

THE MYTHICAL CHRIST.

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Views and Opinions.

The Mythical Christ.

MODERN criticism has gone a long way towards killing the belief in a supernatural Jesus. The affiliation of the New Testament character to other admittedly mythological characters, the obvious absurdity of accepting as historically true the story of the birth, death and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, has made his historical existence about as credible as that of Jack the Giant Killer or Santa Claus. To-day there are to be found scores of "advanced" Christian believers who deny the truth of the Virgin birth, the Jesuine miracles, and the resurrection, while the most "respectable" of unbelievers may throw the supernatural Christ overboard without exciting the hostility of the average young curate. So far the criticism of earlier Freethinkers may be taken to have established itself. The virgin-born, miracle-working, devil-contesting, resurrected man-God may be implied in the sermons of the better educated parson, but it is not so often plainly and straightforwardly affirmed.

But there exists another superstition, born of the original one, and which enjoys a wide vogue. This is the superstition that the New Testament story enshrines the figure of some teacher, who taught a lofty morality, and whose ethical influence has endured through the ages. There is no question but that this professed belief covers what the modern psychologists call a "Rationalisation." It masks a timidity that shrinks from a direct and complete break with established belief. It reduces heresy to a point that minimises the penalties of unbelief, and enables one to retain one's position within the ranks of respectable society. He loudly opposes the mythology of the New Testament, but he atones for it by an avowed intention of rescuing the *man* Jesus from the superstitious accretions of centuries. These tissue paper Calahads either will not or cannot recognize that the ethical Jesus is just as much a superstition as the

supernatural Christ of the orthodox faith. These men have intervals of lucidity which prevents their being quite so flagrantly stupid as a Fundamentalist, but they morally proclaim the veracity of a superstition that lacks the historic excuses a Fundamentalist may offer.

* * *

Myth Upon Myth.

The thesis that a bundle of moral platitudes, placed in the mouth of a lay-figure such as meets us in the pages of the New Testament, built up the Christian Church and conquered the world is as fantastic a supposition as can be found outside a theological training college. What impression could the repetition of these moral maxims have possibly made upon the Jews who were already acquainted with every one of them? Or could one seriously think of them giving Jesus the rank of a great moral teacher with the educated Pagan world? Why, one could acquire a better knowledge of ethics from reading the mere chapter headings of an English translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* than could be gained from the whole of the Gospels and the Epistles. And certainly no one after reading the Platonic dialogues dealing with ethical problems could dream of placing the New Testament on a level with them. Morality, after all, does not consist in a knowledge of a handful of maxims which may mean almost anything one likes to make them mean, and no one has ever been made better by mouthing them. They have only helped to make moral emotion do duty for moral action.

No less a person than John Stuart Mill helped to give currency to the superstition that after the world had got rid of the supernatural Christ there still remained the moralizing Jesus, who stood "in the very front rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast." Alexander Bain rightly described this as "a concession to the existing theology," but it is the kind of foolish and unwarrantable concession that English publicists are very fond of making. We have also Lecky, who, in open defiance of the facts he recites, speaks grandiloquently about the manner in which the life of Jesus has transformed the world. The best reply to all these statements is the state of Christendom when the power of Christianity was greatest, and the general character of the mass of the followers of Jesus in all ages. We have thus superstition piled upon superstition. First we have the superstition of a God incarnate in human form, who comes to save man, not by a reorganization of social life, but solely from the horrors of the future life. Then we have—bred of a compound of moral timidity and theological apologetics—the superstition of a supremely good *man*, whose whole aim was to usher in an ethical millenium, with yet a third superstition that this wholly fictitious Jesus has at some unspecified time and in some unspecified way saved the world. These beliefs are stupid enough when voiced

by a professing Christian, but to have them proclaimed by those who have given up belief in the supernatural Christ drives one to attribute the phenomenon to either sheer muddle-headedness or, in Bain's language, to a concession to established theology. The striking thing is that the character whom it is claimed has made for the ethical betterment of the world seems at present to have no power for aught save to add to the prevalence of moral humbug.

* * *

Clotted Nonsense.

When professed disbelievers in all kinds of supernaturalism are found mouthing about the moral character of Jesus one may excuse Christian preachers following suit. Here, for example, is a passage from a sermon by the Rev. Henry Emerson Fosdick, widely acclaimed as a scholarly and an advanced clergyman:—

He broke away from the codes of His people and in consequence was crucified. They saw Him leaping the fences of their ethical codes, and they hated Him. He was an experimenter. He moved out into new ranges of moral life saying, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." His Cross is the measure of the daring with which He broke away from old codes, but, mark this! He broke up, not down. He experimented with new possibilities in goodness, not with fresh styles in badness. He pioneered the development of those constructive forces that build society, and not those low self-indulgences that break society to pieces.

From beginning to end this deliverance—common as it is—is unadulterated nonsense. Taking the Gospel story as it stands there is obviously no breaking away from the ethical code of the Jews, and there is no indication whatever that anyone who is supposed to have listened to him was seriously offended at his moral teaching. How could there be? There was nothing in the purely ethical precepts of the New Testament with which the Jews of nineteen centuries ago were not familiar. Jesus was not brought to trial for a moral offence, but for a religious one. He was charged with blasphemy, not immorality. It is ridiculous to say that he was put to death because he denounced the Scribes and Pharisees. The practice of "going for" certain established classes in society is one that has been common in every age, and no one is seriously disturbed by it. No one appears to have charged the Jesus of the New Testament with being an ethically bad man, and no one appears to have cared to enquire whether he was or not. Bad and good men were about as common two thousand years ago as they are to-day. Mr. Fosdick is more than merely wrong when he implies that Jesus was hated because he said that certain people were *morally* bad, or because he was urging people to adopt new moral rules. That is a sheer travesty of religious history whether by Christian or non-Christian. The men and women who have been killed or imprisoned in the name of the current religion were not so dealt with because they were ethically bad characters, but because they outraged the religious beliefs of their contemporaries. If Jesus Christ ever existed, there is no need to look for the cause of his death any further, or in any other direction than we look for the persecution of heretics in all ages.

* * *

Greek or Christian.

Ethics is a department of sociology, and the notion that an ignorant Jewish peasant, whose knowledge in any direction was in no wise superior to that of the most ignorant around him, could have commanded

the allegiance of the world in virtue of his individual greatness, is in the highest degree absurd. To talk of him as an experimenter in morals is laughable. The whole principle of the New Testament and of the Christian Church is that of authority, and that is as disastrous in morals and sociology as it is in science. It was the Greeks who saw that institutions and teachings were so many experiments in living, to be tested by their influence on human well-being and to be modified as circumstances demanded. These two tendencies have been in sharp conflict for the past seven hundred years. On the one side the "Thou saith the Lord" of the Christian revelation opposing every new idea, denouncing every modification in established modes of conduct, and on the other the spirit of the old Greek enquirers ready to consider all rules and all practice in terms of human well-being. The picture of the incarnate God, dying to save mankind from the terrors of the after life has at least the dignity of an ancient myth. The picture of the New Testament Jesus as the one to whom the world owes its moral inspiration is nothing but a demonstrable humbug.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Legend of Loretto.

"The Catholic Church will, fifty years hence, be still authoritatively teaching its supernatural creed as in the past centuries."—Father Woodlock.

"You do not believe, you only believe that you believe."—S. T. Coleridge.

It is interesting to note that the *Virgin of Loretto* has been proclaimed the "Madonna of the Airmen." Doubtless, the Romish hierarchy hoped, by this action, to bring the Roman Catholic Religion up-to-date, and also to give additional popularity to a very famous and profitable shrine.

The riddle of Loretto makes very curious reading to all but zealous Roman Catholics. The faithful are actually invited to believe that the very house in which the "Virgin Mary" brought up her family at Nazareth remained there for thirteen hundred years. This in itself is a sufficiently astounding thing, but religious faith is a fearful and a wonderful thing, and is capable of even greater strain and stress. The story continues that some of the "angels" became alarmed for the safety of the old homestead, and failing an appeal to the landlord, they intervened on their own sacred account. One day the house vanished, leaving not a brick behind. The compassionate "angels" had carried the old homestead across the Mediterranean sea to the coast of Dalmatia, where it remained three years, presumably whilst the "angels" recovered their breath. Then the "angels" again pulled together and took the ancient house on another journey across the Gulf of Adriatic to Loretto, Italy, where it was fixed without a chimney pot or a brick being out of place.

Of course, Loretto possessed not only the "Virgin Mary's" house, but an image of the "virgin" herself, which was almost as aged as the old homestead. The story goes that the image was carved by an old friend of the family, better known as "Saint Luke." Its shrine was one of the show-places of the world. Among other adornments the image had a gold crown with over three hundred diamonds, and eighty-eight rubies, the gift of the pious Queen Christina of Sweden. During the French Revolutionary wars the shrine was sacked, and the image taken away. Curiously, on this occasion, there was no angelic intervention. The image was restored when Napoleon made terms with the Pope.

A few years ago the revenues of this particular shrine were estimated at £12,000 a year, so, after all, there is some method in all this madness. The Loretto image has been credited with similar "miracles" to those of Lourdes and other popular shrines, which "miracles" can be explained by those who have made a study of faith-healing. All miracle-mongers, however, it will be noted, whether Roman Catholic, Greek Church, or any other religion, rely chiefly on disorders of the nervous system, and one and all stop short at the restoration of an amputated limb.

