

# THE OPEN COURT.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE.

No. 346. (VOL. VIII.—15.)

CHICAGO, APRIL 12, 1894.

{ Two Dollars per Year.  
} Single Copies, 5 Cents.

COPYRIGHT BY THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO.—Reprints are permitted only on condition of giving full credit to Author and Publisher.

## THE METAPHYSICS OF HERBERT SPENCER.

BY THOS. C. LAWS.

THE school of thought which regarded philosophy as implying merely the *a priori* study of mental phenomena is now practically dead, and in its place has arisen one which treats metaphysics but as a side issue in speculative psychology, and psychical phenomena as but a portion of those with which it is the duty of philosophy to concern itself. It is to the increasing progress of experimental science that this change in philosophy is due, and to the new school belongs one of the greatest masters in modern thought, Mr. Herbert Spencer.

The matters placed under the head of metaphysics are capable of classifications as numerous as the writers upon the subject. This is, indeed, inevitable in so debatable a question. From first datum to final conclusion we are in a world of controversy. However, for the sake of this essay, we may distinguish three discussions—mind, externality, and a theory of the universe.

The first question, then, which we ask ourselves is, "What is Mind?" Mr. Spencer's answer is clear and definite. Attacking the sceptical theory of Hume, he asks, "how can that thinker, who has decomposed his consciousness into impressions and ideas, explain the fact that he considers them as *his* impressions and ideas? Or, once more, if, as he must, he admits that he has an impression of his personal existence, what warrant can he show for rejecting this impression as unreal, and accepting his other impressions as real? Unless he can give satisfactory answers to these queries, which he cannot, he must abandon his conclusions, and must admit the reality of the individual mind."<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, he speaks of mind as "the underlying something" of which distinguishable portions or mental phenomena are formed, or of which they are modifications.<sup>2</sup> To this it may be replied that, as Mr. Spencer himself admits, of this ultimate mind we have no knowledge whatever. We are acquainted with mental phenomena, we can study them, analyse them, recombine them, but throughout all these processes we come across no evidence of an underlying

something. Here is a society—a public company, say, or a nation. Corporations, as Sir Edward Coke said, have no souls to save. Take away all the units forming that society, and what is left? Is there an "underlying something"? And yet every individual is conscious that the society of which he is part exists; every society is capable of acting as one and united. The English nation has a tangible existence, and will have, so long as Englishmen exist, but if we scatter all Englishmen to the winds, no English nation will remain. So with mind: an individual mind exists so long as there exist those "impressions and ideas" (to use Hume's phraseology), which constitute it. But, it may be argued, these impressions and ideas are constantly changed. The same is true of the particles which form the substance of the body, yet we regard it, from the cradle to the tomb, as one individual body. The English nation has existed as such since the days of Egfrid and Ini, or at least since the final union of the Saxon peoples was made by Egbert in the ninth century. During those centuries, however, every unit has changed innumerable times, and the composition and condition of the nation undergone a complete transformation. So the individual mind remains intact, notwithstanding the manifold changes which take place in its component "impressions and ideas." How, Mr. Spencer asks, do we recognise these impressions as ours? What warrant have we for regarding them as real, while we set aside an "underlying something" as unreal? How do we recognise the consciousness, continuity, or personality, which constitutes a mental being?

During the course of evolution, ancestral, prenatal, and personal, there has been evolved a sense of discrimination between subjective and objective existence, whereby we have come to regard all impressions affecting our physical organisation as ours. The question of personality is bound up with that of the relation between consciousness and body. No writer has done more than Mr. Spencer to prove to us that consciousness is as much a function of the body as respiration or digestion, or any physical process whatsoever. Not only is greater complexity of mentality associated with greater complexity of cerebral and nervous structure and organisation, but during the pro-

<sup>1</sup> *First Principles*, § 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Principles of Psychology*, § 58.

cess of ideation, chemical and physical action goes on in the substance of the brain. Vigorous mental action leaves the body as fatigued as vigorous physical exertion; during its process certain alkaline phosphates are largely produced and afterwards eliminated from the system; a greater rush of blood takes place to the brain, resulting, when the pressure has been considerable or prolonged, in those disorders frequent in men and women of extraordinary mental powers and activity, such as vertigo and partial congestion of the cerebral blood-vessels. Accidents to the body often impair consciousness, sometimes only temporarily, but frequently inflicting permanent injury to the thinking faculties. Similarly, we have the connexion between delirium and bodily fevers set up by local irritations or loss of blood; insensibility, caused by a blow; loss of speech (aphasia), due to disease of a nerve in the head; loss of memory, illusions, insanity, and other morbid conditions of the mind, caused by disease and physical injuries. We may note, too, mental and moral diseases arising from congenital causes—murder, kleptomania, dipsomania, and epilepsy—and opinions caused and modified by climate, temper, health, and social surroundings. Finally, we may remark the gradual development of mind as the child grows, its maturity in middle age, and in general its decline as physical energies decline, sometimes merging into dotage and senile imbecility, until dissolution of the body brings the mental functions to a close. But underlying all these special facts is the general one that the ultimate source of ideas is experience, and that we can have no experience save through the organs of sense and their adjuncts, the nerves. From which two conclusions are irresistible. First, that psychology is not in itself a general concrete science, but merely a special branch of one,—biology, the science of life in all its forms. The second and more important conclusion is that no “underlying something,” no independent mind, exists, but that the *sensorium* (to use an expression of George Henry Lewes’s), of which consciousness is a function, is coextensive with the entire body, from cerebrum to the tiniest and most distant nerve-filament. Hence it is that we regard “impressions and ideas” experienced by us as ours, because they are part and parcel of our physical organisation, just as are digestion and the circulation of the blood. No man suffering from dyspepsia, even though he be the most extreme idealist, ever doubts that it is *his* stomach which is deranged. Equally, no man experiencing a certain sensation, receiving a certain impression, cognising a certain idea, doubts for one moment that the sensation, impression, and idea are *his*.

