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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
 Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions

God and the Government

THE decision of the Dean and Chapter of Liverpool not to pray for Ministers of State, as a method of marking their disapproval of the Government policy towards Germany, has attracted considerable notice in the press. The latest news concerning it is, that Mr. Maxwell Fyfe, M.P., challenged Canon Davey and the Dean of Liverpool to debate the subject. The two servants of the Lord accepted the challenge, but the Bishop of Liverpool intervened. He was of opinion that a debate on the question would involve both the policy of the Government and the theory and practice of Common Prayer. "It might," he said, "do much harm." With that I quite agree.

In the first place one may note that it is not usual for the Church of England to oppose the Government, nor, indeed, of any Christian Church to oppose any Government so long as the Government is giving it support. And in the case of Canon Davey refusing to offer up prayers for Ministers of State, he was not only setting on one side one of the main functions of the medicine-man in all ages, but he was refusing to do what he is paid to do, and without offering to forego a portion of his salary on conscientious grounds. In all ages the essential function of the medicine-man is to stand between man and his gods. This may be to ward off disease, to secure victory, or to get good crops, but the function of a priest is quite plain. And to-day no one goes to a priest, as a priest, for advice on any subject other than those dealing with God and a future life. Of course, a particular parson may know more than a particular layman of astronomy or biology, but he does not possess this superior knowledge in virtue of his being a parson. And as a priest of the Church of England, he is ordered officially to pray for rain or fine weather, for victory or for relief from pestilence, for the Royal family, and other things. All this is part of the regular job of the Church of England

clergy, and it is so because they inherit the tradition of being in closer touch with God than ordinary men. If Canon Davey does not believe this, then his refusal to pray for the Ministers of State is a piece of bombast. And if so, it is probable that the Recording Angel, to whom one may assume prayers go in the first instance, may have to hunt up a heavenly "Who's Who?" in order to discover who on earth is Canon Davey.

* * *

A Ticklish Situation

THE *Church Times*, scenting danger, says that the Dean and Chapter "exhibited their genius for making themselves ridiculous," they are "muddle-headed and arrogant," and it also fears that "stupidity on one side will excite stupidity on the other." This was by way of comment on the Minister of War, Mr. Duff Cooper, who spoke of the ignorant parsons, and said that it was clean against the Church of England, clean against the outstanding Christian sects to "say anything against the army as a noble profession." The phrase is worth remembering. The *Christian World* thinks the incident unfortunate, and tries to pour oil on the waters by suggesting that to pray for the Ministers of State is a very different thing from registering approval of their policies. But surely to pray for the Ministers of State is to imply agreement with them. The person who prays for them must think they are worth praying for, not that they are past praying for. Nor will it be suggested that when the clergy offer prayers they are asking for nothing definite nor expecting anything precise.

Canon Davey himself offered some kind of explanation by saying that he did not call upon his congregation to refrain from praying for the Government, "What I said was that we should not commend to God" the policy of the Government. According to this, Canon Davey believes that people may pray for the Ministers if they please, but without his official endorsement the prayers will not go very far. One wonders whether the Canon thinks God is waiting to find out whether the Dean and Chapter will commend the Government policy before he makes up his mind to bless or curse the Ministers of State.

I agree with the Bishop of Liverpool that the situation is dangerous. It may open up the whole question of the value of prayer. It is obvious, to commence with, that if God will do what he intends doing whether the Canon and others agree with him or not, then our prayers will make no difference to the sum of happenings, and prayer is just waste of time. But it is also obvious that one who does pray believes that something will happen that would not happen had he never prayed. If a man prays that God will endow the members of the Government with greater wisdom, he may see quite plainly that there is no marked improvement sufficient to call for thanks, but

he will quite probably feel that the Government is not quite so stupid as it might have been had he never prayed. To pray, as a way of evading this difficulty, "Thy will, not my will, be done," is either folly or impudence. If God exists, one may assume that his will *must* be done whether we like it or not, and to say that when we pray we are merely telling God that we agree with his doing as he pleases, is sheer impudence. Of course, I might say that God needs our agreement and approval, even to exist, but I do not think that Christians would say this—that is if they understood what they were saying. Or to say that God's decisions are not altered by our prayers and advice, but that we are ourselves better for having prayed is to convert prayer into a gigantic act of self-deception. It places prayer upon exactly the same level of value as bottles of coloured water and bread pills. With this view I have no serious disagreement. I know that people must feel better for praying, just as hysterics feel better when they have taken a perfectly innocent concoction. Fooling oneself is one of the oldest of human occupations, and religion and religious ceremonies offer the finest scope for the amusement.

Finally, there is that dangerous expression of the Minister of War, "Who are these ignorant clergymen?" Ignorant clergymen! Mr. Duff Cooper may thank himself that he lives in days when Freethought has given him the right to say this without fear of punishment. And the sting of the statement lies in its truth. For apart from the questions of God and a future life—on which subjects I admit the clergy know as much as anyone—if we compare the clergy with an equal number of men from any of the educated professions, then in comparison the clergy are, as a body, really ignorant men. Here and there one clergyman stands out from the rest and gains a reputation for moderate wisdom, but in the main these outstanding characters among the clergy are like hills in Holland—a very little elevation makes them conspicuous. But even in these days whatever reputation the clergy have as men of intellect exists only as a kind of "hang-over" from the time when the medicine-man was credited with a wisdom not possible to ordinary men and women. And when responsible Ministers of State refer to the clergy as "ignorant" they are striking the clergy a blow where it hurts most.

* * *

A few Questions

I have suggested that the Liverpool bother goes further and deeper than appears at first sight, and I am not surprised that some of the religious journals are quite disturbed about it. Even the Dean and Chapter may wonder whether they have not acted rashly. The general public may also be asking themselves questions, and it may well be that presently these may be put to the clergy. For my own part I can imagine a number of people putting questions of the following nature. (1) Have the Dean and Chapter any evidence that God actually knows what is the policy of the Government towards Germany (apart from exploring avenues, turning stones and looking over the world), or is it the belief of the Dean and Chapter that God is waiting to hear their opinion of the Government policy before either blessing or cursing it?

(2) Is it the aim of the Dean and Chapter to call the attention of God—by means of the unusual silence resulting from the cessation of prayers—to what is going on between the Government and Germany, in case political news is not circulated in heaven?

(3) If God does know, and approves the Government policy may not the Dean and Chapter "catch it

hot" for opposing him? If God does not approve the Government may he not feel annoyed at the Dean and Chapter advertising their support of him, much in the line of the famous three tailors of Tooley Street?

(4) If God does know what is going on in Government circles, and, considering his arithmetical feat of knowing every hair on a man's head, he *ought* to know, may he not get into a temper with this body of fussy Liverpool parsons for acting as though their opinion on Government policy may help him to decide whether he shall bless the Government or damn it?

(5) Have we any grounds for believing that God cares the tip of an angel's wing-feather whether certain Liverpool parsons agree with the Government or not?

(6) Assuming that God agrees with Mr. Baldwin's policy (taking it for granted that Mr. Baldwin has a policy with which to agree or disagree), do the Dean and Chapter suggest that some form of "sanctions" should be adopted by themselves and other parsons who agree with them?

(7) When a Government has a quarrel with another Government, it breaks off diplomatic relations by withdrawing its representative. Would the Dean and Chapter agree, assuming God agrees with Mr. Baldwin, that something of the same thing might be done? The Chaplain might be withdrawn from the House of Commons. Every day he has been praying that the members might be endowed with wisdom, and the Dean and Chapter has had publicly to protest against the result. Or would they close Liverpool Cathedral, and advocate the closing of all other Churches, until such time as God, having been informed by the Liverpool Dean and Chapter, of what the Government is doing—or not doing—having also been informed that the Dean and Chapter does not agree with the Government, decides, say, on reviving his biblical policy and covers Mr. Baldwin with boils, or repeats one of the plagues of Egypt and forces the House of Commons to scratch its way to repentance?

Quite clearly the matter ought not to rest here. The Dean and Chapter having publicly protested, may properly expect that God will back up their protest, much as the British Fleet is expected to back up the protests of the British Government if such protests are treated with contempt—of course, with due regard to the size and importance of the parties guilty of the said contempt. The Dean and Chapter having acted as they have, must feel that God is with them or against them. If the former, then it might punish the Government by closing the Churches and so preventing the nation asking for favours until it has amended its ways. If the latter, then the Dean and Chapter should have the courage of their convictions and declare a strike at once. Otherwise God may bless the nation, in just the ordinary course of things, and Mr. Baldwin may take this as a sign of God's approval of his policy. Every avenue should be explored, no stone should be left unturned, the situation should be carefully studied so that the trouble should be brought to a righteous, that is, a British end.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The world may be kind or unkind . . . but whatever else it be, so long as we have good health and a good library, it can hardly be dull.—*Lord Balfour*.

When people who are tolerably fortunate in their outward lot do not find in life sufficient enjoyment to make it valuable to them, the cause generally is, caring for no body but themselves.—*John Stuart Mill*.

Gulling the Godly

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."—*Alice in Wonderland.*

SANDWICHED between accounts of the reappearance of the Loch Ness "monster," and reports of the latest murder case, the newspaper press finds space for fervid appeals for money to help, not the unemployed in derelict areas, but the clergy of the State-supported Anglican Church. Admittedly, the unemployed are existing under terrible conditions, but, according to the journalists, their sufferings are nothing in comparison with those of thousands of parsons and curates. How otherwise can it be explained why the unemployed are treated by editors with high-sniffing contempt, whilst the cries of the canons and the curates are broadcast with all the resources of the Press Gang at its noisiest?

