THE OPEN COURT.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

No. 300. (Vol. VII.—21.) CHICAGO, MAY 25, 1893. { Two Dollars per Year. Single Copies, 5 Cents.

MOTHERS AND SONS OF GODS.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

I.

When, twenty-three years ago, the revisers of the English Bible sat down to their task at Westminster, several able scholars were conspicuously absent from the circle. One of these, as I have since ascertained, declined an invitation to participate in the work, because he discovered that the revision was to be timid and not thorough. The work was better than might have been expected under the inspiration of Convocation, nevertheless it left the English-speaking world still without real knowledge of the contents of the book it circulates in a hundred and fifty languages. And now, quietly, without any ecclesiastical order, and without observation, sixty-six scholars in America and England are at work, each on one book of the Bible, which they mean to translate thoroughly, without reference to any existing version and without servility to any prejudices. Such, at any rate, is the information I have received; and should it prove true, the revelations will be more startling than orthodox. Among other disclosures, it will be made known that some momentous dogmas are founded on texts foreign to the Bible. But even that is likely to be of less importance than the fact that many mistranslations have veiled, for the most part ignorantly, ancient ideas and facts of profound historical or anthropological significance.

These reflections have been lately revived in my mind by a fresh investigation of the opening chapters of Genesis under the following circumstances. One of Michel Angelo's paintings, in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, represents the creation of the first man. The Creator's finger is extended to meet the finger of the man, who is rising from the ground. Cherubim surround the Creator, but within his left arm stands a dark-haired, large-eyed woman, gazing intently on the man. Generations of visitors have stretched their heads back to look at the sacred scenes of the ceiling without noticing this woman, or, if noting her, supposing her an angel, not remembering that Catholic theology admits no female angels. It was left to an English artist, the late William Bell Scott, to take notice of this woman present at the creation of man. Scott lay on his back for hours, in the Sistine Chapel, and called public attention, in the Athenæum, to the fact that it was a woman. This was some years ago, but the matter has been revived by the publication of Scott's reminiscences. "I have no doubt," he says, "Michel Angelo intended to express the coming wife of Adam: the figure is, therefore, the antitype or eidolon of Eve." I have lately scrutinised the figure, and it is certainly a substantial woman. One would expect an antitype or eidolon to be spiritualised, or, at any rate, to resemble the person it anticipates. But near by this picture is that of the "Fall," and the "Expulsion," and neither of these Eves resembles the woman present at the creation of the first man. My own opinion is that Michel Angelo was simply following the first chapter of Genesis, which knows nothing of the personal Adam or Eve, or of the woman's subsequent creation. There it is said that the Elohim (*plural*) created man in his own image (literally, *shadow*), male and female.

The plural Elohim,—thought by some to be *pluralis majestatis*, the royal "We," (Allah, the same name, says "We" in the Koran,) thought by others the Trinity,—would be more naturally interpreted as meaning that there was a divine queen as well as king. Elohim gave the pair complete dominion over the lower creatures, and all fruits for food,—none forbidden,—and bade them be fruitful and multiply and replenish and subdue the earth. This Elohistic narrative is broken through by the Yahvistic legend (Gen. i, ii, iii) and resumed with Genesis v, the two thereafter interrupting each other repeatedly throughout Genesis. They were put together, clumsily enough, by an unknown redactor, about the close of the fifth century before our era.

The second chapter of Genesis introduces us to a class of ideas altogether different from those of chapter first and to a new deity,—Yahve. Though Yahve signifies "existence," the description is of a rain-god, like Indra, who also resides in a beautiful garden. Both of these deities were gradually associated with the storms, thunder, and lightning, rather than with its quickening rains. In this way was evolved our

wrathful Jehovah. I have just examined in the British Museum an ancient coin, which contains what is probably the earliest representation of Yahve. It is a coin of Gaza, and the figure bears, in Hebrew letters, the name "Jahu." The full-length form is robed and seated on a winged wheel. The head is covered in a dignified way, and the full-bearded face, seen in profile, has a serious and noble expression. On the extended left hand is perched a falcon,—possibly supposed to dart down on the evil-doer, as the Holy Ghost fell on Ananias and Sapphira. However, there is nothing fierce or even warlike about this Yahve (Jahu) of the coin described to the fifth century, B. C.

The Yahvistic legend of the creation of woman is unique and is obscured in all translations. The following is fairly exact:

"Yahve Elohim said: 'It is not good that the man should be separate; I will make for him help as over against him.' And out of the ground Yahve Elohim formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the heavens, and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature that was the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for himself he did not find a help fit for him. So Yahve Elohim caused deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his sides and closed up the flesh instead of it; and the side which Yahve Elohim had taken from man fashioned he for woman; and he brought her unto the man. And the man said, 'This now is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman (*aishah*), because she was taken out of Man.'"