It is here that the modern critical psychology parts company entirely with that of Hume, and with its

physical basis runs little or no risk of merging into idealism, as did his.

The theory here advanced is, nevertheless, simply an extension of that of Berkeley, who disputed the existence of any “material substratum” or “matter” behind the phenomena which are observable, declaring of these phenomena that “their *esse* is *percipi*, nor is it possible that they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them,”<sup>1</sup> stripped of what is unphilosophical therein and brought up to the discoveries of modern psychology.

What is the bearing of this theory upon the question of externality? “I do not argue,” says Berkeley, “against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend, either by sense or reflexion. That the things I see with mine eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence we deny, is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance. And in doing this no harm is done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it. . . . while philosophers may possibly find that they have lost a great handle for trifling and disputation.”<sup>2</sup> And elsewhere he remarks with truth, that “if we thoroughly examine this tenet” of a material substratum, we shall find it “at bottom to depend on the doctrine of abstract ideas.”<sup>3</sup> Abstraction is one of the most complex of logical processes, consisting in the creation out of particular facts of general or abstract ideas, which shall include all those characters wherein these facts agree, while neglecting all those wherein they differ. Man is an abstract idea; so, too, are color, the press, and religion. For there exists in nature no abstract man: we are acquainted only with concrete, individual men. We know colors, such as red and green, but create color in the abstract; we acquaint ourselves with newspapers and their staffs; there exists a variety of religions, of religious doctrines and ceremonials, and of religious men and women, but no religion apart from these. The same is true of the sciences, so that the so-called controversy between science and religion is meaningless, except as an expression of conflict between certain scientific facts and certain theological dogmas, or between the opinions of scientific observers and those of theologians. In the same manner, the idea of externality is an abstraction: we are conversant with a multitude of phenomena in so far as they impress themselves upon our senses, wherefrom we infer an existence external to ourselves. We may justify realism by many arguments, the setting forth of which occupies a considerable portion of Mr. Spencer’s “Principles of Psychology.” Let it here suffice

<sup>1</sup> Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, § 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, § 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, § 5.

to remark that even the idealist philosopher himself habitually thinks, feels, speaks, and acts as though an external world exists; that our organisation, indeed, is such that we cannot but imply its existence in every act of life; and that the minutest examination proves only what a cursory one makes us aware of, that there exist facts over which we have some sort of control, and which are evidently ours, and that there exist others over which we have no control whatever, and which are evidently of an origin beyond our consciousness.<sup>1</sup> But an idea, as Berkeley says, "can be like nothing but an idea";<sup>2</sup> a suggestion which Mr. Spencer has worked up into his theory of Transfigured Realism.<sup>3</sup> There exist an internal world and an external world acting constantly upon one another, and, although the impressions conveyed to our minds of the external world of fact, through the internal world of sense, cannot be proved to be identical with the facts of that external world, yet they have acquired, through the evolution of sensibility, a relation to those facts which is constant and reliable. We may call it conventionality or habit, if we will, still the relation cannot be denied. It is here that Mr. Spencer's philosophy is immeasurably superior to that of Berkeley, who appears to drift from a critical statement of psychological fact into a visionary idealism which denies the existence of everything outside the perceiving mind, and which, as Hume said of it later, admitted of no answer, but produced no conviction.

But, if Mr. Spencer be thus scientifically right in his theory of externality, he is, perhaps, unscientifically wrong in that of the unknowable. Nor is he always consistent in his use of that term. In the first part of "First Principles," the unknowable would appear to be simply that which could never come within human ken. But later he narrows his use of the term, until finally we are told by a writer who speaks of the idea of a first cause as unthinkable, to regard this unknowable in terms of the persistence of force as an "absolute force of which we are indefinitely conscious," a "cause which transcends our knowledge and conception," and an "unconditioned reality, without beginning or end."<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Spencer's argument may be briefly put. Locke urged, in his celebrated Essay, the existence of impassable barriers against human knowledge, trusting that when we had learned "how far the understanding can extend its view, how far it has faculties to attain certainty, and in what cases it can only judge and

