

THE FREETHINKER

▪ EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN ▪

— Founded 1887 —

Vol. I.V.—No. 48

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1935

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Maeterlinck on Immortality—The Editor</i> - - -	753
<i>The Costly City Churches—Mimmermus</i> - - -	754
<i>Lodge the Philosopher.—G. H. Taylor</i> - - -	755
<i>Masterpieces of Freethought.—H. Cutner</i> - - -	757
<i>“What is God Like?”—George Bedborough</i> - - -	758
<i>Things Worth Knowing</i> - - -	762
<i>The Real Lilliputian World—T. F. Palmer</i> - - -	763
<i>“Humanity and War”—George Bedborough</i> - - -	764
<i>A Sydney Parson and His Laughing God—Frank Hill</i> - - -	765
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions

Maeterlinck on Immortality

“HAVE you read my last book?” enquired a prosy writer of a friend. And to that came the reply “I hope so.” Not many would give this answer if the question were put by Maurice Maeterlinck, although at the age of seventy-three one cannot reasonably expect many more from his pen. But his last book, published over a year ago, and only appearing recently in its English dress, leads one to hope for more. For *Before the Great Silence* shows no signs of weakening. There is the same grace of expression as in the earlier works, and in some directions the expression marks a greater definiteness of thought on questions which, because of the influence they exert on the vast majority of people, are still of first-rate importance. And the writer’s thoughts are expressed with a terseness that belongs to the authority of an old age not yet accompanied by a weakening of mental powers. Nearly two hundred pages of short paragraphs sum up the philosopher’s final decisions on many problems of life and religion. They are the more striking because they are brief, and the epigrammatic form of most enables them to be carried about in one’s memory, and to assist the classification of one’s own thinking.

Reviewers of the work have, in some cases, been obviously timid, or puzzled in their notice of the book. This timidity extends to the publisher, for on the wrapper comment is made on the ambiguity of the title. This hint of ambiguity is, one imagines, written with an eye on the respectably religious class, who might feel affronted to be told of the profound scepticism of so well-known a writer as Maeterlinck. In our judgment *Before the Great Silence* has no ambiguity about it. It has no reference to a state of mind which is silent concerning “after death,” because it cannot decide what follows death, but has reference only to the fixed belief of the writer that for the individual death means silence, save that

posthumous intercourse between the minds that have been and those that are. The philosophic and scientific truth here is that a man’s work does not commence with him and it does not end with him. Continued existence belongs to the species, not to the individual. He receives from what his predecessors have given, assimilates of this what he can, expresses it in a more or less articulate manner, and so adds his own contribution to the stream of human tendency.

* * *

The Stupidity of Man

What is called the problem of human life is a problem that man sets himself. He cannot answer the problem set because he has expressed it in such a way that every possible answer only serves to create new difficulties. He asks, “Why am I here?” because he is still haunted by the primitive belief that someone created him and sent him here for a special purpose. He can find no answer to his question because it is a fundamentally unintelligible one. Having created an insoluble problem he complains that none can give him an answer to it. He ties his limbs with strong cords and then complains that he has no freedom of movement. One need not be surprised at Maeterlinck’s conclusion that:—

The key to all the misfortunes of the peoples is their stupidity. All the explanations of the politicians and economists are merely the decorations of this fundamental stupidity, which is almost incurable, and which has not been perceptibly amended since the beginning of historic time.

There is an echo of this in the mordant question, “How many people begin to live only when they are dead; and how many are dead before they have lived?”; and in the advice, “Do not let us seek to replace our anxieties with chimeras.” Anxieties bred of primitive fears and perpetuated by the creation of semi-intelligible chimeras is a rough and ready summary of one phase of human history. Humanity, M. Maeterlinck complains, has accepted,

for the last two thousand years, all the mysteries, that is to say, all the puerilities, all the absurdities, which were attributed to the God of the Jews, the Christians, and Moslems. Why not accept, while we are waiting for something better, the inexplicability of a universe which we have hardly begun to interrogate?

But even this inexplicability might be found, on analysis, to be something of our own creation. As we have so often said, clear out theology and what we have left is an unsolved problem. The final solution of the problem may always elude us, but there is in this no discouragement of endeavour, and no fear of enquiry.

* * *

Man and a Future Life

A recurring theme in *Before the Great Silence*, is that of a future life, and one is not surprised to

find that more definitely in his old age than during his earlier years M. Maeterlinck finds the belief in this both useless and improbable. Of those who clamour for a future life he asks:—

What do you really want? To live for ever in an immobile and immutable Universe, selected from the best moments of your youth? But this would be impossible, save in an equally immobile and immutable Universe; and would not such a Universe be deadlier than death itself? Would not an immortal life in this block of ice be worse than annihilation, which would at least liberate us from all useless hopes and regrets.

If you were not dead, what would you do during eternity? Where would you choose to be? Would you look forward to something else? You would not be happy; and if you no longer looked forward to anything would you go on living? What would you wish for? No one, hitherto, has been able to give a satisfactory or even a reasonable reply to these questions.

Here again is a position—one that is very familiar to readers of these columns—clearly stated:—

If at the age of seventy-two I have no longer anything in common with the child at the breast that I once was, what is left to me of the child of seven? What ideas, what feelings have I that date back to these ages? Does not all that I then felt and thought seem absurd to me now? What now survives of what I then believed myself to be? Barely a few memories of some person unknown. I have changed my ego a dozen times, and that famous continuity on which all our hopes of immortality are based is probably, even in this life, no more than the shadow of an illusion. When would our immortal life establish itself? At the moment of death? And should we be for all eternity an infant, a youth or an old man?

Before our birth that which we were about to be was dispersed in confused, heterogeneous, impersonal, irresponsible elements. After death we revert to these same elements. One could, therefore argue that death is less formidable than birth, since it has no longer need to fear life. At heart, what we fear in death is the persistence of life; or rather, survival.

An echo here of the teaching of Lucretius that if we could but realize that death were death indeed, men would cease to fear it, and the fear that has gathered round it, and the power of the priesthood would be gone for ever.

* * *

The Horror of Immortality

We note that the review of *Before the Great Silence*, which appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*—a journal which persistently misrepresents, either by distortion of meaning or suppression of teaching—refers to the “increasingly gloomy estimate of humanity and its prospects.” I fail to find anything of the kind. There is nothing gloomy in facing facts, and in following reason wherever it leads one: and it is mainly because the majority of people have not the courage to do this that they cherish the belief in an immortality into which each one—to quote Maeterlinck—“introduces whatever he pleases, and chiefly the relics of his religious beliefs and sentiments.” It is because few ever work out their idea of a future life to its logical limits that it has any attraction whatever for them. If they did this they would realize that nothing more terrible than an after life, a world utterly unlike this one, and in which birth and death were unknown happenings, could be conceived. “Without death,” asks Maeterlinck, “what would life be? It is death that gives life its weight, its importance, its dignity, its meaning and its infinite perspectives.” I have

said this so often, and in almost the same language, that I may be pardoned at being pleased to find it here. It is not the language of rhetoric, of mere emotion, or of despair. Above all it is not—to cite the stupid insipidity of the *Times* reviewer, “gloomy.” It is a plain statement of truth. Life, human life with all its possibilities and powers is veritably built upon the fact of death.

I must satisfy myself with one more citation from a book which while small in compass, contains a compressed essay on almost every page:—

If we were immortal there would be no question of growing old. All our organs, including the brain, would become inexhaustible and incorruptible; they would be as though mineralized or vitrified. But would the life lived with these organs be comparable with this life of to-day, to which we cling so fast that anything that modifies it seems to destroy it? Does not a notable part of our sentimental and even our intellectual life depend on the sensations, anxieties, and infirmities of our fragile and perishable organs? What would this other life be, this metalized life, enduring for thousands of years, sheltered from everything in a sort of glass case? Without risk, without audacity, without danger, without anything unseem.

What indeed! The Greeks long ago answered that question in the story of Tithones. In response to his perpetual pleadings the Gods granted him eternal life; only to revoke their gift when a long experience had convinced Tithones that without death life had ceased to be worth the living.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Costly City Churches

“A very large portion of society, and that powerfully and extensively connected, derives its sole emolument from the belief in Christianity, as a popular faith.”

Shelley.

THE story of the City Churches is one that should interest all Freethinkers, for it throws a searchlight on matters ecclesiastical. Nowhere else in the whole world are there forty-seven places of worship to a resident population of less than ten thousand. To make the comedy complete, these residents include caretakers, City policemen, and Jewish people, who form the overwhelming majority, and never trouble the pew-openers at the Anglican churches. Nineteen of these churches have been ear-marked as derelict, and the question has even been raised as to whether they ought all to be sold up and the money used elsewhere.

Over forty years ago the extremely valuable estates of these old churches were estimated to be worth £1,500,000. Now their value is more than doubled. The annual income from these estates, which includes houses, shops, and warehouses, brings in £100,000. It was perfectly obvious in the “nineties” of the last century that the City churches, whose congregations had gradually dwindled as the resident population of the City of London shrank, could not be permitted to retain these properties. Indeed, many of them did not know what to do with their money, which in the previous hundred years had increased enormously with the growth of property values. The purposes for which the money had been left by the dead hand of past believers became increasingly difficult to fulfil. There were actually funds for apprentices, but no apprentices; for schools, but no children; for lectures and sermons, but no congregations to listen. Waste was rife. Some vestries were stocked with wine, and beanfeasts were common. Pensions were given to

parishioners with demoralizing readiness, and with no means test. In short, the churches' estates were milch-cows.