This child-like credulity is passing wonderful in grown men and women in the twentieth century. To study it is to essay an enquiry into the psychology of a crowd, and an ignorant one at that. Let there be no mistake on this point. Roman Catholics are mainly ignorant folk. Even their priests are only educated in the patter of their profession. Ordinary believers are not permitted by their priests to read any books or publications criticizing their religion. They are told that by so doing they imperil their immortal "souls," and are in danger of eternal damnation. Even colporteurs of Protestant Bible Societies are ill-treated in Roman Catholic countries, for a zealous Papist will no more read a Protestant version of the Christian Bible than he would read Paine's *Age of Reason*, or the *Freethinker*. No Roman Catholic may even become a Freemason, because priests object to all secret societies other than their own. If a Catholic young man attends a Freethought lecture, he sins more grievously than if he stole his employer's money. What constitutes the obstructive character of the Roman Catholic Church is the abyss which now separates it from the highest intelligence around it; the live, alert brains of the "intellectuals," and the leaden, stereotype of dogma.

The paralysis of this greatest and most powerful of the Christian Churches has been a slow process. There was a time when she was almost all-powerful, when she exterminated all opponents by fire and sword, rack and gibbet, leaving her more ignorant and more bigoted than before.

It required centuries to produce this dire result. The very triumphs of Freethought throughout Europe indirectly contributed to this end. Every Roman Catholic who became an "intellectual" assisted this process. The more brains that were drawn out of the Romish Church the more did the huge mass part with its intellectual leaven, and tend to flatten down to a mere mass of intolerance and superstition.

In darkened and superstitious times the power of the Roman Catholic Church was very great. It finished, so far as this country is concerned, with the glare of the ghastly fires at Smithfield. It was never at any time so unquestioned and unresisted as in France, Italy, Austria, and Spain. There is a wholesome obstinacy in British blood, which is cooler than that of the emotional Latin races. It shows itself whenever the whip is cracked too loudly, as Charles the First and James the Second knew to their bitter cost, and as the long contest for the freedom of the press and of speech also proves.

Priestcraft can never do its worst in England. We shall never again, as a people, favour the confessional, or submit to the poisoned weapons of priests; their hypocritical affectations of celibacy, their tyranny in the home, their officiousness in public affairs, their menace and robbery at the death-bed. Priestcraft had not a safe seat on British shoulders in the dark days of almost universal ignorance, even before the days of the so-called Reformation. It is an impossible dream now that there is an organized national Freethought Party, which has inscribed on its banners that significant and stirring Voltairean phrase: "Crush the Infamous."

Fables Founded on Fact.

THE TWO FARMERS.

1. And He spake unto His disciples and to the multitude that had gathered unto Him; and He said to them; Hear ye the parable of the husbandmen.

2. Behold, in a far country, there dwelt two husbandmen that were neighbours; and the name of the one was Ber-Lever, and the name of the other was Athinka.

3. Now Ber-Lever was an upright man in the eyes of most people of importance; for he feared the Lord and did worship in the Temple upon the Sabbath and upon feast days, giving thanks at all times to Jehovah for the blessings which had been bestowed upon him, as well as for those to which he had helped himself.

4. For he hoped thereby to obtain further favours from the Almighty, both in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and also (chiefly) on earth, where both mothballs and rustless steel prove effective enough.

5. It was only in the privacy of his inner chamber that he ventured to curse the weather for which, amongst other blessings, he believed Jehovah to be responsible. For, being righteous in the sight of all such as were like unto him, he durst not openly utter that which he thought in secret.

6. But Athinka, his neighbour, was a man of evil repute. For although he was a good husband and father, and neither robbed nor spake ill of any man, he did nevertheless ignore the Blasphemy Law and the Prophets, and offered up no sacrifices in the Temple.

7. Wherefore he was shunned by all respectable folk; save only such as were compelled to seek him out for subscriptions to this or that charity. And they were not a few.

8. Now there arose a great prophet in the land, and his name was Ulaiah, the son of Spitaiah. And the spirit of the Lord descended upon him and commanded him to speak unto Athinka, saying:

9. Lo, the Lord hath spoken by the mouth of His servant Ulaiah, and hath said: Cursed be Athinka and all such as think like him; and cursed be his wife and his children unto the third and fourth generations; yea, even unto the fifth, sixth and seventh generations—and more, if there be any.

10. And cursed be his corn and his chattels unto the same number of generations. But blessed be Ber-Lever and all that is his for ever and ever—and longer if possible. Amen.

11. For inasmuch as Athinka hath not dedicated one tenth of his goods to the service of the holy Temple and its holy hangers-on, so shall the judgment of the Lord descend upon him and upon his kinsfolk, even unto the most innocent new-born babe.

12. But, saith the Lord in His mercy, in the day that Athinka shall repent the folly of his ways and shall subscribe to the *Christian*, the *Tablet* or the *Church Times*; and in the day that he and his wife and his children shall worship in the Temple and shall not omit to put at least threepence each in the plate.

13. On that day, saith the Lord, shall I let the light of my countenance shine upon him; and he need fear neither storm nor tempest, neither foot and mouth disease, nor any other unpleasantness which it may amuse Me to torment him with. Thus saith the Lord.

14. But Athinka hearkened not unto the words of the Lord which His holy Prophet said He had said; for he did not believe anything that Ulaiah said—

strongly suspecting him of a vivid imagination and ulterior motives.

15. Nay, rather, he smiled within himself and kept his own counsel; reading, in his spare time, that which was written concerning scientific agriculture, and such like heresies.

16. Now it came to pass that the season of hay-making drew nigh. For, much to the surprise of Ulaiah and the priests, it seemed very much as if the Lord had actually answered the prayers for fair weather which they had wafted up to Heaven, accompanied by clouds of inferior incense.

17. Yet the soul of Ber-Lever was sad within him. For it grieved him considerably to see that the sun shone with equal vigour upon the just and the unjust; and that the hay of Athinka had benefitted to the same extent as his own.

18. For, said Ber-Lever communing with his soul, Wherewithal doth it profit me, O my soul, to wear out the knees of my breeches in the Temple and to carry the plate before all men, if the Lord doth make no distinction between His servant and that skunk Athinka.

19. So when the Sabbath was come and the hay lay ripe upon the fields, ready unto the gathering thereof, Ber-Lever arose betimes, he and his wife and his children, his menservants and his maidservants.

20. And they went up into the Temple. And Ber-Lever bowed his face before the Tabernacle even unto seventy times seven (which being interpreted into the Hebrew tongue means about half a thousand); and lifting up his voice, so that none might ignore the sanctity of his intonations, he prayed to Jehovah in this wise:

21. Oh, Lord of Lords, God of Gods, King of Kings, Prince of Princes, President of Presidents, and Heaven knows what else! Oh, Maker of all things that are and of all things that aren't! Harken unto the humble petition of Thy most miserable and insignificant germ of a worm.

22. Look, we beseech Thee, upon us grovelling here in abject abasement; and then have a look at Athinka—if Thou canst find him. Where, O Lord, is the blighter? And why is he not grovelling here alongside us? Because, O Lord, he doth set at nought Thy most holy commandments, and is probably still hogging it in bed.

23. How long, O Lord, how long art Thou going to tolerate such iniquity? Thou really mustest put a stop to it. And in this matter Ulaiah thy servant and I are in complete agreement (aren't we, Ulaiah?)

24. Therefore grant, O Lord, that after all our hay hath been gathered on the morrow, thou wilt command Thy heavenly fire to descend upon the stacks of Athinka (giving mine a good miss), so that they may be utterly destroyed from the face of the earth.

25. That thus all faithful people may know the wickedness of Athinka and may praise Thy justice and loving-kindness, glorifying Thy Holy Name from everlasting to everlasting and back again. Amen.

26. Then Ber-Lever and all his kinsfolk returned to the farm with joyful noise; and they did feast off roast beef and two vegs., not to mention marmalade pudding and brown ale, until the second hour after noon.

27. And at that hour they laid them down to rest until the sixth hour, even as the Lord had commanded that they should do—save, of course, the maidservants, who had to wash the dishes.

28. And at the sixth hour of the evening, it being still the Sabbath, Ber-Lever betook himself again unto the Temple, he and his wife and his children—though the latter did mildly protest that they would fain have gone to the house of moving pictures.

29. But Ber-Lever would have none of such desecration. For he feared the Lord greatly, and the opinion of the congregation still more; moreover he could not tolerate that others should enjoy themselves in any other way than the one he chose for them.

30. Now Athinka was (as we have aforetime hinted) a man of Belial. Not that he believed in Belial any more than in Jehovah; but simply because it was obvious to Ulaiah that his actions could not be prompted by the latter all-powerful deity, and must therefore be instigated by the opposing, though scarcely less almighty, divinity.

31. Wherefore upon the selfsame Sabbath, while Ber-Lever did serve the Lord with prayers and fasting, Athinka and his menfolk did sally forth into the fields, and they did toil all day in the boiling sun, even as the Lord had forbidden them to do.

32. And they gathered in their hay into stacks, while the hay of Ber-Lever still lay upon the fields, ripe unto the gathering. Even unto the eighth hour of the evening did they labour and do all they had to do. And they rested not from their labours till all their hay was stacked.

33. Now an Angel of the Lord beheld what was done, and how Athinka had spurned the commandment of the Lord, which He commanded all men, saying: Thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy. And the Angel aroused Jehovah from his weekly snooze.

34. And the Lord spake unto the Angel, saying: Who art thou, O disturber of the peace; and why art thou not asleep, even as I am and all the Hosts of Heaven? And the Lord was exceeding wroth with the Angel—as who would not have been.

35. But when His anger was appeased, the Angel of the Lord ventured to explain himself; being sure that Jehovah would commend him for his vigilance and, perchance, promote him to the rank of Archangel.

36. But to his utter chagrin, the Lord turned upon him with renewed irritation and said: Get thee behind me, thou morbid slice of fiction! What, I ask thee, dost thou think that I can do in the matter? I am that I am—and that's about all that I am. And the weather is as it shall be—for my laws are immutable.

