

Veneration.

Our friend, G. R. Pottorff, the gentleman with whom we had the friendly controversy in the January 12th issue of the Torch, now wishes us to answer through the columns of our paper the following question:

Phrenology teaches us that there is in the human head an organ called veneration, its office being to worship. Now, if there is no God, for what purpose was this organ evolved?

The above statement that the office of the organ of veneration is to worship might be questioned. It would be better to say that its function is venerating, or revering, and surely there are objects in this world that it is well for us to revere. Our fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, our friends, and our wives need our veneration. It does them good for us to venerate them, and we know that they exist. We can show them that we venerate them, and it will make us stronger, better and happier men, while the worship of the gods weakens the intellect, makes men cruel and unhappy.

Then, again, we must not forget that the function has developed the organ, rather than the organ being made for a purpose. Our organs were not evolved for any purpose. From the simplest beginning we have grown without any purpose whatever. The conservation of forces—the conditions—have produced us as it has all other things, and we can see no more purpose in it than in the development of bacteria, or the union of oxygen and hydrogen to form a molecule of water.

It is a fact that we exist, but we are simply little "whirlpools of the elements," brought about by inherent forces within themselves. These elements and their forces seem to be indestructible and eternal, and a god is superfluous.

But what is very commonly thought to be veneration is nothing but fear. Take away the fear of a something we have been told has power to make or break us here and hereafter—take away all fear of eternal death or eternal punishment, how long will there be veneration for a god?

Again, we cannot have a genuine love or reverence for anyone whose presence we have never enjoyed and whose venerable qualities we have never experienced. To be sure we might think well of one who had been represented by our friends as worthy of our love, and we might imagine them with us, but this imaginary love and reverence for an imaginary being in an imaginary home in an imaginary, far distant realm, is more imagination and fear than it is veneration.

Reverence, like other mental powers, may be abnormally developed, and it often is. The heathen wor-

ship gods of wood, snakes, crocodiles, etc., and thus this faculty, which, if directed in right directions, would do them much good, is wasted. So it is with the worshippers of the imaginary Jehovah and his son. Their veneration is misguided, and when they should be venerating education, science, truth and liberty and their fellow men, they are bowing down to a creature of their own creation.

O, brother, let us guide all our mental faculties into channels that will help to free the world from its superstitious fears and slavish worship of ghosts, and help to make real gods and goddesses in this world fit subjects of our veneration and love.

The Solid Rock.

Secularism stands on the solid rock of Science, while Christianity stands on the decaying foundation of myth and miracle; and yet Christians condemn to everlasting punishment those who will not stand with them and sing:

"On Christ the solid rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."

"Celsus, one of Rome's greatest historians and most profound reasoners, during the reign of Hadrian, 117 to 138 A. C., published two books of criticisms on Christianity, in which he clearly demonstrated the absurdity of the Christian doctrines. Following which, and as a matter of history, he proved, from Christian sources and church documents, that Mary procured a divorce from her husband, and while wandering about Judea, fell in love with a Roman soldier by the name of Panthera, who was the real father of Christ; that the boy, being in destitute circumstances, went down into Egypt to procure employment; that while there he fell in with Egyptian jugglers, from whom he learned the art of working pretended miracles; that on his return to Judea he set up a claim to the Messiahship, which he supported by his Egyptian system of miracle-workings, and that his alleged miracles were performed privately in out-of-the-way places, to slaves, women and children of the most ignorant class."

It is certainly absurd for civilized people to longer cling to the idea that an ignorant Jewish miracle-worker, who lived and died nineteen hundred years ago, is to be relied upon to save our people from the ignorance of our own age.

We must drop the baby-play of the ancient religion-makers and unite in educating ourselves in the good work of making THIS WORLD a fit dwelling place.

We must all learn to sing:

"On TRUTH the solid rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."
All other ground is sinking sand."

Pioneers of Freethought.

