

FATALISM

Vid Foree Believes the Doctrine of a Fatalism is Responsible for Present Day Degeneracy

Editor Independent: If there is one belief more than another that is responsible for the degeneracy of the present times that belief is the fatalist's belief. Fatalism is known by different names; in religious discussion it is known as Calvinism, predestinationism or foreordination; it is the old "hard shell" doctrine of election. It is taught or preached by a class of thinkers who have the impudence to believe that they can understand, explain or make an analysis of the plan and purpose of Almighty God. It is a finite attempt to measure the infinite. The reasoning of the fatalist begins with an assumption of the infallibility of human reason or judgment, and ends in the process of reasoning that makes everything that is, or is to be, part of one great plan.

Now, I will not deny that the fatalist established on the foundation of the infallibility of human reason or judgment (but since when did human reason or judgment become infallible?) can build a fine thought structure. I know of no way to attack it or tear it down. Nor do I propose to try. I do not know whether "is to be will be" or not, and it is none of my business. The Almighty has had the management of that matter through eternity past, and can be trusted to manage it through eternity to come. But there is a command in the good old book, to go and preach the gospel of the Savior of mankind to every creature, that is easily understood. These fatalists—such of them as are fit for the work—would be better employed if they would obey the command instead of reasoning or preaching a philosophy that leaves out the idea of human agency in everything, and teaches that man "formed in the image of God" is simply a part of a plan or machine like a stick of timber in a building or a cog in a wheel, and that God created men for different destinies—some to an eternity of delights, and some for an eternity of torture, some to honor, some to dishonor, some to be masters, some to be slaves, and that the man has no choice in the matter. That man cannot serve God if he wants to, unless it is in the plan of destiny, that he cannot refuse to serve God, unless that is in the plan (and the worst of it is that according to fool human reason they are correct in their conclusions). Thus do they go on substituting human reason or philosophy for the old faith of the Bible. Thus do they drown with noise and confusion of words the sweet wooing sound of the Master's call when He says, "Come unto me all ye that weary and are heavy laden." Thus do they with blasphemous impudence presume to analyze or explain the plan and purpose of God. 'Tis said that "Byron walked upright where angels feared to tread" and it can be said with greater truth that in this blasphemous attempt to analyze God—men will do what devils would not dare.

This fatalistic belief works to the detriment of all human effort. And it is in the matter of making excuse for wrong-doing that a belief in fatalism works a great deal of harm. There is not a crime in the calendar, from the theft of a penny piece to the cutting of a human being's throat, that the well developed fatalist cannot find excuse for. He will say that "it had to be," that "it was in the plan," "it was destiny ordained of God" or it could not have been. What excuse did the imperialists of this country make when they were asked why they made war on the Filipinos? They hunted all over the earth and found none. When asked why turn and stab the murderous knife in the bosoms of those who made common cause with us against a common enemy, and they answer with the fatalist's "destiny."

This coal Baron Baer, who makes the blasphemous claim of partnership with God in the management of the coal beds, is another example of the development of the fatalistic belief. The man that stood before the president of these United States with murder in his heart, and demanded that troops be sent against the striking miners, (if he had been addressing a Cleveland his command would have been heeded), but honor to the president who was too much of a man to be dictated to by him, who saw that there was a "fair fight" and gave to union labor the first recognition it had ever received from an executive of this country. This deadening, benumbing belief that teaches that some are born to hope, others to despair; that some are elect, others non-elect; that discourages the frail, struggling human in his efforts to right himself and get nearer to his God, this fatalism, this philosophy, this substitution of human reason, for the old simple child-like faith of the Christian, the faith that

lay as a foundation for all right living, the faith that led men to martyrdom and caused them to die rejoicing amid the flames of persecution; this faith is thought to be insufficient now; it must needs be scaffolded up and propped up by the flimsy sticks of human reason. And these "reasoners" undertake the task. There seems to be no limit to the attempt of these men gone mad with learning.

If there ever was a time in this country when the sober, common sense should take the reins of management, that time is now. 'Tis time that it was demanded of these "intellectual giants, thought masters, advanced thinkers," that they come off of their "high perch," that they alight and let common, every-day reason into the saddle. The reason that does not attempt to stand alone, but is based upon, traces back to, and rests upon the faith of man in his God. This change needs to be made, lest we are led by these madmen to both mental and moral destruction.