37. Go, get thee to the other end of Heaven and shake dice; and disturb me no more till Monday afternoon at two o'clock. For at that hour the Lambeth Conference is to be broadcast, and I would not miss the fun for worlds. I have spoken!

38. So the Angel of the Lord bowed his face before the wrath of Jehovah; and he withdrew from His presence with a sore heart. For, after all, his intentions had been good.

39. And the Angel wept.

40. Now it was about the tenth hour of the evening of the Sabbath when the Angel commenced to weep; and he ceased not from weeping for forty days and forty nights.

41. For a thousand years is as a day in the sight of the Lord; and forty days is about half an hour to an Angel. And all the while that the Angel wept, his tears fell in torrents upon the earth beneath.

42. And the hay which Ber-Lever had left upon his fields was ruined. But the hay of Athinka, which had been gathered into stacks, was sold subsequently at a great profit.

43. He that hath ears to hear, let him buy cotton-wool. And he that hath eyes to see, let him purchase a pair of blue glasses.

44. Lest common-sense enter in where credulity was, and the Word of God be recognized for the nonsense it is.

The Harbinger of Scientific Psychology.

JOHN LOCKE occupies an exalted position among the pioneers and apostles of modern philosophy. To him Berkeley, Hume, and the Deistical group generally; Kant, Comte, and Spencer all owe allegiance. Locke's permanent contributions to philosophy were truly considerable, but perhaps his supreme greatness consists in the stimulus he gave to contemporary and succeeding seekers into the secrets of life and mind.

Campbell Fraser hails Locke as "one of the most conspicuous figures in the intellectual history of modern Europe"; while Dr. W. R. Sorley goes so far as to state that: "John Locke may be regarded as, on the whole, the most important figure in English philosophy." But he allows that others outshone Locke in genius; that Hobbes was his superior in comprehensiveness, and that he lacked the daring originality of Berkeley and the rare subtlety of Hume. Other thinkers of an earlier or a later day might be mentioned who manifested equal if not greater philosophical insight, but the judgment seems sound which pronounces that Locke was "surpassed by none in candour, sagacity and shrewdness." Locke was certainly less advanced in theological theory than some of his contemporaries, but not one of the causes he championed has since suffered discredit. For alike in political, psychological and religious speculation his various contributions were distinctly progressive in character.

Locke was born at Wrington in Somerset, in 1632. He lost his mother while still a little child, and much in the manner of John Stuart Mill, Locke's father, a rural attorney, exercised a solid influence in the training and formation of his son's mind. Reared in a Puritan environment Locke was ten years' old when the armed conflict between Crown and Commons began. He was at Westminster School when the Puritan divines assembled in London to stormily debate disputed points in Calvinistic theology, and perhaps he witnessed the execution of Charles I. in Whitehall. Entering Oxford, young Locke found the traditional Schoolmen's version of Aristotle still in the ascendant, but the germinating ideas of Descartes and Bacon were under discussion and their influence was felt despite official disparagement.

When his father died in 1661 Locke inherited the small family estate in Somerset. In company with many other eminent men whose fame rests on their secular labours, Locke at one time favoured an ecclesiastical career. But his deepening sympathy with mental independence, and the distressing spectacle presented by the fanatical and intolerant Puritan clergy caused him to relinquish all desire for the clerical life. "I found," Locke tells us, "that a general freedom is but a general bondage, and that the popular assertors of liberty are the greatest encroachers of it too, and not unjustly called its keepers."

He now became intensely interested in medical studies, and although he never took a degree he practiced as an amateur doctor in Oxford. This gained him the friendship of Lord Ashley, subsequently first Earl of Shaftesbury, who had come to Oxford to benefit his health. Locke soon became the trusted adviser of his patron, as well as his family physician, and served as Shaftesbury's secretary while he held the office of Lord Chancellor. Locke also acted as tutor to Shaftesbury's son, afterwards celebrated as the sceptical author of the well-known *Characteristics*.

Locke published little of importance until 1689, when he had attained the mature age of fifty-six. But long years of close observation, reflection, and study

now enabled him to compose writings for the press which appeared in rapid succession. His *Epistola de Tolerantia*, originally published in Holland, appeared in English in the same year (1689). In February, 1690, Locke's *Two Treatises on Government* were presented to the public and one month later the eagerly awaited *Essay concerning Human Understanding* appeared. This work proved an instant success. Its doctrines aroused the enthusiasm of the more enlightened of the younger generation, while the custodians of orthodox tradition strove to secure its suppression. Dr. Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, attempted an answer, although that able ecclesiastic was more concerned with the conclusion so consistently drawn by Toland from Locke's *Essay* in his *Christianity not Mysterious* than with Locke's work itself. Locke was driven into a written controversy with Stillingfleet, and this discussion lasted until the Bishop's death in 1699.

Locke stressed the truth that human judgments are frequently fallible. The *Essay on Toleration* (*Epistola de Tolerantia*) and the *Treatises on Government* reveal Locke's concern for the unrestricted exercise of reason. It is true that he excluded Papists and Atheists from the toleration he wished to extend to all other theorists in matters religious. But the political and social conditions of the seventeenth century rendered impossible the Catholic emancipation of a later day. And Locke's devout theism, with his unflinching faith in the divinity as the author and sanction of all good, blinded him to the truth that ethical values repose on factors of social utility in no way concerned with the existence or non-existence of God.

The arguments he advanced in favour of religious freedom appear unanswerable. "The business of laws," writes Locke, "is not to provide for the truth of opinions, but for the safety and security of the commonwealth, and of every particular man's goods and person. And so it ought to be. For truth would certainly do well enough, if left to shift for herself. She seldom has received, and I fear never will receive, much assistance from the power of great men, to whom she is but rarely known, and more rarely welcome. . . . But if truth makes not her way into the understanding by her own light, she will be but the weaker for any borrowed force violence can add to her."

Locke's political principles were strictly utilitarian. Men should remain free to adopt whatever form of government they deem most serviceable to themselves. And the philosopher and literary mouthpiece of the political compromise of 1689 (for Locke was certainly this) declared that the community should possess the power to change their government if they considered the change of public benefit.

In his *Essay on the Human Understanding* Locke urges the right and duty of discarding all those customs and beliefs which hinder the advance of truth. Mankind fails to realize that however useful long cherished observances may have proved, yet a strict adherence to them is frequently detrimental to progress. All our knowledge is the result of experience. Innate ideas are alleged mainly for the purpose of defending propositions logically indefensible. Yet assumptions which are proved in practice to be warranted must ever be preserved. But when so-called "innate principles" cannot withstand the test of experience it is man's bounden duty to reject them as mischievous and worthless. At best, they remain utterly unproven. Although Locke lived in pre-evolutionary times he plainly discerned that a latent capacity to realize self-evident truths is inborn in all sane men, for he tells us that: "There are certain propositions which, though the soul from the beginning, when a man is born, does not (consciously)

know, yet, by assistance from the outward senses and the help of some previous cultivation, it may afterwards come self-evidently, or with a demonstrable necessity to know the truth of, is no more than I have affirmed in my first book." The common misconception that Locke regarded the human mind at birth as a smooth or blank tablet is thus disposed of. As Prof. Campbell Fraser states in his volume on Locke: "He had no intention to deny the fact that we can rise to self-evident truths, which neither need nor admit of proof; for innateness with him means a man's original possession of such truths *consciously*."

As might have been expected Locke's great work was condemned by the Oxford authorities. In a letter to his young friend, the Freethinking Anthony Collins, Locke promises merriment over the antics of the obscurantists at their next meeting. Collins was ever welcome to the elder man, and did much to cheer the evening of his days. Locke died in 1704, and was buried at High Laver, where a few loved friends, including Collins, gathered to pay their last respects to the distinguished dead.

T. F. PALMER.

Opposites.

It's the lane that seems the longest proves the sweetest on the turn; it's the boy who acts the strongest that to "mother" women yearn; it's the cloud that looks the darkest shows the brightest silver lining; and the man who boozes starkest gets our thanks for drink declining!

It's the groggiest-looking boxer wins our plaudits at the ropes; it's the seed we sowed the deepest gives best answer to our hopes; it's the student who is quiet makes his essay ring the truest; and the man whose laugh's a riot at misfortune looks the bluest!

It's the book we deem our brightest that the public will not buy; it's the dough that rises lightest makes the palest, deadliest pie; it's the dinner eaten queasily that must give you indigestion; and the poem written easily that is taken without question!

It's the fact that speed the fleetest when anxiety's the spur; it's the laugh that sounds the sweetest when it follows Sorrow's burr; it's the holiest of silence comes upon the heels of storm; and the bore we wish a mile hence gets the kudos for reform!

It's the skinflint takes the laurel when he gives a large donation; it's the tyrant, gross, immoral, who makes known his trembling nation: it's the over-virtuous lady proves the willingest Jane Shore; and the slush I'm writing—maybe?—makes you cry aloud for More!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

The Book Shop.

