

treason, minimize its offense, or deny its existence, however manifest. These are they who "with melancholy irony furnish weapons against themselves and against Christianity," to use the doctor's own phrase.

I am sorry to have shaken the faith of a good man, and therefore beg the privilege of suggesting a means of relief. I would remind Dr. Phelps that there are two kinds of faith. One, mistaking sect for the Church, sentiment or ritual for Religion, and tradition for Christianity, is naturally liable to overthrow or distress on every occasion of advance of knowledge, for the very reason that it has attached itself to the transitory which it mistook for the permanent. This is the faith that has nothing to do with truth and which scoffs at consistency.

The other kind of faith, while it recognizes the value of sect, custom and tradition, yet is also aware of their subordinate character, and is so much more attached to the truth which is eternal, that it scarcely suffers at all by the passing of a transitory form. Least of all does it suffer by an assault on falsehood; it rejoices in that.

In short, the same prescription which in another connection I suggested for the Church in general, I would now suggest for Dr. Phelps. Let him take large doses of truth, honesty and sincerity. He will soon begin to mend. Before long he will be able to distinguish friend from foe, to distinguish an attack on sin from an attack on Christianity; he will not be driven to fictitious interpretations of divine things; he will find no occasion for the policy of inaction or concealment, or for otherwise stultifying intelligence and conscience; and at length he will come to a solid and enduring faith, with increasing health, courage and joy in every new truth.

### RELIGION IN FRANCE.

The August (1903) number of *The Open Court* contained a letter of mine, which requires certain corrections and explanations. This letter was not originally intended for publication, and the proofs intended for my revision failed to reach me. My knowledge of the English language is limited and I may, on that account, not be clear in certain statements, but I will do my best to make myself understood.

My first comment is of little importance. In using the expression, "It was written," I meant to say that "it was foreordained," that sooner or later the people of France would get rid of "the congregations" (i. e., the religious societies having their own rules and regulations in contrast to the secular clergy). The natural progress of civilization is such that whatever form of government we may have had, whatever our national and social state may have been, France was compelled by the requirements of her history to rid herself of these religious corporations. Things might have been otherwise had Protestantism become the prevailing religion of our country, or had Louis XIV. not signed the edict of Nantes.

My second comment is of a more general nature. It refers to the paragraph marked (i) page 507. I answer the question "What is religion?" by saying: "It is simply the adoration of, and prayer to, someone, anthropomorphically conceived, who is capable of seeing our adoration, of hearing and answering our prayers." But, someone may claim that no person exists

who is able or will transcend the laws of nature to fulfill my desires. Explanations, therefore, are required.

There are two kinds of religion, accepting the word in its wider significance. One is a philosophy such as Plato and other sages offer to enlightened people, the purpose of which is the regulation of one's own conduct and thought. It aims at an artificial or ideal conception of some beatific end of man's growth,—both purpose and aim intended to elevate man's spirit and satisfy his mental and moral needs, bringing him happiness.

The other kind of religion is adapted to the needs of the common people, serving to regulate their actions in accordance with the demands of the general social interests.

The question now arises as to the possibility and desirability of perfecting a union between these two kinds of religion. The educated classes can do without the conception of an anthropomorphic deity, but the masses cannot. The former will be satisfied with ideals, the latter fail to recognize their significance.

Religion, or rather, its representatives, the priests, have not satisfied the wants of the lower classes, and that is the reason why the socialists of this age can take as their formula: "No God, no Master."

We know that in Egypt the upper classes were furnished with fine and solid graves for their "doubles,"\* i. e., their souls, but the laboring classes did not even have a sepulchre. They had no place in the religion on the Nile, and, as elsewhere, their religious wants remained unsatisfied.

For my part, I acknowledge that there are many discoveries for science yet to make; that back of that gigantic word of August Comte and Herbert Spencer, "unknowable," there lie many untrod pathways. Yet, I verily believe, that there will be a continual increase of knowledge until, by and by, mankind will determine a true statement of the harmony of things and reveal the secret of the universe. Because of this belief I admit a general primal principle and accept your word *nomotheism* as the most appropriate expression to designate a conception of the Godlike character of the laws of nature as stated in Physics, Psychology, Biology, Cosmography, etc. I also accept the doctrine that there is a Universal Energy to which all the forms of energy, such as, light, sound, electricity, magnetism, radiation, thought, etc., may be reduced. That which constitutes my own life and thought is a part of that universal energy also. This individual vitalizing energy or power begins with me at my birth, increases with the growth of my body, manifesting itself chiefly in my brain activity, and at the death of my body returns whence it came, i. e., to the sum-total of universal energy spread throughout the entire world. Such a doctrine can be understood in the light of the ancient philosophies of India, and yet it certainly must be regarded as at least based on scientific facts.