There is nothing about the rib. How many sermons on female inferiority have been preached from that rib, which is not in the Bible at all! In the phrase "he took one of his sides," the word "one" is feminine; "it," at the conclusion of the same clause, is also feminine; whereas, had the legend meant to suggest a rib both words would have been neuter. The plain meaning is that the man had two sides, one male the other female, and the female side was detached.

Although the redactor, who has inserted sundry things that cannot have been in the originals, evidently understood that as in the Elohistic legend (Gen. i) Eve was meant to be Adam's wife, there are various items of the Yahvistic legend suggesting that such was not the case. The idea of a divine family on earth had arisen. Eve, to whom the fruit was not directly forbidden, was punished for having persuaded Adam to taste it, but she does not appear to have been expelled with him from the garden. When Cain is born she says, "With Yahve I have begotten a man." One of the meanings of Cain is "the created," and the meaning of Abel seems to be "a breath." These names, while escaping any sensual suggestion, point to an original legend that these brothers were the progeny of Yahve. It is notable that in the Elohistic book of the genealogy of Adam (Gen. v), Adam's first and only son is Seth ("scion"). We may find here an explanation of Yahve's protection of Cain: sevenfold vengeance was to be taken on any one who should slay this fratricide, on whom now depended the continuance of the divine line on earth. For Eve had become Adam's wife, and bore him Seth. Cain married in the land of Nod, and his descendants may be "the sons of the gods" (Gen. vi, 1) who took wives of the "daughters of men" (descendants of Seth). One line was traceable to Yahve and Eve, the other to Adam and Eve. On account of these intermarriages, and the consequent dilution of the divine blood, Yahve says, "My breath will not abide for ever in man, in their straying they are flesh, and his days shall be but a hundred and twenty years." The redactor probably adds: "The giants were in the earth in those days; and also afterwards, when the sons of the gods came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same were the mighty men of old, the men of renown."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE, A CATECHISM.

[CONCLUDED.]

THE CATHOLICITY OF THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT.

The old traditional religions take, as it were, a beeline in advancing man to the benefits and blessings of truth. They make it possible for man to feel the truth without knowing it; the truth is given him in a mixture with mythology, so that even minds incapable of scientific inquiry can possess and apply it in practical life.

Religion will naturally appear to neophytes who have not entered into its sanctissimum and have never had a glimpse of its esoteric spirit as a mystery; and to those, who, blind to its truth, see its mythology only as a medley of human fraud and folly.

In the assurance of devout piety there is a wisdom that is not discarded by the religion of science. We can have, and we should have, a resolute confidence in the unbreakable and unbroken laws of existence. We can have, and we should have, an intimate and truly personal relation to that All-being in which, through which, and to which we live. This All-being in its wonderful harmony of law surrounds and pervades our entire existence. We cannot withdraw ourselves from its influence, and, truly, it is grand and sublime and perfect beyond description. It is the source of all blessings, and it encompasses us with a beneficence that can be compared only to a father's love. It is greater than a father's love; and is greater than any particular thing we know of, for it comprises all things, and a father's love is only one brilliant ray of its sunshine.

When we regard our own being as a revelation of the All-being, so that our very self is felt to be an in

carnation of nature's divinity, and that our will is identified with God's will, we shall learn to look upon the troubles and anxieties of life with quietude. A heavenly rest will overspread all our being. Whether we struggle and conquer or stumble and fall, whether we are in joy or in sorrow, whether we live or die, we know that it is a greater one than ourselves who suffers and struggles and has his being in us and in our aspirations, and his greatness sanctifies the yearnings of our heart and consecrates even the trivialities of life.

We do not exist for enjoyment, for truly pure enjoyment is an impossibility. We live to perform work. We have a mission. There are duties imposed upon us.

And we can gain satisfaction only by performing our work, by complying with our mission, by attending to our duties.

There is no genuine happiness, unless it be the rapture of the God moving in us.

* * *

When we consider the letter in which truth is expressed, we find an unfathomable abyss between the religion of science and the dogmatic religions of the established churches. It is the abyss that separates mythology from truth, paganism from sound science, idolatry from self-reliance, superstition from religion, bigotry from righteousness.

When we consider the spirit in which the truth is felt, we find that the spirit is the same in the old historical religions as in the religion of science.

The spirit of almost all the words of the great teachers of mankind is the same as that which must animate the religion of science, and the most beautiful, the profoundest, and sublimest of all sayings are those spoken by the great Master of Galilee.

The spirit of religion is true and noble, but dogmatism affects, like a deadly poison, the religions of mankind. How many of the keenest and most scientific thinkers have been, and are still, through its influence, estranged from the church! Dogmatism warps the sentiments of men and takes away the natural charm that surrounds the holiest enthusiasm. Nevertheless, even in orthodox churchmen the light of true religion sometimes shines undimmed.