THERE are hosts of novelists, and a continual deluge of novels. Many of the novels, through lack of imagination, chiefly deal with murders, motor-cars and telephones. They do not appeal to anyone whose taste has been cultivated by serious reading and a study of the world's best story writers. Take, for instance, Cervante's *Don Quixote*, the novels of Tehekov and Kuprin, Flaubert's *Salambo*, and *Madame Bovary*, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and *Joseph Andrews*; these are fairly typical samples of national art and craft in fiction. A background of knowledge of them, at least, gives a reliable standard of judgment. I do not live in hope of seeing many modern novelists making a serious contribution to the mental development of the human race; to go no farther than titles and jackets, enough is as good as a feast. For science, then, read the newest; for good fiction the oldest—for the substance of fiction even, read the classics. Reading Chapter X of the *Offices of Cicero*, I found in it the origin of a play "The Monkey's Paw,"

and in Chapter IX., a sentiment that has been polished by Voltaire without removing the sound sense: "that we should never venture on any action, of which we doubt whether it is honest or dishonest." The motive that set me off on this paragraph appeared in an announcement that the writing of a novel has led to the overwork of Mr. Gilbert Frankau, who has been ordered to rest in the South of France. If another novel was never written, there would be enough in existence to keep the world interested, providing that what was read was understood. The modern novelist must not be taken seriously.

The third edition of *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, by Mr. Chapman Cohen, adds another well-produced book to the list of works by the editor of the *Freethinker*. There is a permanence to a book that seems lacking in a pamphlet or paper cover edition; I confess to a liking for a book that will stand up straight on a bookshelf, have a plain title, and hold numerous notes that may be used as refreshers. This edition was worthy of its binding, and, characteristic of its author, is the style and ease of compressing his case with a minimum of words. Credulity will exist as long as the human race lasts; the many claims of Christianity in all its phase and degrees have been repeated, and with the addition of force, ritual, and suppression of opposition they have bitten deep in human consciousness. Reiteration has created a fact to those whom authority is the last word, and it is only when Christianity's claims are subjected to an examination, that the bottom of them falls out. Mr. Cohen, for his facts, draws from many sources and makes his own conclusions, which will not be acceptable to any who rely and nominally come in contact with their religion once a week. There is a wealth of information in this book, and the facts alone commend it to the serious study of sincere Labour leaders. Mr. H. Cutner has provided an excellent jacket design, showing the good ship *Jesus* in full sail; the human mind is confronted in this book with a very concrete example of the truth stated by Luther, that the Bible was a nose of wax. Whatever picture was produced was always ugly.

If one takes the attitude of Socrates, who saw so much in Athens that he could do without, the buying of a book becomes an important transaction. One will have very definite reasons for adding to worldly encumbrances. And again, having sown the wild oats of indiscretion in the shape of books that have been given a sailor's good-bye, the book bought is going to be read. *The Wisdom of the Chinese*, Brentano, arrested my eye among the tonnage of books in a shop; would there be anything in it of Lao Tzu? There was—quite a liberal portion of his work in language that the mind must sip slowly. His *Precepts* are valuable to any student, and in reading them they appear to be the original sound of which later precepts are merely echoes. One of the most difficult to practice is, "Requite injury with kindness." This from Lao Tzu 604 B.C. There is therefore no biblical copyright in the substance of this precept. Another precept, which rolls about in the world of teachings in various disguises, is the following, "He who knows others is clever, but he who knows himself is enlightened." A little of Lao Tzu goes a long way; he has earned, from me, his right on a bookshelf, in the company of Thoreau, Emerson, Nietzsche, Spinoza and kindred spirits. And I conclude this paragraph as began; the buying of a book is an important matter; a sound mental digestion cannot be maintained by constantly chewing chaff.

The July *Adelphi*, together with other good reading, has an arresting article by Geoffrey West, entitled *A Philosopher of Detachment*. It serves to introduce Henry Chester Tracy, who was born in Pennsylvania and at the age of two was taken to Turkey, where he spent ten years at Marsovan. From the extracts given one recognizes another Thoreau, but with a difference. Tracy is trying to work out a philosophy, tangible, yet in opposition to a society that accepts standardization, but

there is little doubt that it is founded on the verifiable facts of biology. Just to give a sample from bulk, I must steal from Mr. West's quotation: "I value the natural forest because it clears the mind of an illusion of age and corruption, a fear and horror of decay. These things are harmonized; and against a lying logic of futility there is an eloquence of living leaves." There is a magic in woods; not to be misunderstood, there is a certain peace that, to the artist, the poet, or the philosopher, may be interpreted in a hundred ways. The *Woods of Westermain*, by Meredith, sensed this magic; Tracy recognizes it in the forest, and it may be that he is a forerunner of those who will mark out the path of sanity for a civilization that threatens to fall to pieces. My own humble philosophy is that by treading on grass, occasional hours of solitude, and contact with the giants of history through books, all act as a governor for the mind and the body, for I agree with Thoreau in the truth of the folly that—"Men have an indistinct notion that if they keep up this activity of joint stocks and spades long enough all will at length ride somewhere, in next to no time, and for nothing." and, in the truth, "that men groan under self-inflicted burdens, for the whole some wants of life are few." C-DE-B.

Acid Drops.

"No spiritual experience" can be scientifically proved or demonstrated, says the *Church Times*. That is what we have been saying for years. No man can scientifically prove or demonstrate that he actually saw a three-headed cow chasing a four-legged rabbit up and down the Thames. But if he is convinced that he did see it, this is a spiritual experience, quite as good as the spiritual experience that leads anyone to believe in the resurrection of "our Lord." It is absurd to ask for scientific proof of either belief, for scientific proof means evidence that will induce conviction in normally constituted individuals. We are in complete harmony with the *Church Times* on this point. It is delightful to find two such journals as the *Freethinker* and the *Church Times* pulling together.

Gipsy Smith told a mixed gathering of the pious that: "When you Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists pray, you are all alike. It is only when you quarrel that you are easy to tell." Quite so. When they pray they are not thinking about the meaning and interpretation of the religion of Christ. When they do think about the meaning and interpretation, they quarrel. After that, they have the effrontery to tell the world that the religion of Christ is a creed of love, which will bring peace on earth and make all men as brothers.

That hardy old advertiser, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, who about twenty years ago invented a "new theology," which, so a contemporary critic said, was "neither new nor theology," declares in the *Church of England Newspaper*, that "Materialism has defeated itself." Under the imposing style and title of "Chancellor,"—we last heard of him as a Canon—Dr. Campbell attempts to reply to Bertrand Russell's contention that "industrial populations everywhere are tending to Atheism." "He may be right," but, adds this apologist of religion, "it is never the prevailing tendency of the hour that should be most closely scrutinised in any attempt to read the future." A Solomon indeed! It seems that this gentleman ventured to tell a private assembly of clergy in London a year or two back, "that there are forces at work quietly which may change the whole face of things within a decade." He adds that "that a new interest in the world's Redeemer is becoming manifest in unexpected circles." We don't wonder that "the majority of the brethren present expressed themselves as dubious of this statement."

As to not judging or "reading" the future by the tendency of the hour—and "reading the future" is more a job for palmists than for parsons—we may add that if, acting more rationally, we judge the next generation by

the general tendency of that in which it is growing up we shall incline to the opinion that it will not like Dr. Campbell look with a friendly eye on "those who did not know about Shakespeare," and who had "no novels, no magazines, no newspapers, no science, no football matches," and when "the sporting world and the financial world hardly existed." When a man says that that narrow world was a better world than that we live in, and that "the typical man of our age has lost the vision of far horizons" of those who lived when "foreign politics" were "religious questions" we rub our eyes to see if we have read aright, for the author of this rubbish serves up weekly counsel of a sermonising character to millions of readers weekly. We understand, however, that it is not for Campbell, but for its competitors that the journal is so much in demand.

Writing about the *Flaws in School Education*, "Candidus," of the *Daily Sketch* says:—

The methods of the school are wholesale; if they had no set-back every child might leave school like every other child. The parent may correct the process in foolish ways [i.e., indulgence]; but he does recognize what the schoolmaster so rarely does—that the child has an individuality which, however you prune and train, has still some right to persist. I often think that school education destroys more character and ability than it forms. Education tends to make children like each other, to produce types; but the big things in the world, both for good and evil, are done by being different from others. If a census were taken of the really famous men of each century, it would, I suspect, be found that the amount of great achievement traceable to the school training was surprisingly small. It is in the mediocre range of character and achievement that school training is most efficacious, but how much originality it destroys in the process I should not like to guess.

In this connexion, there is no harm in suggesting that maybe the pedagogic world is still dominated by the Christian Church's notion of forcing every child's mind and character to conform to one model, and of training every child to think as he is told to think. The discouragement of independent and original thinking by the Christian Church is notorious.

A Roman Catholic says, in a daily paper, that "the Church of England has never done anything to discourage war." Whereupon, another reader, Mr. J. W. Poynter, asks:—

Why Church of England in particular? Has your correspondent never heard of the Crusades, started and kept going for centuries by Popes, of the horrible war against the Albigenses, of the Spanish Armada, blessed by the Pope, of Pope Innocence V., who denounced the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648, by allowing rights to Protestants? Narrow sectarianism has produced as many wars as narrow nationalism.

We may add that the wars produced or fostered by religion which claims to be bringing brotherhood among all men were notorious for their ferocity.

Some Churches cannot get enough men for the ministry, says a writer; but the Wesleyan difficulty is that the Church has too many. It can only take 85—and 180 have offered themselves this year. We gather that although God "calls" 180 men, the Selection Committee thinks it knows better than God, and rejects 95 of the "called." The rejected are, we presume, too stupid to wonder whether God is having a bit of fun at their expense.

One of the primitives in our midst thinks that the explanation for the spate of wet week-ends is not hard to find:—

I think the Almighty is provoked and pained at the godless way Sunday is treated—so very many people only think of going out in their cars all Sunday pleasuring.

There's one consolation. God's punishment falls on the godly as well as the ungodly. But perhaps this fact makes it hard to believe that wet Sundays are sent by God as punishment. Now if the wet fell only on the ungodly, how very convincing that would be as to the truth of our primitive friend's hypothesis!

Despite industrial depression, Sheffield, we learn, is endeavouring to raise 100,000 guineas for new churches. There are, of course, some worse uses to which 100,000 guineas could be put—but not many.

