men, but of all men. I hope, therefore, that you will publish the accompanying report of that part of my speech which deals with the subject under consideration. The report was made by the representative of the *Gloucester Chronicle*, and I did not see it until it appeared in print.

GEORGE H. FRODSHAM, Bishop.

[The following is the pertinent passage in the report enclosed by Bishop Frodsham:—"It was a biological fact that a lower organism could crush out a higher one; and it was no insult to the Chinese and the Japanese, our Allies, and the less developed races of the world to say that they were lower in organization than the English, the Americans, and other white races were." We regret we have not space for the whole of the report, but we cannot see that it materially effects what we said in "Acid Drops" for July 15. The Chinese and Japanese are *different* from us, but to take difference as an equivalent of inferiority is an example of that religious egotism against which we protested. The egotism may be unconscious, but it is there.—ED.]

The Duke of Argyll has been engaged in the pleasant pastime of bishop baiting. "It has been widely remarked," says the Duke, that since the War began the bishops have hardly made one sensible remark about it." The indignant bishops will wish that they had not discarded the "cursing" Psalm.

"Lord Northcliffe is a creator of modern England," says the Rev. W. E. Bentley. Most parsons profess to believe that the creator of modern England also made old Judce.

Acid Drops.

Rev. Dr. Fitchett is a Wesleyan clergyman who has made something of a reputation, and we assume, of an income by the writing of frothy religio-patriotic books. From a short article in the *Age* (Melbourne) we see that he has been addressing himself to the question of why God does not put an end to the War. He agrees that God could stop the War by killing the Kaiser, but he asks, plaintively, "If God started along those lines where would he stop?" But the question was, Why does he not commence? Perhaps Dr. Fitchett is afraid that if God started clearing out undesirables he might not draw the line at Germany.

Dr. Fitchett says: "The fact was that every alternative to Christianity had broken down, and if anything was calculated to reinforce our faith it was the picture of the downfall of Germany, whose wicked theory of a non-moral State had produced the War. In the face of these facts some of the most eminent freethinkers had declared their conviction that on the logic of this war Christianity alone could save the world." Dr. Fitchett knows that he is on safe ground when telling this sort of story about "eminent freethinkers." For our part, we say deliberately that they do not exist outside Dr. Fitchett's imagination. Lying for the greater glory of God is an old Christian practice, and Dr. Fitchett is in this respect at least quite orthodox.

The *Evening News* has grave doubts "of the great change and regeneration of England that the War was to bring," and adds that "we poison babies with impure milk, London bread makes people ill, and beer is often an affair of noisome chemicals." All of which proves that the only truthful thing about Christianity is that its professors are "miserable sinners."

Newspaper piety is a fearful and a wonderful thing. The *Daily Sketch* says that the British "are shy of invoking the Deity" and "refrain from vociferous insistence" that God is with them. This is a half-truth, for tens of thousands of British parsons and amateur preachers are perpetually invoking the Deity, and their congregations pay them handsomely for so doing.

At the Wesleyan Methodist Conference on July 19, the new President said the Christianity suitable to the soldiers when they return must be "a religion of valour with iron in its blood." This sounds like a paraphrase of Bismarck's "blood and iron," and, in any case, it seems a trifle removed from the Christianity of meekness and love that we used to hear of. But we have no doubt that the old-fashioned variety will be on hand when it is needed—particularly when something is needed to keep the people "in order," should they ask for more than it is thought advisable to give them.

The National Council of the Free Churches of Wales appeals to all the Churches to set apart August 4 and 5 as days of supplication. The Welsh weekly journal, *Y Cymro*, hopes that the message of this appeal will be universally heeded, and that "we shall see an entire nation bent in submission before God." Do the Welsh people imagine that the War is really God's operation, or that the Father in Heaven is responsible for the horrible slaughter of so many millions of his own children? As they sing, "The God of love my Shepherd is," do they verily believe that he is deliberately butchering such countless multitudes of "the sheep of his pasture"? If not, why should they humble themselves under his mighty hand? If they do, why supplicate, why burden his throne with fictions? Either God is the author of the War, or he is not; if he is, is he not much rather a contemptible monster than God of love? If he is not, what is the use of having anything whatever to do with him? In either case, to supplicate him is an act of sheer mockery, while the humbling of ourselves before him would be unforgivable hypocrisy.

It has gone the round of the papers that the following letters have passed between Sir William Robertson Nicoll

and Lord Rhondda: Sir William wrote, "Talk less, and work more." Lord Rhondda retorted, "Write less, and work more." We were not aware that the Food Controller was much given to talking, but we do know that the Editor of the *British Weekly* is guilty of writing an infinite amount of trash about God and the War, and of exploiting the War to further the interests of its own fads.

The *Sunday Times* has some very pertinent and outspoken remarks on the Sunday Observance prosecutions at Sheffield. "Time and money, both public and private, were wasted at Sheffield, and, quite possibly, may be again wasted elsewhere, until this archaic law is relegated to the limbo of other worn-out relics of the past."

The Americans are pushful and resourceful people, and the *Detroit Times* has been protesting vigorously against "the old vogue of free notices or advertisements of Sunday services in the newspapers." It adds, "the only perplexity now is to get the church officers to be willing to pay the bills." "Aye, there's the rub." As in effete old Europe, the dear clergy do not give money away.

A house-agent's advertisement in a provincial paper, depicting the glories of a growing neighbourhood, adds the note, "Come out Sundays." If he is not more careful, that house-agent will get a free mention in ministerial prayers, and consigned to a place not on any map.

According to an American newspaper, the Bethlehem Steel Company manufactures armour plant. The title seems singularly appropriate.