One of the founders of Christian dogmatism is St. Augustine. But he is not so narrow as are his followers. Although he sometimes appears narrow, his conception of Christianity is broad, so that he might call it the cosmic religion, the religion of truth, or that religion which the scientist will find to be founded in the constitution of the universe. Christianity is to him only a name which was recently given to the cosmic religion of universal truth. He says:

"The very same thing which now is called Christianity existed among the ancients and was not absent in the beginning of mankind until Christ himself appeared in the flesh, whence the true religion, which already existed, began *to be called* Christian." (Retr. I, 13.)*

We are, furthermore, strangely impressed with the remarkable agreement that obtains, not in the letter, but in the spirit, between the teachings of the religion of science and those of Johannes Tauler.

The quotation of a few short passages will suffice to set this agreement in a clear light.

The chapter which is to be considered as the quintessence of all his preaching, "containing the doctrines of Tauler in three points, discusses the subject, "how we shall perfectly go out of ourselves and enter God."

It must be observed that Tauler's terminology is different from ours. While "nature," in the terminology of science, is identical with reality, including all that exists, also the laws of nature and the reality of our spiritual being, it means to Tauler only the lower desires of man and that which is apt to elicit them. "Nature" means to Taulers what "Sansara" means to the Buddhist. It is the sham of our individual existence, the delusion of egotism, and the Vanity Fair of our transient pleasures.

Says Tauler†:

"We now propose three points which contain briefly all that on which we have expatiated in this book.

"The first point is this: He who wants to make progress in his sanctification, to become a real and affirmed friend of God, to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind, and his neighbor as himself, and to truly feel God's presence in his interior, in his heart, all earthly love of and inclination toward anything that is not God must be slain and must remain dead."

We have to remark that there may be a difference of opinion as to what God is and what God is not. For instance, the duties of family life, energetic enterprise in business, admiration of art may have appeared, if not to Tauler, but to any average clergyman of Tauler's time, as ungodly. The religion of science finds God in all things. The religion of science has overcome the error of negativism and has freed us from the shackels of asceticism. But this difference of view as to the nature of God should not prevent us from seeing the concurrence in principles.

Tauler continues:

"The second point demands that if we wish here in time, and there in eternity, to attain to the cognition of the highest truth, we must in all things rid ourselves of all pleasures of the spirit, in which the spirit seeks and means itself. It is so common, alas! that having abandoned all the externalities of life, the pleasure of

* *Ipse res quæ nunc Christiana religio nuncupatur, erat apud antiquos nec defuit ab initio generis humani, quousque ipse Christus veniret in carne, unde vera religio quæ jam erat, cœpit appellari Christiana.*

† *Medulla Animæ*, Chap. XXVI in Surius's Latin edition, Chap. XXV in the German edition, Chap. XXXIX in Cassender's modern translation. The quotations above are translated from the Cassender edition (Prague, 1872, 2d ed., F. Tempsky).

the spirit in us begins to awake. The spirit is pleased with certain fancies and certain ways which it loves as its *alter ego*, which it seeks and aims at; and thus the spirit is captivated in these things and shut out from the true light so that the latter cannot give any enlightenment. The self-loving lust of the spirit to which the spirit loves to surrender itself hinders and dims the rays of divine truth. The exercises, whatever they may be, contemplation, thought, activity, intuition, etc., are not used as means for a pure seeking God, willing God, and meaning God. The spirit rather seeks in them its own self. Their purpose is the ego and not God."

Is this passage not true of all those arguments which are brought forth in favor of an individual immortality of the ego? How often is it claimed that any other immortality but the ego-immortality is unsatisfactory. Truly, the immortality of the soul as taught by science must be unsatisfactory to everyone whose religion has not as yet reached the height and purity of Tauler's doctrines. Those who find satisfaction only if they have an ego-immortality, do not seek God in religion, but themselves.

Tauler's second point finds further explanation:

"In this state (of seeking God, willing God, and meaning God) nature must slaughter and sacrifice its pleasure; its seeking self must die entirely. . . . This means in the proper sense of the word, to die off to one's self. It is a real *entwerden* (a becoming nothing), an annihilation, a losing, a resignation. Nothing remains but God; nothing is retained but He; there is no rest but in Him; so that God, in and with man, can do His will, so that God alone be willing, working, illumining, and moving in man, man being nothing of his own accord, neither willing, nor working, nor illumining, nay, even not existing except as that which God is in him; so that man is nothing at all in his ways, works, and objects; i. e., in all things man should seek himself neither in time nor in eternity."

"The third point of the whole doctrine is this: When man has freed himself externally and internally of any and all pretensions, when he has reached the state, in the way we have indicated, of standing upon his nothingness, then alone can he freely enter into the highest and simplest good—into God. His entrance however, must be thorough and not in part. . . . O, what bliss lies in such moments! . . . . One such entrance into God is sublimer and more excellent than many other and often so-called great exercises and works outside of it. In it alone is real divine life and true peace."