The prison population in Scotland last year was the lowest since the war. The fact should serve as a reminder that the doleful prognostications of the ministers, ament the efforts of the irreligion of the age, must not be taken too seriously. Perhaps when all kinds of wholesome amusement and recreation are available in Scotland on Sunday, keeping idle minds and hands out of mischief, the authorities may have even a better tale to tell.

Dr. Workman, President of the Wesleyan Conference, gave some young parsons some good advice. He says:—

Above all, as Methodist preachers, remember not to do your thinking aloud. Think as deeply and as anxiously as you like in your own study, but when you face your congregation remember that it is not to proclaim your doubts but the certainties of your faith. . . . Never let anyone imagine for a moment that you are in any hesitation as to the fundamental truths of the eternal Gospel

In other words, don't say what you think, but what you want the fools to believe. After this, we feel sure the young parsons would fully appreciate what the Irish tutor told the divinity student was the first thing for him to learn—"That the public is an ass!"

Mr. Edgar Wallace, in a partly excellent leader in the *Sunday News* (July 26), thus refers to the differences between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dr. Barnes. It is, he thinks, about the question "whether, when the communicant receives the wafer and wine he actually receives the body and blood of Christ, or whether the wafer and the wine are symbolical? The Bishop says they are symbolical. Mr. Wallace goes on to say:—

One section of the religious regards perhaps the holiest and most exalted act of worship as a miraculous reality, and there is another section of the Church which dismisses it briskly as "a superstition rejected at the Reformation." To the layman . . . it is all highly complicated and technical.

We are sorry to say so, but this is just drivel. It is not at all a complicated matter once we dismiss the possibility of what Mr. Wallace calls a "miraculous fact" and a "miraculous reality." What we should like to know is, is a "fact" or a "reality" of that character outside that order of "facts" equally represented by what some call "The Lord's Supper," and the "Holy Mass"? If Mr. Wallace were as familiar with the Bible and the Articles of Religion of the Establishment as he is said to be with Ruff's *Guide to the Turf*, he would not spoil a well written indictment of Secularism by such loose writing as that we have quoted. We will wager Mr. Wallace never found any "miraculous realities" while on the look out for plots or winners.

Says an Anglican bishop: "The vitality of the Methodist Churches, now happily to be united, must be a source of satisfaction to all who value the Puritan tradition in English life." For our part, we cannot imagine any really intelligent person valuing the Puritan tradition, with its narrow and uncultured outlook, its itch for inflicting prohibitions on other people, and its degrading effect generally on English life and character. The followers of the Puritan tradition claim freedom of thought and action for themselves but deny it to others. That English life is enriched thereby no genuine lover of freedom will admit, even though it appears to be a source of satisfaction to a few Anglican bishops and a horde of Methodist parsons.

From *Film Weekly*:—

NEW CENSORSHIP?

It appears that before long the British Board of Film Censors which has laboured well under many difficulties,

will either be altered out of recognition or be superseded by some other method of censorship.

The Attorney-General, Sir Win. Jowett, made a very significant statement last week. "I feel that the whole system of the licensing of films is very unsatisfactory," he declared. "I hope we shall be able to devise something better." Such a statement cannot be taken lightly. Whether the change, if and when it comes, will be for the better is another matter.

The statement may not be quite unconnected with the fact that a certain Methodist journal, whose Puritan sympathies are well-known, has been howling for censorship of a sterner kind. Of course, one must do something to please the chapel voter. How much pleasure cinema-goers will extract from films censored in accordance with Puritan ideals—well, that also is another matter. But, of course, if films are to be allowed on Sunday they must be made as dreary and unattractive as possible. Some respect must be shown for the Lord's Day.

The *Saturday Pulpit* has disappeared from the *News-Chronicle*, and the feature is now replaced with A Lay Sermon by J. A. R. Cairns, who is described as "One of London's Wisest Magistrates." The change from the hurdy-gurdy language of representatives of churches and chapels is refreshing to anyone who does not expect too much from newspapers. This Magistrate's office places him in a better position to know humanity as it is, and not as it is imagined to be by those who work once a week in a trade that would deny the privilege of playing on that day to the public.

One cannot apply the usual methods of thinking or understanding of works on theology. The reader of *The Divine in Man* is asked to accept the statement that "Man is a dependent creature, but God has given him potentially a nature like His own—a self conscious personality, so that man is in a limited way what God eternally is." The author W. C. de Pauley, may be in the confidence of the Almighty, but until we have proof it will be as well to assume that there is no such gift to man.

A critic (in the *Observer*) of Upton Sinclair's new book *Money Writes*, calls forth this note. In this book Mr. Sinclair does for modern American literature what he did for its modern theologians in *The Profits of Religion*, i.e., shows their intimate connexion with and influence by capitalistic persons and ideas and interests. But this is not to say, as this critic does, that Upton Sinclair has the quality of "tiresome sameness," principally "because he refers everything to a materialistic background instead of a spiritual one." To what other basis can we refer Sinclair Lewis, or the late Dr. Dowd? "Once the old social and economic churches have been cleaned out," says the critic, there will be an "appalling silence of that immense desolation." But cleansing only means desolation for—dirt!

It is not often that Jesuits are not sly enough not to be caught contradicting each other. But, if the *Church Times* is right, there is a nice little row going on between Father Day, S.J. and Father Woodcock of that ilk (Cardinal Bourne intervening on behalf of the latter) as to whether "the English Labour Party is a Socialist Party in the Continental sense." We recently pointed out here that Socialism and Liberalism on the Continent have implications not generally attached to them here, but, nevertheless legitimate implications involved in their accepted principles according to the most authoritative expositors thereof. "The Pope," says the *Church Times*, "is fully justified in declaring that no true Catholic can be a true Socialist," but, according to the Pope, that brand of Catholicism which our contemporary champions is not the "true" variety. We don't wonder that the organ of "Anglo-Catholicism" says that "vague general advice is all that the Church can successfully give on political matters." But if the Pope declares that Fascism is Pagan and that Socialism means Slavery, why need that affect the readers of the *Church Times* any more than it would effect us—and, we may add, most people in this country?

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D. HARDING.—You will see it has already been dealt with. Thanks all the same.

C. ABRAHAM.—Thanks. The editor's absence from London, at Durham, and the short week owing to the holidays, prevents our using at the moment.

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

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

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R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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 at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/0.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen's visit to Durham, on July 29 and 30, was completely successful. The Town Hall was well filled, and Freethinkers were present from South Shields, Newcastle, Sunderland, and other parts of Durham and Northumberland. Best of all, the bulk of the audience appeared to be made up of residents of Durham City itself, many of whom were probably listening to a Freethought address for the first time in their lives. The lecture was listened to with quietness and attention, and it is certain that the attention to Freethought will not stop there. The attendance was the more gratifying as the day was a very wet one, and that must have affected would-be visitors from a distance. Mr. Brown occupied the chair at both the indoor and outdoor meetings.

Thursday the weather was kind and, the open-air meeting was held in beautiful summer weather. This was the main object of Mr. Cohen's visit. The circumstances are these. Some weeks ago Mr. J. T. Brighton, who is doing regular open-air lecturing in the district, held a meeting in Durham, and at the close of his lecture some students belonging to the University created a disturbance of a not very serious kind. No notice would have been taken of this but for the ill-vised action of Police Superintendent Foster, who wrote Mr. Brighton that because of the disturbances "I hereby give you notice that you will not be permitted to speak in the Market Place, Durham, in future, as your remarks will undoubtedly cause disorder and a breach of the peace." This was an order that Superintendent Foster had no right to give, and no power to enforce. Bluff is not a bad policy, sometimes. But if bluff is called, it is all over.

So Mr. Cohen, acting with the consent of the Executive of the N.S.S., announced that he would visit Durham and see just what Superintendent Foster had in view. The meeting was held in the Market Place, and after he had spoken for about an hour, Mr. Brighton was asked to address the meeting, and did so. He spoke for about a quarter of an hour, and we are satisfied that he is not the speaker to needlessly exasperate an audience. There were several police officers present, but no interference was offered. Probably by that time the Superintendent had discovered that he had no power to interfere. We do not think that kind of threat will be used again—at least to the N.S.S. or to any of its speakers.

Mr. Cohen made it quite plain that it was to the interest of the Society to hold peaceful meetings, and to do all that it could to prevent disorder. He also said that so far as it was possible we were willing to assist the police in maintaining order, and to pay attention to any reasonable suggestions that might be made to that end. But we did not intend to permit the right of public meeting to be set on one side because a few rowdies cared to make a noise, or because a police officer decided that a meeting should not be held. In any case, the legally unwarrantable police order has been met in the only way it could be met. The meeting was held, and Mr. Brighton has spoken. Nothing was done, no disturbance ensued, and we hope the matter will end there. We expect it will. If not, well. The Society has had tougher problems than that to handle.

There were many requests that Mr. Cohen should pay some lecturing visits to the North of England, and he has promised to visit Sunderland, and also other centres, if suitable halls can be secured.

We are pleased to learn that ten new members of the Birkenhead Branch of the N.S.S. joined at its last meeting. The new Branch is full of fire, and we hope that the enthusiasm will be maintained, meanwhile we commend what is being done to groups of Freethinkers in other parts of the country. The next meeting of the Birkenhead Branch will be held on August 16, at Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone, at 7.0. An address will be delivered by Mr. Abel on "Outlines of a New Satanism."

