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# THE OPEN COURT

A

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

11  
1897

VOLUME XI.

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Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and  
the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS,  
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## SALUTATORY.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN THE OLD SPIRIT, but in a new garb, in the shape of a monthly instead of a weekly, *The Open Court* enters upon the eleventh anniversary of its career, and both publisher and editor hope that the change will serve to extend its circulation and carry the message which it announces to the world, farther than before.

The message of *The Open Court*, to state it briefly, is that science is a religious revelation; science is the unfoldment of the spirit, and its truths (if they be genuine scientific truths) are holy. If God ever speaks to his creatures he speaks to them in the truths that they have learned from their experience, and when truths are systematised and formulated with exactness, which is the province of science, they do not become less divine, but more divine. Therefore the application of scientific exactness to the various problems of religion is a religious *duty* which, if obeyed, may destroy some errors that have become dear to us, but will in the end unfailingly lead to the most important religious reform.

If science is applicable anywhere it is applicable with all the rigidity of the most searching critique to the problems of the destiny of man, his origin, and his future. What would be the use of science if it were not applicable to religion? Of what profit are the various conveniences of life and the material advance of the age if our soul is to be fed on the husks of tradition, which, unless we re-transform them and make them our own, are nothing but the leavings of the religious aspirations of previous periods.

Science is the light of life; shall we not use it? Science is the bread of the spirit; he who does not partake of its soul-nourishing gifts will spiritually die of starvation.

Science should not be conceived as forming any contradictory

contrast to religion. Woe to that religion which ignores or even antagonises science! It is science that leads to new truths and reveals to us more and more of the wonders of the universe. Thus if Christ's promise of the comforter<sup>1</sup> is being fulfilled at all it is fulfilled in the evolution of science.

If science is the Holy Spirit, if the truths of science are religious revelations, how can religious people remain deaf to the voice of science? It is a sad fact, but it is true, that there are many Christians who look upon science as an enemy to their religion and harden their hearts against the results of scientific inquiry because it collides with their conceptions of God and of Christianity. The consequence of such a condition is the doom of degeneration. Unintellectuality (especially if it be a wilful hostility to intellectual progress) is as much a sin as immorality; error is as much a perversion of the soul as criminality. Error and stupidity are punished with no less severity, nay, with more severity, than trespasses against the Ten Commandments. Indeed, the sin against the spirit, as expressly stated in the Scriptures, cannot be forgiven, and those who persist in it will be blotted out from the pages of the book of life.

Considering the religious importance of science, we call a recognition of the stern rigidity of scientific truth and of its indispensableness in all the domains of life, in the workshop as well as in the social relations of man to man, *The Religion of Science*.

The Religion of Science is not a new religion, but simply a new interpretation of the old religions. Nor is it a new movement in the sense that it introduces a new motive into our religious and moral life; it is simply a revised statement of the old faith, rendering that clear which from the beginning of the religious evolution in the history of mankind lay always at the bottom of man's holiest aspirations. Therefore we claim that the Religion of Science does not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

The Religion of Science combines in a consistent system the boldest radicalism with the most deliberate conservatism. It proposes to purify religion of the dross of error, but it would not reject the gold. It would retain of the old religions all that is true and good, and would add to the old truths a new significance by throwing upon them the bright light of modern science, which allows a clearer vision and gives a deeper insight than has heretofore been possible.

The Science of Religion (that is to say, a scientific treatment

<sup>1</sup> "When the spirit of truth is come he will guide you into all truth." St. John, 17, 13.



of the religious problems) leads to the Religion of Science, which is briefly the trust in truth ; and the Religion of Science is a principle which, wherever recognised, will reconcile not only religion with science, but also the various religions with one another ; for on the basis of this principle a comparison is rendered possible, and this comparison will lead to a final settlement of the controversies of religions with the same necessity as the controversies between various schools of scientific theories are decided, not by any authoritative dictum, but by weight of evidence, by experiment, by argument, by proof.

