

first saw the venison the molecular motion of your brain created the desire to possess, and over this subjective process you had no control, nor volition in its production. It was as necessary a result of the conditions as that two and two make four. The same applies with equal force to the aversion which succeeded the desire. You had no control over it. Your sense of smell acting instinctively produced the impression on your brain.

This action of your brain was not the result of your behest or will. It was mechanical. It immediately gave rise to the feeling of aversion, and what did you do or *could* you do in the case but obey the impulse? This is true of the whole of the activities of the five senses covering the whole ground of sensation and perception. Equally does it hold in the province of reason and reflection. We must accept the strongest evidence of our senses, and the strongest intellectual evidence of our minds. For instance, if I am asked the color of a piece of paper which *appears* to me white I answer white, and no argument, persuasion or coercion will avail to change my mind until the object shall *appear* to me to be some other color. When, in some cases, the reason corrects false appearances to the senses, the true conclusion arrived at is as necessarily accepted as the false appearance was in the absence of the evidence to the contrary. We believe, for example, from appearances through the senses, that the sun moves round the earth until we become convinced by abstract thought that such is not the case. There is no freedom of will in either state. In the first we involuntarily accept appearances through the senses, and in the second we as involuntarily reject the appearances as false through the higher faculties of reason. There are many adult persons in civilized life who do not yet believe that it is the earth and not the sun that moves. Why? Because they have only accepted such evidence as has been presented, or such as their minds are capable of receiving. They believe what *appears* to their senses to be true, not being able intellectually to grasp the mathematical demonstration of its falsity. Bailey says:—"Every proposition presented to the mind, the terms of which are understood, necessarily occasions either belief, disbelief or doubt."

Necessarily occasions, remember, independently of our will. If it be the latter, viz, doubt which is occasioned, further reflection and light may result in certainty. And the ultimate conclusion, whatever it may be, is as necessarily occasioned as the preceding doubt was. If I place my hand upon ice I get the impression of cold. Let the "free-will" advocate do the same, and then try by the exercise of his "free will," to persuade himself that the ice is not cold. He will doubtless exclaim that this test is as absurd as it is unfair! It is neither, for this reason:—If he is "free" to change his intellectual convictions by the exercise of his will he can likewise change his physical impressions by the aid of his will. He claims that he is free to believe or disbelieve a given proposition or doctrine when presented to his mind. Now, if he can by the exercise of his "free will" believe what appears to his reason as untrue, he can also, by the exercise of his "free will," disbelieve the physical impression of cold when he places his hand upon the ice. The one would be no more nor less absurd than the other.

(To be continued.)

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NOTES AND EXTRACTS.

BY R. F. UNDERWOOD.

The morality of the New Testament, it is often claimed, is evidence of its superhuman origin. But it has been shown time and again that every moral sentiment in that book was taught ages before it was written, in Egypt, in India, in Greece and Rome. The golden rule, the forgiveness of enemies, the brotherhood of man, the fatherhood of God, self-examination, renunciation, were all old doctrines and teachings when Jesus lived. He never taught one new doctrine or precept, and the clergy ought to know it and have the candor to admit it. Jesus probably never made any

claim to originality in the moral precepts he taught. But from the pulpit statements one would suppose that men never knew what the forgiveness of enemies, doing good for evil, and examining their dispositions and motives meant until Jesus opened his mouth.

Much has been said and written about the prophecies of the Bible. The Freethinker has a right to demand evidence that any Bible prophecy appealed to in proof of inspiration was uttered or recorded before the event predicted occurred; that the event was beyond the power of man to foresee; that the prophecy has not been changed to correspond with the event; that the account of the event has not been modified to conform to the prophecy; that the prophecy is in clear, unambiguous language, and does not admit of application to different events. Are there any such prophecies in the Bible?

The following passage is from Buckle's "History of Civilization in England:" "Yet it is evident that until doubt began, progress was impossible. For, as we have clearly seen, the advance of civilization solely depended on the acquisitions made by the human intellect, and on the extent to which those acquisitions are diffused. But men who are perfectly satisfied with their own knowledge will never attempt to increase it. Men who are perfectly convinced of the accuracy of their opinions will never take the pains of examining the basis on which they are built. They look always with wonder, and often with horror, on views contrary to those which they inherited from their fathers; and while they are in this state of mind it is impossible that they should receive any new truth which interferes with their foregone conclusions. On this account it is, that although the acquisition of fresh knowledge is the necessary precursor of every step in social progress, such acquisition must itself be preceded by a love of inquiry, and therefore by a spirit of doubt; because without doubt there will be no inquiry, and without inquiry there will be no knowledge. For knowledge is not an inert and passive principle which comes to us whether we will or no; but it must be sought before it can be won; it is the product of great labor, and therefore of great sacrifice. And it is absurd to suppose that men will incur the labor and make the sacrifice for subjects respecting which they are already perfectly content. They who do not feel the darkness will never look for the light. If on any point we have attained to certainty we make no further inquiry on that point, because inquiry would be useless or perhaps dangerous. The doubt must intervene before the investigation can begin. Here, then, we have the act of doubting as the originator, or, at all events, the necessary antecedent of all progress. Here we have that skepticism, the very name of which is an abomination to the ignorant, because it disturbs their lazy and complacent minds, because it troubles their cherished superstitions, because it imposes on them the fatigue of inquiry, and because it rouses even sluggish understanding to ask if things are as they are commonly supposed, and if all is really true which they from their childhood have been taught to believe."

Mrs. Elizabeth Denton, wife of the well-known Spiritualist, Wm. Denton, says.—"To my apprehension Spiritualism and Christianity rest on the same basis, viz., an unproven assumption. * * * But the hypothesis of a continued, conscious, individualized spirit existence, independent of the material form, I regard not only as unproven but as unprovable by any method of which we are at present cognizant. * * * Nor can I see that we are safe in declaring these phenomena (such as may be genuine) due to any force outside of ourselves, until we can either trace them to the source from whence they emanate, or truthfully assert that we have at last compassed all the possibilities of the human individual, and know that they are due to none of these." She adds that "there must be men and women with warm hearts and earnest, honest purposes who will fearlessly look this question in the face, and dare to know the truth, though it cost them many a fondly cherished hope"—*The Evolution*.

The following, from Smollett, gives some idea of the inter-