Tauler took Christianity seriously and extracted its quintessence. Let us take Tauler seriously, and we come to an agreement with Christianity.

Cling to the meaning of your mythology, O ye faithful; and you will naturally walk on the right path!

There is this constant objection made, "If the religious doctrines are not literally true, if God is not truly a person, if my ego is a mere illusion, if heaven and hell are conditions of our being and not places somewhere in space, what do I care for the meaning of these parables?"

We answer: The substance is better than the allegory, the meaning is deeper than the mythology, truth is greater than fiction.

He who does not see that the substance is better than the allegory, the meaning deeper than the mythology, and truth greater than fiction, had better cling to the allegory, mythology, and fiction, lest he lose the substance, the meaning, and the truth. His mind is not as yet sufficiently matured to receive the truth.

We cannot feed the babes with meat, we must give them milk.

* * *

The main secret of the innumerable blessings and benefits which can be derived from religion lies in this: that by learning how to live we learn to understand the meaning of the world. The mystery of being is revealed only to the man who actually lives a moral life.

Religion on the one hand demands a surrender of all egotistic desires, it teaches us the right spirit in which we must regulate our conduct; and on the other hand religion gradually accustoms us to viewing life from the higher standpoint of the divinity of nature. We see that which is transient as transient and identify our being with that which is eternal. And the air we breathe on the heights to which religion raises us is bracing, refreshing, and healthy.

The religion of science is not a substitute for the dogmatic and mythological religions of our churches. On the contrary, the church-religions are a substitute for the religion of science; they are a mere temporary expedient proposing mythologies so long as the truth is not as yet forthcoming. When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. The mythology is of a passing value but the truth will abide.

CURRENT TOPICS.

THE triumphal march of the Liberty bell from Philadelphia to Chicago was a picturesque panorama of exultant men and women patriotically intoxicated by the recollection of what the old bell said on the 4th of July, 1776. There was a good deal of image worship in the greetings it received, but that was rather commendable considering the immortal message printed on the bell, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," the inspired battle-cry of resistance to every form of tyranny imposed by law. That men of influence and eminence have now turned against the old bell on account of its unfashionable politics is a change to be deplored, because their equivocal patronage shows how strong is the American reaction towards the toryism of King George. At Indianapolis, General Harrison, finding the bell broken, and unable to reply, took advantage of its infirmities to lower its character, to garble its history, and to apologise for its principles. Being chosen to make a speech of welcome he improved the occasion by throwing aristocratic ice-water upon the enthusiasm of the people, and he impressed upon them the tory translation of the motto on the bell. He pretended that the bell did not mean what it said; that when it mentioned liberty, it meant not liberty, but "liberty regulated by law," that fettered liberty which all governments concede. In that phrase General Harrison adopted the pompous jargon of the English tories, but the American doctrine was, "law regulated by liberty," and this was the politics of the bell. According to General Harrison "the great lesson" taught by the bell was "submission to public authority," but if that is true the bell rang discords when it gave welcome and salutation to the Declaration of Independence, for every man who

signed the Declaration pledged himself to resistance, and never a man to "submission." While I am writing, the Sons of the American Revolution are celebrating the anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill, and I have no doubt there are degenerate "Sons" among them ready to maintain that submission to public authority is the "great lesson" of Bunker Hill.

* * *

There was double worship at the second Presbyterian church on the 30th of April, for the President of the United States went there to worship the Lord, and a large and fashionable congregation went there to worship the President. The prose laureate was there of course, and to him I feel grateful for a minute and interesting description of the delightful idolatry. The account is a pleasant mixture, familiarity and servility in equal parts, prepared in the lemon and sugar style that prose laureates love, and in which the chief magistrate sometimes appears as "Grover" and sometimes as the "President"; for instance, "The President enters the church," and "Grover joins in the singing," thrilling historical events made more impressive and pictorial by wood cuts that compare excellently with the laureate's literary style. "Though the sermon was good," says the laureate, "few of the congregation listened to it. Their eyes were all fixed upon the presidential party," an attitude of devotion highly becoming to an American congregation. It is not easy to believe that the object of all that homage is a mortal man, but I suppose he is, for just before the worship he "ate a hearty meal of chops and eggs, with a tenderloin steak"; important information, of course, but slightly out of harmony with all the rest of it because not so spiritual and etherial as the lofty theme demands. It must be difficult even for American Presbyterians to join in the adoration of a divinity who has just eaten a hearty meal of chops, eggs, and a tenderloin steak, a commonplace feat which any of us can perform who has the good luck to get the steak and the eggs and the chops. I half suspect that if the lean and hungry Cassius when he wanted to know "upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed that he is grown so great?" had followed up the question he would have discovered that it was eggs, chops, and a tenderloin steak.

