

ter is God's creation, and therefore, a reality.

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth... and God said, be light made. And light was made, etc." (Gen.: 1, 3)

Disease and sin are both declared by Christian Scientists to be things imaginary. But Christ's religion treats of them as really existing, as is evident from the following out of many passages of Holy Scripture:

"And Jesus went about all Galilee healing all diseases and infirmities among the people." (St. Matt. iv. 23)

"And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases." (St. Mark i, 34.)

"Therefore I said to you that you shall die in your sin: For if you believe not that I am He you shall die in your sins." (St. John viii, 24.)

If sickness and sinfulness are, as the Christian Scientists teach, but things imaginary, what sense is there in Mr. Spaulding's assertion that Christian Science "heals the sick, and reforms the sinful?" It deserves but small credit if it only drives away a nothing.

In fact Dowdism is less ridiculous than so-called Christian Science; for while both systems absurdly reject the science of medicine, John Alexander Dowd does not, so far as we are aware, pretend to having discovered that there is no such thing as sickness.

We find nothing to retract in our edit. remarks of August 10.

A MODERN INSTANCE.

BY REV. AUGUSTIN D. MALLEY.

When the Duke in "As You Like It" rejoices that he has been freed from painted pomp through his exile, and by communication with nature in the forest of Arden had found "congresses in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing," he no doubt enunciated a great truth we all experience in moments of chastened joy in the presence of beautiful nature. Our blessed Lord Himself saw these sermons and read these books, translating their meaning to His followers, for to the devout mind the visible is a sign and symbol of the invisible. So also our gentlest and sweetest Christian thinkers have called upon nature as their ally and companion in the praise and worship of God. St. Francis of Assisi sings of his brother, the sun, and his sister, the moon, bird and beast, "il ferocissimo lupo d'Agobbio," as they were all creatures of God, and therefore his brethren. And the other St. Francis, of Salco, relied on examples from nature to help him portray what holiness and grace mean. Even in our own day we see in the works of the great Cardinal, John Newman, how nature helped him to pierce through the tangle of doubting thoughts after the same fashion as the great Butler. Now if this is so, what quarrel can we have with nature studies since they lead to God?

No one who has read the recent work of Frank Norris, "The Octopus," will fail to grasp the reality of the dangers of nature study, when nature is not regarded as the product of a directing mind. Of all the gloomy and pessimistic works that have appeared in late years this book is surely the peer. One arises from its perusal dizzy, sickened, stunned at the hopeless lot of man when pelted in the face of the titanic forces which rule men and things! There is no comfort for the poor and oppressed, who are the sport of a ruthless fate, who can only cry out to a heaven that seems made of brass, or fall down and die upon an earth made of iron! The novel puts in dramatic form the hopeless philosophy of Schopenhauer, although the author intends it for optimism. In it nature is seen as a gigantic, unthinking machine. If man comes in contact with one of her everlasting wheels, then he is mercilessly crushed for his lack of adroitness!

A few short selections will show, in rich and powerful language, the modern conception of man and nature. "Presley regained the street stifled, his brain in a whirl. This new idea, this new conception, dumb-founded him. Somehow he could not deny it. It rang with the clear reverberation of truth. Was no one, then, to blame for the horror of the irrigating ditch? Forces, conditions, laws of supply and demand—were these, then, the enemies after all? Not enemies; there was no malevolence in nature. Colossal indifference only, a vast trend toward appointed goals. Nature was, then, a gigantic engine, a vast cyclopean power, huge, terrible, a leviathan with a heart of steel, knowing no compunction, no forgiveness, no tolerance; crushing out the human atom standing in its way, with nirvanic calm, the agony of destruction sending never a jar, never the faintest tremor through all that prodigious mechanism of wheels and cogs."

"What then was left? Was there no hope, no outlook for the future, no rift in the black curtain, no glimmer through the night? Was good to be thus overthrown? Was evil thus to be strong and to prevail? Was nothing left? Then suddenly Vanamee's words came back to his mind. What was the larger view? What constituted the greatest good to the greatest numbers? What was the full round of the circle whose segment only he beheld? In the end, the ultimate, final end of all, what was left? Yes, good

issued from this crisis, untouched, unassailable, undefiled. Men, notes in the sunshine, perished, were shot down in the very noon of life, hearts were broken. In that little isolated group of human insects misery, death and anguish spun like a wheel of fire. But the wheat remained. Falseness dies; injustice and oppression in the end of everything fade and vanish away. Greed, cruelty, selfishness and inhumanity are short lived; the individual suffers, but the race goes on. Anxieties die, but in a far distant corner of the world a thousand lives are saved. The larger view allows, and through all shams, all wickedness, discovers the truth that will, in the end, prevail, and all things surely, inevitably, resistlessly work together for good.

