



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

# Theism or atheism

W. T. Lee, George  
William Foote











# THEISM OR ATHEISM:

WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE?

## A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

**MR. W. T. LEE**

*(Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society)*

AND

**MR. G. W. FOOTE**

*(President of the National Secular Society)*

HELD IN THE TEMPERANCE HALL, DERBY, MAY 15  
AND 16, 1895

CHAIRMAN: J. W. PIPER, ESQ.

*(Editor of "The Derby Daily Telegraph")*

---

**Revised by Both Disputants**

---

LONDON :

R. FORDER, 28, STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.

---

1896



LOAN STACK

2136 G

BL 2778

L4

1896

MAIN

# THEISM OR ATHEISM:

WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE ?

---

## FIRST NIGHT.

**THE CHAIRMAN :** Ladies and Gentlemen,—Allow me, in the first place, to express my indebtedness to the members of the local committee who are charged with the management of this meeting, for having bestowed upon me the compliment of inviting me to preside over this meeting. In the next place, I should like to assure you of the deep sympathy I feel in every honest effort to get at the truth with regard to matters vitally affecting the peace of mind and happiness of the people. Believe me, I have as little sympathy or patience with the gay trifler who, referring to matters of this importance, insists that ignorance is bliss, as I have with those persons who blindly take their orders from the priests and from the bookmen. Let me again frankly admit that I have little sympathy with a reckless and indiscriminate discussion on topics of this sacred character ; I hold that the truth can best be arrived at, and a satisfactory solution of difficulties best secured, by temperate and orderly discussion. Happily for us to-night, we are surrounded by all the elements of profitable debate. The contending champions are gentlemen of acknowledged ability, and, I believe, of sterling honesty of purpose. In Mr. Lee—(loud applause)—we have a powerful and high-minded expo-

ment of orthodoxy, who has acquitted himself well upon many a field of controversy ; and in his opponent we have one well qualified to meet him. (Cheers.) I can, perhaps, pay Mr. Foote no higher compliment than to say he has been deemed worthy by his fellow-thinkers to succeed an eminent orator and statesman, one whose acquaintance I was proud to make and enjoy—I refer to the late Charles Bradlaugh. Well, these friends of ours have mutually agreed to discuss a certain topic, which, as you all know, is thus described : “Theism or Atheism : Which is the more reasonable ?” and, in doing so, they have undertaken to be bound by certain conditions ; and perhaps, at this point, I cannot better consult your convenience and your information than by reading some of the more salient parts of the arrangements which have been drawn up :—

Mr. Lee to open the first night, Mr. Foote the second. Order of debate : (a) Opener to speak for thirty minutes ; (b) his opponent to speak for thirty minutes. Each to speak twice for fifteen minutes after. All the local business arrangements to be made by the joint committee at Derby.

There are other points, which, for obvious reasons, I need not trouble you with.

I have now to say, ladies and gentlemen, that you will not elicit from me any critical opinion with regard to the selected topic of discussion ; throughout this debate I shall carefully abstain from making any such observations. I hope to prove to your satisfaction that, in undertaking this duty, I have been actuated by a desire to observe the strictest impartiality ; and, with this end in view, I very confidently appeal to you for assistance and support. Let us listen with the utmost patience and consideration to what both our friends have to say, and let us be careful not to indulge in any act, however slight, which may have a tendency to irritate or to distract them.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have only to express the hope that this discussion throughout may be characterised, both on the part of the disputants and on the part of the audience, with good temper, so that we may hope for profitable and useful results. In accordance with arrangement, I propose sounding a bell three minutes before the expiration of the allotted time to each speaker—you will quite understand what that signifies—and again at the completion of the allotted time.

I will now, then, in accordance with arrangements made, ask Mr. Lee to open the real business of this debate.

Mr. LEE : Mr. Chairman, Mr. Foote, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The question we have met to discuss will necessitate the use of four very important words. These words I propose defining as follows : First, by the word “universe” I mean the sum-total of all conditioned existence. Second, by the term “reasonable” I understand what is in accordance with the logical demands of the mind. Third, by the word “Atheism” I understand that doctrine which rejects the idea that the universe was produced by a Being called God, and, in denying His existence, goes on to show that the universe is eternal, or is the necessary outcome of the necessary working of the substance it calls matter, and speaks of as eternal. Fourth, the term “Theism,” the name of that doctrine which regards the universe as the consciously-willed production of the unoriginated Being, who is absolute in wisdom and power, who was before all things, and by whom, and in whom, all things exist and consist. This Being is spoken of by Theists as God.

These being my definitions, I must ask Mr. Foote to accept them as true, or to show them to be untrue by appealing to the great masters of lexicography, whose business it is to treat of the origin, history, and meaning of words. This is due to me, his opponent, and also to you, our judges.

Having defined our terms, the question naturally arises, Which is the more reasonable doctrine—Atheism, which denies God, or Theism, which affirms God ? I assert, and shall seek to prove, that the Theistic doctrine of the universe is essentially reasonable, because it can be vindicated by lines of argument and processes of reasoning admittedly trustworthy in other fields of inquiry, and therefore to be taken as reliable in this ; and, further, I fearlessly assert that Atheism, as a doctrine of the universe, is utterly unsatisfactory, being opposed to every accepted process of inductive reasoning, violating the laws of scientific inquiry, rejecting the fundamental deliveries of our consciousness, and outraging the collective testimony of all the progressive races of the earth.

Having cleared the ground, let us proceed to the argument, the first proposition of which stands thus : The fact of present existence necessitates the further fact—eternal existence. To put our argument in a simple way, we will place it thus : Something now exists ; hence something must have existed always, because out of nothing comes nothing ; therefore something must be eternal. To put this another way, all thinkers agree that something must be eternal—that is, there must be something which is underived, unconditioned ; something which always has been and for ever will be—an eternal, self-existent substance. This position I think Mr. Foote will admit without discussion ; I shall, however, regard it as a favour if he will say definitely whether this supposition is so or not. Taking it that Mr. Foote and I agree as to the eternity of something, the question arises, What is this something ? Is it the universe, or is it the matter which composes the universe, or is it something different from both ?

This brings me to my second proposition—that neither the universe, nor the matter composing the universe, is the eternal substance for which we seek. To those who are acquainted with the trend of the most advanced science

this proposition will sound like a truism ; but in this debate we must take nothing for granted ; therefore it is clearly my duty to prove, as it will be clearly Mr. Foote's duty to analyse, and, if possible, disprove, the proposition which I now advance. Until this is done, nothing will be gained by Mr. Foote, nothing will be lost by me. I assert, then, that the universe is not the eternal existence for which we seek, because the universe has not always existed. There was a time when this universe was not ; a time when this earth, the sun, and all the orbs of heaven were non-existent ; a time when the substance of all material things existed in a highly-attenuated and gaseous state. And not only are we scientifically sure that this universe has not eternally existed—we are equally certain it will come to an end. For, just as our world is slowly but certainly approaching the sun, so all the moving bodies of the sidereal heavens are making for a common centre ; every star and sun is getting cooler, and energy, in the form of heat, is being dissipated, and an end to the universe must be acknowledged.

Under these circumstances, to speak of the universe being eternal, as Professor Haeckel does, is to lay one's self open to the slashing reply of Herbert Spencer : " Haeckel is unphilosophical ; it is the indestructibility of force and the eternity of motion which are *a priori* truths, transcending both demonstration and experience."

But I expect before this debate closes to have the pleasure of showing that Herbert Spencer is as unscientific as Haeckel.

We must, then, admit, from numerous scientific facts and inductions from them, that our universe has not always existed ; and, if this universe is not eternal, its present existence must be an effect due to some cause. But what do we mean by the term "cause," and what by the word "effect" ? By the former we understand something which really exists, something which has power, something which has power enough to account for the existence or happening

of any given thing ; by the latter we mean the happening of any event, or, to be more correct, by the word "effect" we connote anything for the existence of which some outside efficiency is demanded. With these definitions before me I assert that matter is not the cause of the universe, and I further assert that Atheism is grossly unreasonable when it speaks of matter as the cause of the universe, for matter fails to account for its own existence. We take a parcel of matter in our hands, and we find it to be made up of parts ; we examine those parts, and find them to be made up of other parts ; we continue our analysis until our senses are no longer of any avail. Here science comes to our aid with keener methods of investigation, until at last we get to the atom, the ultimate condition of matter. But, having found the atom, have we discovered the cause of the universe ? Nay, for these atoms need as much explanation as does the sun in the heavens. A great scientist has told us that these ultimate bodies are of definite form and incompressible ; they continue to this day as when first formed, perfect in number, measure, and weight. I am not surprised, therefore, that Sir J. F. W. Herschel and Professor Clerk-Maxwell should say that these atoms bear all the marks of being "manufactured articles." I, therefore, conclude that the universe is not eternal, and that matter is not the cause of the universe, because it not only fails to account for its own existence, but, in its ultimate particles, witnesses to the existence of a wise and powerful being, to whom it stands related as effect to cause.

But I can imagine Mr. Foote saying : "I do not accept Clerk-Maxwell or Herschel's theory of matter ; I believe all matter is eternal in duration and infinite in extension, and I, therefore, feel justified in conceiving it to be the substance of all substances and the cause of all causes." Now, Mr. Foote will excuse me if I say he cannot possibly conceive of matter as eternal or infinite, and he will also excuse me if I say that, apart from the ordinary conception of matter

as a vehicle of energy with the two attributes extension and inertia, he cannot conceive of matter at all.

Let us see how the Atheistic position is stated, and then how much this position is worth.

Professor Haeckel, the high priest of Monism, tells us that the universe is both eternal and infinite, and that matter and motion, inseparable from matter, remain eternal and indestructible. Now, you will remember what Herbert Spencer said about the statement of Haeckel's—he said it was utterly unphilosophical; and now we will prove this statement of Herbert Spencer's to be true, for, “if matter be infinite in extension, the universe must be full of matter, and if the universe be full of matter, there can be no attractive force; every spot being equally full, no particle can draw closer to another, and there can be no rotatory motion, for there would be no reason for turning one way more than another, neither would there be any primitive heat, for heat is motion, and no change of place is possible in a plenum where no particle has any place to move into that is not already full.” So, then, matter fails to explain itself, while, if it be infinite, motion and the origination of the universe become philosophically impossible. Atheism, then, fails to explain the existence of matter and the possibility of motion, and, failing here, it must fail everywhere; for, if it cannot account for matter, how shall it account for life? If it fails to account for motion, how shall it account for mind? If it fails to explain the atom, how can it explain the universe? If it fails to account for motion, how can it account for that mighty power of human reason which climbs the starry stairs of the universe and reads the history of stars and suns, projects itself into the very heart of things, and then confesses the presence of a power greater than itself, and a reason higher than its own? (Applause.)

Thus far, then, we have shown Atheism to be utterly unreasonable as a doctrine of the universe, and that it always gets more into each succeeding effect than can be



found in the alleged preceding cause. It begins with matter and ends with mind ; it starts with inertia and rises to motion ; from motion it passes to life, from life to thought, from thought to what?—the grave ; thus it begins and ends with dust.

Now what have we accomplished? We have seen, first, there must be an eternal substance ; second, that this eternal substance must be different from matter, and in the last analysis the cause of the universe—in other words, we have shown that, since something now is, something must be eternal ; we have shown that this eternal something is not the universe, and cannot be the matter of which the universe is composed. It must, then, be something other than the universe, something other than matter. What that something is we can tell to this extent—it is a real existence ; for if it were not, there would be no existence : it must have real power ; for if it had not, there would be no existence except itself. These two facts, then, are certain—the existence of an eternal substance, the possession of power by this substance.

Now, having established these two facts, we have also established a third fact, and that fact is as follows. Since there must be an eternal substance, and this eternal substance must have power, this eternal substance must be the cause by which the sum-total of conditioned existence has been brought into being. No amount of mental analysis or argument will enable us to get rid of this third fact.

We now proceed to our next proposition—that this universe is the manifestation of power directed by intelligence. “Now, the result of our whole experience seems to amount to this—there are but two ways in which we have observed the different forms of matter to be thrown together, either at random or with design and purpose. By the former we have never seen produced a regular complicated effect corresponding to a certain end ; by the second we uniformly have. If, then, the works of nature and the productions of

men resemble each other in this one general characteristic, will not this experience warrant us in ascribing to both a similar, though, of course, a proportionate, cause?" Admit the facts, and the induction from the facts is amply justified. But the question naturally arises, Do the facts of nature agree with the productions of men in the manifestation of aim, intention, purpose? I believe they do, and here are my reasons for so believing. Whatever our theory of the origin of the universe may be, we must admit that the earth, the sea, and the sky are full of beauty. From far-off space, where the unresolved nebulæ float, in all the millions and millions of suns and systems of suns which glitter in the brow of night, and here, even in this tiny speck we call our world, order is everywhere manifested, order everywhere known. In the midst of numberless varieties there is a deep-seated unity, vast worlds and systems of worlds, the marshalled battalions of heaven, alongside of which our earth and our planets are as nothing, are rolling through space in orbits millions and millions of times greater than that of our solar system; but everywhere the same laws of gravitation, the same laws of light, of heat, of motion, are found. From speck of dust to blazing sun and floating nebulæ, order and law everywhere prevail. But order and law are the manifestation of power guided by intelligence. Nowhere do we discover order and law apart from intelligence, and, therefore, I hold that the cause of the universe must not only have power, but also mind and intelligence. (Cheers.) To put this another way, one great irrefutable fact of the universe is this, it is a gigantic intelligible unity, all its laws are mathematical relations, and can be expressed in mathematical formula. This is undoubtedly true of the law of gravitation, and of chemical combinations, the law of colour and of music, the facets of crystals, the pistils of flowers, the feathers of birds. Now, I put this question to Mr. Foote. If it takes the intellect of a Copernicus, a Kepler, and a Newton years upon years of anxious study to

formulate a few of the mathematical relations and laws of the heavens ; if it takes the life-long investigation of men like Owen, and Darwin, and Flower to state the laws of comparative anatomy ; if it takes thinkers like Huxley, and Allman, and Weismann to understand the laws of biological science ; if it takes experimenters like Pritchard and Stokes to discover the laws of optics—I say, if it takes minds like these and intellects such as those of Faraday, of Balfour Stewart, of Tait, Kelvin, Rayleigh, and thousands of others we could name, to explain a few of the laws and mathematical relations of the universe, what mind, what intellect, must it have taken to have planned the whole universe, and then to have realised the plan in this beautiful, orderly universe? (Applause.) I ask Mr. Foote, Could matter have done this, could matter and undirected motion have done this? I say nay, a thousand times nay. Mere matter and undirected motion have never been known to make a child's toy or a mud pie, and it is flying in the face of all experience and all the verified processes of scientific investigation, as well as a gross insult to our common sense, to ask us to believe that matter and undirected motion have originated the wonderful mechanism which we call our universe. (Applause.)

But I have not done. This universe is an intelligible universe ; it can be understood. Now, from a child I have always been taught that it is impossible to get out of a thing that which it does not contain. Very well. I study the stars, and I get thought out of them ; I study the rocks, and I get thought out of them ; I study the sea, and I get thought out of it ; I study the manifold forms of living things on this earth, and I get thought out of them. Now, evolution, we are told, cannot exceed involution ; if, then, thought can be got out of the universe, thought must have been put into the universe by the cause which has produced the universe ; and, if thought was put into the universe by the cause of the universe, that cause must have been intelli-

gent, or it could not have put thought into the universe. Thus our third proposition is established ; this universe is the manifestation of power directed by intelligence. In others words, we have proved these four facts—first, the existence of an eternal substance ; second, the possession of power by this substance ; third, that this eternal substance is the cause of the universe ; and, lastly, that the order, law, purpose, intention manifested in nature are a proof that the cause of the universe is possessed not only with power, but with intelligence. In so far as these propositions are established, in so far is Theism shown to be true, and in proportion to the proof of the Theistic doctrine of the universe is the Atheistic doctrine disproved.

And now I come to my fourth proposition—that the facts of man's mental, moral, and religious nature cannot be explained on the principles of Atheism, but are easily accounted for by the doctrines of Theism. Every man has, in his own consciousness (the mind's knowledge of its own states) the evidence of the existence of mind ; in other words, all of us are conscious of ourselves—we know we exist, and we know we think. We also know that the mind is altogether other than the body ; in a word, that mind and matter are not only distinct, but different substances, manifesting themselves to us by sets of different and totally incompatible attributes. If Mr. Foote denies this, I must ask him to show that the attributes of mind and matter are alike. Until this is done, we shall continue to believe that we have two sets of incompatible attributes ; and, when we find that this belief is not peculiar to ourselves, but is held in some form by all the peoples of the earth, we not only feel that our belief is justified, but we believe that it brings us into the presence of a fact which calls for explanation ; and we turn to those who hold the Atheistic position, and ask, How is the existence of this thinking substance, which we call self, to be accounted for ? That it has not always existed is undeniable ; and, if it began to be, it

must have a cause other than itself. That cause cannot be the self of the parents, for that also is an effect ; it began to be. Now, if the soul, or the self, cannot be accounted for by derivation in an unending series of steps from those who preceded us, neither can it be conceived of as the product of physical forces, or combinations of such forces. We must, then, conclude that our selves owe their existence to Him whose wisdom and power are manifested in the heavens and the earth, and in the mind of man.