SID FOREE.

Woman Suffrage

What is suffrage? The intelligent expression of an opinion in regard to principles, measures, and men; and the essence of suffrage is rational choice.

Are women capable of forming an intelligent opinion? Are they capable of rational choice? If so, under our republican form of government, they have the moral right to vote. If "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," women who are governed, who are American citizens in state and nation, have a right to give that consent, and the only form of consent known in a republic is the ballot.

But women are needed in government because women are unlike men. They are a class of citizens, and government by men alone is class legislation—always imperfect, always unjust.

In some qualities men are superior to women; in others women are superior to men. Every class that votes makes itself felt in the government in the direction of its own qualities and interests.

Women on the average are more peaceful and gentle, more temperate, more chaste, more economical, and more law-abiding than men. When they vote, these qualities will be felt in legislation, and they are the very qualities in which our government is defective.

Our present government has in it all the masculine qualities. Add those of women, and the result will be a government of the people, for the people, and by the people.

JERRY B. BLACKWELL.

BUTT END OF A PANIC

To have elected a democratic lower house of congress at this time would have been a most disastrous thing for the reform forces. That has been the opinion of The Independent for so long and has so often been stated in these columns that it is not necessary more than to refer to it. Senator Vest made the same statement more than a year ago. Unless all the rules of banking which have heretofore been regarded as sound, are false, and the science of political economy as taught by all the great authorities of the last fifty years is a delusion, then we are to have a disastrous panic in the near future. That the great Wall street bankers believe it is shown by the address of the vice president of Rockefeller's National City bank of New York, which was referred to in these columns last week. It would be the supremest folly for the democratic party to have control of any branch of the government when that panic comes. With nearly all the avenues of information in the control of plutocracy, it would be easy to cast the odium of the panic upon the opposition. It would be only necessary to say that "the threat" of a democratic congress was what brought the panic about. The odium of the hard times caused by the panic of '93 was cast upon the democratic party, although the policies of Cleveland which brought it about were the policies of the republican party and supported by all its leaders. The wise course to pursue is to let the republican party take the butt end of a panic, especially so when it is the result of republican policies. As far as the house of representatives is concerned, The Independent is delighted that it will continue in control of the republican party. Meantime let the work of education go on so that at least a fair share of the people will be able to understand the direction from which the cyclone comes when it strikes them.

The representatives of the administration talk about good trusts and bad trusts, but whenever called upon to name a "good trust" they refuse to answer.

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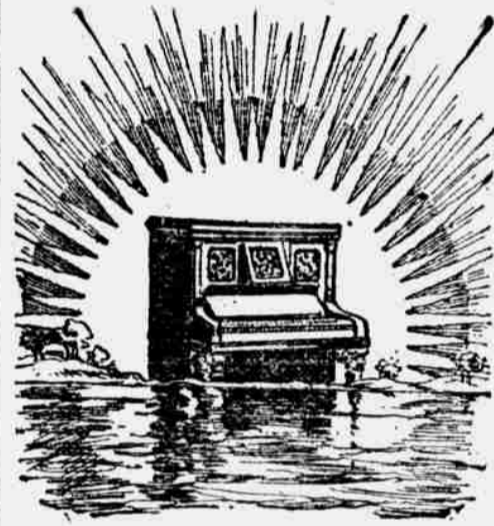
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The November number of Wilshire's Magazine, New York, is, as usual, bright and up to date. Its leading features are some highly interesting interviews with three of the day's most talked-of men—John Mitchell, Mark Hanna and Tom Johnson. Current Events and the editor's experience as An International Office Seeker are written up with that combination of wit and philosophy which distinguishes Wilshire's writings. There is a Study of the Trusts, by Joel Benton, and an able discussion of The Death and Renaissance of the Democratic Party, by Charles Ferguson. J. Stitt Wilson gives An Economic Exposition, and Daniel B. Strong writes convincingly on the effect of Competition on Wages. Rev. A. L. Byron Curtis, in Society and Religion, holds that society should be founded on the basis of the New Commandment "that ye love one another." Literature and the drama receive attention in a criticism of Pinero's new play, "Iris," and a Study of Walt Whitman by Louville H. Dyer, and Art as Affected by Economics is discussed ably by A. M. Simons. And to complete the round, Bernarr Macfadden describes some Exercises for Physical Strength.

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