

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

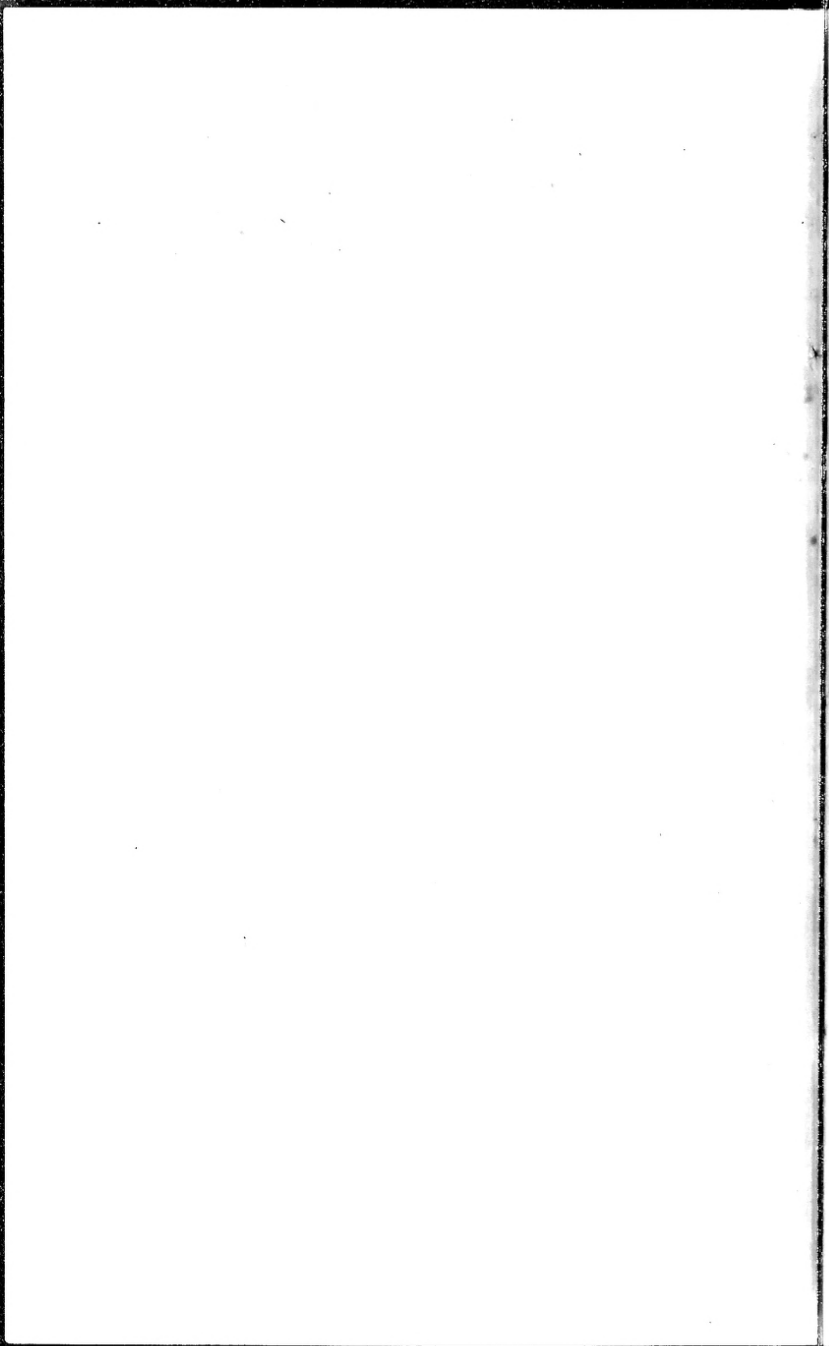
THE EUCHARIST.

“Ibant obscuri sola sub nocte per umbram,
Perque domos Ditis vacuas, et inania regna :
Quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
Est iter in silvis ; ubi cœlum condidit umbra
Jupiter, et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem.”

ÆNEID vi., 268-272.

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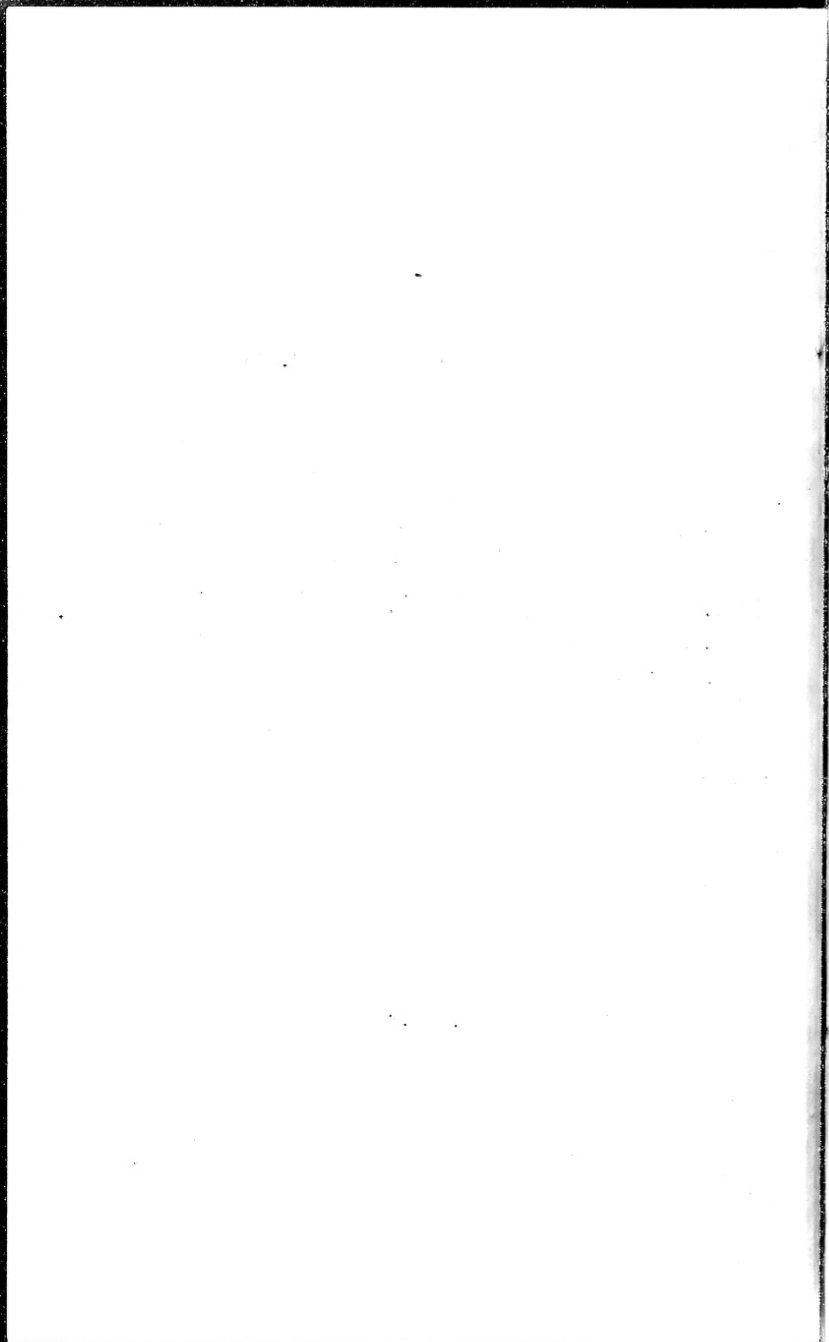
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P R E F A C E.