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*The Open Court*, with its message of the Religion of Science, has been criticised by representatives of both extreme parties. Dogmatists of the old school condemn science as profane, and claim that it is untrustworthy as a guide in matters of morality and religion, while the so-called freethinkers denounce our conservatism of retaining the words God, soul, and immortality as pouring new wine into old bottles. We reply to the latter, to the freethinkers, that the various terms of religion originated in response to definite needs and that their significance can be traced in the realities of life. If we abolish the traditional terms we should have to invent new terms. It will therefore be wiser to retain the old names and define their meaning with more exactness, always replacing hypothetical assumptions as much as possible by a definite description of facts. But to the former, the dogmatists, we say if Science and the Religion of Science "are the work of men, it will come to naught ; but if this council and this work be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

In propounding the Religion of Science, *The Open Court* has never identified itself with any party within or without the various churches ; it has kept aloof from both the liberals and the conservatives, and has delivered its message independently and fearlessly, neither for the love of nor in spite of any one ; but in doing so it has gained friends in all countries of the world, among the ranks of all churches, among the unchurched, and even among the devotees of various non christian religions.

*The Open Court* is, in certain respects, at variance with both the liberals and the conservatives. It is dissatisfied with the conservatives because they are not truly conservative, and with the liberals because they are not truly liberal.

If a father wishes to preserve his children, he educates them and gives them all the chances of a mental and moral growth. For

evolution is the law of life, and there is no better preservative than growth. As soon as the conservatives, for the sake of preserving certain truths or convictions or institutions, shut out progress and keep intellectual life in a stagnant condition, they cease to be truly conservative and virtually promote degeneration. Therefore he who is truly conservative is progressive; he believes in growth and is willing to learn new truths. The Religion of Science, for the sake of conserving the advances already made, must encourage progress, and, in doing so, will be more conservative than the ultra-conservatives, whose conservatism practically consists in retrogression.

*The Open Court* is conservative, but not stationary or reactionary; it proposes to utilise the advances made in the past for further progress, and thus combines conservatism with progressiveness.

The word "liberal" has two meanings. Firstly, when spelled with a small initial, it denotes a moral attitude. Liberal is he who shows a willingness patiently to listen to views which differ from his own and who weighs every opinion impartially and without resorting either to violence or to harsh words. Secondly, when capitalised, Liberal is used as a party-name to designate those who have cut themselves loose from authority of some kind. In this sense "Liberalism" denotes the surrender of traditions, doctrines, or old allegiances; and the more a man has given up of his beliefs, the more Liberal he is accounted. Thus Liberalism as a party name has come to stand for negativism, and liberal religion is practically used in the sense of looseness of religious conviction.

*The Open Court* means to be liberal in the first sense; but cannot properly be called "Liberal" in the second sense. Instead of surrendering the old religious allegiance to what in theological language is called God, it proposes to make this allegiance sterner and more earnest than ever. God is the God of truth, or he is not God at all. The various liberal movements of our age not only very frequently pursue an extremely narrow-minded policy, but they also exhibit reactionary tendencies which more than the dogmatism of the conservatives blockade the progress of mankind. This may be surprising news to many, but it is true, nevertheless, and we are ready to explain why it is true.

\* \* \*

Liberals are negative spirits, who are characterised by a readiness to discard traditions of all kinds; they attempt to reject the errors of the past, but in the vain hope of attaining infallibility themselves, they reject also the aspiration of having definite opin-

ions. This tendency has bred the main disease of our age—agnosticism.

Agnosticism is negativism with a vengeance, for agnosticism (as defined by its two greatest representatives Professor Huxley and Mr. Spencer) is that doctrine which declares that the main problems of philosophy, the problems of the existence of God, the nature of the soul with its immortality, and the basis of ethics are insoluble; in a word, agnosticism identifies the unknown with the unknowable and makes of the most important questions on which the regulation of man's conduct in life depends, absolute mysteries. Such a philosophy is a more effectual check on religious and scientific progress than the methods employed by the Inquisition. The Inquisition had the power to put a few independent thinkers on the rack, and for a time gagged the others; but agnosticism attempts to poison the minds of whole generations: it makes people drowsy and indifferent; it makes them despair of the possibility of finding the right solution, and induces them to abandon the search for truth.