guess," such knowledge would be "of use to prevail with the busy mind of man to be more cautious in meddling with things exceeding its comprehension; to stop when it is at the utmost extent of its tether; and to sit down in quiet ignorance of those things, which, upon examination, are found to be beyond the reach of our capacities," for "men may find matter sufficient to busy their hands with variety, delight, and satisfaction, if they will not boldly quarrel with their own constitution, and throw away the blessings their hands are filled with, because they are not big enough to grasp everything."<sup>1</sup> Criticising the various theories which have been put forward regarding the origin and constitution of the universe, Mr. Spencer finds one and all to be inconsistent, and contradictory, and incapable of standing the strain of criticism, and concludes that in our researches into them we are but buffeted between opposite absurdities. He finds that ultimately matter and force, space and time are in themselves alike inscrutable, and that we can only know their phenomena. Had he stopped there and maintained that these phenomena alone have an objective existence, and that matter, force, space, and time are abstract ideas, having no existence outside the human mind, we should not here have found it necessary to criticise him. But, instead, he maintains their objective reality, and asserts that they are modes of manifestation of an unknowable existence. The fallacy of the theory lies in its assumption of the objectivity of knowledge. Knowledge is a sum-total of experiences, received through the senses, and, as such, can have only subjective existence. In other words, there may be external facts, but knowledge of them can only be within the thinking mind. Hence knowable and unknowable are no more entities than are those human creations, the "laws of nature." There are, so far as we are aware, no laws *in* nature—there exist phenomena, whose observed order and sequence is, for convenience sake, framed into an abstract or general law, by which new facts are observed, tested, or explained. To the savage, the researches of our laboratories and our observatories are unknowable: his mind is so constituted that he could not comprehend them, if explained to him. Looking at the universe in its relation to human consciousness, we may distinguish the *known* from the *unknown*, seeking ever to widen the domain of the former at the expense of the latter. As we have already said, what Kant calls the "pure forms of sensibility, elements of knowledge *a priori*,"<sup>2</sup> and what Mr. Spencer speaks of as "ultimate scientific ideas," have no existence outside the human mind. We distinguish facts into material or dynamic, temporal or spatial, according to their prevailing charac-

<sup>1</sup> This last was admitted by Berkeley, who distinguished between the ideas of *sense* and those of *imagination*, declaring the former to have a "steadiness, order, and coherence," which is wanting in the latter, and to be ideas "excited by the will of another and more powerful spirit." (See *Principles*, §§ 26-33.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, § 8.

<sup>3</sup> Spencer, *Principles of Psychology*, §§ 471-474.

<sup>4</sup> *First Principles*, § 62.

<sup>1</sup> Locke, *Essay on the Human Understanding*, §§ 4.

<sup>2</sup> Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, (Leipsic, Reclam,) p. 50.

ters. But matter in itself, inert and apart from its phenomena, is a logical impossibility. It must exist in time and space; if in motion, must be impelled by one force; if immobile, must be kept rigidly in position by another. Space and time, without something to exist therein, and force, without something to act upon, are alike contradictions in terms. In nature there exists no pure matter, no pure force, no abstract time and space; these are general notions framed by man to synthesise his conception of the universe in which he lives. And so long as he bears in mind that they are but ideas of his and uses them as such for observation and research, all will be well. The evil arises, when, mistaking his words for realities, he dogmatizes upon them, builds up systems of speculation upon them, and raises aloft metaphysical and theological structures, which, when the winds of criticism do howl and the billows of logic do break themselves thereupon, shall fall with mighty crash, for they were built upon the sands of obscurantism and ambiguity. "Words," let us say with Hobbes, "are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools, that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Thomas, or any other doctor whatever, if but a man."<sup>1</sup> The fundamental necessity to all philosophic discussion is definition. If we desire to be of those who speak "with many words making nothing understood," we shall throw definition to the dogs and exactly to the winds, using our words with little respect to meaning. But he who desires to make others profit by that which he tells, must first learn so to train his language that it represents all his thoughts without doubt or ambiguity, nor leaves ready room for sophistry. Knowledge is power, but unless in the exercise of that power one learns adequately to define one's words, to maintain those definitions when made, and to swerve therefrom neither to the right hand nor to the left, one shall find one's knowledge a power not for good but for evil.

#### BERKELEY'S POSITIVISM.

BISHOP BERKELEY is frequently misunderstood not only by the unphilosophical public, but also by philosophers, and among the latter must be reckoned his own disciples and followers, not less than his adversaries. This great Irish philosopher was much more radical than could be expected of a bishop, and he is much more in accord with positivism than would be generally conceded to a thorough idealist who denies the existence of any material substratum called matter. Indeed we should say that apart from a difference of terminology and of our methods of attacking the various problems—our own view of monistic positivism is in close agreement with Berkeley's idealism. We do

not intend here to expound Berkeley's philosophy or enter into a critical examination of it, but shall confine ourselves to one point only, concerning which Mr. Thomas C. Laws, in his article on "The Metaphysics of Herbert Spencer," says:

"It is here that Mr. Spencer's philosophy is immeasurably superior to that of Berkeley, who appears to drift from a critical statement of psychological fact into a visionary idealism which denied the existence of everything outside the perceiving mind."