"Poverty among the clergy is widespread," says one periodical (*Sunday Dispatch*, March 22), and quotes a parson as declaring:—

None of us gets riches, most do not get a living wage, and many are half starved

The anonymous cleric who made this very sweeping statement, does not know much about his own profession. Let us therefore examine the matter more closely. He says, "none of us gets riches." It all depends upon what one regards as "riches." The Church of England itself is a millionaire Church, with a capital of £32,000,000, excluding tithe-rent charges, which produce nearly £3,000,000 per year. Forty of the principal bishops, including two archbishops, share £182,700 yearly, together with palaces and palatial residences. And many of the clergy manage to leave large sums of money when they shuffle off this mortal coil and enter the golden streets of heaven. The late Bishop of Colchester left estate valued at £60,848. Bishop Creighton, who used to talk of the poverty of parsons, left £29,500. Archbishop Benson left £35,000, and Archbishop Tait a similar sum. Bishop Walsham How did better with £72,240. A good second to this was Bishop Tuffnell's £65,800. Bishop Phillpotts left £60,000, whilst Archbishop Thomson left £55,000, and Bishop Trollope £50,790. More modest "nest-eggs" were those of Bishop Harvey Godwin, £19,361; Bishop Tozier, £10,000; and Bishop Pelham, £12,605.

This anonymous "defender of the faith" also says "most do not get a living wage, and many are half starved." The answer to this is that, at present, the average income of the "half-starved" curates is roughly £190, and that of incumbents £400, with a house thrown in, larger than the neighbours'. Some incumbents, with small parishes, are paid up to £2,000 a year, and certain canons, with no duty except that of preaching an occasional sermon, are paid £1,000 a year. And pluralists, that is clergymen who hold more than one clerical job, are by no means unknown.

One thing is worth noting in this appeal on behalf of the clergy. It is not said, this time, that the unhappy men are starved, but only that they are "half-starved." In former appeals actual starvation was stressed, but critics pointed out that there were no deaths of the clergy from starvation, and no coroners' verdicts to that effect. Hence the mitigation of their affliction in later appeals to that of semi-starvation.

This sentimental newspaper nonsense is written with the object of exciting the sympathy of the innocent men and women who are taught to revere the clergy as a sacred caste apart, and who never think

that religion is a trade just as much as that of the publican, pawnbroker, or cat's-meat merchant.

Excluding the curates, who do the routine work, the average "reverend" enjoys a comfortable livelihood. He has a house, mostly larger and nicer than his neighbour's, usually with plenty of garden-space. He has just as much, or as little, work as he likes to do, and if he chooses to spend three-fourths of each day reading or visiting, there is no one to say him nay. He can count on invitations to dinner and other hospitality all the year round, which is no small saving in household expenses. In the pleasant summer months he can enjoy lengthy holidays, far more extensive than the majority of men.

With regard to the curates themselves, most of them come from families in a comfortable social position. Working-class folk cannot afford to send their sons to a university for training. Furthermore, when the clerical aspirant has learnt the patter of his profession, he is in a happier position than the young doctor or solicitor, who has either to "start at scratch," or to buy a business. The Bishop of London was once a curate at Bethnal Green, and he was never in danger of starvation or semi-starvation. Has he not told us that he saved £10,000 by going without beer or baccy?

In the coming holiday season, thousands of these "half-starved" clergymen will be seen disporting themselves at the pleasure-resorts around the coast of Britain, whilst the higher ecclesiastics will adorn the Continental resorts. It will be seen that these clergymen have a good time on earth, and, despite the harrowing stories in the newspapers, they are not by any means in danger of crucifixion. The bachelor Bishop of London, who is always shouting of the sufferings of the clergy, "starves" on a salary of £200 weekly, a sum sufficient to keep a score of families in comfort. And his brother-prelate, His Grace of Canterbury, lives from hand to mouth on a paltry £300 weekly. The plain truth is that this State-supported Church of England is the richest church in all Christendom. At the top are ecclesiastics with seats in the House of Lords, where they never do any good service for the democracy; at the bottom are a multitude of holders of benefices far better off than the ordinary man.

This constant harping on the alleged sufferings of the clergy is a trick of their trade. And there are a few others that are used. At present Westminster Abbey is without an organ, and a new instrument will be used at the Coronation next year. For some time to come the Abbey services will be accompanied on a piano. The *Evening Standard* (March 25) explains:—

A temporary organ could have been erected, but that would have tended to diminish in the eyes of the public the need for the new one, and, incidentally the money to pay for it.

It reminds one of the story of the impecunious tradesman, who required a shade for his shop-window, and who placed a collection-box on his counter marked "For the Blind," in order to raise the money.

No advertising agent, no patent-medicine manufacturer, no theatre proprietor, ever had keener eyes for the pursuit of cash than the clergy. The mere recital of their "stunts" would fill columns. Think of the threatened "downfall" of Saint Paul's Cathedral! Recall the wail concerning the "Paganism" of the London suburbs! Consider the blood-curdling yarns of the sufferings of the poor half-starved clergy! And then notice that the bishoprics of this poor, persecuted Church have been multiplied by the score during the past two generations, each with its appropriate four-figure salary. There is even an Anglican bishop of Northern and Central

Europe, and it is a very safe conclusion that the vast majority of the inhabitants of that vast region never heard of the man or the sectarian body he so comfortably represents.

A further consideration of these clever clerical advertising stunts reveals one particularly interesting feature. No reliance is placed upon the alleged supernatural, but the time-honoured methods of ordinary commercialism are pressed into service. Faith may move mountains, but the clergy prefer the more certain methods of modern and up-to-date advertising. In the pulpit these parsons talk glibly of celestial help, but in their business manipulations they are just plain showmen. It is a very entertaining piece of Christian evidence, and throws a search-light on the practices and pretensions of this clerical caste, whose business methods are as tortuous and as questionable as their theology.

MIMNERMUS.

The Yellow Spot

"THE YELLOW SPOT," which has just been published by Gollancz, 8s. 6d. cloth, 5s. paper, should be read by every Freethinker and lover of freedom. It is a documentary study of the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews from Germany; save, perhaps, those renegade Jews who, for pelf and power, have sold themselves and betrayed their fellows by going over to the side of the Nazi.

Freethinkers, who have so frequently condemned the barbarities of the Middle Ages, and the foul crimes of the Inquisition, cannot be consistent if they fail to condemn the Nazi pogroms against the Jews.

To denounce the horrors of the past while silently permitting the outrages of the present to continue without protest and without trying to prevent their extension is to deprive freedom of thought and action of all practical value, and to reduce it to the jaw-wagging of the talking-shop.

The Yellow Spot is not only an indictment of the horrible and disgusting treatment of the Jews, under the Hitler regime. It is a warning of what is to take place in Great Britain, unless public opinion and action are roused to such a degree as will make impossible the development of anti-Jewish feeling by Mosley and his followers. Not only so; the Jew-baiting activities of the Fascists are not merely a danger to Jews alone. They are a means to an end. They form a cover under which it is hoped a mass basis for Fascism can be built up. Once the tide is turned in favour of Jew-baiting, the Fascists can keep the minds of thousands, whose race feelings have been aroused, away from the real causes of present-day misery, poverty, and unemployment. Then it will be less difficult to extend Fascist brutality to the beating up of all who object to or resist Fascist authority. Whether you are Jew or "pure" Aryan will cease to matter.

The title of the book *The Yellow Spot* is taken from the Ghetto badge of the Middle Ages. The contents of the book make one wonder what meaning is to be attached to the term "Modern Civilization."

Jew-baiting in Nazi Germany must be condemned. Protests should be sent either to Berlin or to the German Ambassador in London. This is not an unjustifiable interference with the internal management of another nation. Inhumanity on so large a scale is an international affair; and we can agree with the Bishop of Durham when he says, in his intro-

duction to the book, "Nations cannot live in isolation: and their membership of the comity of civilized peoples imposes on them some obligations, which they cannot be suffered to repudiate." (p. 7.)

A glance at the Nuremberg Laws (September 15, 1935), quoted on pp. 30/31 of *The Yellow Spot*, makes it quite clear that persecution of the Jews in Germany has the support of Nazi law. While the quotation on p. 36, from Hitler's, *My Struggle*, p. 724, German Edition, leaves no doubt that the extirpation of the Jews by the Nazi is a fundamental tenet of National Socialism.

Most of the evidence is taken from Nazi documents, but a passage from the *Manchester Guardian* of March 27, 1933, records some of the early excesses in brutality of the Brown Shirts in Berlin. Jews were beaten until their heads and faces streamed with blood; their backs and shoulders were bruised; and many fainted in the streets and had to be taken to hospital by passers-by. Some were beaten until they were unconscious and their money was taken from them. A whole gang of Nazis, would attack and beat one person, or break into a house and use their rubber truncheons on the family until all were bruised and bleeding. (p. 34.)

