

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS.

Associates: } E. C. HEGELER
 } MARY CARUS.

VOL. XIX. (NO. 10.)

OCTOBER, 1905.

NO. 593

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CHICAGO

The Open Court Publishing Company

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ACHALA (WILL-POWER).

BY SEISO HASHIMOTO.

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PRO DOMO.

HOW FAR HAVE WE STRAYED FROM CHRISTIANITY?

BY THE EDITOR.

SOME time ago there appeared in *The Expository Times* of London, some notices of my work in philosophy and comparative religion, intended as an impartial statement of facts, but containing a few misrepresentations which in the opinion of their author may be slight, but to my own view are important enough to call for a reply.

As a rule, too, I have refrained from discussing in my articles book reviews, because it would lead too far to correct the mistakes of every reviewer or writer. The present case, however, is peculiar in so far as I have a personal feeling of sympathy with the position of orthodox Christian authors, and I feel more anxious to be rightly understood by them than by liberals, agnostics, or those who are indifferent. Especially these last—the lukewarm, who according to the Revelation of St. John are distasteful to the good Lord himself—are in my opinion a negligible quantity and their likes and dislikes or misrepresentations are of little concern.

As a rule, too, I have refrained from discussing in my articles questions which touch upon my own mental or spiritual development, but when I have to cross swords with those who represent my former self, I cannot help unburdening my soul and discussing conditions which are of a personal nature. I do so not without reluctance, but I feel that a ventilation of my own experience will throw some light upon the conclusions which I have reached by strictly logical arguments. In considering the personal equation which naturally plays an important part in scientific calculations, both my friends and antagonists are at liberty to utilize these data with regard to statements of my philosophy.

My reviewer relies mainly on Dr. Minton's opinion* and following the latter, treats me with sufficient courtesy. Quoting from him he says:

"Dr. Paul Carus 'is a man of no merely amateur accomplishments in the arena of dialectical thought and discussion. He has convictions of his own, and he is not wanting in courage and ability to enforce them. He disclaims originality, or, more accurately, he affirms his endeavor to avoid it. In this, whatever his own modesty may lead him to declare, it will hardly be unjust to charge him with some measure of failure. It may be more surprising to the savants of the opening century, that a new and somewhat original philosophy should come out of the utilitarian and mammon-worshipping city of Chicago than it was to them of the old time that any good thing should come of Nazareth; but in both instances the thing which surprises is the thing which comes to pass.'"

The idea that I should be "a man of no merely amateur accomplishments" is interesting in consideration of the fact that I have passed through the mill of a technical philosophical education in the severest sense of the word, having taken in Germany all examinations and degrees necessary to justify my claim of being a professional philosopher. I have never laid stress upon the advantages I have had, for they constitute no argument for preference unless I make good use of them; and further that my philosophy comes from "the mammon-worshipping city of Chicago" is not so accidental as might seem at first sight.

I considered very carefully at the critical moment of my life, whether I should not settle at the German university and work my way up in the regular course of a German university professor; but after much hesitation, I finally came to the conclusion that Germany in its present condition is not favorable for the development of genuine philosophy. And I was right. Philosophical work that has come from German universities for the last thirty years is either purely critical, or purely technical, or purely historical, or consists of elaborations of some specialty, but nowhere has there been presented a philosophy in the true sense of the word. There are prominent professors of philosophy, scholars of great accomplishment and ability, but not one of them presents a comprehensive philosophical world-conception. A philosophy in the full sense of the word is positively discountenanced in official circles in Germany, for every philosophy that is taken seriously is possessed of a religious character. It has either to take issue against the existent religion or must identify itself with it; there is no middle course. When I felt that

* See the *Princeton Theological Review*, Jan., 1904; and *The Monist* Vol XIV, p. 452.

there was a reactionary breeze passing over Germany and that my aspirations were not in tune with the dominant spirit, I decided to seek a more congenial country, and in America I found a field for work in this "mammon-worshipping city of Chicago."

It may appear strange that I have found here the necessary support and encouragement, and some of my German friends have expressed astonishment at the fact. But I would say that the American spirit which also manifests itself in the city of Chicago is much more ideal than ordinarily people are inclined to believe. Even here in America we are in the habit of criticising American life and characterizing it as the restless pursuit after the almighty dollar—a statement which shall not be denied at all. The Germans, on the other hand, are in the habit of describing their country as the land of idealism, and that fact, too, is true in its way, especially when thinking of the age which produced Kant, Goethe, Schiller, and Beethoven. But if we understand ideal not in the sense of constantly harping on ideals but as the endeavor to realize them, to make sacrifices for their realization, to surrender the almighty dollar in our possession for ideal purposes, I would say that at present America is the land in which idealism is undeniably a living force.

