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FABLES FROM THE NEW ÆSOP.

BY HUDOR GENONE.

The Silly Triangle.

IN THE great region of Areas the Triangle lay lazily basking. It had nothing to do but bask; nothing to live for but laziness. In this respect it differed in no degree from its cousins and connexions of the family of regular figures. These all (and none more than the Triangle) looked down with the utmost contempt upon all figures not strictly regular, with whom indeed they refused to associate, or recognise as having any claim upon either their sympathies or affections.

The Circle, the Square, the Trapezoid, the Trapezium, and the Triangle, all held—however they might differ amongst themselves—that they were of finer material than shapes less mathematical, and more beautiful than forms not possessed of what they proudly called homologous lines.

The chief amusement these haughty folk had to solace the austerity of their existence was to discuss the excellence of their being, and to comfort one another by mutual felicitations upon a life perfect in itself and demanding no exertion or effort for continuance.

“We just are,” they said, “and that is quite enough for us.”

One day an Atom, (who dwells, you do not need to be told, in a very different realm,—the kingdom of Solids,) happening that way, heard the Triangle discoursing to his fellows, and for very pity of their forlorn condition, took a hand in their conversation.

“Do you really believe all you have said?” he asked, having drawn the Triangle aside, because he perceived him to be sharper than the rest; “Do you really believe that in you and your kind the Infinite Geometry has exhausted His potencies?”

“Certainly,” replied the Triangle, “I am confident that as the fountain can rise no higher than its source I and my kind only, having had breathed into us the breath of life, are the sole likenesses of our Creator. Is not that plain?”

“Not to a wayfaring Atom who knows better,” was the quick reply; “but come, tell me, is it because

of this view which you call plain that you are known as plain surfaces?”

“Plain surfaces! Curious I never thought of the matter in that light. It may be though that you have stumbled upon the truth.”

“And your deity then is plain Geometry for the same reason?”

“Perhaps,” replied the Triangle, “though the especial form of doctrine I hold is Trigonometry.”

“And quite properly too,” said the Atom, “for as you yourself have quoted—the reservoir determines the altitude of the jet. It is therefore impossible for you to worship a god not in your own likeness, albeit the sum and co-ordination and nucleus of merit of all your possibilities.”

“Really,” said the Triangle, “I fail to follow you.”

“And no wonder,” replied the Atom; “but if you choose you may follow me. As you may have observed my residence is in a different locality from yours. You are content to be supine, I am only happy in activity; you are satisfied with the quiescence of mere being, I ask for happiness, nay, more, I require for existence not only being but also action. Now while you remain continually in one spot I move about,—”

“I observe,” said the Triangle querulously, “that you are very restless.”

“Move about,” continued the Atom, disregarding the interruption, “not for the mere desire for change of scene, although that has charms, nor even for the purpose of getting fresh views of things by becoming continually part of new combinations, for that constitutes my chief utility, but that—even as you depend for life upon the existence of Trigonometry, so in like, though vastly higher and nobler manner, my life depends upon a higher life, I too have a god which has created and which sustains me. My god is called Chemical Affinity.”

“That is sheer blasphemy,” said the Triangle. “There is but one God.”

“Admitting that,” said the Atom, “is it blasphemy to investigate his possibilities?”

“They are infinite,” replied the Triangle.

“Then so much more room for investigation; you observe my motions, is it not evident to you how superior my functions are to yours? I move, but you

do not. Your god is good enough in his way, and that is for your way; but for mine how superior my deity."

"Oh! as to that," said the Triangle, "I can move too if I choose."

"If you choose," said the Atom with some scorn. "Why, as you have related your condition you are incapable of choice."

At this the Triangle fired up.

"Incapable of choice!" he exclaimed. "That only shows your ignorance. Now watch me and observe how easily I move."

So saying the Triangle stretched out his arms, his head got bigger and bigger, till all at once—trying to do that for which his nature was not fitted—he lost his head entirely, and, far from rising into that region which he boastfully sought to emulate, he sank into a lower, he ceased to be a surface and became a line.

"No wonder," remarked the Atom as he went off at the call of his Affinity, "no wonder they called him an obtuse angled Triangle."

CONSERVATIVE RADICALISM.