On March 10, 1933, *The Frankfurter Zeitung* reported how the Law Courts of Breslau had been cleared of Jewish judges and lawyers by troops of S.A. men, and on March 19, *The Volkische Beobachter* advocated, with gusto, that the same methods should be adopted in Berlin; speaking of the Breslau incident as the "modest beginnings of a purge." (p. 36.)

Details of the boycott of Jewish shops and stores, and of all the slogans used to incite popular feeling against the Jews cannot be given here, but the wealth of information presented in *The Yellow Spot* reveals the mental degradation of the Nazi authorities.

The chapters dealing with Streicher's *Stürmer* propaganda provide sickening reading. Vile expressions are used concerning the Jews and lying reports of ritual murders given, in order to keep up the pogroms throughout Germany during 1935. Headings like "Rapacious Jewish Lust for German Women," "Piggish Race Morals," "Rape with a Revolver," "Defilement of Nurses," are common: while the *Stürmer* reader is asked to see that the paper reaches the remotest family in Germany.

In a special appeal, dated Nuremberg, August 26, 1935, the reader of the *Stürmer* is told that "the Jewish plague has eaten its way deep into the German people"; that "hundreds of thousands have been successfully rescued from the talons of the Jew"; that "in order finally to root out the criminal Jewish people, a mighty campaign of enlightenment must be carried through, embracing the whole nation"; and the reader is addressed as a "true Jew-hater" and called upon to "fight against the devil's people of Jewry." (pp. 103-104.)

The "campaign of enlightenment" consists of the publication of pornographic illustrations about Jews, in vile slanders of the Jewish people, in headlines which reek with references to sex, all of which are so presented as to incite to ill-treatment and pogroms against the Jewish people.

In many cases, Jews and Jewesses have been paraded through the streets carrying cards stating "I have defiled a German girl!" or "I have allowed myself to be defiled by a Jew!" No! this is not from an incident recorded of the Middle Ages, but from 1935 Nazi Germany, and it must be remembered that the pogroms, mass arrests, the drenching of Jewish houses by Storm Troopers using hose-pipes, the turning of Jewish families into the rain in night attire, and the placarding of city, town, and village

with anti-Jewish slogans has been carried on throughout Germany.

The "campaign of enlightenment" carried on against Jewish workers, business people (who are forced to sell their businesses at a loss), lawyers and doctors who are prevented exercising their calling, and the "cleaning up" of literature, science, and the arts in general, are described in many a page with documentary evidence. This should be enough to convince any reader of the horror of Fascism. But what of the enlightenment of German children?

Before dealing with this, two quotations: 1. "The German Association of the Blind has decided on the exclusion of the Jewish blind." 2. "By order of the Reich Leader of the Central Organization for German Deaf, all deaf Jewish members have been excluded." (pp. 176-177.)

The chapter on "The Children's Crusade" must be read in order to get an idea of the extent to which the minds of children are poisoned against the Jews, to the greater glory of Nazi Germany. The following brief summary will serve as an eyeopener. "Jew-baiting taught every day in the schools must have consequences, the extent of which can scarcely be gauged. Children, at a tender age, are taught biological facts through the medium of the *Stürmer*, the pornographic content of which is notorious. Children as 'young *Stürmer*-guards' are encouraged to harass not only children of their own age but also adults. Children are told to explain 'ritual murder' to their parents, and to stop their mothers buying from Jewish shops. Children are taught to denounce their parents and to persecute other children." (p. 246.)

Quotations from letters which children send to the *Stürmer*, as examples of the way in which they have imbibed their anti-Jew lessons, are given, along with evidence of the pride which swells the breasts of the teachers. The whole chapter records deeds worthy of the darkest periods of human history. Jewish children are not allowed to have milk at school; they are turned out of Children's Homes while they are actually ill; three Jewish lads, ages 12 and 13, were savagely beaten by twenty heroic Nazis in uniform for doing nothing worse than camp on the banks of the Elbe; and "ladies" of the National Socialist Welfare Organization take pride in "discovering" that a Jewish schoolboy has defiled a German schoolgirl by the simple method of setting upper-form girls to watch the children when they are together in the street in broad day-light. The frame-up is completed by frightening the children into a door-way and then calling the police to arrest them. Thus are young lives spoiled, young minds poisoned, and all the beastly elements in human nature fostered in adults under cover of building up a new civilization with a more glorious culture. Well may the chapter dealing with the children end with the words, "what can be the consequences for Germany, and perhaps for the whole world, of the upbringing of an entire younger generation in beliefs and with lessons of the kind described in this chapter is not pleasant to contemplate." (p. 251.)

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

A Robin red-breast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage;
A dove-house full of doves and pigeons
Shudders Hell through all its regions;
A Skylark wounded on the wing
Doth make a cherub cease to sing.

William Blake.

State and Church in Mexico

THE influence upon Mexico's ancient culture of the United States of America, coupled with that of her Spanish Conquerors, has given her a violent, chequered history in modern times. This, in turn, has produced many interesting social experiments, one of which is an attempt to limit the power of the Church, though because of the cloud of Europe's travail and the belief that modern Mexico is merely a small copy of the U.S.S.R., little is known of it in Europe.

The large programme of social development Mexico has since fathered is a direct outcome of this disestablishment. For instance, the Revolutionary Government has freed 7,604,880 hectares of land for division among the people, begun a scheme of rural schools, enrolling 145,000 children and adults for education by film, travel, and open-air theatre, and made possible considerable progress in Labour legislation, temperance work, protection of women and children, and in public health. In fact, between the Mexico of to-day and the Mexico of yesterday there is a bridge of splendid social achievement, which has been motivated by a desire to break with the blackness of the past, and an enthusiastic belief in the possibility of a new Mexico. Plain to the outside world, though, is the fact that the churches take no part in this social revolution, that in the midst of all this, hundreds of churches are closed. And, moreover, the churches that do function are not only spectators, but are almost entirely excluded from other spheres of life.

Mexico's modern history divides itself into three clearly marked periods, which throw light on the development of this anti-religious feeling. These periods are: the Independence Period culminating in the Independence finally arrived at in 1821; the Liberal Reform of 1857; and the Revolution (1910-21), the last and most virile phase of which is now working. The Independence movement was a reflection of a vague wish among the people for social improvement, with the ultimate outcome of legislation which left political power in the hands of the land-owning and clerical oligarchy, and a disillusioned minority of rebellious military units waiting to wrest it from them. Most of the demands of Latin American Liberals were allowed by the Reform of 1857: the lay school, nationalization of ecclesiastical properties, secularization of cemeteries, and religious freedom: generally believed to be the bounden foundations for the building up of the social welfare. But though clericalism's attempt at a *coup d'état* failed with the collapse of the French intervention, much of its power was given back by the concessions to the churches by the Dictator Porfirio Diaz (1876-1910). As these were made without touching the Liberal Reform, both "left" and "right" were theoretically in power, a situation which led quickly to armed risings, and from these to civil war.

From 1910 to 1917 Mexico was torn by a civil war which reduced her population by nearly a million. The first of the chiefs of the Revolution, Madero, contributed his share to the Constitution of 1917, and his successors added theirs in turn. Framed in the stress of fighting, and hardened by the violent opposition of the clergy, who were once again on the side of reaction, it was constructed so that the Church would be powerless to use the political machine against the new ideals. After 1917, when the influence of the Russian Revolution began to be felt, it was amended to allow the addition of many provisos for social reconstruction.

Socialist ideas find small place in the Constitution, however, which is Nationalist and Liberal with a Socialist flavour. Its difference from the Russian system is due to the fact that it was framed from camp fire discussions, from opinions hotly disputed in the camp and bivouack, and from men's instincts and burning grievances, rather than from the study of a body of political doctrine by professional jurists. Its effects upon religion are something similar, nevertheless, for laws regulating property, education and the Ministry are common to both.

The Catholic historian, Lucas Alamán, reckoned the property of the Mexican churches in the nineteenth century to amount to one-half of the total real estate of the country. This estimate included the value of churches, church offices, vicarages and convents. Now, this belongs to the nation, and the Government stipulates which churches are to open; in Mexico City with a population of 1,000,000 people, 25 out of 300 churches are functioning. Many have become schools; the others are simply closed.

But when one regards the education question, even the property issue is dwarfed—at least in clerical eyes. Till 1934, education was secular, but by a repair of Article 3 of the Constitution, it was made "Socialist." By "Socialist" is not meant that bias towards freedom from indoctrination in education advocated by Socialists, but, simply and solely, complete freedom of education from all religious influence. Education under this law is irreligious at the least, anti-religious at the most, in that it is obligatory on private schools, which excludes churches from making any educational provision whatever for their members.

The Christian ministry has been strictly controlled. Governors of States are empowered by the Constitution to fix the number of ministers to be licensed, who must be of Mexican birth, and who, only, can perform religious ceremonies involving acts of public worship. The official ruling regarding "an act of public worship, or *acto de culto*," excludes preaching, but includes sacramental acts. This law has been enforced everywhere in Mexico, except against Christ Church, the church of the foreign colony in Mexico City. No ministers at all are allowed in seven States, and the once powerful Catholic Church has under 200 licensed ministers for over 17,000,000 people. In some districts, the regulations theoretically permit the Catholic Church more, but demand priestly obedience to rules (such as that all priests must marry), which make priesthood impossible.