In religion, the Liberals show a strong inclination to reject the ritual and the doctrines of the past. They object to the symbolism of the Church, but also command advancing thought to halt before their negativism. Thus, the founder of the Societies for Ethical Culture dispenses with ritual of any kind, he no longer uses the word God, but he also claims that science and philosophy cannot teach ethics; indeed, he is especially severe in denouncing the endeavor of founding ethics upon science, and he loves to dwell on the mysticism of the ought, which, according to him, does not develop naturally, but comes to us from spheres transcendental. His Liberalism carried him so far that he was accused of atheism, yet he retains the philosophical error of mysticism which is the root of innumerable superstitions. When he left the synagogue there were many rabbis remaining in their old vocation who were more progressive and philosophically further advanced than he, but they being more liberal as to ceremonies, felt no compunction in preaching in the synagogues and making use of the traditional phraseology.

A strange superstition of modern Liberalism is to spell energy with a capital E and speak of it in terms of awe and reverence. What is there venerable in energy that it should take the place of God? Energy is an abstraction of a high order, it is a term of very wide but very simple circumscription. Energy is capacity for work, either by reason of position or actual motion. The falling of the

stone, the power of a cataract, the tension of a spring—all these are instances of energy, and all energy is measurable in footpounds. Energy becomes venerable only when it appears as moral purpose, that is to say, when it assumes that special form wherein it is combined with consciousness and directed by a right conception of the world. Energy is divine only when it appears as a will guided by the truth ; when it is an incarnation of duty bound to fulfil its mission in life.

The same that has been said of energy applies to the deification of matter.

Less crude, but not less unphilosophical, is the deification of the First Cause, spelt with two capitals to do it reverence. While energy and matter are at least ideas possessing reality, a first cause is as much a self contradiction as a final effect. Every effect has its cause, and every cause its effect, every effect being the cause of the next following effect. By cause we understand that change in a given condition of things which introduces a new arrangement of its parts. The first cause in a longer chain of causes and effects has not the slightest higher dignity than any subsequent cause. The first cause in the creation of our solar system may, according to the Kant-Laplace theory, have been a disturbance of the distribution of nebular substance, resulting of necessity in a rotation of its mass. Yet those who use the term do not mean the first cause in the sense of the incipient motion of the evolutionary process of our world-system, but the decision of God to create the world. Granted that God, like a master mechanic, had said to himself : "Let us create the heavens," his resolution would have been the product of a previous deliberation, and certainly he must have existed before, and if he existed he must have been active, which means that there was in God's being a series of causes and effects prior to the first cause of the world's existence. There is no need of entering into further explanations of the self-contradictions of the notion of a "first cause," which originates through a confusion of the ideas "*cause*" and "*raison d'être* ;"<sup>1</sup> but this much may be added, that the fallacy in question is the product of a materialistic view of causation, which regards a chain of causes and effects not as transformations, but as a series of objects following one another like the cars of a railroad train. A philosopher like David Hume, who adopted this conception of causation, is consistently driven to scepticism, or, as we now would say, agnosticism, which means a bankruptcy of philosophy and science.

<sup>1</sup> For details see *Fundamental Problems*, pp. 79-109; and *Primer of Philosophy*, pp. 137-172.



The phrase First Cause was first used by Liberals who sought for a convenient word which might take the place of the term God ; but nowadays the word is used even in prayer.

The Infinite, the Eternal Energy, the First Cause, are mere idols, but altars are built to them because they produce an astounding confusion in the minds of their worshippers.

Mankind judges too much from externalities. Religion to the masses is identified with the observance of days, of pulpit-slang, of dressing in special vestments. But the main thing which is the underlying conception and interpretation of all these things, the philosophy of religion, is scarcely ever alluded to ; and yet it is the soul of it, on which everything depends.

The same religion, in fact the same sectarian formulation of a religion may differ very much according as it is interpreted in the light of different philosophies. It may, under the guidance of a right interpretation, produce such noble men, martyrs, heroes, and conquerors, as were the Huguenots, who, when driven from their homes, arrived in foreign lands in abject poverty. Yet how quickly did they recover their loss ! What blessings did they spread by the example of their industry and moral earnestness ! And wherever they went they prospered and were respected and beloved by all with whom they had any dealings. But the same Calvinism, with the same confession of faith, the same sturdiness of purpose and sternness of determination, could under the sway of another philosophical interpretation (after the precedent of their leader) kindle the faggots and burn witches as well as dissenters !