A church notice recently announced that a parson would speak on the subject, "Godliness is Profitable." Even the bench of bishops would not dispute this.

That the position, so far as Christianity is concerned, is beginning to be realized, even at Woolwich, is evidenced by the cessation of the "Special Services for Munition Workers," lasting ten minutes, held until recently every Sunday at 1.10 p.m., by the Rector of Holy Trinity, Woolwich, which church is situate just outside the Royal Arsenal gates. These services have, during the past twelve months, been attended by as many as eight and as few as two persons at a time on the three occasions the writer visited them out of curiosity. "Spiritual things" do not appeal to the workers on munitions. They are engaged on material things, both in their own affairs and their occupations, and experience has taught them that success is best achieved by leaving spiritual things to those possessing such an enormous stock of faith and credulity as will enable them to continue praying even when the sugar and bread, presumably prayed for, do not arrive.

The centenary of Henry Thoreau recalls that he was a "conscientious objector," and that he went to prison for his resistance to the authorities. Whilst Thoreau was in prison he was visited by Emerson. "Why are you in there, Henry?" asked Emerson. "Ralph, why are you not in?" was the significant answer.

Christians are beginning to find out that all Germans are not Atheists. Lord Hugh Cecil, speaking at the House of Laymen, said Churchmen "were bound as Christians to love the Germans, and they had no more right to hate German Christians than they had to hate any other Christians." Christian love is as much open to suspicion as Christian truth.

At the Wesleyan Conference one of the speakers, Rev. F. H. Benson, said that many men at the Front had written home to say it was a hell. The *Daily Telegraph* report says that this was greeted with "cries of dissent." If the War on the Western Front doesn't approach near enough to hell to satisfy these parsons, they must be very hard to please. And yet we suppose the clergy really did ask for exemption in order to keep out of heaven.

At the present time, says Miss Violet Scott James in the *Evening Standard*, "we are allowed for the good of the nation to plough on a Sunday; we are compelled for the safety of the nation to fight on a Sunday; the only thing, then, that is denied us is that we should enjoy ourselves on a Sunday." But enjoyments are of the conditions of mental health, and mental health was never Christianity's concern. And, probably, if we indulged in more rational enjoyment we should both work better and fight less.

The Salvation Army is now quite respectable. In a newspaper paragraph it is stated that Queen Wilhelmina, of Holland, takes a keen interest in the Army's work. The Army might get another testimonial from the King of the Cannibal Islands, stating that he likes the taste of the "Blood and Fire" missionaries.

The Bishop of Chelmsford contends that reprisals would "disgrace he whom we serve." The grammar is as weak as the sentiment.

A writer in the *Star* says "behind the bayonet of to-day stands the Christian of to-morrow." What happens if the man behind the gun gets shot?

A speaker at the House of Laymen said churches to-day often reminded him of the theatre bills, "Early doors three-pence extra." This recalls the jest that the difference between a theatre and a place of worship is that you pay to go in one, and pay to get out of the other.

The clergy are beginning to be uneasy concerning the public's attitude towards the exemption of the black army from military service. In order to confuse the issue, some of the religious papers are publishing lists of parsons' relatives who have been killed or wounded at the Front. In one case the record is entitled, "The Toll of the Parsonage."

"Vanoc," of the *Referee*, is wroth with the Bishops for deleting David's (or whoever wrote the fifty-eighth Psalm) Hymn of Hate from the Church Service. He calls the Bishops "piratical blue-pencillers of the Word of God." But the Church Service is not claimed to be the "Word of God," and the Bishops do not propose to eliminate the fifty-eighth Psalm from the Bible. "Vanoc" may rest his soul in peace. With or without the fifty-eighth Psalm, Christians are not likely to be found wanting in the power of hatred. Of that the pious readers of the *Referee* may rest assured.

"Vanoc" says: "I would prefer concurrent endowment of all sects to the impoverishment and destruction of the Church of England." Generous man! Rather than the one should suffer, he would take from the public and give to all the Churches. Such whole-hearted philanthropy is staggering. For our part, we prefer the other course—that of the State leaving all the sects severely alone. They will then have to rely upon themselves alone—their God.

The number of candidates for ordination last year was 381, as against 670 in 1913. Still, we have heard no complaint from the general public about the shortage of the clergy. Perhaps this was overshadowed by the shortage of potatoes and other things.

Part of a wrecked Zeppelin has been given by the War Office to the Rector of South Hackney, who has placed it in his church. We do not know what prompted the War Office to make the gift, but we presume that the rector wishes to remind worshippers that God protects them during air-raids.

In an inspired puff in the press it is stated that Mr. J. J. Virgo, national field secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, has just returned from a trip to "nearly all the British fronts," and he had collected over £120,000 on his tour. Complimentary allusions to Mr. Virgo's tact followed, together with the naive admission that he was "not engaged on a money-raising campaign." Presumably, a *virgo intacta*.

At Worthing the Provost Marshall of a military camp asked the magistrates to allow cinema shows to be open on Sunday in the interests of soldiers. The request was refused—in the interests of Sabbatarianism. We do not know on what ground magistrates take to themselves the power to grant or deny these Sunday performances. We believe it to be quite outside their power to do either. Sunday entertainments, to which admission is paid by money, are illegal by statute, and it is ridiculous to assume that a magistrate can give permission to a breach of the law. If cinema proprietors care to run the risk of opening, they can do so without the magistrate's permission; and if the magistrate does permit it, they may still be prosecuted if anyone cares to do so.

The Bishop of London says that he places his hope for the future of the world in the progress of the democratic spirit and in substituting democracies for dynasties. The sentiment is all right, but we remember that not long since the Bishop was joining with Mr. Stephen Graham in ignorant eulogies of the late Czar, the then Russian Government, and the Russian Church. All it means is that what the Bishop is pleased to call his mind is at the service of anything that strikes him at the moment.