Mexican opinion differs widely on the effects, wisdom and value of these, and similar measures. The Catholic Church says that it is being violently persecuted, and it has produced some cases of real hardship to support its contention. The Protestants make little complaint. The Government says that it is not anti-religious, and holds that the hardship suffered by the Church or its servants is the consequence of its refusal to re-organize itself, and its persistent interference in politics.

Although there has been some slight easing of the tension between State and Church since 1929, when the churches were re-opened, feeling in general runs high between them, particularly over the education question. Naturally, as the most powerful church, and, therefore, the hardest hit by the new Constitution, the Catholic Church is most in opposition, but the anti-clerical laws have been partially imposed upon all denominations.

The extremism of some States, such as the State of Tabasco, where the cathedral has been razed and no religious services have been held for the last seven years, does not hasten a reconciliation. By order,

however, from the President in the summer of 1935, the local administration in Tabasco was suspended, and, with this step, other moderating influences have been set going, which have somewhat counterbalanced extremist tendencies.

Wisely, the Government has kept anti-clerical legislation from becoming anti-religious activity, knowing that this would immediately gain the Church the sympathy of a mass of religiously indifferent people whose cultural traditions are lay and liberal. Its aim appears to be rather to allow religion to die the lingering death it believes is inevitable when its material props are removed.

The Churches have not lapsed into a passive acceptance of their chains. The evangelical minorities are resolved to fight for their freedom, and to that end have formed a temporary alliance. Catholicism is active too, and is making the most of its influence on the Municipal Councils, upon which it is revealing unsuspected strength. A factor very disturbing to the Government is that it is constantly having to remove from high offices men found using their positions for the advancement of the Catholic Church. Only last December, four State Governors and five Senators were deposed and sentenced to imprisonment for being concerned with a group of Callistas, followers of General Calles, the Catholic General, who wished to implant a Catholic-Fascist regime in Mexico.

L. H. BORRILL.

Cause and Effect

A CARELESS nurse-maid dropped him on his head
When he was but a tiny baby boy;
At first they thought their precious infant dead,
But he recovered, to his mother's joy;
And after years of idle boyhood sped,
He ceased his worried parents to annoy;
In fact he left his family in the lurch,
And turned his erring footsteps to the Church.

His sense of self-importance was inflated;
He thought himself the special friend of God;
Upon this fact he oft expatiated,
And never seemed to think the friendship odd;
His vanity was never satiated,
And in his dreams, when in the Land of Nod,
He sat with God, with Jesus at his feet,
And thought the Holy Trinity complete.

But that, of course, is only when he dreams,
His daily life is lived in stricter bounds;
His addled brain with oddest fancies teems,
But still the faithful pay him many pounds;
They love to hear him praying, so it seems,
But slumber when the Gospel he expounds;
They know him for a friend of the Most High;
He tells them so, and parsons cannot lie.

The time is drawing near when he will pass
To join in Heaven the ranks of the Elect,
For as the Scriptures say, "All Flesh is Grass,"
And Death for no man has the least respect;
His foes, no doubt, will call the man an ass,
But on this thought I ask them to reflect:
Had he not had this bump upon his head,
He might have gone to Hell when he was dead.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Always laugh when you can. . . Merriment is a philosophy not well understood. It is the sunny side of existence.—Byron.

Acid Drops

Writing in this column some eight months ago we said that short of a miracle happening, the days of Abyssinia as an independent country, might be considered as numbered. The miracle has not happened, and the shilly-shallying of the "powers," great in everything but courage and honesty, has once again made the lesson plain that so far as Governments are concerned it is the big fist and the big purse that tells. Italy will now, in the name of civilization—Christian civilization—assume control over Abyssinia, and the business of the "Powers" will be to devise some formula that will look as though right and justice demand that Italy shall have her way.

Our own Minister of War, recently declared that every branch of the Christian Church agreed that the army was a noble profession. Not a necessary profession, or a profession that we must submit to with all the evil consequences that an army must bring, for a sectional army can live only on mutual distrust of others and the expectancy of war, from which it follows that war itself is also noble—but a "noble profession!" Well, Italy has at least given us a sample of what the noble profession is capable of. Aeroplanes showering mustard gas on women and children, dropping poison gas and explosive bombs on hordes of men unable to even strike back, blasting collections of mud huts off the face of the earth, and firing on hospitals whenever occasion offered. And the Italian Army is as noble a profession as any other army. It is a noble profession, and when the Italian airmen come home they will be greeted as national heroes as is every conquering army the world over.

And let us make no mistake on one other point. Italy has now shown the world what the next war will be like. The heroes of each army, the nobility generated by the profession, will reconcile men to the task of showering on civilians and soldiers alike all that Italy has showered on the comparatively defenceless Abyssinians. It is a noble game, and it will remain so until the very existence of standing armies is regarded as a blot upon whatever civilization exists.

From this there is but one way out. This is for nations to have the intelligence and the courage voluntarily to place out of their power the means of any one nation declaring war. This is only asking nations to do what individuals in most countries have done, and are the better for having so acted. We hope that Mr. Duff Cooper will be made to realize the full significance of "the army is a noble profession." A necessary evil an army may be, but if we are to judge things by their consequences, we ought to take this colossal stupidity of Mr. Duff Cooper at its proper value. It is an exhibition of moral cowardice and intellectual atavism.

We have every appreciation of the indignation of the *Church Times* at the brutality of the Italian bombing of Abyssinian villages with poison gas. But only one degree less brutal was the bombing of some Sudanese villages by our own airmen at the end of last week, because the tribesmen had been giving the authorities some trouble. And against either dropping explosive bombs or gas bombs whenever "troubles" arise we are quite convinced that any kind of agreement merely not to use them is useless. When war commences it will not be long before one side accuses the other of commencing it, and there will be preparations during times of peace in case the unnamed enemy starts first. The only way out is to place all aircraft under some sort of international control, and to forbid bombing planes altogether. If this cannot be done, then to talk agreements, which in the future, more than ever, will be kept only so long as one side sees fit to keep them, is mere verbiage, intended only to blind those who cannot see very far.

But we cannot let the *Church Times* get away with the remark that Mussolini's terrorism is "Perfectly un-Christian." It is not. The weapon of terrorism has been the favourite one, both in teaching and in practice in all ages. What was the doctrine of hell but one of terrorism? What was the rule of all the Christian Churches but an exhibition of terrorism? To maintain this terrorism men and women were imprisoned, killed, tortured, ostracized, and ill-treated. And even to-day the system of terrorism is carried as far as circumstances permit. People are still boycotted in business and in other ways on account of their heretical opinions, or are driven to dishonesty because of the Christian pressure that is brought to bear upon them. If the *Church Times* is unacquainted with these facts we shall be pleased to supply it with particulars. The terrorism of to-day is not that of yesterday, but neither are the circumstances of to-day those of yesterday.

The Bishop of Durham, we regret to say, slipped when returning from prayers in his private chapel, and broke a bone in his ankle. We wish him a quick recovery, but we confess to a little curiosity as to the nature of the prayers offered. Did he ask for anything with which the Lord violently disagreed; or did the Lord make a mistake and mix up the prayers of the Bishop with someone else? Or did the Bishop pray "Thy will be done," and the broken ankle was a proof that the Lord took him at his word? The accident is very disconcerting to one who is trying to work up faith in the power of prayer.

A writer in the *Cambridge Review*, says plaintively enough, "If Christian students go down from the University with a first-class in the Theological Tripos, but completely untrained in biology, psychology, economics, sociology and philosophy, the consequences cannot but be disastrous." If the writer of the words cited is a Christian, we quite fail to see good grounds for complaint. It is to protect the Church and the graduate that the budding parson is sent down as described. If he were trained—well trained—in the subjects named, for how long would he remain in the ministry? The less trained thinking is brought to bear on some jobs the better.

From the *Observer* for April 5:—

His Majesty's Coronation which has been settled to take place in May of next year, will lend perspective to the whole intervening period. It will be the landmark by which all programmes are steered, the pivot on which all organizations will hang. Its pageantry will make an appeal to the world's imagination beyond that of all living memory. . . . The part that a British Sovereign plays in the life of his people is too intricate and intimate for any attempt at definition. But with consonance of heart and mind he can quicken for them the highest memories of their history, keep before them the nobler part of their own nature, lead them in the endurance of adversity and add confidence to their every advance upon new fields.

In case we should get swelled-headed enough to think that the British public is superior in having a King—or in always having a King—who can do all these things, we must bear in mind that the Mikado is a direct descendant of God; and readers of Sir James Frazer will remember that with uncivilized people the King is responsible for the succession of the seasons, the life of the Sun, and the production of the harvest. Our having had an equally wonderful King in the last one, and our assurance that we shall have an equally wonderful King in the next one, will comfort us with the reflection that everything is going "according to plan."

The other day we came across an advertisement of a book *The Private Life of Solomon*. The price was 15s. We did not buy it, but considering that Solomon had 300 wives and seven hundred concubines, we should imagine that he had much more of a private life when he was out than when he was at home.

Whether people are beginning to see through the missionary ramp and the missionary societies, can be judged from the latest reports on the latter's financial aspects. At the meeting of the Missionary Council of the Church Assembly, the other day, it was announced that their receipts for the year 1935-36 were down by a sum between £30,000 and £40,000 as compared with the same date in 1934-35. This is very good news. If all the money devoted to the propagation of Christianity were diverted to something useful—say, helping the unemployed in this country, or abolishing slums—one could even shout for joy. We hope next year's report will show even greater losses.