Deny this, and I demand that I shall have answers given to these questions : First, how shall we account for man being in possession of powers of intellect which are capable of limitless expansion, and also a desire for knowledge that is never satisfied ? How do you account for man having a capacity for happiness which nothing in the whole world or the whole universe can meet ? How do you account for man having aspirations for the true, the holy, and the eternal, if there be no true, no holy, no eternal ? (Applause.) But man is not only sure he exists, and that he thinks ; he is conscious of a moral sense, a power by which he perceives some things to be right and others to be wrong ; and no man can will that to be right which his conscience tells him is wrong ; neither can any man argue himself into the conviction that he has done right when his conscience tells him he has done wrong. Thus, our consciences possess an authority which is above our reason and our will, and therefore could not have been derived from either of these, and must therefore be something imposed upon us, and to which we are required to be conformed by an authority out of ourselves. This authority cannot be man, neither can it be society ; it must, then, be something higher than man and stronger than society ; in other words, it must be that strong and wise Being who is the moral Dispenser of the universe. Thus, as with mind, so with morals, God becomes the great and necessary postulate. If this be so with mind and morals, how much more must it be so with the religious sense ?

I shall stop by submitting to my friend a few questions, and the first is this: What is the substance of which this universe is composed? [How could an ordered universe arise from an unordered state of physical units? How could an intelligible universe arise out of a mindless physical condition? How could an universe manifesting law have arisen from a condition where no law can be found? How could an universe without a moral nature produce beings with a moral nature? How could a number of elementary substances called atoms have produced the unity everywhere manifested in nature? How could life, the power which moulds and builds up organisms, and preserves them from the disintegrating influences which act on mere matter, have been produced from the non-living? And, in the last place, how could a universe which, according to Atheism, excludes the possibility of God have produced a number of beings, the very flower of that universe, who have become thoroughly persuaded there is a God? (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: I have now, ladies and gentlemen, to bespeak, on the part of Mr. Foote, the same conscientious attention that you have given to his opponent, Mr. Lee.

MR. FOOTE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lee, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It would be absurd for me to assume that anything more than an encouraging percentage of this audience was in any kind of agreement with my ideas; and as Mr. Lee, in his otherwise extremely temperate speech, was good enough to say that the Atheistic position was an outrage on human intelligence, I must warn you, if that be correct, that I am likely to say things which will be regarded as an outrage on human intelligence. (Laughter and cheers.) You will, therefore, from that point of view, grant me the indulgence which we always expect from an educated, an intelligent, and honest English audience. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Lee has, in his own opinion, established a large number of propositions ; and, not satisfied with that, he wound up with an equally large number of questions, every one of those questions involving a statement and an argument. Now, I am not so young a debater as to fall into a trap of that kind. If any gentleman wants me to answer, upon the spur of the moment, a large number of questions, which he reads off as rapidly as he can during the last minute or two of a speech, he has altogether taken a false measure of human capacity. No, I am not going to do anything of the kind. Mr. Lee would have a perfect right, if we were discussing on the Socratic method, to ask as many questions as he pleased. But he speaks for half an hour, and I do the same. He sets up one position, and I attack it ; to-morrow night he will have the same opportunity of attacking me, and I do not intend to-night to occupy the defensive for the greater ease of Mr. Lee in opposition.

Now, then, let us see what Mr. Lee's speech really comes to. He says that the universe is the sum-total of all conditioned existence. Let me ask him if he has any experience of unconditioned existence. When he has informed me of the extent of his experience in that direction, I will continue the discussion as to what may be outside of the universe, which is a conditioned existence. For my own part, I say frankly that I know absolutely nothing of any existence which is not conditioned ; nor have I ever met with any person who had any first-hand knowledge of unconditioned existence ; and, until unconditioned existence is established as a fact, I decline the responsibility of either accounting for it or arguing about it.

Mr. Lee said that what was reasonable was what conformed to the demands of human intelligence. I listened with profound attention, but could not see any more in the explanation than in the term ; so that we come, at the finish, to "what is reasonable is reasonable," and with that I cordially concur.

In the next place, Mr. Lee was good enough, not only to define Theism, but to define Atheism, and in a fashion which suited himself. When this debate was being arranged, it was suggested that the proposition for discussion should be, "Theism or Atheism: Which is the more reasonable theory of the universe?" and Mr. Lee is quite well aware that I insisted upon the words "theory of the universe" being struck out, because Atheism *per se* does not affirm a theory of the universe. An Atheist like the late Charles Bradlaugh may affirm, as a personal thinker, his theory of the universe; but Atheism *per se* simply means, not denial, but rejection, in the sense of not accepting the Theistic theory of the universe which Mr. Lee has put forward to-night. I suppose everybody will admit that Charles Bradlaugh, whose name was mentioned in such honourable terms by our Chairman, was an eminent, and, in a certain sense, a typical, Atheist. When I am told that I must go to the lexicographers for a definition of terms, I reply that I decline to do anything of the sort. Lexicographers all work on their own individual responsibility. Webster will define a word in one way, Richardson in another, Latham in another; and how can I accept the meaning of important terms on the authority of these conflicting lexicographers? If I want to know what is Christianity, I am bound to find out what Christians mean by the term; if I want to know what Buddhism is, I am bound to have the term explained by Buddhists; and if Mr. Lee wants to know what Atheism is, for the purpose of discussion, he must discover what Atheists themselves mean by that term. Now, Charles Bradlaugh, in the very first sentence of his pamphlet, *Is there a God?* says: "The initial difficulty is in defining the word God. It is equally impossible to intelligently affirm or deny any proposition unless there is at least an understanding on the part of the affirmer or denier of the meaning of every word used in the proposition. To me, the word God, standing alone, is a word without meaning." I endorse



every word of that sentence. Take another passage from the same Charles Bradlaugh's *Plea for Atheism*. He says : " The Atheist does not say there is no God ; but he says, I know not what you mean by God ; I am without your idea of God. The word God, to me, is a sound, conveying no real or distinct affirmation. I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception, and the belief of which, by its affirmer, is so imperfect that he is unable to define it to me. If, however, God is defined to me as an existence other than the existence of which I am a mode, then I deny God, and affirm that it is impossible such God can be." Thus, the Atheist's position is not an absolute denial of any conceivable God ; it is the denial of any God so defined as to be in contradiction to the indisputable facts of nature and human nature. I say that Mr. Lee cannot define a God so that I cannot furnish denials and contradictions in the daily and hourly experience of all sentient and intelligent beings upon this planet. It is so easy to talk large, loose metaphysical phrases. Do you imagine that you are going to get a deity that can figure as an object of worship to the masses of the people upon this planet by such involved syllogistical reasoning as Mr. Lee has adopted to-night ? Men in this world never believe in the existence of God upon grounds like these. If you ask an ordinary man in the street why he believes in God, do you think he will give you any of those reasons that Mr. Lee has elaborated in his written paper ? Nothing of the kind. Those are not the reasons that induce any man to believe in God ; those are the reasons that are resorted to for clinging to the belief when it is attacked by human intelligence. The belief in God did not *originate* in the action of human intelligence, fairly and wisely applied to the facts of life. All the religions of to-day originated in ancient times, and those religions of ancient times had their progenitors in lower systems that preceded them ; in short, the most elaborate religions of to-day are only, as it were, new weavings

of the old raw material of theology, or, as I should call it, superstition. There is, in this respect, even in modern days, nothing new ; it is but a fresh presentation of old material in a new form. The masses of the people never believe religion upon grounds of reason, but upon grounds of authority and early education. The grounds of argument are only adopted by the apologists of religion when they are hard pressed by the critics of religion. (Applause.)

I deny, therefore, that Atheism *per se* denies the existence of God ; I deny that Atheism *per se* affirms the eternity of matter ; and I decline to accept responsibility for any theory of the universe. I tell Mr. Lee that, notwithstanding his ability, his mind is not large enough to comprehend the universe—"Oh, oh"—or to formulate a satisfactory theory about it. Further, I say that there is *no* intelligence on this earth adequate to form a satisfactory theory of the universe. And why? Because, in the very language which Mr. Lee has employed, infinity is predicated ; and how can the mind of man, which is admittedly finite, formulate a satisfactory theory of an infinite existence? The thing is a contradiction in terms—(applause)—and it is no insult to Mr. Lee to say that his powers are inadequate to an infinite task. (Hear, hear.)

I noticed that Mr. Lee fell into, what seemed to me, at any rate, a confusion about the universe. He spoke of the universe and of the matter composing it. Are they two distinct things? The universe simply means the whole, and the whole is made up of what composes it. You cannot have the universe separate, and the matter which composes it separate. The universe is simply a term for the total quantity of its composition. When Mr. Lee said that this universe was not eternal, he took an illustration from our solar system. Does Mr. Lee mean, because there is a dissipation of energy from our planet, that energy is lost? Does Mr. Lee mean, if a planet should ultimately, in some sidereal cataclysm, become broken and scattered through

what he calls the universe, that it is lost? All its component matter would exist after the shock as well as before ; and, if planets are not eternal, which no astronomer ever thought of asserting, nevertheless the matter of which all planets are composed appears to be eternal. Mr. Lee may say it is not, but I defy Mr. Lee's mind or any mind to realise and prove the statement that this universe is not eternal. (Applause.)

We then come to this supposed Creator, and we come, in conjunction with this, to the atoms which Mr. Lee's authority says bear all the marks of manufacture. I have heard that before, and it may pass as a metaphorical expression ; but we must have logical propositions in debate. One would think that somebody had seen an atom and handled it. Well, nobody has ever done anything of the kind. An atom is an hypothetical existence ; that is, it cannot be demonstrated to the senses ; and, when a man says that an atom bears marks of manufacture, it is really only another way of stating his own opinion that atoms were created. But it cannot be proved that these atoms have such characteristics, because nobody has ever seen them.

Now, we come to this point—that there was a mind that created matter. Mr. Lee thinks it very curious that anybody should start with matter and reach to mind. I think it is still more curious that you should start with mind and reach to matter. I can understand the process of evolution through perpetual differentiation, climbing to higher and higher stages of organic existence ; but I cannot understand your perfect mind producing an imperfect universe, which has existed ever since he created it, and seems to be no better now than it was the very moment he started it. (Applause.) If matter cannot produce mind, I ask you how you arrive at the opposite view that mind can produce matter? I deny that there is any analogy in human experience to justify the assumption that *mind* can *create*. The only mind of which we have any knowledge is our own ;

and, if you predicate a mind in the universe outside ours, you must either endow it with the essential powers of our own mind, or you must give some reason for believing that it belongs to an entirely separate category of intelligence. Now, I ask anyone to inquire of himself what he knows of creation. We say the poet creates, the artist creates. But *what* does he create ? He does not produce something out of nothing. He works with matter that existed before he was born, and will exist after he is dead. He changes matter from one combination into another, but he cannot create an atom of matter, and he cannot destroy an atom of matter. I, therefore, say the term creation, in the metaphysical sense of producing absolutely out of nothing, or out of something discrete, is, to my mind, utterly unintelligible ; and I cannot possibly accept what conveys no reality to my own intelligence.

Mr. Lee says that the Atheist begins with matter and ends with mind. Then he talks about the grave, and says the Atheist begins with dust and ends with dust. But we all have to pass through the same stages of being. Mr. Lee was born as I was ; Mr. Lee will die as I shall, for the age of miracles has passed. What is the use of complaining of the Atheist, when the Theist has to go through exactly the same career ? You may tell me, of course, that after you are dead something very agreeable is going to happen to you ; but I will wait until I know it before I assume it as a fact which should serve as the basis of a discussion.

We came eventually to that something which was the cause of this material universe, and that something is intelligent, and that something is eternal ; that is, this something eternally existed before it made up its mind to create the material universe. Has Mr. Lee any idea of what could have occurred to put a new thought into an infinite mind ? Why, an infinite mind must live in an infinite now. Being infinite, there is neither past, present, nor future to it ; for

these terms are terms of conditioned existence in time and space. How, then, could this eternal being have begun to change? How could it have woke up, so to speak, to the necessity of creating matter? And out of what was that matter created? All that existed before its creation was God ; there was no room for anything else ; for by the terms of the argument this God is infinite and eternal. Then out of what was the matter created? for out of nothing could come nothing. What comes out of anything must be concrete with it, and, as matter is asserted to be a distinct substance altogether from mind, I want Mr. Lee, on his own hypothesis, to tell me how it was that mind could create something utterly discrete from itself, as he says his God did when he produced the universe?

This ultimate power is directed, says Mr. Lee, by intelligence, and he believes there are only two possible alternatives—either things happen at random, or with design and purpose. I do not accept either view, but hold that a third is conceivable, which Mr. Lee might easily have included ; and that is, that things occur according to the inherent properties of the elements that participate in the occurrence. Fire burns—not at random, and I do not see that it burns from intelligence. Fire burns because it is the quality of heat to produce a certain effect upon the human skin or the human fluids. When a child stumbles upon the fire and gets burned, the fire does not act at random ; it is the nature of fire to produce that effect upon the child's skin ; and it does not happen, as I conceive, by intelligence, for I cannot understand intelligence directing the combination of child and fire, so that one should be ready to burn and the other to be burnt. Are such the intelligent arrangements of Mr. Lee's God and Creator?

But there is beauty in the world. True, and there is ugliness. Will Mr. Lee tell me who produces ugliness? God, he says, produced all, and if he is to take the credit for the beauty, I want him to take the discredit of the ugly-

ness. As a matter of fact, very few of us are as good-looking as we could wish to be, and I don't really think that you can ground the existence of God upon the argument of beauty. You yourself will admit that man has existed for thousands of years; surely by this time his Creator, with that high sense of beauty, ought to have made him a more presentable object than he is.

Then we are told there is intelligence because there is law and order. I have to complain that Mr. Lee has used for metaphysical purposes two terms which are commonly used in another sense—in political and social conversation. We speak of law and order in the political and social world, and what do we mean? By order we mean good behaviour; by law we mean edicts, decrees, or acts promulgated either by the king or the parliament of the country, and for the infraction of which there is a prescribed penalty. I deny that you have any right to use the word law in nature in any such sense as that. All you mean by law is a certain method in which things occur, and the question behind that which Mr. Lee is asking is this, Is that method in which things occur settled by intelligence, or is it the result of the absolute, unchangeable, inherent properties of matter? When you use the word "law" in a metaphysical sense, you are begging the very question at issue; for under cover of the term "law" you introduce the law-giver, which is the very subject we are met this evening to discuss.

Mr. Lee says that he can think about the stars, and that he can get thought out of them. (A laugh.) He cannot. Let an idiot look at a star for a thousand years, if he lived so long, and what thought would he get out of it? (Hisses.) Let a poet look at a star, and he might, to use this fashion of speech, get thought out of it; but the thought is not in the star—the capacity for thought is in the poet's brain. (Applause.) Mr. Lee did not get thought out of the star; he got it out of his own active intelligence.

Mr. Lee says that there is thought in the universe, and

if it is there, an intelligent being must have put it in. Now, I decline to countenance this language. One would fancy thought was something you could put into nature as you put water into a decanter. Wherever I see matter organised in a certain way, I find thought, and without that organisation I find *no* thought. When that organisation is broken or impaired, thought is broken or impaired ; and when that organisation dies, to all human knowledge the thought dies with it. If you say that God put thought into the universe, what do you mean by this expression ? Do you mean that he gave the universe the capacity of thinking ? But then I thought matter could not think ! God thus can do what, according to your theory, is a contradiction in language. God put thought into the universe ? Why, thought is not general in the universe ; thought is rather the exception. As a matter of fact, how much real thinking is there among the masses of men all over this planet to-day ? And down below man there are more extensive orders of organic existence that think less and still less, until at last we get down to a point when no one would predicate thought at all. I know that, through a long process of evolution, the higher is evolved from the lower, and thought increases by the stress of life and the operation of the law of natural selection, leading to elimination of the unfit, the survival of the fit, and the continuance of the fit through the law of heredity. But when you tell me that thought is put into the universe, I say that thought is not in it as a *thing*. Thought to me is a *condition* ; a condition confined to matter in a certain state of organisation ; and I can attach no other meaning whatsoever to the term.

As to man's moral, mental, and religious nature, which is said to require a God, I deny altogether that there is any necessity for resorting to such an hypothesis. Man, we are told, has a capacity for limitless improvement in mind. I am not sure of that. That is prophecy, and a prophecy should be no basis for discussion. Mr. John Morley says

that the best way to answer a prophet is to prophesy the opposite. As a matter of fact, one of our greatest jurists, Sir Henry Maine, in his powerful work upon *Popular Government*, argues that there are perceptible limits to man's intellectual capacity for improvement ; and, in the face of this, it is idle to ask me to accept as an established fact what is only a conjecture about the future on the part of Mr. Lee himself.

Then man has aspirations for the true, the holy, and the eternal, and there must therefore be the true, the holy, the eternal ! But does the Atheist say there is nothing true ? Surely the Atheist can aspire to truth as well as the Theist. The motto of the National Secular Society, which does me the honor to elect me President, is " We seek for Truth." It is again idle to tell us the aspiration after truth involves the existence of the Being whom Mr. Lee is endeavoring to establish. And what do you mean by the word *holy* ? Holy, as generally used, is something connected with religion. A clergyman is " a holy person," a church is " a holy building," and a Church festival, or Sunday, is " a holy day." Very well ; if you use the word in that sense, I will leave you its full possession. But if by the word *holy* you mean anything which is dignified, honest, or pertains to the highest moral nature of man, then *we* aspire to the holy quite as much as any of the Theists who speak from the platforms or preach from the pulpits of the world.

A word, in conclusion, about man's moral sense. It is imposed from without by God, says Mr. Lee. I say that even men in your own Church, like Professor Henry Drummond, contend that morality is a natural evolution, without anything supernatural in it from beginning to end. God imposes morality upon us ! Then why did he not impose it so that in all parts of the world it was understood alike ? You say we know when we do right and when we do wrong. Do we ? If you commit bigamy in England, you will get seven years' imprisonment ; but if you commit it



in Turkey, you are acting in conformity with the laws of the land and the consciences of the people. What is the use of saying this morality is imposed from without by God, when its variation with time and place, its absolute accordance with the social and economic growth of man, proves it to be natural in its origin and development? (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am sure Mr. Lee cannot be insensible to the attention and consideration you have shown to both the speakers, and I am now about to ask Mr. Lee to continue the debate in an address of fifteen minutes. That effort will be responded to by his opponent in an address of similar length; and, after that, there will be another address from each gentleman, of corresponding proportions.

MR. LEE: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Mr. Foote commenced by complaining of my putting a series of questions to him, reading them out in the last three minutes of my speech as fast as I could. Now, I am leading to-night, and I demand that my questions be attended to. Mr. Foote says he is not a young debater. Neither am I a young debater. I therefore demand that my questions be attended to. I will attend to his questions to-morrow night, as far as I can.

Mr. Foote says that, in my own opinion, I have established a series of propositions. I am glad to say Mr. Foote has been unable to overturn them, and that, instead of replying to my questions, he has managed, in his address, to put questions to me.

Our friend says he does not intend to occupy the defensive for the greater ease of Mr. Lee. Now, sir, as we are met to discuss "Theism or Atheism: Which is the *more reasonable?*" I submit you cannot discuss that question apart from the universe; and, therefore, you have to give some fact in favor

of Atheism, no matter what you say against Theism. Theism may, or may not, be true ; but, if you say nothing in favor of Atheism, you have not established your position.

Our friend said I defined the universe as the sum-total of all conditioned existence. I did ; and I abide by that. But Mr. Foote says I assume to know something of an unconditioned existence. I do ; and Mr. Foote cannot think of any material object without thinking of that object as conditioned ; and he cannot think of the conditioned without being driven to the recognition of the unconditioned—you are bound to go on to the unconditioned. Mr. Foote may say there is nothing but the conditioned. I say there are the conditioned and the unconditioned.

But our friend went on to say that I defined reasonable as that which conforms to human intelligence. I did nothing of the kind. Mr. Foote has managed to leave out two very important words. I defined reasonable as that which conforms to the *logical demands* of man's mind. This is not saying that what is reasonable is reasonable, but that that is reasonable which is in harmony with the logical demands of the mental life we all possess.

But Mr. Foote says I defined Atheism and Theism to suit myself. I did not. I defined them in harmony with the great masters of language ; and I say, when we come to debate terms which stand for great doctrines, we must use those terms, not as any individual wishes them to be used, but as the great masters of speech everywhere use them.

But he went on to say : "Atheism does not affirm *per se* a theory of the universe." Will Mr. Foote kindly tell me how Atheism can affirm anything *per se* ? Mr. Bradlaugh said that, to him, the word "God" was a word without meaning. Then how could Mr. Bradlaugh justify his attempt to get rid of an affirmation which has a great deal of meaning to others, but none to himself ? But Mr. Foote says he will quote Mr. Bradlaugh's words : "The Atheist does not say there is no God." I admit that. Mr. Bradlaugh

was far too wise a man to say, in so many words, "There is no God." Yet Mr. Bradlaugh did more than say "There is no God"—he sought to *prove* there could be none ; and if that is not Atheism, I do not know what is.

Mr. Foote goes on to say it is very easy to talk loose metaphysical phrases. Yes ; we have had a sample of that in Mr. Foote to-night.

Mr. Foote says : "Go to the man in the street, and ask him what he thinks about God. Will he give you the reasons Mr. Lee has given to-night?" The man, if he is a good man (I am not insinuating that an Atheist is not good), will say, "I believe in God," and will give reasons. But I am meeting a gentleman to-night who has no belief in God, and I must therefore meet him on common ground—ground on which we can both stand. I appeal, then, to reason, that mighty power which seeks the solution of all problems, and I say we cannot understand the facts of the universe unless we postulate and put behind them the necessary and absolute existence which is above and beyond both the universe and Mr. Foote himself. (Applause.)

Mr. Foote denied that Atheism *per se* denied the existence of God. I say Atheism cannot deny anything *per se*. We have no relation to that which is *per se*, "in itself." It must be manifested to us in some way ; and, when Mr. Foote talks of things in this slipshod way, he uses pretty metaphysical phrases which have no meaning.

Mr. Foote paid me the compliment of saying my mind is not large enough to form a theory of the universe. No ; but when, then, the universe is formed, I may be able to understand it. But, if my mind is not large enough to form a theory of the universe, how is Mr. Foote's mind large enough to show that my theory of the universe is not true ? (Loud applause.)

Mr. Foote says, if we have no knowledge of the unconditioned, we have no right to assert its existence. Therefore, before we can make statements implying the existence of

God, we must have a knowledge of God. This Mr. Foote regards as impossible. But I would remind Mr. Foote that some of the great German philosophers hold that, before we can say anything is unknown and unknowable, you must be above and beyond it. But, if you are above and beyond it, you make it known; and so you destroy your doctrine that it is unknown. Thus, in getting rid of my proposition, Mr. Foote has got rid of his own contention that God is unknown and unknowable.

But Mr. Foote says I fell into a mistake when I spoke of matter and of the universe as different. I did so purposely—in other words, I was dealing in the first part of my remarks with the visible universe; but the matter which makes the universe, though a part of it, is not visible; and, when I used these two terms, I meant by the universe that which we can see, and by matter that which is resolvable into the atom, which we cannot see. I fail to see any difficulty in this position. Then as to the atoms which I referred to as bearing the marks of manufactured articles. Mr. Foote says this is a metaphorical expression, as nobody has seen them. Very well. If these atoms have not been seen, how do you know they do not bear the marks of being manufactured? In other words, Mr. Foote has to go through a process of reasoning in order to say these atoms do not bear these marks, just as great physicists like Clerk Maxwell have gone through processes of reasoning and say they do bear the marks. Personally, I prefer taking the statements of the physicists before those of Mr. Foote.

But, says our friend, if we think of this universe as the outcome of an existence which is eternal, and which is related to this universe as cause to effect, we are face to face with this difficulty: we cannot possibly conceive of creation. If by that you mean I cannot form an idea or image in my mind as to the way in which it was done, I agree with you; but if you say I cannot understand or apprehend the bringing of something into existence by a

being possessing the creative power of God, then I deny the statement.

Our friend further says: If you believe in creation, you must believe that it is either something different from God, or that it is God. Now, I have met this statement before the late Charles Bradlaugh invented it; but I put this suggestion to Mr. Foote: I believe the Creator of the universe stands in the same relation to the universe as I stand in relation to my thoughts. When Mr. Foote proves that my thoughts are me, then I will deal with his argument as to this world being God.

But, says Mr. Foote, "You get thought out of the stars? I deny that"; and he says, "We will bring an idiot." But who asked him to bring an idiot to get thought out of the stars? But "we will bring the poet." Yes, bring the poet; the poet looks at the stars, and he gets something out of them, and he writes a poem on the heavens. "Ah!" says Mr. Foote, "there is no thought in the universe; the thought is in the poet's brain." But how came it in the poet's brain? We will just press this a little closer. Let a man read a book, say Balfour Stewart's *Conservation of Energy*, and he will have more thought after he has read it than he had before. Where did the thought come from? It came from the thought in the book. In the same sense, this universe is a book to the mind of man, and thought can be got out of it.

But our friend talked about law being a certain method in which things work; but *how* came they to work in that method? This is a big metaphysical problem, and I want information.

Our friend says: "Wherever I see an organism in a certain condition, I see thought, and if that organism is injured or broken, thought is injured or broken." I hold in my hand Professor Ferrier's great work on "The Functions of the Brain," in which he says, at page 246: "When one hemisphere is removed or destroyed by disease, motion and

sensation are abolished unilaterally ; *but mental operations are still capable of being carried on in their completeness through the agency of one hemisphere.*"

Mr. FOOTE : Mr. Lee demands—" Oh, oh "—I repeat that Mr. Lee demands what he has no power to exact. I have already declined, as any man of sense would decline, to answer questions read out to me, and not furnished to me. Mr. Lee, by his own act, robbed himself of the right to put questions. In the original conditions, as the Joint Committee know, there was to be a certain space of time—a quarter of an hour or so—allowed for questions between the disputants. It was Mr. Lee's own suggestion that the time for questions should be struck out.

Mr. LEE : I rise to a point of order. The part that was struck out was the part relating to a Socratic method of debate, in which the question should be put and immediately answered ; but that does not rob me of the right to put questions in the course of my address. In every debate in which I have taken part these questions have always been recognised and answered.

Mr. FOOTE : Then, with whatever explanation Mr. Lee may qualify the statement, the statement is accurate, that at Mr. Lee's suggestion the time allotted for questions and answers was struck out from the original articles of debate ; and I decline altogether to come here with the responsibility of answering questions that have not been furnished to me—questions that no memory could charge itself with the task of accurately retaining. If Mr. Lee wants questions of that kind answered, he shall furnish them beforehand, so that one could get an acquaintance with their terms and bearing. Every man knows that you can ask more questions in a couple of minutes than the wisest man on earth can answer in twenty-four hours. At any rate, Mr. Lee may

demand as much as he pleases ; I refuse to accede to his demand, and leave him to whatever remedy he can discover.

Mr. Lee says that I was wrong in saying that I would not occupy the defensive in order that Mr. Lee might more easily take the offensive. Did I not explain to you that it is Mr. Lee's lead to-night ? All I am required to do is to follow Mr. Lee, and to-morrow night he must follow me ; otherwise, why does one disputant open on one night, and the other on the second night ? It is my business to-night to oppose what Mr. Lee advances ; to-morrow night it will be his business to oppose what I advance ; and I absolutely decline to be drawn out of what I conceive to be the regular line of logical debate.

Mr. Lee said I did not give a single fact in favour of Atheism. Well, that is *his* opinion. *My* opinion is that he did not give a single fact in favour of Theism. But what is the use of bandying about mere expressions of opinion like that ? It is for the audience to judge calmly after the debate is over, and not for the two disputants to say one has not established his position, and the other has not established his.

Mr. Lee said that he did not know anything of unconditioned existence, but he said that, after knowing conditioned existence, we were bound to go on to the idea of unconditioned existence. Permit me to observe that Mr. Lee has a perfect right to say what *he* is bound to do, but he has no right to say what *I* am bound to do. I do *not* feel bound to go on to unconditioned existence. All I know of is conditioned existence. I cannot conceive of what is called unconditioned existence. Therefore his statement falls absolutely to the ground, as it affects myself and a very large number of other people.

I read from Charles Bradlaugh to the effect that Atheism did not deny God—that is, *any* God ; but the moment you define God Atheism asks whether your defined God is consistent with the facts of experience ; and, if found incon-

sistent with those facts, then Atheism would have a perfect right to deny the existence of that God so defined. That is what Atheism does. If Mr. Lee tells me there is a God all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, I tell him that the facts of life contradict the existence of such a being. ("No, no.") We have heard the names of scientific men. Well, the greatest naturalist that ever lived, Charles Darwin—(a laugh)—the man that smiles at that name cannot know what he is smiling at—I say, the greatest naturalist that ever lived, Charles Darwin, said there is too much suffering in the world ; and he, the greatest scientific intellect since Newton, in face of the facts that science has revealed, felt himself utterly unable to accept the God that Mr. Lee has put forward to-night, and predicated as absolutely necessary to logical human thought.

Now, we had a little merriment about "Atheism *per se*," but there is really nothing metaphysical about that. "*Per se*" simply means, as Mr. Lee knows, "by itself." You cannot think of a thing in universal connections. Man's powers being finite, he must isolate, for purposes of convenience, the objects of his thought ; although, in external nature, they are all in infinite relations to each other. Thus, when you define a line, owing to the imperfection of human powers, you define it as "length without breadth"; but you never find this in actual experience. It is a device you have to resort to ; you take the idea of length separate from the idea of breadth, although the two things are never found except in conjunction with each other. Very well. Atheism in itself, apart from the personal notion of individual Atheists—or, as I expressed it, "Atheism *per se*"—does not affirm a theory of the universe. I said that individual Atheists, like Mr. Bradlaugh himself, might affirm Monism (like Spinoza, who was charged with Atheism, but affirms Pantheism); but that is a different thing altogether from what are the logical contents of the term Atheism. I deny that Atheism affirms a theory of the universe. And if Mr.



Lee can establish his theory, he does not need to argue the unreasonableness of Atheism, for Atheism then disappears. Atheism is the rejection of those forms of Theism which, from past experience, and from what we can infer from present experience, are inconsistent with the facts of life. And in that sense I say Atheism is not at all affected by anything Mr. Lee has said. It is not for me to prove there is no God ; Charles Bradlaugh never set out to prove there is no God. Charles Bradlaugh set out to prove that the God defined by Theists was not consistent with facts that were indisputable, and therefore he denied that conception.

Mr. Lee says that God explains all—does it? (I say “it,” because I take God now as an hypothesis.) God explain all? Not to me ; God does not, to me, make anything any more intelligible. Here is an atom, you say ; minute, invisible ; how did it originate? The very question, “How did it originate?” involves the statement that it *did* originate. I deny your right to make the statement that the atom originated. I say that you have to prove that it did originate before you have a right to ask the “how.”

Then, in the next place, if we assume, for the purpose of argument, that the atom did originate, I deny that you can think—you may believe, but you cannot *think*; that is, you cannot think out, you cannot realise in your own mind the idea—of a mind creating an atom. I deny altogether that anybody has the power to conceive creation in the religious or metaphysical sense of the word. All man can do by the exertion of his utmost powers is to shift matter—pre-existent matter, matter that will exist after he is dead—from one position to another. All creation is to us the re-shaping of pre-existent matter. I deny that the human mind is capable of realising creation in any absolute sense of the word.

It is no explanation of the atom to tell me that God made it. That is offering me one mystery as the explanation of another mystery. The origin of the atom is a mystery ; a Being is brought in hypothetically, who is a greater mystery

than the atom itself ; and how can this mystery explain the other ? I will tell you how a thing is explained. A thing is explained when Science shows us exactly its origin, its growth, its development, and possibly its decay and disappearance ; tracing it from its initial stage to the completion of its career. That is a scientific explanation ; and, when Science explains a thing like that, we understand it ; but it is not a scientific or a rational explanation of a thing to say, "God did it." That is what ignorance has said in all ages. (Applause.)

It used to be asked, "Who made the world ?" until the nebular hypothesis explained to us the history of worlds. Then the question was shifted farther back, and it was asked, "Who made all the various species of life upon this planet ?" Darwin explained the Origin of Species—I will not say to the satisfaction of all parties, but to the satisfaction of scientific men. And now the question is put farther back—"Who made life ? Or who made the atoms ?" In other words, the banner of Theology is always planted at the point where knowledge ends and ignorance begins. It is driven farther and farther back. It is the banner, not of Knowledge, but of Mystery. It is the flag of Superstition, under which all the priesthoods of the world have gathered for the exploitation of the people. (Applause.)

Mr. Lee said that he used the word universe to signify visible matter. Now, there is no distinction between visible and invisible matter, except in Mr. Lee's powers of perception. Visible matter means matter large enough to be seen. But if you have millions upon millions of invisible atoms forming a visible combination of matter, there is no difference in the condition of the atoms because they are in collection, and large enough for our organs of vision to perceive them. That is a distinction without a difference.

A word about brain and thought. Who ever said that man—who has two brains working in combination, though sometimes not in entire harmony—who ever said that he

could not think with one hemisphere when the other was injured? A man sees with two eyes; but, if he loses the sight of one eye, he can see fairly well with the other. It is a question of focus. I did not say that two hemispheres were absolutely necessary. I said that brain is necessary to thought. If the second hemisphere goes too, thought disappears. There is no thought without bodily organism. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN : We have now reached the last stage of this interesting and ably-conducted debate, and I will ask Mr. Lee to give us what must be, for to-night, his final contribution.

MR. LEE : I want to go back to my first speech. Our friend referred to a fire and a child, and he said he could not believe that God had planned the fire and the child to meet together. Neither do I. But Mr. Foote does not get rid of the *fact* of the fire and the child meeting. Whatever his theory of the universe may be, he still has to face the *fact*. Mr. Foote does not believe in Christianity because God is represented as interfering in the world, and he does not believe in God because he does not interfere in the world. Is not that a contradiction? The fact is, whatever you do to please Mr. Foote, you cannot satisfy him.

Our friend says that law is a certain method in which things occur. I asked him in my last speech kindly to explain how the things came to have that method of working; but Mr. Foote says he is not here to answer questions. We are very much like the naughty boy; we ought not to ask questions. That is our opponent's privilege.

Mr. Foote goes on to say in reference to the National Secular Society, of which he is President, that that Society, as well as those who are on my side, are firm believers in truth. Yes, but there is just this difference. Of course, it is only a matter of opinion, Mr. Foote would say; but with

us it is a question of conviction. Mr. Foote tells us the National Secular Society is in *search* of truth. *We* Theists believe we have *found* it. (Cheers.)

Mr. Foote says, no matter what Mr. Lee demands, Mr. Lee struck out the part of the conditions of debate which referred to a Socratic debate, and, therefore, has no right to ask questions. The reason I struck that part of the conditions out was this. I do not believe in mixing up things that differ. If we want a Socratic debate, we will have it ; but I object to wedging in half-an-hour of Socratic debate in a debate of another character ; but I still have the right to ask questions respecting matters which are fundamental to my position and to Mr. Foote's. If we have no right to ask such questions, why are we here to discuss ?

But Mr. Foote says that I have not been able to produce a single fact in favour of Theism. Well, now, I have produced a series of propositions ; I have shown that something must be eternal. Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. I have shown you that that something must have power ; Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. I have shown you that something must be the cause of the changes in this universe ; Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. I have shown you that the different movements going on in this universe are going on in accordance with law ; Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. And I have shown you that we have reason, mind, a religious and moral sense ; but Mr. Foote has not attempted to deal with that. The whole of my propositions stand untouched—(applause)—and not only untouched, but the banner of theology, which Mr. Foote has spoken of as floating above the place where ignorance begins and knowledge ends—this banner of theology—this banner, sir—floats high above our heads, not as the symbol of “we do not know,” but as the sign of a coming victory which has already been shown to be ours by your refusing to deal with these questions. (Loud applause.) Ah, Mr. Foote says, “the banner of

theology." I have never seen a banner yet where there were not contending armies. And I have never seen a banner floating only as the sign of victory ; and, if it floats to-night on this platform, then on this platform *we* have victory, and not defeat.

Mr. Foote says what is the use of bandying statements one against the other. Well, I did not begin this practice ; Mr. Foote commenced it, and, therefore, Mr. Foote must not complain if I serve him in the same way he has served me.

But he goes on to say that Mr. Lee said he did not know the unconditioned. I did not. I say I *do* know the unconditioned—that is, I apprehend it ; I do not form an image of it, but I apprehend it. A cup is not big enough to hold the sea, but it will hold some of it, so that we can tell what kind of a thing the sea is. So we can know something of God. We have shown him to be power, intelligent, and personal, and, therefore, we have shown that God is something, and that we know something of God.

Mr. Foote seems to have missed my argument on this point altogether. He says he knows nothing but the conditioned, and he refuses to go on to the unconditioned ; but, I say, if you know the conditioned, by the laws of mental life you *must* go on to the unconditioned, and the man who refuses to go on to the unconditioned does not represent the floating banner of victory, but rather has his back to the doctrine which he seeks to overthrow.

But Mr. Foote says that Atheism denies the existence of a defined God, and goes on to show that Atheism is the rejection of those forms of Theism which we hold. Now, I thought that awfully funny ; because, if it is only the rejection of the definitions of God which have been brought to Mr. Foote's notice, then a definition of God *may* be framed which will ultimately overthrow Atheism, and God, after all, be established in his mind. In other words, Mr. Foote is not fighting God ; he is fighting definitions. Now I, for one,

do not believe in fighting definitions, unless I know that those definitions are part and parcel of the thing I fight. I have not attempted this evening to give you a definition of God ; I have given you a few suggestions as to what I understand God to be. I told you I believe him to be an eternal something, having power and intelligence, and such-like. But, while I do not know all about God, I know something of God ; I do not know all about Derby, but I know something of Derby. Still, I have often said—I said it three months ago—I am not one of those who say they believe in God ; I have got a knowledge of God. I go beyond belief—I *know* God.

Our friend talked to us about the defects of definitions and such-like, and went on to say that the atom is something, and that the universe is only a bigger atom. Well, now, I object altogether to this position of Mr. Foote's, because he said that an atom is something which cannot be seen. Now, not only is an atom that which cannot be seen—he has told us that—but he went on to say that this world of ours must be the same as the matter which is unseen. Now, if that is so, then the unseen atom must be under the same conditions as this seen table ; and, as this seen table cannot move itself, how came the atom to move itself ?

But our friend says that I simply get rid of one difficulty—the origin of the atom—in order to bring in a greater difficulty—God. No, I do not. Mr. Foote has told us that an atom is that which is so infinitely little that it cannot be seen ; yet Mr. Foote must, if he is logical, seek to build up this wondrous universe, with its teeming forms of living activity, from a thing that cannot be seen, and that is so infinitely powerless that it can do nothing of itself—because “the unseen must be the same as the seen.” Then he says I bring in another subject which is equally unthinkable. Did I not show you that something must be eternal ? Does Mr. Foote believe the atom is eternal ? If so, he is opposed

to the greatest physicists in the world, who say it is not eternal.

Balfour Stewart will be my answer to another statement of Mr. Foote's. He said : "When Science explains a thing, it accounts for its origin, its growth, and its decay." I hold in my hand Balfour Stewart on *The Conservation of Energy*, and he shows in this book, by scientific induction, that this universe is like a candle lit, and must go out. He shows what its origin was, what its growth has been, and what its decay will probably be, by scientific facts, and proves that this universe is not eternal. Mr. Foote will have to reckon, not with Mr. Lee, but with Professor Balfour Stewart, the greatest physicist England has ever produced.

Mr. Foote has given us a series of statements this evening which I think he will find it very difficult to substantiate ; but to-morrow night, when he leads in this discussion, we shall have, as I understand, a statement as to what sort of a constructive system Atheism is. If Atheism is not a constructive system, it does not prove itself to be reasonable by showing that Theism is unreasonable. What it has to do is to show that it is *more* reasonable than Theism.

Now, I find I have a body—Mr. Foote has one. In this body I find certain appetites—hunger, thirst. These appetites prove to me that I need something, and that somewhere there is something to satisfy these wants ; in other words, somewhere there are food and drink. So that these appetites are proofs to me of a want, and proofs to me also that there is, somewhere, something to supply that want. I also have a mind, and this mind yearns for knowledge ; and the existence of this appetite for knowledge is a proof to me that I need knowledge, and that somewhere there is knowledge to be had. I have a spirit or self which yearns for God, and this yearning in me proves to me that somewhere there must be a God ; for, if you trust your physical appetites and your mental appetites, why not trust your spiritual appetites also ? And if your hunger proves that somewhere

there is food, if your mental hunger proves that somewhere there is knowledge, the hunger of the soul proves that somewhere there is God. Mr. Foote may say, "I have not got this appetite, I know nothing about it"; but, as we do not trust a blind man when we wish to know something about the sun, neither do we trust an Atheist when we want to know something about God. (Cheers.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am sure you must have undergone considerable inconvenience in the heat of this crowded hall, especially those of you who are standing; but it seems to me so in harmony with the instincts of fair play that Mr. Foote should have a full, a fair, and impartial hearing to the end that I trust no one will leave the meeting until Mr. Foote has finished his concluding address.

Mr. LEE expressed a similar wish.

Mr. FOOTE: I am extremely obliged for the kindly spirit which was manifested in the hint just given, but I hardly think it is necessary. I do not feel so profoundly upon the matter as it seems to be imagined, and if any lady or gentleman, at any time, does not want to hear me, I really do not object to their withdrawing. On the other hand, I do not think it is a right thing to assume that anybody *would* leave the meeting. Personally, I think we ought to accept people's innocence until there is reason to believe they are guilty. (Dissent and interruption.) Apparently one disputant is free to introduce a matter which the other disputant is not to say anything about. Is that fair play?

Mr. Lee said that the child and the fire meet, and the fire burns, and what I have got to do is to explain why it burns. ("No, no.") I repeat that Mr. Lee said I was bound to explain how it came to burn. Now, I say I am under no such necessity. All I am obliged to do, if I want to be



scientific, is to explain the action of fire upon the tissues of the human organism. It does not matter one iota, in the case of the child and the fire, by what argument you come to the conclusion that atoms were endowed or not endowed with their properties. It is enough for my guidance in this world to know the action of fire upon the tissues of the human organism. In that scientific explanation we have all that is necessary to us here, and metaphysics and theology are an useless burden upon our shoulders.

Mr. Lee says that the Secularists are in search of truth, but the Christians have found it. Not *all* truth, I apprehend ? (A laugh.) Then, if it does not mean that, it does not mean anything. When the Secularist says he is in search of truth, he is not to be understood to mean that he has not yet discovered any truth. What he means is that he is in search of *new* truth, fresh truth, the truth of to-morrow, with its higher standpoint, with its command of a broader horizon, above the lower truth or falsehood of yesterday, that kept us crawling and abject, instead of making us dignified and independent.

Mr. Lee continues to assert that something is eternal, by which he can only mean that there is something existing which he is unable, in thought, to limit in time. No man has any right to affirm dogmatically that anything existed eternally. He has a right to say he cannot help thinking so, but no one has a right dogmatically to affirm anything which he does not *know* ; and no man can *know* the eternity of anything unless he himself is eternal, having eternally co-existed with it.

Mr. Lee was good enough to say that I did not touch any of his points, including the moral nature of man ; but I thought I was called to time just at the very moment when I was dealing with the moral nature of man in my first speech. I am willing to let the audience decide, calmly and dispassionately, when the debate is over, as to that. Whether Mr. Lee thinks I have touched his points or not is a matter of very small importance to me. Mr. Lee does not expect

to convert me, and, if I had answered all his propositions to his satisfaction, he would not become an Atheist. What is the use, then, of his saying I have not answered his questions? All I can do is to reply. I do not expect Mr. Lee to think that I have shattered all his positions.

Mr. Lee says he knows the unconditioned; but I deny that he knows, or can know, the unconditioned. He is himself distinctly conditioned, every moment of his life being absolutely dependent upon his environment. When he talks about matter being incapable of moving itself, I tell Mr. Lee that he himself, except in relation to external nature, would lose all capacity of thought. Mankind can only work under the stimulus of the external universe. We begin with sensations, perceptions; we weave them into ideas; but it is the stimulus of the external universe that furnishes us with the sensations, and it is the stimulus of that external universe that keeps alive the activity of our powers.

Mr. Lee said it was no use fighting definitions. What else can we fight in a discussion? It is idle to talk about fighting God: we are here to fight over *the defined God*. If God exists, he does not require any man's defence; and if God do not exist, no man's defence can establish his existence. Our object is discussion, and discussion can only proceed upon definitions; consequently it is really definitions that we are here to debate.

We were told that the religious banner is a sign of victory. Not necessarily. Both armies carry banners into the field, and in general it is only one side that wins. And banners are not confined to battle; they are floated in times of peace as well as in war. I do not think it is right to found an argument upon a metaphor. A metaphor is a very good thing as an adornment, a help, an illustration—but no more. And when you say your banner is triumphant, I say the very fact that, after thousands of years of priestly teaching, and of the authority of religion over the child's mind—I

say, the very fact that, after it all, we are met to-night to discuss this very question of God's existence shows that your banner is *not* triumphant. (Applause.)

You have an appetite for knowledge, and you think that that appetite postulates infinite knowledge ; you have an aspiration for knowledge of God, and you think that that postulates the existence of God. I say that there is no logical connection between your desires and the certainty of their satisfaction. A man may yearn for food in the midst of starvation ; the appetite and the food *may* go together, but they may *not*, or starvation would never occur. Appetite is, of course, in its strict meaning, the clamour of the stomach for food, owing to the depletion of the organ under exercise and air. That is all its primary meaning, and when you use the word in any other sense you are only using it in a metaphorical, and not in a debating sense. If you want knowledge, have you not field enough in studying the universe without beginning with dogmatism about its origin ? You want truth, you say ? Well, all the scientists of the world have not learned all that can be learned about Nature ; and even Shakespeare, the greatest reader of human nature, has not fathomed all the profound recesses of human thought and feeling. Surely there is room within this great universe to expatiate, without trying to fly in a vacuum.

Then I am told that Balfour Stewart says the atom was created or originated ; I don't care which term you use, it comes to the same thing. Now, it is quite true that the authors—for there were *two* of them—of "The Unseen Universe" did take up that position, and it is equally true that Professor Clifford opposed them ; and Professor Clifford was one of the first scientific men of this country, and probably of the world. What is the use of saying I must bow down to the authority of one scientific man when another scientific man opposes him on grounds of science ? I say the man of science has no more power of deciding about the creation

of matter than any common man that walks the streets. He can tell you how atoms combine, and how they divide ; he can show you their chemical properties ; but he has no knowledge whatever of their creation or origination. The doctrine accepted by all scientists is that man cannot create an atom, man cannot destroy an atom ; and I say that, arguing from analogy, it is reasonable—at any rate, *more* reasonable—to suppose that what cannot be destroyed will never cease to be, and that what cannot be made never began to be.

Finally, we were told, in poetical language, about God's kindness ; and we were given a poetical recitation, which I hope Mr. Lee did not think was any contribution to the debate. I might cite poetry, but then is that discussion ? Shelley said the name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness. You talk of the kindness of your God ! I fail to see the kindness when I look at the history of the world. The great Cardinal Newman, the keenest theological intellect that this country has produced in the present century, said that, although his being was full of the idea of God, yet when he looked into the universe the impression made upon him was as though he had looked into a mirror and saw no reflection of his face. What he saw in the world was incompatible with the doctrines of theology in which he had been educated. The kindness of God and religion ! The kindness of the *auto-da-fé* ! The kindness of the thumb-screw, the rack, the torture chamber ! The kindness of the heretic's dungeon ! The kindness of perverting and distorting the mind of the child ! I prefer the kindness of Humanity to the kindness of all the gods the world has ever known. (Loud applause.)

## SECOND NIGHT.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ladies and Gentlemen,—In commencing the business of this evening I shall content myself by expressing the hope that the courteous and careful attention paid by the audience last night to both the gentlemen who figure in this debate will be repeated on this occasion. You are all, no doubt, well aware of the subject of the discussion, and it will only remain for me to remark for your information that certain regulations have been drawn up by the Joint Committee who have the management of the arrangements, and acquiesced in by both the disputants. Last evening Mr. Lee opened the debate by delivering an address of thirty minutes' duration. He was replied to in a speech of similar length by Mr. Foote, and subsequently both gentlemen delivered two speeches of a quarter of an hour in length. The same order of procedure will be followed this evening, with this distinction, that to-night Mr. Foote opens the debate, and he will be replied to by Mr. Lee ; and then will follow, in the natural order of events, a series of speeches corresponding to those delivered last evening.

I will now, without further ado, and with a desire to expedite the business of the meeting, ask Mr. Foote to open the debate.

MR. FOOTE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Lee, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The subject we are met to discuss to-night, as last night, is "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?" My friendly opponent led off last night, and, of

course, had the opportunity of deciding the direction of the evening's debate. To-night that opportunity lies with me. I do not suppose that anybody who differs from me (and in this I will include my opponent) will be quite satisfied with the direction I take ; but I am in the conduct of my own case, and I intend to do what I consider to be justice to it, quite irrespective of the opinions of anyone else. (Hear, hear.)

Now I wish, at the outset, to say just a few words about the direction the debate took last night. It was mainly of a metaphysical character, and chiefly turned upon the problem of the origin of the universe, if I may express it in that summary fashion. Mr. Lee told us a great deal about matter and atoms, and the whole argument really turned upon what is admittedly incomprehensible—that is, incomprehensible in the present state of our knowledge. I am not one of those who say that no particular problem will at some future time be solved ; but one *is* entitled to say that a certain specified problem is insoluble in the present condition of human knowledge ; and, as a matter of fact, when you discuss the origin of matter, you are discussing a thing which, from the very nature of the case, you are not in a position to determine. And it appears to me that you may mix up with a discussion of that kind a great deal of very questionable physics. For instance, we were told last night that, if the universe were full of matter, there would be no possibility of motion ; but, of course, that overlooks the fact that combinations of matter are of various degrees of density. Every time Mr. Lee and I walk along the street we walk, as it were, through matter, for the air around us is as much matter, although in a gaseous condition, as this table or the floor upon which we stand. To illustrate this from another standpoint : if you were to take a bottle and put half-a-dozen marbles in it, and then fill the bottle 'right up with water, and hermetically seal it, you would find that, as you moved the bottle about, the marbles, under the law of

gravitation, would shift their position, and that they would pass through the fluid medium of water, although the receptacle which contained them was full. Now, of course, in the same way, the various heavenly bodies move through what is described as an infinite elastic substance—the interstellar ether. If you have elasticity, and if you have bodies of various degrees of density, it seems to me absurd to say that, if the universe were full of matter, there would be no room for and no possibility of motion. I might, of course, take some other illustrations, but these will suffice to show that when you get discussing these questions about the origin of matter, unless you happen to be as perfectly well up in physics as, say, Balfour Stewart, it is easy to go astray.

Last night Mr. Lee defined Atheism, and he defined Theism; but I am not bound, all through this discussion, to be tied up by his definitions. I am going to tell you what I mean by Atheism, and I shall tell you in a moment what I mean by Theism. Atheism is simply “not Theism.” Atheism does not deny the existence of God—that is, of *any* God. Atheism is opposed to every form of Theism which has yet been propounded to the world. The Atheist is a person who, if there be anything in Theism, is desirous of ascertaining what it is, and, if it be true, of accepting it. Consequently he takes the trouble to examine the various theories that are propounded, and, as far as he can, he ascertains their worth. Now, the Atheist considers that all the Theistic theories that have been propounded labour under disadvantages, which, at any rate at present, seem impossible of removal. An Atheist, then, is one who is not a Theist. The prefix “A” does not mean denial; it means “without”; and, consequently, I shall use the term “Atheism” to-night as “not Theism”—or, if you please, “against Theism,” in so far as Theism endeavors to define its God, and defines him in a manner which is contradicted by indisputable facts of existence. Of course, I may be told—we *were* told last night—that such an Atheism is not constructive; in other

words, that Atheism does not explain the universe. Well, no Atheist attempts to explain the universe. He is more modest than to pretend to do anything of the kind. The Atheist declares that the finite intelligence of man is not capable of solving the infinite problem of the inconceivably distant origin of this universe. (Cheers.) But if you pressed me, and said that, as a thinker, I must have *some* idea upon the subject, I should say : "Very well ; I am not prepared to assert that matter is either eternal or not eternal ; I am not in a position to make a positive assertion where I have no positive evidence ; but it is as open for me to conjecture as for any man, and perhaps my conjecture would be as true as his ; and, if you tell me there must be an eternal something, I should start from what I know, for I would rather believe in the eternity of what I know than in the eternity of something that I have not been able to discover. And so, I say, matter exists ; matter is all about us ; our bodily organism, at any rate, is material ; and I would prefer to believe that the matter which, according to physical teaching, is, by us at any rate, indestructible in its atoms, is *essentially* indestructible ; that it never began to be ; that, as it exists now, and did exist eternally in the past, so it will continue to exist eternally in the future." In other words, if there is to be an eternal something, I prefer an eternal something which I know, to an eternal nothing which is only the postulate of an opponent in a discussion. (Applause.)

Atheism and Theism, except they come into dogmatic relationship to morals and conduct, are speculations, and it is well known that speculations—the *very same* speculations—can be entertained by men of all varieties of moral character and condition. Indeed, when one speculation is before the world, and another is opposed to it, and when the world has been discussing these speculations for thousands of years, and is still discussing them, with no hope of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, an impartial, honest, and careful thinker is tempted to ask himself, What is the



reason of this perpetual discord, in spite of this perpetual discussion? For my part, I am obliged—I cannot *help* myself—to fall back upon the explanation that this discussion has never been settled, because the disputants have not the facts to go by. When you discuss a matter of science, or a matter of history, you get at *the facts*; and, by-and-bye, the facts determine the judgment of the people who study them. But, when you are speculating about the unknown, you have *no* facts to go upon; hence it is a mere matter of conjecture; and, as conjecture is determined by individual preference, taste, predilection, and even imagination and fancy, it is quite natural that, in the absence of facts to sway the judgment, this discord should continue as long as men will look in that direction for truth. And I, for one, fall back—as an Atheist falls back, as the old type of Atheists all fell back—upon the position that man can never sound, with his finite plummet, the depths of an infinite universe; that man cannot, with his finite intelligence, solve an infinite problem; and that it is his business to fall back upon practical knowledge and practical conduct. In short, the constructive side of Atheism is Secularism. Secularism deals with *this* world. The Atheist, as such, may deny Theism as it is propounded in definitions; but you have the constructive side of Atheism in the practical system of Secularism. Theism itself is no more really constructive than Atheism. It is a speculation about the origin and government of the universe, and Atheism is in opposition to that particular speculation. Before either of them can construct, they must descend to the common ground of human nature and human experience. That common ground is open to every form of belief for constructive purposes; it is not the exclusive possession of Theism, to which school my friendly opponent belongs. I say, therefore, that the whole question between Atheism and Theism, as to their reasonableness, resolves itself into the trial of Theism. It is the Theist who propounds *his* theory. I have *no* theory

of the universe ; and, when the words were put down for discussion, I declined to admit them. The Atheist has no such theory. He does not set out to explain the universe ; he tries to learn as much as he can about it ; and, if he learns any new truth to-day, there is more to be learned to-morrow. As long as man's mind is finite, and he has to inhabit this world—which is really but as a speck of dust in the infinitude of space—however far he advances, there will be the same old horizon of knowledge. However we may gather knowledge in the years to come, our far-off posterity will have a similar opportunity, and may they put it to a similar use ! (Applause.)

Now, if we have to enter upon a trial of Theism, we must understand what Theism is. Mr. Lee, last night, refrained from defining God. His God accounts for everything, but the very thing which was all-important in the case was never defined.

I shall define Theism as “that form of belief which declares that the visible, tangible, conditioned universe is created and governed by infinite intelligence, which belongs to an infinite personality, which is characterised by infinite power and infinite wisdom ; nay, more—it is characterised, according to Theistic teaching, by infinite goodness or benevolence.” What I am going to do in the trial of Theism is to ascertain whether the facts fit in with the theory. I am not going to rush off to a supposed centre, to which the sun, with all our system, is hurrying. I am not going to peer with the microscope in the vain hope of discovering the origin of the atom. I am going to speak about what we know of the facts of life, instead of rushing off into infinite space. I am going to see what can be found in this world, the world in which we live. (Applause.) I submit that, if Theism can be proved at all, it ought to be proved from what we thoroughly know, rather than from what we are only inadequately acquainted with.

Now, what is the great teaching of men of science—a

teaching which, although originating outside the Churches, is spreading within, and infecting them all? It is the doctrine of Evolution. The bishops are accepting it; the foremost champions of Christianity are accepting it; Mr. Benjamin Kidd, one of the most powerful defenders of religion, accepts Darwinism as a starting-point; and Professor Henry Drummond, the author of *The Ascent of Man*—who differs from Mr. Kidd very largely, yet agrees with him in this—starts with Darwinism as an established truth. It does not matter if some of the clergy still look askance at it; for, as Charles Darwin said, it is the business of men of science to find out what is true, and, when the men of science are agreed, all the clergy have to do is to say, "Ditto." Now, what is this Evolution? Evolution is not a plan which you can imagine devised by infinite wisdom, and carried out by infinite power, prompted by infinite benevolence. What is the great principle which Charles Darwin established to the satisfaction of the scientific world? It is natural selection; and the result of that is what Herbert Spencer calls "the survival of the fittest." What does natural selection operate upon? The struggle for existence. This planet is limited in size. It is limited in the amount of subsistence it affords to animal life. Nature is producing animal life in superabundance; it is impossible for all to subsist; and the result is, they are all engaged, upon the lines of evolution, in a struggle for life. One order of existence presses upon another, and, as Darwin's grandfather said, the law of life on this globe is "eat or be eaten." Now, I cannot imagine a God of infinite wisdom, infinite love, and infinite power, planning a universe in which living beings have to submit to the law of "eat or be eaten." I would rather not have to kill; I would rather not see all living things about me engaged in killing each other. But they *do* kill each other; and man, with supreme impartiality, kills all the rest when they stand in his way, or when he wants them for his feast or sport.

Now, what does this struggle for existence mean? It means that the world, ever since the rise upon it of organic life—at least, ever since the advent of beings who are capable of feeling pleasure and pain—has been one great cock-pit, running red with the blood of mutual slaughter. In this struggle for existence there is no quarter given. You are not let off to fight another day. As Professor Huxley says, the result for the vanquished is death. And this red cock-pit, which the world has been ever since sentient organisms appeared upon it, I am told by the Theists was designed, and that the Being who designed it foresaw all that would happen, sees what does happen, and, in spite of all our efforts to improve it, continues it as it is. I say that this is too hard for common flesh and blood to believe, if we realise what it means. I would rather be an Atheist, who says, “I know nothing of God, and your definition of God does not commend itself to my intelligence, in the face of the facts of existence,” than be a Theist, believing in a God who permits—nay, as Creator, *ordained*—that which every tender-hearted man and woman would put a stop to, if possible, to-morrow. (Applause.)

What is human history? Looked at through the long records that have come down to us, it is more or less a long succession of quarrelling, largely about religion, and wars of dynasty and ambition, and the sacrifice of the lives, liberties, and happiness of the great masses of the people, in the interests of those who leaped into the seats of power, and used mankind for their own purposes. Why, it is only within recent memory that the people, even in civilised countries, have been brought within the pale of a free constitution. Their whole lives were previously decided for them by a handful of upper classes. I can no more see in human history, than I can see in Evolution, the signs of an intelligent and moral governor. Even when we take man as he now is, where and how does Theism justify itself? The human organism is extremely imperfect. Take the most

splendid-looking specimen, and the physiologist will tell you that, even in such a case, there are many variations from the normal standard. And how many of us are splendid specimens? If you take the world all through, the condition of man as an organism, stripped of the vanity of his apparel, reflects no great credit upon his Creator. (Dissent.) This Creator has been producing men for thousands of years, and has not yet learned to produce men who can bring about a state of society without workhouses, without gaols, without pauperism. (Applause.) Why, I think if we were constructed with something less than infinite wisdom, with something less than infinite goodness, with something less than infinite power, one might expect the human race to be better than it now is after all these thousands of years of experiment. (Applause.)

Even if you take the human organ which Paley, in his *Natural Theology*, laid so much stress upon, what is the fact? I observe that Mr. Lee, like myself, trusts to the aid of glasses. Now, I went to a very eminent optician in London, some few months ago, to have my eyes tested afresh, and he said, in the way of conversation, as a practical man, that the human eye was a very imperfect instrument. Professor Tyndall says that the great German scientist, Helmholtz, who died last year, declared that if a thing like the human eye were sent to him by a workman, he would send it back with severe reprobation. I cannot conceive that infinite intelligence, after thousands of years of practice, could not turn out better eyes than are now located in our heads. And what have we found since rapid communication came in, and engine-drivers were employed who had to be signalled with colored lights? It has been discovered that a very large percentage of people are color-blind, and cannot distinguish colors accurately, especially blue and red and green. Now, if this be so, it argues some defect in the Infinite Designer of the universe, and I want to know who is responsible for these defects. If some other being is not

responsible for them, then God is responsible for them. If God produces eyes that cannot see, or eyes that can only see very inadequately, it is idle to tell me that his wisdom and power are infinite ; for infinite wisdom would know how to produce better eyes, and infinite power would be able to second the designs of infinite wisdom.

Then look at the disasters that occur in the world. Man is encouraged to build his house, to found his home, and suddenly, without warning, the earthquake shatters it and kills him ; or, if he is spared himself, perhaps his dearest are buried beneath its ruins. Do you mean to tell me that an infinite intelligence is 'responsible for this ? Do you mean to tell me that the work of that infinite intelligence is prompted by infinite wisdom, and is carried out by infinite power ? I say that these disasters that are constantly desolating the world, that these pestilences, these blightings of crops, are all confutations of your Theistic theory. Here in England we send missionaries out to India, and when a famine occurs in India through the failure of the harvest we subscribe money in order to save from starvation the people who, if left to providence, would starve by the action of this God of infinite wisdom and goodness and power.

How, upon the Theistic hypothesis, can you reconcile yourself to the fact of disease ? Disease is ever baffling the man of science. Often, as we master one disease, another becomes more malignant. As we learn how to treat fevers, cancer becomes more severe in its ravages ; and, as we manage, by improved sanitation, to get a better condition of general health among the people, we suffer from that disease which is known as insanity, and which is gaining ground in every civilised country. Now, what is the *cause* of these diseases ? You may tell me it is the microbes ; but who made the microbes to produce diseases ? Your infinite deity planned the microbe and planned the man ; he arranged it so that the microbe would get into the man's blood, and set up an action there which produces terrible

suffering, and perhaps death. A man is produced ; he may be a splendid specimen of the human race ; but a cancer is planted within him by the arrangements of this infinite intelligence, and he becomes a mere provider for a malignant, devouring parasite.

While these things continue, while destitution fills our workhouses, while crime fills our gaols, while disease fills our hospitals, while insanity fills our asylums, and while men are engaged in mutual slaughter all over the world, I say I remain an Atheist, and that the facts of life contradict the Theism which you are asking me to accept.

The minute which is reserved to me now I will spend in just enforcing, very briefly, a summary of my position.

Atheism is not a denial of any God. It is being without God, because one cannot see the evidence of his existence ; or because the facts of life are opposed to Theism as it is propounded. Atheism, as such, is not called upon to affirm, as a result of finite speculation, any theory about the origin of an infinite universe. When the Atheist, with men of science to back him, looks through the process of evolution, looks through the history of the world, examines the present condition of sentient existence upon the globe, he sees everywhere about him strong demonstration that Theism, which defines God as infinitely wise, powerful, and good, cannot be true. The theory does not fit the facts. You must, therefore, either remove the facts (which you cannot), or you must alter your theory. As your theory stands, and as the facts stand, they contradict each other. And the Atheistic position is supported by the contradiction between your theory and the experience of our lives. (Loud applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN : Ladies and Gentlemen,—Before calling upon Mr. Lee to reply, I will take the liberty of suggesting that those persons who feel somewhat impatient as they listen to views which do not accord with their own should repress their zeal, with the consciousness that their own

champion will, in due course, have the opportunity of replying. I must, further, press this point, because, with every desire to be impartial, I cannot be blind to the fact that the majority of persons present are in distinct opposition to the views expressed by the gentleman who has just sat down.

I will take the liberty of saying that the attribute of fair play demands that the courage he displays in standing before an hostile audience, and so fearlessly expounding his principles, should secure for him a patient and respectful hearing.

I make these observations in good faith, and I also bespeak for Mr. Lee your kindly consideration, as he has been seriously indisposed to-day, and I can only regard his presence here to-night as an indication of his pluck and determination in carrying through his part of the program.

MR. LEE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Foote, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have listened to the address which Mr. Foote has given us with a very great deal of attention, but, I must say, with a very great deal of disappointment. I gathered that Mr. Foote wished us to understand that Atheists had no theory of the universe; but, before Mr. Foote sat down, he showed us that they have a theory of the universe; that they are able to judge of the Theistic theory, and declare it to be bad, and speak of another—the Atheistic—as better.

In spite of these facts, Mr. Foote has repeated his statement that Atheism does not deny God, and that Atheism has no theory of the universe. I hold in my hand Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's debate with the Rev. T. Lawson, of West Hartlepool, on *Is Atheism the True Doctrine of the Universe?* Mr. Foote quoted Mr. Bradlaugh several times last night; I am therefore appealing to his own authority to refute his statements. Mr. Bradlaugh says: "By Atheism I mean the affirmation of one existence. This affirmation is a positive, not a negative, affirmation, and is properly



describable as Atheism, *because it does not include in it any possibility of Theism—that is, of God.*" On page 2 of this book he very justly says : "Either Atheism or Theism must be the true doctrine of the universe. I assume that no other theory is feasible. Theism is either Pantheism, Polytheism, or Monotheism. *Atheism denies alike the reasonableness of Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism.*"

In face of this, our friend says Atheists have no theory of the universe—that is, I presume, no constructive theory. They can criticise another theory, but, when it comes to actual building up, Atheists find they have no foundation on which to rest, and, like the man who built upon the sand, the first blast of the storm topples the structure to the ground. (Applause.)

Mr. Bradlaugh says, on page 3 : "If Monism be true, and Atheism be Monism, then Atheism is necessarily the true theory of the universe. I submit that there cannot be more than one ultimate explanation." Thus Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, who was a great authority on these subjects, is in distinct antagonism with Mr. Foote, for he (Mr. Bradlaugh) says Atheism *has* a theory of the universe, and, if that theory be true, no other theory can be.

I pass on to notice what Mr. Foote said last night, in reference to the relation between the brain and thought. He told us that, whenever he finds an organism in a certain condition, there he finds thought ; but is it not a fact that, in some cases, where the brain cannot be shown to have any physical defect, no thought can be exhibited ? Is it not true also that, where the brain has *many physical defects*, thought is not injured ? I shall be glad if Mr. Foote will kindly answer these questions in his next speech, whether we are engaged in a Socratic debate or not.

Our friend said that, where he finds a given physical condition, there he finds thought. Now, Dr. Carpenter, in his *Mental Physiology* (page 110), says : "Further, it has been often established, alike by experiments on animals and by

observations on the phenomena of disease and accident in man, that the substance of the cerebrum is itself insensible—that is, no injury done to it, or physical impression made upon it, is *felt* by the subject of it.” And Dr. Carpenter goes on to say: “It is clear, therefore, that *the presence of the cerebrum is not essential to consciousness.*”

So much for Mr. Foote’s contention that, where he finds a certain physical condition, there he finds thought. Dr. Carpenter distinctly opposes that view. Indeed, it is agreed by all great mental physiologists that it is impossible for us to explain the passage from the physics of the brain to the facts of self-consciousness ; while Professor Tyndall assures us that self-consciousness is the rock on which Materialism splits.

But Mr. Foote says that he denies my right to assert that matter has originated. I repay the compliment by denying his right to assert that it did not originate.