Let us heed externalities only in so far as they directly and unequivocally express a definite interpretation of essentials ; otherwise, let us always go down to the significance of the doctrines. And it is strange that to discard established rituals or make innovations in the externalities of a religion is exceedingly difficult, but to introduce a new conception of both the old ceremonies and old doctrines is comparatively easy. The reason is here again that the masses being incapable of comprehending the philosophy of a religion, judge from externalities and no one would take offence at the most radical Church reform, if only the clergyman would don the same gown and preserve the old liturgy.

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A prominent clergyman of the Church of England<sup>1</sup> declared that while the Reformation of the sixteenth century had been a moral reform, the present need of the times was above all an intel-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. Haweis in an article published some time ago in *The Contemporary Review*.

lectual reform of the Church. This is very true, and what can the desire for an intellectual reform mean otherwise than a longing for the recognition of those principles which we define as the Religion of Science. Yet in spite of the great importance of emphasising the intellectual aspects of religion, our Liberals as a rule urge people to limit religion to practical issues to the neglect of theoretical questions. They drop theology and preach love, without being aware that love, be it ever so actively applied in practical life, without the intellectual guidance of theoretical principles, degenerates into sentimentalism. Clergymen who hold the dogma of eternal damnation in abhorrence are apt to pray with great unction. But I for one should find more edification in reading the sermon of a time-honored Presbyterian describing the horrors of Hell so vividly that we fairly smell the burning brimstone, than in listening to the prayer of such liberal pulpiteers, who sugar their theology over with the fictitious sweetness of a divine Father in Heaven. There is at least iron in the mental make-up of the old-fashioned believers. I grant the interpretation of their belief in Hell is out of date, but a new interpretation will find much truth in the dogma, for sin, if persisted in, leads irretrievably to eternal perdition, and no amount of the divinest love is able to prevent it. It is difficult to say how many Presbyterians, if there are any, still retain the literal belief in the lake of fire, as it is so drastically described in the Revelation of St. John; but who can be so blind to the facts of life as to deny that there is in life an unspeakable abyss of sin and of the curses of sin, and that the doctrine of Hell symbolises a very obvious and very important truth? How inconsistent is that kind of liberal religion which literally accepts the eternal bliss of a heaven-locality and ceases to retain its correlate symbol, the doctrine of the doom of error and sin!

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At the latest Liberal Congress held in Indianapolis one of the speakers mentioned as the sources of religion "the awe of the mysterious" and "the sense of absolute dependence." If such were indeed the sources of religion, the scientist whose duty is to explain the mysterious, and the man of independent mind would be excessively irreligious. A religion that does not help us to do away with the mysteries of life and to make us more and more independent, is a false light; and it seems to me that the success of Christianity in former centuries greatly depended upon its having made an important step forward, a step away from the bondage of a religion of

ceremonies, sacrifices, and codified law toward what Luther calls "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

When Christianity made its first appearance in history, it announced itself as the solution of the problem of life, and claimed to ransom, redeem, and liberate mankind. It was Schleiermacher, one of the best liberal theologians, who first pronounced the definition of religion as "the sense of absolute dependence" (*das Gefühl schlechthinniger Abhängigkeit*); and Schopenhauer spoke of Schleiermacher as "a veil-maker."<sup>1</sup> Truly, if liberal theology cannot walk on the path of progress, it would be better to remain with the strict conservatives; for it would not be wise to undo the advance that has actually been made. Otherwise we might tear down with the iconoclasts the whole fabric of religion and have to start the evolution of man from savage life on over again, after the fashion of the unschooled social reformers whose panacea as a rule consists in the abolition of civilisation involving a return to some primitive state of barbarism.

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While the Liberals upon the whole show an aptitude to retain the mistakes of the past, while they ignore or even antagonise the advances that have actually been made, the conservatives in their turn are beginning to imitate the faults of the Liberals. They accept the main errors of Liberalism and parade them before their congregations as a sign of their readiness to progress with the times.