Rev. F. Lewis Donaldson, who was one of the speakers at the same meeting, said, "We ministers and Churches were held in indifference by the working people before the War; now we are held in contempt." That put the situation in a nutshell. And we doubt if the clergy will reinstate themselves by pointing out to the public how richly the vast majority deserve the treatment they receive.

The *Christian World* raises the question as to what steps a clergyman should take if an air-raid occurs during divine service. One would have thought that the proper course would be to offer up a prayer, and leave the rest with the Lord. Instead of that, it suggests that the centre of a church is not good cover, and advises taking cover by the main walls. That advice would suit a billiard saloon as well as a church. But if people are no better off in church than elsewhere, why not stay at home?

Who will say now that Christianity does not make for brotherhood and good fellowship? The Bishop of London and the Bishop of Chelmsford actually paid a friendly visit to the Methodist Conference to express feelings of friendship and cordial recognition of the Christian character of the Methodist Church. It is very touching, even though to some it may seem a very wee mouse for the mountain of Christian preaching to have produced. The Bishop of London hopes to see the Methodists reconciled to the Church of England. Some of the Methodist leaders hope to see a greater measure of co-operation between the two bodies. Perhaps, after all, it is only the presence of a common danger that is drawing them closer together.

TOLERATION.

Why should anyone wish that others should think exactly as he does? It is like compelling them to wear the same kind of clothes, or to use the same kind of spectacles, and losing our temper if they object to do so. In reference therefore to those convictions which we may think most of all important for the human race, and the significance of which we may perhaps ourselves be long in seeing, it is best "to possess one's soul in patience." Why should we wish to hear an echo of our own beliefs around us, if it be unbecoming to "compass sea and land to make proselytes" to them? It may also be noted that a society of men and women in which belief is uniform is always a dull society. It stagnates from the want of the elements of difference. In all progressive communities, however much the individual may succeed in coming to definite conclusions on great subjects, what is growing up around him in society, as the result of the contemporary forces that sway it, is necessarily different from that which he has himself reached, or from which he originally started. This consideration alone should be sufficient to make men tolerant and sympathetic as to the evolution of belief.—*Prof. W. Knight.*

To Correspondents.

- WILL Advertiser please call or send for replies to the advertisement of "Young Married Couple"?
- S. SODDY.—Pleased to receive the congratulations of so old a supporter of the N. S. S. as yourself. Shall be very glad to see you once more a member of the old Society.
- G. AVRES.—We should also like to see an index prepared for each volume of the *Freethinker*, but that would mean a deal of work if done properly, and at present we have as much as we can handle.
- H. L.—Ask your local newsagent to display a copy. That is an excellent form of advertising.
- L. CHEETHAM.—Your letters, with others received, proves that we were not in error in thinking that Freethinkers generally would endorse our action. We felt that a plain statement was all required.
- We have to thank some anonymous friend for a present of twenty-five cigars. We know they came from a friend because we have smoked a couple of them.
- C. F. BENNETT.—We do not know of any current book dealing particularly with the subject. You will have to dig out the information from such writers as Lecky, Gibbon, Draper, and others. Mr. Cohen wrote at some length in these columns on the question of Christianity and the Slave Trade about 1900, but the articles have never been reprinted. We are acquainted with Locker-Lampson's book on Ireland, and show our appreciation of it. Will attend to your suggestion when possible. Thanks for second letter, just to hand.
- G. O. WARREN.—Thanks. We hope to publish soon.
- ALAN HANDSACRE.—MSS. to hand. Thanks.
- C. W. PEACHEY.—We are obliged for suggestion and offer, but the present is not a good time for innovations of the kind suggested. And the want of capital is a very serious obstacle.
- J. EFFEL.—We wrote several articles on the subject some years ago, under the title of "Freethought and Social Reform," but may return to it and elaborate on some future occasion. Thanks for MSS.
- C. HARPUR.—We are obliged for quotations, which may prove useful.
- E. B.—We greatly value your warm appreciation of our "Special" in last week's issue. We quite believe it will have the effect you indicate.
- J. J. O.—Next week.
- T. WILMOT.—There is only one form of disestablishment that will be really effective, that is to disestablish religion in the minds of the people.
- R. STUBBS.—We quite appreciate your position. Still, a line has to be drawn somewhere, and there are considerations which made it imperative to draw the line as suggested.
- E. M.—We are proud of the support on this question of so old a Freethinker as yourself. The decision was not reached without much consideration, and we are gratified to find it so generally endorsed.
- A. JOHNSON.—Leaflets and paper sent. Hope you will be able to induce the Nuneaton Freethinkers to organize and set to work. The time is ripe for the effort.
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4 by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.*
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.*
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.*

Sugar Plums.

The fight with the L.C.C. has advanced a further stage, as will be seen from the following report from the *Star* of July 23:—

In the King's Bench Divisional Court, before the Lord Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Ridley, and Mr. Justice Atkin, Mr. Macmorran, K.C., was granted, on behalf of Mrs. Linda Corrie, a rule nisi for a mandamus to be directed to the L.C.C.,

calling upon them to hear and determine an application for consent to sell a pamphlet in their parks on behalf of the National League of the Blind.

Counsel said that Mrs. Corrie (who was London Secretary for the West London Branch of the League) had applied for permission to sell the pamphlet, but she had been informed that no more permits for the sale of literature would be granted.

He was not raising any question as to the validity of the by-law, but he contended that the Council, having discretion to grant the consent, must exercise it in particular cases, and not fetter it by general rules.

The Lord Chief Justice said as it was a matter of public interest the rule would be granted, in order that the question might be argued.