Nor is this all of the story. This Gilbertian Heart of the Metropolis of the Empire is deserted on Sundays, and resembles nothing so much as a city of the dead. Hence the officiating priests of the deserted temples, in order to justify their pay-rolls, make the week-days more important than the appointed Sabbath. They hold dinner-hour services, give organ-recitals, organize luncheon clubs, and adopt all the resources of the showman's art. As an index of the actual work done in this square mile of the heart of the Empire, the summary of confirmation for one year shows that in the East City 62 candidates were confirmed, and in the West City 90 were similarly received into the Established Church. These figures spread over forty-seven places of worship, and drawn from a resident population of nearly ten thousand, seem to suggest that the Church of England may be regarded, so far as this particular corner of the Lord's Vineyard is concerned, as the Church of the clergy rather than that of the people. Indeed, this Parliamentary-made Church has of late years created fresh bishoprics by the score, and the number has been increased till the total is now three hundred. From the priestly point of view, the thing is well worth doing, for the salaries range from the modest £1,500 of the Bishop of Sodor and Man to that of the £10,000 of the Bishop of London, and the £15,000 of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Bench of Bishops receive, between them, £180,700 yearly, with emoluments in the shape of palaces and palatial residences. In addition there is a small army of colonial and suffragan bishops, who also "bask in the sunshine of the countenance of God," as a famous preacher used to express it.

Although, nominally, a member of this Church of England, the ordinary citizen knows nothing of these matters, for priests are the shyest of all people where matters of intimate Church finance are concerned. It was only when the Ecclesiastical Authorities decided to sell nineteen derelict City churches that the plain man realized that the financial resources of this Established Church were "beyond the dreams of avarice." And, remember, the value of the sites of these forty-seven ancient churches, and the surrounding churchyards, must run into an enormous sum of money, irrespective altogether of the other properties held by each church. Thus, we find, on a very cursory examination that this so-called Church of England, which can only boast of the support of a small percentage of the entire population, possesses property to the value of over four millions in the space of one square mile in the City of London. Small wonder that numbers of priests are attracted to an organization that offers to numbers of its clergy "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former wealthy Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral wittily expressed it. Even to-day the right to appoint parsons to benefices is sold for money in the open market, as if it were shares in a gold mine or diamond syndicate.

It is useless for the clergy to shout that this is none of our business. It is our concern, for that form of the Christian Church, which is known as the Church of England, has been manufactured by Parliament, and from time to time has been under the hands of its creator for repairs and alterations. The creator is a cynical association known as the House of Commons, having no religion in particular, and having included in its membership Atheists, Quakers, and Parsees. It concerns us all, for the legal theory of this country makes us all, including Freethinkers, Christadelphians, Swedenborgians, even Spiritual-

ists, parties to the constitution of this Parliamentary-made Church. If it were in the British Colonies, or the United States of America, where no such thing as a State Church exists, we need not care a button what humbug or chicanery went on in a particular church, for it would be none of our affair. But the legislation of Parliament makes us all partners in this Church of England, and compels us to be, as it were, privy to its trickeries and evasions.

The votes of the bishops in the House of Lords in itself is sufficient to show how far these ecclesiastics are from appreciating the trend of modern ideas, and how hopelessly these Right-Reverend Fathers-in-God are out of touch with democratic aspirations. The bishops voted against admitting Nonconformists to the Universities of their own country, and against removing the civil disabilities of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers. They opposed the introduction of Free Education, although one third of the nation was illiterate. They voted against the suggestion that women were human beings, and would have none of them on London Borough Councils. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, or flogging women in prison. They even voted against the use of seats for tired shop-assistants. In plain English, they opposed almost every measure of reform ever introduced in the House of Lords, and then calmly pretend that their religion has been the mainspring of civilization and progress.

No reform of this out-of-date Church of England is needed. It should be disestablished and disendowed, and then left to reform itself like any other organization. And why has the disestablishment and disendowment of this Church been omitted from the Labour Party Programme? The Established Church simply absorbs millions of money and so many offices and dignities, and is merely the most inefficient branch of the Civil Service. The sooner it is disestablished and disendowed the better for the country. Labourites should really take notice of what the clergy have done, and not listen to their honeyed protestations, nor have any doubts concerning their political attitude. The clergy are always chanting "Happy England," and they know that this country is a happy land for priests and priestcraft.

MIMNERMUS.

Lodge the Philosopher

THE general fitness of rank and file Spiritualists to study critically the phenomena which confront them may be observed at close quarters in any of their chapels at Sunday meetings. Sir Oliver Lodge stands almost alone in his effort to construct a philosophy which will provide a rational background for the empirical "evidence." Spirits may tap tables by the thousand without in the least indicating a cosmic scheme, attested by science, in which the behaviour of mind, as divorced from matter, becomes conceivable. In his philosophy, with which we here wish to deal, Lodge presents Spiritualism as according to its possibility, rather than its actuality.

His system may be classed as neo-Vitalism, which differs from ordinary Vitalism in its readiness to accept Determinism. Matter is thus not so much the obstacle as the *instrument* of life, not so much challenging life to break its causal sequence by the opposition of a separate energy, but serving life in the way that a train serves the purpose of the railway company. The element which Life adds is not new energy but guidance. As the line determines the path of the train, so Life determines the course of behaviour undergone by matter. In this way the

vitalist difficulties of inoculating a new factor are avoided. Life imparts no new competing energy, but merely controls the direction of "material forces, timing them and determining their place of application, subject always to the laws of energy and all other mechanical laws. . . . Life can generate no trace of energy, it can only guide its transmutation."¹

A living organism is, for Lodge, the demonstration of a "guiding and directing principle,"² and this agency, Life, therefore achieves its ends without interfering with the sum total of energy and (or) matter, whose determinism thus assumes a purposive character. Similarly, emergence is the display of what was intended by Life. "Strange to say, when these molecules attain a certain complexity, they may become animated and display the surprising phenomena of life" (*ibid*). "Latent properties of animation, already existent in space, . . . come to fruition by interacting with matter," when the latter has attained a protoplasmic-stage which has the chance of being endowed with vital activity. Something in the ether enters into relationship with matter at such stage of its development, endures the connection for a time, and then returns whence it came.

It came from its vantage-ground or home in the ether. Resident first in that realm, Life becomes embedded in the physical vehicle, and so "our matter body has been constructed by our spiritual body,"³ which guides the molecules into conditions which will enable a personality to become manifest. "Form waves" are the physical mechanism whereby life and mind operate on and direct material particles, and Lodge wants biologists to adopt the conception of a "bio-field."

The special advantages of ether as a dwelling-place for spirits is that it is not material, and so here is our permanent basis for Life. We must presume that Lodge has in mind a restricted definition of matter, and doubt whether the denial of materiality to ether would otherwise meet with professional support. A more appropriate description might regard ether as continuous and undifferentiated by thickenings or knobs.

The separation of the Life Force into individuals is explained on the following lines. Life is the rudimentary form of mind, and mind is the conscious part of life, the same thing in an advanced stage, and "matter is the instrument by which thought can become incarnate and manifested."⁴ But by incarnation the undifferentiated mind in its etheric vehicle becomes separated in its material one and develops separate personalities, using the discontinuity of matter to "partition itself off into free and independent units, so that in association with matter they may acquire an individuality of their own, and thus by free and personal development enhance the value and complexity of the whole" (*ibid*). Absolute Mind, he maintains, exists in continuous ether, and by the use of matter blossoms or evolves into animals and people, each of whom did not pre-exist, but formed his character by material associations and then "rejoins its larger self."⁵

Yet even during the earthly spell "life and mind may have some etheric concomitant invariably associated with them which enables them to exert an influence on the material world,"⁶ for "there is an un-

seen and unsensed universe, a universe of life and mind and spirit, which clearly dominates the material and which, though it makes no direct appeal to the senses, is equally real."⁷ Death, as must follow logically from his theory, does not interrupt the continuity of the spiritual body.

What Prof. Lodge significantly fails to note is that on his theory of an undifferentiated mind inhabiting the ether, any return to that undifferentiated unity, as at death, must forfeit that individual personality which, according to him, has been made possible by the discontinuity of matter. If, then, there is a return to the undifferentiated and continuous, which still goes on breaking up into individuals from some obscure source of renewal, there are no longer the conditions enabling the existence of finite persons, and Sir Oliver's system thus crumbles on its own foundations. This is not surprising, since it is only an attempt to justify a preconceived belief in survival, which in its turn is of the nature of a wish-fulfilment. In any case, his philosophy has not, of course, any mark of scientific authority. It is Lodge's admirers who view it in that light, not Lodge himself, as can be shown from his books. "It is speculation," he declares, "and therefore devoid of scientific authority."⁸

This must encourage us to receive critically his belief that mind is not a manifestation of brain, but brain the vehicle of an "unknown, mysterious and purposeful entity," so that "if the brain is destroyed its function as an intermediary between mind and matter ceases."⁹ How this thing can be quite unknown and yet known to be purposive is not clear.

Sir Oliver does not appear to have consulted the authorities, i.e., the psychologists, as might have been expected from a scientist modestly aware of the limitations of his own department as a physicist. Prof. James Leuba has recently ascertained, in a questionnaire to the Greater Psychologists of America, that only two out of a hundred believe in survival, and the number is diminishing on information based on statistics.

One must also take with suspicion his assurance that we are living in the best possible world to which fact we are blinded only by our own imperfect knowledge. As for pain and evil "we can always regard it as a stage to something higher"; that it is all the work of the Godhead he knows by "insight." The tree of life has been riddled with meaningless, aimless blind alleys, stages, not to "something higher," as Lodge supposes, but to nowhere save starvation, disease and ultimate extinction. These remarks of his are from a lecture under the auspices of a religious trust, one of its objects being to promote faith in Jesus. The assistance of Sir Oliver for that purpose seems doubtful, in view of his rejection of such doctrines as the Fall, Atonement, and Virgin Birth, but the consolations he offers to orthodoxy are well in keeping with his plea therein for "a return to a child-like attitude."¹⁰

Fortunately, this attitude does not characterize his scientific work, and his ventures of faith must be set against his remark that "science shows us a self-contained and self-sufficient universe, not in touch with anything beyond or above itself, nothing supernatural or miraculous, no intervention of beings other than ourselves being conceived possible."¹¹ Thus does Lodge the scientist act as a corrective to Lodge

¹ *Life and Matter*.

² *Beyond Physics*.