The Pioneer Press has purchased a limited number of copies of "Immortal Man, A Study of Funeral Customs and Belief with regard to the nature of the Soul," by C. E. Vulliamy. This is an authoritative work on the beginnings in primitive life of the belief in a soul and a future life, and one that we can confidently recommend. The book was published in 1926 at 6s. It is being offered for 2s. 6d., by post 2s. 9d. Those who wish for a copy should send for it at once. The supply is likely to be soon exhausted.

We do not think that any serious and informed writer doubts that in that hodge-podge of mythology that has come down to us as Christianity astronomical mythology plays a prominent part. The evidence in this respect is too strong. In *What Does the Bible Conceal?* Mr. E. C. Saphin has given a brief outline of this evidence, which is concealed from the ordinary reader of the Bible, because he lacks the key to understand so much of what he reads. Mr. Saphin's pamphlet is simply and clearly written, and is published by the author at the price of twopence. The pamphlet may be purchased from the Pioneer Press, by post twopence halfpenny.

As was to be expected, Mr. G. Whitehead had good meetings in Perth, whenever the weather allowed them to be held. The local saints are sincere and enthusiastic in their work for the Cause, and Mr. Whitehead's visit has acted as a tonic. Mr. G. Whitehead is now in the Glasgow district, and details of meetings will be found in the Lecture Notice column. The local Branch of the N.S.S. will co-operate in all the meetings, and it is hoped all members will rally to the support.

Mr. J. Clayton reports surprisingly well attended meetings during the past month in various parts of Lancashire. If the thousands of unattached Freethinkers in the country would join up with the N.S.S. the Executive could extend the work to other areas.

In the report, in our last issue, of the meeting of the Executive of the N.S.S., reference was made to the Study Circle which is being formed to help young speakers, and to keep members abreast of our movement generally. It will assist in the work of arranging a programme if those intending to join the Circle would communicate with Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and state the evenings on which they could attend.

Swedenborg.

(Concluded from Page 486.)

THESE five points, which do not pretend to be a complete synopsis, either of Swedenborg's theology, or of its differences from the orthodoxy of his day, reveal at a glance, as would the rest of it if we had time and space to set it forth, how the intellectual difficulties, at all events of Protestants, may seem to be cleared away by Swedenborg's message. We will content ourselves with one concrete illustration of the working of his science of correspondences in the reconciliation of two apparently contradictory statements from the New Testament. They are as follows: "Put up thy sword into its sheath. They who take the sword shall perish by the sword." (John xviii. 11.) "He that hath not a sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." (Mark xxii. 36.) Here, as it seems, is at once a declaration of pacifism and of war. Swedenborg disposes of the contradiction thus: "sword" in the Bible represents the truths of faith in their combative function: "garments" represent the externals, the non-essentials of religion, mere form or ceremony without faith, for example. And so these two texts come to mean (1) The standard by which a man is judged is the standard of the truth which he knows. By that, and not by his ignorance, will he live or perish "spiritually." (2) The truth is of more value than the forms in which it may be contained, misrepresented, or obscured. It is better to be naked and in possession of truth than to have any exterior riches of apparel without it, or as it is put in another text "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

This seeming clarity where there was confusion is impressive. So also, to the "honest doubter" who still wishes to be a Christian, are the doctrinal conceptions of the Trinity, of the Resurrection, of the uselessness of belief alone; of the necessity for using and not imprisoning or submitting reason to authority. The Catholic answer to this honest doubter, on the other hand, instead of appealing to his intelligence, repels it. As it is the object of this paper to avoid the least exaggeration we will quote not a Roman, but an Anglican "Catholic" authority, to prove this statement. The late Rev. Dr. Gore, in the famous *Lux Mundi*, says:—

"The Church knows what the Bible means because the Holy Ghost teaches her its meaning; and directly anyone tries to put a meaning of his own upon any part of the Bible, or to get any doctrine out of it which is not church doctrine, that person begins to go wrong. Remember this, and if ever it should happen when you are reading the Bible that a thought comes into your mind which seems to go against the Catholic faith, put that thought away at once. Don't stop to argue about it. Don't say, 'It is in the Bible.' The Bible is the book of the Church. The Church is the keeper of the Bible, and the Holy Ghost is the Teacher of the Church. The Church and the Bible never contradict one another. If they seem to anyone to do so, it is because he does not understand." The Council of Trent itself could not go beyond this, and, in fact, does not.

IV.

We would now enquire, in what respect does Swedenborg's demand for our acceptance of himself as the divinely appointed instrument of the Second Coming, and the revealer of the only true inward sense of the written revelation (on which, both Catholicism and Swedenborgianism assert the necessity for a divinely appointed interpreter), differ from the demand of the Church and in what respect is it more credible?

Is it more consistent with any conception of special revelation conceivable that such a revelation should have been made to a learned man, with a complicated style, and that the revelation itself should be dependent for being understood, since it is a more or less exact science, only by more than averagely intelligent persons, and quite unfathomable to the simple or illiterate? Unless the idea that the Lord has a partiality for the better educated classes (an idea Swedenborg himself would assuredly have scorned), is to be accepted, the theological writings of that versatile man are out of court as a revelation.

Nor is it necessary, as the Swedenborgian apologists always suggest, to question Swedenborg's honesty or sanity in order to reject his claims. Nobody suggests that Sir Oliver Lodge is either a charlatan or a lunatic; but the majority of those who accept him as an authority in his own department of science entirely reject his spiritist works and ideas. In a popular life of Swedenborg (by George Trobridge) five chapters are devoted to a laboriously and unnecessary attempt to prove that he was an excellent scientist, citizen, politician, seer, and a most worthy person, and that any number of his contemporaries, from the King of Sweden downwards, liked and respected him. The same might have been said of Faraday, but it would not involve agreement with the Eastern, and in these days, perhaps, unhygienic custom of the sect of which he was a member, that the brethren (and sisters) should salute each other with a holy kiss.

Swedenborg, we may mention, in parenthesis, in his *Conjugal Love*, distinguishes between it and the conjugal sort, and represents the ideal marriage as a spiritual union incapable of comprehension by ordinary people. Swedenborg was a bachelor, and, there is every reason to believe, of unblemished chastity. In that respect, as in others, it is impossible to study his works without a sense that they are best suited for the leisure of brainy people with time for mental hobbies, and singularly lacking in the simplicity and inspiration that has characterized more successful evangelists, both of religion and of secular knowledge. But this is by the way.

It is not to be denied that Swedenborg's revelations are similar in kind, though marked by a scientific narration which is rare, if not unknown, in other mystics, to many ecstatic visions that may be found in the *Lives of the Saints*, and elsewhere. It is hard to say, in many of these cases, where is the border-line between vision and illusion or delusion; just as there is a very thin and precarious boundary between "spiritual" ardour and sexual passion. But, at least, it is not claimed for the saints that they are each individually "inspired" in the sense that inspiration is claimed by and for Swedenborg. If it were so Papal Infallibility, even with the aid of Newman's doctrine of development, would be less tenable than it seems to be to some persons, even at this time of day.

To say (as Mr. Trobridge says) that Swedenborg's teachings "are exactly suited to the needs of the age" is not to produce evidence of their truth or credibility. There are many new inventions which make this claim, but their suitability is judged by their use. Swedenborg, however, even if suited to the age in which he lived, which he certainly considered himself and his teachings to be, had no knowledge of the social and industrial (as distinct from scientific) changes that have taken place since the dawn of his special mission (1744) and to-day, one hundred and eighty-seven years afterwards.

We conclude then that, even as Newman thought, there is no alternative between Rome and Reason for (not that we are cheated by the rhetorical picture of Macaulay's impossible New Zealander) the Roman Church in its apologetics is at least as credible as

Swedenborg, and unlike him, not unique in an odd humanity, but with the knowledge and cunning of ages, rich in the love and of the weakness and natural proclivities of men. Swedenborg lived mostly alone; a scholar and visionary. Catholicism, which for a thousand years was the only Christianity in the world, is woven into the fabric of the ages, and, although, like all supernatural religion, on the decline in every literate and civilized community; and doomed, as all superstition is, to fall ultimately before the advance of knowledge, is an incomparably more attractive shelter from the storm of logic than the literary and scientific performances and, it must be allowed, eccentricities, of one who was that rare thing among the abnormally religious, a cultured, honourable, and, of course, as to his "revelations" mistaken man.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

Knapsack John.

Adapted from the Rumanian story of Ion Creanga. A play-let for the non-believer and believer.

SCENE: The pay-desk of an old-style Russian officer. John, an ageing soldier, is standing at the table receiving his last pay. He has his weapons and kit with him. Three or four officers are in the room, one filling up John's discharge papers.

Officer: Well, John, here you are and good luck. You have done your duty as a soldier and now you are free . . . But be careful of the brandy, I see you've been celebrating already . . .

John: Just took leave of my comrades, sir, just another drink or two before . . .

Officer: Well, well. Here you are, John, two silver roubles to spend. And take care of yourself. Goodbye. (John salutes and a little unsteadily marches out. Fade out and in with Church music to country lane, end of bridge along which John comes a little unsteadily, reeling and singing. Towards him is seen coming the Almighty and St. Peter, conversing quietly. St. Peter hears the soldier.)

St. Peter: (in a fright) Lord, we must either hurry on or go to one side; it is possible that this soldier is full of fight, and we may have trouble with him. Thou knowest that I got a drubbing from one of that kind.

The Almighty: Be not afraid, Peter, there is no need to fear a traveller who sings. This soldier is a good and charitable man. Dost thou see? He has only two silver roubles to his name; and to prove it turn thyself into a beggar at this end of the bridge and I will go to the other, and thou wilt see that he will give us both the silver roubles in charity, poor man! Remember, Peter, how often I have told thee that such as these inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

(St. Peter stands at one end of the bridge, the Almighty at the other and begs alms. When John comes along, he eyes them unsteadily then draws out the two roubles and gives one each to St. Peter and the Almighty.)