CONTROVERSIES, lest they become interminable, must be limited to those issues in which the differences are not merely verbal but material. In my reply to the rejoinder of Corvinus I shall accordingly waive minor and purely incidental points.

Corvinus declares that I threw the gauntlet to him, while it is he who began the controversy; he criticised me, not I him; I simply explained those subjects concerning which he felt misgivings. Corvinus speaks of my "bemoaning the fact that the Open Court Publishing Company is criticised and suspected." Far from bemoaning criticism, I rejoice at it; and indeed I solicit criticism. I regret criticism only if it is based upon mere misconceptions.

Among other points of little consequence I find a remark made by Corvinus, to which I should never have thought of giving a reply, had he not uttered it with unusual emphasis. Corvinus resents my characterisation of his views as negative, and challenges me to quote one sentence of his which would prove the correctness of my assertion. It appears that we disagree regarding the terms "positive" and "negative." Corvinus understands by positive such views as are moral and earnest, which implies that negative means immoral, or at least flippant. My definition of negative is that which denies the right of something to exist, that which proposes to destroy. While I endeavor to purify religion, religious ideas, religious aspirations, and religious institutions, Corvinus most emphatically declares that they should be wiped out of existence. This is what I call negativism, and this negativism is identified by Corvinus with scientific thought.

But now *in medias res!*

Corvinus repeats his accusation of ambiguity. He imagines that I am only joking when I fill the old terms of religious tradition with a deeper and scientifically more exact meaning. He speaks of tergiversation and self-deception in "reconciling absurdities with common sense and reason," for the purpose of "gaining the favor of the thoughtless masses" and "in order to save my reputation as a thinker and—a pious person." Corvinus speaks of "unconscious ambiguity" as though he wanted to excuse or palliate the dishonesty which all ambiguity implies, and he assures me repeatedly that he understands me thoroughly.

I have come to the conclusion that Corvinus does not understand me, for my usage of the old terms is neither tergiversation resulting from a desire of pandering to the thoughtless, nor is it unconscious. I know what I am about when I use old terms in a new sense, and that I do so is not a matter of policy with me, but of conviction.

The Religion of Science which, in agreement with the founder of *The Open Court*, I uphold, and which with his noble assistance it has become my life-work to explain and to propagate, is not a new-fangled theory or a revolution against the traditions of mankind, it is an old aspiration in its latest rebirth and it is rendered sacred not only by age, but also by the exertions of our ancestors in their search for the truth. The Religion of Science is not, or at least only in part, a negation of the old dogmatic religions of the past. The Religion of Science is their fulfilment; it embodies all the truth which they contain, adding thereto the light that scientific investigation affords.

When our ancestors formulated their religious views, they were not frauds, although they were unable to state the truth plainly and unmixed with error. The martyrs of the various religions and confessions, among the early Christians, among the Waldenses, the Huguenots, the Dutch Protestants, and others, were not simply fools; they suffered for a purpose. And they sanctified their purpose by their suffering. The old prophets were not impostors, but men of earnest convictions.

When the prophets saw the extortions of the rich and powerful, the insolence and other vices of the mass of the people, the thoughtlessness of the frivolous, who lived for their own pleasure, regardless of the duties that life imposed upon them, they raised the voice of warning; they pointed out the afflictions which come as the curse of sin, and declared the law of justice which in the end is sure to destroy the evildoer. The prophets' observations are based upon facts, and the injunctions derived from them are important for practical purposes.

What is the *raison d'être* of the old religions?

This world of ours, although not built by the hands of an architect after the fashion of man's handiwork, is nevertheless a harmonious whole. There is law in it, and the law is omnipresent. The laws of nature and the cosmic order of the universe are real facts of existence; indeed, they are more important than any other set of facts. Yet you cannot touch them with hands or perceive them with any of the senses. You can see them alone with your mind's eye. They are the conditions of rationality in nature, for through them alone man exists as a thinking being. They, representing the logic of facts, are the *rationale* of the cosmos, which alone endows life with dignity, for it brings it about that rational beings can pursue aims, lay down rules of conduct, and aspire for worthy ideals.

Religious prophets are filled with the awe of this omnipresence of law and proclaim the injunctions that experience naturally, and often instinctively, derives from its manifestations.