MARRIAGE, Baptism, Eating and Drinking at the Eucharist, Laying on of Hands, Prayers at Burial, are Christian sacraments and ceremonies which are administered or performed at the present day. The Eucharist is considered by far the most important, and, therefore, its origin and development have been most carefully and extensively examined in this tract. All our sacraments had their origin in the ignorance, miseries, and fancies of the primitive savage condition of all the human races, a condition which these sacraments to some extent relieved. Their original significance has long passed away from the knowledge of civilized races, who, now labouring under total misconceptions regarding their significance, suffer poignant stings of conscience, which constitute the natural punishment attending on "sins of ignorance." To free the reader's mind from those misconceptions is the object of this tract.

KILFEREST :

FEAST OF ST NICODEMUS, 1880.



THE EUCHARIST.

WHEN a man prays his object is to induce the Deity to do something which the suppliant supposes would benefit himself. Prayer is an offer of a bribe. Originally this bribe was flattery. Prayer has always contained this element of flattery. Next there was added the offer of a present. This consisted in an article of food, or something else which the suppliant considered valuable. Since the Deity neither devoured the food nor took away the present, the offering was subsequently consumed with fire, or otherwise destroyed, to render it useless to the suppliant. So, in course of time, a "burned offering" came to be considered the most efficacious bribe that could be offered to the Deity; because the suppliant thereby suffered a loss which he could not recover. The suppliant glorified the Deity by squandering to his honour something which the suppliant considered valuable, and the Deity was supposed to be bound to take that fact into consideration. In this way, sacrifice was supposed to have a magical or charming effect on the Deity, and it became and has ever since continued an essential element of religion. Sacrifice was, in fact, a miracle, which word is a term convertible with the word ignorance. Its origin was fear of those forces in nature which hurt mankind,—such as storms, deluges, earthquakes, pestilence, and the like. Man was ignorant concerning the true causes of these things and he supposed them to be anthropomorphic deities: that is

to say, unseen reduplications of himself, but vastly more powerful. So he endeavoured to bribe these deities with offerings which were calculated to appease the anger of his fellow men. Thus the suppliant hoped that by means of prayer and sacrifice the laws of nature would be suspended for his benefit. He was wholly ignorant of the fact that those laws are invariable,—that the present condition of the universe is the necessary result of every preceding state; that the same men, acted on by the same motives, would do as they have done; and that every thing that takes place in the universe is the necessary result of unvarying forces. As the necessary result of this ignorance, the primitive worshippers supposed that prayer and sacrifice operating through the Deity, should have on man's body and its environments as powerful an effect as a sound constitution, an intelligent understanding, a healthy atmosphere, a fine summer, a fruitful autumn, and anything else which omniscience and omnipotence could bestow. This supposition is an essential element of Christianity, and it is embodied in the Eucharist, or giving of thanks.

Although the celebration of the Eucharist is now an innocent ceremony, yet it was not so originally. The account of its institution and nature, which is most approved of by the Christian Church, is that set forth by the writer of the first epistle to the Corinthians, xi. 23-30, who says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's

death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

So, by the supernatural power of the Christian Church the apparent elements of bread and wine are metamorphosed into the body and blood of a human being. By the same supernatural power, the celebration of the Eucharist proved injurious to some of its unworthy recipients. It proved even fatal to others; for the Greek verb rendered by our verb "sleep" in the above quoted passage is applied, Acts vii. 60, to the *death* of Stephen, and it has the same meaning, namely that of "death," in several other passages of our New Testament.

It is a remarkable fact that the above quoted passage is not to be found in our four Gospels. It is still more remarkable that our four Gospels are never quoted in any of the other writings contained in our New Testament. It, therefore, becomes a very important question, namely, whether the above quoted passage is canonical? A similar question arises regarding several other quotations. For instance, the writer of the Epistle to Titus, i. 12, 13, says, "One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true." There are also in our New Testament several other quotations from the Septuagint, from profane sources, and from apocryphal gospels. Are these to be regarded as canonical?

This question has been answered by Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, in the Preface to his translation of the Septuagint. He says, "What was uninspired before

quotation becomes inspired after ; or rather quotation by the Holy Ghost is the very stamp and seal of inspiration affixed to the words at the moment he condescends to use them. If God can employ human means, including human words and *phrases* too, not the pure tongue of Paradise, but language in itself (till purged by Him) witnessing to the pollution of man's sinful lips, may not the Heavenly Dove light upon truth, which has been ignorantly, perhaps foolishly, perversely uttered, and yet *truth*, and therefore infinitely precious, because of its capacity to minister to the spiritual wants of the children of God? If any think this language too strong let him refer to Tit. i. 12, 13, where we have the testimony of inspiration itself to assure us that God can take words of one nationally and as it were constitutionally a liar and add this sanction, *This witness is true*. Much confusion and difficulty may indeed be avoided if we bear in mind that it is throughout a question not of *originality* but of *inspiration*, save that whatever is good anywhere must of course be original with the Father of lights, whatever the channel through which it happens to flow. In reply then to the question, how far does the apostolic quotation of a part of the Septuagint warrant the inspiration of the whole? we venture to state that it is no warrant at all. What the Holy Ghost touches it hallows—beyond this the translation, whatever its excellence, comes into our hands as the work of fallible man." So quotation by an inspired writer renders the words quoted from any writing a canonical portion of holy Scripture, just as the celebration of the Eucharist by a duly ordained priest changes bread and wine into human flesh and blood. The quotation in the former case operates as the blessing in the latter.

Can it be shown that the popes have promulgated an absurdity for which an equivalent cannot be found in publications of Protestant writers? Or among the precepts of practical wisdom and among the doctrines

of theological nonsense which are contained in the Bible, can there be found any which are not merely echoes of similar wisdom and similar nonsense contained in the Veda and the Bedagat ?

One of the strongest reasons for considering anthropophagy or cannibalism as having widely prevailed in pre-historic ages, is the fact of its being deeply ingrained in savage and barbaric religions whose gods are so often regarded as delighting in human flesh and blood. This is admitted by scholars of such eminence and of such different opinions as Paley and Gladstone. Sometimes the flesh of sacrificed human victims serves to provide cannibal feasts. The understood meaning of those rites in some cases is that the bodies of the victims are consumed by the worshippers vicariously, and in other cases that the gods themselves feed on the spirits of the victims while their bodies are eaten by the priests and people. As might be expected the same ideas and practices prevail at the present day among utterly barbarous nations who now practise that religious cannibalism which the ancestors of civilized people formerly practised. Then Mr T. Williams ("Fiji and the Fijians," Vol. i., p. 231) says, "Of the great offerings of food, native belief apportions merely the *soul* thereof to the gods, who are described as being enormous eaters ; the substance is consumed by the worshippers. Cannibalism is a part of the Fijian religion, and the gods are described as delighting in human flesh." In Mexico the anthropophagy which prevailed was distinctly religious in its origin and professed purpose. See Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico," Bancroft's "Native Races of Pacific States," Vol. ii. That the primary meaning of the human sacrifice was to present victims to their deities is shown by the manner in which the sacrificing Mexican priest tore out the heart, offered it to the sun, and afterwards went through ceremonies of feeding the idol with the heart and

blood. To obtain supplies of captives for sacrifices caused the Mexicans to engage in frequent wars ; and it was the limbs of these victims which were eaten in the sacrificial feasts that formed part of the festivals. See Thomas J. Hutchinson's "Ten Years among the Ethiopians," p. 62, &c., Lander's "Records," Vol. ii. p. 250, whereby it is shown evidently that in Africa cannibalism has in some cases a sacrificial character. Sir John Lubbock ("Pre-historic Times," Third Edition, pp. 468-9) says, "The cannibalism of a New Zealander, though often a mere meal, was also sometimes a ceremony ; in these cases the object was something very different from mere sensual gratification ; it must be regarded as a part of his religion, as a sort of unholy sacrament. This is proved by the fact that after a battle the bodies which they preferred were not those of plump young men, or tender damsels, but of the most celebrated chiefs however old and dry they might be. In fact they believed that it was not only the material substance which they thus appropriated, but also the spirit, the ability and the glory of him whom they devoured. The greater the number of corpses they had eaten, the higher they thought would be their position in the world to come Religious persecutions have scarcely ceased in Europe even now, nor is it so very long since the fire and the stake were regarded as necessary for the preservation of Christianity itself."