A "useful" summary of the "German-Nordic Religion" has been issued by the "Friends of Europe." It is notable for the fact that "Christianity remains the indispensable basis for the German-Nordic Religion"—though "the cult of the Cross were better left to a barbaric past." The *Universe* calls it "lunatic rubbish"—but really is it much sillier than "true" Christianity?

Divorce reformers in Paris have almost as many difficulties to overcome as they have here. A Bill "to permit divorce after two years' separation instead of three," has again been defeated in the Chamber of Deputies, "thanks to the work of Canon Desgranges and several Catholic deputies." Every time that it has been brought forward—and it has been on the list for 23 years—"the Canon and his friends have put all kinds of legal obstacles in the way of its admittance." Even when the Bill at last got to the voting stage, the Canon managed to get it shelved once again. And Catholics are the people who plead for tolerance for themselves! Divorce reform, has no bitterer enemy than the "Holy" Church. Yet we are certain that if ever divorce reform does come to pass, people will go about claiming that Jesus Christ is the world's greatest divorce reformer!

At last we can manage to give an example of Christian unity—Christians shaking hands instead of flying at each other's throats. The Rev. B. E. F. Mitchell, the Mayor of St. Albans, was among the guests at the St. Patrick Annual Ball held by Catholics. He was welcomed by Fr. Gouffe, and said "it spoke well for the spirit prevailing in St. Albans, that they could join together in such splendid fellowship." We quite agree—so rare is it for Catholics and Protestants to mingle with one another without religious hatred. All the same, what would happen if the Mayor was a believer in birth control propaganda and birth-control clinics? Would he ever be invited again to any Catholic reception?

Another variation on the old theme that "Christianity has never yet been tried." The Rev. Ernest H. Jeffs claims in the *Christian World* that "there never has been a time when Christianity directed the actions of nations in their relations with one another." Mr. Jeffs might just as well admit that for over nineteen centuries Christianity has never yet directed the international relations of the nations towards Peace and has—if you take the most favourable view possible—been unable to prevent or stop war, and that there has never yet been a war which was not "blessed" and approved by all the powers of Christianity. When the Bible God—ancient or modern—was most believed in, Peace was least assured and War most common.

"The only thing that will live," says the Rev. Joseph Fort Newton, is "what is of value to God." Yes, but what is of value to God? Is it the life of an innocent child? We hear of devastating fires and floods which destroy myriads of these "valuable" things. We think it must be War, or Earthquakes, or the silly simpering of preachers like Mr. Fort Newton, whose words are utterly meaningless when he tries to calculate the "Values" of a worthless God.

Here is a striking case which will *not* be cited by believers in Lourdes miracles. Bishop Gerlier has been Bishop of Lourdes for over seven years, and has recently suffered with some disease of the throat. What a spectacular cure it would have been if the Bishop had proved to a more or less unbelieving world that a dip or two in the Holy Water could have cured him. Yet it will hardly be credited that he actually underwent a prosaic surgical operation just as any ordinary layman or thorough unbeliever. He was there on the spot, he must have talked to people who had seen "Our Lady" visit the grotto, he knew all the miraculous cures—and yet he thought it a wee bit safer to trust a surgeon rather than "Our Lady." Oh, ye of much faith, what can ye say of Bishop Gerlier?

In the meantime an imposing crowd of native believers were holding a big Lourdes procession in the heart of British India. A reproduction of the Grotto at Lourdes was set up and a long procession of Hindu converts, accompanied by two bands, arrived there in time to hear a sermon in Telegu with plenty of sick gathered round as well as the halt, the maimed, and the blind. And did a single miracle or cure take place? Not on your life!

Mgr. Howlett, in a sermon, the other day, said that the State cannot teach religion. "I.C.C. religion," he added, "may make good Protestants, but it can produce only very bad Catholics." We think it would not be difficult to prove that priest-taught Catholics can also be pretty bad—for example, some of the inmates of our prisons and a good many gangsters in America. But it is a pity that Mgr. Howlett does not see that the only solution to all these religious squabbles is Secular education. He can then have Catholic children taught his own religion *ad lib*—provided he pays for it. But that seems to be the one thing these religious people do not like. Why should they expect other people to pay for teaching a religion which they entirely oppose?

In any case, however, the proposals in the Government's new Education Bill are strongly opposed by Catholics. The Bishop of Salford, for example, is particularly bitter against them. Among other denunciations, he said:—

We cannot believe that this country has wandered so far from Christian principles that its rulers wish to drive God from the schools and bring up a generation of irreligious men and women. Why then this animus which is constantly showing itself against those parents who demand religion in the school, and in the teacher who is to have charge of their children?

Well, if the Government's new Bill really does this, it seems rather something to be thankful for, and is undoubtedly a step in the right direction towards Secular education. We can only hope that, in the end, true Secular Education will be the ideal aimed for, and eventually obtained—no matter what Catholics and other Christians think.

The Bishop of Durham, talking, the other day, about tithes, coal-royalties, disendowment, disestablishment, education, and Church finance and administration, came to the conclusion that the Church, as a Church, was "exceedingly inefficient." Without such a big programme, we could have said the same. The Bishop added that "in many parishes the Church is badly worked; it is pitifully undermanned; and in none is it as strong as it ought to be. We want more men; we want money to provide stipends; we want well-ordered parishes for training deacons." In fact, he wants the moon. But there can be no doubt Dr. Henson is not one of those optimistic Christians who see a revival every day, or even a stupendous conquest of Christianity. On the contrary, he recognizes that "the decline in religion was telling potently on the Church." And a good thing too.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—C. F. Simpson, £2 2s.
MR. COHEN wishes to thank the members of the Manchester Branch for their warm personal message, which he thoroughly appreciates.

S. LANGLEY.—The objection to such a term as "Monism" is much on the same lines as the objection to the word "Religion." It is vague, and, in most cases, evasive. A belief in one substance may be a belief in matter, or mind, or God, or Nature, or something quite undifferentiated and incomprehensible. And definitions should define—that is, they should "mark off," not supply a smoke-cloud behind which outlines are indiscernible.

W. J. MEALOR.—Keep it up, it does good to let Christians know there are others, and in the long run good often results. But in a place like Liverpool, Roman Catholic influence is bound to be strong, and the motto of that Church is quantity, not quality.

C. DRYLAND, G. EMERY and T. WILLIAMSON.—Mr. Cohen greatly appreciates the feeling expressed in your letters for his health and general welfare. It would be a poor return for the kindly feeling expressed if he did not take all possible care, and he will take as much holiday between now and the winter as he can. In a week or two he may write upon some of the suggestions received.

To Advertising and Distributing the Freethinker.—Don Fisher, 3s.; W. James, 3s.

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

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

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. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen's article in *Reynolds* on "What is the future of Religion," was followed by a number of letters to the editor. Probably the article would not have attracted so much attention were the genuinely Free-thought point of view more frequently seen in newspapers. But newspaper editors have the settled habit of staging a faked contest, in which neither opponent ever states a clear and definite issue. Mr. Cohen has written the editor of *Reynolds*, offering to deal with all the points raised by his correspondents if sufficient space can be given. But it is useless trying to deal with a number of points in a letter. That only leads to further misunderstanding.

We hope that members of the National Secular Society all over the country will bear in mind the Annual Conference which this year, owing to the President's illness, will be held in London. The business meetings will be held in Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on the morning and afternoon of Whit-Sunday, and in the evening, in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, there will be a public demonstration. Mr. Cohen hopes to be able to take the chair at all three meetings.

Provincial visitors (for special reasons we hope to see a goodly number of these) who wish for hotel accommodation should write as soon as possible to the General Secretary, stating just what kind of accommodation they require, and for what time. It should also be said that the Conference is for all members of the N.S.S., whether representing Branches or not, and whether the Branch to which they belong is represented or not.

We learn that Messrs. Gollancz are responsible for a new and worthy venture in the publishing line. They are starting a Left Book Club which, for a monthly payment of 2s. 6d., will provide members with a copy of a book priced at from 5s. to 25s. for non-subscribers. The books will be such as would interest those who "desire to play an intelligent part in the struggle for World Peace and a better social and economic order, and against Fascism." A card to Messrs. Gollancz, 14 Henrietta Street, W.C.2, will bring particulars. The subscription is very modest, and the offer is tempting enough to attract, we hope, an encouraging amount of support.

The West London Branch concluded a very successful winter's work by a Social and Dance on Thursday, April 2, at the "Laurie Arms." About 60 members and friends, including visitors from the North London and West Ham Branches attended, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Stokes contributed songs of a very high order, Mr. Dunn and Mr. Dowson were successful entertainers and Mrs. Saran told some good and amusing stories. All present expressed their regret that Mr. Tuson was absent through illness.

From a three-column review of *Arms and the Clergy*, in the *American Freeman* (May issue), we extract the following comments:—

The men represented (in these elegant extracts) are "big guns" in the clerical racket. How they can live down this record I don't know. . . . How clear it is what a crass world this would be if there were no Men of God to bring us messages of love, hope, faith, peace and charity!

Morley, near Leeds, has been celebrating its Jubilee as an incorporated Borough, and the Vicar of Morley (the Rev. D. M. Wiswell) has denounced the decorations as "un-Christian," reminding his parishioners that it is Holy Week. The Mayor, Mr. Harold Smith, has, in turn, reminded the vicar that "We don't stand still because it is Holy Week." It is a pleasure to chronicle such an apt and decisive Mayoral pronouncement. The proceedings go on.

