

advice which day after day were heard in all the Churches.

Now that Christmas is here, we may confidently appeal to the Christian feelings of our readers to drop controversy, and put away the controversial spirit, and let the "peace and good-will" ushered in at Christ's Birth, draw all hearts together in the loving bonds of Christian fellowship.

A BRIEF ARGUMENT AGAINST MATERIALISM: OR MORAL RESULTS OF EVOLUTION.

[FOR THE CHURCH GUARDIAN.]

• BY REV. J. CARRY, D. D.

(Concluded.)

3. It is clear that such theory abolishes, in logical consistency, both moral and physical evil. But here starts up an enormous difficulty in the way of the theory. The difficulty stares one like the sun in the sky. Men have now, and have had as far back as the records of human thought go, the idea, the conviction of evil; that the processes of material things,—for we may not say results where all is in a state of evolution,—are not always desirable, while many moral actions are censurable and mischievous, and indeed intrinsically evil. If all things come by evolutionary law, and this law belongs to the nature of things, then this sense of evil, moral and physical, is itself a just and necessary conviction, and truly belongs to the nature of things. But this is totally irreconcilable with the necessary conclusions of sections 1 and 2. Which, then, must we renounce—our reason or our moral sense? for it is transparently clear that on the materialistic hypothesis they cannot co-exist. But if we are disposed to abandon neither, then we shall be forced to denounce the mad system which affects to originate both, but which can never reconcile them.

4. There arises still another difficulty in the way of the purely evolutionary origin of *man*, and an insuperable difficulty. In all the other parts of the material system, as known to us, we see no discord arise in the life of the individual subject of the laws of evolution. The vegetable or the animal develops according to the law that governs its own nature and its environment. We are not aware of any mutiny against the law of its being; nay, that law implies the very opposite, an appetency or tendency in the individual subject towards the blindly destined aim. If man, then, is under the same conditions of being, whence spring the self-conflict, the self-reproach, the guilty resistance of which he is conscious, and which make his inward and often his outward life a scene of such desperate disorder? Outside the circle of human life the struggle of the less good upwards succeeds, the better wins in conflict with the worse: how is it then that while in the individual man the struggle is the same, the result is far from being the same? Are we not forced to the conclusion, that a new element enters into the question here, an element of moral freedom in conflict with the rigidity of material law, and a freedom that acts amiss? Thus the familiar phenomena of actual every-day life are irreconcilable with the anti-spiritual theory.

5. The Christian doctrine of the *Fall* is the only satisfactory solution of the anomalies which stare us in the life of the human race. According to the evolutionary theory, man has risen instead

of falling; and yet we see no real rise of man in history, except under the Christian religion; or, at any rate, no such rise. Then, as Evolutionists, we should have to maintain that Christianity itself is a just development, which may advance but cannot retrocede.

How wonderful if man himself, with all his vast endowments, and his highest religion, Christianity, were undesigned developments! Man has come at last to possess design—this is indisputable; and so he has become the *real* good, as having this faculty which no being before him ever had!

This slight sketch of the difficulties and contradictions which are involved in the Atheistic system, and especially the utter destruction of any fixed or even intelligible foundation for the morality of human life, may, perhaps, assist your readers in resisting more steadfastly the presumptuous claims of unbelief, and in cleaving with more light and assurance to the glorious faith of humanity—the faith in God.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Confession and Absolution.

A SERMON BY REV. W. B. MATURIN.

To the Editor of the Church Guardian.

SIR,—Your editorial note to my communication printed in your issue of Dec. 12, seems to convey the idea that I have been guilty of a suppression—*veritas*—a form of deception I abominate above all other. Please then allow me to remark:—

1. That Father Maturin's sermon on St. Matt. xxi, 23 was already in print as preached at Philadelphia, before it was preached at Halifax.

2. That being an extempore preacher Father Maturin of course varies the form, illustrations and length of sermons on the same subject or text.

3. That the Halifax sermon, however, differed from the Philadelphia only in the last two points.

4. That there being no shorthand reporter at St. Luke's, the Philadelphia edition was the only available means left me of counteracting the false impressions propagated by the Halifax papers.

5. That the Philadelphia edition was distributed by Father Maturin himself after his sermon at St. Luke's, so that we may be perfectly sure it contains the doctrine as he holds and teaches it, whatever false conclusions others may have deduced from some of his illustrations.