It is to be observed, however, that the element of murder is excluded from the celebration of the eucharist ; because, Hebrews x. 12, Jesus "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." But the eating of actual human flesh and the drinking of actual human blood are both necessary for the salvation of a Christian ; because, (John vi. 53), "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." All man-

kind, and especially untutored nations, attributed supreme and most abiding importance and efficacy to human sacrifices. This supremacy arose from two causes, namely, firstly, imperfect observation of cause and supposed effect which is common to all practices of sacrifice, and, secondly, supposed value of human sacrifices.

Regarding the first cause, Bacon says, ("Novum Organum," book i., aph., § 46), "When any proposition has been once accepted, the human understanding forces everything else to add fresh support and confirmation; and although most cogent and abundant instances may exist to the contrary, yet the human understanding either does not observe or despise them, or get rid of and reject them by some distinction, with violent and injurious prejudice, rather than sacrifice the authority of its first conclusions. It was well answered by him [Diagoras], who was shewn in a temple the votive tablets suspended by such as had escaped the peril of shipwreck, and was pressed as to whether he would then recognise the power of the gods by an inquiry, But where are the portraits of those who have perished in spite of their vows? All superstition is much the same, whether it be that of astrology, dreams, omens, retributive judgment, or the like, in all of which the deluded believers observe events which are fulfilled, but neglect and pass over their failure, though it be much more common. But this evil insinuates itself still more craftily in philosophy and the sciences, in which a settled maxim vitiates and governs every other circumstance, though the latter be much more worthy of confidence. Besides, even in the absence of that eagerness and want of thought, which we have mentioned, it is a peculiar and perpetual error of the human understanding to be more moved and excited by affirmatives than by negatives, whereas it ought to be duly and regularly impartial: nay, in establishing any true axiom, the negative instance is the more powerful."

Unfortunately the false reasoning pointed out by Bacon can never be eradicated from the human constitution. For the human understanding is so environed by human pain, want, waste, misery, fear, desire, and (worst of all) hope, that a really free exercise of reason is almost out of the question. Moreover, reason cannot directly influence a belief that did not originate in reason. Hence this false reasoning clings to men of talent, courage, experience, and education. Xenophon successfully conducted the celebrated retreat of the ten thousand Grecian soldiers from the neighbourhood of Babylon to that of Byzantium. He has left us an account of that retreat in his "Anabasis." There, when relating (book iv., ch. v. 3, 4) the last passage of the Greeks across the Euphrates, he says, "The last day's march was hard to bear, for a north wind, blowing full in their faces, quite chilled and stiffened the men. Upon this, one of the seers advised to sacrifice to the wind; so they sacrificed, and the severity of the wind perceptibly abated."

Here we have sacrifice and false reasoning going together hand in hand as they have always gone since man was what he is. It is the old story. A man wishes to gain the favour of the Deity, who is assumed to be a Power encompassed with human feelings and human infirmities: in fact, to all intents and for all purposes an immensely powerful Man. Therefore, in the first place, the man prays to his supposed Deity. Secondly, the man makes a vow that he will give his supposed Deity something. Thirdly, the man resolves to glorify his supposed Deity, and this leads to the fourth and last step, namely, since the man wishes to give public proof of his attachment to his supposed Deity, the man must impose upon himself PAIN, and the pain must be such as not to present the remotest prospect of any dependent or independent reward. Mankind will measure the amount of devotion by the amount and intensity of the pain which the worshipper

gratuitously inflicts on himself. Hence have arisen fasting, asceticism, filth, austerity, celibacy, torture, poverty, seclusion.

It would be well if religious pranks ended here. But since the worshipper imagines himself morally bound to glorify his supposed Deity, it follows that the universal recognition of his Deity will be the chief object of the worshipper, who is thus placed in a state of hostility to all those who (1) do not believe in the existence of this supposed Deity, (2) who do not obey his will, and (3) who imperfectly obey his will.

It has been demonstrated ("Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," by John Fiske) that "No two individuals are exactly alike." It is a well-known truth (John i. 18) that "No man has seen God at any time." Hence it follows that all deities, supposed to be endowed with moral or immoral attributes, or with both, are and always have been as numerous and as various as the worshippers who pay those deities homage. In this, and only in this respect, religion is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Hence arises not only hostility, but an immense extension of that feeling. A number of artificial instances are created and subjected to its control where before it had not any application; and every fresh case of collision swells and aggravates the hostility which sprang from the previous sources. Keeping this fact constantly in view, it will soon become self-evident that to put a limit to the miseries arising from religious fear, religious ignorance, religious selfishness, and religious cruelty, would be simply impossible. Although the human race has existed on earth during millions of years, yet we know comparatively very little regarding the history of man. Our knowledge of human progress does not extend back during a longer period than about eight thousand years, of which, at least one-half, we know only in outline. But we know that we have strong grounds for believing "That existing savages are not the descendants of civi-

lized ancestors. That the primitive condition of man was one of utter barbarism. And that from this condition several races have independently raised themselves." (Lubbock's "Origin of Civilization," Ed. 1870, p. 323.) We also know that those races who have so raised themselves have been in their progress retarded more by the hostility of Religion to Science than by any other impediment. So well as we know, the history of every religion is a tale of woes, cruelties, and revolting atrocities. None is so bad as the history of Christianity. Judaism destroyed thousands of Canaanites. Mohammedanism slaughtered hundreds of thousands among the Arabs, Persians, and Hindoos. But these are trifles when compared with "the tender mercies" of Christianity. According to an eminent writer, "Christianity indeed has equalled Judaism in the atrocities, and exceeded it in the extent of its desolation. Eleven millions of men, women, and children, have been killed in battle, butchered in their sleep, burned to death at public festivals of sacrifice, poisoned, tortured, assassinated, and pillaged in the spirit of the Religion of Peace, and for the glory of the most merciful God." Here is a eucharist indeed. Here is a real and genuine "giving of thanks," compared with which all other eucharists dwindle into insignificance.

It is a most melancholy subject for reflection that such eucharists—although upon a much smaller scale—have been celebrated all over the earth. That in one shape or other they are being celebrated even at the present time. And that so long as religion is what it is, such eucharists must be celebrated more or less among mankind.

For, since sacrifices originated in the human desire to appease angry gods by offerings held by the worshippers as dearest and most precious, it cannot be surprising to find that—at all events for a considerable time—human sacrifices were almost inseparable from religion. "Not content with presenting their choicest

property, whether animate or inanimate, untutored nations slaughtered in honour of their deities human beings, prized as the noblest work of creation, and in many respects kindred with the gods themselves." Kalisch "on Leviticus," vol. i., p. 324.

Like all other offerings, human sacrifices were prized in proportion to the self-denial which they involved. Man cannot manifest his earnestness and religious devotion more strikingly than by sacrificing his own life to move the will of the gods. Hence the highest and most glorious offering was supposed to be self-immolation. This belief pervades the stories contained in the works of the Greek Tragics, and the narratives of ancient Roman legends. This belief was also entertained by Jesus Christ, according to our New Testament.