³ *Science and Human Progress*.

⁴ *Beyond Physics*.

⁵ *Phantom Walls*.

⁶ *Beyond Physics*.

⁷ *Science and Human Progress*.

⁸ *Beyond Physics*.

⁹ *Science and Human Progress*.

¹⁰ In *Philosophy* (January, 1933) he says the conflict between science and religion continues to be a real one.

¹¹ *Man and the Universe*.

the philosopher. And at a much later date, he has defended "The Truth of Mechanism," to quote his title, offering an alternative scheme to Jeans' as regards the physical aspect of the universe, and holding "there is no need to sweep away mechanism, but by perceiving that the ether is the essential part of it, it may gradually be understood."¹² His theory of the ether as the mediating principle is worked out fully in his latest lengthy work, *My Philosophy*. So rich are the qualities with which he endows ether, and so omnipresent is the "mind-unity" by which it is inhabited, that one may wonder whether there is anything left for God to do in his scheme. It is hardly surprising that continental Spiritualism should have taken an Atheistic turn.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Masterpieces of Freethought

THE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

By

DR. GEORGE DRYSDALE

IV.

It need not be denied that the *Elements* preached "Free Love"; but one must take into consideration exactly what the author meant by that much abused term.

For Drysdale, "marriage" meant the union of two human beings—not the civil or religious contract which they signed. Nature knows nothing of such contracts. Without implying any theological deity, one can assert that nature has implanted in man two urges—one for food and one for sex; both very strong and both requiring satisfaction. Climate, temperament, and social habits will, of course, affect the strength of one as well as the other. Without food we cannot live; so the satisfying of our hunger is the most imperative need we have. But what may be, to use an old adage, one man's food is another man's poison; so, in various countries, hunger is satisfied in various ways.

Sex is influenced much in the same manner; and there are many people who can easily remain celibate, or almost celibate, all their lives without the least harm. But for most healthy, normal men and women, "marriage" is of vital importance to their well-being. To suppress the sex-instinct is distinctly harmful. It can be done—nay, it has to be done, at least, in modern civilization. But the study of many experienced observers proves how much ill-health and neurosis follow in the train of suppressed instincts. Psycho-analysis, in particular, traces many of the faults and failings of mankind to inhibitions, not only to those of our childhood, but to those of our adult life.

During the middle of last century, and indeed, almost up to the time of the war, an "old maid" was a term of derision. For, while there were many old bachelors, most of them were never celibate as so many poor, single women were. What terrible unhappiness must have been caused to many splendid and noble types of womanhood who for various reasons never married, and who had to face society under the derisive name of "old maid"! For these and their like, Drysdale spoke out with a clearness and a defiance which, whether we agree with free love or not, should compel our admiration.

Why should chastity be considered a virtue? Was chastity the aim of nature or not? Is not a woman properly mated to a man, or a man to a woman, as

nature intended (here, again, the "intention" is not that of a deity) infinitely happier than one suppressing the constant urge with which we all are endowed? Drysdale said:—

Many of the sexual evils widely spread among us depend directly upon the errors of our code of morality. According to this code, all love, except married love is considered sinful. . . . What is, or should be, the grand object of any social institution for uniting the sexes? It is that *each individual in society, every man and woman, should have a fair share of the blessings of love and of offspring, and that the children should be duly provided for.* But if marriage be the only honourable way of obtaining sexual and parental pleasures, very many must be excluded from them.

I admit Drysdale even goes far in condemning marriage in many ways and pleads for sexual freedom. He seems, to me at all events, to imagine a sexual Utopia, but his free and unfettered opinion was necessary for people to judge for themselves; and, in particular, whether what he wrote could be applied to their own cases. He was, by no means, the first to advocate free love and to attack marriage, or to say that chastity was no virtue. Here is what Shelley says:—

Love withers under constraint; its very essence is liberty; it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy nor fear; it is there most perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve. How long, then, ought sexual connexion to last? What law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other; any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny.

Our modern advocates of divorce reform will see that we have still a long way to go before reaching this ideal of Shelley put by him over one hundred years ago. He continues:—

Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage. . . . I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous (if marriage were abolished).

Now whether here again we agree with Shelley is beside the point. Personally, I am in favour of monogamous marriage; but I maintain the right of those who differ from me to assert that right; as I claim also the right to study any work hostile to my own views and to judge for myself.

And that was the position of Charles Bradlaugh, when in reviewing the *Elements of Social Science*, in one of the early numbers of the *National Reformer*, he advised his readers to get the book—much to the horror of Joseph (turncoat) Barker, who was his co-editor at the time.

Barker, not understanding the magnificent plea for social and sexual reform which prompted the book, could see nothing in it but a plea for a degrading promiscuity; and left his part of the editorial chair in disgust. But the book, even when reviewed in a hostile spirit, was recognized as a sincere effort to spread the gospel of health and happiness, however mistaken its author might be in some details.

What made the work even more significant was its passionate championing of birth control—then known as Neo-Malthusianism.

¹² *Philosophy* (for April, 1932).

For the work of Malthus, Drysdale had such admiration that he considered it "the most important contribution to human knowledge that ever was made," and he adds, "I do not know any work so important to the happiness of mankind at present as that of Mr. Malthus." These opinions, of course, appear very extravagant; but Drysdale was writing in the 'fifties of last century and before our "machine" age was revolutionizing humanity for better or for worse. In any case this question of children must still profoundly influence our homes and happiness whatever the promise of Utopian social reform may be. And certainly the demand for birth-control methods and knowledge has never been so imperative as it is now.

Not all the denunciation of the Churches can stay that demand; and whether we like it or no, the opinion voiced by Drysdale about the work of Malthus may not seem quite so extravagant when looked at a second time. At all events he not only gave long extracts from the *Essay on the Principle of Population*, but followed them up by extracts from John Stuart Mill on the same subject, and his own essay on the only cause and only cure for poverty. They are—at least, to me—fine contributions to a problem which has ever engrossed all people whose ideal is a happy community; and happiness is impossible without the complete abolition of poverty. Drysdale followed it up with a disquisition on "Natural Religion"—on Dignity, Liberty and Independence; an essay which ought to be studied by every Freethinker who still values these qualities in mankind. I have no space for the many long quotations I have noted—indeed, they could easily fill this issue of our paper. And it is the same with the valuable fourth part which was added to the third edition, and in which Drysdale's "main object is to demonstrate the truth of the Malthusian Law of Population; to show that this law is the real cause of the great social evils of old countries and preventive sexual intercourse the only remedy." There is also an essay on "Can war be suppressed?"—which begins, "How long is war with its countless list of horrors and miseries to continue among us?" We who loathe war, who know something even more of its horrors than did perhaps Drysdale, will find in this chapter an impassioned plea against war that might have been written yesterday. Will the reader be surprised to find he pleads for "A general reduction of armaments, a Confederation of States, and international armies?" He backs up his suggestions with arguments that seem now, after years of writing and speaking against war, absurdly familiar. But he was, in this, as in so many things a pioneer. Read his book and see for yourself.

I have only just space to refer to the way in which the *Elements* was attacked. His views on free love were almost exclusively quoted—as if he had touched literally upon nothing else. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant both had more mud slung at them because they advocated reading the book (they did not agree in everything with the author) than they ever had in advocating Atheism. And after the famous Knowlton trial, even the "reverent" Agnostics took a hand. "Saladin" wrote a pamphlet called *Knowltonism*, which violently attacked Neo-Malthusianism with arguments mostly encouraging mothers to have large families. And he added an "addendum" to another pamphlet *Sexual Economy*, written by "Peter Agate, M.D.," who may or may not have been a real person, but who certainly appeared to some people to have been either inspired by Saladin or his ghost. In this the *Elements* got the most drastic criticism I have read—or perhaps I ought to say, it was Free Love and Preventive Intercourse that received the criticism; for the other parts of the book are hardly

hinted at. Then "Lara," one of Saladin's lieutenants, who was really G. C. Griffith-Jones, inspired by a foul publication called the *Life of Bradlaugh*, which had to be destroyed by order of the courts, let himself go both against Bradlaugh, Knowlton and the *Elements*, in about as ignorant and vituperative an essay as I have ever read. They are all worth reading, however, to the student of our economic and social morality as well as to those interested in the ways of the Freethought movement.

That George Drysdale is in a great measure vindicated, I am quite convinced. He wrote before his time; but modern writers on sexual questions, whether influenced by later discoveries in psychology or psycho-analysis, have only found more and better reasons for supporting many of his conclusions. And in supporting his book, once again we Freethinkers have shown our determination to vindicate the right of free speech. We can never better that.

H. CUTNER.

"What Is God Like?"

WITHOUT caring one way or the other, most Freethinkers would be glad to get some kind of description of "God" on which Christians generally would agree. Of course if God is only a "Word" (John i.), or a mere "Voice" (Rev. i. 12), we can only say we are surprised that even the author of the Book called "Revelation" should expect us to believe that he "saw a voice."

Authentic portraits of Jesus Christ continue to be a common merchandise, but these gory oleographs aim rather at portraying a bleeding heart than presenting a recognisable photograph of a divine face. Hearts after all, are much alike in shape, size and colour, and it is seldom that the police take heart-impressions as a substitute for finger-prints. Besides God the Father is not shown as possessing any kind of a heart. The records deny its existence altogether.

The familiar pictures of a stern and particularly ancient bald-headed capitalist reached their climax, and let us hope their cessation in the fascinating expression of William Blake's unique imagination.

Dr. Maude Royden, in her book, *I Believe in God*, gives us no help in our quest. "Mind," she says, "I call God." Nobody can say she doesn't, but it is a poor means of identification of either. We are the more disappointed because Dr. Royden "believes" in God, and describes Him as the element in which "we live, move, and have our being." But if we imagined that that would lead us to any sort of definition or description of "What God is like," we were over sanguine, although Dr. Royden talks about our "shutting God out." Really, the human mind boggles at the idea of "shutting out" something in which we move and live and exist. It sounds like a goldfish eating his glass bowl, or making holes in it to let out the water in which he swims, moves and has his being.