We do not think the L.C.C. will find the destruction of a public privilege quite so easy a thing as it anticipated.

There is a fairly brisk demand for the new propagandist leaflet by Mr. Cohen on *The Massacre of the Innocents*, and we have no doubt it is doing all the good anticipated. While the air-raids are in all minds the leaflet is certain to arouse interest, and it is by such means that the attention of many may be directed to the whole question of Freethought. Six Shillings, with sixpence to cover cost of carriage, will bring a thousand copies to anyone's door, and a deal of effective propaganda may thus be done in a quiet way at small cost.

The letter from the Secretary of the Manchester Branch, which appears in another column, reminds us it is time that all N. S. S. Branches were considering their programme for the coming autumn and winter. It is no use leaving arrangements until the autumn is here, and within the next month matters should be well advanced. We may repeat what we have said many times before, namely, that the present is the best time for our work that has presented itself for many years. The War has given the Churches a severe shaking, and it will be our own fault if we fail to take advantage of our opportunities. We offer the above advice specifically to Branches of the N. S. S., but there are many towns in which no Branch exists, where a few Freethinkers could set the work going. And in all cases whatever assistance is possible will be given from headquarters.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Percy Wild's lectures at Sheffield on July 15 and 22 met with a gratifying success. The audiences were attentive, and there was a good demand for N. S. S. membership forms, which will, we hope, result in a strengthening of the local Branch. The secretary is Mr. T. Dennis, 38 Gifford Road, Heeley, and he will be pleased to answer all inquiries that may be addressed to him. The lecturer to-day is Mr. J. Grimes, and next week Mr. Wallis, of Birmingham, will speak. All these meetings are being held under the auspices of the N. S. S.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd is spending a brief holiday in North Wales, not very far from the place of his birth, and all our readers will be glad to learn that he is reaping much benefit from the rest and change. He will return quite prepared to plunge into the autumn lecturing with all his old vigour, and we hope that Freethinkers all over the country will see that his energies are fully employed. To leave any of his dates unfilled is as wasteful as a manufacturer keeping a valuable plant idle.

Is Religion Growing or Decaying? is the question asked by Mr. F. J. Gould in a just published pamphlet (Watts & Co., price 2d.). By making "the idea of society the soul of religion," and the service of humanity its end, Mr. Gould is able to answer the question in the affirmative. And in that sense, much as we dislike the use of the word, we agree with him. The sense of human kinship expands and strengthens in spite of the War, and as Mr. Gould points out, the efforts being made to force our social requirements and provide for a better social condition when the War is over are hopeful signs. Mr. Gould's pamphlet is, in the main, an appeal to all who can to help in the great work of organizing society on a basis of fellowship and service. And in that we wish him every success.

Science, Telepathy, and Communion with the Dead.

II.

(Continued from p. 454.)

As to the natural tendency to believe in telepathy, it may be regarded as part of the anthropocentric and egocentric view of the universe and its happenings, and as an exemplification of the mystical view of mundane events, both of which are dominant in primitive philosophy, remain conspicuous wherever superstition still has a hold, flourish in pseudo-science and in esoteric cults, and will probably never become wholly obsolete.—*Professor J. Jastrów, "Fact and Fable in Psychology,"* p. 104.

The whole of what is called "modern occultism," including (so-called telepathy), crystal gazing, astrology, and such mysteries, can only be treated reasonably in the way I have mentioned. We ask for a demonstration of the occurrence of the mysterious communications or prophecies, or "raps" or "levitations" or whatever it may be. Lovers of science have never been unwilling to investigate such marvels fairly and squarely brought before them. In the very few cases which have been submitted in this way to scientific examination, the marvel has been shown to be either childish fraud or a mere conjurer's trick, or else the facts adduced in evidence have proved to be entirely insufficient to support the conclusion that there is anything unusual at work, or beyond the experience of scientific investigators.—*Sir Ray Lankester, "Divisions of a Naturalist,"* p. 363.

MR. MASKELYNE wrote to the *Daily Chronicle* suggesting that, if there was anything in the nature of thought-transference in the Zancigs' performance, "the whole matter can be settled in five minutes." But this opportunity of establishing their claims was ignored. They would allow Mr. Stead to test their claims anywhere and at any time, but by Mr. Maskelyne or Mr. Stuart Cumberland, never. When the *Chronicle* published part of their code, and members of the audience began to give correct answers before Madame Zancig could reply, Mr. Zancig publicly admitted from the stage of the Alhambra that "If it were our misfortune to lose our sight and hearing, we should not be able to work,"¹ the bubble of their reputation was pricked. Even Mr. Stead began to hedge, and explained that the Zancigs used Telepathy and a code; the code only being used to relieve the strain on their minds! Which reminds us of Voltaire's observation that incantations and arsenic had been known to destroy flocks of sheep; the arsenic and the code being the only efficacious agents in the respective cases. One of their most mystifying tricks was the ability of Mrs. Zancig to read any passage from any book of which Mr. Zancig had been provided with a similar copy, and upon which passage he had concentrated his mind. At Cambridge they utterly failed at repeating this trick because they were provided with two books which, unlike ordinary books, had unnumbered pages; therefore Mr. Zancig could not convey by code of word or sign the number of the page and passage which he wished Mrs. Zancig to read. The Zancigs were the last public exponents of Telepathy, or thought-transference, pretending to possess supernatural powers.