It is a fine distinction Dr. Chapman draws between the erroneous conception Byron held of the universe and his labors actually to overthrow that error. Byron believed not in evolution. It is doubtful if his mind could have accepted it. To him, as to Shelley, "rational mind stood apart from material things." Spirits in the air and genii of the evening breeze were very real to him. This separation of man from the material universe, removed by evolution, dwelt in Greek philosophy and in all the Victorian poets before Browning. Wordsworth's pantheism is a very different thing from evolution. He does not identify man with the material universe, of which he is the pinnacle and from eternity the goal, and his intimations are not inheritances from earlier and lower states in the descent of man. But shadowy recollections of previous spiritual existence.

The beautiful paradox is that Byron and Shelley could not believe in evolution, but they made evolution possible. Until the shackles of a false ecclesiasticism had been stricken from the mind, it could neither discover nor grasp the origin of species. Until dauntless workers like Byron and Shelley, Gibbon, Goethe and Newton, had prepared the soil, the true story of nature could find no soil in which to take root. Evolution is the greatest fact in the intellectual universe and the most pervasive thought that can take possession of the mind. It is therefore just to say, perhaps, that everything that went before was preparatory to it. And it is a momentous revelation that laborers like Byron were really working to an end for which they had no love and no adaptation. Every man in English civilization today owes a debt to Byron for having prepared the way for scientific truth. He may be venerated as a benefactor, therefore, by those who have confessed in sorrow that they could neither abide his morals nor admire his poetry.

What was Byron's part in this pioneer work for science? Perhaps it was supreme, because he addressed so wide a public. The cultivated few who worshiped Shelley, the students of Newton, the scholarly following of Goethe and Gibbon, may have been aided by Byron, but not signally. Their susceptibility to his appeal was less, their need, even, was not so keen. But the great masses, in whom Byron's majestic imagery and protest against tyranny of every form struck a responsive chord—to those he was the apostle of a brighter day and a revelation that should revolutionize human thought—create, indeed, a new heaven and a new earth.

Whether we read Byron or not, then, may, after all, not make much

difference. His name and fame are not to be measured by the sales of his volumes. The anxious admirer who adduces these evidences as testimony to Byron's genius may be indulging love's labor lost. The things that Byron thought have passed into the human mind. Monumental as they were in their day and generation, their work, to a great extent, is done. The lesson they taught is learned, once for all; and his protests against tyranny can roughly be classed with Galileo's argument for the rotundity of the earth, and the reasoning by which Columbus concluded that India lay to the westward. This may be said of Byron's work as a thinker, but not as a poet. It is inconceivable that the human mind should some day change so as not to be moved by the wonderful lines in which the author of "Childe Harold" moulded his gospel of freedom.—[Sunday Oregonian.]

Belated Love.

I have known a husband to neglect his wife in his pursuit of pleasure or business, and when finally she died he wrung his hands over her dead body, called her his angel wife, said his heart was broken and home desolate, and climaxed the whole by having built over the unconscious body the finest marble monument in the graveyard. She asked for love and he gave her a stone. And I thought as I pondered over the whole scene that if some of the loving words he was pouring into the dead ear had been uttered in life, and if some of the dollars he had spent on the coffin had been invested in a way to make life and body easier and less toil worn, she would have been the happy faced wife and mother of the home circle instead of sleeping alone under the cedars and among the white monuments on the hillside.

What we want is kindness in life and not in death. It is not flowers scattered on her coffin lid that will make a woman happy, but a bunch of them tied together in the form of a bouquet and given her with the words, "I love you." That makes her pulses leap, the crimson come into her cheek, the light come into her eye and the warm, happy feeling rush to her heart.

We want kindness shown us in this life. That is what our servants look for; this is what the children need—they crave to be treated gently and kindly in life, not wept over in death. Hearts everywhere cry, "Treat me lovingly now." When dead we do not hear the cries of affection around the coffin, nor feel the tears dripping from overflowing eyes on our faces. Be kind now.—[Sel.]

Are you acquainted with the merits of the Forstner auger bit?