Mr. Heywood Brown, the famous New York journalist, commenting with bitter sarcasm on Dr. Straton's fundamentalist ideas of what God is like, comes to the conclusion that "the God of Straton's Church is very like Dr. Straton, though half a head taller and more hasty in his judgments." Dr. Straton had urged his hearers to "make a chum of God," but Brown comments that "this is a fellowship many of us must decline."

How could one visualize the TRINITY except in a comic cartoon? Matthew Arnold's "Three Lord Shaftesbury's conjures up a vision of beely-faced be-spectacled dumpy old coronetted legislators ambling with tired feet into a stuffy House of Peers. Such a blasphemous description offended Arnold's friends. F. W. Robertson (the Brighton Backslider, called by a contemporary "ninety-nine per cent orthodox," and by Haweis "an anachronism") protested that there was no sense in talking about three PERSONS . . . the Trinity was just a meta-

physical puzzle and "a division in the Mind of God."* One could certainly not expect to recognize (if one met it in the street) a mere vulgar fraction like that. Mr. Robertson found consolation in the vague belief that man himself was a bit of a Trinity too.

Dr. Donald Soper (in *Questions On Tower Hill*) devotes a whole chapter to the subject: "What Is God Like?" It cannot be said that Dr. Soper illuminates us. He pokes fun at Sir James Jeans for hinting "at the end of a book about the stars, that God may be something like a mathematician," and agrees with us that "there is very little nourishment in these crumbs." But although the Tower Hill orator is often questioned about "What's He Like?" the questioners also "get little nourishment" from Dr. Soper's replies. "God is a Spirit," he answers, "but we are human beings and couldn't recognize a spirit if we saw one." All the same: "God is like Jesus. He is the human photograph of the unseen. The smile of Jesus is the smile of God." Dr. Soper is indeed a humorist, and apparently means that God very nearly resembles a blank piece of invisible paper. As neither God nor Jesus ever "smiled," their smiles probably do resemble one another.

G. W. Foote once said that the only time mankind might have got a glimpse of God was a few days (or a few millions of ages) before man was "created." Foote was alluding to that strange appearance of God (see Gen. i.) which describes how the Creator entertained Himself and "killed time," before Time began. He is said to have "moved upon the face of the waters." The face of the Divine Swimmer Himself would have interested us more than the "face of the waters." Even a glance at the Holy bathing suit might have diverted us.

Moses was luckier. He at least saw something of God. But nowadays we are taught that "God hath neither body, parts nor passions," and what Moses saw was the "part" which God does not possess. Yet there seems some hint of truth in the story, for it was not the "part" where one's brain is usually situated. Not even Moses saw that. We hear a lot about the "God-head," but we are fully justified in believing that God had "lost his head" even in the days of Moses.

It is said that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair" (Gen. ii. 6), but it does not say that the sons of God were fair. Besides, the good looks of a son may depend solely on his mother's beauty, and we are not at present considering the personal charms of Mrs. Jahweh.

If only we had an authentic likeness of Adam, all would be well, for he was created "in the image of God." But on second thoughts we hesitate. The primitive sculptor might have been quite incompetent, or have relied upon a far too flattering likeness supplied to him for the purpose. Many of the "images" we see in museums of primitive man discourage us from further attempts to learn therefrom an answer to our question.

Ancient man, who was nearer presumably to his "Creator" than we of later ages, must have been more familiar with Him than civilized man can ever be, and represented God as Cow, Cat, Ape, Serpent, Fish and almost every other living creature. In the Book of Revelation is described a miscellaneous sort of Beast which seems to be a composite picture of every animal except man. Let us be contented enough to fall back upon this as the nearest likeness we shall ever get of God Himself.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

No one can say what capacity living cells may have of taking substances from the blood, returning some of them, and excreting others. This unknown capacity leads to results which, when they do not appear to be in accordance with the laws of physics, are commonly termed "vital." The term is a stumbling block which has tripped up generations of physiologists.

A. Hill, "The Body at Work."

* Sermon on "The Trinity," in Dent's *Everyman* edition of "Sermons by F. W. Robertson."

Acid Drops

The following from the *Kentish Courier*, February 1, 1820, is of interest:—

Court King's Bench, January 28. The King v. Mary Carlisle.

Mr. Gurney, on the part of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, last term, moved for rule to show cause why a criminal information should not be filed against Richard Carlile and his wife for republishing the blasphemous libel of which the male defendant had been found guilty, at Guildhall, during the sittings in the Vacation, under the form of what designated a *Mock Trial* of that defendant. On the motion the Court granted the rule against the wife only, as Richard Carlisle could not be shown to have had any communication with the shop where the second publication took place, as he was at the time in the King's Bench prison, for want of bail. Mrs. Carlisle afterwards showed cause against the rule, which was, however, made absolute.

She appeared this morning in court, with an infant in her arms, to plead to the information, and put in a plea of Not Guilty. She then asked for a copy of the indictment, but the Lord Chief Justice told her the Court could not make an order to that effect, except in cases where the proceedings were instituted by the Attorney or Solicitor-General.

Mr. Dealtry gave her notice that her trial would take place after the present term, in Guildford.

From the same paper we take the following on the death of King George III.:—

His Most Gracious Majesty King George III. died on Saturday morning, at 35 minutes past 8 o'clock. . . . We doubt if there is an individual amongst our countrymen whose abstract calculations of good and evil will not be disturbed by a sentiment of ungodly sorrow, when we announce to him that George III. is no more. . . . All of us, except the very old, were born beneath the sceptre of George III. . . . He was the great, the living—almost the sole remnant of our loved forefathers of that hallowed generation of parents and instructors who had given us life, and fostered our infancy, and sowed in our youthful minds the seeds of loyalty and piety, of truth and honour. To us . . . therefore, the death of our aged monarch is as if the paternal roof had fallen in and left our chamber desolate. To other nations, the near and watchful observers of England, it will be as if some towering rock, hoary with time and hardened by the tempest, some landmark immemorial, had sunk into the earth and changed the bearings of the whole visible horizon.

All we have to add to this is that it was written of a man of whom few historians can say anything flattering, who was illiberal in the extreme, who for nearly thirty years had been subject to fits of insanity, and for the last nine or ten years of his life had been completely insane. We have often said that the virtues of Kings goes with the office. That has been the case since the primitive medicine-man and the primitive King was combined in the same person, and upon whose well-being depended the regularity of the seasons, the growth of crops, good-fortune in war and the health of every member of the tribe.

In an "Ichabodie" address to a luncheon of Rotarians, the Rev. J. V. C. Farquhar, of Hexham Abbey, spoke of the decline in prestige of the country clergy during the past century. Indeed, the tale is a most unhappy one, for, says Mr. Farquhar, in the early nineteenth century, the country parson was always looked upon as a beneficial person, and his character did not greatly affect his position. Furthermore his influence over his parishioners was greater than it is in modern times. "To-day, he finds his level only from his capacity, and not from his position." Small wonder is it, therefore, that Mr. Farquhar prefaced his remarks thus, "Not all changes are beneficial, though they may be the result of popular achievement." One word of comfort, Mr. Farquhar, there still are some millions of people who seem incapable of judging parsons by their true capacity.

The Rev. H. Beevor, M.A., in a sermon he preached, the other day, said, "it is supernatural religion, not humanism, which alone will bring peace to the world." We like that word "alone"—especially when we consider how much peace, "supernatural religion, not humanism" did bring in the past. Many of the most terrible wars during the past 1900 years were religious wars, both sides believing in and calling upon the same supernatural deity. Mr. Beevor conveniently forgets them and still wants us to accept "the reign of Him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords." But as this "Lord of Lords" has always so egregiously failed to keep the peace, what makes the rev. gentleman think the "King of Kings" will do any better now?

A report on religion in Germany has been issued by the Church of England Council for Foreign Relations, and it is interesting to note that the *Church Times* reviewer says the survey "is a thinly-disguised sympathy with the present political regime in the Reich." "The Hitler Youth Movement is applauded," we are told, and a warning is given "that foreign observers should not look at Germany through spectacles coloured by their own political and ecclesiastical conditions." The "paganism" associated with Rosenberg is ascribed to "a noisy minority which has a very small following in the nation as a whole." We do not see any mention in the review, of the Jewish question—but perhaps this is not serious enough for the august Christian Council for Foreign Relations to deal with. Altogether it is difficult to reconcile the claims made in this country for Christianity with what looks like sympathy for the Hitler regime, a regime marked with foul and bestial savagery.

In justice to the *Church Times*, we must say it has, however, always attacked both the Hitler regime and the German treatment of the Jews. Moreover on the persecution of the race generally, it says, "the treatment of the Jew in the Middle Ages is, indeed one of which modern Christians may well be ashamed." But, "the hostility of the Middle Ages to the Jews was not racial, but religious." Precisely. It nearly always was religious, for the Jew was of the one obstinate race which refused to see in Jesus anything more than a misguided preacher; and Christian fury in every sense religious—has never, even to this day, forgiven that. Curious how "religion" seems to taint almost everything it touches.

Dame Beatrix Lyall, who was one of the "Panel" to investigate Spiritualism—though her qualifications seem to have been that she was for some years an active member of the L.C.C.—chosen by the *Daily Sketch*, does not appear to be unduly impressed by the ghostly marvels. Needless to say, she found Mrs. Estelle Roberts "a charming and gentle woman," and "nothing seemed to be hidden or mysterious." Under trance conditions, Mrs. Roberts, "appeared to change and grow like a man." As for the final verdict, Dame Beatrix thought "the messages given were rather vague"; and she wants to know why they are "so trivial or vague when such power of spirit and greater discernment should give definite and wise guidance and uplift"; and "If God wills us to know, why are not such messages communicated through His recognized ministers on Earth"? Ah, but is not that asking too much from our Lodges and Swaffers?