You will readily understand, now, why I cannot adore this universal energy, which is by Spinoza regarded as the Supreme Substance, whether it is revealed in the external world or as it animates my own body. For the same reasons that I cannot adore it, I cannot pray to it.

\*In M. Topinard's letter of August, 1903, the sense of this sentence was spoiled by a typographical error. In place of the word "double" the word "doubt" was printed. M. Topinard's letter was inserted without revision, because the editor was under the impression that M. Topinard had seen and returned the proofs.—Ed.

Thus far I have dealt with the religion of the enlightened classes. For the average person, however, other views must be entertained which will bring him into harmonious social relations with every other individual.

Society, it must be remembered, is not a production of nature. It is an artificial and arbitrary product of man himself,—a *modus vivendi*, an attempt to conciliate two opposite principles; the right of man to do all that is beneficial for himself, all that his own organism demands for his welfare, and the obligation to restrain his actions so that the same right may be exercised by others. Mutual concessions on these points are necessary to make society safe. Morality is measured in accordance with man's fidelity to the mean of these two principles.

But our human, I would prefer to say, our animal nature, is essentially egoistic, some might even say anthropocentric. "Everyone for himself" is the first biological law. Society is, therefore, impossible without a political law, and the policeman is indispensable. However, circumstances may arise in which neither have any hold over the individual. Therefore, right conduct, i. e., the habit of thinking and acting in such a manner as to have peace and not molest another one in society, becomes necessary. My question is then, can those moral rules be established without a theory or philosophical system? Is it sufficient to say to the people, "Aside from the political law, you must obey your conscience in your actions?"

However, it is claimed, that religion is not only a guide in life, not only a stimulus toward morality, but it is also a consolation in misfortune, and answers a certain psychological need in many lives. It satisfies a desire that man be not merely a higher development of the animal kingdom, but more,—more than an ant, more than a grain of sand. Such a belief gives man courage, adds dignity to this trust in himself, and makes him more considerate of public opinion. For these reasons, I conclude by saying that religion is useful to the average man, but it is difficult to support it by logical argument.

I will not speak of the authority of the prophets or sages, such as Mahomet, Zoroaster, Shakyamuni, Hammurabi, Confucius, Manco-Capac and others. I wish only to add a few words on some principles which might be regarded as a basis for religion. First, the idea of natural and universal justice. By this we mean that every man will reap what he sows, will receive what is due him, will bear "the consequences of his acts." This is the justice sought by Plato, Cicero and so many others, among whom is our lamented prophet, Herbert Spencer. It is all Vanity, says the writer of ecclesiastes. I know no better argument of what this justice is or ought to be than that of the Melians against the Athenians as related in Thucydides Book V, pp. 85-118. Your readers know my own opinion on the subject. Nevertheless, it must be adopted as a dogma, for no society, either public or private, can exist without it.\*

The second principle is that of reciprocity. Reciprocity is, in reality, the criterion of just conduct toward one another. Negatively expressed it means: "Do not to others what you would not have done to you." and positively: "Do to others what you would have done to you." Unfortunately these two

\*I have not said all I think about the absence of Justice to-day and the promise of its fuller realization in future times. I find that others and myself have talked too much on the subject and admit that it must be taken as a dogma in social life; it is a mystery, not to be increased nor discussed.

maxims are only rules and rest ultimately upon egotisms. Nevertheless they may remain as complementary dogmas.

A third principle might be self-respect, supported by conviction, innate or taught, of our high psychical freedom (*libre arbite*) and responsibility. I have, however, less confidence in it, for it leads rather to stoicism than to morality.

Another, and the best principle will be found in altruism, or more exactly in a natural faculty of our nervous system, more or less developed in the majority of men,—a psychological need which I will call, the need of loving and being loved. This faculty may be increased and exceedingly extended in every man and in his whole species by hereditary habits in families, and by the education of mothers, as I described in my book, "Science and Faith," and also by proper institutions and laws. The cultivation of this dual disposition—to love and be loved—would lead, naturally, to rules of morality in ordinary intercourse in the first place, and secondly to the enforcement of those rules, and in the third and highest place, to an esthetic adoration of the good and beautiful, in other words, to the idea of supreme perfection.