John: From giving and gifts is Paradise made. There you are! God gave me and I give, and God will give me again for He has wherefrom to give.

(He begins to sing and slowly moves off.)

St. Peter: Lord, in truth, this is a good man, and he ought not to have gone unrewarded from before Thy face.

The Almighty: Come, Peter, let Me take care of him. John! Come!

(John comes back a few paces and they meet.)

The Almighty: Good journey, John. You sing and sing continually. John: Thank you. But how do you know I am called John?

The Almighty: If I do not know who else would know?

John: But who are you? (brusquely) How do you boast of knowing everything?

The Almighty: I am the beggar upon whom thou hadst pity at the bridge yonder, John. And who gives to the poor lends to God, the Scriptures say. Here is thy loan back, for I have no need of money, I only

wished to prove to Peter that thou art charitable. Learn now, John, that I am God, and can give thee anything thou dost ask of Me; for thou art an honest and liberal man.

(John falls on his knees, sober, and prays then says).

John: Lord, if in truth Thou art God as Thou sayest, I beseech Thee to bless my knapsack that whatsoever I wish may be forced to enter it, and unable to get out without my consent.

(The Almighty smilingly blesses the knapsack.)

The Almighty: John, thou art tired of wandering through all the world, thou must come and serve also at My gate, it will not be a bad thing for thee.

John: With pleasure, Lord. I will come soon, but now I must go and see whether something won't drop into my knapsack.

(Fade out into room of Russian nobleman's house. John is found begging for shelter.)

Servant: There are doings in this house, in this room, that will make you pay dear for this night's rest. I know there will be work to-night.

John. (not yet sober) Work?

Servant: (preparing to leave) Devils! The Evil One lives here, they say. We'll see what's what to-night. Either he'll get the devils or the devils will get him!

(Servant leaves. John prepares to sleep on the couch. A dim light is seen in the room after he blows the candle out. He lies on the couch, putting his knapsack under his head. Yawns, falls asleep. Suddenly the pillow is pulled from under his head and drops in the far corner of the room. John jumps up, seizes his sword, lights candle and begins to search.)

John: Well, what's this affair? Either the house is haunted or the earth quaked, and the pillow slipped from under my head; and I stumbling about like a lunatic! It must have been an earthquake.

(He makes some holy crosses in the air with his finger and goes to lie down again. A number of voices sound through the room, some like cats, some like pigs, some croak like frogs and some growl like bears, all growing more and more hideous! suddenly John jumps up shouting.)

John: Whoever it is he'll have to reckon with his master, I'm thinking! (shouts) Into the knapsack, good-for-nothings!

(A whir is heard as the devils crowd into the sack. He ties the neck securely and gives the sack a sound beating. He lies for some time, then begins to snore. Daybreak peeps through the window and Scaraschi, chief of all devils, comes to discover the reason of his servants' tardiness. A flash and John jumps up in a fury, shouting.)

John: Who hit me? Into your knapsack? Eh! Let me judge you now, you unclean spirits; I'll knock all the heresy out of you. You've found your judge in me. I'll make you run till even the dogs laugh at you.

(He dresses, takes up his things and goes out. Fade out into yard. Daybreak. John makes all the commotion possible. The nobleman's servants come sleepy-eyed, tripping over each other.)

John: I've got them all here.

Servants: What's happened to you, you silly lout, that you must get up at dawn and make this row?

John: What has happened to me? Well I've caught a few hares, and I've a mind to skin them.

Nobleman: What is the noise here?

Servants: The greater part of the night we've not been able to sleep on account of this Russian. The devil knows what's wrong with him, they say he has caught some hares, and wants to skin them, begging your honour's pardon!

John: (to nobleman) See here, master, with whom I've wrestled all the night . . . but at least I have cleansed your house from devils, and I make you a present first thing in the morning. Give orders that they bring me some gauntlet, and beat them so that they will remember all their lives that they have met with John, the servant of the Lord.

Nobleman: (timid) Bring him stakes.

(They bring stakes. John takes them and ties two or three together to form a switch. Then, in front of all,

he loosens one corner of the sack and takes out each devil by his horns, and beats him soundly).

John: Will you come back, then?

(The tormented devils go off covered with weals. The people watch, especially the youths, with great glee).

John: (pulling out Scarasoski by the beard) Well, well! (he beats the devil soundly). If you please. You went out after trouble, and trouble you have found, Scarasoski. That'll teach you not to go worrying people another time, dirty devil that you are!

(He lets Scarasoski go. Whrr. Scarasoski's flight is quick).

Nobleman: (embracing John) May the Lord prolong your days. From henceforth stay with me, John. Because you have cleansed my house of devils I will give you of the best.

John: But no, sire, I go to serve God the Master of us all.

(He buckles on his sword, puts the knapsack on his hip, his haversack on his back, rifle on shoulder and sets off. The onlookers call various wishes for his journey).

Nobleman: Good luck. Had you remained with me you would have been as a brother to me, but as you won't you are as two brothers to me.

(Fade out into the following day. John on the road, tired).

John: I have asked and asked, yet no one can tell me where God dwells. All shrug their shoulders. Surely St. Nicholas ought to know about this. (Takes ikon out of his breast and kisses it back and front—sudden fade out and bright day at the gate of Paradise!)

St. Peter's Voice: Who is there?

John: I am.

St. Peter: Who is I?

John: I, John.

St. Peter: What do you want?

John: Is there tobacco there?

St. Peter: No, there is not.

John: Is there vodka there?

St. Peter: No, there is not.

John: Are there women there?

St. Peter: No, there is not.

John: Are there musicians there?

St. Peter: No, John why do you worry me so?

John: But where do I find all these things?

St. Peter: In Hell, John, not here.

John: Oh, what complete poverty there is in Paradise. I'll go elsewhere.

(Fade out into Sulphury smelling, iron studded door—the gate of the Nether Regions. John knocks).

John: Is there tobacco there?

A Voice from within: There is.

John: Is there vodka?

A Voice: Yes, there is.

John: Are there women there?

A Voice: How could there not be!

John: Are there musicians there?

A Voice: Ho, ho! As many as you please.

John: Ah! Excellent. This is the place for me. Open, open quickly!

(He stamps his feet and rubs his hands with pleasure. Fade out into the interior of Hell).

The Devil Door-keeper: Ah, an old customer! Come in surprised. (Surprised.) What Knapsack John! Out . . .

Chorus of Devils inside: Woe is us! Woe is us! We have been had!

(They scratch their heads woefully).

John: Bring vodka, tobacco, musicians and lovely women! I've a fancy to have a royal time!

(They do so, everything he demands. They run all over the place to serve him. John is in good humour. For sometime he riots as much as he pleases, upsets hell and starts to dance, roughly dragging both female and male devils into the dances, he upsets shelves and other things riotously. Occasionally an hurried conference takes place between two or three devils in a corner. At last the chief deviless dances with glee and calls).

Deviless: Much use your head is! If I weren't here you'd suffer, worse than this. Bring me quickly a barrel, dog's skin and two sticks, and I'll make him a plaything I know of, and you can chase him from here.

(They bring these things and she makes a drum, then going outside begins to beat the drum as though for war. John suddenly casts aside all and seizes his arms and hurries out; the devils slam the door shut; they gleefully dance. John beats the door but only makes them merrier).

John's Voice: Well, you horned devils, if ever you fall into my hands the knapsack will teach you what for!

(The devils silently dance and begin to re-arrange matters in the chamber).

(Fade out into Crossroads. John is studying the sign-post, and finally takes the one marked to Paradise. He tramps on slowly, then reaching the gates of Paradise he mounts guard. He stands helpless a day and night without leaving the spot. During the morning behold Death arrives).

Death: (knocking) I come to see the Almighty immediately, to receive his commands.

(John puts his bayonet to Death's breast).

John: What do you want, and where are you going?

Death: To the Almighty, John, to see what he has further to command me.

John: That is not allowed. I must go and bring you the reply.

(John becomes annoyed).

John: Into the knapsack, toddering fool!

Death: Woe! (Death vanishes into the knapsack. Sighing and sobbing is heard from within. John ties up the neck with indifference and knocks at the gate. St. Peter opens).

St. Peter: Eh, John, so you are tired of wandering through the world after the lusts of the flesh.

John: I am very tired, St. Peter.

St. Peter: Well, what do you want now?

John: I want to go to the Almighty and ask Him something.

St. Peter: Well, John go, and no one bars your way. You are in every sense one of our household.

(John goes forward. Fade out into brilliant light: the presence of God himself).

John: Lord, I don't know if Thou art aware of it, but for some time I serve at the gate of Paradise. And just now Death comes, and asks what more Thou dost command.

The Almighty: Tell him, John, from Me, that I command that for three whole years in succession only old men such as thou shall die . . . (He smiles benignly.)

John: Good, Lord, I go now to tell him what Thou hast commanded.

(John turns away looking sick. He draws Death from his prison).

John: God has commanded that for three whole years you are to eat old timber only; the younger you may not touch. Do you understand? Go! and do your duty.

(Death goes. Black out. Slowly fade in. Same Scene. Death approaches.)

Death: The knapsack! The infernal knapsack terrifies me. But I have no choice, go I must. I must see Him again. (Comes up).

Death: Still here John.

John: Why not. Where would you expect to see me when this is my duty?

Death: I thought that you might be chasing through the world after your evil courses.

John: Even though I've just fled from the world, I know its sweetness and its bitterness, may the devil take it! It's boxed John's ears, it has. But what makes you so feeble, Death, old man?

Death: Your kindness, John! I think you won't treat me ill again, but give way to enter God's presence for I have important business.