The other members of the Panel are equally amusing, if not instructive. Mr. H. B. Lees-Smith "was very disappointed." He thinks that Mrs. Roberts is quite honest, but she takes her part for something supernatural. The medium said his sister was called either Ann or Louisa, and she died ten years ago; when actually her name was Charlotte and, she died forty-seven years ago. But this will only prove to Spiritualists that Mr. Lees-Smith is very prejudiced.

As for Admiral Mark Kerr, he found "Red Cloud," the spirit guide, wrong in many things, and puts down "thought transference" as an explanation; while Ex-Supt. Cornish is "not convinced of the truth of the

statement that the dead return." Finally, Miss Clemence Dane "prefers to reserve her opinions on this matter." The net result is that the "seeker" (Mr. H. Owen) has had his investigation "suspended by order of Red Cloud." And Mrs. Roberts advises Dame Beatrix to study spiritualistic works, finds the Admiral "impossible," does not like Mr. Lees-Smith for putting "it" down to "self-delusion"—contrary to the "absolute conviction of many of the greatest minds in the world," and is sorry that the Ex-Supt. does not know how many people Mrs. Roberts has saved from suicide. So everybody is happy and Spiritualism is once again proved to be true. Or is it?

Catholics, who never speak of the Salvation Army except with undisguised contempt, and the members of the Army who vehemently denounce Popery as being anti-Christian, do, however, agree in one thing, and that is, their opposition to birth-control. General Eva Booth, who never married herself, naturally is a determined opponent, and denounces contraception quite as violently as a celibate priest. "Every Catholic," says the *Universe*, "will applaud her declaration that God created family life, and that birth-control propaganda is a deliberate attempt to destroy that tradition." We can only say that the propaganda does *not* destroy "family life" but encourages it. It only insists that a small family has a better chance than a large one in cases of economic insecurity, and that woman is not primarily a breeding machine. But why are old maids and bachelors always denouncing birth-control?

The Christian idea that difference of opinion means, to quote the Dean of Durham, "falling foul" of your opponent, is an interesting survival of ancient intolerance. We do not deny its application to many controversialists. That is no reason why it should be taken for granted. Yet the *British Weekly* says that "it is a vain thing to say that those who feel strongly on politics can remain good friends . . . They cannot." It even advises those who differ on the relative merits of Baldwin and Lloyd George "to avoid seeing each other at close quarters" on the eve of the poll. It speaks volumes for the kind of social life envisaged by such remarks. In days when cultured women, married to educated men, have a family circle wherein every kind of opinion is freely discussed, advice of the *British Weekly* sort says little for Christian intelligence.

There is an amusing as well as an enlightening side to the story told in *John O'London's* from a Ceylon correspondent. He says the Ceylonese naturally object to the libel conveyed in a well-known Hymn. Accordingly, these "poor benighted heathen," instead of discarding the whole fiction, piously "pass the buck" to "foreigners," and sing with malevolent heartiness:—

"What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er JAVA'S isle
Where every prospect pleases
And only man (i.e., Javanese man, of course), is vile."

The original is said to have been written after a once well-known Bishop had been sold some bogus pearls by a native.

Mr. Joseph Crouch, author of *Puritanism and Art*, is at pains to prove that Roman Catholicism was far more antagonistic to art than was "Puritanism." Every visitor to Rome sees for himself the atrocious "fig-leaf" ornamentations which make every fine statue existent during the period of papal puritanism a souvenir of obscene obsession with perverted ideas of "sin." Mr. Crouch tells us that John Wesley possessed "a fine quarto edition of Shakespeare's plays, filled with critical notes by Wesley himself." This and many other volumes roused the puritan resentment of Wesley's successor, the Rev. John Pawson, who laid violent hands on them and destroyed the lot as "tending not to edification." The same tale is true to-day when we see in England and America, Methodists and Catholics joining hands to interfere with human amusements, human dress, and human happiness.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. HUMPHRIES.—Mr. Cohen is flattered by your wish that he should visit Glasgow more frequently. But he does visit Glasgow twice every year, and there are many other places he has to visit, and in view of the amount of work he has to get through in other directions he often feels that he would like to curtail the number of train journeys rather than add to them.

P. G. TACCHI.—We should have welcomed a really telling criticism of *Letters to the Lord*, but the quality of the one you send from your friend does not compensate for its length.

D. DALE.—Thanks for article, which we regret we cannot use. Some of the "Brimstone Ballads" would bear re-printing, but others have had their day. They were all very clever, but the pertinency of the form of any writing has to be considered in relation to particular periods.

W. A. WILLIAMS.—Pleased to know that your newsagent has undertaken to keep copies of *Humanity and War* on view. We hope that *Freethinker* readers will follow your example. We should like this pamphlet to have the widest possible circulation.

"CRYSTAL."—It is not worth while wasting more space on an ignorant evangelist.

F. W. R. SILKE (Cape Town).—Thanks for letter and cuttings. We are not greatly concerned with other people using our "Views and Opinions." If they acknowledge the source of the article, so much the better, but our main concern is to get our ideas as widely spread as possible. We appreciate the compliment of the borrowing, both in this country and abroad, but the circulation of the ideas is the important thing, and the only thing about which we bother.

O.V.B.—We agree that Meredith's lines in the instance cited, are just an expression of sentiment, but in this case one may forgive the "mere sentiment" for the sake of the idea behind it.

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

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

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

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

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, 3/9.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary R. H. Roselli, giving as long notice as possible.

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

Sugar Plums

To-day (Decembtr 1) Mr. Cohen is to visit Bradford, and will speak in the Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, at 7.0. Admission is free, but there will be reserved seats. Subject of lecture, "The Savageries of Civilization."

We have had a fairly satisfactory response to our request for readers to help in the distribution of Mr. Cohen's new booklet, *Humanity and War*, but we are as

yet a long way of getting the thousand individuals who will themselves help to circulate it. We are sending eight copies post free for two shillings, so the contribution from each is not—on the financial side—excessive. If some are inclined to send for larger quantities, so much the better. But apart from the quality of the essay, the wide distribution of *Humanity and War* will serve to introduce a great many new people to the *Freethinker* and to the Freethought movement. The present edition should be quickly exhausted.

A companion volume—with a more avowed Freethought aim is Mr. Bedborough's *Arms and the Clergy*. Bearing in mind the attitude of the clergy now, and the part they played during the war, *Arms and the Clergy* provides a documented record of the actual utterances of the principal preachers of the country that forms a useful historical record. Nothing like it exists in this country.

We have managed to secure a few—very few—more copies of Professor Canney's *Givers of Life and their Significance in Mythology*. The book is an account of the belief in magical things and ceremonies as held in primitive communities, and is of first-rate importance as a study of religious origins. Professor Canney also gives a very admirable summary of the new Diffusionist theory in history—one of the best we have seen. The book will be sent post free for 1s. 8d., but those who wish for a copy must write at once. The same advice holds of the works of Mr. Havelock Ellis. The number available is limited, and Ellis's works belong to the order of books that all should read.

The *Daily Telegraph* says that the "expressed intention" of the Socialist majority on the Glasgow Corporation to abolish the Officers' Training Corps and Cadet Corps in three Glasgow schools, has been "received with indignation." But the abolition of similar bodies, and also the abolition of military drill in all schools was one of the conditions of the Versailles Treaty that was forced on Germany. This was done for the avowed reason that it created a war mentality. And there has been much indignation in the British press over Mussolini drilling school children. Will someone be good enough to explain why military drill with Italian and German children and students leads to the creation of a militaristic mentality, while in this country it creates a profound love of peace?

It is worth noting that hardly any of the clergy who are so busy protesting against war have offered the slightest objection to the training corps, etc., that goes on in schools. Neither have any of them protested against Christian preachers being appointed to the army and navy. Nor do they refuse to take part in military parades. We should like some of them to explain why this is the case. Our columns are open to them.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti's meetings last Sunday in Glasgow and Edinburgh were very well attended, and there was no mistaking the interest with which the lectures were followed at each place. Mr. R. T. White was a very efficient chairman at Glasgow, and the lady who took the chair at Edinburgh is to be congratulated on her management. A very pleasing feature is the enthusiasm of the new N.S.S. Branch at Edinburgh. Among its members are a number of young people of both sexes who are keen to spread the message of Freethought, and meetings indoors and outdoors are being carried on.

The debate between Mr. H. G. Wood, M.A., and Mr. H. Cutner, at the Friends' Meeting House on Friday, Nov. 22, attracted a good audience, who listened keenly to the arguments urged by the speakers. The debate was conducted with courtesy on both sides. Although the view that Jesus Christ is not a historical character comes with a shock to many, we hope that some of the arguments advanced will show the need of a reconsideration of their position.

We referred a couple of weeks ago to the action against the publisher of *The Sexual Impulse*, by E. Charles, and the magistrates order for the seizure of copies of the work. The work contains a "Foreword" by Professor Julian Huxley and Mrs Chance, and both appeared in court as witnesses for the defence. We now learn that the case is to go to appeal, and the public are asked to subscribe towards the costs. A notice of this will be found in our advertising columns with the address to which subscriptions are to be sent. The appeal is being backed by the Council for Civil Liberties.

The Sexual Impulse has only one chapter that might reasonably be open to question, but for the rest it is a straightforward, plain study of an important question. But in any case it is time that the question of what is called "obscene libel" was settled in a more satisfactory manner than exists at present. The Campbell Act was avowedly intended to deal with books written for pornographic purposes, and the application of it to scientific studies was disavowed by those responsible for the Act. But not merely is the scope of the Act very uncertain, but it is obviously undesirable that the decision as to what is or is not an "obscene libel" should be quite clearly defined. To leave the decision of so important a point entirely to the taste of a magistrate—or even a judge, is not what should be the case. For that reason we hope that if this case goes to appeal some reliable decision will be reached.

Birkenhead saints and their friends should easily fill the Beecheroff Settlement Hall in Whetstone Lane today (December 1) when Mr. R. H. Rosetti lectures for the local N.S.S. Branch on "Jesus, Fascism and Free-thought." The subject is attractive, and a full house is expected. The lecture begins at 7 p.m., admission is free.