Here are a few instances.

The principle of agnosticism, which was invented for the purpose of keeping the claims of dogmatism in check, is now frequently pronounced from pulpits of all descriptions. The phrase, "The finite mind cannot grasp the infinite," wrong and nonsensical though it be, is repeated *ad nauseam*. The phrase is used only by unclear thinkers, by men who may be very learned but who know nothing of exact logic and less (if that be possible) of mathematics. The infinite is by no means anything incomprehensible, indeed it is less incomprehensible than the finite, for the infinite is a simpler idea than the finite. It is true that God, the power that constitutes the order of the world and whose sway is the highest law of ethics, is infinite in his various dispensations; but for that

<sup>1</sup> While criticising Schleiermacher's definition of Religion, I feel urged to say that I am not blind to the many noble thoughts which he has uttered in his sermons, especially his monologues on religion.

reason the quality of infinitude is not any more divine than the limitations which give definiteness to concrete things and events.

The infinite is a quality involving an unlimited continuation or the capacity of an unchecked progress, or inexhaustible applications and potentialities; it is a condition, but never a complete and concrete thing. Of course, it is a mistake to think of the unfinished as finished, of the incomplete as complete, of that which is in a state of becoming as rigid being, of that which moves as being at rest, of that which lives and develops as absolutely stable; but those who try to conceive of the infinite as a finite object are bewildered; and in their confusion they imagine that infinitude must be something incomprehensible.

The infinite as such is not God. Man, too, is infinite, for the potentialities of every soul are unlimited and illimitable. Nay, things less sacred are infinite; space is infinite; time is infinite, or, as we commonly express it, eternal;  $\frac{1}{6}$  is infinitely large;  $\frac{6}{1}$  is infinitely small; and every mathematical line is infinite. Is there any mystery in infinitude? Is there any holiness in it? Is the notion of the infinite an idea of moral importance? If it were, we should write that pretzel-like emblem ( $\infty$ ), which is the exactest expression of the infinite, upon the altar of the church of the future and bow down and worship it.

The interpretation of the traditional doctrines has slowly and almost imperceptibly been changed, but we find that at the same time the aspiration after catholicity and orthodoxy is being abandoned. How often is the "spirit of orthodoxy" denounced on the ground that orthodoxy is wrong in principle, which in other words means that truth is unknowable.

Orthodoxy means rightness of doctrine, and catholicity means the universality of truth. What we need is not the abolition of orthodoxy, but genuine orthodoxy; not the disavowal of catholicity or a peculiar and particular kind of catholicity, an Anglican, or an Italian, or a Russian catholicity, but true catholicity. We need rightness of doctrine and a truth that is universal.

And how frequently is theology denounced,—not a special theology but theology in general. We hear sometimes voices that come from the conservative ranks clamoring for religion without theology. Theology is blamed for all the vices of heresy trials and witch-prosecution, while religion is extolled as being the sole thing needed. And yet theology is nothing but the old name for "the science of religion." It is now quite fashionable among conservative clergymen to join in the hue and cry of the liberals which is



raised against theology in favor of a mere sentimental practice of devotional religion, and which has contributed a great deal to prevent progress and to keep religious evolution upon a lower plane where the intellect is regarded with suspicion.

What we need in religion is not less theology but more theology; we need a thoroughly scientific investigation of the religious problems. We need a radical and fearless application of the scientific spirit to religion.

*The Open Court* does not belong to any party, but endeavors to form the third unpartisan party which shall unite the two extremes of the belligerents; and the method to accomplish this end consists, briefly, in taking religion seriously. We should neither take the traditions of the churches simply as a matter of course, nor ever surrender the hope of making headway in the comprehension of the religious problem. We should investigate boldly though reverently. We should seek the truth earnestly, assiduously, and with due discrimination, and cherish the confidence that if we seek in the right spirit with right methods we shall at last find the truth.

The cornerstone of the aspirations of the Religion of Science is a trust in truth. We believe that truth can be found and that the truth, whatever it may be, will be the best, better than the dearest illusions of our fathers or of our own making.