For an explanation I will make this statement: Suppose there were in any great city of the United States an urgent public demand, be it for the establishment of a hospital, a university, or some work of public usefulness which could not be paid from the public treasury, and suppose that I were a man who commands the public confidence both as to executive ability and honesty of purpose, I am sure there is no city in this country where I could not collect in one or two days several millions of dollars paid without any consideration of return, simply for the purpose of serving the public good. Any one familiar with conditions in this country will testify that this statement is not exaggerated and it applies also and especially to the "mammon-worshipping city of Chicago."

My critic notices that I disclaim originality. This is correct, as any readers of the Preface to my *Fundamental Problems* will know, and he is also correct when he says that I affirm my endeavor to avoid it. But he is mistaken when he interprets both the endeavor and the claim as "modesty," for modesty has nothing whatever to do with it. On the contrary, I believe it is easy enough to produce half a dozen original philosophies within a week—every day a new one,—but it is difficult and takes a calm and critical mind to work out *the* philosophy that ought to be, the philosophy of science, or, if you prefer the expression, philosophy as a science.

Up to the appearance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, philosophy had been in its swaddling clothes, and the result is that the history of philosophy is filled with innumerable systems of original philosophies. Much ingenuity and originality can be discovered in the various systems of astrology and alchemy, but originality ceases as soon as astronomy and chemistry begin. There may be an originality in the personal character of the scientist who discovers scientific truths, but the truths themselves can hardly be called original. The condition of success in the line of science consists exactly in an absolute surrender of the endeavor to be original, and in a perfect submission to the truth. But the result will be that instead of presenting ingenious and alluring theories, the man who surrenders his private ambitions and his hankering after originality, if he be but careful in drawing his conclusions with consistency, will advance on the path upon which mankind will have to travel; and so I may be pardoned for being sufficiently immodest to think that my critic who stands now in the place from which I started in my younger years, or rather that particular kind of theology that he represents, will gradually be forced to follow my lead, and the time will come when our theologians will consider my position as not only tenable, but sound, nay even orthodox.

The position of *The Expository Times* which is that of Protestant Christianity, has been my own, and in spite of the changes which my views have undergone, I still feel the bond of union which connects me by invisible threads to its tenets, antiquated though they may now appear to me. It embodies the religion of my father and my father's fathers, and my own development is nothing but a logical result of circumstances, which now when I look back on my life appear to be necessary and inevitable according to psychological laws.

Religion has always been to us,—at any rate since the time of the Reformation,—a trust in the tenets of our faith as *being the truth*, and Luther held the conviction that the truths of Christianity were divine, while human reason is merely human and liable to error. In the meantime our views of reason and its application, science, have changed. We know that men are fallible but that reason itself is infallible. We know that scientists may go astray, but that science itself, if it be but faithful to its vocation and principles, is a reliable guide to truth. That view has been gaining ground not only in the natural sciences, but also in our study of the history of religion, the canonical scriptures of Christianity, and also in our inquiry into the philosophical foundations of religious ideals. It was under the influence of the light of science that my belief in orthodox Christianity

was transformed into a broader and more definite conviction, and several successive changes took place in spite of myself, and I was forced to accept conclusions, which from my former standpoint I would have abhorred. I will not here enter into details of my religious development, but I will only say that I know positively that no one who would take the trouble to let the light of science have an influence upon his convictions, can escape traveling the same path; and this must necessarily be the fate of every honest man unless he blinds himself, and commits the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost in dulling his reason and stultifying his intellect. For these reasons, I dearly wish not to be misunderstood in the circles of orthodox believers, and it is on this account that I will give an explanation to my kind reviewer in *The Expository Times*.