Is it not true, after all, that what Plato called God is a subjective and metaphysical conception of the good, the wholesome and the beautiful? "Your conduct," he said to his enlightened ones. "must be made to approach perfection. This is for the individual the supreme wisdom (Sophia)." So Plato taught. But it is my private conviction that he really felt it was but an artificial expedient. He looked for some tenable ethics, and created his philosophy in such manner as to attract the leading men of his times, and to cause them to follow the best light they had in their private life. In public life a man's conduct was to be such as would be most useful to the welfare of the city. Read his discussion on "injustice" or "incorrectness" in his philosophical dialogues. Compare them with passages in his "Republic" and "Laws," and you will discover that he had many doubts about the actuality of justice on earth, as we understand it to-day. The utilitarian conception of a practical philosophy must above everything else advance the welfare of the individual; political regulations must promote the welfare of society. This would be a religion for the enlightened, as well as for the common people. We desire only one, if possible, and, assuredly, we must have the same morality for all.

But one word more. November 8 a festival took place in Paris, at the palace of the Trocadero, under the name of La Fete de la Raison. This gathering was presided over by Berthelot, of the *Institute*, and organized by Charbonel, an ex-priest, now a social reformer and editor of two journals, "l'Action" and "la Raison." Both men delivered addresses, anti-clerical in tone, especially anti-Roman Catholic. They were, however, actuated by a different spirit. Carbonel desired to celebrate the Revolutionary reason of 1794, derived from the writings of Rousseau and Condorcet, and later from those of Voltaire and Diderot. Berthelot had in mind the geometrical reason of Greek philosophers, modified by modern science, and signifying the best adaptation of human ideals to actual conditions, i. e., the maximum of rights compatible with the several conflicting interests of society. "Like our ancestors," said he, "we are for truth, justice and fraternity."

We can say this also, and yet we maintain that the actual entire concilia-



tion of truth and necessity is impossible in social life. Justice remains only as a dogma, and fraternity as a great aim. Is there a religion or a philosophy that can give us these two?

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### HOW WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP AFFECTS THE EAST.

Many complaints are made by missionaries that Christianity is not acceptable to Orientals. It is too Western to their taste, and converts are both few in number and limited to the lower classes of society. It would be wrong, however, to think that the West does not exercise an enormous influence on the East. Western ideas are like a leaven, and, though the process is slow, the results will unfailingly be a transformation, or better, a reformation of Eastern conditions. One instance of it is modern Japan, but we see similar effects in all Eastern countries, and we will quote as another instance, an event in India, which is a significant straw in the wind, viz., the reformation that is going on at present among the Parsees.

We read in an English paper that a society has been formed in Bombay, the object of which is to study the "Holy Gâthas" of the Zend Avesta, the ancient hymns of Zarathushtra. The Parsees having become better familiar through the writings of Western scholars, especially Prof. Lawrence Mills, with the original meaning of their sacred scriptures, propose to reform their faith on the basis of their own sacred books.

The movement was started under the name of "the Gatha Society," and at the first meeting Mr. J. C. Coyajee delivered a lecture on the "Spirit of the Gâthas." The friendliness with which these Parsee aspirations were greeted by their Christian fellow citizens appears from the fact that the Rev. Dr. D. Mackichan, M. A., D. D., LL. D., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay, was in the chair as president of the meeting.

The text upon which the lecturer based his studies, and from which he made his quotations, was the translation of the Gâthas made by Prof. Lawrence Mills of Oxford, England.\*

The Gâthas are the most sacred and most venerable documents of Parseeism. They are hymns many of which, according to the higher criticism of the Zend Avesta, have been written by Zarathushtra, the great prophet of the Zend Avesta, himself. They reflect a pure monotheism, a belief in Ahaura Mazda, the Lord Omniscient, and show the founder of this noble religion (commonly called "Mazdaism") in his struggles and aspirations sometimes in a state of dejection, sometimes elated by the thought of a final victory; and our interest in the Gâthas will certainly not be lessened by the consideration that Mazdaism has repeatedly influenced our own religion, first under Cyrus, at whose order the Temple of Jerusalem was rebuilt, and then in the form of Mithraism at the beginning of the Christian era.

It is even not impossible that the name of the main orthodox sect of the Jews, Pharisees, means originally "Parsees," being the sect of Persians since they represented the orthodox monotheism established at Jerusalem through

\**The Gathas of Zarathushtra* by Lawrence H. Mills, D. D., Hon. M. A., Professor of Zend Philology in the University of Oxford. F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1900, 2d. edition. American edition. The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago.