

## A RATIONALISTIC GOD

BY F. LINCOLN HUTCHINS

IS IT not worth while to bring the conception of an over-ruling Supreme Power out of darkness into light? To most people their God is a mystical being, hidden behind the clouds, of which they have no knowledge but which they attempt to describe according to their training in dogmas and superstitions. Having no concrete facts, their imaginations run riot and no two persons have the same conception as to the God whom they worship. There is in human nature a feeling, an impulse, a longing for something to tie to, to believe in, which may be revered and which satisfies the demand for some explanation that will account for the cosmos; the inner desire to know the cause of all phenomena. So far back as the record runs, human beings have always conceived of some existing ruling power, which they have named Spirits or spirit, Gods or God. It being impossible to imagine anything that is outside of one's experience, it was natural that men should picture their Gods as magnified men, or disembodied spirits.

Before science had investigated and laid down the laws governing physical manifestations, all natural happenings were attributed to the direct control of supernatural beings working in human ways, but as science advanced such conceptions were gradually eliminated; the magical interpositions of Gods and Spirits were discarded and natural law substituted, but the old words remained, many of them are still in use as stumbling blocks to clear conceptions. We still use the terms of ancient beliefs to describe notions that have long since been discarded; such terms are anachronisms which are out of place in any society of modern culture. While physical manifestations are pretty generally understood there is vast ignorance

with respect to what is called the "psychic" nature; here is a wide field for the exercise of an unlimited imagination and the use of words which still carry misleading interpretations of the patterns that are stimulated by observed facts the cause of which are unknown. The words soul, spirit, life, will, memory, instincts, as names of concrete entities, which have no real existence, are as misleading as we now know were the early designations of physical happenings.

Agnostics and materialists are those who have acquired a disgust for the dogmas and superstitions of the ignorant past, and realizing the unverifiability of old beliefs, are moved to adopt an attitude of scepticism with regard to all speculations that are unsupported by scientifically verified facts. As personal experiences, extensive reading of scientific works, and the discrediting of all supernatural notions, has progressed there has been a vast increase in scepticism and a growing distrust of all hypotheses in respect to matters that lie outside of the physical sciences, but this is going too far; the worship of the so-called intellectual capacity, which causes neglect of deeper responses in the subliminal self, leads to a disparagement of all sentiments that arise from that source.

As progress in the physical sciences drove out notions that were based on supernatural causes for manifestations in the material world, the prodigious advances in scientific psychology, made during the past decade, are driving out the supernatural agencies in the so-called psychic field. It has been discovered that the laws which govern the manifestations of the inner nature of man are just as immutable and compelling as those in the purely material field, and their violation are as invariably punished. In the confusion due to this advance in knowledge, the agnostic declines to enter into the speculative field; the materialist denies the existence of anything beyond matter itself; but the scientist knows from experience that there is something behind the manifestations that he observes which he cannot take hold of or explain, yet clings to his axiom "that something never came from nothing."

A synthesis of the latest discoveries in scientific psychology indicates that human beings have two distinct and separate nerve systems; the first and most important is the hereditary which constitutes the real self, the visceral organism which carries on all of the living processes, creates the wants, desires, wishes, fears and

other emotions, and the miscalled instincts. The second and less important is the sensory, an ancillary and dependent instrument for the unconscious self. This sensory system is individually organized, a purely environmental affair; all that is known comes through stimulations from manifestations. Up to two years of age all children are without a definite organization of their sensory system; the babe knows neither its father or its mother, time or distance, neither its own body or other objects; its movements are indefinite and uncontrollable, except so far as the experience of the race have created hereditary responses. An infant gives no indication of its hereditary nature or of its capacity to organize a sensory system; it cannot be known whether the child will become a genius or an imbecile. At birth the sensory system is inchoate, unorganized and inoperative; the connective nerves from the senses to the brain or spinal cord are dissociated; stimulations find no direct pathway to any centrally organized focussing point; they are diffused over the entire nerve system. The organizing of the sensory system seems to be after the following described order. Present an apple to an infant, at first he forms a hazy impression of its form and color through his eyes; repeated presentations cause the visual nerves to establish a pathway from vision sense organ to certain focussing cells in the brain, by repetitions of the stimulation this pathway is more firmly established and the brain pattern becomes fixed so that any stimulation representing any part of the apple will cause a reformation of the entire pattern. Let the child feel, smell or taste the apple, similar patterns are formed through the tactile, olfactory and gustatory senses which are added to the visual patterns. Now add the stimulation of the word "apple" and the auditory sense adds still another pattern, the whole forming an associated pattern which represents all that is known of that apple, which may be supplemented by reactions from all kinds of apples during the future time. The establishment of such patterns is effected by the transmission of energy, caused by a disturbance of a resting condition in the sense organs, through the afferent neurons to connected brain or spinal nerve cells, this energy overcharges those cells and is passed on through the efferent neurons to the muscles where it is transformed into heat and motion. Of this transformation there is a feeling, an awareness, a consciousness or knowledge.

The handicap under which mankind is now laboring lies in the

language into which each individual is born and the training that he receives, both of which are vestigages of an older and more ignorant age. Such misbegotten words misrepresent, and misinterpret the patterns that each one forms from stimulations; the actual patterns are unknown as there can be no awareness of them, the awareness comes only from feeling the transformation of energy at the muscles and, unfortunately, many of these feelings are interpreted by terms that bear no relation to the patterns that caused them.

