

something. Even the Catholic child who has no more learning on scientific problems than he gets from the Penny Catechism knows more about the deep problems than Mr. Glover himself, and consequently is better equipped for making a start as a thinker about them. Coming down to hard facts, the highest of all studies is Theology, and the hardest kind of thinking has to be done before one makes any progress in it. One looks long and vainly before finding any Protestant thinker fit to rank with Aquinas with Scotus, with Bonaventure; and we venture to say that boys trained in modern State schools (which admirably inculcate the science of not thinking) could not even follow the close reasoning of these masters. But perhaps Mr. Glover and his disciples may object to such a deep study as Theology on the ground that only a Catholic mind can grapple seriously with it. Then, let him take any other subject he pleases. If we turn to literature, we find that from Dante down to Francis Thompson or to Paul Bourget, we are justified in backing our man to beat any contemporary "thinker" selected by Mr. Glover. If he turns to science, we can call on all sorts of people, from Roger Bacon down to Mendel; from Leonardo da Vinci down to Louis Pasteur, to prove that Catholics could think to some effect on all sorts of subjects. Take it another way. Take the effects of long Catholic thinking and set against them the effects of long Protestant thinking. On the one hand you have in France at the present time the richest and noblest of modern literatures, as well as industrial successes won by men who, in the Catholic tradition of the Middle Ages, aim at producing things that are a credit to the producer, aiming in a word at quality rather than quantity. On the other hand, you have Protestant and American literature in the gutter at the present time, while shoddy is becoming the hall mark of British-made goods. And yet these people tell us that Catholics cannot think. If what we do is not thinking, one wonders what name would suit the operations that go on in the heads of men who talk such nonsense as is heard from the average No-Popery ranter, whether in England or in New Zealand. It seems that such people are never ashamed to be found out asserting the thing that is contrary to the truth, and that exposure does not deter them from doing so again and again.

### Arrogance and War

There is one thing of which the MacDonald Government may justly feel proud, and it is that during their short term of office they brought a much better spirit into the Foreign Office than the one which previously had resided there. Consequently, when Mr. Rasmay MacDonald, in discussing the affairs of Egypt, condemned the prevailing war spirit, we must grant him the respectful hearing due to the man who tried to put his principles into practice. He said, "the world would have to empty its mind of the futile idea that one nation, by its strength of will and determination, can simply ride rough-shod over the rest of the world. The world would have to realise that it was madness to suppose that any nation—British,

Russian, Egyptian, or French—can say: 'That is what we want, and if you don't agree we will come and fight you.' That is a mentality that has grown up so much since the war; that is a mentality that is going to bring us into more war, more revolutions, more unsettlement; a mentality that every Christian man and woman should range themselves against, because only when we get people to enter into a frame of mind associated with rational agreement are we going to get over our difficulties." It is cheering to hear a prominent public man express the sensible view that international peace depends upon the goodwill of the nations. It shows that he, at least, understands the truth that peace and prosperity depend upon goodwill or charity, and not, as some reformers have it, on economic conditions. Still, much more is needed than merely saying that the nations must cleanse themselves of the truculent spirit. It is not possible to formulate a plan that will create a spirit of goodwill among the nations and permit the predatory mind to remain among individuals. Though we speak of nations as composite bodies, we must not forget they are made up of units, each one of whom possesses a mentality, a personality, and an identity separate from each one of his neighbors. His social and economic interests, though they are to a certain extent bound up with those of his fellows, are yet his own in a very exclusive sense. For that reason a nation cannot be trained *en masse*. Training must be applied to the unit. General warnings are not of much value, because they are heard chiefly by those whose habits of thought are fixed. It is the children in the plastic stage of brain growth who will make the surest foundation for a peaceful world if they are trained in the proper manner. Such a training would involve not only the study of religion but also the practice of it. If the statesmen of the world desire the maximum of peace attainable in the presence of a multitude of conflicting interests and strong passions they will have to found it upon a religion which speaks fearlessly and definitely on questions of right and wrong, a religion which possesses a sacramental system through which the moral law is applied in the most intimate fashion to each unit: a religion which trains the child and disciplines the adult. Such a religion is indispensable, and the woes of the world are due to the fact that the world tries to get along without it. Peace talk is very laudable, no doubt; but until the nations recognise that peace depends more upon morals than upon armaments; that morals depend upon training; and that the training must be definite, practical, and authoritative, the moralising of the politicians will not have sufficient influence to prevent a single case of petty larceny, much less a war.

### Materialisation

Among Catholic critics on the prodigies of Spiritism there are two schools, one holding that the wonderful things done are altogether due to deceit and fraud, and the other attributing at least some of the manifestations to preternatural powers. It is certain that fraud has been discovered

so often that people have good *a priori* reasons for suspecting it in every case; it is also certain that the most wonderful and apparently inexplicable things done by spiritists have been done by natural means by such clever conjurors as Maskeyline and Cook and by Father de Heredia. Naturally the followers of such professors of the art of legerdemain are satisfied that there is a natural explanation for the marvels that occur in seances. But there are others just as firmly convinced that no natural means can explain everything done, and that spirits really do intervene. Father Thurston, who has recently been investigating the phenomena in the light of cold and inexorable reason, confesses that he is able to come to no definite conclusion. He terminates a long study with the following remarks which are of great weight:

"By way of conclusion to this series of articles, I can only regret my inability to say anything that is positive. The observations available are too uncertain, too extraordinary, too far removed from normal experience, to supply grounds for forming a confident judgment. Moreover, it seems very doubtful whether psychic researches a century hence will be in any better position to solve the momentous problems entailed, seeing that so little real progress has been made in the past seventy years. None the less, in my opinion, the facts which I have endeavored to outline do point strongly to the existence of several supranormal phenomena and to the intervention of outside forces, acting with a purpose, but freakishly, and sometimes almost as if they were disposed to mock man's helplessness. Seeing that the same fitful caprice is characteristic of the alleged spirit communications, so often strangely veridical, and at other times maliciously deceptive, I am inclined to refer both classes of phenomena to the operation of *discarnate intelligences, possibly human, or possibly alien to earth.*" The idea of materialisation is not unfamiliar to Catholic theology. The incubi and succubi of the writers on demonology have long been the scorn of agnostics and materialists. The medieval theologian, no doubt, is inclined to refer everything abnormal to Satanic agency, but while it is highly probable that the powers of evil have much to do with the manifestations which so often end in the moral ruin of the unwary medium, I see no reason why the discarnate spirits of the unbaptized may not also make their power felt in this world in ways which we cannot explain, or possibly even understand."

\*Father Schmoeger, C.S.S.R., in a work pronounced by the Ordinary, the Bishop of Limburg, to contain nothing contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church, tells us, on the authority of Sister Catherine Emmerich, that there are "souls neither in heaven, purgatory, nor hell, but wandering the earth in terrible anguish," and also "planetary spirits who are very different from devils, and who have yet to be judged and condemned." I pronounce no judgment on this matter, but there has evidently been in the past some latitude of opinion among theologians as to the eschatological opinions here involved.

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