In 1882 the Society for Psychical Research was founded, with the object of investigating the phenomena of Spiritualism, Hypnotism, and the occult in general. Mr. Frederick Myers, in founding the Society, says that "its primary aim" was "the establishment of thought-transference."² The Society has been in existence for thirty-five years, and has conducted an enormous amount of investigation into occult phenomena, the record of which is contained in the twenty-eight yearly volumes published by the Society, each containing, on an average, between 500 and 600 pages—two of them contain 700

pages—to say nothing of a monthly journal published for private circulation among members only. It is to this enormous record that Sir Oliver Lodge is always referring the public for proofs of Telepathy! as if the public possesses access to these volumes; or, if they had, as if they were able to read, analyse, and give a verdict upon such a mass of printed matter! for it is to the average man that Sir Oliver appeals in his lectures, books, and magazine articles. He admits, and deplors, the scepticism and indifference of the scientific world to the reality of Telepathy.

Moreover, if the evidence obtained is so convincing, why is it that the mass of the scientific intellect is not convinced of the possibility of thought-transference? Sir Oliver Lodge attributes this attitude of the scientific world to pure prejudice, and regards himself as a modern Galileo, fighting for the truth against a scientific world blinded by prejudice and dogma.

As we have remarked, there are very few who possess the leisure, capacity, or inclination to sift this mass of material, to say nothing of other records. The late Mr. Frank Podmore, a member of the Society—whose honesty and capacity is recognized by both sides in the dispute—who published many works dealing with the subject, and may be said to have spent his life in seeking for evidence of a continued existence after death, in the end could not decide for or against, and gave a Scotch verdict of "not proven." He committed suicide, but whether through disappointment or for other reasons, is not publicly known. Dr. Ivor Tuckett, another member of the Society, categorically denies the existence of Telepathy, or communication with the dead; as do Sir Ray Lankester and Sir Bryan Donkin, who have not only studied the records, but have taken part in the actual investigations. Either of these gentlemen are the equal of Sir Oliver Lodge in honesty, sincerity, intellectual power, and knowledge of the subject. What is the use, then, of Sir Oliver pretending that the opposition to Telepathy and Survival proceeds from irrational and blind prejudice? As Dr. Ivor Tuckett observes in reply to Professor Barrett: "The fact remains that several of the more critical researchers who have thoroughly examined the evidence have ultimately come to the conclusion that the case for telepathy is completely unproven. Thus Professor Simon Newcombe, first president of the American S.P.R.—Society for Psychical Research—(founded in 1884) expressed his mature opinion twenty-five years later (1909), just before his death, that there was no convincing evidence for Telepathy, and that 'Nothing has been brought out by the researches of the Psychical Society and its able collaborators except what we should expect to find in the ordinary course of nature.'"³

Let us examine, in company with Dr. Ivor Tuckett, some of the evidence for Telepathy. The first report on thought-reading submitted to the Society appeared in the first volume of the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. They deal almost entirely with the thought-reading power of the children of the Rev. A. M. Creery. An account by Messrs. Barrett, Gurney, and Myers also appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1882, and was severely criticized in the July number by Sir Bryan Donkin, "who pointed out that no real precautions against collusion were taken, that the experiments were of the sloppiest description, and that it was a most suspicious circumstance that the Rev. A. M. Creery's servant-girl possessed the same power of thought-reading as the Creery children. Instances of the probable use of a code were also given."⁴ Professor

¹ *Daily Chronicle*, January 3, 1907.

² Cited by Dr. J. L. Tuckett. *Bedrock*, July, 1912.

³ Dr. I. L. Tuckett, *Bedrock*, July, 1912. Cites Newcombe from *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1909.

⁴ *Bedrock*, July, 1912; p. 195.

Sidgwick, the first President of the S.P.R., was so impressed by the record of these experiments that he considered them conclusive; but after two or three more reports on the Creery children had been published, the children were actually detected using a code, and further experiments abandoned. The next case of thought-reading investigated also occurred in 1882. This was the case of Mr. Blackburn, of Brighton, who claimed to have obtained some remarkable results in Telepathy with a Mr. G. A. Smith, a young mesmerist living at Brighton. The experiments were first carried out at Brighton, and then at a house in Dean's Yard, London. But thirty years later Mr. Blackburn, writing to the *Daily News* (September 1 and 5, 1911), stated most explicitly that all their successes in thought-transference were worked by means of a code. He was equally candid in stating "that Messrs. Gurney and Myers were too anxious to get corroboration of their theories to hold the balance impartially. Again and again they gave the benefit of the doubt to experiments that were failures. They allowed us to impose our own conditions, accepted without demur our explanations of failure, and, in short, exhibited a complaisance which, however complimentary to us, was scarcely consonant with a strict investigation on behalf of the public." Mr. Blackburn gave as a reason for his "confession" the belated desire to promote the cause of truth, believing himself to be "the sole survivor of that group of experimentalists." But as a matter of fact, Mr. Smith was not dead, and he replied with a categorical denial in the *Daily News* for September 4, 1911. As Dr. Ivor Tuckett remarks: "It is not possible to decide which of these two statements is the less trustworthy. But Mr. Smith acted as secretary to Messrs. Gurney and Myers for some years subsequent to the Brighton experiments, and took part in several other series of experiments, so that he had a powerful motive against admitting dishonesty in these experiments."¹ On the other hand, what possible motive could induce Mr. Blackburn to declare their success was due to trickery and fraud if the performance was really genuine? He had nothing to gain by such a confession, with the additional ignominy of branding himself as a common impostor.

(To be continued.)

W. MANN.

Some Definitions.

To lay down an exact logical definition is generally admitted to be by no means easy, especially in the case of abstract terms. And this difficulty is not diminished, but rather increased, in the case of those familiar ones in every day use—such as Religion, Morality, Justice, and the like—the meanings of which are supposed to be so well understood.