RELIGION

Is it not shallow and unjust to demand that the doctrines of religion shall be the limit of human speculation, the standard of all thought and that the highest powers of human intelligence shall remain unused and undeveloped, even be nipped in the bud in order that their activity may not thwart the popular belief? Isn't it a little too much to have tolerance and delicate forbearance preached by what is intolerance and cruelty itself? Think of the heretical tribunals, inquisitions, religious wars, crusades, Socrates' cup of poison, Bruno's and Vannini's death in the flames! Is all this quite a thing of the past?—*Schopenhauer*.

Things Worth Knowing*

XXXVI.

MIND AND MATTER

EVERY natural product behaves with a peculiarity of its own; the stone remains stationary, and the wind travels from land to land. Nor is the mind a thing that can be got hold of at a certain place; true we feel its activity in our head, but it does not remain there; it issues forth into the wide world and there it combines, if not chemically, still as a matter of fact with all objects of the universal nature. As little as the wind can be separated from the air, can our mind be separated from other natural objects; it only manifests itself as a phenomenon with other natural objects. Without the natural combination with other material the mind is not to be had. It is probably not a chemical element which can be produced in a free state. And why should everything be chemical? . . . The question ought to be considered after the precept of Spinoza, from the standpoint of the Universe, *sub specie æternitatis*. In the endless universe matter . . . tangible matter, does not possess the slightest preferential right to be more substantial, more distinct and more certain than other phenomena of Nature.

It is an essential broadening of our sphere of knowledge to conceive the material subject, the brain, together with its mental predicate, that is, both the brain and the mind, as mere properties or phenomena of the absolute subject, the natural nature which has no other nature besides or above or outside. This conception restrains the extravagance with which materialists extol their matter, and idealists their function of the brain to the skies.

Those Materialists who make tangible matter the substance and the intangible function of the brain a mere incidence think too little of this function. In order to gain a more adequate and just idea of it, it is above all necessary to go back to the fact that they are children of one mother, that they are two natural phenomena on which we turn a light when we describe them and arrange them in classes, species and sub-species. . . .

Our Materialism is distinguished by its special knowledge of the *common* nature of mind and matter. Whenever this modern materialism takes up the human mind as an object of study, it treats it like any other object of study. . . . The materialist theory of knowledge amounts, then, to the statement that the human organ of knowledge radiates no *meta-physical* light, but is a piece of nature which pictures other pieces of nature whose essence is explained when we describe it and bring it in connexion with the whole universe as the one Reality and the real Unity.

In the eyes . . . of Materialism the mind is a collective name for the mental phenomena, as matter is a collective name for the material phenomena, and the two together figure under the idea and name as of the phenomena of Nature.

Philosophical Essays of Joseph Dietzgen,
pp. 307-12.

* 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.

"My Name is Legion"

FREETHINKERS have always contended that the Churches are strictly bound to believe in devils. Obviously this archaic creed is often hidden—in verbiage mostly. High dignitaries deprecate direct exposition of doctrines of demonology. Perhaps a vague allusion to "The" devil is admissible, but the presence, in our very midst, of a gigantic crowd of devils is not to be hinted at. It is simply bad form—it isn't done.

Christian god-parents continue to "renounce" "the devil and all his works"—just as if they had previously boasted of being subjects of His Satanic Majesty.

The Modernists to-day preach and write generally as if there had never been any devil, and as if Jesus had never "rebuked" and conversed with this purely imaginary figure of speech. Dr. Maude Royden bravely faces the Christ legend and rebukes Jesus much as He rebuked Satan. Dr. Royden says:—

I am no more inclined to believe that Christ believed in the Devil because He spoke of the Devil than I believe that the reader of this book believes the sun sets because he speaks of a sunset.

This is all very well, but few modern thinkers, outside lunatic asylums, rebuke the sun, get verbal answers from the sun, or finally induce the sun to obliterate himself for ever in the bodies of suicidal swine.

Editors of British newspapers refuse to pollute their columns with any kind of recognition that these grovelling superstitions are the common beliefs of their Christian readers. Criticism or exposure of these same superstitions however is equally vetoed. Occasionally a book of travel will tell the world about Christian superstitions persisting in primitive and savage Christian races, like the Abyssinians in Mr. W. J. Makin's *Swinging the Equator*.

In the "Hilly-Billy" country of the U.S.A., where Fundamentalists flourish, there are few parts of the Bible which do not furnish the basis for curious credulities and simple straightforward assents to all Scriptural statements however outrageous their impossibility. What is too often overlooked is the fact that Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, Salvationists and the like, deny nothing that appears in Holy Writ—while Catholics add considerable contributions of additional legends to be swallowed by "Whosoever will."

The *Milwaukee Journal* of March 1, 1936, contains many columns drawing attention to the appalling claims of Father Theophilus Reisinger, O.M.C., a local Capuchin Friar, who "drove devils out" of many people. He has been famous for his "Exorcisms" in the same church, for many years. His first "Exorcism" was accomplished 28 years ago.

It must be remembered that every Catholic priest, when ordained is empowered to "exorcise," but generally he seeks the permission of his bishop in special cases of this somewhat rare service. Father Reisinger sought and obtained his bishop's permission, and in 1926 created a stir by casting out a number of devils from a woman at St. Joseph's Hospital. This hospital is in Milwaukee, a city of 600,000 population, with a fair sprinkling of Freethinkers.

The *Journal* makes good fun out of its representative's interview with the Friar, which it publishes with a photograph of this Rasputin-like priest, who, on his side, betrays a total absence of shame, reserve and humour. He claims to have cast out "billions and billions" of devils from each of his "patients."

He must, therefore, have met the same gentle devil who gave his card to Jesus. In passing, we should like to remark that "devils" are smaller in physique than pious painters have always pictured them.

Father Theophilus—again imitating his Master—seems proud to have held "conversations" with a Deputation of the many devils. No note is given as to the Friar's method of "numbering the people"—there may have been a few less than "billions of billions" or even half-a-dozen more, of these demon hordes. The language difficulty was no problem to him. He speaks "many languages including Latin"—and whatever other languages they speak in Hell. This was well, for we are told that "devils speak in many tongues," the Friar finding some of them "talking like cats and dogs"—a language not often taught in ordinary schools.

Although Father Reisinger is an accomplished linguist, his accent is apparently not altogether beyond reproach. Satan, on the contrary is a pedant about pronunciation. "When I mispronounced a word in any foreign language," says the priest, "Beelzebub shrieked: 'Dumbell, you don't know anything!'" Beelzebub talks all through the narrative like a Hollywood Comedian, and we imagine what he really said was, "You don't know nothin'." The Friar flatters Beelzebub.

The devils—or Beelzebub their spokesman—gave "back-answers" all the time. When the Friar called the demon "a diabolical dog," the latter admitted he really was a bit of a dog (a feminine one in the case mentioned). But the *Milwaukee Journal* suppresses many of the epithets freely used, remarking "they were of the order of words used by the moderns in their franker novels." Editors, more censorious than some publishers "exorcise" the language, if not the "spirit" of some writers.

One original idea illuminates the depressing interview. The devils invariably refer to Satan as GOD, and call God SATAN. Perhaps the devils are right, as they ought to know.

In these days of "slimming" we should have imagined that a lady would find these "billions of billions" of even the smallest devils must necessarily add to her adiposity. Quite the contrary. Father Theo. tells "tall stories" of "possessed" women actually losing weight, like the man in Mr. Wells' story. We hear of these poor women becoming lighter than the air, in which they soon began to float, "at times rising dangerously toward the ceiling, and hanging with cat-like grip on the higher wall-nails, pictures and ceiling cornices."

Christ easily overcame the task of "disposing of the body" of the devils He cast out. But Christ did not live in Milwaukee, where the food laws are severe on those who wilfully infest pigs with devilish diseases. Our Friar had reluctantly to tell his devils to "Go to Hell"—where they would feel at home no doubt. Even Hell is better than occupying the bodies of drowned pigs.

Although this weird Friar's stories have been in circulation for many years, he has never been "disciplined" nor have his yarns been repudiated by any clerical authority. Naturally. To deny Theophilus Reisinger is to deny Christ and God's Holy Word. They and their Church still sponsor these degrading superstitions.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Adapt thyself to the things with which thy lot has been cast: and the men among whom thou hast received thy portion, love them, but do it sincerely.

Marcus Aurelius.

Rationalism contra Mundum

III.

IN studying the problem of existence, all conclusions and generalizations that may be classed as rationalistic pertain to objective truth and the nature of things. They are separate from erroneous notions of the past, the outcome of ignorance. Also are they removed from merely egoistic persuasions of a later cast—unless at one with eternal verity—of which we find a variety in the offing. A vision of the Life Force and its upshot given by the famous dramatist, X: a cycle of spiritual experience and mystic premonition from the blasé essayist Y: intimation of communion with ghostly associates on the part of the physicist Z: not to mention specious grounds for reconciliation with Rome from sundry converts.