For we are told (Matthew, xvi. 21-23), "From that time forth Jesus began to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art an offence unto me ; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." This determination of Jesus to seek death by self-immolation is repeated, over and over again, in our New Testament. And when Jesus was on his trial for life or death, he took care to goad his judges into killing him. For we are told (Matthew xxvi. 62-66,) that "the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing ? What is it which these witness against thee ? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God that thou tellest whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say

unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his own clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death."

Commenting on the self-immolation of Jesus, an eminent writer says:—"All Christendom has always believed that the death of Jesus was *voluntarily* incurred; and unless no man ever became a wilful martyr, I cannot conceive why we are to doubt the fact concerning Jesus. When he resolved to go up to Jerusalem, he was warned by his disciples of the danger; but so far was he from being blind to it, that he distinctly announced to them that he knew he should suffer in Jerusalem the shameful death of a malefactor. On his arrival in the suburbs, his first act was to ride ostentatiously into the city on an ass's colt, in the midst of the acclamations of the multitude, in order to exhibit himself as having a just right to the throne of David. Thus he gave a handle to imputations of intended treason. He next entered the temple courts, where doves and lambs were sold for sacrifice, and committed a breach of the peace by flogging with a whip those who trafficked in the area. By such conduct he undoubtedly made himself liable to legal punishment, and probably might have been publicly scourged for it, had the rulers chosen to moderate their vengeance. But he 'meant to be prosecuted for treason, not for felony,' to use the words of a modern offender. [John Mitchel, 1848.] He therefore commenced the most exasperating attacks on all the powerful, calling them hypocrites and whited sepulchres and viper's brood, and denouncing upon them the 'condemnation of hell.' He was successful. He had both enraged the rulers up to the point of thirsting for His life, and given colour to the charge of

political rebellion. He resolved to die ; and he died. Had his enemies contemptuously let him live, he would have been forced to act the part of Jewish Messiah, or renounce Messiahship. If anyone holds Jesus to be not amenable to the laws of human morality, I am not now reasoning with such a one. But if any one claims for him a human perfection, then I say that his conduct on this occasion was neither laudable nor justifiable : far otherwise. There are cases in which life may be thrown away for a great cause, as when a leader in battle rushes upon certain death, in order to animate his own men ; but the case before us has no similarity to that. If our accounts are not wholly false, Jesus knowingly and purposely exasperated the rulers into a great crime—the crime of taking his life from personal resentment. . . . At his public trial the vast majority judge him to deserve punishment, and prefer to ask free forgiveness for Barabbas, a bandit who was in prison for murder. We moderns, nursed in an arbitrary belief concerning these events, drink in with our first milk the assumption that Jesus alone was guiltless, and all the other actors in this sad affair inexcusably guilty. Let no one imagine that I defend for a moment the cruel punishment which raw resentment inflicted on him. But though the rulers felt the rage of vengeance, the people, who had suffered no personal wrong, were moved only by ill-measured indignation. The multitude love to hear the powerful exposed and reproached up to a certain limit, but if reproach go clearly beyond all that they feel to be deserved, a violent sentiment reacts on the head of the reviler, and though popular indignation (even when free from the element of selfishness) ill fixes the due *measure* of punishment, I have a strong belief that it is righteous, when it pronounces the verdict Guilty. Does my friend deny that the death of Jesus was wilfully incurred ? The ‘orthodox’ not merely admit, but maintain it. Their creed justifies it

by the doctrine that his death was a 'sacrifice' so pleasing to God as to expiate the sins of the world. This honestly meets the objections to self-destruction, for how better could life be used than by laying it down for such a prize? But besides all other difficulties in the very idea of atonement, the orthodox creed startles us by the incredible conception that a voluntary sacrifice of life should be unacceptable to God, unless offered by ferocious and impious hands. If Jesus had 'authority from the Father to lay down his life,' was he unable to stab himself in the desert, or on the sacred altar of the temple, without involving guilt to any human being? Did he, who is at once 'high priest' and victim, when 'offering up himself' and 'presenting his own blood unto God,' need any justification for using the sacrificial knife? In entire consistency with his previous determination to die, Jesus, when arraigned, refused to rebut accusation, and behaved as one pleading guilty. . . . After he had confirmed by his silence the belief that he had used a dishonest evasion indicative of consciousness that he was no real Messiah, he suddenly burst out with a full reply to the high priest's question, and avowed that he *was* the Messiah, the Son of God, and that they should hereafter see him sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven—of course, to enter into judgment on them all. I am the less surprised that this precipitated his condemnation, since he himself seems to have designed precisely that result."

Such was the eucharist offered by Jesus Christ!

Of course, we Secularists know that, as an objective reality, it cannot be proved that Jesus Christ ever had a really historical existence. And the object of quoting the foregoing passage is merely to prove not only the pre-eminent importance attached to suicide in ancient times, but also the palmary importance attached to it—at all events in the case of the mythical Jesus Christ—even in our own time.

When, B.C. 1225, the seven Argive heroes, under Adrastus, King of Argos, invaded the Theban territory, the Cadmeians, assisted by their allies the Phocians and the Phlegyae, marched forth and fought a battle in which they were defeated, and forced to retire within the walls of Thebes. The prophet Tiresias informed them that if Meneceus, son of Creon, King of Thebes, would offer himself as a victim to Mars, victory would be secured to the Thebans. The heroic youth slew himself before the city. Six of the Argive heroes perished in the subsequent battle, and the invading army was almost annihilated.

Again, (2 Kings iii. 9, 24, 26, 27),—when, B.C. 895, “the King of Israel went, and the King of Judah, and the King of Edom . . . and they . . . smote the Moabites so that they fled before them . . . and when the King of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom : but they could not. Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel : and they departed from him and returned to their own land.” It is needless to multiply instances.

Next to self-immolation, the most valued sacrifice was that of the dearest relation. Hence arose the well-known eucharist of burning to death children as offerings to certain gods. In course of time aged parents were sacrificed by their children to those gods. So, both infanticide and parricide were eucharists.

Next to these, priests and pious people were regarded as highly acceptable eucharists. At Meroe, near the confluence of the Blue and the White Nile, when the priests pretended that some oracle had directed the king to be sacrificed in order to avert some great calamity, it was customary to kill his majesty as an offering to the gods. It is hardly conceivable that this custom could have lasted very long. At all events,

about B.C. 300, we are informed (Diodorus Siculus, iii. 6) that the Æthiopian king, Ergamenes, having been summoned for a similar sacrifice, collected his forces together, defeated and slew the priests, and abolished the custom.

After the happy conclusion of a military expedition, victorious nations sacrificed captives taken during the war. This gradually led to killing strangers rather than natives in honour of the gods. But we know from Plutarch ("Concerning Superstition," 13) that even this first step was not achieved without a severe struggle. It was denounced by priests and fanatics, who censured it as a means for evading, in a cowardly manner, the most sacred of religious duties.

Nevertheless it was impossible that matters could stop here. Thanks be to Energy, who has always caused religion to be subdued by time! Bacon says, "He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils; for Time is the greatest innovator." In fact, we know that the tendency of all natural forces is to bring all organizations more and more into harmony with each other, and to disintegrate the inharmonious elements altogether. So, the very continuance of this adjustment is itself Progress.

"Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith;
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
Whose waves they have tainted with death.
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages and swells,
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see
Like wrecks, in the surge of eternity."