The writer takes me to be one of those liberals who are atheists as there have been many atheists before. He thinks that the negations of my religious position are based upon the old negative arguments of the one-sided rationalists of the eighteenth century. He imagines that I would look for God with the telescope, the microscope and every instrument that science has invented." He even quotes me with the intention of characterizing my conception of Monism, saying:

"Dr. Carus is Hegelian enough to recognize two substances. But he rises above Hegelianism as he rises above Spinozism. He affirms that neither spirit nor matter has existence. Both are forms of abstract thought. Both are lost in that higher unity which only has being, that Cosmos or Existence which in the most absolute sense is all and in all. There are no differences of kind in this All-Existence. There is no divine and human. All is nature. . . . There is no matter and there is no spirit; there is cosmos alone, the great All-One."

It is perhaps the first time that I have been accused of Hegelianism. Although I have a great respect for Hegel, I am most emphatically opposed to the method of *a priori* construction with which he builds up the universe like an air castle and expects facts to agree with it.

While it is true that spirit and matter exist only in connection with that higher unity which we call the Cosmos, or the All, or reality, I would not say, as states my reviewer that I do, that both matter and spirit are lost in that higher unity. The word "matter" signifies certain features of our experience and these features remain matter, and the word "spirit" signifies certain other features of reality and these too remain spirit. Spirit and matter are not identical. They are as different as good and evil, as pleasure and pain, or hatred and love, or whatever contrast we may refer to. The

higher unity in which all things are involved, does not reduce everything to one common level. The very nature of our abstract terms indicates their difference and proves the importance of making discriminations.

Then, too, I am not in the habit of speaking of the great All-One, although, of course, I would have no objection to using emotional words concerning the unity of all things; and, certainly, I would not deny the existence of either matter or spirit. I deny that there is matter-in-itself and spirit-in-itself. I deny generally Kant's theory of things-in-themselves, but I do not say that things for that reason are nonentities. On the contrary, I insist on their reality. That matter is not a thing-in-itself, means that you cannot produce anything that is matter and nothing but matter.

Matter is a name which denotes a certain and assuredly also an actual feature of existence. Matter is mass, which consists of volume and weight, and both are undeniably efficient factors in the domain of experience. The same is true of spirit. By spirit we understand certain definite phenomena in the life of man which are popularly subsumed under the general name of will, intellect, and sentiment. No one who understands the situation can deny the actuality of spirit. It is as real as the actuality of matter. It would be no error, however, to say that both matter and spirit are bound up with many other qualities of existence, and that the terms matter and spirit are mere abstractions.

The mistake of that branch of mediæval philosophy which goes under the name of nominalism, consists exactly in the denial of the reality of abstractions. William of Occam and his followers said that names are mere words, or rather as we would prefer to say, their contents, ideas, had no significance beyond their mere sound. Words designate realities, and thus these thinkers, Thomas Aquinas and his disciples, call themselves realists (a name which of course should not be confounded with modern realism).

We would carry the principle of this realism to its consistent conclusion when we say that all abstractions, if they are true and not mere fiction, describe features of reality which are actual. Abstractions are not empty, as is claimed in many quarters unaccustomed to scientific modes of thinking. They are full of meaning to those who know their significance; and thus if the scientist says that spirit, the soul, volition, sensation, sentiment, justice, yea even God himself, are abstractions, the uneducated pastor may stand aghast at this bare faced method of preaching nihilism and atheism. Nevertheless, we are conscious of the fact that all our ideas, all our scien-

tific terms, all our moral concepts are abstractions pure and simple, but being abstractions they are not nonentities, but they are the spiritual quintessence of the most significant features of reality. In these abstractions, cold and dry though they may appear to the man who is not trained in reducing his experience to the clearness of scientific formulas, is reflected the glory of God Almighty.

Modern rationalism and especially the negative philosophy which has waged war on religion both Protestant and Catholic, has risen from the nominalist school; and so it is perhaps natural that any critic who appears to the old orthodox party as an infidel, is deemed a nominalist, and is as a matter of course supposed to deny the existence of the reality of ideas.