Brighton and Hove has a Parliament of its own, and Mr. J. C. Keast, the other day, introduced therein a Bill for the establishment of exclusively Secular Education in State-supported schools. There were some good speeches delivered, but in the end the Bill was rejected. In this respect Brighton and Hove are as backward as Westminster. But the introduction of the Bill enabled some speeches to be made against the present plan, and that would be all to the good.

The Secretary of the South London Branch N.S.S. writes, apropos of the correspondence on Free-thought proceeding in a South London newspaper, that the correct title of the paper is the *Clapham Observer*. The title given refers to a part of the paper only.

It is demons which produce famine, unfruitfulness, corruptions of the air, pestilences; they hover concealed in clouds in the lower atmosphere, and are attracted by the blood and incense which the heathen offer to them as gods.—Origen (*Christian Father* 185-254 A.D.)

HERETICS

The authorized and authoritative *Catholic Encyclopedia* asserts solemnly that the inspired canon laws, including those prescribing the torture and burning to death of "heretics," are in their divine nature "irreformable," have accordingly never been repeated and merely lie in "abeyance" or are "for practical purposes obsolete," only because of "changed conditions"; and that the infernal "custom of burning heretics is really not a question of justice (i.e., of right or wrong), but a question of civilization"—which has gradually brought about these "changed conditions"; so that "burning heretics" while yet a divinely sanctioned and un repealed law of God and Church cannot in these days be enforced because of this secular "civilization," which renders the burning laws of God and Church unpopular and impotent.—*Joseph Wheelless: "Is it God's Word?"*

Things Worth Knowing*

XV.

THE SOCIAL MIND

WHILE the mental functions are functions of the individual organism, the product, Mind, is more than individual product. Like its great instrument, Language, it is at once individual and social. Each man speaks in virtue of the functions of vocal expression, but also in virtue of the social need of communication. The words spoken are not his creation, yet he, too, must appropriate them by what may be called a creative process before he can understand them. What his tribe speaks he repeats; but he does not simply echo their words; he rethinks them. In the same way he adopts their experiences when he assimilates them to his own. He only feels their emotions when his soul is moved like theirs; he cannot think their thoughts so long as his experiences refuse to be condensed in their symbols. But because he has similar vocal function, and a similar verbal store, he can reproduce and understand their novel combinations of speech; and because he has similar experiences he can understand their novel combinations of thought, adopting both into his own and getting the range of his fellowship enlarged. . . .

Language belongs essentially to the community by whom and for whom it is called into existence. . . . A solitary man would feel, and think, and will; but he would no more fashion his feelings, thoughts, and volitions into conceptions which are the formulas of his knowledge than he would articulate them in words.

Further, the experiences of each individual come and go; they correct, enlarge, destroy one another, leaving behind them a residual store, which condensed in intuitions and formulated in principles, direct and modify all future experiences. The sum of these is designated the individual Mind. A similar process evolves the general mind—the residual store of experiences common to all. By means of language the individual shares in the general fund, which thus becomes for him an impersonal objective influence. To it each appeals. We all assimilate some of its material, and help to increase its store. Not only do we find ourselves confronting Nature, to whose order we must conform, but confronting Society, whose laws we must obey. . . .

Men living always in groups co-operate like the organs in an organism. Their actions have a common impulse and a common end.

Their desires and opinions bear the common impress of an impersonal direction. Much of their life is common to all. The roads, market-places, and temples, are each for all. The experiences, the dogmas, and the doctrines, are for each and all. Customs arise, and are formulated in laws, the restraint of all. The customs, born of the circumstances, immanent in the social conditions, are consciously extricated and prescribed as the rules of life; each new generation is born into this social medium, and has to adapt itself to the established forms. Society, though constituted by individuals, has a powerful reaction on every individual. "In the infancy of nations," says Montesquieu, "man forms the state; in their maturity the state forms the man." It is thus also with the collec-

* Under this heading we purpose printing, weekly, a series of definite statements, taken from authoritative works, on specific subjects. They will supply instructive comments on aspects of special subjects, and will be useful, not merely in themselves, but also as a guide to works that are worth closer study.

tive experience of the race fashioning the experience of the individual. It makes a man accept what he cannot understand, and obey what he does not believe. His thoughts are only partly his own; they are also the thoughts of others. His actions are guided by the will of others; even in rebellion he has them in mind. . . .

Individual experience being limited and individual spontaneity feeble, we are strengthened and enriched by assimilating the experiences of others. A nation, a tribe, a sect is the medium of the individual mind, as a sea, a river, a pond is the medium of a fish; through this it touches the outside world and is touched by it; but the direct motions of the activity are within this circle. Not that the individual is passive, he is only directed; he, too, reacts on the sect and nation, helping to create the social life of which he partakes. . . . That conceptions once incorporated in the General Mind become forces which coerce the individual is conspicuous in the terrible effects due to the idea of "saving souls." This monstrous fiction of speculative logic scattered the amassed wealth of Grecian and Moorish culture, repressed for centuries the search after truth, made Doubt a sin, and placed the investigation of nature on a par with magical incantations. . . . Nor did it end here. It embittered and embitters in many ways the lives of those whom it professed to save, and did its best to make Hell a reality in this world for those who ventured to doubt its reality in another. Happily the power of conceptions is not limited to disastrous errors, but extends to beneficent truths. If irrational conceptions have made man miserable and kept him ignorant, rational conceptions have made him less miserable and more wise. Our pressing need to understand the facts of the universe in which we live has forced us to encourage the pursuit of truth.

New and larger conceptions of man's nature and destiny have been evolved. These, slowly altering the structure of the General Mind, alter the Social Forms which express it, and both react on the individual.

The Study of Psychology (1879),
by GEORGE HENRY LEWES, pp. 160-70.

The Real Lilliputian World

Men and women of diminutive stature have ever attracted the attention and aroused the risibility of normally-proportioned people. For midgets are usually regarded as ridiculous creatures, and this feeling has been intensified by their all-too-frequent exhibition as human curiosities. Yet, the private lives of midgets are mainly those of the normal community and many of them possess powers of penetration, business ability, manual skill and artistic capacity, well above the average. Indeed, they display the same psychological and physical proclivities which distinguish the world at large.

A fascinating and informative study of these minute people is now available. This volume, *The World of Midgets*, by Walter Bodin and Burnet Hershey (Jarrolds, 1935), is replete with curious information. Evidently its authors have grudged neither time nor trouble in gathering their material and their treatment of their clients is laudably sympathetic and appreciative.

The book opens with a realistic survey of midgets' lives, while the second chapter relates to the causative factors of midget growth and its antithesis, giantism, and makes plain the distinction which exists between true midgets and dwarfs.

Dr. Marie of Paris opined that glandular enlargement is responsible for the production of gigantic men and women. This hypothesis led Kraus to the conclusion that the under development of glands conduces to the appearance of midgets. Kraus was enabled to put his theory to the test when he performed the post-mortem examination in the morgue of the Bellevue Hospital in New York of the corpse of a midget man who died in the Hospital. His subject's age was thirty-seven, but he was only 3 feet 4 inches in height, the dimensions of a child four and half years old. The autopsy showed that the dead midget's vital organs were normal, save in size. But the examination of his brain disclosed the fact that the pituitary gland whose over-development generates giantism was in this instance incomplete. "Half was gone, and the balance was plainly defective." Here seemed the proof that imperfect development of bodily organs arises from a defective pituitary gland.

Brown-Sequard was a pioneer in these studies, and his discoveries stimulated the far-reaching researches of Victor Horsley, Gaskell and other able investigators. It is apparently established that the various ductless glands—glands of internal secretion—play a very important part in the functioning of organic structures. While the tear, sweat and salivary glands excrete their products, the endocrine or ductless glands introduce their secretions into the blood stream. The thymus, pineal, thyroid, adrenal, pituitary and other glands are seemingly all concerned in the production of abnormal organisms. Serious indeed, are the offences of the pituitary, a tiny gland in the brain, in this connexion. This strange gland secretes two chemical substances: the hormones essential to the normal development of the torso bones and the hormones which materially control the power of reproduction. The thyroid—so long regarded as a functionless organ—exercises a potent influence over the growth of the long bones of the body, the appearance of secondary sexual characters, the well-being of the brain and other phenomena. It is stated that: "Generally speaking, an under-functioning pituitary produces the midget; an over-functioning pituitary produces the giant, a predominantly under-functioning thyroid produces the malformed dwarf."

Health and physical strength appear entirely dependent on the normal functioning endocrine glands, and this seems also essential to moral health as well. Sexual aberrations are associated with glandular disturbance, and it is recorded that in "an investigation made by Louis Brennan, M.D., of New York, and read before the Society for Medical Jurisprudence in that City, in 1931, he found that evidence of glandular deficiency and imbalance occurred almost three times as frequently among criminals as among moral citizens."

Unlike dwarfs, midgets are duly proportioned men and women on a miniature scale. Those whose height is less than 4 feet 6 inches are usually classed as midgets. Their average height, when full grown, is between 3 or 4 feet, although midgets measuring only 1 foot 9 inches are now alive, mostly in America. The most famous member of this undersized group is "General" Tom Thumb, whose real name was Charles Sherwood Stratton, who, when exhibited by Barnum, became a world-wonder. Stratton's spouse was also a midget, whose girl-child at birth weighed three pounds. Tom Thumb's height never exceeded 3 feet 4 inches or his weight 70 pounds. He long drew vast audiences in the States and elsewhere, and when in London 300,000 people paid to see him. Later, at his well-staged wedding in New York, public curiosity and excitement became so great that the news of the Civil War then raging in America occu-

pied much smaller space in the popular press than the descriptive and illustrated accounts of the mid-gets' marriage.

Congenital midgets are comparatively rare. There are true, infantile and primordial midgets. At birth the former classes are of average size and weight when born, and these comprise a far greater number of the midget people. On the other hand, the rare primordial midget occasionally weighs as little as one or two pounds when delivered, whereas the others may scale from 8 to 10 pounds at birth.