So another advance was soon made towards mitigating the horrible crime of sacrificing innocent men and children. This advance was made by slaughtering men, especially condemned criminals, who, by the laws of the land, had forfeited their lives. And so long as there are murderers on earth, it is to be hoped that

this slaughter—but not as a sacrifice—shall never be abolished. No doubt all men act from what is, for the time, the strongest motive, and they cannot act otherwise. Consequently, to prove that the punishment in a future existence for what was inevitable in this life could be an act of justice, is simply impossible. But a man who commits murder is not to be trusted. And entertaining the most profound esteem and admiration for Mr Bright's genius, talents, eloquence, and amiable disposition, still, murderers here must be destroyed if the human race is to advance. But such destruction is to be inflicted for the same reasons that any other immediate obstacles to human advancement are to be removed. This is the justification of human punishment. We do not accuse the venomous serpent of moral guilt. But we cannot trust the venomous serpent; neither can we trust the murderer. But punishment does not justify protracted torture here or hereafter.

Another, and a very decided step towards a less revolting form of sacrifice was made by merely bleeding a man in honour of the gods. This ceremony was performed at Sparta, in the time of Pausanias, (III., xvi. 6), and at Rome, B.C. 85, when the obsequies of Marius were being celebrated.

Ægypt possesses the oldest history of any country with which we are acquainted. There it is that we find the earliest trace of worshippers, when sacrificing, substituting symbolical figures instead of men. During the long, (B.C. 570-526), and prosperous reign of the Ægyptian King, Amasis, that enlightened prince (Porphyry, "on Abstinence," II. 55) offered, at Heliopolis, a sacrifice of wax images, instead of human beings formerly sacrificed. Here, at length, we come to the institution of harmless sacrifices, including, amongst other things, a crumb of bread and a drop of wine! Bread and wine were the primary food of man when he was rising out of barbarism, and were by him offered to

the powers of Earth and Energy, Demeter, an old form of γῆ μήτηρ, "Mother Earth," and Dionysus, a name of uncertain etymology, but probably connected with the same root as the word *Dyauis*, δῖος, Διός, *Deus*, etc., and regarded as the god of joy and animated emotion. Hence bread and wine are symbols of elemental worship, which still lingers in the dove which symbolizes the Holy Ghost, while it also was the bird sacred to Venus, and points to an ecclesiastical institution, the explanation of which is purposely omitted from this tract.

Thus, then, cannibalism, the bloody eucharist, and the slaughter of men to secure the favour of the gods, originated in ignorance, fear, irrational selfishness, and cruelty, which constitute that religious sentiment, which, it is to be feared, is common to all nations, and seems to be inherent in the human mind. This slaughter was resorted to on occasions of exceptional solemnity, when the sacrifice of animals seemed inadequate to express the full irrational selfishness of religious emotion; and it was for a long time regarded as a form of worship so praiseworthy and exalted that its neglect was deplored as a sign of cowardice and of declining piety. Unfortunately, the practice of human sacrifice proved compatible with a very considerable degree of civilisation and mental culture, which proves that the immoralities of religion ought to be entirely excluded from all early education of human beings; because since religion accustomed men to feel supreme satisfaction in seeing their fellow beings and even their own children and parents massacred, pierced by the sword, burned to death, hurled from rocks, buildings, or lofty terraces, drowned in cess-pools, seas, or rivers, exposed to starvation, or otherwise cruelly exterminated, history thereby abundantly and awfully proves that the practice of religion invariably leads to the most degrading, the most cruel, and the most revolting enormities—especially it did so during those

“dark ages,” when Christianity was uncontrolled by civil law or moral science, and forced its votaries into religious wars, the persecution of sects, the murder of Infidels, the burning of witches, the pillage of Jews, and the horrors of the inquisition!

But, after all, perhaps it may be asserted that the Christian church does not recognise the existence of cannibalism in the celebration of the eucharist. Here, then, is the admirable advantage of definition. In the Catechism of the Christian Church, edited by the most reverend Dr James Butler, the eucharist is defined by question and answer in the following words:—

“*Question.* What is the blessed Eucharist?

Answer. The body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine.

Q. What means the word Eucharist?

A. A special grace or gift of God, and it means also a solemn act of thanksgiving to God for all his mercies.

Q. What do you mean by the appearances of bread and wine?

A. The taste, colour, and form of bread and wine, which still remain after the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ.

Q. Are both the body and blood of Christ under the appearance of bread and under the appearance of wine?

A. Yes: Christ is whole and entire, true God and true Man, under the appearance of each.

Q. Are we to believe that the God of all glory is under the appearances of our corporal food?

A. Yes: as we must also believe that the same God of all glory suffered death, under the appearance of a criminal on the cross.

Q. How can the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ?

A. By the goodness and power of God, with whom no words shall be impossible,—Luke i. 37.

Q. Are we assured that Christ changed bread and wine into his body and blood ?

A. Yes : by the very words which Christ himself said when he instituted the blessed eucharist at his last supper.

Q. Which are the words Christ said when he instituted the blessed Eucharist ?

A. This is my body, this is my blood—Matt. xxvi. 26.

Q. Did Christ give power to the priests of his church to change bread and wine into his body and blood ?

A. Yes : when he said to his apostles at his last supper : Do this for a commemoration of me—Luke xxii. 19.

Q. Why did Christ give to the priests of his church so great a power ?

A. That his children, throughout all ages and nations, might have a most acceptable sacrifice to offer to their heavenly Father, and the most precious food to nourish their souls.

Q. What is a sacrifice ?

A. That first and most necessary act of religion, whereby we acknowledge God's supreme dominion over us, and our total dependence on him.

Q. What is the sacrifice of the New Law ?

A. The Mass.

Q. What is the Mass ?

A. The sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, which are really present under the appearances of bread and wine, and are offered to God by the priest for the living and the dead.

Q. Is the Mass a different sacrifice from that of the cross ?

A. No ; because the same Christ who once offered himself a bleeding victim to his heavenly Father on the cross, continues to offer himself in an unbloody manner by the hands of his priests on our altars.

Q. Was Mass offered in the Old Law?

A. No : so great a sacrifice was reserved for the New Law, which was to fulfil the figures of the Old Law, and to give religion its full perfection.

Q. At what part of the Mass are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?

A. At the consecration.

Q. By whom are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?

A. By the priest ; but in virtue of the words of Christ, whose person the priest represents at the awful moment of consecration.

Q. What are the ends for which Mass is said?

A. To give God honour and glory, to thank Him for His benefits, to obtain remission of our sins, and all other graces and blessings, through Jesus Christ.

Q. For what other end is Mass offered?

A. To continue and represent the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. 'This do,' says Christ, 'in remembrance of me.' 1 Cor. xi.

Q. How should we assist at Mass?

A. With great interior recollection and piety, and with every mark of outward respect and devotion.

Q. Which is the best manner of hearing Mass?

A. To offer it to God with the priest for the same purpose for which it is said, to meditate on Christ's sufferings, and to go to communion."

So the Christian church still offers a real human sacrifice at the celebration of the Eucharist by transforming the bread and wine used at that feast into "the body and blood of Christ, which are really present under the appearances of bread and wine, and are offered to God by the priest for the living and the dead." And, therefore, whenever members of the Christian Church celebrate "the blessed Eucharist" they also celebrate a real cannibal feast.

SCHOLIUM.

ALTHOUGH about three hundred millions of Christians continue to celebrate the Eucharist, unconscious while they are doing so that they are celebrating a cannibal feast, yet their unconscious celebration of other Pagan and even savage ceremonies connected with religion is a more remarkable incident in the history of human thought. So powerfully does the force of inactivity, or the conservative element, act on the brain of man, that sometimes ceremonies are practised long after those ceremonies have ceased to manifest the circumstances that gave them their original significance. To indicate the circumstances which, we have reason to believe, originated some ceremonies still observed and celebrated by Christians may excite a reader's curiosity, and even his active inquiry.