Rationalism, therefore, presumes a sure basis of intellectual authority in lieu of spurious imposition. This must found in the first case on Science or ordered Knowledge; though here, too, there is need for clarity of concept. Certain modern "scientists" appear bemused over their own business and formulæ, on account of recent experiments with the "atom" in the laboratory. We are told that Science can no longer speak with the confident "materialism" of the last century; that matter is reduced to the immaterial, and in place of the uniformity of nature we find "indeterminacy" rather than "law." Well, there seems nothing indeterminate at present about the "precession of the equinoxes." After the physicist has resolved his atom, or unit of matter, into a point in space, the engineer, in blissful unconsciousness of the catastrophe, projects his bridge a mile long over a dangerous watercourse. This in an assured faith that his calculations in mechanics and the "material" with which he builds (if of the standard quality) will not fail to sustain successfully the pressure and strains to which his fabric will be subjected. And a biologist unconcernedly pursues investigations into the relation of bacteria to the fertility of soil.

Science, to repeat, is no more than a method of transcription and interpretation of nature and phenomena. It uses invention and imagination in its combinations—it *discovers* all that it classifies, and its dicta are always open to revision. Mathematics, in a sense an invention for measure and quantitative analysis, rest on laws of number and dimension. It can alone speak intelligibly in two-fold terms of matter and energy, the dual aspect of one real presentation (the words used make no difference) applied to a sequence and cause and effect, something acting, something acted upon, throughout nature, animate and inanimate.

Beneath this starry arch
Nought resteth or is still,
But all things hold their march
As if by one great will:
Moves one, move all:
Hark to the footfall!
On, On, for ever!!

To call this process "mechanical" is a misnomer, for that implies completeness, where we are fronted by ceaseless flux. When inquiry seeks to link the chain of data concerning, say, the natural history of Earth by some wide generalization, it enters on hypothesis and speculation; but within the field of observable fact. So we have the formula of Evolution as a comprehensive "law" of the mutations whence came the earth's surface and its present inhabitants. Yet here, as elsewhere, we get only partial glimpses of the factors at work:—

Harriet Martineau.

On entering the tertiary strata the palaeontologist finds that organic nature has undergone a complete change—that every plant and animal with which he became acquainted when studying the Secondary rocks has passed away, and that he has now entered on a wholly new stage of existence. Never before did so thorough and total a change take place in the flora and fauna of the globe. The flora is distinguished from that of the older epochs by the abundance of dicotyledonous trees (oaks, beeches, elms, etc.) . . . The fauna of the system is equally characteristic. It was pre-eminently the age of mammalia; for though mammals, both marsupial and placental, are known to have existed in the Secondary ages, only a few vestiges of either occur in formations lower down than the Eocene. . . . Altogether, upwards of 100 genera of mammals occur in the tertiary rocks; and, what is still more remarkable, all the existing orders of the class are represented, though unequally.

In seeking the cause of these changes, the appearance of a defined metal or mineral, gold, platinum, silver, copper, lead, is just as singular a phenomenon as that of a fresh species. This phase of the problem leads to those ultimate questionings upon which so much intellection has been expended from different quarters: whether the whole manifestation is no more than a "fortuitous dance of atoms": whether it is influenced by some "great will" or power, however its attributes are expressed: or whether the Universe, apart from phenomenal apprehension, in its immanent character and direction is beyond human cognizance altogether.

Such conundrums are the residue of theology. Now when a monotheistic concept emerges from the diffused antique supernaturalism (as in the case of Judaism) this responds to a peculiar craving at that stage; one meets it in converse with the ingenuous today; it permeates Islamic poetry and expression—the sense of a creative power more or less personal. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . And God said Let there be light, and there was light. . . . He made the stars also." This is explicit, and has served in its details for an account of the origin of things until recent times. But as actual cosmic working has become unfolded, the difficulty of placing creative intervention in the series or ascribing its character, has increased accordingly.² Metaphysical theory arises where ascertainable fact appears to end, which is the strict province of science. Their relation is a moot point in Modernist controversy over the final mystery, where all beliefs thereon are no more than human cogitations. To utilize the data of science in this sphere to support any particular positive doctrine is simply a personal adventure in exploration. If, as the writer himself thinks, we touch here the limitations of mind itself, then an "agnostic" attitude as put by Hume is justified:—

The highest end of human knowledge consists in summing up the empirically discovered causes of natural phenomena, and arranging the multitude of particular effects under a few general causes. But one's pains are lost if we attempt to ascertain the cause of these general causes. The ultimate grounds of things are utterly inaccessible to the curiosity and investigation of man.

But people will continue to speculate,³ and indulge imagination. In this connexion we may accept with due reservation the vision of the poet to illumine what

² It may be noted how ordinary exposition of things lends to figurative language of Will, as "Nature has seen to this contingency," etc.

³ Thus Sir James Jeans, who has a flair for cosmic fantasy, lately announced a lecture under the title: The "age" and "size" of the "Universe"! On the other hand the Astronomer Royal presents a book entitled, *Worlds Without End*.

remains obscure. So, in lieu of seeking the "origin of life" in some fortuitous chemical combination, we may treat it as belonging to primal energy. In the words of Swinburne:—

Before ever land was
Before ever the sea,
Or soft hair of the grass,
Or fair limbs of the tree
Or the flesh-coloured fruit of my branches, I was,
and thy soul was in me.

And as Life and Living, when all is said, is our main interest, we will consider shortly the bearing of our conclusions on its conduct and hope.

AUSTEN VERNEY.

"Medicine" and Freethought

"If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say 'Amen.'"

THE article "As Others See Us," by Medicus, in a recent issue of the *Freethinker*, raised issues of a much wider nature than were initiated in the original letter by W. Don Fisher. Consequently, a criticism, by another Freethinker, from another angle, may be useful.

Many will not agree that the Freethinker is essentially a propagandist: that is not his or her chief characteristic. I suggest that the essential feature of the Freethinker, as Freethinker, is the same as that of the Scientist, as Scientist. It is the desire to know, to understand, to seek Truth. This very desire compels or obliges us to appear propagandists—to a greater or less degree. Still, many of the best Freethinkers have no desire at all to be propagandists. While acting as Good Citizens, they can be philosophic spectators of the Circus of Human Life, with a certain amount of Healthy Cynicism. For there is a Healthy Cynicism, as well as the usual unhealthy cynicism—so often associated with Religion.

Freethought is not concerned merely with Religion. Its business is not solely to fight against Religion. Freethought is an outlook on life and a mental method. It should operate in every sphere of Life, Thought, Speech, and Publication. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. There are many Freethinkers in relation to Religion, who are as irrational about other subjects as are any of the rigid orthodox.

So, the Freethinker's scientific open democratic criticism is not only applicable to Religion, but to the "Law," Journalism, Teaching, Banking, Politics, Economics—both orthodox and evolutionary, Sociology, Trade Unionism, and the Medical Profession, etc., etc. In many of these fields, it is more than applicable: it is very much needed. "Our" Editor, and our *Freethinker*, sometimes deal with some of such subjects: the main struggle, however, is still against Religion; just because Religion affects, for evil, every other department of Human Life.

I appreciate Medicus in his treatment of Religion—directly or indirectly. I like him not half so well when he becomes the "Dean Ingean" apologist for the British Medical Profession. I have read his article at least three times; and, it seems to me, the style is the same as that of the clever Apologist for Christianity. So the cobbler, who was "The Village Atheist," resented criticism in the matter or manner of mending soles!

To many Freethinkers there is much in the Medical Profession that is very similar, in nature, to some of the evil features of Religion—when and where Religion had or has the Power. Further, much of what

is said in defence of the British Medical Profession, at times, savours of the "Bunk" put forward by the modern Apologists for Christian Superstition. If to be "broad, tolerant, urbane, cosmopolitan" means that we must refrain from criticizing the Medical Profession; then, on the same lines Christianity will have a better chance of holding-on to its wealth, and power for evil. I do not believe in shooting the pianist, when "he's doing his best": I do believe—emphatically—in removing him. Of course, this should be done in as broad, tolerant, and urbane a manner as possible, consistently with stopping the noise!

All this is general criticism: some practical and concrete cases may make it more effective. The doctor has a closer direct contact—for good or for evil—with the ordinary person than has the lawyer, the journalist, or even the politician. As for teachers—but, let us attend to the doctors at present!

The history of Vaccination—apart from religion, anti-vivisection, or any other extraneous subject—is more than enough to make any Freethinker, with a scientific Atheist philosophy, more than distrustful of the Medical Profession. One of the best and most scientific Freethinkers—still active—in conversation, once described Vaccination as "one of the grossest superstitions ever imposed upon a credulous people." After logical inquiry, I agreed with him. After a somewhat varied life at home and abroad, and after some friendly discussion with doctors now and then, and here and there, I agree more thoroughly than ever. Probably Medicus would agree that, to some I've met, the poet's words apply:—

"A set o' dull conceited hashies,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak."

The life story of the late Dr. Allinson in his relation to the Medical Faculty should convince any sensible person of the need for open Freethought criticism of the Medical Profession. "Publicity in public matters; privacy for private and personal affairs" is a good democratic rule. It is in accord with Freethought Principles. Only a Tyranny—I will not write "Dictatorship"!—prefers Secrecy in public matters, and publicity for private and personal purposes. And, we are justified in being suspicious about any Tyranny that fears fair, open, democratic criticism.

For many years only a few, more or less Freethinking, people seriously criticized the University training of doctors. Now, at long last, some of the "leaders" in the profession have admitted—publicly—that that education, or "training," is wrong and needs reform.