It seems strange that midgets are seldom the offspring of midget parents. Moreover, any apparently normal couple may become the begetters of a giant, a midget, or a dwarf. The signs of midget growth manifest themselves prior to the age of puberty, and may appear at an even earlier period. The time of the retardation, or complete cessation of growth, is termed the age of onset. Striking also is the circumstance that midgets, even when mated with midgets, usually procreate normally developed children. Virile dwarfs are alleged to beget normal offspring, but the children born to giants in the few instances recorded have apparently died in infancy.

Obviously then, midgetism is not strictly hereditary and the reappearance of this deficiency in subsequent generations is extremely rare. Unfortunately, the unlooked for appearance of midgets in families previously normal usually arouses sentiments of disappointment, resentment or shame. Not merely do these diminutive mortals seem uncanny, but there is the dread of vulgar ridicule. Again the midget itself is prone to despondency when it becomes aware of its unkind fate. Several cases are recorded where parents have been guilty of unspeakable cruelty especially when their midget children have been regarded as plain signs of divine displeasure. As our authors observe, "the unintelligent parent, such as the mid-European peasant, considers the child as an instrument of God's wrath against him for some wrong-doing. To him the child is an ever-present reminder that 'the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children,' and he pursues his unhappy offspring with hatred throughout life."

Midgets tend to display peculiar characteristics. Some are intensely egoistic and are apt to strut in public, while others curse and swear, gamble, bet, drink and fornicate with the best normal practitioners of these common arts. But much of this assertiveness, where it occurs, is a natural reaction against the all too frequent superciliousness of the normal community. When they are religious, their creed is almost invariably that of their forbears. We are told that: "they have had their priests and nuns—there is in Vienna to-day, a young Hungarian Jew of less than three feet, who recites the Talmud in ancient Hebrew . . . but they also have their fair share of Agnostics and Atheists."

The midget community is estimated to number 2,000. Thus one child per million born seems doomed to lifelong diminutiveness. Monarchs and even warriors; artists, men of letters and theologians adorned their ranks in times past.

Many midget men have been and are, mated with women of normal stature, and there are instances of female midgets whose husbands are fully developed both in size and weight, and their children are nearly always of normal proportions. The offspring usually outgrow their midget parent by the age of ten. Some midgets appear impotent, but the generative organs in the vast majority of cases are functional. It is estimated that about 22 per cent of midgets marry, but a very large proportion prove infertile. The trials and tribulations of ordinary married life are a common experience in midget families, and divorces

are by no means novel. Famous midgets have been notorious as gay Lotharios who inflamed and broke the hearts of innumerable spinsters and wedded-women. Attempts to breed a midget race by means of judicious pairing have failed. The most notable of these experiments were those of a sister of Peter the Great in Russia, and Catherine de Medici in France some centuries ago.

The writers of *The World of Midgets* conclude their exceedingly interesting and instructive volume with the forecast that, "When the scientists have learned all the secrets of our mysterious glands it is not improbable that midgets and their strange cousins, the giants, will go the way of the dodo, the dinosaur and pterodactyl, themselves the victims of faulty glands, into oblivion."

T. F. PALMER.

"Humanity and War"*

THE inexpensiveness of Mr. Cohen's latest pamphlet must not blind anybody to its equally wonderful value. It is safe to say that it expresses, on the whole, what the Freethought Party stands for on the question of War and Peace, and that Party has long been educated by its leader into an unassailable policy capable of perfectly definite explanation.

In his pamphlet Mr. Chapman Cohen "implements" Mr. G. W. Foote's fine anti-war Humanitarian League pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*. Thomas Paine's bold dream has materialized since Mr. Foote wrote, and whatever criticism many of us properly feel inclined to make as to the constitution, methods and eminent personages of that assembly, no lover of peace can ignore the League of Nations.

No Freethinker can regard the policy of Christian non-resistance as anything but an unattainable unreasonable ignoring of man's best resolve (in Wordsworth's pregnant phrase):—

"That an accursed thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye
Nor . . .
Forget the weakness upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny."

We may disagree with Mr. Cohen's belief that it would be a bad thing if man were not a pugnacious animal (page 32), but he makes his meaning clear that "we have advanced beyond the stage when a man felt convinced that the protection of his interests or his honour . . . depended upon his own sword or upon his ability to get a number of other swords to help him." In other words human pugnacity possesses means of settling questions of personal honour without recourse to violence. It is only in international disputes that violence is called in to aid pugnacity. Mr. Cohen is at his best in recognizing as so few even of our most pacific thinkers see, that we want to end war, not that we have any interest in preventing "the warfare of competing ideas and ideals which demands a far higher and rarer form of courage than that expressed on the battlefield."

There is so much wisdom in these forty closely-printed (and closely reasoned) pages that we can only refer to the necessity which Mr. Cohen emphasises of re-considering "the relation of Europe to non-European peoples." If for the moment the question of Abyssinia is uppermost in our minds, we cannot and must not ignore other problems looming close to our day—and our Empire. Whether England is to take a dog-in-the-manger attitude when Germany, Japan and Italy demand more territory, or whether we are to ignore purely British interests and face all international questions with a genuine spirit of international goodwill—this is what this pamphlet discusses. Mr. Cohen objects to the stupidity which classifies countries as "Great

* *Humanity and War*, by Chapman Cohen, threepence, Pioneer Press.

Powers" according to their possessions, their wealth, or their war-capacity.

The real moral of our problem to-day is not so much denunciation of war as the need for a reasonable basis for peace. We fear the League of Nations—for causes explained by Mr. Cohen—has wasted much time and has been side-tracked again and again, by irrelevancies engineered by interested counsellors whose aims are not peace. In England certainly the real pacific cause is constantly stultified by the fanatical impossibilist Sermon-on-the-Mount preachers. Mr. Cohen has made us his debtors by his very convincing realism, which I, as an inveterate idealist, find greatly to my taste.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

A Sydney Parson and His Laughing God

AUSTRALIA'S prize parsonical oddity is the Rev. T. E. Ruth—a truly amazing combination of emptiness and noisiness.

From week to week, in addition to being heard through the pulpit, he is foisted on the public in a twofold capacity—over the air; and in a column-article, with his portrait and hand-written signature, in *The Sydney Sunday Sun*. The prominence thus given him would appear to say little for the intelligence of Australians. But we know how such things are contrived. Those behind the wireless and the press are under the wholly mistaken impression that "the religious touch" is desired by their hearers and readers, or that something in the sense of commercial gain is to be derived from it. Really the response, for by far the most part, is simply one of impatient, jeering derision.

Ruth's particular vanity is to try to be impressively, strikingly original. The result is a series of sentences, entirely unwarranted in their assumptions, and a veritable burlesque of the book he seeks to expound. Here, of course, I am referring to his printed articles. Take this, the first paragraph in one headed, "The Quest for Laughter"; "The Christian religion is essentially God's quest for the laughter which springs from the wholeness of human life. It is God's quest for the joy of man. God's joy is man's strength. That is the joy set before the Christ on the other side of the Cross. It is something necessary to the happiness of heaven. So angels rejoice when man is found. They, too, begin to be merry." Thus, in the same irresponsible, unctuous way does he proceed to waste a whole column.

Let us have just two more sentences. "If," he says, "you think it through and reduce the world's needs to a common formula—after the manner of a world conference—you will find very little that is wrong with the world that cannot find a place in the category of a lost laugh." Then, at a later stage, we get this: "God has created us all with a capacity for merriment."

Clouds and clouds of words! But the point of them all—in so far as the least meaning emerges from them—is the resounding laughter everywhere of all humanity, of the angels, and of God himself. "There is very little wrong with the world that cannot find a place in the category of a lost laugh." Is Ruth so absorbed with admiration of himself that he has never heard of the incurable afflictions that are the lot of so many of the human race? Of the millions who, to-day, are without employment, and the further millions still, who are more-or-less expiring in poverty and misery? Or of the fears that are felt, practically throughout the world, at the preparations for wars, the rumours of wars, and the certainty of wars to come?

Angels may rejoice, and God may laugh. That is, in the hopelessly disordered mind of Ruth. But it seems to me that merriment in the present state of the world, or the immediate prospect of the world, would be much more worthy of demented demons. "God has created us all with a capacity for merriment." This grotesque outburst by Ruth prompts the question.

What justification for revelry in heaven has there ever

been regarding a world where, in the words of Ingersoll, all life is sustained at the expense of other lives, and where every mouth is a slaughter-house and every stomach a tomb?

Presumably, the immensely self-satisfied Ruth would consider the "capacity for merriment" to be all the greater where the devouring process was the more prolonged and the more agonizing.

Such is the creed in which Ruth trades that God could, if he so wished it, spare all created things the very semblance of a suffering. Why the hesitation in doing so? By the very fact that any transformation of this kind is as far off as ever, Ruth confesses the futility of his prayers, and the mockery of the superstition that inspires them.

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

CLEARING THE MUDDLE

SIR,—I find the following points to be cleared in Mr. Witcomb's remarks concerning my letter of November 10:—

1. By my first paragraph I meant that some Freethinkers are not aware of the *evolution* of the meaning of the term "God," and of the logical absurdity *involved* in the change from the polytheistic Christianity to the (theoretically) monotheistic one. Witness Mr. Bedborough, who, while saying that "we must not forget that 'God' is the proper name of the god which Christians worship," apparently is not aware that "*No theos*" (translated as "God") with or without the article in the Green New Testament is clearly a *common* noun alluding to the Roarer of the "Holy Scriptures," and that the *el* (also translated as "God") of the Hebrew text, for instance: Genesis xvii. 18-20: *el Elyon* (god the Supreme), Gen. xvii. 1: *el Shadai* (god the Terrible or the Destroyer), Gen. xvi. 3: *el Roi* (god the Seer), Gen. xxi. 33: *el Olam* (God the Ancient One), is also clearly a *common* noun of the polytheistic period, only lately identified with Yahweh (Rev. Dr. J. Sanders)—Anyway, it is the *Christians* as a body who rarely—if ever—realize it!