PHALLIC WORSHIP.

It is a well ascertained fact that when Christians worship the Trinity, they worship in the abstract that which was originally a concrete symbol of the Sun. The primitive human thinker observed that the sun's rays produced an influence on vegetable life analogous to male generation in animal life. So they represented the sun's rays under the symbol of the cross, which symbol was intended to be a spiritual representation of generation in the abstract. And it is a well ascertained historical fact that from China westwards to Spain, and from Mexico to Chili, the cross has been an emblem of the Trinity and of Sun worship from times that are remotely prehistoric down to our own times. On this subject, and on other matters connected with worship of the Sun, volumes have been written. Here let it be sufficient to state that the names Helios, Phœbus, Jupiter, Pasiphæ, Jehovah, Ulysses, Jesus Christ,

Sinbad the Sailor, and a multitude of other names have been more or less clearly identified with matters relating to worship of the Sun. In fact, any name in mythology that can be identified with a name of the Sun may be regarded safely as connected with solar myth.

MARRIAGE.

AMONG all purely savage tribes there is not any such relation between any two members of the tribe as that which we understand by the expression "husband and wife." The females are the common property of all the men: and consequently when a man wished to have a wife of his own, he had to capture a woman from some other tribe. Then she became his wife in the same way as a horse, a cow, a sheep, or any other thing captured from some other tribe was a man's property. This led such of the men as were strong and brave to separate from the tribe and rear families of their own after the manner of a lion and his lioness. For this purpose the patriarch constructed for himself a fort, afterwards a castle; and when his family was sufficiently large, the strong castle became the centre of a village which, in course of time, grew into a fortified town. Hence the meaning of the Psalm, cxxvii. 4, 5: "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man who hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." In course of time a strong town rendered weak towns tributary, and in this manner the Assyrian kingdom, with its headquarters at Nineveh, and afterwards Babylon, Athens, and Rome, grew into national powers.

To return to the patriarch. He had absolute power to slay or sell his children, slaves, servants, cattle, wife, &c. The sale of daughters is admirably illustrated in the case of Laban and Jacob (Genesis xxxi.), although, in that case, the astute son-in-law generally obtained the advantage over his more opulent father-in-law. This selling of children has left its traces in the Christian Church. In the solemnization of matrimony by the Church of Rome, when the man and woman have signified their agreement to become husband and wife, the Roman Catholic Missal directs: "*Deinde detur fœmina a patre suo vel ab amicis suis; quæ, si puella sit, discoopertam habeat manum, si vidua, tectam: et vir eam recipiat in Dei fide et sua servandam, et tenet eam per manum dexteram in manu sua dextera; et ad hunc modum, docente sacerdote, dat ei fidem per verbum de præsentibus, dicens.*"

"Then let the woman be given by her father or by her friends; if she be a maiden let her keep her hand uncovered, if a widow, covered, and let the man receive her to be preserved in the faith of God and her own faith; and he holds her with her right hand in his right hand, and, according to the following form, the priest dictating the words, he plights his troth to her by word of mouth, saying."

And in the Church of England the book of Common Prayer directs: "Then shall the minister say, 'Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?' Then shall they give their troth to each other in this manner—the minister, receiving the woman at her father or friend's hands, shall cause the man with his right hand to take the woman by her right hand, and to say after him as followeth."

In these formulas "giving" is merely a euphemism for "selling." Among civilized nations the pecuniary arrangements are always agreed on and made before the marriage ceremony is performed.

BAPTISM.

WHILE infanticide prevails among the members of any tribe or nation, a child doomed to destruction would be killed without being cleansed, or having any other sort of labour bestowed on it. On the other hand, a child intended to be preserved would be cleansed. For cleaning the human body, washing in water is the method in use even among the most barbarous of the savage tribes at present known. Hence washing a child would be associated with the idea of its preservation. Superstition spiritualizes physical acts whenever an opportunity offers. From this association of ideas there would naturally arise in the mind of a savage the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

DRINKING.

WHEN it was necessary for the preservation of the human race that all men should fight, it so happened that some men were not able to fight in proportion to their physical strength. This inability was caused by want of courage. In process of time it was discovered that there were certain victuals and drinks which to some extent would supply this want of courage. Among these may be enumerated opium, wine, hemp, tobacco, and coca. When the use of these stimulants and narcotics was discovered, they were resorted to for the purpose of allaying fear. At all events, so well as we know, the allaying of fear was the first use to which extracts from hemp were applied. See the *Spectator* for 5th July 1879. In the east it is the main cause for their continued use. And the wine used at the eucharist is supposed to prepare Christian communicants for warfare on behalf of "the church militant."

For in the catechism of the English Church we have the following question and answer:—

Question. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?

Answer. The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ as our bodies are by the bread and wine."

Among the Greeks the import of some practices in which they indulged during the celebration of the Dionysia, has been well explained by Müller in his "History of the Literature of Ancient Greece," i. 289. The intense desire felt by every worshipper of Dionysus to fight, to conquer, to suffer in common with him, made them regard the subordinate beings (such as the satyrs, panes, and nymphs by whom the god himself was surrounded, and through whom life seemed to pass from him into vegetation, and branch off into a variety of grotesque or beautiful forms, and who were ever present to the fancy of the Greeks), as convenient means by which they could approach more nearly to the presence of their deity. Just as the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians (ii. 13, 14, 17) tells them, "Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace who hath made both one; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." The customs so prevalent at the festivals of Dionysus, whereby the worshippers took the disguise of satyrs, originated in this feeling, and not in the mere desire of concealing excesses under the disguise of a mask; otherwise so serious and pathetic a spectacle as tragedy could never have originated in the choruses of those satyrs. Drunkenness and the boisterous music of cymbals, drums and flutes, the colouring of the body, wearing skins of goats and deer, and covering the face with masks and leaves, manifested a desire to escape from self into something new and strange, and to live in an imaginary world.

LAYING ON OF HANDS.

It is observed by the writer of Ecclesiastes, (xi. 5), that "thou knowest not how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child;" and it may be sufficient to state generally that because the touch of natural generation has power to reproduce animal life and existence, therefore it was supposed almost universally that the touch of any very great man had power to infuse a portion of his strength, wisdom, prosperity, good luck, or holiness into any person whom he touched with the intention of benefiting that person. This appears to have been the original idea contained in the ceremony of blessing and ordaining to office by laying on of hands. In an analogous manner when kings had reigned for some time, a sovereign, by virtue of his high office, was supposed to be able to cure certain diseases by the touch of his royal hand. That is to say, he was supposed to drive away the disease in question by infusing a portion of his royal virtue into the sufferer. Thus (Mark v. 30, Luke viii. 46) when a woman, suffering from a bodily ailment, touched Jesus Christ, even without his being aware of her intention, he perceived that virtue went out of him and cured her. Also (Luke vi. 19), when a whole multitude of disordered persons came to be cured by Jesus Christ, "there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." Again when Jesus was newly risen from the dead (John xx. 17) he said to Mary, "touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my Father:" that is to say he was too weak to permit virtue to go out of him, as he required to go to heaven and receive from Jehovah a new infusion of supernatural power.