To my kind critic (for I appreciate fully his fairness and good intentions) my objection may appear quibbling, but in my opinion it is of great and important consequence. I would make exactly the reverse statement, and say: "There is matter and there is also spirit. Both have an actual existence in the Cosmos—in the great All-One." He characterizes my attitude towards Christianity, in part correctly, as follows:

"Dr. Paul Carus plainly declares he is no Christian. He accepts the ethics of Christ. The Cosmos cannot give him better ethics or more workable. But the ethics of Christ, he says, are not the ethics of Christianity. Christ did not, Christianity does, disregard the order of the universe and the findings of science. Now 'the surrender of science is the way to perdition.' And, however reluctantly, Dr. Carus is obliged to break with Christianity out and out, for there is no supernatural and there is no God. 'By God,' he says, 'we understand the order of the world that makes harmony, evolution, aspiration, and morality possible.' It is not that he denies the personality of God. God is a person and more. He is all that a person is, and he is more than a person can ever be. He is the All-in-all. He is spirit and matter combined, and not merely combined, but lost in a higher reality. He is Cosmos. We may call the All-One God if we like. But to speak of the Cosmos as God is to use the language of poetry. We may compare it to a father and with Christ call it 'Our Father,' but we only mean what we mean when we speak of Mother Nature. And as there is no God, there is of course no worship. 'We do not call the "All" God in order to bow down into the dust and adore it. We regard adoration as a pagan custom, which, it is a pity, survived into Christianity.'"

As to my declaration that I am "no Christian," I have simply to say that it depends entirely on the Christians whether or not they would still recognize me as such. The truth is I have started from Christianity, I have shed the slough of that which is untenable or transient, I have incorporated into and assimilated to my views all that appealed to me as true and good in other quarters. I have grown in comprehension by becoming acquainted with the doctrine

of the Buddha, the teachings of the ancient Greek philosophers, the meditations of the old Chinese thinker Lao-Tze and kindred spirits. At first it was a shock to me, so long as I still thought that unless Christ and his truth are unique Christianity is worthless, and I passed through transitional phases in which the old orthodox narrowness was an impediment to my growth.

This attitude is still a remnant of the old materialistic view that ideas (and with them the truth) must be concrete, as if they were individual things, not omnipresent and universal factors—a lingering error of mediæval nominalism that would deny the reality of any thing purely mental and so would doom everything universal and omnipresent as non-existent. It is a proposition of materialism that the material alone—the concrete, the individual—is real and anything that is of a general nature—ideas, ideals, abstractions—are nonentities. If that were so, then Christ alone can utter the ideas of Christ, and it would seem like an infringement of his domain if the same truth be found in other places, and if it be uttered by other people. But the spirit of Christ is not limited to the personality of Jesus. I have come to the conclusion that Christianity exists not only in Christianity, but its essence appears also in other religions, Buddhism, Taoism, the old Zarathushtrian Mazdaism, Hindu philosophy, and I am convinced that it appears also on other planets wherever rational beings originate, and aspiring creatures actualize in their history the highest ideals of life.

The question, What is Christianity? has been answered again and again, and yet the problem has never been solved. Every generation has offered a new solution and the truth is, that we can as little settle it historically as we should be able to determine by historical investigation any philosophical problem. Christianity is a historical movement which, unless it be dead, is not as yet complete, and therefore it has passed through as many phases as the life of a man who was first a child, then a boy, then a youth, and then at last started out in attending to the serious duties of life. If the historian had to settle the problem of the nature of Christianity, we might as well declare that Christianity is a communist movement in its origin and would therefore have to regard it as socialism; for the primitive Christians had all things in common, and no one was considered a member unless he sold all he had and surrendered it to the apostles.

We need not recapitulate the history of Christianity. It is obvious that it has changed constantly, and the Reformation especially is not a restoration of primitive Christianity but a progress and a higher realization of its aims. Gottfried Herder, who held the

position of Superintendent-General of the Saxe-Weimar church, spoke of Christianity as a great stream which carried in its waters mud and foreign substances. He expected that it would be cleared in the future, but insisted on its now being in a state of unfinished growth. It is true he was more a poet and philosopher than a clergyman and theologian, but his official position in the church has never been disputed, although he indicated an advance among his contemporaries. If Christianity opposes that universal order of the Cosmos which in my interpretation is nothing but the omnipresence of God, it dooms itself. It thereby counteracts that living power which sustains it, and sinks back upon the level of paganism.

My critic of *The Expository Times* feels very well that there is more Christianity in my philosophy than he expected to find, but he is mistaken if he thinks it is unconscious on my part. He says in his review of my *Gospel of Buddha*:

“But Dr. Carus is more Christian than he thinks and less everything else.”

Incidentally I might say that he takes offence at the title of “Gospel,” obviously thinking that it should be reserved for Christianity alone. He says of the *Gospel of Buddha*:

“Its name is its worst enemy. There is really no absurd Buddhist apologetics in it. Belonging to the *Religion of Science Library*, it has genuine scientific intentions.”