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We should not conclude this review without at least outlining and recapitulating the solution which *The Open Court* offers in reply to the most important religious problems, the problems of duty, of the soul, of immortality, and of God.

We endeavor in religion as well as in other domains of life to dig down to the facts from which our abstractions and generalisations, direct and indirect, are derived and upon which our convictions rest. We propose in the science of religion, as well as in the various branches of natural science, to replace theories by simple statements of fact, which means we reduce our terms to the experiences which they are meant to embody.

We have sense-impressions which cause our soul to respond in various reactions. Sometimes we feel pleasure and at other times come to grief. We encounter resistance and try to overcome it. We love and we hate. We struggle, and, when the hostile forces are too powerful, we combine for a more effectual struggle. There is struggle everywhere, even within us. Our will is not one and the same always; we consist of various impulses which frequently come in conflict, and then the question arises,

Which impulse shall have its way, and which one must be suppressed? The maxim which for such situations recommends itself is our conception of duty; and the conditions which demand an implicit obedience to duty, whether or not its performance be pleasant, is that power which since times immemorial has been called God. God is not anything unknown or unknowable; his manifestations are nearer to us than our heart-beats; he is knowable, and we can with the usual methods of science investigate the character of his dispensation.

Besides the experiences in the domain of our aspirations, we face conditions that affect our sentiments. We grow old and die, and in the face of death we long for self-preservation. We become conscious of the fact that life is a fleeting phenomenon, and we seek for that which constitutes its permanence. We thirst for immortality. And here is the main problem of religion: Will our life extend beyond the grave, and, if it will, what does the life to come consist in?

In order to solve this question we must analyse our soul and trace its origin, for the origin of the soul teaches us its fate after death. Some claim that the problem of the soul is insoluble; but have we not the records of history, can we not study biology and all the other sciences that explain to us man's being? Does science teach that the soul is an ephemeral phenomenon which did not exist yesterday and will be gone to-morrow? Impossible! Here we are a living reality, and can our soul rise from nothingness simply to return again to nothingness? What is the nature of our soul? How is it produced, how does it grow, and what are the moulds in which it is shaped? These problems clamor for a solution that must be based upon a rigid and critical investigation.

The main difficulties that encounter us here are the materialistic and sensualistic tendencies, which naturally present themselves first and commend themselves to superficial inquirers. The materialistic view leads us to think that our self is the sum total of all the material particles of which we consist at a given moment, and the sensualistic view induces us to identify our soul with our feelings or with consciousness, yet both views neglect the paramount importance of form. That which constitutes our self in its peculiar idiosyncrasy is the form of our body and our sentiments. We are not vitality of a certain amount of energy, but a certain kind of vitality, a certain kind of consciousness; we are a combination of definite impulses and aspirations, and that special form which gives a special character to our peculiar constitution is the most essential

part of our existence. Our thoughts are not nerve-activity of a certain quantity, but of a certain quality. The quality of our being is our self ; all the rest is of secondary importance. The matter that constitutes our body and the energy that is spent in the physiological functions of the brain are passing through our system in a rapid and constant change. They are going, always going ; they become mere waste material at the very moment when they do their work, while that which is characteristic of every action is preserved as a peculiar formation or disposition which is the condition of memory. Our bodily and mental make-up consists of innumerable dispositions which are the product of functions. Our constitution, in all its parts, is memory, partly conscious, partly subconscious, partly unconscious ; and the functions which we perform contribute their share in adding to or modifying the present constitution.

This analysis of the soul shows the immortality problem in a new light. While the material frame of every organism is destined to be dissolved in death, its peculiar type continues to exist ; its soul reappears in new formations in a process of continuous growth. Bodily forms are transmitted to the new generations mainly by heredity, but the spirit of man has still other and higher avenues left to immortalise itself. Example and education insure the continuance of the most precious features of every life, preserving them in the same way that a thought which we have been thinking once continues to be a part of ourselves as an ever-present memory which, when not specially needed, slumbers in our subconsciousness, but can at the slightest provocation be reawakened to the full blaze of conscious activity. My soul, in its peculiar idiosyncrasy, is the present phase of a definite life-evolution ; my soul not only existed before in various previous forms that contributed to shape its present incarnation, but it is ultimately conditioned in the cosmic constitution of the All which moulds its rationality and determines its ideals and moral aspirations. My soul is a more or less perfect incarnation of God. As the past generations, with all the special features that constitute their personal character, continue to exist in the present generation, in the same way the present generation will live on in the future generations, preserving the identity of all that is essential to their being. As the life-experiences of an individual man remain with him in the shape of his memory, increasing the proficiency of his work, so all the lives of the race are living stones that build up the temple of humanity and continue in it, in their personal and distinctive specificness as ever-present pres-