Yet, even though in such cases, strict logical accuracy may be difficult or impossible of attainment, an attempt at definition may sometimes be of use in helping towards a fuller comprehension of the thing defined; just as, even in the usually exact relations of mathematics, a method of "approximation" is sometimes of the greatest value. Hence I venture to put forward the following definitions:—

- (1). Superstition is a belief in supernatural agency operating in the physical world.
- (2). Religion is a belief in supernatural agency operating in the moral world.

Here the elements common to the two things defined, and the elements in which they stand in contrast are clearly distinguishable. What Superstition and Religion

possess in common is a belief in supernatural agency, while the contrast between them relates to the scope and nature of the function assigned to that agency. And this relationship between Superstition and Religion is quite in accord with the results of actual investigation into their origin and growth.

The earliest forms of Superstition, viz., Nature-Worship, Animism, and Magic, contained no moral elements. They were and are merely the beliefs of primitive and savage man in supernatural agencies—usually malevolent agencies—exercised in the physical world around him. Indeed, the terms Nature-"Worship," Fetish-"Worship" are not quite correct as applied to these forms of superstitious belief, for it is strongly presumable that no feeling really akin to what we understand as "worship" ever existed among primitive men in connection with the mysterious forces or powers in which they believed. Primitive man probably did—as contemporary savages now do—fear these mysterious powers with a very real dread. They probably propitiated them with gifts, cajoled them with promises, and even threatened them with forfeiture of their allegiance as present day savages do; but there is no evidence of those feelings of veneration, worship, or devotion which form the moral element in religion. These powers and forces are merely regarded as more or less potent, more or less amenable to control, more or less fearsome, malignant, or favourable; but they are not regarded as "good" or "bad," or credited with any propensity towards approving or disapproving of human actions according as such actions are "right" or "wrong." And this is only natural, for at this early stage of human culture definite notions of right and wrong are themselves non-existent.

But while these moral ideas are being evolved, as man gradually becomes a consciously moral being, his supernatural beliefs take on a moral quality, and superstition passes into religion. This change is broadly contemporaneous with the transition from Animism to Ghost-Worship, and it is easy to see why this should be so. The spirits of the dead are *human* spirits, and as such they naturally share in the moral sentiments of the human community to which they belonged in life, and their morality develops with the development of the social sentiments of the community. The spirit of a father or mother would be treated with the same degree of deference or affection that was accorded to the living parent. The deified ghost of the great chief who had, during his lifetime, done much for the welfare of the tribe—had rewarded the deserving and punished the evil-doer, would still be credited with these moral qualities together with that superior power of reward and punishment which ghosts always possess over that of living men.

Thus, while Nature Worship and Animism may be regarded as the basis of superstition, Ancestor-Worship or Ghost-Worship may be regarded as the basis of religion. Of course, it is not claimed that there is a sharp line of demarcation between the two, or that superstition and religion have developed in strictly serial order, for they are often found existing side by side in the same system of supernatural beliefs. There have been many contemporary developments, many intermixtures between the two, many overlaps of one by the other. It is only in the latest developments of belief that religion becomes differentiated from superstition as above defined, and concerns itself essentially with the moral aspect of the supernatural; though even here we see relics of ancient superstitious notions akin to primitive magic in those prayers for rain, fine weather, or good harvests which survive in the liturgies of modern

¹ *Bedrock*, July, 1912; pp. 196-7.

churches. These do not differ essentially from the incantations of the medicine man of a primitive tribe directed against the terrors of a solar eclipse or the baleful influences of a comet.

To complete and further illustrate the line of thought here indicated the two following propositions, which are in close logical relationship with the foregoing definitions, may be laid down:—

- (3). Modern Physical Science is based on a recognition of natural causation as operating in the material world.
- (4). Modern Ethics is based on a recognition of natural causation as operating in the moral world.

Here, as in the case of the former definitions, the elements common to the subjects of the two propositions are at once distinguishable. Modern science and modern rational ethics both take cognizance of natural causation, and admit no supernatural explanations in the one case or supernatural sanctions in the other. That is why we call our rational ethics scientific. And the points of contrast are equally clear, for while physical science concerns itself solely with material phenomena, ethics concerns itself solely with moral phenomena. The business of science is to distinguish between the true and the false. The business of ethics is to distinguish between the right and the wrong.

Comparisons between the propositions last stated and those previously stated reveal some interesting relationships. For instance, comparing Proposition (3) with Proposition (1), we find that even superstition and science have some common ground, for they both deal with phenomena of the physical world, the difference being that superstition attributes these phenomena to mysterious supernatural agencies, while science attributes them to that natural agency—equally mysterious in an ultimate analysis—which we call causation. It may seem a startling assertion that science and superstition can have anything in common, but that this notion is not a merely fanciful one is clearly shown by the investigations of sociologists. The savage's belief in magic is really very much akin to, and quite as strong as, our belief in physical science. Magical rites have to be performed with scrupulous exactness if the desired result is to be achieved. The incantations must be correctly pronounced, the mystic formulæ carefully adhered to. The potent herbs must be gathered at the exact specified phase of the moon, and they must be compounded in the exact specified proportions in a vessel of a particular kind, and so on. If the expected result does not follow, the failure throws no doubt whatever on the reality of the mysterious powers invoked, but is attributed to some error or disability on the part of the magician; as with us, a failure to obtain the expected result in a chemical experiment is put down to some vitiating error in its performance, and not to a failure of the law of causation. In short, magic is the "science" of the savage, albeit a pseudo-science based on false and futile premises.

Again, comparing (2) with (4), we come upon the fundamental distinction between religion and ethics, which is that the first depends on a supernatural and the second on a natural basis for morality—a distinction which can never be got rid of, however "refined" or "spiritual" religion may become. And this consideration naturally brings us to the "Christian morality" fallacy. Christianity can surely claim little credit for having incorporated into its own supernatural system of doctrine certain moral precepts which formed part of the common heritage of civilized humanity before Christianity existed, and for having given them the crudest and most primitive sort of supernatural authority. In

the estimation of modern scientific ethics, moral precepts, when based on supernatural sanctions, forfeit their moral value. A true ethic must take account not only of moral precepts but of the grounds on which they are based, and tried by this test "Christian morality" can claim no superiority over that of any other supernatural belief. Rationalists have long been listening to the arrogant assertion that there can be no morality apart from religious belief. They might more justly retort that there can be no true morality with it.

A. E. MADDOCK.

New Testament Legends for Young Readers.

II.—THE SALVATION CHILD.

KETTLE-DRUMS rattled in heaven, and flowers fell from the sky to the earth, and divine spirits sang hymns, and earth was gay with blossoms, and the hills sparkled with gems, and the rivers ran sweet nectar, on the day when the Indian queen Kausalya bore a son. The day of his birth was so glorious that it was as long as a month; the sun went not down for four weeks. As the child grew its mother saw wonders. One day she saw her son become great and giant-like, and his body was made up of worlds, mountains, rivers, oceans, forests, and she knew he was a God. Then he became a boy again, and ate sweetmeats, and played. The name of the boy was Rama, and all Hindu children love the Gospel (God's spell; God's story) of Rama.¹

Another Indian queen in those olden days—those olden dreamland days—was Maia. When her time arrived to be a mother, she went into a forest with her ladies, and a curtain was drawn around her, and in this pavilion her child was born. The angels, or "Nats," flew from a thousand worlds to salute the child with flowers and perfumes. Thirty-two wonders happened; and some of the thirty-two were these: a light lit up ten thousand worlds at once; blind people saw; deaf folk heard; lame men walked; prisoners leaped from prison; men and animals felt peace and joy; heavenly music sounded; rain fell on deserts; salt water turned fresh; flowers suddenly bloomed. An old hermit told Maia that in thirty-five years' time her son would become a Teacher of the Law and the Noble Path; and the hermit rejoiced to think of it.

The child was Buddha.

* * * *

A woman walked slowly, leaning on her husband's arm, for she was tired. Evening had fallen, and stars began to gleam.

The wayfarers looked anxiously into a shelter by the roadside. It was more like a cave than an inn, and they could see a crowd of travellers, standing or sitting, eating, drinking, chatting.

There was no room for them in the inn. They turned into the rude and evil-smelling chamber where cattle and asses fed and slept; and Joseph led Mary into the stable, and she lay upon a bench which was littered with hay and other cattle food.

It was now night. The crowd in the inn had become silent in sleep; but Joseph and Mary were awake.

Out in the valley a group of men, rough-clad in skins, watched over flocks of sheep. At times, when the sheep were quietly feeding, the shepherds could draw near together, for a neighbourly gossip.

¹ It is told in F. J. Gould's *Divine Archer* (published by Dent & Sons).

A blaze of light shone round about them, and a shining man stood before them; and the country fellows were in terror.

"Fear not," said the shining angel, "I bring good news for you and all folk. This very night, in Bethlehem yonder, is born a Saviour—a Christ—the Lord. Run and find him. He lies in a manger."

A great army of shining men suddenly appeared, and they shouted:

"Glory to God in high heaven! Peace to earth! Love to men!"

Then all vanished, and there was naught to be seen in the dim starlight but the dark vale, and the hundreds of sheep.

"Let's go to Bethlehem, mates," the shepherds said.

In mighty haste, they left the meadow. While hurrying past the stable, they saw the glow of a lamp, stopped, entered; and they saw Mary lying on the bench and her babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, nestled in a hay-box; and Joseph wondered at the coming of the shepherds. Soon they told their tale, and a little mob—some were men from the inn, some were passers-by—gathered in the stable, or at the door, and asked questions, and were much amazed, and looked towards the valley, as if hoping to see the angels. At length the shepherds went back to their flocks thanking God that to them, poor and plain men as they were, the marvellous thing had been told.

Some time later Joseph and Mary took the baby (who was named "Saviour," that is, Jesus), to the city of Jerusalem. They bought a pair of doves from a hawkler near the Temple, and took the birds into the sacred House, where they presented the child before the priest, and offered the doves as a fee, or gift. It was the Jewish way of enrolling the little citizen as a member of the Chosen Nation of God.

Joseph and Mary were about to leave the Temple, when a voice exclaimed:

"Master, now your slave may die! I have seen the Salvation! I have seen!"

A very old Jew tottered in, and in his trembling arms lifted the babe and caressed it. So aged was he that the day of death seemed as if it ought to have come long ago. But no! the Master in heaven had held the old man back from the grave until he should see the Salvation Child.

"Master," he cried, "now let your slave die in peace! Mine eyes have seen your Salvation. A light for all folk! A light for the Jews! A light to lighten the Gentiles!"

While the old man, whose name was Simeon, was blessing Joseph and Mary, to whom he had handed back the child, a white-haired dame, very, very old—a widow—entered the holy Place, and called aloud her thanks to God, for she also knew this to be the Salvation Child. Her name was Anna.

Twelve quiet years passed after that. Joseph and Mary lived in a small country town, called Nazareth, among the limestone hills of Galilee county or province. Often they talked of the strange scenes of the past—of the shepherds, and old Simeon, and the aged widow Anna. They had other children besides the Salvation Child; and on the seventh day, or Sabbath, of each week the family would go to pray in the wayside chapel, or synagogue, and listen to the stories and hymns which the reader recited from the Hebrew parchment-roll, or Scripture.