This laying on of hands was sometimes performed by touching the recipient with the fore and middle fingers of the great man's right hand. These fingers were

used symbolically. Hence a touch of them was intended to signify impregnation. So when giving a blessing—infusing the Holy Ghost into a person—giving a person “the gift of tongues”—appointing a person to any high office (Numbers xxvii. 18), as in the case of Joshua—consecrating a person to any ecclesiastical office such as deacon, elder, priest, bishop—the person already holding high ecclesiastical office touches with his right hand the person intended to be consecrated. In the Bible, the earliest account of an instance where the laying on of hands was used, is in connection (Genesis xlvi. 14, 15), with the blessing given by the patriarch Jacob to the sons of Joseph. It was prescribed (Numbers viii. 10) to Moses as the form for consecrating the Levites.

From these times it was represented as having been used on such occasions as blessing and appointing to office, generally among the Jews. In like manner it was used by the early Christians. See Mark x. 16, xvi. 18; Acts vi. 6, viii. 17, 18, xiii. 3, xix. 16, xxviii. 8; 1 Timothy iv. 14.

At Ephesus, A.D. 56, St Paul (Acts xix. 1-6), found certain disciples who had been baptized unto John's baptism. Paul asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. They answered, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” Then Paul asked them unto what were they baptized? They said unto John's baptism. Then Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, “saying unto the people that they should believe on him who should come after John, that is on Jesus Christ. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,” with a facility of persuasion which renders the whole story apocryphal! “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied;” that is to say (“Supernatural Religion,” iii. pp. 353-366,

Acts iv. 36), they spoke in unintelligible sounds, and they delivered exhortation.

Connected with these ideas regarding the efficacy supposed to exist in some cases in the laying on of hands, there is in Greek poetry a remarkable story regarding the wanderings of Io, daughter of Inachus, king of Argos. Io was beloved by Jupiter, and therefore Juno persecuted Io. In Greek the word *epaphe* means "a touch." Io was said to have given birth to Epaphus, a mythical king of Egypt, of whom she became pregnant by the mere touch of Jupiter. On this subject Æschylus ("Suppliants," 312), says, "Jupiter, who touched her, begot a son by his hand." Commenting on this passage, Mr Paley says, "Throughout there is a play on the name Ἐπαφος, as derived from ἐφάπτειν, 'to touch.' It was a supernatural birth—an incarnation of the deity without procreation: an ancient Ægyptian doctrine of great moment and interest, especially as connected with ἐπίπνοια ['inspiration']." So then the efficacy of a divine touch was believed in by the ancient Ægyptians.

In like manner we have stories regarding the magic wand of the wizard, the sorcerer, the witch, the thaumaturgus, the enchanter, and so forth. Almost every reader is familiar with the story (Odyssey x. 238), regarding the companions of Ulysses, who were turned into swine by a touch from the magic wand, *ράβδος*, of Circe, "a she-kite." Also (John xx. 22), that a touch from the breath of Jesus Christ infused the Holy Ghost into his apostles. And a similar idea regarding impregnation by touching is contained in some of the ceremonies connected with the Latin *lupercalia*, which were festivals in honour of Lupercus, "the warder off against wolves," and the God of fertility. At those festivals the men ran about naked, and touching or striking with a leather thong persons whom they met. Their touching of women was supposed to render the touched females prolific.

Among the ancient Romans, when a master wished to set free his slave by means of the liberating rod, *vindicta*, the ceremony was performed thus:-- The master brought his slave to the magistrate who had authority for that purpose, and the master stated the grounds, *causa*, for the intended manumission. The lictor of the magistrate laid a rod, *festuca*, on the head of the slave, accompanied with certain formal words, in which the lictor declared that the slave was a free man, *ex jure Quiritium*, that is, the lictor placed the slave in a free condition, *vindicavit in libertatem*. In the meantime the master held the slave, and after the master had pronounced the words *hunc hominem liberum volo*, "I wish this man to be free," the master turned the slave round, and *emitit e manu*, or *misit manu*, "he let him go from his hand," from which word, "hand," the name given to the act of manumission has been derived. So, in this case, a slave was made actually free by the hand of his master.

FASTING.

AMONG the ancient Greeks the *iatros*, or surgeon, worked by means of an epode or incantation, *carmen*. The *hiereus*, or sacrificer, acted as a *mantis*, or prophet, and he performed this function partly by fasting (see Lubbock's "Origin of Civilization," p. 153, et seq.), and afterwards by inspecting the entrails of the victim. By fasting, the Hesychasts were favoured with a supernatural revelation. See an account of them in Mosheim's "Institutes," century xiv., ch. v. § 1, 2. When (Acts x. 10-35) Peter had been fasting, and his nervous system being thereby disordered, he fell into a trance, and learned that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

In our own day the clergyman goes through a preparation commonly called "education." After learning how to lay his hand on certain symbols and persons—bend his knees—read prayers—talk solemn nonsense—make the sign of the cross—and turn a crumb of bread and a drop of port wine into flesh and blood, he becomes a minister, "minor," and afterwards a priest or "elder," and if the first lord commissioner of Her Majesty's treasury be favourably disposed towards the priest, he will become a bishop or "overseer." If the priest be a man who has not any friend possessed of political influence, the priest must fast if he desire to be promoted. Among all clergymen, savage and civilized, the efficacy of fasting is supposed to be very great. The object of fasting is to bring on at will certain abnormal nervous conditions, which cause the brain to be conscious of certain subjective feelings which have not any objective reality. When in this state, the fasting priest thinks he sees visions which give him direct access to the fancied inhabitants of the supposed spiritual world. See Matt. iv. 2, xvii. 21; Mark ix. 29; Luke ii. 37; Acts x. 30, xiv. 23; xix. 6; 1 Cor. vii. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 5. We are told (Matt. xvii. 21; Mark ix. 29) that Jesus Christ thought that fasting would cure epilepsy. "Vanity of vanities!"

UNIFORMITY.

ALL the human faculties are developed by man's desire to regulate his actions to advantage. Man has not the least desire to trace causes, except for the purpose of his being able to predict what effects will follow when certain causes shall have occurred. Certain causes force themselves on man's observation by their frequent occurrence, and by the invariable nature

of the effects that follow ; for instance, the rising and setting of the sun followed respectively by daylight and by darkness. But when the phenomena are complicated, man must expend time and such skilled training as he possesses to determine the nature of the physical causes which combine to produce the complicated effects. In such cases, primitive man must form some theory which appears most probable to his very limited knowledge, for the purpose of arriving at some determination regarding his course of action. Under such circumstances, it always happens that one of the causes which appears to him to be most constant in its occurrence, and most variable in its effects, is the human will. By observation on himself and his friends, primitive man infers that the operations of the human will are governed by passion or caprice more than by the laws which regulate the material world. Therefore, by analogy with what is familiar to him, when he sees phenomena, the cause of which he does not know, for instance, rain, wind, frost, and pestilence, he infers that they are caused by some capricious will.

When families collect into tribes for the purpose of self-preservation, it is important that all the members should act with unanimity. Therefore all those members should hold, or should act as if they held, the same opinions regarding the unknown causes of phenomena, such, for instance, as luck. Their belief in the ascertained causes of simple phenomena does not need to be enforced by public opinion, or law, or even by custom, as, for instance, if a man doubted whether drinking the juice of hemlock would kill a man, or the like, the dissentient can be proved to be wrong by an easily performed experiment. It is only when the knowledge possessed by the members of a tribe regarding a cause is uncertain, and when the cause can be only guessed at by analogy, that the authority of public opinion is required to enforce that uniformity of action

which is necessary to insure to most advantage the combined action of the whole tribe. At an early period in the world's history, the importance of this uniformity was recognised by the various tribes, and caused their chiefs or kings (who at first were also their priests) to claim a special knowledge regarding the will of those unknown beings who were supposed to be the unseen causes of rain, wind, frost, pestilence, and other obscure phenomena, and this also led those chiefs to claim that they were endowed with knowledge regarding the means whereby those unseen beings might be propitiated, and also knowledge regarding such human actions as would bring down the vengeance of those beings on the tribe. To secure uniformity of action, it was necessary to enforce uniformity of opinion, or at least uniformity of assent to the claims made by those chiefs. It never could serve a good purpose to permit the knowledge or the authority of the chief to be called in question when the safety of the tribe required united and immediate action. Moreover, if a sceptical minority in a tribe were allowed to do anything which, according to the chief, would cause bad luck, the doing so by that minority would discourage the majority, and thereby weaken their fighting power. Homer perceived this when (*Iliad* ii. 204, 205) he said "the rule of the many is not good: let there be one ruler, one king to whom the son of wily Kronos has given rule."

