

predictions and abstruse speculations; remember that Moses did not write history, nor science, but the divine philosophy of creation, and sin, and redemption. Start with the fact that Moses had to create a sense of obedience to the invisible God and right laws of life; that Genesis is the prologue to Exodus, and is true to science and man's experience. Whether the story of the creation of man is accurate in its details, I do not know, but I am convinced it must be as to its main features. I find in this Book four thousand years of testimony to the fact that God is; that He is with man upon the earth; that He is good; that His love rays out from the vivid centre to the furthestmost fringes of creation; that the best men the world has ever known have declared that their inspiration came from Him, and their aspirations were toward Him; I see that He is in the life of the world, redeeming it from evil. And am I to throw this Book aside and renounce my belief in God because a few stories have crept into it in which men have attributed to God that which was the outcome of their own ignorance? I should no more think of doing so than I thought of turning infidel the other day when some Scotch clergymen, with irreligious unreason, said the Tay Bridge disaster was God's punishment upon the railway directors for encouraging railway travel on Sunday. I shall no more think of doing it than I think of giving up my belief in the divine holiness and power because Col. Robert Ingersoll is allowed to talk vulgar nonsense on a platform.

One point more I must notice. The lecturer having demolished God and the Bible, proceeded to treat of our idea of Providence. And here again was easy work. A little pathos, a few jokes, and the thing was over. He said Providence is a failure, because he has not governed every where with equal success. A story or two about famines, a quotation from Moody and Talmage, an enquiry as to why Providence had put a morass in one place to give forth deadly malaria, and put a few earthquakes under and a few volcanoes around, and a true bill was found and judgment given against Providence. These questions have been asked and partly answered at least a thousand times, but Col. Ingersoll is not aware of the fact. I am not going to say that there is no mystery about this, nothing incomprehensible—there is. The lecturer, who seemed to imagine that he understood everything else, was compelled to acknowledge that he did not understand why there should be so much hunger and pain and misery. Why, the world over, life should live upon life. When he has cast Jehovah out of the universe, he is pained and puzzled to account for the presence of wrong and sorrow. With God he cannot account for it; without God he cannot account for it. Then what does he gain? I shall show you in a minute that he gains nothing, but loses everything. He declared that he has a God—it is Nature, and spoke eloquently of mountain and tree and flower, of the writing upon rocks, and the voices of the winds; but I want to ask: Now that you have found your God, is that morass still there, from which a foul malaria rises breeding fever? Are the earthquakes nursing their strength down below, and the deadly volcanoes vomiting fire? Does life still live upon life? Why did your god do this? Is it worse in Jehovah to have done it than in nature? If you reject the God of the Bible on account of it, surely you cannot accept the Godship of nature while the same state of things exists? If by changing your belief as to God you could change the actual condition of matters, I could understand it; but since the condition remains the same and the problem of evil and sorrow remains unsolved, I cannot understand it. If Col. Ingersoll or any other of that school can give me an intelligent theory of life and satisfactory solution of the problem of the presence of evil and pain without God I am prepared to consider it. But they do not attempt that. Their statements abound with contradictions. The lecturer to whom I am referring got angry and merry by turns because it had been said God made the world. "Why didn't He do it better?" he said. "Why did He put the morass, the volcano, the famine about?" Then he said, "Nature is my God," and took it—morass, volcano, famine and all. "Beauty is the object of my worship," he said, "and to be happy here and now is my religion, and the way to be happy is to do good to others." A strange conclusion from such a premises surely, and one that is contradicted every day. Self-sacrifice is not the gospel of the infidel, but selfishness is. The man who puts away God from his belief cannot have an intelligent theory of life, or a science of happiness, or a ray of hope to scarf the black thunder-cloud that hangs across the blue vault of heaven; but with belief in God I have a theory of life; it is not dropping down to earth and night and nothingness, but rising up from stage to stage; He gives me inspiration to persevere in the way of goodness, forgiveness for my sins, and hope to cheer me on through dark days and bitter nights. I know that He is helping me to endure disappointment, and to redeem my life from destruction. I shall not give up my faith in Him, and I implore you not to give up yours. I do not pretend that I can logically satisfy you as to the Being of a God. The path to God lies not through the logical faculties, but let the heart go free and you will find Him. The world has not ceased to tell the story of its Creator and Ruler; and if you read this Bible with careful, reverent mind you will see the clear light of truth shine up through ancient record, and psalm, and sermon, and figure of speech; you will find great principles for all time, demands for righteousness, incentives to justice, the power of that charity which blesses all mankind, a God and Father, a Christ and Saviour, a hope, a heaven, a life for evermore.

[Mr. Bray will continue the subject next week by a discourse on "Col. Ingersoll on Conversion, Heaven, and Hell."]

OPPORTUNITY.

In harvest times, when fields and woods
Out-dazzle sunset's glow,
And scythes clang music through the land,
It is too late to sow.
Too late! too late!
It is too late to sow.

In wintry days, when dreary earth
Lies cold in pulseless sleep,
With not a blossom on her shroud,
It is too late to reap.
Too late! too late!
It is too late to reap.

When blue-eyed violets are astir,
And new-born grasses creep,
And young birds chirp, then sow betimes,
And thou betimes shall reap.
Then sow! then sow!
And thou betimes shall reap.

DEATH'S FINAL CONQUEST.

The glories of our crown and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill;
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still.
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon death's purple altar now
See where the victor victim bleeds;
All heads must come
To the cold tomb,
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

[The above stanzas were originally designed for a funeral song in James Shirley's play "The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses." Shirley was a noted dramatic writer of the reign of Charles I; surviving the Restoration, he died in 1666, age 72 years. The poem is said to have been a favourite with Charles II.]

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

The bright, beautiful spring days have come to us early this year, and already the weather is so mild that even those who have not much faith in fresh air are tempted to open their doors and windows, admitting the pure life-giving element, and the cheering, purifying sunshine. And now we may hope that the contagious diseases that have been so prevalent among children all winter will soon be wafted away on the pure spring breezes. Those who have had sickness in their families will do well to hasten the period of their spring cleanings, and a liberal use of disinfectants in drains and cellars will not be amiss; but we trust all are now aware that it is useless to kill one bad smell with another, or even to remove an offensive odour by the use of a disinfectant which is inodorous. These may diminish the evil for a time, but our first effort should be to discover and remove the cause, then fresh air, soap and water will probably soon destroy all traces of the trouble. But where there has been sickness a judicious use of disinfectants to kill the germs of contagion is necessary. Very few persons in this country seem to be aware of the good effects of permanganate of potash as a disinfectant, although it is one of the best, cheapest and most pleasant to use. Some know of it as Condly's Fluid, which is exactly the same thing in a state of solution, but costs about twenty times as much, and being expensive is not likely to be so freely used. The permanganate may be purchased at twenty-five cents per ounce, and a teaspoonful is sufficient for two