* * *

The deportment of Mr. Cleveland during divine service presents an example of religious etiquette which all dutiful subjects will follow if they wish to imitate their betters and worship in a fashionable way. For instance, the laureate informs us that during the prayer the President "leaned on his hand," and while the hymn was being sung he "stood upright with his chest expanded and his right arm thrown behind his back. His hand was clinched. He placed his left thumb on the third button of his black frock coat, and unconsciously turned half round." There is no difficulty in getting the correct attitude, for it can be put into the form of tactics as we had them in the army; for instance, position of the worshipper when singing hymns; chest expanded, and right arm thrown behind the back; clinch the hand; place left thumb on third button of the coat, and unconsciously turn half round. During the delivery of the sermon the deportment is a little different; then the President "threw his right arm over the partition, and his body in the same direction until his left shoulder was raised several inches above the right, while he leaned his head to the left in an attentive attitude." Using the slang of high life, I suppose it is not "good form" to put more than two dollars into the plate; at least that is the inference to be drawn from the action of the presidential party as described by the court laureate, who says that, "Each of the party dropped a small bill into the collection plate, and as nothing larger than a two dollar bill was found it was evident that the high officials did not wish to attract attention by swelling the collection to any great extent" Then the President "arose" and left the church, the congregation remaining reverently in their pews until he had passed into the street. The old world is far behind us. There is not a newspaper in Europe with enterprise enough to hire a laureate to explore the mysteries of a kitchen and find out what a great man had for breakfast, to follow him to church, to report his attitude in worship, and to learn from the deacons how much he put into the plate. And we are the only people high spirited enough to buy those personal details after they are printed; the only people with a taste cultivated enough to read such microscopic information and enjoy it.

* * *

A few years ago some workmen, while digging a sewer across old Smithfield in London, suddenly came upon some bones, some charred wood, and some iron links of a chain, ghastly relics, which had lain there below the surface undisturbed for more than three hundred years. The bones were those of a heretic who had been burned alive for believing or doubting a little more or something less than the theological standard of his time; the charred wood was part of the stake at which he was burned, and the iron links were bits of the chain that bound him. Those relics are the material symbols of a spirit by no means obsolete, and they ought to be presented to those gentle ministers of the gospel, who, in solemn conclave at Boston, called upon the President of the United States to set the regular army with its merciless guns upon persons wicked enough to learn something useful at the World's Fair on Sunday. This appeal to the President is a relic from the sanguinary piety of Smithfield, as the bones and the charcoal and the chain are its resurrected emblems and its melancholy signs. The genius of American liberty gives those ministers the absolute right to consecrate for themselves and set apart one day in seven as a festival to ignorance, but they have no right to sanctify Gatling guns and compel other men to observe the Sabbatarian feast of dullness. I believe I do not speak too harshly when I say that men who would use the army to make other men observe the Sabbath would make Jackson Park another Smithfield if they could; and so, I fear, would every sect in Christendom, excepting two or three, and these are not orthodox. When I think of the useful and elevating character of the Exposition, the gospel of industry preached within its buildings, its lessons of human friendship and international peace, its educational power and the innocent pleasure it confers, I cannot help thinking that the men who would shut it up on Sunday, the laborer's day, deserve the charity of that prayer which the master they pretend to serve once offered for some other intolerant men, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

* * *

The feverish anxiety about the Russian treaty has not abated yet, and protests against that international contract continue to pour in. Some persons think the censure premature, because nobody knows what the provisions of the treaty really are, but the objection is weak, for the reason that we cannot be too quick in denouncing the tyranny of other nations, and we can always divert attention from ourselves by raising the "stop thief" cry. Besides, if the treaty shall prove to be innocent of the charges brought against it, so much the better, and no harm is done by condemning it a little too soon. When Mr. Cleveland was in Chicago he told some gentlemen that the treaty was carefully guarded, "so that the right of asylum was fully protected," and he doubted "whether the treaty was subject to the construction that would prevent our government deciding in every case whether the offense was a political one or not." That assurance given by the President ought to have some weight, but at the same time the American people cannot be too jealous of an extradition treaty with Russia, because the Russian code of political crimes is very large, and almost any expressions in favor of political reforms can be tortured into evidence of "conspiracy against the life of the Czar" Informers and spies are as numerous in St. Petersburg as they are in Chicago; and there, as here, those people will fit a crime on to

a man as easily as a tailor fits a coat. Without looking at it, we may safely say in advance that any extradition treaty with Russia, that includes within it political offences, is a treaty "not fit to be made." The right of asylum should be as jealously guarded here as it is in England, and the American government ought not to be made a police agency for the arrest and return of political offenders to any country, and least of all to Russia.