At spring-time every year the country-folk tramped, or rode on asses, from their hamlets and villages to

Jerusalem city. The town was crowded with the pilgrims. Thousands of bleating lambs were slaughtered, and their blood poured over the Temple altar as a gift to God. The carcasses were carried away and cooked, and laid on tables for the Passover Feast. The meat was eaten along with bread and bitter herbs, and cups of red wine were drunk, and old Hebrew songs were sung, such as:

"Oh, give thanks unto Yahweh, for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever."

The Nazareth family paid their usual visit to the Holy City when Jesus was twelve years old, and, after the feast, they trudged with the noisy crowd along the valley road towards home, not noticing that the Salvation Child was not in the company. At evening, when a halt was called for the night, he was missed, and the troubled parents hurried back to the City. All next day they searched for him in vain—from street to street. On the third day they went to the Temple and were much astonished to hear the boy's voice in the midst of a group of elderly men.

A conversation was going on between the grey-bearded Rabbis, or Teachers, and the country boy from Galilee county. He asked questions—the Rabbis answered, lifting their hands, shrugging their shoulders. They asked him questions, and he, bright faced and quick of tongue, answered. And the folk that stood around said in wonder: "What an intelligent lad!"—"Marvellous!"—"Extraordinary!"

Mary rushed forward and clasped the boy and cried:

"My son! Why have you done this? Your father and I have been looking everywhere for you in sorrow and fear."

"You should not have worried," said the strange boy, "for didn't you know I had to do business for my father?"

Business

The business of some men is carpentering; of others, sea faring; of others, ploughing; of some, dying for a Cause

* * * *

Four small books, or Gospels, at the beginning of the New Testament are known as *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*. The legends I have told you of Jesus come from *Luke*. But in *Matthew* you can read of the "Three Wise Men from the East," whom we may see painted in many famous pictures. They offer gold and sweet spices to the Holy Child as they kneel before him, and they tell his parents how they have followed a Star all the way from their Eastern home till it paused over the house where "he that is born King of the Jews" is cradled. Such a scene is called by the painters "The Adoration of the Magi," that is, "The Worship of the Wise Men." The *Matthew* Gospel goes on to say that Herod, King of the Jews, who had heard from the Magi about the wonderful Star and the Royal Child, killed all the babes in Bethlehem so as to be sure of killing the little King. The little King, however, had been carried off by Mary and Joseph into the land of Egypt. The slaying of the babes is known as "The Massacre of the Innocents."

The Romans told a tale that the Council or Senate of the Republic heard say that, in the next year, a child should be born King of the Romans. The Senators were so anxious not to have a King that they resolved to cause the death of all boys born in that year. Nevertheless, one boy was preserved, and he was afterwards Augustus, Emperor of Rome.¹

F. J. GOULD.

¹ So the Greek words run. "Despot"=master.

¹ The historian Suetonius narrates the legend in his life of Augustus.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 29.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the Chair. Also present: Messrs. Brandes, Leat, Palmer, Roger, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley, Mrs. Rolf, and the Secretary.

Minutes read and confirmed.

The chief business before the meeting was the further discussion of the prosecution of J. W. Gott at Birmingham.

Mr. Cohen gave a detailed account of his visit to that town, where he had interviewed Mr. Gott and the solicitor who had been engaged to appear for him at the Police Court hearing, and whose suggested line of defence Mr. Gott had accepted. The result of the hearing was that the case had been committed for trial at the Assizes opening on July 10, the charge being one of blasphemy.

A long and exhaustive discussion took place on blasphemy prosecutions, and in what circumstances a defence could be made.

The points both for and against a defence in the present instance were carefully weighed, and the following resolution was moved and carried unanimously:—

That this Executive having carefully considered the question of the Birmingham Blasphemy Prosecution, regrets that it cannot see its way to further action without prejudice to the cause of Freethought and to the ultimate repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

It was further resolved that Mr. Cohen, as President of the N. S. S., be asked to draw up a statement for insertion in the *Freethinker* as to the Executive's attitude on this matter at a later date.

The Secretary reported the result of the adjourned summons against Mr. Jas. Neate at the instance of the London County Council. This case had been defended by the Protest Committee, who paid the fine, amounting to £3 without costs, and were now taking legal advice as to future action.

Mr. Cohen, at the Executive's request, gave permission for the reprinting of his article on "The Massacre of the Innocents" as a propagandist tract, and it was resolved that this be issued as soon as possible.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

The Psalm of Life.

(New Version.)

TELL me not in mournful numbers,
Hell is but an empty dream;
Though the congregation slumbers,
Things are better than they seem.

Hell is real, hell is earnest,
Hell is never short of coals,
Hell's delights are of the sternest,
Cursing God and frying souls.

In the world's great field of prattle
Bogey tales are always rife,
Sounding like a baby's rattle
From the nursery of life.

Tales mayhap some pious mother
Heard from granny, who again,
Heard them from her dotty brother
(Shall these tales be told in vain)?

Pious sinners all remind us
We may yet be doing time,
With the wrath of God behind us,
Nosing out our secret crime.

Let us then be up and doing,
E'en to-night may fix our fate,
And to-morrow find us stewing
Over hell's infernal grate.

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.

MR. A. D. HOWELL SMITH'S DISCUSSION CLASS (N. S. S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street): Thursday, Aug 2, at 7.30.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Miss Kough, "He Can't Do Anything."

FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, G. Rule, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, Mr. Burke, "What are the Churches Doing?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 6.30, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK N. S. S.: 3.15, G. Rule, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3, P. S. Wilde, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station): 7, F. Shaller, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Saphin; 3.15, Messrs. Dales and Yeates; 6.30, Messrs. Hyatt, Saphin, and Kells.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH N. S. S. (Poole Square): 7, J. Grimes, "Does God Exist?"

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