As a matter of fact I wish to say that Gospel translates the Greek *Evangelion* which means “good message,” and is literally the same as the Buddhist terms *saddhammo* or *kalyamo dhammo*. The former is a contracted form of *sat*, “good,” and *dhammo*, “doctrine,” which fuses the two ideas into one word* in close analogy to the Saxon word Gospel† and its Greek prototype. *Kalyamo* means “glorious,” “most excellent,” “most beautiful,” (analogous to the Greek *kallistos*), and *kalyamo dhammo* is used with special emphasis when the Buddha sends out his disciples to carry the “glad tidings” to all the world for the salvation of the multitudes.

To my reviewer my position is little different from that of the agnostic, but the fact is I negate only the old interpretation of his own Christianity and instead of holding a negative position replace

* *Sat* means “good” in compound words in the same sense as the Greek . The *t* is assimilated to *d* before *dhammo*. It is connected with *sādhu*, “good,” which is used among Buddhists as a response in exactly the same sense and in a similar manner as the Hebrew-Christian *amen*.

† The English word “Gospel,” (viz., good spell) still echoes the magic power of words. The Greek *angelion* means message and is connected with the word angel, which is the English form of the Greek *angelos*, messenger.

it by a new orthodoxy. I believe very vigorously in the ideal of orthodoxy.* I believe there is a right doctrine and a wrong doctrine. I believe that we can discriminate between truth and untruth, but I would deny that a mere tradition or a mere confidence in a collection of books called the Bible, or faith in convictions based purely on sentiment, on intuition, or mystic revelations of any kind, is sufficient evidence of truth. I believe that scientific inquiry can be applied also to matters of religion and that the verdict of science, if it be but true and genuine science and not merely the clamor of schools, is the voice of God.

I grant that I deny the supernatural in the old sense, but I do not, for that reason, discard the idea altogether. There is a supernatural, and the supernatural as I interpret it is to be understood in the literal and original sense of the term. The physical is the domain of physics, but the phenomena of zoology and biology reveal to us a new realm which as far as we can judge grows out of the physical and might appropriately be called the hyperphysical; yet the hyperphysical, according to common usage, is still included in the domain of nature, for the phenomena of life are commonly called natural. Within the domain of human nature, however, there again rise aspirations which carry man beyond his own individual interests and lead him into the higher sphere of moral ideals. If the natural man is simply the egotist who deems it unnatural to forget his own interest, we may very well call the moral aspirations of the higher man supernatural. The natural man deems it natural to hate his enemies, but there is a maxim that ranges above this nature of the natural man and preaches love even of our enemies. Accordingly, I do not deny the supernatural but interpret it in a new spirit, insisting on the truth that the supernatural develops naturally from the natural as much as the hyperphysical inevitably appears in the physical world wherever its conditions are present.

According to the negative view of agnosticism and of the average freethinker, Christianity and all other religions are a gross error, the sooner abandoned the better for mankind. According to my position Christianity is true, but the present interpretation of Christianity has not yet spoken the last word. It is our duty to purify religion, and the present age demands mainly an intellectual reform as much as in Calvin's and Luther's times a moral reform was needed.

I look upon the crudities and shortcomings of Protestant Chris-

* See my article "The New Orthodoxy," in *The Dawn of a New Religious Era*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co.

tianity, and also of primitive Christianity, as necessary and unavoidable phases in the development of religious truth, and I believe that honestly pious Christians are actually in possession of essential truths, though they see them as through a glass darkly and not yet face to face. The dogmatic interpretation of Christianity is a surrogate for the more genuine and truer Christianity of the future, and I deem it wise that the transition from the old to the new should not be made hastily or unadvisedly.

In questions of fact I am frequently, and not altogether wrongly, classed as an infidel; for I deny the actuality of miracles and many other things which the traditionalist deems indispensable to his faith, and which in his opinion constitute a deep gulf between my religion and his religion. On the other hand there is a deep gulf between myself and the typical freethinker, inasmuch as he sees only the faults of traditional religion and fails to recognize the truth of its ideals, which after all are essential and more significant than he knows. Thus my position is not that of the iconoclast. It is not mere negation. On the contrary, it is a genuine positivism. I feel more and more the significance of my conservative tendencies which ultimately will be recognized by even those to whom at present my methods appear very subversive.