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For the Torch of Reason.

In Nature's Realm.

BY WILLARD MATTHEW PHARES.

The golden moon's incessant rays of light
Fell soft across my pathway, and her
beams
Of Aestrous light were rhymes within
my soul.
Sit as I will, today, the harmony
Of night still burns within my heart;
the skies
Were streaked with tints of sombre hue,
and now
The earth is gemmed with pearls of
beaming light.
Oh, that we could as heaven sweet, con-
tent
Ourselves by giving rays of light — than
dark
And grey, until in Nature's fold secure.
Should vestures of decay come stealing
close,
We can but fear, yet why should we dis-
may?
Could we but know the secrets of the air,
As we do solve the workings of the mind,
We then would find that love is "all in
all"
Of heaven's peace and fullest rest sub-
lime.
As air is immaterial to our eye,
We do not see it, but we feel her soft
Reflections as we go, and are aware
Of living breath upon our cheeks, that
gives
The ruddy youth his strength and grace
its pride.
Yet vilely some will foul her breath so
pure
With oaths, whose bases are unchaste,
corrupt.
Come sit with me in Nature's realm, and
think
Of your existence here; of your divine
Purport and end; reflect, and pass with
me
From life's great stage, a man complete
within
The bounds of mental care and Nature's
laws.

For the Torch of Reason.

The Old Doctor's Notes.

BY C. ELTON BLANCHARD

Since the last report of the Bohemian Evening devoted to Mysticism, the young men have spent several very profitable hours with the Old Doctor, and I shall now send you from week to week some of the thoughts brought out by Dr. Brown in his conversations with the Bohemian boys. I cannot hope to give you a complete report, since I write from memory or from meager notes such as I was able to take during the various evenings spent in the Old Doctor's cosy study. The editor of the Quarterly Christian published at Nashville, Tenn., having read a report of the former Bohemian Evenings, published recently an answer to "Atheism and Other Infidelity." This article was read to the Old Doctor by Mr. Volepeck. The following is his reply as best I can produce it:

If I were to give a title to any reply made to supernaturalism I

would call it, "A Tale of the Woe of Assumed Premises", for of all the twisting and turning, struggling with words to make them mean something when they will not, and resorting to fallacious methods of thought, the theologians give us the most stupendous efforts. They say, "All existence is necessary or contingent."

Perhaps this means that some existence must exist in order that some more existence may exist, and if so it is hard to understand where logic would give us a starting point at which SOME existence was so NECESSARY that it was self-existent.

But the man says, "Necessary existence is absolute, and contingent existence is dependent."

Now this is certainly very clear and the meaning very plain! It means that it is necessary for some existence to be so dependent that it is absolute or independent in order that some other existence may be contingent or dependent. Now this is a conclusion which cannot be escaped!

The writer continues: "Absolute existence is self-existence, infinite and omnipotent."

Now this is axiomatic, and while it plays an important part in the syllogism, it needs no proof, for it is self-evident. It is as plain to the supernaturalist as, the sum of the parts are equal to the whole.

Now the next step is easy, for he says: "The necessary or absolute being is Jehovah, who created all contingent existence."

You see, in order to make the whole puzzle fit together this is an important discovery. This is the same Jehovah who formerly loved only the Jews, but who created all other races that he might enjoy their tortures in the fires of hell. I do not know how the preachers explain the former bad character of Jehovah, nor do I understand their theories of the late improvement in his character, but one thing I do know: If Jehovah had been half as cunning as some of his ministry, he would have destroyed his good book, which casts so much light upon his past disreputable history, and I would make it stronger, for I consider the picture which the bible gives us of this "necessary or absolute" being as one of the most contemptible, immoral, low-lived and despicable of individuals, who, had he not left the earth entirely in the hands of the devil, could not keep out of states prison in any well regulated community today.

But the final conclusion is: "The

dependent is created and proves the existence of a creator."

This is a sample of Christian logic. Upon similar premises we can prove the existence of the man in the moon, or anything else. A dependent existence proves a great creator. This creator is not dependent, therefore self-existent. The self-existent creator is so independent that he does not need to be accounted for, or rather he is so necessary that he is self-evident in logic, and it is not legitimate to ask why only one self-existent entity when it was not existent took into its thought a desire to become existent. A slush of fallacy! A damnable nonsense which has befogged the minds of men and kept them in the mists of uncertainty, sorrow and insanity. A woe to the world which cannot be measured. A sorrow to the race greater than mind can know or reason measure.

This recalls to my mind similar logic used by Prof. F. G. Wright, who is no doubt an honest student of science, but who cannot afford to be free and hold his chair in a Christian college. Prof. Wright's book, "Logic of Christian Evidence," is used in many schools as a textbook. In it is used the old watch argument of Paley to prove design. It runs: A man finds a watch. He has never seen the like before. It is surely no chance production. It must come from the hand of an intelligent designer. He looks about and finds the maker of the watch. He discovers that man is also more wonderful than the watch. He too must have a maker, and he traces this origin to God. Here they stop.

Let us go a little farther. The investigator looks the matter over and finds that God is more wonderful than man, and his wonderful ways are past finding out, so the bible says. In fact he is so wonderful that he needs no creator. He is self-existent! Is it not strange that people can be so wise and yet so foolish?

"My young friends," the old doctor said, "let me caution you to be sure that in your reasoning all your premises are truths."

NOTE.— Questions for the Old Doctor can be sent to C. Elton Blanchard, editor Current Thought, 802 Ansel Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.

I conclude that all religions had the same origin, and that in fact there has never been but one religion in the world. The twigs and leaves may differ, but the trunk is the same.—[R. G. Ingersoll.

Nature Governed by Law.

BY JOHN W. DRAPER.

Has the great shadeless desert nothing to do with the habits of the nomade tribes who pitch their tents upon it—the fertile plain no connection with flocks and pastoral life—the mountain fastnesses with the courage that has so often defended them—the sea with habits of adventure? Indeed, do not all our expectations of the stability of social institutions rest upon our belief in the stability of surrounding physical conditions? From the time of Bodin, who nearly three hundred years ago published his work, "De Republica," these principles have been well recognized: that the laws of nature cannot be subordinated to the will of man, and that government must be adapted to climate. It was these things which led him to the conclusion that force is best resorted to for northern nations, reason for the middle, and superstition for the southern.

In the month of March the sun crosses the equator, dispensing his rays more abundantly over our northern hemisphere. Following his train, a wave of verdure expands toward the pole. The luxuriance is in proportion to the local brilliancy. The animal world is also affected. Pressed forward, or solicited onward by the warmth, the birds of passage commence their annual migration, keeping pace with the developing vegetation beneath. As summer declines, this orderly advance of light and life is followed by an orderly retreat, and in its turn the southern hemisphere presents the same glorious phenomenon. Once every year the life of the earth pulsates; now there is an abounding vitality, now a desolation. But what is the cause of all this? It is only mechanical. The earth's axis of rotation is inclined to the plane of her orbit of revolution round the sun.

Let that wonderful phenomenon and its explanation be a lesson to us; let it profoundly impress us with the importance of physical agents and physical laws. They intervene in the life and death of man personally and socially. External events become interwoven in our constitution; their periodicities create periodicities in us. Day and night are incorporated in our waking and sleeping; summer and winter compel us to exhibit cycles in our life.—[Intellectual Development of Europe.