This, no doubt, is very fine writing, and can capture the unskilled. What is the particular fault in it? Through out the whole book, and lurking in these passages, can be seen the three great doubts of our age, the doubt of a personal God, the doubt of immortality for the individual, the doubt of a providence for the individual. For God is substituted force or impersonal good; for individual immortality is substituted permanent endurance of human kind; for individual providence is given the greatest good for the greatest number. This is all rank materialism masquerading as a spiritual philosophy. It is not atheism exactly, but a brand of disheartening pantheism. What is it to me if humanity is my debtor by my heroic resignation, if there is not a personal God who watches over me and will finally give me rest? It is in reading a book of this kind that the thoughtful Catholic realizes the motive of the Church when she particularly insists on being regarded as a teacher and guide in educational matters. For what is she striving? Some who are unable to stretch their vision beyond the limits of their parish, imagine she has some quarrel with the local public school or systems of schools. The issue is not so petty. The local school or system of schools may be excellent in its way; but she sees the three great perils that are confronting the religious thought of the American nation—the loss of a profound belief in a personal God, the wavering in regard to personal immortality and personal providence. Take even the modern conception of God when He is regarded as personal, as is seen in the policy of state, or in the creed of the fashionable set. As has been well said, He seems to be a weakly, good natured Being who started to govern this world by a system of rewards and punishments, but seeing now the great weakness of most of the sons of Adam, repeats Him of His former severity, is only eager to see the end of it all, and will grant heaven to everybody. So, too, the lower and inferior races of men are a source of shame and confusion to Him, and He is grateful to may, even commissions the advanced nations to blow their weaker brothers off this earth. He sees now He should never have placed them.

What is the result to a nation when the popular conception of God is weakened? The idea of God is the cornerstone of every civilization. Where do we find institutions more firm, authority more respected, liberty more equalized, manners more softened, oaths and pledges more scrupulously kept, virtue better loved, passion and license more successfully restrained than among a people that are God-fearing? Where is there more forgetfulness of self, disinterestedness, spirit of sacrifice, devotion to humanity and fatherland, than among a people who worship God in their churches? In these things alone, can civilization be found, and not in railroads, bonds or bridges. So when the church calls a halt we should respectfully bare our heads and listen to her pleadings.

Now the higher knowledge of God that these things are based on is an experience. The great results coming from it can only be obtained by disciplining the mind and heart to the belief. Argumentation and preaching can do a little, but the real conviction of God's personality and His watchful care over us must be felt. For this we must be trained. Our own Catholic religion is a training; it does not consist in holding a peculiar set of dogmas distinct from Protestantism; it is a matter of life and character. The training necessary for it must come in youth; one is rarely won to it in middle or old age, for it is all a sort of trial to hardened human nature. At this season then the Church demands of all parents: Is that child being trained, not left completely alone, or even instructed, but is it being trained in the love and fear of the Almighty? If it is not, then its soul is going to be periled in the materialistic spirit of the age. It is going to doubt God as a beginning and an end, to suffer the weakening of the spiritual life, for this is the result of all secular education.

These thoughts were provoked by seeing the effect such books as "The Octopus" make on bright and thoughtful minds that are educated enough fully to realize difficulties, but have not enough acquaintance with the scientific aspect of religion to combat the three great doubts. Such souls deserve and should obtain the keenest sympathy. It takes the soundest and most finished training in Christian principles to keep one's convictions clear and firm amid the general abandonment of theological discipline. A pliant disposition is a good and an only foundation; but the intellect must have a firm grasp on the principles of revelation or else there is little hope of keeping faith serene.

It must be confessed, also, that works of this class, modern, materialistic productions, possess great beauty of a certain kind. They abound in rich imagination, shifting fancy, even genius, can delude, if possible, even the elect. One is often tempted to think that the dangerous books or works are those which contain direct attacks on religion. But this is a fallacy. Such books have their day; they have their day and cease to be. But the powerful, subtle antagonists to revealed religion, which slay their tens of thousands where productions of the ingersoll type would slay but fifty souls, are such works, in the poetical and sentimental line, as the "Kubalyat," or the quasi scientific, socialistic and philosophic works, like the book under consideration. Argumentation cannot refute them, for they bring forward no arguments. They create a certain spirit, an atmosphere, in which religious truths cannot blossom. They can be met only when the soul is rendered immune by a devotional as well as a scientific training, for, left to itself, it is helpless before such powerful foes.

To state it all briefly, the world is finding it very hard to deal justly with man in the double aspect of his nature, to weigh and give due credit to both physical and moral truths. Man is a creature of sense and of reason, of conscience and of faith. The world at present despises ethical and theological questions as impractical, declaring nothing can be known in regard to the soul's origin or destiny, and throwing itself upon materialistic sciences and their uses, to the total exclusion of the spiritual. Who is to restore the lost equilibrium? There is no spiritual authority to do this in the world except the Church. This is her mission in the twentieth century. Catholics are looking the difficulty squarely in the face and are devising means to meet it. No doubt we can pick many flaws in our educational methods in the past, for they were untried experiments; but now seeing their strengths and their weaknesses, we can profit by both and not be above criticism. All is merely a matter of adjustment to changed times and circumstances. Our separated fellow-citizens should be made to feel that the Church has no sister designs against public schools, but as the guardian of God's interests is warning all against the impending dangers from the loss of spiritual reverence. In this way she is proving herself the staunch friend and supporter of the republic, for, according to the citizens' convictions of God will they rise or fall.—Republic.

HOW A YOUNG MAN BECOMES AN INFIDEL.

See this young man in his twenties. He has been baptized into the Church of God, . . . he has made his First Communion, he has been marked in the sacrament of Confirmation with the seal of Christian manhood. But now he believes no longer; the Christian life of his soul has disappeared; faith appears to be wholly extinct within him. He goes so far as even to affect pity for the belief which in his tender years he shared with his mother; he parades a supreme contempt for the teaching of the Church of Christ. What can have happened to work such a revolution in this youthful mind? If we ask him, he will probably tell us that he believes no longer; the Christian life of his soul has disappeared; faith appears to be wholly extinct within him. He goes so far as even to affect pity for the belief which in his tender years he shared with his mother; he parades a supreme contempt for the teaching of the Church of Christ. What can have happened to work such a revolution in this youthful mind? 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