In this statement I have avoided the term God, and spoken of laws of nature. I have now to add, that the replacement of the old term "God" by the new term "the laws of nature" is in two respects misleading, (1) there is one consistent order in the cosmos, not many laws, and (2) the term "laws of nature" is commonly used to denote the formulations of our scientists which describe the various ways of the cosmos, while I here mean the realities themselves and not man's conception of those realities. In order to denote the oneness, the eternity, the immutability, the omnipotence or more directly speaking the irrefragability, the omnipresence, the universality, the absolute sovereignty of this something in nature we call it by the old fashioned term God; and claim that this God who is the only true God is not a mere fancy or product of man's imagination, but a reality, and indeed the most indubitable reality of all reality; for everything that is, exists in Him, through Him and to Him. All things and all souls are in Him and He is in all of them. There is nothing without Him.

This is not Pantheism; for to say that God is in all things does not constitute him the totality of beings. God must not be identified with the sum-total of existence. He is more than that. God is supernatural in the proper sense of the term, for the world-order is not only omnipresent in this actual world of ours, but is the condition of every possible world. There may be worlds in which the law of gravitation would have no application, in which the properties of existence might be so different as to render our senses useless and make other sensations possible, but there can be no world without those universal laws which we formulate in the purely formal sciences, such as

logic and arithmetic. No possible world can exist in which 2×2 could now be 5, now 6, and again some other number. It must be always the selfsame product of 2×2 which we call 4.

Here lies the essential difference between Corvinus's views and mine. Corvinus says:

"There is no moral law but what is established by man."

Corvinus puts the cart before the horse by stating:

"The moral law of nature, the conditions of human society is no moral law of nature, but a law conditioned by human society—consciously or unconsciously shaping the moral convictions of humanity—is a child of the human brain. I prove this by the fact that no moral law can be conceived as existent without the presence of one conceiving it."

If Corvinus understood what I mean, he would not offer this assumption as a proof. I mean by "moral law" the eternal conditions of nature which in the evolution of life beget man as a rational and moral being. Why should the existence of a law of nature (in the sense of some modes of action in the ways of cosmic life) be dependent upon their being conceived? Were not the laws of electricity as real as they are now long before anybody on earth dreamt of the possibility of electric forces? And is not the ideal of virtue the same whether or not represented in the brain of man?

Let us restate the issue on another ground, which, not being directly implied in the religious problem, might allow our friend and critic to think without prejudice. Is causality real or not? That is to say, does the law of cause and effect, which our scientists formulate, describe conditions in the domain of our experiences that are real, or is causality merely a child of the human brain? The old nominalist school, together with their modern descendents who are represented by Hume, Kant, and Mill, take the negative horn of the dilemma, while the philosophy of science takes the positive horn. Causality is a real and actual fact. Causality is not an object; it is not a piece of matter; it is not a quantity of energy; it cannot be perceived by any one of the senses; yet is it real; and indeed it is as much real as any fact of nature. It is as real as stones, as actual as a dynamite explosion, and, indeed, it is more important than any one of the single facts or objects that we meet with in experience. It is one of those omnipresent facts and is as such a part and parcel of that reality which we comprise under the religious term "God."

Corvinus asks for a proof of the objective reality of the moral law of nature. He might as well ask for a proof that 2×2 will always be four, and he might as well deny the truth of this statement, as J. S. Mill actually did. A nominalist only can ask for a proof that he himself exists as a rational being.

The proof of the objective reality of law and of the universality of law must be based upon the re-

liability of human reason in experience. Is it, or is it not, a fact that we can rely upon rationally correct deductions? Is logic a safe guide in practical life? Is universality of thought possible or not? The nominalist denies that universals are real, but in doing so, he denies the reality and reliability of his rational faculty and implicitly declares that his reasoning has no objective application. The nominalistic proposition appears, at first sight, more guarded than the realistic doctrine, but it is actually a bold negation and an assumption that stands in contradiction to the most assured and most obtrusive facts. At the same time, it is a suicidal statement, for on its own supposition no universal statement whatever, be it positive or negative, can be made.

A nominalist denies universality, which is to say, he denies the applicability of reason; and yet he argues. If he were consistent, he would surrender all argument.

I do not say that Corvinus is a nominalist who would accept all the tenets of a consistent nominalism; I only say that he has made nominalistic statements and that these statements are founded upon error.

