

AN ANSWER TO BERNHARDI

things. The fundamental law of all life is the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest for that struggle. Morality is a secondary result of that conflict, something which grows up within the separate States. It is the result of a concordat between their citizens which experience shows to be necessary if the States are to be efficient in the universal struggle and so to survive. But it has no rightful place in the relations of States with each other, because there is no Super-state to enforce it. Man, as such, has no rights. It is hard to see how, even if there were such an authority, it could enforce an international morality without suspending the struggle which, on Bernhardi's view, is the fundamental law. 'Strife', he would say with Heraclitus, 'is the father of all things,' including morality. All the virtues, on this view, become simply means to national existence and greatness, to the possession of ice-free harbours and gold mines, provinces rich in coal and iron, over-sea markets and so forth. This is plainly materialism of a very elementary kind. The strange thing is that the writer does not seem to see this, and uses idealistic, religious, and even Christian language with the most edifying fervour.

NATURE OR SPIRIT

But the fact remains that the core of his argument is that the all-determining thing in the universe is nature and not spirit, biological and not moral necessity.

Any complete answer to Bernhardi would thus demand a critical analysis of materialism, which would carry us far beyond the limits of this paper. But a theory may be refuted not only by examining its premisses and by showing its inner inconsistencies and its inadequacy to explain the facts, but also by showing that it leads to consequences so revolting to the conscience of mankind,