For these reasons, therefore, intolerance to some extent was and is necessary; especially when the independence of a nation or a state is in danger. But intolerance is useless so far as regards matters of private agreement or disagreement, such as a game at chess, the price of a donkey, justification by faith, and the like. Regarding such matters as these the exercise of intolerance is cruel and even pernicious.

BURIAL SERVICE.

To the untutored human mind there were not any powers of evil so much feared as deceased heroes. The energy which animated them while alive was supposed to dwell in and about their graves. That energy was fancied to be something different from matter and its properties. It was imagined to be spirit, more ethereal than gas or breath, and yet it was supposed to be both able and willing to inflict on living man corporal injury. Hence these fancied spirits of departed heroes were worshipped and propitiated by the slaughter of living victims, whose blood those spirits were supposed to consume with a most exquisite relish. These blood-gluttings were offered annually at the graves of the heroes, and were supposed to have a strengthening and propitiating effect on their spirits. The blood gave the soul both strength and intelligence. Thus (Odyssey, xi. 152-4) when Ulysses had offered sacrifices at the entrance to Hades and evoked the shades, the soul of his mother did not know Ulysses until she had partaken of the blood: he says, "I remained there firmly, until my mother came and drank of the blood: then immediately she knew me, and, lamenting, addressed to me winged words." These heroic spirits or souls were called by the Greeks *datmones*, a term of rather obscure origin, but meaning a divine power. They were regarded as performing a double part both infernal and celestial. See Aristotle's "Ethics," bk. v., ch. 7, and see "Chthonian Worship" in "The Journal of Philology," Vol. i., p. 1-14; by Mr Frederick A. Paley. In his "Suppliants," 25, Æschylus represents the chorus invoking Earth, Jupiter, the gods supreme, and also, "vindictive spirits of heroes laid in tombs." So lately as B.C. 422, sacrifices were

offered to the departed spirit of the Spartan general Brasidas as to a hero. In short, burial service is grounded on the rites whereby primitive man endeavoured to propitiate the malignant spirits of deceased heroes, who were supposed to live again in a future life. For heroes of great strength and courage were supposed to have been directly or mediately the offspring of the gods, while ordinary mortals were supposed to have sprung from the earth. The descendants of both the heroes and the mortals were imagined to have degenerated; as Homer says regarding a large stone hurled by one of the Grecian worthies,

“Not two strong men the enormous weight could raise ;
Such men as live in these degenerate days.”

This theory of man's degeneracy was accepted by the Christians whose supposed Founder is represented as being wholly destitute of originality and inventive genius. The primitive Christians fancied that they had sufficiently accounted for human degeneracy by the hypothesis of “original sin ;” a doctrine concerning which volumes have been written vilifying human nature to such an extent that a full grown, rational man, hearing an orthodox exposition of this doctrine for the first time, might very reasonably wonder why among orthodox Christians suicide was not regarded as one of “the cardinal virtues.” But concerning original sin, Darwin's “Descent of Man” has caused a strange revolution among the orthodox apologists of Christianity.

That all the human races were originally in a state of utter barbarism,—that man is descended from an animal considerably inferior to a monkey—that the main-spring of all human actions is pain—and that there is not any such thing as positive human pleasure, are newly discovered but well-ascertained doctrines.

Homer (Iliad xiv. 409-418) says that when Ajax struck down Hector with a blow from a stone that hit him on the breast, above the orb of his shield, near the neck, Ajax "made Hector to spin like a top and he ran quite round," and Hector fell in the dust. So, in like manner, the present apologists of Christianity have been "made to spin like a top and run quite round" by those new doctrines above referred to. In their desperate attempt to make out a case for the immortality of human existence those apologists have been obliged to have recourse to a doctrine suggested by Dr Joseph Butler, more than a hundred years ago, without attracting more than almost the very slightest attention, namely, the doctrine that an immortal existence awaits even members of the brute creation. Those apologists, however, have not yet grappled with the fact that all animals are more or less in a state of pain to the utter exclusion of positive pleasure. This fact is consistent with the suggestion that in a future life (if there be one) there may exist a place or state of eternal pain and torment, but not of pleasure. From a present state of pain a hell of eternal pain is a logical deduction, but a deduction thence to a heaven of pleasure is an absurdity. From pain a continuance of pain may be logically inferred, but it is contrary to all rational deduction to infer that pleasure will arise from pain. A future life, therefore, can be carried on only in hell. So, according to the apologists of Christianity, on this plan of argument, the government of the world is an immoral government that is positively diabolical. To get out of this difficulty, another school of apologists takes a very different line of defence from that adopted by the old apologists. Instead of vilifying human nature (as all orthodox Christians did during the last fifteen or sixteen centuries) this other school advocates the inherent worth of human nature. The members of this new school with the Reverend Frederick W. Farrar at its head, assert,

now, that human nature is a blessing and so valuable that the miseries of human life are well worth enduring !

So, from what has been here said, it is, at least, most probable that all ceremonies, at present connected with the celebration of the Christian religion and worship, are grounded on savage ceremonies and superstitions. This important inference cannot cause much wonder in the mind of an intelligent and painstaking Thinker ; because he must know that human ignorance, error, fancy, prejudice, and indolence, have influenced man's religious belief to an extent that is almost incalculable. Moreover, it is to be remembered that when religious belief regarding anything, no matter what, has during a considerable time been undisturbed, prejudice and indolence will cause the believer to resent the publication of anything that disturbs his erroneous opinions. So, it comes to pass that religious belief increases the darkness which is cast on the human mind by ignorance and error. Even the most profound and original Thinkers cannot liberate themselves entirely from the mistakes, fancies, illusions, and shadows of superstition. In fact, religious belief is the most powerful and efficient assistant of error. To drive away human error it is necessary to drive away religious belief. As Virgil says, "Happy is he who has been able to trace the causes of things, and who has cast beneath his feet all fears and inexorable destiny, and the noise of greedy Acheron." And Lucretius says, "There must be driven away utterly from our minds that fear of Acheron, which disturbs human life from its very foundation, suffusing all things with the blackness of death." Even in the present day the most fearless, conscientious, and intelligent Thinkers are under the necessity of making their investigations, prosecuting their researches, and arriving at their conclusions beneath the darkness and ob-

seuring influence of religious belief, the ghost-haunted day-dreams of superstition, and the hostility of the numerous partisans who are ready to shed their blood to maintain in power erroneous authority. Such Thinkers are in a condition analogous to that of Æneas and the Sibyl while travelling through Hades, as described by the operose Latin imitator of our spurious "Odyssey":—

They, wrapped in gloom, their journey made
Through the dim night's lonely shade,
Where solitary Pluto reigns
O'er ghost-inhabited domains :
So travellers in a forest move,
While gleams the fitful moon above
With weird and scanty light ;
When Jove has hid the sky from view,
And objects are deprived of hue
By the obscuring night.