6. That it was published by me in the *Daily Sun*, for one, and one only object, namely, to show that the Missioners did not teach Compulsory Confession, not to answer other objections and criticisms, and for this reason I desired you to reprint it in your columns.

Allow me to add one word. One would suppose, from the prominence given to the subject of Confession and Absolution in the papers, that the Missioners spoke of nothing else. That it must always be a very important item at Missions, which are special calls to Repentance, goes without saying, but outsiders would get a very false impression of what was done at Halifax if they concluded that the fifty sermons, meditations, instructions, &c., given in St. Luke's (and a similar number in the other two churches) during the twelve days were all occupied with this subject.

JOHN M. DAVENPORT.

Priest of the Mission Church.

Portland, St. John, N. B.

To the Editor of the Church Guardian:

SIR,—As Mr. Davenport has undertaken the defence of the confessional, and has made special reference to my letter, I trust you will kindly allow me space to reply.

Mr. D. says:—"We do not teach compulsory confession." Now, here all depends upon the construction put upon "we" and "compulsory."

If by "we" Mr. D. means simply Mr. Maturin and himself, I must, of course, accept his statement. But if he wishes it to be understood as applying to all belonging to his "school," I can only reply that *facts* are against him. By compulsion, I presume Mr. D. means moral compulsion, as no one supposes any other compulsion to be used.

A few years ago, this subject of confession was before the House of Lords; and during one of the discussions, a letter, written by a clergyman to a young lady, was read, from which I quote:—"I should not say anything unkind; but it seems to me that if you leave off coming to a Sacrament which our Lord has ordained for the forgiveness of sins done after baptism, you are running a great risk. I know no other way by which mortal sin, committed after baptism, is forgiven, except by Sacramental Confession and Absolution. If you are living and dying without being again absolved, it is only right you should see clearly the risk you are running." But I have a case nearer home. A young man, who by my instrumentality was won from a life of carelessness, became a regular attendant at a certain Church, which shall be nameless. After a little while, he desired to be admitted to the Lord's Table, and applied to the clergyman for that purpose. What was his surprise to find confession insisted upon as a prerequisite. To this he would not submit, and the consequence was that he left the Church and became a consistent and active member of the Wesleyan body. Will Mr. D. deny that there was compulsion in the above cases? And these are simply typical ones.

Again, Mr. D. says this subject of confession was uppermost in our Lord's compassionate heart at the time when He said, "Receive the Holy Ghost," etc. Now, as one line of proof is of more value than a page of mere assertion, will Mr. D. kindly give us the proof in this case? What did the inspired Apostles ever do, and when and where, to show that they so understood it?

It would require too much space to follow Mr. D. through that part of his letter which treats of the benefits of this system when *discreetly* used. How gingerly Mr. D. handles it. But I must again say that facts do not bear him out. I could give individual cases in proof of this, if necessary; but there is one broad general fact which I think he will not dispute, viz., that in communities where confession is regularly practiced by hundreds, the morality is, to say the least, no higher than where it is not so practiced.

I do not deny that there are exceptional cases where it may be used *occasionally* with benefit, and for these our Church has wisely made provision. But this is a very different thing to advocating it before a large audience as generally advisable and beneficial to all.

And this brings me round to the real point of contention. Does our Church teach that it is generally necessary, or even advisable? And in order to give Mr. D. some authoritative utterances upon the subject, and at the same time answer the question of "B. C.," allow me to add the following to your excellent article of 12th inst.:—

The Bishop of Winchester, April 15th, 1876, replying to a memorial upon this subject, says:—"We find no authority for such a practice in Holy Scripture, in the records of the Primitive Church, or in the formularies of the Church of England."

The Bishop of Worcester, July 3rd, 1877, in replying to another memorial, after referring to a charge recently delivered, says:—"I then stated my belief, which subsequent experience has fully confirmed, that the systematic use of confession and absolution in private is calculated to move, more than any other practice, *which was deliberately laid aside by our Reformers*, the aversion and indignation of the people of this country." The italics are mine.

In 1873, the whole body of Bishops of the Province of Canterbury drew up a formal declaration upon the subject, in which they say:—"The Church of England, in the 25th Article, affirms that penance is not to be counted for a Sacrament of the Gospel, and, as judged by her formularies,