There are quite a number of prominent authors like the French materialist Baron D'Holbach and the English poet Lord Byron, who publicly confessed that they could not refute Berkeley, however unthinkable his idealism appeared to them. There must be some powerful truth in a statement which cannot be refuted. Is Berkeley's system perhaps a consistent description of the world in terms commonly used in a different sense? This may be one reason, but there is another and weightier one which makes his views unacceptable even to those who cannot answer his arguments; it is the fact that he skilfully trips the unconscious metaphysicism of materialism as well as spiritualism; and materialism is a lingering chain, which among many professed dualists and monists is still the most deeply seated preconception of our time.

Concerning the passage quoted from Mr. Laws, we believe that Berkeley's view is not correctly represented. Berkeley denies the existence of a hypostatisation like matter, but he does not deny the existence of everything outside the perceiving mind. Does not Berkeley speak of God as that something (Berkeley awkwardly calls it "spirit") which excites our sense-impressions? What Berkeley calls God, we call reality, and in so far as in reality the All of facts in their oneness are the ultimate authority of moral conduct, we should make no objection to the Bishop's terminology. Berkeley does not deny the reality of things. Here he differs from many of his misguided disciples and followers, who imagine they become deep philosophers by denying the reality of things. Berkeley is as much a realist as any unsophisticated farm-laborer can be, who, working with a shovel, trusts that the soil he digs is an actuality and no mere illusion. Berkeley (as quoted by Mr. Laws) says: "That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question." What, then, does Berkeley deny, to deserve the name idealist? Berkeley denies the existence of a metaphysical substratum called matter; he denies what Professor Huxley and other modern physiologists call the physical basis of mind; he denies that matter alone is real, and that mind is only a property of matter; in other words, he denies the metaphysical existence of matter and regards matter as a mere abstract term.

<sup>1</sup> Hobbes, *Leviathan*, c. iv.

Mr. Laws regards psychology as a special branch of biology and says of "modern critical psychology" that it

"With its physical basis runs little or no risk of merging into idealism."

The mere term "physical basis of mind" implies a metaphysical assumption; it implies the theory, of late so lucidly set forth by Mr. Lester F. Ward in the January number of *The Monist*, that matter is real, while mind is merely a property of matter, a view which we reject as a pseudo-monism, because it unifies the universe by means of a one-sided system; it is a single-concept theory, not a truly unitary system; it is henism, not monism.<sup>1</sup>

If we compare the formal categories of our mind to a system of drawers or pigeon-holes in which all our experiences are classified and stored away in good order, so as to be handy when wanted, the henist feeling the necessity of bringing unity into his thought-material, is like a man who puts all into one great box. The spiritualist subsumes everything under spirit, as either spirit itself, or a property of spirit; the materialist subsumes everything under matter, as either matter itself, or a property of matter; the dynamist or mechanicalist subsumes everything under energy as a mode of motion or the effect of a motion. True monism must always remain conscious of the method by which we have constructed our abstract notions; it must not forget that they are thought-symbols to which some features of reality correspond, but that neither matter, nor spirit, nor energy represent independent entities or things in themselves which can be assumed to be the substratum of reality and the metaphysical basis of our experience.

We do not deny that it is sometimes *convenient* in special branches of science to regard matter as thing, and color as a quality of matter. But in doing so, we must remain conscious of the poetical licence which we indulge in. This method of viewing things serves a temporary purpose and must be dropped with the special occasion. If we retain the fiction of matter being the true reality and not merely an abstract representing a quality or a number of qualities abstracted from our experiences, we shall soon become puzzled with the children of our own thought, and, like Mr. Spencer, become victims of agnosticism, standing overawed with wonder before the simplest generalisations, as if they contained the mysteries of being in a concentrated form. We need not repeat here how Spencer, in his "First Principles," obscures all issues so as to render the ideas matter, motion, and mind

self-contradictory and incomprehensible, thus producing mysteries where there are none.<sup>1</sup> Suffice it to say that any one who either unconsciously or consciously hypostatizes his abstract notions will sooner or later arrive at mysticism or agnosticism, that is to say, he will sooner or later be so bewildered with the confusion of his own thought as to declare: "Philosophy is too much for me, I do not understand its problems, and as I cannot solve them, no one can."

Mr. Laws, we are glad to notice, not only rejects Mr. Spencer's notion of the unknowable, but also accepts the theory of abstraction. He says:

"Abstraction is one of the most complex of logical processes, consisting in the creation out of particular facts of general or abstract ideas, which shall include all those characters wherein these facts agree, while neglecting all those wherein they differ. Man is an abstract idea; so, too, are color, the press, and religion."