But human beings require means to express the inner nature, which is an universal, persistent quality in the cosmos, and this demand has manifested itself from the very beginning of historic experiences. This medium, obviously, must be one that is known to the group of which one forms a part, however different may be the patterns to which they are applied. This difference in association of words in interpreting patterns is the cause of discussions and endless conflicts between people. Without such a means, each individual would be confined to grimaces, gestures and animal cries that are unequal to the expression of these impalpable concepts which the sensitiveness of his nerve systems enable man to have.

Do not the foregoing facts lead to the conviction that the Supreme Power is constituted of imponderable qualities, the essence of which are beyond the present capacity of man to apprehend, but of which the manifestations of energy, order, harmony, rhythm, acquisitiveness, ambition, altruism and love are known by all men regardless of their state of culture, and all of which are governed by laws as immutable and compelling as those of the purely material world. This conviction accounts for the existence of the universe and everything within it. Beginning with the manifestation of energy in the electron, the conservation of which proves its immortality, and from the combination of those electrons all material forms have been evolved, from that of gases, fluids, and solids of inorganic matter up to the highest sensibility in the animal known as man. A sensibility that began with the sublimation of matter into incipient nerve stuff which made the form susceptible to irritation and thus introduced the manifestation of life; since which time there has been a slow but ever increasing refinement of the nerve constitution until, through successive changes, man is now able to respond as never before to the impulses that flow from the eternal

qualities. This conviction compels the concept that the imponderable qualities are the only real, eternal objects in the cosmos, and that all material forms are but the means, the instruments through which those qualities obtain manifestation and development. This conviction explains the impulse to postulate a Supreme Essence, however mistaken or bizarre the language used in describing gods, for there is a feeling of a compelling control of all manifestations by an invisible, but invincible power. Such a conviction brings God into the region of partial understandability; it accords with all that the sciences have demonstrated; it appeals to common knowledge; and at the same time impresses upon the individual the obligations, "to be true to the heavenly vision," which he inherited at his birth.

As in all physical sciences it is demonstrated that there is a particular balance of forces that produce the best results, so in the super-material world there must be a balance that will produce the most good; therefore the impulses from the imponderable qualities should be properly balanced, but it is a well known fact that individuals are very unequally endowed with the capacity to respond to impulses from the eternal qualities. One inheriting factors that are over-sensitive to acquisitive impulses will develop a greedy temperament; one sensitive to harmony and rhythm will develop a musical temperament; one susceptible to the procreative quality will live a sensuous life; one with factors that give dominance to ambitions, to love of power and fame will drown all impulses from the altruistic qualities; one whose temperament inclines toward discoveries will become an inventor, an explorer, or a scientist, and so it is with regard to susceptibility to impulses from any other of the supreme qualities.

Over-dominance of any one of the imponderable qualities in any individual is followed by punishment of some sort, even unto death, not always to the actor for the effects may have a social significance. The social complex is therefore the criterion of absolute right and wrong. These acts or manifestations that are not followed by punishment, commonly endure because they are in accord with the supreme qualities and are right, while those which bring punishment upon the actor or to anything in the environment, either now or hereafter, are wrong, because they violate the eternal law. These are the elements which have directed the course of all evolution; not

in a purposive way, but in a step-by-step, a hit or miss process, in the strenuous endeavor to evolve material forms through which the real qualities may find and manifest themselves. The course has been governed by punishment, that is, those manifestations that were in accord with the supreme qualities found no opposition and were conserved, while those forms which failed to manifest or manifested in ways antagonistic to those qualities were extinguished. Those forms which developed any one of the qualities at the expense of any of the others, disturbing the harmony between them, received punishment to bring them into line. As pain and death follow all infractions of the physical laws so do pain and sorrow follow any infraction of the laws that govern the supreme qualities. It is only when experience has solidified the social complex, in different races and states of culture, in the ever growing recognition of manifestations that bring no punishment in their train, is progress attained.

The explanation of the enduring persistence of the cult which began with the story of Jesus Christ, which has influenced western culture during the past two thousand years, notwithstanding the oriental language in which it is expressed, and in spite of creeds, dogmas and superstitions which have grown up around it, is because it has found an echoing response from the hereditary elements that the immortal qualities have established in the human form. Expressions in all religions and in literature which have touched the inner nature of mankind, are those which harmonize with the imponderable qualities, however crude or fantastic the words used to convey them have been. The great understanding heart of humanity has re-interpreted the fallacious words into stimulations of the nerve elements which synchronize with the qualities of the Supreme Power.

With the conviction of such a ruling power, uncontradicted by science and supported by rightly interpreted words of the prophets, messiahs and great men of all times and races, man will attain a greater dignity as a co-worker with God; a deeper conception of the purpose of existence and a clearer vision of his obligation to aid in the efforts of the Infinite to evolve an instrument capable of apprehending and manifesting the Supreme Qualities.

Should not this be the basis upon which the young should be taught? They should be made to understand that they, in common

with all other material forms, are merely means through which the eternal qualities may find expression. That the impulses from these qualities are the real powers behind all ideals. That each person should listen for impulses from all the qualities and, by striving to maintain a proper balance among them, fulfill his obligations and live a perfect, worth while life. No one with this conviction of a rationalistic god would ever wittingly violate the laws of existence however much he might err through ignorance, or by being cursed with an excessive dominance of the nerve elements which respond to impulses from some one of the primeval qualities that were first apprehended and manifested.