But what does Mr. Foote mean by the word “matter” ? He has used the term several times. Every word I used I defined as I used it. I therefore demand an explanation of this word “matter.”

Mr. Foote last night denied that he is compelled to think of something as eternal, and he spoke of the changing phenomena of this earth and the worlds around us, implying that an infinite series of causes and effects is the explanation of the evolution of the visible universe. That was the implication ; or, if it was not, what was the implication ? And if it was, then Mr. Foote *can* think of the eternal, for he speaks of an eternal series of causes and effects. But if we carefully analyse what is meant by an infinite, or eternal, series of causes and effects, we find it means that a long series of finite changes can make up a total which is infinite. This is opposed to common sense, educated reason, and the first principles of scientific induction. You cannot get an infinite total by the multiplication of finite units. Mr. Foote may try, but he will fail.

Mr. Foote goes on to say that he knows only the conditioned. Then how does he know it is conditioned? This is important. If he knows only the conditioned, how does he know it is conditioned? I must have that explained to-night; and, though we are not having a Socratic debate, I have a right to ask a question like this, and I demand to have it answered.

But, Mr. Foote says, Cardinal Newman, one of the keenest intellects of this century, saw certain things in nature which he could not understand, or reconcile with the idea of God. That may be so; but is it not rather strange that Cardinal Newman, with his keen intellect, was so thoroughly opposed to Atheism that he became one of those exalted souls who live in the very atmosphere of the realised presence of the living, eternal God? (Applause.)

But Mr. Foote says no man has a right to affirm what he does not know, and to affirm the eternal you must know it; but, in order to know it, you must be eternal. Now, this is a play on the word "know." Does Mr. Foote mean, by the word "know," *absolute* knowledge, absolute information, about anything? Does he mean such a knowledge of any given thing that nothing more can be added to the knowledge? If so, I deny that he knows anything in this sense. But, if I can have a *partial* knowledge of Mr. Foote, if I can have a partial knowledge of this table, if I can have a partial knowledge of this universe, why cannot I also have a partial knowledge of God? The very fact that we exist demands that something must have existed without beginning, that something must be eternal; and, whatever our theory of the heavens or the earth, or man, may be, deep down under every theory and form of belief there is this absolute fact of the mind—something must be eternal.

But, Mr. Foote says, if God exists, he does not need to be defended. No, he does not. But, when we find men trying to rob the nation of its belief in God, we come forward with our little reasoning powers, and, in the struggle

of intellect with intellect, and mind against mind, we shatter the beliefs of those who say there is no God. (Applause.)

In reference to my statement that we have certain bodily, mental, and spiritual appetites, Mr. Foote says: "Yes, I admit we have these appetites for knowledge; but have we not room enough in the universe to satisfy these appetites?" I say, No; and the *fact* that all the progressive races of the earth have not been content to rest in the universe is a proof that man is not satisfied with the universe. When he looks upon this universe, as it comes within the field of his vision, he sees upon its face the indications of a Being behind and above the universe—a Being to whom he must go on, and before whom he must bow. No, our friend has not shown that we must be satisfied with the universe which is around us; rather, we rise "through nature up to nature's God."

Our friend has referred to a sentence which occurred in the little poem\* which I recited to you last night, in which the "*sweet kindness*" of God is spoken of. He said (and I think I never heard a more illogical argument in my life)—"Kind," said he, "when this God has designed thumb-screws and racks to tear and rend men?" God designed thumb-screws and racks! Why, it is man who has done this, not God. No, not God, but man, on the nature of whom Mr. Foote builds his philosophy, saying there exist guarantees of morality in human nature. Guarantees of morality in human nature! History and experience refute the statement, and show that, when man is astray from the moral Governor of the universe, these guarantees become guarantees of so many ferocious appetites, which wreak themselves on the weak, the defenceless, the poor, and the holy. The fact is, no trust can be put in man; our trust must be in the living, eternal God. (Applause.)

\* This poem will be found at the end of this report, the reporter having omitted to take it down in its proper place.

Our friend says we cannot get thought out of the universe. I am not now referring to the idiot he brought forward last night, because we never said an idiot could get thought out of the universe. I simply ask Mr. Foote this question : If this universe is not intelligible, how can we have any science at all ? Science is systematised knowledge, and, if there is no system in the happening of things, how can you have a science of the happening of them ? But Professor Lodge, one of the greatest of living physicists, in his address before the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association, at Cardiff, made use of these words : " And I would say, have faith in the intelligibility of the universe. Intelligibility has been the great creed, in the strength of which all intellectual advance has been attempted and all scientific progress made." So, then, Professor Lodge, the great physicist, the great experimentalist, comes forward, and I put his statement as to the intelligibility of the universe alongside Mr. Foote's denial that it is so.

But we have another strange fact, and it is this : That this Atheism, of which our friend has been speaking, is a wonderful something ; but he is afraid to say what it is. He says he will not allow me to define his terms ; yet he claims the right to define my terms. But, if Mr. Foote will not give me the right to define his terms, I refuse to give him the right to define my terms. Our friend says : " Atheism does not mean denial of God ; it means without God." But the history of the word and the use of the word go against the individual opinion of Mr. Foote ; and I am here to say that the great masters of language have a right to be heard on this matter. If Mr. Foote wants Atheism simply to mean " without God," why does he not say he is an Agnostic, and have done with it ?

But our friend says : " How can mind produce matter ?" Will our friend kindly tell me what he means by matter ? I defined matter as " the vehicle of energy." If that be true, then the universe is the expression of the will of God ; and,

until our friend shows this to be impossible, our position is unshaken.

But Mr. Foote says: "Can God have designed this universe, when the law of it is 'eat or be eaten'?" I will deal with this doctrine in a few minutes, and probably I shall be able to eat it before I have done.

Our friend says, when I speak of motion being impossible in an infinitely extended universe of matter, I forget the different densities of matter. I do not. I say that you cannot have different density in matter where you have a perfect vacuum. Every particle of matter must be of the same weight in a perfect vacuum. If, however, the universe be *full* of matter, every point of space must be occupied. Therefore, there can be no space unoccupied. To talk of the *different densities* of matter is to say there is room in space, points where matter is not.

Our friend says he is not prepared to say matter is eternal or not eternal. That is standing on the edge—not going one way or the other; and, if Atheism is in that position, I do not envy it.

Our friend says he would rather believe in the eternity of something which he knows than of something he does not know. But he does not know matter; he knows only his sensations. In other words, *he can think of matter only in terms of mind*. Now, Sir, if you can think of matter only in terms of mind, the most certain fact is mind, and you reach matter by inference. You really know mind; you only *infer matter*.

Our friend says we have these perpetual discords and debates because we have not got at the facts; but the universe is all around us, and we are seeking to understand it. Men have understood it, and, in proportion as they have understood it, they have risen above the universe, and found themselves in the presence of One "greater than I, and holier than thou."

But our friend says he falls back upon the fact that man

cannot sound the depths of infinity. Nobody dreams of his doing so ; but we do believe we can apprehend the infinite, and know it exists. We can know a little of it, though not all.

Our friend says the whole question of the reasonableness of Atheism or Theism resolves itself into analysing the claims of Theism. Oh, indeed ! I deny this ; for, if Theism be proven untrue as I represent it here to-night, it does not follow that Atheism is true, for some Theistic form of belief may be proven intensely reasonable. In trying to attack my position, instead of defending his own, as he ought to have done, Mr. Foote has simply been fighting, not for Atheism, but against Theism.

Mr. Foote defines Theism as "that form of belief which declares that the visible, tangible, conditioned universe is created and governed by infinite intelligence, which belongs to an infinite personality, and is characterised by infinite power and infinite wisdom." I agree with all that. And now I hope we shall be able to discuss something that is reasonable. I wonder whether Mr. Foote will say that a personal being must be limited ? We shall see.

Meanwhile our friend asks : "What is the teaching of modern science ?" and he answers : "It is Evolution." Very well. Our friend implied that Evolution has destroyed intention in the universe ; and, therefore, having destroyed the design—the intention—there is no room for the recognition of God in the world. I hold in my hand the second volume of *Studies in the Theory of Descent*, by Dr. Weismann, probably the greatest of living Evolutionists, and this is what he says : "I believe that I have shown that the theory of selection by no means leads, as is always assumed, to the denial of a teleological universal cause, and to Materialism ; and I thereby hope that I have cleared the way for this doctrine, the importance of which it is scarcely possible to over-estimate. Mechanism and teleology do not exclude one another ; they are, rather, in mutual agreement. With-

out teleology there would be no mechanism, but only a confusion of crude forces ; and without mechanism there would be no teleology, for how could the latter effect its purpose ?” Against Mr. Foote’s statement I place this quotation from Dr. Weismann.

But our friend says he cannot imagine a God designing a world in which “eat or be eaten” is the law of existence. Our friend forgot to tell us how he gets this fact of “eat or be eaten.” In other words, he got the eater before he got the life to eat ; and I want to know where he gets the life before he gets the eater. But if this universe, or this world, is, as he described it, “one great cock-pit, running red with human slaughter,” I ask him how he can reconcile this with his coming here to-night and advocating the teaching of Atheism, when this blind, mindless, cruel, biting, slaying machine, which he calls the world, grinds the lives, and blasts the hopes, and crushes the affections of those whom it has produced, *only to destroy*. No future life, no future good ; but blindly, aimlessly, uselessly, simply to play with, it produces men only to destroy them, only to crush them, only to make them suffer. That, Sir, is the teaching of Atheism. But we Theists believe that, through these sorrows and sufferings, there is a great purpose being worked out—that God is working out a plan ; and, until our friend can show that the plan is not being realised, he has no right to reject the belief that there is such a plan.

Now, if Evolution means anything, it means that everything which is, and which has been, has a purpose and a function ; and therefore Evolution itself witnesses to the great Being who has arranged it thus and thus.

But is it true that this universe is a great, brutalising, “eat-or-be-eaten” machine ? (“Yes,” “No.”) There are more smiles than tears in the world, more days of sunshine than rain ; and, on a mere balance of probabilities, there is more good in God than evil. So that our friend has not in



any way got rid of the fact of these things witnessing to a Being who is actively at work in the universe.

Our friend says there are earthquakes, and I know not what besides. True, but think. We cannot get rid of the *facts*. Suffering is in the world, earthquakes are in the world ; but in reference to human suffering, remember this, that nearly every instance, if not every instance, can be traced to the carelessness or the wickedness of the man himself or his parents. In other words, law has been violated, and violated law must avenge itself. If it were not so, we could go and stick our hands in the fire and let them be burnt off without pain ; but the good God has given us nerves, so that when we feel the fire we should pull our hands away. (Applause.)

But our friend says that these things destroy, in his mind, the possibility of the recognition of purpose. Yes, but other great men have looked into these matters, and have come to an opposite conclusion. Take the case of earthquakes. I am quoting from a speech on "Earthquakes and Volcanoes," by Professor W. C. Williamson, and on page 235 of the book he says : "I have now done. I would only, in conclusion, again remind you that it is a short-sighted philosophy which sees in these events only calamitous instruments of destruction and evil. While there have been dark days in the history of the world occasioned by these agencies, on the whole their effect is beneficial." I could give you other quotations from this work if time would permit.

Our friend says : "I notice Mr. Lee has to seek the aid of spectacles." Yes. And he said : "I went to a great oculist recently, and this oculist said that the eye was a very imperfect instrument." Well, now, if this eye which we have has somehow been evolved without mind and intention, how is it this great oculist, with power to plan, has not given us a better one ? Our friend quoted a great German author on the eye, Helmholtz ; but our friend forgot to say

that, when Helmholtz had pointed out what he regarded as imperfections in the eye as an optical instrument, he concluded his address by saying that, if every improvement which he had suggested were put into the eye, it would render it *less fit* for its purpose than it now is ; and he went on to say that no sane man would think of taking a razor to cleave blocks—he would take an axe ; and that for the rough-and-ready work which the human eye was called to perform, it could not be improved. So, then, our friend has his own authority with whom to settle. But I want our friend to answer this : If it is necessary for an optician to make my glasses and his glasses (which cannot be compared to the wondrous mechanism of the human eye), does not the human eye itself demand a maker who shall be greater in wisdom and power than all the opticians on earth ?

But our friend says we see men destroyed all around us. Yes, but there is this difference between the position of the Theist and that of the Atheist. The Theist does not say the man is destroyed. God has given him life, and God has a right to remove that life to any other sphere He pleases. He does not destroy the being of man, He simply changes the place of being, and, therefore, He has a right, if a man does not square with His demands, or if He thinks fit to elevate him to some other condition, to do it, because He is the originator of all life, and in Him only can life exist.

But our friend says there are diseases. Yes, even microbes. Again, I ask you to think. If we were travelling on your Midland Railway, so long as the engines kept their proper lines, we should say the powers in the engine were good ; but if two engines coming in opposite directions collided, that power which was good would become an evil. Why ? Because the arrangements which had been laid down for their safety had been violated, either by the carelessness or wickedness of man. Now, the vital forces of our body and of all living organisms God intended should

work aright ; but men, by disregarding the laws of health and such like, cause those forces to be misdirected, so that, instead of healthy organisms, we have unhealthy ones. Yet, even here, God's goodness is shown, for it makes us more careful of our conditions ; they are deputations from God's Sanitary Department, urging cleanliness on the world.

Now let us see what we have done. Mr. Foote has given us a series of statements. I have touched them every one. But the questions I gave him last night are still evaded ; the propositions I laid down he has not refuted. Those propositions stand, those questions will be printed in the report ; and if the people see the propositions have been evaded or not dealt with, and the questions have been unanswered, they will draw their own conclusion, and, like wise people, say Atheism can only attack another system, it cannot build up, it cannot defend its own. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN : I have now, ladies and gentlemen, to call upon Mr. Foote to give us the first of four short speeches which have still to be delivered.

MR. FOOTE : My opponent began by confessing to a disappointment. I am not surprised. It is what an Atheist generally hears from a Theist. It would be a curious thing if an Atheist were to deliver a speech which satisfied a Theist. (Hear, hear.)

I have further to say that the major part of Mr. Lee's speech to-night was simply a re-dealing with matters we discussed last evening. I admit his right, when he leads off, to determine the direction of the discussion for that night ; but I claim the same right to determine the direction of the discussion when it is my turn to lead the debate.

Mr. Lee was good enough to quote from a debate of Charles Bradlaugh's. I fail to see a single word in what he quoted which was at variance with what I quoted from Mr. Bradlaugh last night. To use Mr. Lee's own words, I

should have been disappointed had it been so, because my estimate of Charles Bradlaugh was that, whether right or wrong, he was one of the most careful thinkers and one of the most careful expressers of his thought. Now, Charles Bradlaugh says in explicit terms, as I read to you last night, that Atheism does not say there is no God; and I submit that a man's explicit statement to that effect is of more importance than any inference which Mr. Lee or anyone else may derive from some other passage which he has penned or spoken, in written or oral debate. Here is a man's written and explicit declaration which cannot be evaded: "The Atheist does not say there is no God." The Atheist takes the definitions of God which are laid before him for his acceptance, and, finding that they do not fit in with the facts of existence, he contradicts them, because the facts contradict them. Now, if that is not an intelligible position for a man to take up, then we must admit that we use words in a totally different signification, and any further discussion, at least upon that point, is simply a waste of time.

But we were told that what Mr. Bradlaugh's statement came to was that Atheism denies Theism, including Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism. Well, I admitted as much in my opening speech, and there was no occasion to elaborate what was admitted.

It was stated by my opponent that Atheism had no foundation. It has the same foundation that anything else has, or possibly can have. The only foundation for anything, as Mr. Lee knows well, is man's knowledge. Mr. Lee also knows that there have been Atheistic scientists, like Professor Clifford, and that there have been Agnostic scientists (which comes to the same thing), like Charles Darwin, Professor Huxley, and Herbert Spencer, whose names will stand as high as any upon the Theistic roll that Mr. Lee can produce.

Mr. Lee wants to know what I mean by "conditioned,"

but Mr. Lee himself first introduced the term. In his opening speech last night he defined the universe as "the sum-total of all conditioned existence," and if Mr. Lee wants to know what I mean by conditioned, why did he not tell us what he means by it himself? I did not suppose there was going to be any quarrel over "conditioned." "Conditioned" means existing in relation to other things. All knowledge is conditioned, and the very fact that it is conditioned debars it from ever being infinite. Knowledge means discrimination, the separation of things, the marking out of categories of similarity and dissimilarity; and that means analysis, distinction, and classification. Knowledge is never complete until it arrives at definition. And to define a thing is to limit it, and, having limited it, you cannot regard it as infinite; consequently to know a thing is to define it, and to define it is to place it beyond the category of infinitude.

We were told, too, that Cardinal Newman, with his keen intellect (I believe the word I used was "the keenest *theological* intellect of this century"—I am not prepared to admit that he was the keenest intellect)—but Cardinal Newman, we are told, came to be a Theist. Why, he was brought up one. He never had the opportunity of becoming one when left to himself. And it is not a fact that Cardinal Newman felt that Theism was safe in argument. Cardinal Newman said to the Protestant: "If you submit the first principles of your faith to the criticism of reason, they will never stand the test." "Nothing," he said, "in religion will stand the test of discussion—nothing will escape dissolution under the play of the restless intellect of man." That is confessing that, if Theism were submitted to an analytical discussion, it could not hold the field, and must fall back upon the very grounds on which children receive it—grounds of authority and grounds of faith. Men do not become Theists, in the main, because they reason themselves into Theism; they are trained in it as children, and are

made Theists before they are able to judge for themselves. I was charged with "robbing the community of its faith in God." Robbing ! that is a term from the Old Bailey.