2. The remark (with an incorrect restatement) about the "conclusion based on a grammatical error," has no point at all. Firstly, it was clear that I meant "the individual items of the series," and secondly Mr. Witcomb does *not* deny the said conclusion, i.e., that by whatever name (The Mysterious Tremendum, The Wholly Other, Truth, Light, etc., etc.) he calls his (*only*) God, it (he) will be always *identical* with the Roarer of the Christian Bible!

3. I am *not* prepared to admit that when someone uses a word, he in fact refers to something that exists under that name. *That depends on an analysis.* "Without a criticism of language it will be always possible to infer from the existence of a name the existence of the thing named, e.g., from the word "God" the existence of "God" (Fr. Mauthner: *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, Leipzig: Meiner, 1923, Vol. I. p. 173): I have never claimed to define "God"; what I did was to hint at the absurdity created in its (implied) definition by the evolution of the polytheistic Christianity into the (theoretically) monotheistic system.

4. The question of the term God is unnecessarily obscured by dragging in "the unknown" (the unknown—what?), "reality" and "Truth." Why, the *unknown* does not designate a particular thing, it is simply a negation of the actual possibility of *adequate* knowledge of something to which this adjective happens to be attributed. As for the *reality* of anything, it is an abstract name for "nothing else than the possibility of its being placed in a certain system, in this case, in the space-time-system of the physical world and the question of reality has sense only if it concerns elements or parts,

not if it concerns the system itself." (R. Carnap: *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, p. 20, Kegan Paul, 2s. 6d.). And as for truth, has not Mr. Witcomb realized that it abstractly stands for the indefinite class of true statements? and—that Pilate's question like many similar questions of that terribly superstitious age (witness the vast collections of Magical Papyri and Inscriptions!) is in its implications antiquated?

5. The sentence by which the letter is wound up has again no point at all: I have never denied the statement that truth will have to be faced by all. Of course, it will—and by Mr. Witcomb especially! (I beg to refer to my earlier letter of May 26, 1935, for my final answer).

G. S. SMELTERS.

Riga, Latvia.

THE GIANT KILLER

SIR,—In two columns of the *Freethinker* Mr. W. Don Fisher destroys the whole structure of modern Medicine.

Just let him have two more columns to tell struggling practitioners what to put in its place. It will be enough to say what is knowledge, and how is it acquired?

One surmises that the writer of the letter is an anti-vivisectionist.

Seriously are we to infer that the *Freethinker* is an organ for Anti-vivisection?

W. L. ENGLISH, M.B.

[The opinions expressed by a writer in his letter is entirely his own, and he alone is responsible for them. All we are concerned with is that a letter shall contain a point of view and be suitably expressed.—EDITOR.]

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 21, 1935

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Wood, Saphin, Tuson, Silvester, Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

A number of apologies for unavoidable absence were noted.

Minutes of last meeting read and accepted. The Financial Statement was presented. New members were admitted for Plymouth, Bradford, Edinburgh, Brighton, Glasgow, Liverpool, North London, West London Branches, and the Parent Society.

Lecture reports were submitted from West Ham, Bradford, Brighton, Edinburgh, and instructions given for lecture arrangements in London and the provinces. Correspondence from the Union of International Freethought Societies were dealt with and the date of the next congress at Prague recorded. A successful Social at Caxton Hall was reported, and details in connexion with the Annual Dinner discussed. The new form of membership cards was submitted and approved. The next meeting of the Executive was ordered to be held on December 19, and the meeting then closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

SOME POPES

Pope Alexander VI. had openly bought the papal tiara, and his five bastards shared its advantages. His son, the Cardinal-Duke of Borgia made an end, in concert with his father, of Vitelli, Urbino, Gravina, Oliverotto, and a hundred other nobles, in order to seize their lands. Julius II., animated by the same spirit, excommunicated Louis XII. and gave his Kingdom to the first occupant; while he himself, helmet on head and cuirass on back, spread blood and fire over part of Italy. Leo X. to pay for his pleasures, sold indulgences, as the taxes are sold in the open market.—*Voltaire*

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, A Lecture. Highbury Corner, 7.30, A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday. Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W. 4): 7.30, Mr. Arnold Lunn—"In Defence of Science."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Mark Twain (Centenary) Artist and Humanist."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, December 2, Mr. R. F. Turney—"On the use of Leisure."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, H. Preece—"The Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W): 7.30, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A.—"What is Roman Catholicism?"

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti (London)—"Jesus, Fascism and Prothought."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, Birmingham): 7.30, Debate—"Is Industrialism More Valuable than Collectivism in the Modern World?" Mr. W. J. Smith, *Neg.* Mr. Millington *Affir.*

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.0, Mr. Kenneth Hunt (Read)—"Religion and Modern Youth."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford): 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"The Savageries of Civilization."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street): 7.0, Ethel D. Currie, B.Sc., Ph.D., F.G.S.—"Extinct Monsters." Lantern Lecture.

HETTON (Cub Hall): 8.0, Wednesday, December 3, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. G. Bedborough—"Morality and the Christian Model."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, H. Little (Liverpool)—"Jesting Jesus."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, November 29, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Room 5, 2nd Floor, Drake Circus): 7.30, A Lecture—"Judaism."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Materialism Made Easy."

SOME CHRISTIAN TYPES

by

CRITICUS

Price 4d.

By post 5d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.4

BOOK BARGAINS

Essays on Love and Virtue

The Renovation of the Family—The Function of Taboos—The Revaluation of Obscenity—The Control of Population—Eugenics and the Future, etc. Published 7/6. Price 3/-. Postage 4d.

The Task of Social Hygiene

The Problem of Sexual Hygiene—Eugenics and Love—The Significance of a Falling Birth-rate, etc. Published 6/. Price 2/9. Postage 4½d.

Impressions and Comments

Essays. Published 6/-. Price 2/9. Postage 4d.

Affirmations

Literary Essays. Published 6/-. Price 2/9. Postage 4½d.
The above Books by HAVELOCK ELLIS.

Givers of Life, and Their Significance in Mythology

A Study in Religious Origins. By M. A. CANNEY. Published 3/6. Price 1/6. Postage 2d.

Voltaire

The White Bull—The Adventure of Memory—Madame de Maintenon—Thought for Fools—Wives Submit Yourselves—Epictetus to his Son, etc. Translated, with notes, by C. E. Vulliamy. Limited edition. Published 7/6. Price 3/-. Postage 5½d.

Immortal Man

A Study of Primitive Funeral Customs and Beliefs about a Future Life. Published 6/-. Price 2/6. Postage 3½d.

Authorodoxy

A Careful and Slashing Criticism of G. K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*. Published 5/- Price 1/6. Postage 2d.

All as new. Only limited number of copies

Obtainable from THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E C 4

Footsteps of the Past

BY

J. M. WHEELER

Price 3s. 6d.

Postage 3d.

AN APPEAL has been lodged against the recent magistrate's decision which banned *The Sexual Impulse*, by EDWARD CHARLES, published by Boriswood. Donations from all those interested in preserving the liberty of expression will greatly assist the defence, and should be sent to The Boriswood Appeal, c/o The National Council for Civil Liberties, 99a Charing Cross Road, W.C.1.

ACADEMY CINEMA,

Oxford Street.

Ger. 2981

Awarded the Volpi Cup at Venice, 1935, for the World's Best Screen Performance PAULA WESSLELY (of "Maskerade" fame) in "Episode" (A).

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

An Illustrated Descriptive List (68 pages) of Birth Control Requisites and Books sent post free for 2.1½d. stamp
N.B.—PRICES ARE NOW LOWER.

J. R. HOLMES, East Hanney, Wantage, Berks.

ESTABLISHED NEARLY HALF A CENTURY

Reading for To-day

Arms & The Clergy

By

George Bedborough

The War Years are now 17 years behind us and a new generation has arisen that is not familiar with the attitude of the clergy during the strenuous period of 1914-1918. To-day their talk is of peace and the barbarisms of war. Then there were no greater cultivators of the war-spirit than the clergy. Mr. Bedborough has in *Arms and the Clergy* produced with marked success a handy and effective piece of work. This is a book that everyone interested in the question of peace and war should possess.

Price 1s. By post 1s. 2d. Cloth, gilt, by post 2s. 3d.

Issued for the Secular Society, Limited by the Pioneer Press, 61 FARRINGTON ST., E.C.4
LONDON

The Question of the Moment

HUMANITY AND WAR

By

CHAPMAN COHEN

Forty pages, with cover. THREEPENCE, postage 1d. extra. This is a Freethinker's view of the whole subject of war, fearlessly and simply expressed. In order to assist in its circulation eight copies will be sent for Two shillings postage paid. Terms for larger quantities on application.

SEND AT ONCE FOR A SUPPLY

Issued for the Secular Society, Limited, by
the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon St., E.C.4
LONDON

220 pages of Wit and Wisdom

BIBLE ROMANCES

By G. W. Foote

The *Bible Romances* is an illustration of G. W. Foote at his best. It is profound without being dull, witty without being shallow; and is as indispensable to the Freethinker as is the *Bible Handbook*.

Price 2/6 Postage 3d.

Well printed and well bound.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.4.

*A Yuletide or
New Year's Gift:*

The handsome Library Edition of
MODERN KNOWLEDGE
AND
OLD BELIEFS

This may be obtained from THE PIONEER PRESS
for 2s. 6d. or, including postage, for 2s. 9d.

NOW READY

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

By

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

Price 2d.

Postage ½d.

A list of Ingersoll's pamphlets published by
The Pioneer Press

<i>About the Holy Bible</i>	- - -	3d.
<i>Rome or Reason?</i>	- - -	3d.
<i>What is Religion?</i>	- - -	1d.
<i>What is its Worth?</i>	- - -	1d.
<i>Household of Faith</i>	- - -	1d.
<i>Mistakes of Moses</i>	- - -	2d.

The above will be sent post free 1s. 3d.