
The Cleveland Tragedy.

The sympathy of everyone at the University goes out to Harold Simpson and his family in the loss of his sister, who died in the Cleveland tragedy of Wednesday. At Harold's request five Masses have been said here for the repose of her soul; a remembrance in your prayers and Holy Communions will be a great comfort for the family.

It is early yet to form a true estimate of the whole tragedy, but a sinister paragraph in the Chicago Tribune's account of Dr. Crile, the founder of the destroyed clinic, is of such importance that your attention should be called to it. Was Dr. Crile defiant of God? Did he deny the existence of an intelligent First Cause, Author of life? The Tribune, in a special from New York, reports:

"He is the author of a theory that 'man and animals are mechanisms driven by electricity and were originally created and constructed by electrical forces,' and that 'man or animal is an energy phenomenon. The processes which distinguish the living from the non-living are due to electrical forces,' he said in his book, A Bi-Polar Theory of Living Processes, published in 1926. 'Electricity keeps the flame of life burning in the cell -- the unit of structure and of function of the animal organism. Life, as we view it, is the expression of the activity of the automatic mechanism.'"

That leaves out the immortal soul, it leaves out what we call an essential difference between life and non-life, it leaves out God. We hope that this is a misinterpretation of his theory, but on the face of it, it is not: it is the electro-mechanistic theory of Materialism, the most active opponent of Theism and solvent of Christianity -- the theory that destroys faith in the students of secular universities.

The Tribune article further informs us of Dr. Crile's great accomplishments for the good of humanity. "Dr. Crile invented the system of blood transfusion in common use all over the world today; he did much to prove the value of adrenalin as a medicine; he conducted successful experiments in 'returning the dead to life' by means of heart massage; he perfected the famous 'nerve block' system of anaesthesia, by which operations are performed without the usual shock and dangerous exhaustion to the nervous system." "Dr. Crile gained his earliest fame as a specialist in surgery of the respiratory system.

Dr. Crile has done noble work in medicine; let us hope that he has kept out of the field of theology. If he hasn't, and there has been any defiance of God in his attitude, it looks bad when electricity is made the agent of the awful tragedy. There have been cases of defiance of God that were followed swiftly by catastrophe.

The most awful natural visitation of recent times was the Messina earthquake, in which more than 23,000 victims lost their lives. Two days before that event, the Christmas edition of a blasphemous "funny" weekly came out with a sacrilegious poem to the Babe of Bethlehem, which ended with the defiance: "If Thou are the True Divine Infant, send us an earthquake." It is said that when the Titanic was building in Belfast, workmen painted scurrilous blasphemies on the ribs of its giant hull; it sailed on its maiden voyage as the indestructible ship -- the highest achievement of naval architecture. On a clear night and a calm sea it was crushed by an iceberg and 1517 people lost their lives.

God is the Author of Life and the destiny of the living soul. In the twinkling of an eye He can call us to account. The Tower of Babel was an achievement of science; but its builders were overambitious, and God called them to account. History is filled with stories of lost arts and lost civilizations. Science is useful as a humble servant; it is deadly when it rises against its Lord and Master.

PRAYERS: Robert Duffy's father is quite ill. James Digan's mother has met with a painful accident. Four special intentions.