* * *

I desire to acknowledge with many thanks the kindness of some valued friends who have sent me their printed opinions concerning the Russian treaty; and because I strongly sympathise with them in sentiment I am embarrassed when I try to caution them against the sophistry that makes moral distinctions between political and personal assassinations. I implore them now to think that over and abandon the mistake that assassination, under any circumstances, may be employed as a political or a social remedy. The genius of murder is too stupid and barbarous to make moral distinctions, and there is not a mile of human progress in the assassination of a hundred kings. The casuistry that finds a moral difference between the murder of a president and the murder of a czar is a treacherous guide, leading the conscience astray and bewildering it among misty subtleties and artificial contradictions. There is no difference; and when the assassins of Alexander, the Czar, passed resolutions denouncing the assassins of Garfield, the President, they reached the depths of cynical mockery, and their sympathy had the appearance of comic satire grotesque as the resolutions. Their distinction between the killing of a president and the killing of a czar may have imposed on them, but it was not accepted by their sympathisers in America, for on the night after the assassination of Alexander one of their "comrades" made a speech in the city of New York, in which he said: "The fate of Alexander has a point. There are those in the United States who should heed the warning." And then he solemnly passed sentence of death on two American citizens who were not even officers of the government. Their offense was that they had money. He then had the insolence to declare that "others" would be sentenced in due time. The cowardice of that kind of agitation is more conspicuous than its ferocity, for women and children are kept in continual fear when their husbands and fathers are threatened with assassination. The folly of it is more colossal still, for there is no political regeneration or saving grace for any people in the Eucharist of murder.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SOCIALISTIC SCHEME OF MR. MORRISON SWIFT.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

Mr. Morrison Swift's scheme, published in No. 298 of *The Open Court*, to give capital and labor—which, he seems to fear, "are rushing rapidly to a destructive crisis"—until the first of May 1900 to adjust their differences in a wolf-and-lamb-lying-together fashion, forces the suggestion upon my mind, that if the mental energy which is constantly, not only being wasted in fruitless "rainbow-chasing" efforts to solve the so-called labor question, but is actively engaged in complicating (therefore retarding) its solution, were as persistently applied in another direction, it might render most valuable service to the cause of human progress, which would of course include the betterment of labor. But such dreamy propositions as that of Mr. Swift, that fill the heads of our workingmen with the absurd notion that capital must necessarily be a monster; that labor is the lamb or the toiling ox; that this monster feeds upon patient, suffering labor; and that, "unless some such definite rational policy," as that suggested by Mr. Swift, "be quickly decided upon," something terrible will happen; and the country is given to understand that it may, at any time, be turned topsy-turvy by a new and improved edition of "the horrors of the French Revolution."

Aside from the vicious effect upon the minds of the workingmen, such threats are "nettling" to the men who assisted in crushing "the destructive crisis" of 1861, when "circumstances" had driven the people of nine or ten states of this Union "to frenzy," and it would be well for Mr. Swift and all of these give-us-what-we-want-or-the-devil-will-be-to pay reformers, however sincere, to remember that the spirit which moved the arm in '61 still lives, only in a more intense form, and whenever Mr. Swift's "scattered and otherwise dangerous energies" venture to "mass" for action, it may raise havoc with the "crisis conjurers" and their dupes. They seem to forget that we are living under republican institutions, where one man may be as good as another, if he so selects; that the constitution and the laws must be obeyed until changed or abrogated in the manner therein prescribed.

The American people are exceedingly "thin skinned" upon these matters, and any attempt to inaugurate changes through "crises" will be mercilessly crushed.

A free ballot, the most powerful and efficacious agency for the redress of grievances, is placed in our hands, and those who are too lazy, too indifferent, or too stupid to avail themselves of it, have no right to lay violent hands upon the edifice that shelters us all.

If the conditions of labor are such as to justify a demand for industrial readjustment, if they are unfavorable to labor and favorable to capital, the causes are known: it is owing to the ignorance and carelessness of the former, and to the shrewdness and diligence of the latter in matters of legislation.

If, instead of leading the workingmen into a labyrinth of impractical theories and of exciting their inflammable imaginations with treasonable suggestions, these labor-question solvers would devote their brains, their time, and energies to instructing them in the rudiments of economics and in the simple duties of American citizenship; if they would impress upon them the maxim that a just regard for the rights of others will go far towards securing their own, and last, but not least, if these leaders would see to it that they vote, conscientiously and understandingly, there would be no need for a new policy of general partnership, nor for the extended period of seven years to solve the labor question.

This reminds me of a conversation with the hapless Spies years before his horrible fate. In speaking of the wrongs suffered by labor, to which I partly assented, I deprecated the "none voting" attitude of the socialists, since it is through the ballot only that in this country wrongs and abuses can be rectified.

With a shake of his head, poor, short-sighted Spies replied: "Elections are a fraud; does your vote count, General?"

"I apprehend it does not now," I said, "but it will count after a while."

To-day it does count, under the Australian ballot law, and so does that of every workingman, but his counts for worse than nothing, because he does not know how to cast it. These very men, who, Mr. Swift says, "are driven to frenzy by many circumstances," have elected as law-makers, within the last few years, the worst brace of purchasable rascals that ever disgraced our State Legislature.

HERMANN LIEB.