John: Why not! If you curb your appetite maybe the world won't lose much . . . but perhaps you want to have a little talk with the Almighty?

Death: You carry a joke too far, John.

John: So that's your business, eh? And into the bargain you abuse me? Into the knapsack, tottering idiot! Do as you please with whom you please only not as you please with John.

Arranged by L. CORINNI.

(To be concluded.)

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

RELIGION AND FREETHOUGHT IN AFRICA.

SIR,—Freethinkers in Southern and Central Africa are very widely scattered over this huge Sub-continent, and their individual efforts in the interest of the advancement of Freethought and, particularly, the secularization of State educational institutions are not in any way co-ordinated, nor does it appear that any attempt has, so far, been made to do so.

The activities of religious bodies in this country, especially at the present moment, are such as to call for greater effort on the part of all Freethinkers.

So far, we have been largely passive in our opposition, and the fact that there are numbers of Freethinkers and Secularists scattered throughout the land is scarcely known.

Organized religion in South and Central Africa is gaining more and more control over education, and public institutions generally.

Religious bodies are invading the State Schools and successfully establishing their denominational teachings as part of the regular School curriculum.

The commercial exploitation (in the name of religion) of the African Aborigines by Mission Societies is more rampant than ever.

Churches are ever more loudly voicing their objections to Sunday games, and, in Rhodesia, the holding of cinema shows on "The Lord's" Day.

The Rt. Rev. Bishop of S. Rhodesia, in a fairly recent letter to his diocese openly expressed his avowed intention of persisting in his efforts to close the Sunday cinemas notwithstanding the fact that all theatres open their Sunday evening sessions, out of pure consideration to the churches, after church services.

The Dutch Reformed Church of S. Africa is agitating ever more and more, and with increased success, for the extinction of healthy Sunday sports and amusements, to say nothing of its blatant interference with the political activities of the country.

As in England, so is it in this Sub-continent—organized religion is out for control in every walk of life—commercial, political, industrial, as apart from its supposedly legitimate functions—and it is largely due to the apathy, or genuine, apathy of those who think and desire otherwise that this sort of thing exists and is gaining an ever stronger hold over the country.

Is it not time that some co-ordination of ideas and desires amongst Freethinkers and other Secularists in South and Central Africa took place?

Why not the formation of a branch, or branches, of the National Secular Society in this Sub-continent?

Such a movement would serve the purpose of making Freethinkers out here known to each other, and afford the possibility of the interchange of ideas and the co-ordination of information relative to movements taking place throughout the country affecting our mutual interests.

Organized opposition is the only way to stem the activities of organized religion, and although we live in a vast and sparsely populated country it appears to me that such an opposition is not impossible of achievement.

May I, through the medium of your columns, appeal to all Freethinkers and others resident in South and Central Africa, who may be interested in the formation of such an organization to communicate with me to the address as under, and formulate their ideas upon the matter.

The longer we remain quiescent the more difficult will the organization of such a Society become.

Religious bodies are profiting by the apathy of those who, really, are opposed to their activities, and it is surely time that we roused ourselves and formed a united opposition against their ever increasing demands and policy of domination and control.

If you could put me in the way of procuring literature

relative to the secularization of State education, I would be more than grateful.

DON WALTON.

Salisbury,
S. Rhodesia.

FOR FREETHINKERS.

SIR,—May I respectfully and most earnestly recommend every one of your readers, who has not yet done so, to read Mrs. Naomi Mitchison's story in *John O'London's Weekly* of August 1. It is one of the most beautiful short stories I have ever read, and very felicitously, in depicting the mental travail of a Greek youth of the olden time, puts the Freethinker's position. The story is entitled "The Garden of Epicuros," and has a profoundly human appeal.

IGNOTUS.

WHAT IS "FREE"?

SIR,—It is rather hard that Mr. Fraser should accuse me of confusing various meanings of the words "free" and "freedom," when I did my best to be clear; and I must plead Not Guilty.

When your correspondent stated that a Catholic was "not a free man in a Free State," it was so obvious that he did not use the words "Free State" in the Irish political sense, that I considered it unnecessary to labour that point. So I asked for a definition of the term. I said there was no such thing as "Free State," and gave my reasons. I notice Mr. Fraser concurs with my view, so there is no difference between us on this point.

The "Free State" fallacy having been disposed of, we can pass on to the next point. Am I a "Free Man"? I say "Yes." Mr. Fraser says "No," because whatever my own views may be I leave the Pope to decide for me, and accept his ruling unconditionally, even though it be contrary to my judgment. This is where Mr. Fraser slips up. I do not accept the Pope's ruling unconditionally; but only in those things in which I consider him competent to direct me. But I do the same with other men in other things. I have to defer to my doctor in medical cases, and my solicitor in legal cases. Do I stultify my reason by so acting? If I recognize special Authority in the case of Medicine and the Law, why should I not accept Authority in Religion? Unless I am to claim a special revelation for myself, I must do so.

The term "Freethinker" is as fallacious as the term "Free State" (ex Ireland.) No man is free, for he is actuated by his environment and culture. A state where every man did exactly as he thought fit regardless of the effect on his neighbour, would be chaotic. He must be conditioned by something. True, Mr. Fraser may not recognize any Pope as leader of his system; but unless he claims absolute originality for himself, he must be following some School of Philosophy, which has its experts, just the same as the Catholic Church has.

So I am as free as he is. The Pope is not an autocrat, as he is a man under discipline and under law. By that law he can be tested, and if he steps outside it, I can resist him, and still be a good Catholic. History contains many instances where sound and good men resisted or protested against ecclesiastical action, and no one thought any the worse of them for that. It is no part of the faith to believe that everything a priest or even a Pope does is right. Each case must be decided on its merits. Nevertheless the good Catholic will always take scrupulous care to examine the situation from every angle before opposing the Authority, as it is only prudent to do so. As the Pope has more means of getting proper information than I have, and many grave and competent counsellors to confer with, it seems to me only commonsense to suppose he is more likely to be right in his judgments than I. Let Mr. Fraser ponder over the problem again.

W. H. REES.

SIR,—There are three things I should like to say about Mr. Rees letter in a recent issue:—

First, that to admit being a Roman Catholic is evidence of a wharped mentality.

Secondly, He and all such would be best *outside* the Labour and Socialist movement, and no *real* Socialist can be anything but an Atheist.

Thirdly, As a Roman Catholic Mr. Rees doubtless expects to go to "heaven" (whatever that may mean) and regards that as "utopia"; but will he be "free" when he gets there? I wonder.

D. DAWSON.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. A. D. McLaren—A Lecture.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Chorrols Road, North End Road) : Saturday, at 7.30, Messrs. Haskell, Barnes and Bryant. *Freethinkers* on sale.

FINSBURY PARK N.S.S.—11.15, Mr. A. D. McLaren—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain) : 6.0, Mrs. Grout—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Tuesday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road. Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture at Arlington Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, Sunday at 7.15, Mr. L. Ebury; Wednesday, August 5, at Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, August 7, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Thursday, at 7.0, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and J. Darby; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. F. C. Warner—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith) : 3.30, Messrs. Bryant and C. Tuson.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Saturday, at 8.0, opposite the Open Market, inside the Level. Sunday, at 3.30, the Level, speakers Messrs. Jackson, Byrne and G. de Lacey.

BLACKBURN MARKET.—Thursday, August 13, at 7.30—Mr. J. Clayton.

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CRAWSHAWBOOTH.—Tuesday, August 11, at 7.30—Mr. J. Clayton.

DURHAM (Market Place).—Tuesday, August 11, at 8.0—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : Sunday, August 9, A Ramble to Roughlee. Meet outside Palace Theatre, Burnley Center, at 1.0 p.m. Nelson friends meet top of Carr Road and Manchester Road Corner at 1.30 p.m. Tea and Games at Roughlee. (Paddling, Swimming, and Rattling). Bring the children. All East Lancashire Freethinkers and friends are invited. Members of the Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. specially invited. At 7.45 p.m., a meeting will be held on Carr Road Recreation Ground, Nelson, speaker Mr. Jack Clayton. Don't forget to bring your Tea with you.

GLASGOW N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture at West Regent Street on Thursday, August 6 and for several following evenings, at 7.30. Other announcements will be made at the meetings.

HIGHAM.—Monday, August 10, at 7.15—Mr. J. Clayton.

HORDEN (near Miners' Hall).—Sunday, August 9, at 10.30.—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, at Queen's Drive (opposite Baths), Messrs. Jackson, Shortt and Tissyman; Monday, at Beaumont Street, Messrs. Jackson and Wollen; Tuesday, at Edge Hill Lamp, Messrs. Little and Sherwin; Wednesday, at Waste Ground adjoining Old Swan Library, Messrs. Little and Shortt; Thursday, at corner of High Park Street and Park Road, Messrs. Jackson and Tissyman. All at 7.30. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

NELSON (Carr Road).—Sunday, August 9, at 7.45.—Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street).—Saturday, August 8, at 7.30—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (near Boilermakers' Hall).—Sunday, August 9, at 7.0.—Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WIGAN MARKET PLACE.—Sunday, August 9, at 3.0 and 7.0. Messrs. Hankin, Partington and Sisson.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, August 15, at 7.0 p.m. (prompt), at Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead, General Meeting, with address by Mr. F. Abel, on "Outlines of a New Satanism." Literature and current *Freethinkers* on sale. More members wanted. Roll up in your hundreds.

PERTH BRANCH N.S.S.—I.L.P. Hall, Sunday, August 9, at 7.30, Debate: "The Bible: Is it True?" *Affir.*: Mr. H. Buchan; *Neg.*: Mr. Jas. Wingate. Questions and Discussion.

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