Columns of the *Freethinker* might be filled by concrete cases which prove the need for open, fair, democratic Freethought criticism of the British Medical Profession. Those I have adduced should suffice to convince sensible people that an all-round Freethought mentality is one of the most valuable factors in the life of any community. Unfortunately—or fortunately?—the *Freethinker* cannot deal with every variety of Tyranny. Still, individual Freethinkers can do their best—with what measure of "urbanity" they can command.

The story of Socrates is the story of the Freethinker; and such is often his or her end. Sometimes it is much more painful. Many spheres of human social activity, besides "Medicine," are in the same position as is Religion; but I fear that, in those fields, a "Socrates" is even rarer than he is in relation to Religion:—

"Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage."

ATHOSO ZENOO.

Freethought Anniversaries

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE—APRIL 5, 1837

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE was born, in London, on April 5, 1837. He was of a family that had been of importance in Northumbria for five hundred years. When the poet was born, Sir John, his seventy-five-year-old grandfather, was head of the house. He had been friendly with Voltaire and Mirabeau, was an Atheist and a Jacobite. In later years, when his grandson was on holiday at Cap Heaton, Sir John delighted to wander round the gardens with his red-haired, elfin-faced descendant, discoursing in the grand manner about the iniquities of tyrants, the taming of horses, the rights of man, of the Courts of Versailles, of the women he had loved! What a grandfather to have. Small wonder that he became a Tory, a Republican, an Atheist and a Poet of Revolt! Another result was his snobbishness evinced when picturing for his youthful friends the Border fighting engaged in by his ancestors; but most people, if honest with themselves, will admit a little vicarious tuft-hunting. His father, Admiral Chas. Swinburne, is said to have had a "healthy" loathing for the arts of Literature and Music, and to have been red-haired and irritable! The parents were High Church and interested in the Oxford movement; the local rector was consulted about his education, novels were forbidden and Byron was on the mother's Index. And so he went to Eton.

He spent four years there meeting many who were afterwards well-known, but are now forgotten men. One of them, later known as Black Michael, said he was "a horrid little boy with a big red head and a pasty complexion." Another one, who was very friendly with Swinburne, says that he was somewhat formidable, had indomitable courage, unfailing good manners, but at the same time a habit of staring at his tormentors with wide, level, green eyes that brought respect. He might be "Mad Swinburne" behind his back, but in his presence, good manners were essential. He seems, as a schoolboy, to have been average, and not to have felt any the worse for it. He was already writing verse and plays for the edification of his cousins and their friends. It was obvious who the hero was! But on his holidays at home he was finding new books, one of them was Charles Lamb's *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets*. And the reading suggested by this work left this boy in possession of a knowledge of Shakespeare's times and the times before and after, that many experts might have been envious of. And his grandfather had an influence too at this time, by introducing him to the earliest of the French Romancists. Thirty years later he published his *Tristram of Lyonesse*, in which this influence is directly traceable.

At nineteen years he went to Oxford, to Balliol College, and in his first year reverted to High Church Anglicanism. But in his second year he made a lot of new friendships, and among them the Pre-Raphaelites and John Nichol, who was afterwards a Professor at Glasgow. Gone was his High Churchism, here he was subject to the "icy blast of agnosticism," and "he learned to drink." No students ever took "drink" except Swinburne and Nichol, the latter being described in terms almost as intemperate as his addiction to his favourite beverage. "... thin, white face... its beauty and self-assurance... clean-cut, impassive... serene, cynical, almost cruelly dominant." The features had "... the cold keen blast of personality..." "And, lastly, he was a Freethinker and a Republican..." This is all based on an examination of a faded photograph taken in 1857, and published in 1919. Nichol was 22 years in '57, Swinburne 20. We are told by the same critic that Swinburne was writing poetry, not all of which was bad; was meeting Morris, Burne-Jones, Rossetti and Ruskin, and was known to and encouraged by Tennyson. "And, finally, John Nichol encouraged him to drink." Whether he needed such encouragement we shall never know, but drinking was nearly the ruin of his health in later years. He left Oxford in 1860 without sitting for a degree.

From 1860 till his death there was a flow of verse, prose and drama of high quality, which placed him above the majority of his critics. All the while he is meeting most of the really distinguished men of his day; holidaying at home and abroad, visiting Walter Savage Landor at Florence, Mazzini, Victor Hugo and others elsewhere. Landor was then eighty-nine and very frail. At his death Swinburne wrote *In Memory of Walter Savage Landor*, in which occurs this reference to their meeting:—

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

In 1865 he published *Atalanta in Calydon*, the greatest of his dramas. "The supreme evil" is his denunciation of deity. Next year appeared the *Poems and Ballads*, and the reading public became aware of a new force in its midst. Every nineteenth century poet was to some extent unorthodox; in this one there was no doubt, he was so unbelievably outspoken, his outspokenness was unbelievable. In *Ilicet* we find these lines:—

There is an end of joy and sorrow;
Peace all day long, all night, all morrow,
But never a time to laugh or weep.
The end is come of pleasant places,
The end of tender words and faces,
The end of all, the popped sleep.

Good night, good sleep, good rest from sorrow.
To those that shall not have good morrow;

The closing lines are quite definite:—

The end is more than joy and anguish,
Than lives that laugh and lives that languish,
The popped sleep, the end of all.

More however, and from the Christian's point of view, worse, was to follow. In 1870 the dogma of Papal Infallibility was proclaimed. If Swinburne hated any institution more than the Papacy it wasn't known to his friends. Many informed critics are of opinion that the dogma has not been any more harmful than when it was not officially held; and this is in part due to Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise*, which appeared in 1871. *The Hymn of Man* is one of the most important of all his writings, and was written while the Council was assembled in the Vatican.

It begins by questioning about Man and the World order, "In the grey beginning of years, in the twilight of things that began," and carries on, half asking and half answering:—

Before the growth was the grower, and the seed ere the
plant was sown;
But what was seed of the sower? and the grain of him,
whence was it grown?

That Man made God is, of course, part of his teaching:—

Thou and I and he are not gods made men for a span,
But God, if a God there be, is the substance of men which is
man.

The indictment goes on, it becomes insulting! to God:—

The herds of kings and their hosts and the flocks of the
high priests bow
To a master whose face is a ghost's; O thou that wast God,
is it thou?
Thou madest man in the garden; thou temptedst man, and
he fell;
Thou gavest him poison and pardon for blood and burnt-
offering to sell.

The Old Testament story of the conflict between the Prophets of Israel and of Baal is seized and is parodied. Cry aloud till his godhead awaken; what doth he to sleep and to dream?

Cry, cut yourselves, gash you with knives and with scourges,
heap on to you dust;
Is his life but as other gods' lives? Is not this the Lord
God of your trust?
Is not this the Great God of your sires, that with souls and
with bodies was fed,
And the world was on flame with his fires? Oh fools, he was
God, and is dead.

And so he traces out the evolution of the Judeo-Christian God that was called Yahveh, ending with a great climax:—

Surely, ye say, he is strong, though the times be against
him and men;

Yet a little, ye say, and how long, till he come to show
judgment again?

Shall God then die as the beasts die? who is it hath broken
his rod?

O God, Lord God of thy priests, rise up now and show
thyself God.

They cry out, thine elect, thine aspirants to heavenward,
whose faith is as flame;

O thou, the Lord God of our tyrants, they call thee, their
God, by thy name.

By thy name that in hell-fire was written, and burned at the
point of thy sword,

Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art smitten; thy death is
upon thee, O Lord.

And the love-song of earth as thou diest resounds through
the wind of her wings—

Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of
things.

Much work in prose and verse came from him after this; there was no wavering in his unbelief, his passion for liberty was unabated.

April 1, 1909 was wet and cold, but this was no deterrent to Swinburne, he went for a walk as usual and without a coat; on the 5th he was too ill to open his birthday telegrams, and on the 10th, he died "whispering the choruses of Sophocles and Æschylus."

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THE "Freethinker" Endowment Trust

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THE *Freethinker* Endowment Trust was registered on the 25th of August, 1925, its object being to raise a sum of not less than £8,000, which, by investment, would yield sufficient to cover the estimated annual loss incurred in the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. The Trust is controlled and administered by five Trustees, of which number the Editor of the *Freethinker* is one in virtue of his office. By the terms of the Trust Deed the Trustees are prohibited from deriving anything from the Trust in the shape of profit, emoluments, or payment, and in the event of the *Freethinker* at any time, in the opinion of the Trustees, rendering the Fund unnecessary, it may be brought to an end, and the capital sum handed over to the National Secular Society.

The Trustees set themselves the task of raising a minimum sum of £8,000. This was accomplished by the end of December, 1927. At the suggestion of some of the largest subscribers, it has since been resolved to increase the Trust to a round £10,000, and there is every hope of this being done within a reasonably short time.

The Trust may be benefited by donations of cash, or shares already held, or by bequests. All contributions will be acknowledged in the columns of this journal, and may be sent to either the Editor, or to the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. W. Ash, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Any further information concerning the Trust will be supplied on application.

There is no need to say more about the *Freethinker* itself, than that its invaluable service to the Freethought Cause is recognized and acknowledged by all. It is the mouthpiece of militant Freethought in this country, and places its columns, without charge, at the service of the Movement.

The address of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust is 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.