TIME AND SPACE.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

The letter by Mr. Horace P. Biddle upon your article on "The Absolute," in No. 290 of *The Open Court*, suggests to me the following comments.

If, in imagination, we remove everything, if we annihilate all that exists, so that nothing remains, we yet have the two inde-

structible conditions for existence, viz., Time and Space. Is it not a mistake to speak of these as "entities"?

Are they not rather the negative conditions remaining when all entities are removed?

Their negative character is, I think, disclosed by taking some concrete instance, for example, the receiver of an air-pump may be emptied of its air; we may, in imagination, go still further, and empty it of every molecule of gas, and of the all-pervading ether, and of every known and unknown form of matter, yet the more complete is our success in this process of getting everything out, the more space (i. e. room for something) will remain. In other words, the more *something* is taken out the more *nothing* is left in, and this nothing is simply room for something, or unoccupied space.

The mistake in Mr. Biddle's way of putting it is, I think, that he treats a negative as a positive. So also of his point regarding truth. If everything is removed, nothing remains. This is true. Yet unoccupied time and unoccupied space remain, and the truth about them is that there is nothing to tell the truth about.

After having emptied a vessel, we cannot, even in imagination, go on and empty it of its emptiness. Emptiness is the limit in that direction, and can be removed, not by pumping out, but by filling in.

Something and nothing are mutually destructive propositions; we cannot have both; we must have one or the other; if nothing, then we have void—emptiness waiting to be occupied.

We may wish that this void be also removed, but it is not possible in fact, nor conceivable in thought, save by bringing *something* into the field.

To say that these nothings are somethings of a peculiar kind, that they are "uncreated, unrelated, unconditioned, infinite eternal entities," is, I submit, a misreading of one of nature's texts.

I do not wish to treat lightly a serious argument, but Mr. Biddle's letter reminds me of a certain facetious bartender, who, when brandy and water without sugar was ordered, replied to his customer that he could only fill part of his order, and when asked what part, said it was the "without sugar" part.

Now, this part would eternally remain until removed by the production of sugar.

So with void—emptiness—space. These also must eternally remain and infinitely extend until arrested by the presence of *something*, for they are but names for its absence. If unoccupied space is not nothing, what is nothing? If it (unoccupied space) were something, it could, in imagination, be removed; an effort to do this will prove precisely the same as that of trying, after emptying a vessel, to remove the emptiness. This, as I have said, can only be done by putting something into it. We must not lift this persistent negation into an "infinite eternal entity."

The conditions the mind pictures, as those which must have obtained before the dawn of creation (supposing creation to have had a dawn) are not conditions of being, but of non-being; not conditions of entity, but of non-entity. Yours truly,

L. T. Ives.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

What is space? I conceive it to be *all* pervading and immeasurable. Not being a thing in itself, yet space pervades all things in themselves, nor can space be literally abstracted from the thing in itself. There is nothing to abstract. But it seems to me that space is a *reality*, the office of which is to give things in themselves elbow-room. Space, as a reality, though unquantitive and unqualitive as a whole of space is as real to my senses as the feeling of cold, and equally as negative.

What is the universal *thing in itself* we call *matter*? It is positive, quantitive, and qualitive. It has also the power, if you will permit the term, of *absorbing* space, occupying (and being occupied by) all space in varying density. It moves through nothing (space), and yet I know that *nothing* to be a reality. For when I look at the stove in my room (the thing in itself), it can be seen that the stove occupies so much space, and the space is within the stove, and if the stove be taken away, space is still where the stove was—and it is very *real* in both instances.

What is Change? Shall I call it the *relation* or *connection* between molecules, or—give it the soul-power of Omnipotence? It is certain that all nature must be constantly changing in structure, and equally certain that the changing molecular energy of the atom is an epitome of the history of the universal race of atoms, be they small or large, motes or suns. In Change, as in things in themselves, there seems to be no real death. Subtle change, eternal, omnipotent, orderly, and intelligent, it seems to me, is the "active agent" obscurely referred to by Newton. But, shall change be worshipped as a tangible, overruling power towards the beautiful and good? Man must worship something. What shall it be? Cut and dried religions have long been tried and found wanting. Would it not be a proper experiment to deify Change? On this mundane sphere, at least, it might do some good. If Change could be worshipped with all the solemnity and dignity of the orthodox God, mankind as a whole would at least have one advantage. Mundane environments could be improved through the God of Change—not by prayer and supplication, but by simply taking advantage, mentally, morally, and physically, of the lessons taught in the great book of nature, written in Change's own handwriting, read at a glance by all nations, and indelibly recorded in rocks, and trees, and flowers. F. H. S.

[Both our correspondents seem to agree that time and space are mere nothings: and yet the one regards them as "indestructible," and the other makes the puzzling declaration that he knows "that nothing to be reality." How can nothing be indestructible, and how can nothing be a reality?