But accepting this theory of abstraction, is it not inconsistent to speak of consciousness as a function of the body, and mind as a product of the brain; to regard impressions and ideas as part and parcel of our physical (!) organisation? We do not deny, as we said above, that occasions may arise in which it might be convenient to speak of matter and its properties, or even to represent the atoms of the brain as the true reality and our thoughts as mere functions of the brain. But this view is unphilosophical. Such a licence is temporarily allowable when we compare two qualities of which the one is relatively stable the other relatively transient. For instance, weight and color. In the case of mind and brain, however, this mode of speech is not admissible, except when we take a purely physiological aspect and inquire into the brain mechanism of thought, excluding feelings, ideas, and the meanings of ideas. By mind, however, we understand the interaction of ideas and the meaning of ideas. When speaking of ideas, we should not forget that thinking is a mental process, which, if it were visible in a transparent brain, would appear to an outside observer as a brain-motion. But the relatively constant factor in thinking is the idea thought and not the material atoms of the brain which vibrate while we think. The idea remains the same, while the brain-substance is constantly renewed; our conceptions remain constant in the flux of physiological changes of matter. Thus, as soon as we discuss psychological problems we should rather be justified in regarding mind as the reality and brain action as one of its qualities, than the reverse. We do not say that psychologists must present mental problems in this form, but they can provisionally assume this view as much as a physicist may speak of bodies and their properties.

In case psychologists adopt the henism of regarding matter as the real thing and mind as a property

<sup>1</sup> See *The Monist*, Vol. IV, No. 2, "A Monistic Theory of Mind," by Lester F. Ward, and the editorial, "Monism and Henism." Compare also Prof. C. Lloyd Morgan's article in the present number of *The Monist* (Vol. IV, No. 3), pp. 321-332, "Three Aspects of Monism."

<sup>1</sup> See *The Open Court*, No. 212.

only of the brain-cells, they commit themselves to the absurdity of regarding the secretions of the nervous substance which after having done the thinking are thrown out in the natural way, as man's true self. In thus identifying ourselves with the material that passes through our body, we become blind to the spiritual nature of our being and we shall look upon death as a finality. When an idea has been thought, the particles that did the thinking will soon be replaced by other substance, and after a brief time be wiped out of the brain, yet the idea will remain in our mind. In the same way, when we die our remains will be buried, but not we, not our souls, not our true selves, which are of a spiritual nature. Our souls can be preserved. Our ideas can be thought again, and our aspirations can continue. The temple in which they are enshrined will be broken, but the temple will be built up again, and our spiritual being will be resurrected to new life.

True monism rejects all hypostatisation, materialistic, spiritualistic, or mechanistic. By bearing in mind that abstract notions are part-representations of reality, describing sections, features or qualities of existence, we do not fall a prey to self-mystification, and see our way clearly before us. We may differ as to the propriety of terms and their definitions, such as Reason, God, Religion, and others, but we have definite issues and practical problems. The road of scientific and philosophical investigation is no longer blocked by insolvable mysteries, unknowables or other metaphysical hobgoblins. We begin with the facts given in experience and are no longer in need of assumptions, axioms, or hypothetical principles as building material for our world-conception. Thus philosophy has become a science, the statements of which are no longer a matter of partisan position or dependent upon postulates; they can be decided by investigation and subjected to the test of being in agreement or disagreement with facts.

P. C.

#### THE NEW ERA.

BY ATHERTON BLIGHT.

A BOOK of unusual interest and importance in the line of religious thought has appeared recently. I refer to Prof. Edward Caird's Gifford lectures, "The Evolution of Religion." The distinguished author and thinker has only recently succeeded the great Greek scholar, the late Professor Jowett, as Master of Balliol. How well I remember hailing with delight the publication of "Essays and Reviews," in 1860, and how those of us interested in such subjects were encouraged by the now famous dictum of Jowett, "Interpret the Bible as you would any other book." And now, after a generation of men have left the stage and we are nearing the close of the nineteenth century, the new Master of Balliol declares that what Christ conceived by a divine intuition, what his followers and the Church partly developed, partly misunderstood, this is now the proper object of a religious philosophy.

In an interesting notice of this valuable work in the *New York Evening Post*, the author says: "The result of Professor Caird's thought is thus a revised Christianity, from which the traditional

sort of supernaturalism has indeed been banished. The highly unconventional character of the theology thus outlined is obvious. The Gospel history is in consequence interpreted without recourse to miracle. The greater part of traditional Church dogma appears as non-essential opinion having only historical interest. Human immortality is apparently, in Professor Caird's mind, at present a problem whose philosophical answer is decidedly incomplete, if not altogether problematic."

The point, then, which I wish to make clear is that Professor Caird, like Dr. Momerie and other profound thinkers, have, with *The Open Court*, utterly abandoned the supernaturalism of the churches. Even the Bishop of London in a recent address on "Faith" said that our faith could not rest entirely on externals, including miracles, but we must largely rely upon the faith of the soul in the eternal supremacy of holiness, justice, and goodness. He said, and they are very remarkable words proceeding from such a source, "that the recognition of God is in reality the recognition of the moral law in action." Is not this the very essence of the teaching of *The Open Court*?

I would like to call your attention to another book, not so weighty and philosophical as the two volumes of Professor Caird, but nevertheless a very interesting and suggestive little work, and one which should be read carefully by every one interested in the great cause *The Open Court* has at heart. I have reference to "The Religion of a Literary Man," by Richard Le Gallienne. Allow me to give you two quotations, which fairly give the keynote of the little book: "The most vital point at which religious controversy formerly ever arrived was the inspiration of the Bible. But that difficulty has passed; we now either accept or reject the inspiration of a hundred Bibles, and the question is no longer of the inspiration of one book, but of the inspiration of the human soul, which has dictated all books."

This is my second quotation: "To speak of natural religious senses will seem redundant to any one familiarised with the obvious idea that everything that exists, religion included, is 'natural,' that

"Nature is made better by no mean,  
But Nature makes that mean: over that  
Which you say adds to Nature, is an art  
That Nature makes."

"But one has been so brought up to regard religion as something superimposed upon our human nature, rather than as something blossoming out of it, that the habit clings."

Professor Dowden in his "Studies in Literature," published, I think, in the seventies, assumes that such views as M. Le Gallienne's prevail generally among educated people; and Mr. Stedman in his charming books, the "Victorian Poets" and "Poets of America," seems to take very much the same position. But in Mr. Stedman's important work on "The Nature and Elements of Poetry" he says in a very just and beautiful eulogy of the "Book of Common Prayer": "The sincere agnostic must be content with his not inglorious isolation; he must barter the rapture and beauty and hope of such a liturgy for his faith in something different, something compensatory, perchance a future and still more worldwide brotherhood of men."

Did Mr. Stedman never read Mr. Frederick Harrison's "Apology for His Faith" in the *Fortnightly Review*? Therein that most interesting essayist shows that the advanced thinker always keeps touch with the past. The greater includes the less. We have not bartered the rapture and beauty and hope of the liturgy. Whatever is *divine* in it, or, in Goethe's phrase, ministers to our highest development, we retain as a possession forever. The scholar with Emerson "sails with God the seas," and you cannot bring him too good news from any quarter. To return again to Professor Caird "the idea of development teaches us to distinguish the one spiritual principle which is continually working in man's life, from

the changing forms through which it passes in the course of its history; . . . to do justice to the past without enslaving the present, and to give freedom to the thought of the present without forgetting that it in its turn must be criticised and transcended by the widening consciousness of the future."

By far the most trenchant criticism of the kind we have been considering is that of Mr. Leslie Stephen in his "Agnostic's Apology and Other Essays." In the course of one of his chapters he remarks that we cannot change our opinions as we would take jewels out of a box and replace them with others. Change of view—of belief is a *growth*, a *process* of the mind. Edmund Scherer, the distinguished French essayist, said it took him fifteen years of study and reflexion before he became completely emancipated from the old clerical method of assuming a supernatural and then proceeding to build an elaborate theology. We must have a reason for the faith that is in us. It is easy now, as Renan says, to proclaim with the gamin in the street that Christ never rose from the dead; but to show the steps of reasoning whereby one arrives at that conclusion is a very different thing. We see now very clearly that the Bible is a purely *human* production and being written at the time it was, in a perfectly uncritical age and in an oriental country, it must perforce of circumstances have contained all kinds of marvellous stories, the bodily resurrection of Jesus among the rest. Goethe said there is nothing worth thinking but it has been thought before; *we must only try to think it again*. "What Goethe means," says Mr. Bailey Saunders in his interesting "Maxims and Reflexions of Goethe," "is that we shall do best to find out the truth of all things for ourselves, for on one side truth is individual; and that we shall be happy if our individual truth is also universal, or accords with the wisest thought of the past."

"The spring of a new era is in the air—an era of faith," exclaims M. Le Gallienne, a great deal of the old faith of the "ages of faith," at least in the formulas, symbols, and expressions now long outworn, is, as Renan shows, impossible to the modern critical, emancipated mind. M. Le Gallienne and many others are almost daily giving us valuable hints for the faith of the future.

"Oh! bells of San Blas, in vain  
Ye call back the past again,  
The past is deaf to your prayer—  
Out of the shadows of night  
The world rolls into light,  
'Tis daybreak everywhere."

#### CURRENT TOPICS.

THE Chicago election is over, and it is gratifying to read in the morning papers that it "passed off quietly." There were only about a hundred fights, all told, with a proper proportion of broken heads to each. A goodly number of shots were fired, but as the gunners were full of beer the bullets went wild. Only two or three men were shot, and even these are "expected to recover." In the First Ward it was bullets against ballots, and the bullets won. Much patriotic feeling was exhibited in this ward among the partisans of Mr. Coughlin and Mr. Skakel, the opposing candidates for the office of alderman, and they turned the election into a Donnybrook Fair. When the polls closed it was found that Mr. Coughlin was elected, and that Mr. Skakel's men were most of them in the hospital, or at their various places of residence under the doctor's care. A large number of colored men live in the First Ward, and they showed as much aptitude for American citizenship as the white men. Two of them, "Slicky Sam" Phillips and "Toots" Marshall fought a duel in the crowded thoroughfare at the corner of Taylor and State Streets, but, unfortunately, although they "emptied their revolvers," only one of them was wounded, and this was explained as due more to accident than aim, because his feet were "unusually large," and one of them stopped a bullet. One of Mr. Skakel's band-wagons was filled with hiring musicians, playing "Marching through Georgia,"

and they had the temerity to blow their bugles in front of "Hinky Dink's" saloon, the headquarters of the Coughlin party. As might have been expected, they were welcomed with a volley from the revolvers of the Coughlin men. The musicians "ducked," and the bullets passing over them went into McCoy's Hotel, but merely breaking the windows and the plaster on the inside walls. No blame attaches to the Coughlin men for this, because it is conceded by public sentiment that the quality of the music justified the shooting. This election was merely for aldermen and township officers; it did not include within its fortunes the glory and emoluments of national, state, or county candidates, and that's the reason it "passed off quietly."

\* \* \*

Anxious to see how the civil war in South Carolina was getting along, I glanced over the dispatches from Columbia dated April 3, and I found at the beginning of them these rather startling headlines: "Tillman makes an incendiary speech at Columbia." Knowing that the person spoken of as "Tillman" was the Governor of South Carolina, I wondered how a magistrate of such high rank and royalty could make an incendiary speech, for I had supposed that only swarthy laborers, rude rebellious men of low degree, or "pale-browed enthusiasts," impatient of social wrongs, could commit such a crime as that. Surely the order and arrangement of affairs in this conservative world must be turning upside down when governors compete with labor agitators in the business of setting politics on fire by means of incendiary speeches. Sedition may become fashionable yet, although there is none of it in the oratory of Governor Tillman, so far as I can see. Incendiary speeches are usually directed against the law, but those of Governor Tillman are passionate appeals in favor of the law, and they express a determination to suppress the revolutionary factions and the mutinous militia that seek to overthrow the law. The revolt of the militia is ominous, because it throws another element of uncertainty into the social problem, for if the militia is not to be relied on, what is the use of our armories and our Gatling guns?

\* \* \*

Whatever we may think about the laws of South Carolina, or the policy of Governor Tillman, we must admit that he is neither a time-server nor a coward. There is manly stuff in this governor, and a good supply of that civic nerve that all magistrates ought to have. "I have sworn to enforce the laws," he said; "the dispensary law is on the statute books, and I will exert all the powers of my office to see that the law is obeyed." We have so many invertebrate politicians in power now, supple statesmen who, undulating gracefully as worms, can wriggle up and down through all the rounds of a ladder, that a chief magistrate, who in the midst of mutiny and civil turmoil, with assassination promised him, can stand erect on his feet without breaking, looks like one of the old heroic statues of the Greeks. The very sight of these in their majestic strength and symmetry makes all of us a little stronger than we might otherwise be. Governor Tillman makes no pretensions to oratory or scholarship, and perhaps the critics may be able to show some rhetorical mistakes in the poise and balance of his words, but there are parts of the speech he made at Columbia on Monday that remind us of the oration of Cicero when he told the Senate of the plot that had been formed for his assassination. Referring to a similar plot against himself, Governor Tillman said: "One man told Mr. Yelldell here that he came from Edgefield, my own county, with a shotgun to kill me Friday night. My life is not worth much to me, but it is worth as much to me as the life of any other man is to him, but rather than desert my post, where you have placed me, I would have stood there until I fell dead. The men who are threatening to fire this powder magazine are the bar-room element, and those who are urging them on are the rulers of the old oligarchy. This riot is a political frenzy; I shall not swerve an inch from the stand that I have taken as the

people's governor. You may imagine from this that I am going to aggravate the trouble, but I am simply going to uphold the law." This rebuke to the antediluvian aristocracy, this defiance of the conspirators, this elevation of duty above life itself, all intensified by a renewal of his oath to enforce the law, give to the speech of Governor Tillman a spirit and dignity not surpassed in the famous oration against Catiline.

\* \* \*

A very fine distinction, one of the finest in the moral code, was drawn the other day by the striking workmen who had been employed at Crane's factory in Chicago. They were holding a meeting at Bricklayers' Hall, when a donation amounting to twenty dollars was received from Mr. Jacob Horn, the candidate for West town assessor, and a discussion immediately arose as to the propriety of accepting money from a candidate. According to the report in the paper, as to the truth of which, however, I am rather sceptical, it was decided to return the money. At the same meeting, a letter was read from A. F. Hoffman, the Democratic candidate for West Town collector, in which he "donated" twenty kegs of beer to be used at the ball which the strikers will give at the Second Regiment Armory. The beer was accepted with enthusiastic cheers. The moral difference between a gift of money and a gift of beer as a bid for votes is finer than a spider's thread, and yet there are consciences that can walk securely on that flimsy string. Old Stillman Strong of Marbletown used to say when tempted at election time, "A soul I have above lucre, money cannot buy me, but whiskey can." There are many men who have moral constitutions just like that of Stillman Strong. When Gen. Albert Sidney Johnstone was about starting in command of the Utah expedition, an officer came to him and asked permission to take a box of books, but the General answered, "No, there are not wagons enough to carry the baggage absolutely necessary for the expedition." Then the officer asked if he might carry a barrel of whiskey along, and the General replied, "Certainly! Certainly! Anything in reason!"

\* \* \*

Two or three weeks ago, I predicted that the army of General Coxey would straggle out of existence without ever coming within sight of Pittsburg. I was wrong; and hereafter I shall prophesy after the fact, for in spite of some desertions, the army increased a little every day, and it marched into Pittsburg nearly three hundred strong. Not only that, but it was at Pittsburg and Alleghany that the army became of any serious interest or importance, and this through the illegal and arbitrary measures adopted by the police. Before the police powers interfered with Coxey's men in a harsh despotic way, the army was merely amusing, a grotesque imitation of the tatterdemalion company recruited by Sir John Falstaff; but after that interference, it represented liberty, and it commanded sympathy. The imprisonment of the army in the corral at Alleghany with a police deadline drawn around it, was an assault upon the freedom of American citizens to travel from one part of the country to another either on foot or on the excursion train. The arrest, imprisonment, and punishment by fine of citizens guilty of no crime was an unwarranted act of persecution done by the magistrates and police in anarchistic defiance of the Constitution of the United States and of the Constitution of Pennsylvania. It was drawing another deadline between the classes and the masses, between the rich and the poor; and it was gathering up wrath for the day of wrath. It was altogether gratuitous and unnecessary, a wanton exercise of bludgeon power, adding another contribution to that threatening mass of discontent which is already too large for the peace and safety of the republic. It gave dramatic dignity to a spectacle which previously was nothing but burlesque.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

## NOTES.

Dr. Jenkin Lloyd Jones takes issue with Dr. Harper for making a distinction between the office of the preacher and the teacher. Dr. Harper, who has given offence to his Baptist brethren for presenting in his lectures some of the results of modern Bible criticism says: "If I were a preacher and were preaching about these stories I would minimise the human element and magnify the divine element, but as a teacher I must present both sides. I am presenting facts." Dr. Jones understands Dr. Harper to say that "the preacher's vocation is less than that of a truth teller," and that it is his business (in the words of Jeremiah) to "bend his tongue as if it were a bow for falsehood." He takes the proposition of "minimising" and "magnifying" in the sense of disfiguring or misrepresenting. And truly Dr. Jones is right in holding that any falsehood is to be denounced, be it in the preacher or in the teacher. All that Dr. Jones says in condemnation of equivocalness is true, and we agree with him that the preacher's first allegiance not less than the teacher's is to truth, and all other considerations of tact, propriety, regard for the sentiments of others and so forth, are to be subordinated to this supreme law of moral conduct. But we must add, Is it fair to understand Professor Harper to mean that he expects the preacher to hide the truth? Is it charitable to put this interpretation upon his utterance? We have not seen the quoted sentence in its context, but are confident that Dr. Harper uses the word "magnify" in the sense of "emphasise." It is not the office of the clergyman to preach on Biblical criticism; the office of the clergyman is to preach morality. By God we understand the authority of moral conduct, and "divine" is according to common usage all that is elevating and sanctifying. In this sense President Harper is right when he says that the preacher must make great the divine, while a teacher has simply to lay down facts. The preacher's duty is higher; he has to teach the truth and utilise it for practical life. The facts which he presents must serve a purpose and to present facts which have no bearing upon practical morality is out of place in the pulpit. We expect that President Harper is still attached to the old dogmatism of his church and has probably other conceptions than we of what God and Divine are; but that need not concern us here. The main thing is that it is not probable, nay, impossible, that he meant what he is criticised for.

A note of correction seems necessary concerning General Trumbull's statement in No. 344 of *The Open Court* (article "Kosuth") of General Görgei's "desertion." The word "desertion" does not imply treachery, but suggests it. Görgei surrendered to the Russians because further resistance was absolutely hopeless, and in the honest belief that better terms would be thus obtained, not from a treacherous desertion of the Hungarian cause.

## THE OPEN COURT.

321 DEARBORN STREET,  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, POST OFFICE DRAWER F.

E. C. HEGELER, PUBLISHER. DR. PAUL CARUS, EDITOR.

TERMS THROUGHOUT THE POSTAL UNION:  
\$2.00 PER YEAR. \$1.00 FOR SIX MONTHS.

### CONTENTS OF NO. 346.

THE METAPHYSICS OF HERBERT SPENCER. THOS. C. LAWS.....	4039
BERKELEY'S POSITIVISM. EDITOR.....	4042
THE NEW ERA. ATHONTON BLIGHT.....	4044
CURRENT TOPICS: A Quiet Election. Incendiary Speech. Governor Tillman's Militia. Election Beer. Police Anarchy in Pennsylvania. GEN. M. M. TRUMBULL	4045
NOTES.....	4046