Mr. LEE : I did not wish to use it in that sense, and, if it is repugnant to Mr. Foote, I will withdraw it.

Mr. FOOTE : Every man who thinks he has a glimmer of truth not only has the right to present it to his fellow-men, but is under a duty to do so. If a man finds, in listening to another man, that a belief which he thought true is only half true, or not true at all, instead of being deprived of anything valuable, he is deprived of something which occupied the door of his mind, and kept the truth out of it. When this intruder is removed, the truth can enter in the place of the falsehood that usurped its situation. (Applause.)

We were told, too, that there was no guarantee of morality in human nature, and that we must trust entirely to God ; yet I find that some of the most notorious villains of our time have been well-known professors of religion. I do not say they were so *because* of their religion, but in the face of their profession, and in the face of the statistics of crime, it is idle to tell me we must trust to God for morality. Wherever a human heart beats with sympathy ; wherever mothers love their children ; wherever fathers protect them ; wherever parents will, with their own lives, save the lives of their dear ones ; wherever one man will rush to the aid of another—*there* is the guarantee of morality. Your argosy of faith floats upon the great sea of humanity. You declare that the water would dry up without your fleet ; yet, if your fleet were to sink, the mighty ocean of humanity would roll on the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. (Applause.)

Now, we come to what has been said about my opening speech. Mr. Lee quoted from Weismann, and said that he put against Mr. Foote's views of design the words of a great German. But there is no particular sanctity about a

German. Charles Darwin was a greater than Weismann. Charles Darwin is universally allowed by the scientific world to be the greatest scientific intellect of the present century. ("No, no"; "Yes, yes.")

Charles Darwin says—I am quoting from his own statement, which may be found in his *Life and Letters*—"The old argument from design in nature, as given by Paley, that formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. There seems to me no more design in the variability of organic beings, and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows." There is Darwin against Weismann ; and if you say they extinguish each other, then it leaves us where we ought to have been left—to a discussion on the facts of the case, without bringing in an arbitrary authority. This matter is not to be settled by authorities, or else what is the use of discussion ? If authorities would settle it, you have merely to get books, see what the authorities have written, and then bow down to them. I do not follow that plan. I think for myself. And you are here to judge of the arguments advanced, and based upon the facts. It is nothing to say that one eminent man is on Mr. Lee's side, and another eminent man is on my side. All that counts for nothing. I do not believe in the truth of authority. I stand up for the authority of Truth. (Applause.)

Mr. Lee said that God's kindness had not made the racks and thumbscrews. But God's kindness made the men—made them what they were—and they invented the racks and the thumbscrews. Mark you, the racks and thumbscrews were not invented and used by Secularists or Atheists. They were invented and used by believers in God—"yes," "no"—and they were used in the name of God. ("No.") Now, if anyone were to commit atrocity in my name, and in my name were to take innocent men, whose only crime was daring to think for themselves, put them upon a rack and stretch every fibre of their sensitive frames, devising

apparatus to inflict agony upon every part of their being—if I could not stop it, I would denounce it, and disown all responsibility for it. Such things were done in the name of your God, yet he never stopped it, but let it go on. It is science and humanity that have put down the brutalities of your religion. (Applause.)

There are, says Mr. Lee, more smiles than tears in the world, and so he strikes a balance in favour of his God. A balance in favour of infinite wisdom, infinite power, and infinite goodness ! And man strikes it ! I can understand a balance to a man's credit ; but a balance to God's credit ! And this is the God I am asked to believe in. I cannot believe in a God like that.

If God makes poor eyes, and the oculist sees their defects, how is it—Mr. Lee asks—that the oculist cannot make better ones ? Why, “making” is a term of art, and not a term of nature. Eyes are not made ; human beings are not made ; lower animals are not made ; plants are not made ; you cannot even make a crystal ; you cannot make the crystallised frost upon your window-pane. The word in nature is “growth,” and, if the eye has grown, it is God's method, according to Mr. Lee's argument, of bringing it into existence ; and God is responsible for his handiwork. It is idle to say we have not the right to point out errors in a theory unless we have a better theory of our own. We have such a right. I may not be able to explain the universe, and I admit I cannot ; yet, if you put forward a theory that is contradicted by facts which you and I alike admit, I have a right to say that, whatever may be the *true* theory, yours is *false* ; because a theory which does not fit the facts *is* false, according to the canons of logic. (Cheers.)

MR. LEE : You will observe that the questions which I put to Mr. Foote in my last speech have not been dealt with. Mr. Foote has not told us what he believes or under-



stands by matter ; and the many other questions I put to him, which are really of vital importance from my point of view, have again been ignored. Things which we cannot deal with we ought to say we cannot explain. If Mr. Foote cannot deal with these questions, will he tell us so ? For, if he cannot deal with them, and in so far as he does not deal with them, the Atheistic position is worthless.

My friend says : “ My opponent commenced by confessing a disappointment.” I did. And he says : “ Of course, we cannot possibly expect a Theist to be satisfied with the *Atheistic* position.” Quite so. But I was not confessing my disappointment with Mr. Foote’s position. I was confessing my disappointment with the fact that Mr. Foote had not seen that it devolved upon him to construct something, and with his not attempting to vindicate Atheism. We have met here to decide which is the *more* reasonable, Theism or Atheism ; but Mr. Foote has fled from Atheism as a man flees from the plague. *Disproof* of Theism does not mean *proof* of Atheism. I want Mr. Foote to remember that, as an Atheist, it is his duty to present something like a constructive system. He may say what he likes about Mr. Bradlaugh and my quotations from him. Mr. Bradlaugh distinctly says : “ It [that is, Atheism] does not include in it any possibility of Theos or God.” And he says by Theism—that is, the system I am defending—“ I mean either Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism, and Atheism denies alike the reasonableness of Pantheism, Polytheism, and Monotheism.” If this is correct, then Atheism denies Theism ; and, if it denies Theism, Mr. Foote has no right to say that it does not deny God, for, since Theism affirms God, the denial of Theism is the denial of God.

Our friend says Atheism does not construct. Mr. Bradlaugh says it does, and he enters into a written discussion—not a spoken, but a written discussion—in order to show that Atheism is the true doctrine of the universe. Now, if that is not constructing, then I do not know what construc-

tion is. I am bound to say that Mr. Bradlaugh himself seems to me to fail to construct anything, and all Atheists must share in the same fate.

Our friend says I used, last night, the word "conditioned." Yes. And I also said what I meant by it—(cheers)—namely, that which witnesses to something other than itself, and demands for its existence some other thing. Now, Mr. Foote has no right to say that we do not explain our words where we take every care to explain them. But Mr. Foote says that by conditioned he means "existing in relation to other things"; but this universe is one, not many. Then what does this witness to, what is it in relation to? If in relation to something, what is that something? If not in relation to something, then it has no relation at all; and, if it has no relation at all, then it is not conditioned, and you do not know it, for you know only the conditioned.

Our friend quotes a number of scientists, Darwin and others, and he says these men were men who believed in Atheism or Agnosticism. I say that these men, almost without exception, repelled the charge of Atheism. Tyndall said that this word was affixed to him unfairly, and repelled it. Huxley has rejected the name again and again, Darwin never said he was an Atheist, and not one of the men to whom reference has been made ever said he was an Atheist. In order to show their humility, they took up the position that they did not know whether there is any God, but they did not say there is none, and they did not try to prove there is none; they simply said they did not know. So our friend failed altogether even in his references to these men.

But our friend says, in reference to the problem of knowledge, that knowledge is only relation. Very well. If knowledge is only relation, and this universe is one, and, therefore, according to your position, is not relative to any other thing, how can you, a part of the universe, be conscious of another part, unless that other part be other than yourself; and if that other part be other than yourself, then you are in

relation to something ; and, if you are conditioned by that something which possesses the same nature as yourself, that something must be conditioned, and that conditioned something must witness to another existence which is not conditioned. Our friend will see that if we have that one substance which Mr. Bradlaugh understood by Monism, you can have no relationship at all, and, therefore, knowledge drops out of the mind.

In reference to Cardinal Newman, that keen *theological* intellect (I think Mr. Foote emphasised *theological*. But because it is a theological intellect, does it alter the intellect ? Is not an intellect equally reliable in theological as in scientific inquiries ?), who was only too pleased to confess himself enrapt by a presence higher and greater than himself. "Yes," says Mr. Foote, "but he was born and trained amid Theistic influences." True. But, Mr. Foote, according to your theory, every child is born an Atheist ; according to your theory, every man that has ever lived was born an Atheist. Then how came the idea of God into the world at all ? (Cheers.) If a man has to be taught there is a God, then God must have taught the first man, and to say that this is not so is to say that the law of evolution has been broken. The law of evolution means continuity—the constant unravelling and unrolling of what was previously hid ; but, if Atheism is true, the recognition of God is a great spring with no continuity in it—a spring across a chasm ; it is a miracle in mind, and requires a great supernatural power to make that miracle possible. So that our friend has another question to deal with. Where did the idea of God come from if it has to be taught ? Perhaps Mr. Foote will pass this over without reply.

Our friend says, in reference to my statement that guarantees of morality do not exist in human nature, that God made this nature. Ah, yes, He did. God made man upright ; but he has sought out many devices. Men have thrust God away from them as far as they can, and, turning

to this earth, and this earth alone, and fixing their affections and their minds on things of time and sense alone, they have thought themselves to be part and parcel of a brutalising world ; and so they have crushed and torn each other, not because of God, but because their hearts have been opposed to God.

God, our friend says, has allowed this to occur, and, in a very thrilling statement, he said : "Now, if any man were to injure another in my name, if I could not stop it, I would denounce it." Yes, and the great God has put into men a power of mind which we call conscience, and that power of mind has bitten men like a serpent when they dared to break the law of God's world, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." (Applause.)

Our friend says God has not interfered in this world. We have no right to go into the question of revelation to-night, but we believe God has interfered. But our friend, Mr. Foote, does not believe in God because he has not interfered to stop certain cruelties ; and when he did interfere for the salvation of man from sin, our friend denied that he had interfered at all ! This is a very strange contradiction, and a very strange position to be in. (Derisive laughter.)

Mr. Foote referred to Weismann, and seems to imagine that I thought there is a strange charm in a *German* scientist.

MR. FOOTE : I said there is no magic in a German name.

MR. LEE : That implied the same. The reason I emphasised that Weismann was a German was that a great deal of our philosophy and science comes from Germany. The foremost thinkers in Europe to-day are to be found in Germany ; great experimenters and observers in Germany have given to the world facts, and inferences from facts, which English and other thinkers have been careful to follow out. That is why I emphasised German.

But our friend says that these quotations from Weismann

can be met by others from Darwin. Darwin denies that the argument from design can ever be held again as a proof of God. That is very strange, for Professor Huxley distinctly rejects that notion, and tells us that the teleologist—that is, a man who believes in design in nature—can always push the evolutionist, and ask him how it is that evolution happens to do these wonderful things; so I put Professor Huxley against Darwin.

But our friend says: "I am not going to appeal to authority. Eminence counts for nothing." I beg your pardon; it counts for much. Neither Mr. Foote nor myself—and I say this without the least disrespect for Mr. Foote, because no one has a greater appreciation of Mr. Foote's abilities than I have—but neither Mr. Foote nor myself has the right to speak about these facts without adducing the testimony of a man of eminence who knows all about them; and therefore we appeal, not to the authority of these men, but to the facts which these men produce; and we bring these facts forward, and, by the use of that reason which Mr. Foote glorifies, we infer from these facts certain conclusions, which are in favor of belief in God, and not against such belief.

But our friend says that God's kindness made the men who invented the rack and the thumbscrews, and such like. ("No.") I want to refer to that once more. These things exist; but, before you can say they ought not to exist, you must know all about the universe—you must know what is right for all the universe—and whether the forces to make this right are really now in operation, or whether better forces could be in operation. In other words, in order to re-judge the mechanism of the universe, you want an infinite mind and infinite knowledge, and neither Mr. Foote nor I possess them. Therefore, I say, when we see these blemishes, we must look for a meaning in them, and, if we can find a meaning in them, then the blemishes must be read through the meaning.

A word as to Darwin and his *Descent of Man*. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of Evolution, has gone into the question of suffering very thoroughly, and, in his work on *Darwinism*, he shows, in some three or four pages, that what Mr. Foote has attempted to establish on that point to-night is not what is in nature, but what exists only in Mr. Foote's mind. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN : We have now reached the final stage of this debate. I am about to call upon Mr. Foote to give us his last contribution to it ; and I would take the liberty of again saying that he is entitled, and I hope will receive, your careful and courteous attention. It is more than probable—I do not say I expect it—that he will adduce arguments and make statements which may trouble the minds of some who listen to them ; but I will again remind such persons that they will, on this occasion, have the opportunity of hearing the final word from their own champion.

MR. FOOTE : My attention is drawn to the fact that no new matter is to be introduced into the last speech. That is a point which my opponent must be careful about, as he has got the last speech, not I. My position is one which I generally find the Atheist has to accept. Theism, of course, is true, and Atheism, of course, is false ; yet Theists usually feel the advantage, even in the case of truth against error, of having the last word.

Now, with respect to Germany, I do not object to Germany ; my only surprise was that "German" should be put before "science," as it was. Science is not English, French, German, or of *any* nationality. Science is universal. Science speaks an universal language when it speaks fact and truth. And I deny that all our English science and philosophy comes from Germany. It is a libel upon England. Charles Darwin, the greatest biologist of this

century, was an Englishman ; and I thought last night we heard the name of a man that Mr. Lee ventured to call the greatest of physicists—Balfour Stewart—who, I believe, was a Scotchman, and that is pretty near to an Englishman.

Mr. Lee says I have not noticed many things he said. That is possible ; it is possible that I might say the same thing of him. (“No, no.”) What you declare to be impossible I make possible by saying it. Mr. Lee talks about the printed debate. Well, I do not want to be reminded of that ; I am content to abide by the printed debate. You see that sort of thing cuts two ways. (“Answer the question,” and “Order, order.”) I am answering what Mr. Lee chose to say, and I will answer what he said in my own way, and not in any way dictated by any member of this audience. (Cheers.)

Mr. Lee talked a great deal last night about matter, and I did not quarrel with his definition ; and, as there was no quarrel about the definition of matter, why on earth should the point of definition be raised again to-night ? There is no necessity for a fresh definition until we have objected to each other’s definitions. If Mr. Lee is anxious about another definition of matter, I tell him that, to my mind, matter is the substance of all phenomenal changes which we ascertain from sensation. But there is really no necessity for the definition being given at all when there is no quarrel whatever about definitions in relation to this particular matter.

Mr. Lee once more complains that Atheism does not construct something. I tell him again that, in my judgment, Theism does not construct any more than Atheism constructs. Theism is merely a speculation, and that speculation can only be linked on to construction through systematic religion, taught, not as Theistic speculation, but as God’s commands to men to guide them in their walk through life ; and that is, properly, no part of Theism, but always has to be derived from what is called Revelation.

Then, again, Mr. Lee says that Atheism and Agnosticism are different. What is the difference? It is very largely the difference between courage and timidity. I have defined—rather ironically, it may be, but I may repeat it as I have said it before—I have defined an Agnostic as an Atheist with a tall hat on; and really Agnostics, who, as Mr. Lee says—giving the names of Huxley and Spencer—declare they do not know there is a God, are, to all intents and purposes, in the same position as the Atheist. If they do not *know* there is a God, it is clear that they are *without* God, and to be without God is to be an Atheist.

Then we were told that God made man, but man's heart went astray and was opposed to God. ("Oh.") I should be sorry to misrepresent Mr. Lee.

Mr. LEE: The words were "but man has sought out many devices."

Mr. FOOTE: That is not the expression I was referring to. Mr. Lee said that man's heart had got opposed to God. I should be sorry to misrepresent him, but that is what I have written down, and what, I think, I heard—at any rate, it is the substance of what Mr. Lee said upon this point. Just take a human father and his child. If a child of mine go astray, and I have fulfilled all my duties towards him, I am not responsible for his wandering; because, in bringing him into the world, I was not able to determine absolutely his intellectual and moral character. But if a father *could* absolutely determine the intellectual and moral character of his child, and that child went astray, the father would be responsible for not exercising his power. (Applause.) God is not in the position of an earthly father. An earthly father works under what to us, however inscrutable, are laws of heredity; for a child is not simply the child of his father, he is a child of his father's father, and his mother's father, and their mothers and fathers. Heredity



is not confined to one generation ; it sweeps through the history of the race. The individual parent is often baffled by it ; there is a power greater than his own—the power of the whole past of the race over the present generation. But your God, on your theory, *can*, if he pleases, absolutely determine the mental and moral character of every child brought into the world. And, if man's heart goes wrong and gets opposed to God, God does not exercise the infinite power you say he possesses over his creatures.