My opinion differs from that of Mr. Ives, Mr. F. H. S., and also from Mr. Biddle's, to whose letter in No. 290 of *The Open Court* they refer.

Space, it appears to me, is not negative; it is positive. Space is not nothing, it is space; space being the interrelation of things.

Dr. J. N. Lyle, of Westminster College, Fulton, Mo., objects to my view in a pamphlet, entitled "Euclid and the Anti-Euclidians," (St. Louis: Frederick Printing Co., 1892). He says:

> "Space does not arise from the relation of material bodies to each other, but the spatial relations between them exist solely by reason of the fact that the bodies occupy space and are contained in it. The annihilation of material bodies would destroy the relations between them, but would not affect trinally extended, immaterial, continuous, unbounded space."

Space is not comparable to a box in which things are contained. If no things existed, space alone could not be said to be a reality. Space in itself exists as little as matter in itself, or energy in itself. We can think of pure space without anything in it. The mathematician's conception of space is such that it contains only immaterial points and lines. We can think of energy which is nothing but pressure or motion. The physicist's conception of a system of forces is such. But everybody knows that the physicist's and the mathematician's conceptions are fictions. Pure mechanics and mathematics move each in its own sphere of abstraction; and abstractions, if true, represent some qualities of real things, but they are no entities; they have no independent existence.

Space can be said to be nothing, only in so far as empty space negates the presence of matter and energy. Descartes, taking the view that empty space is not only nothing in the sense of absence of matter, but absolutely nothing, maintained that the walls of an empty chamber were in contact. If space were absolutely nothing, the walls of an empty vessel would indeed be in contact. An empty vessel, however, contains nothing in the sense that matter is absent in it. This absence of matter possesses some very positive

qualities. It consists of space relations. A body moving from one side to the other needs more time the greater this so-called nothing is; and a stone at the ceiling can do more work than a stone of the same mass at the bottom.

Empty space, accordingly, is real.

The best criterion of reality, it seems to me, is the question, Is it a factor in causation? Is the mere relation of an empty space quite indifferent or does its presence tell somehow upon facts? Has it any influence upon the course of events, so that it makes a difference whether or not it is? If it makes no difference, it is a mere nothing; if it makes a difference, it is not a mere nothing; and it is apparent that the presence of empty space is a factor that plays a part in causation. Space relations are real.

Mr. Ives speaks of space unoccupied as emptiness. Emptiness is a negative conception; so he concludes that space, too, is negative. Emptiness is the absence of matter, and we certainly could not empty a void of its emptiness. We can only remove emptiness by filling an empty chamber with matter, but we cannot remove the space (i. e., the relations of this empty chamber to the surrounding world) without removing the whole world. Space and emptiness are very different conceptions and cannot be identified.

While emptiness is a negative conception, space is a positive conception. Emptiness negates the presence of matter, but it does not negate the presence of space. Emptiness does not negate the presence of relations.

Space-relations may be called "uncreated," with the same right as matter and energy are uncreated, but they are not "unrelated." They are related, not only because their very nature consists in relations, but also because they stand in special relations to matter and energy. We have acquired our knowledge of time and space by experience. Our conceptions of time and space are abstract concepts.

Space and time are not infinite eternal "entities," meaning by entities things that exist by themselves. Space and time are not things in themselves. Nor can they be represented as unconditioned and immutable in the sense that they could not, under any conditions or assumptions, be different. We can very well imagine space different from what it is. We cannot depict in our imagination any other than three-dimensional space, but we can very well conceive of the idea of a four, five, or *n*-dimensional space.

There is a difference between the imagination of our senses and the imagination of our reason. The intuition of our senses is limited to one, two, and three-dimensional spaces. We can, in the three-dimensional space, with which we are experientially acquainted, think away dimensions, but we cannot, in sense-intuition, add them. We can form no *Anschauung* of a four-dimensional space.

A very fine *reverie* on this subject was published several years ago under the title "Flatland, a Romance of Many Dimensions. By a Square." (London: Seely & Co., Essex Street, Strand. 1884.)

Our abstract reasoning is not as limited as our sense-intuition. We can assume that space has other qualities than it actually has. Riemann's ingenious hypothesis of the curvature of space is well known. We can think of curved spaces, or we can regard our own space as one the curvature of which is zero.

It appears to me that the importance of the theories of curved and *n*-dimensional space proposed by modern mathematicians, has been much exaggerated, but we have gained at least one thing. We know that space, such as it is, is *not* an absolutely necessary or the only possible condition of existence. Space might be different from what it is. That space is such as it is, we do not know *a priori* by some mysterious intuition, but only by experience. Experience only teaches us that the interrelations of things can be determined by three coördinates, which means that the system of interrelations which we call space is three-dimensional.

I have to add a word concerning Mr. F. H. S.'s idea of change. To deify change would be unequivocal and unalloyed paganism; to worship change would be idolatry.—P. C.]

CONTENTS OF NO. 300.