ences which cannot be annihilated. The body may be destroyed, but not the soul. All the representatives of a new idea, of an inconvenient truth, of an unwelcome aspiration, may be burned, but ideas, truths, aspirations, cannot be burned. Our life may be cut short, but the spirit that stirs in us is indestructible. Considered as a combination of material atoms, man is mortal; but that of man which has taken shape in his bodily system, that which constitutes his personality, his soul, is immortal.

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X The problem of the soul stands in a close connexion with the problem of God. God is the creator; God is the eternal mould which forms man's soul. God is the prototype and the norm of all those aspirations which lead to a higher and ever higher unfoldment of life. God is the reality of which truth is the picture and at the same time the standard of righteousness, for righteousness is nothing but truth applied to practical life.

The God of the Religion of Science is not a new God; it is the same God who revealed himself with more or less perfection in all the prophets and moral teachers of the world. The newness of the conception consists only in being a new definition which is more guarded and avoids the contradictions into which some of the old definitions are apt to involve us.

According to the Religion of Science, God is that authoritative presence in the All which enforces a definite moral conduct. God is that something which constitutes the harmony of the laws of nature; God is the intrinsic necessity of mathematics and logic; God above all is what experience teaches us to be the eternal lesson that leads to righteousness, justice, morality. This presence is both immanent and transcendent: it is immanent as the constituent characteristic of the law that pervades the universe; it is transcendent, for it is the condition of any possible cosmic order; and in this sense it is supercosmic and supernatural.

We do not say that God is impersonal, for the word "impersonal" implies the absence of those features which constitute personality; it implies vagueness, indefiniteness, and lack of character. God, however, as he manifests himself in the order of the universe, is very definite. He is not vague, but possesses quite marked qualities. He is such as he is and not different. His being is universal, but not indeterminable. His nature does not consist of indifferent generalities, but exhibits a distinct suchness. Indeed, all suchness in the world, in physical nature as well as in the domain of spirit, depends upon God as here defined, and what is the



personality of man but the incarnation of that cosmic logic which we call reason? God, although not an individual being, is the prototype of personality; although not a person, thinking thoughts as we do, deliberating, weighing arguments, and coming to a decision, he is yet that which conditions personality; he possesses all those qualities which, when reflected in animated creatures, adds unto their souls the nobility of God's image, called personality. Therefore we say that God is superpersonal.

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The Religion of Science re-establishes the ideals of orthodoxy and of catholicity upon a new basis; it introduces into religion the principle of positivism, not of the Comtean positivism, which is agnostic, but of a new positivism which grounds itself upon the rock of facts; it embodies in its doctrine all the truth that the old religions can teach us and reads their sacred traditions in the light that a scientific world-conception affords. Above all, the Religion of Science emphasises that the doctrines of the churches as formulated in their symbolical books are symbols, and must be understood in their symbolical nature.

Symbols are not lies; symbols contain truth. Allegories and parables are not falsehoods; they convey information; moreover, they can be understood by those who are not as yet prepared to receive the plain truth. Thus, when in the progress of science religious symbols are recognised and known in their symbolical nature, this knowledge will not destroy religion but will cleanse it of error and bring us face to face, more intimately than ever, with that Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will.

The Religion of Science does not reject tradition, it only refuses to recognise tradition as an ultimate and infallible authority. We must judge the worth of doctrines, dogmas, scriptures, and practices according to their agreement with truth. We must prove all things and choose what is good. We must investigate and hold fast to the truth. In this way only can we ground our faith upon the foundation stone of the eternal logos that constitutes the irreversible law of the moral world-order.