We were told that there is a purpose in suffering. Easy words to utter ! but they carry no balm of consolation to my mind. I have witnessed suffering : I have felt a little, and witnessed much. I have experienced mental suffering. I have been made to suffer by the religion, or the professors of the religion, that Mr. Lee advocates. This suffering is a grim fact. You say there is a purpose in it. Tell us what you mean by a purpose. A purpose must have some sort of explanation. Do not call it a purpose unless you can give us some indication of what the purpose is. The general theory is that suffering is for the education, and chiefly the moral education, of the race. Ah, but it gets distributed in the wrong way. And there comes a time when suffering, instead of helping you, thrusts you down, degrades you, brings you to impotence, abjectness, and despair. If the suffering is for education in ethics, how is it that the very poorest, who, by the hard labour of their lives, are under less temptation than the idle or luxurious, get by far the most of it, while the idle and luxurious frequently go scot free ? I see no purpose in this at all. Why, we actually band ourselves together to abolish or diminish the very suffering which you say is so beautifully designed. God has a purpose in inflicting it, and we put the sufferers into a place we call a hospital, and we say to the men of science “ fight it.” We appoint nurses, and we say to them “ fight it.” We ask the public at large to find the money to assist in doing away with it. God is sending the suffering for moral

purposes, and we are striving to abolish it, and so to prevent the ethical education which you say God intends by his inflections.

God, we are told, has a right to take the life he sends. For the sake of argument I will not impugn that. There is no time to discuss it. But, assuming that God has the right to take life, let us see how it works out. Under the law we have a right to take life. A criminal is tried and sentenced to execution. But society insists that, if he is to be killed, he shall be killed in the most painless manner possible. We insist that the hanging shall be done with the utmost dispatch. In America they are trying whether electricity is not even less painful than hanging. In short, although we must (as we say) kill (though I doubt if anybody has that right), still, if we must kill, we are refined enough to say we must kill swiftly and painlessly. But that is not God's method; what we see in nature is not *swift* killing; it is *slow* killing. When man is killed by "the act of God," it is often done very slowly; not in a moment as by the hangman's noose or by electrocution. A lingering disease comes on and kills him week by week, month by month, and year by year. It is an agonising form of cruelty. If God has the right to take life, I deny that he has the right to take it in that way. If life must be taken, it should be taken swiftly and painlessly. All this cruelty in nature, all this killing of human beings by slow disease and long agony, gives the lie to the statement that your God is a being of infinite kindness and love.

Mr. Lee says that I object to revelation because I am told that God *does* interfere in the world, and that I object to Theism because God *does not* interfere in the world. He says that is a contradiction. There is no contradiction; it is a harmony. I object to Theism, because God does not interfere to prevent injustice, cruelty, and suffering. You try to justify his non-interference. Afterwards you offer me a revelation, in which he does interfere. The contradiction

and discord are, therefore, on your own side ; and my position is consistent throughout.

But I am to tell you how the idea of God came ! Well, the idea is of slow growth. What you Theists call God is not the conception of God which is entertained in lower stages of mental culture. Man begins by ascribing to the universe like thoughts and feelings with his own. He fancies that the leaf, which is blown along, moves by some power akin to his. He fancies he sees in the lightning, and hears in the thunder, the wrath of some outraged being ; and he falls prostrate, beseeching that he may be saved. When we understand these things, that sentiment vanishes. The man who knows what a thunderstorm is, instead of falling and crouching, will stand erect, and his whole being will dilate with the splendour of the spectacle.

Man goes on, and works out for himself, as he advances, a multiplicity of deities—all beings like himself ; bigger, greater, but like himself. And, as he learns more of the universe, and finds there is a general interdependence, finds there is regularity, finds that things happen in a definite order, he places one supreme God over the mob of Gods, as one noble out of the old aristocracy rose to the position of constitutional monarch. Then this one God becomes *the* God, the *great* God. The others drop away, and he is left the survivor of all the multitude that have perished ; and my opinion is that he will go too.

Mr. Lee says the idea of God came in by God's telling the first man, and yet Mr. Lee talks about evolution as if he accepted it ! You cannot understand evolution if you talk about the first man ; it is a contradiction to all the teaching of evolution. "The first man" is the language of those who believe in the Bible. There never was a first man, according to Darwinism. Evolution works through natural species, and not through supernatural individuals.

But I am told I have only one minute before this debate

(so far as I am concerned) must be brought to a close. I do not expect that what I have said in this debate will have pleased everybody. All I can say is that it was my duty to say what I thought necessary. I took my own position and defended it, and attacked what Mr. Lee himself advanced. The world moves by this constant agitation. You find sound water in the eager, flowing current. The still pool is stagnant and loathsome. And when the air gets overcharged at times, we see the beautiful spectacle of the lightning. But you cannot have the lightning without the clash of the thunder-clouds. And when we differ in opinion we have these friendly meetings, so that out of the thunder-clash of debate there may leap forth the lightning of truth. (Loud applause.)

**THE CHAIRMAN :** In fifteen minutes more this debate will be brought to a close. That space of time will be occupied by Mr. Lee, whom I now call on.

**MR. LEE :** I do not know whether I understood Mr. Foote to say that Theists like the last word. If I did understand him to say that, may I remind him that he suggested that I should open the first night, and he would open the second night? That is not my arrangement, but his. So, then, our friend has made a mistake in saying I *like* the last word.

Our friend says that the putting of the word "German" before the word "science" was what he quarrelled with, because science is universal. It does not belong to Germany or England; it is universal. If science is universal, then knowledge is universal, and the great Scientific Being—if you will allow me to use the word—must be an universal Knowing Being; and that Being can be no other than God. The truth is that, out of all the scientific facts to be found everywhere in nature, we can get lines of evidence which lead up to one great fact—God is, and God reigns.

But our friend says it is an insult to England to say most

of our science comes from Germany. I say it is not an insult to say that which is true ; and, if this is true, it is not an insult, and all the great thinkers in England to-day would, I think, confess that the vast mass of our scientific thought and philosophy has been handed to us from the Germans.

But our friend referred to a great man whom I quoted last night—Balfour Stewart. Alas ! Balfour Stewart is dead. He died in the year 1887, I believe ; but, before he died, he wrote me a letter, which I have here on this platform to-night, in which he gave me his scientific belief as to the point which I have been seeking to establish—that science leads to a recognition of God. Our friend admits this is a great man, and this great man holds that science leads to God.

Our friend says I referred to him as not having noticed many things, and that he can repay the charge. I always think it is wise, when statements are made, to specify the facts. In all the charges which I have made as to Mr. Foote's not having dealt with my positions, I have said what those positions are. My questions are not answered, and my propositions have not been dealt with ; and Mr. Foote has not shown one single argument in his speeches which I have not dealt with. Why has he not done so ?

Our friend says that he does not wish to be informed there is to be a printed report of this debate. I did not wish to inform Mr. Foote of that ; I wished to inform the audience, so that the audience may know, and get the debate when it is printed, and carefully think it over ; and this action I am sure Mr. Foote will endorse.

Our friend says : " Mr. Lee talked a great deal about matter, and I took no exception to his definition of matter ; therefore it was not necessary for him to bring up this question until I did." It was because Mr. Foote was using the word " matter " in connections which my meaning of the term would not allow, and therefore it was necessary for me

to ask for a definition ; and Mr. Foote, in answer to my request, ought to have given me a definition. But we have it now, and it comes to this—matter is the substance of all the phenomena which come under his sensations. But what are your sensations ? Sensations are not matter ; they are the *mind's* recognition of material existences and connections. Then there is something other than matter ; and the thing for which I have been contending, the recognition of *mind* as a separate entity and substance, is now established in the confession of Mr. Foote. (Applause.)

Mr. Foote says that Atheism does not construct, any more than Theism constructs ; it is a speculative system. But the speculation has shown itself in this way—that, while I have been brave enough to lay down a series of given propositions, each of them leading up to another, and to construct an argument on definite propositions and evidences, Mr. Foote has not constructed any argument, but has simply been criticising the ideas and theories which he fancies represent Theism. So, then, Atheism, in the person of Mr. Foote, has not constructed anything. Theism, in the person of Mr. Lee, has constructed something ; and that something has not been touched. (Applause.)

But Mr. Foote admits there is a difference between Atheism and Agnosticism. The one, he would say, represents courage, and the other timidity. But is it not funny that some of the men to whom he has referred as not believing in God are the men who write themselves down Agnostics, and, therefore, are characterised by Mr. Foote as being too timid to say what their belief is ? Not by any means a flattering position to be in.

But Mr. Foote objects to the statement that man's heart is opposed to God. I am not sure whether I made use of those words—probably I did ; but, whether I used them or not, they describe a great fact, and facts are stubborn things. Man's heart *is* opposed to God, for what has Mr. Foote shown us to-night ? “Tell me,” he said, “that a God like

this exists, and I denounce him." *His* heart is opposed to God.

He says a human father is not able to control his child's intellectual and moral development. (Mr. FOOTE : "Capacity.") So that, while the father would save his children from going wrong, he has not the power to determine their going. God, he says, if He be what I say He is, has the power. I deny that. God has given to man free-will, and God could not—Almighty as He is, God could not—determine the ways of man without destroying man's free agency. But, in blazing star, in fragrant flower, in beating heart, in living conscience, God has shown to man that obedience to law is safe, disobedience brings destruction ; and everywhere around us Nature cries with million tongues : "Obey law, and you are safe ; disobey, and you are ground to powder." God, then, has given a revelation to man in the very make and frame of the universe, and in the very make and frame of his mind and heart ; and, if man breaks that law, do not charge God with what follows—charge man. (Applause.)

Our friend says, If God has a right to remove life, I deny that God has the right to remove it by causing long suffering and agony ; but are these long sufferings and agonies caused by God? Have I not sought to show you to-night that violated law must be avenged, and when you violate the law you are flying in the face of God, and, therefore, as a wise father will seek to educate his children to avoid these things in future, God seeks to educate the human race to do the same. Obey the law, and you will be blessed.

Our friend goes on to say that God does not interfere in this world. How does our friend know? I believe that God interferes in this world more frequently than we are aware of ; and frequently, if God did not, as it were, reach out his hand to save us, we should be caught amid the wheels of this world and be crushed. God interferes more frequently than we imagine.

Our friend says that the idea of God was of slow growth, and he gave us a remarkable history as to how the idea of God grew ; but, while the story was pretty, it was opposed to ascertained facts, for we know, by the science of comparative religion, that the first form of religion known to man was not belief in many Gods, but belief in one God.

Ah, says our friend, but in battles of this nature clouds come together, and in the shock the lightning flash of truth comes forth. Yes, yes ; but what is truth ? I feel sometimes, as I think of the sufferings through which I have seen some small section of the human race pass, that I also know something of suffering. I have seen my little ones taken out of my home and hidden in the earth ; but to tell me, Sir, that I have been produced by a mindless, brainless, purposeless, heartless universe, only to have affections quickened in my heart, only to have children born and placed in my arms, and then for this blind, ruthless thing you call the universe to wreck those affections and destroy those lives, is to say that your universe is an incarnate fiend. But if there be a God, and that God possesses mind, intention, heart, my children are not dead—they live. And out of the shock of brain with brain, and heart with heart, there comes this truth : “Thank God, heaven is above all yet, and there lives a Judge whom no king can corrupt.” (Much applause.)

•

Mr. LEE, again rising, said : It is now my duty, my pleasurable duty, to move that the very best thanks of this meeting be given to our worthy chairman for so generously, patiently, and ably presiding over our meeting on these two evenings of debate.

Mr. FOOTE : I beg, with the most profound sincerity, to second that vote of thanks.

Upon being put, the vote was carried by acclamation.



In response, the CHAIRMAN said : Ladies and Gentlemen, —When I assumed the chair yesterday evening, I told you I would endeavor, as far as my powers enabled me, to conduct this debate impartially, and secure for each disputant a fair, careful, and courteous hearing. I have striven to do so, but I take no credit to myself for that, for I have observed with great interest the desire you have all exhibited to carry out those instructions of mine which I submitted to you, and submitted with great respect. I can remember, ladies and gentlemen, when such a debate as we have listened to would have been utterly impossible. In the first place, the champions of thought were themselves exceedingly intemperate, and the passions which ran riot in the minds of their audiences were correspondingly violent ; and the result was that too frequently these debates partook of results which were always disappointing, and frequently demoralising. I call you all to witness that this state of things has been vastly improved upon ; great subjects have been discussed—ably discussed—with a due regard for the sensibility of the listener ; and, altogether, it seems to me that those who have been privileged to listen to this debate must have derived enlightenment, must have derived pleasure, and, I hope, a good deal of useful information. I congratulate both disputants on the zeal and the obvious sincerity which have characterised all their exertions. I congratulate, also, the committee of management for having arranged the debate ; and I further congratulate you, my fellow-townsmen of Derby, for having assembled in such large numbers, and listened with such obvious interest to the speeches which have been submitted to you.

*(Poem omitted through Reporter's error (see page 61).*

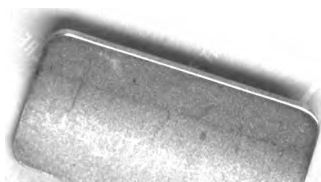
---

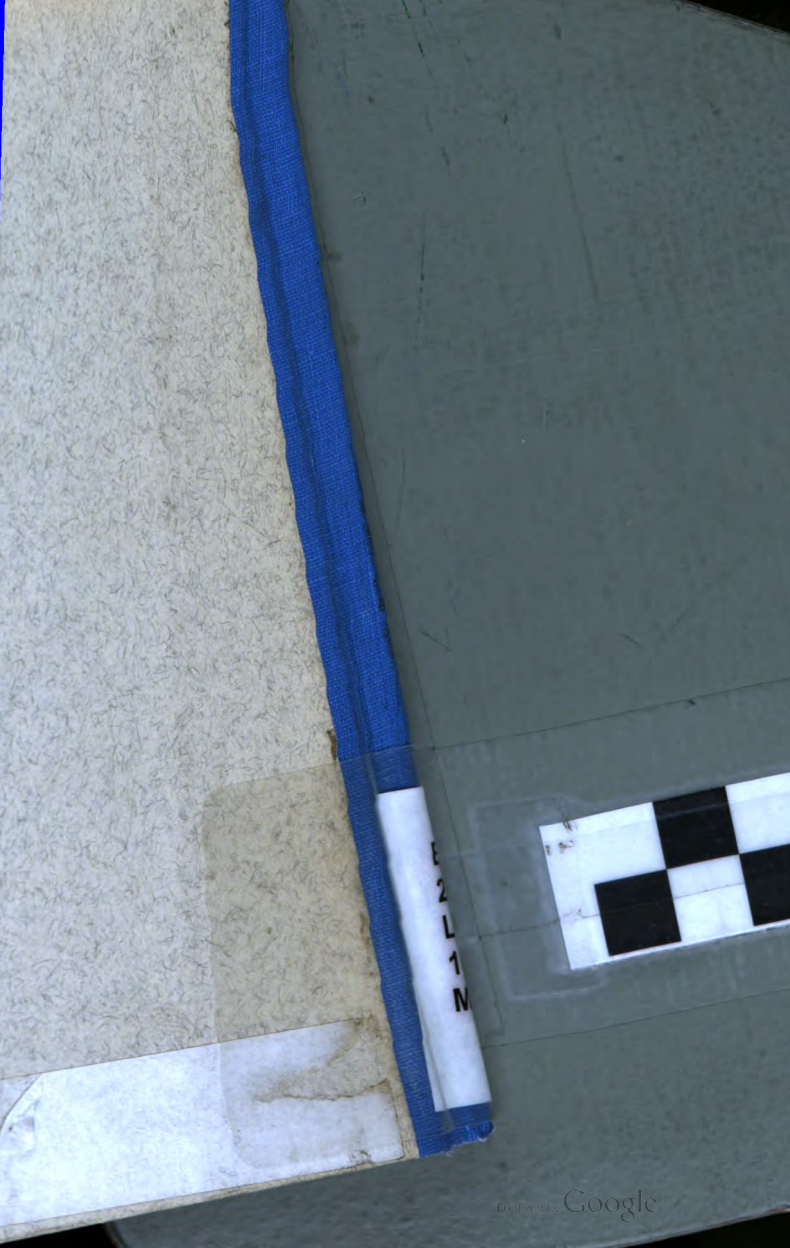
Who shall say that to no mortal  
Heaven ere ope'd its mystic portal ?  
Gave no dream or revelation,  
Save to one peculiar nation ?  
Souls sincere, now voiceless, nameless,  
Knelt at altars, fired and flameless ;  
Asked of nature, asked of reason,  
Sought through every sign and season,  
Seeking God. Through darkness groping,  
Weeping, praying, panting, pining  
For the light on Israel shining.  
Ah, it must be God's sweet kindness  
Pities erring human blindness ;  
And the soul whose pure endeavor  
Strives toward God shall live forever—  
Live by the great Father's favor,  
Saved by the all-sufficient Savior.



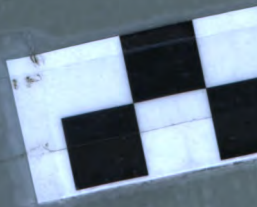








E  
2  
L  
1  
M



E  
2  
L  
1  
M