Corvinus preaches the morality of pure ethics, by which he means that his conception of goodness has nothing to do with his views of the nature of life and of the world. Nor does he ask for the purpose of a virtuous life. He feels the desire of leading a moral life without any definite purpose, without any definite aim—simply because he loves to lead a moral life.

Corvinus feels morally as infinitely above the professional Christian preachers, as in intelligence Darwin is superior to a Bushman; and he looks down with pity on the Galilean dreamer's numerous flock because they are still in the bondage of traditionalism. Considering the ring of conviction in his expositions, we do not doubt that he is an unusually earnest, pure-hearted, and well-meaning man. But is there not a tinge of Pharisaism in his reflexions?

There is a difference between morality, which is a practice in daily life, and ethics, which is conscious knowledge of the significance of morality. Ethics is helpful for the improvement of morality, but ethics does not constitute morality. A bear is in possession of no ethics whatever, but when she defends her cubs and sacrifices herself for them, she may, in morality, be superior to many a man who graduated in ethics and is preaching morality either from the pulpit or in the university lecture-hall, or, as I do, in the editor's chair. He whose ethics are superior, has no reason to look down upon his less favored brother.

While I do not hesitate to believe that the morality of Corvinus is exemplary, I cannot say that his ethics ranks very high, for what is it but mere instinc-

tive goodness. Purposeless and aimless, it may briefly be characterised as the ethics of the thoughtless.

Corvinus sides with Mr. Salter, with whom I had a controversy on the question of the basis of ethics several years ago; and like Mr. Salter, he identifies the problem of the basis of ethics with the idea that moral actions should be done for some selfish end. He answers the ambiguous question, "Why shall I lead a moral life?" by saying "there is no why? I must not look for a reward, but must do the good for the sake of the good. The problem of the basis of ethics has nothing to do with the selfish motives why we should do or abstain from certain actions."

If we inquire into the nature of morality, we must, above all, know what is good and what is bad.

Supposing some one replies, "telling the truth is good; a dutiful performance of duty, the alleviation of suffering is good, etc.,—while lying and the shirking of duties is bad; stealing, and inflicting pain is very bad, etc., we ask again Why is the former good and the latter bad? Shall we say with Corvinus, "there is no why"?

The ethical problem is not so simple as he imagines. Inflicting pain is bad; but is the action of a hero, who inflicts wounds on his enemies, good or bad? And is the man who would not tell the truth on the rack, because it is an important secret, to be blamed or praised?

Is there, indeed, no reason for morality? Is morality really aimless and purposeless, a mere efflux of sentiment? It is right enough to lead a virtuous life because one loves virtue, and not on account of rewards or for fear of punishment here on earth or in some other place, but for that reason we need not declare that virtue is without purpose.

Corvinus himself disagrees with his own statement when he says:

"Human Life has a purpose, the same purpose that all life has during the limited period in which it appears in a certain form: to live in conformity with the conditions into which it sprang."

Very well! These conditions are the formative factors of all the various forms of life; they are the creator of the present shape of the world; religiously speaking, they are God. Accordingly we say, ethics is a correct comprehension of the tendencies of the evolution of life, especially of human life, for the purpose of conforming to its law.

Corvinus does not continue as we would; he adds the self-contradictory sentence:

"But do not ask for the purpose of a virtuous life."

And he declares:

"We should infer from what Dr. Carnus has to say that 'a

system of pure ethics is unscientific, because ethics is always the expression of a world-conception, and that the ethics of the American Indian is scientific—because it is shaped by his world-conception, and should therefore be accepted in preference to my 'unscientific' system of ethics."

My reply is, that if an Indian, with his limited knowledge, conscientiously ponders on the problems of life and endeavors to actualise his errors in superstitious practices, he is so far, and of course only so far, the superior of Corvinus, in spite of the latter's higher culture and more comprehensive knowledge; for the Indian is progressive, his life and the evil results of his errors are valuable experiments which will benefit his posterity, while the ethics of Corvinus is simply to live on the accumulated moral capital of past ages, simply to lead a moral life, because he loves virtue, simply to do the good, whatever that may be, because the good pleases him.

What guarantee has Corvinus from his standpoint of pure ethics that his idea of goodness is correct? Is there not danger, that in calling virtue what pleases him, and in repudiating a "why," he may be regarding certain actions as moral, merely because he loves them? Any system of pure ethics, so called, is unscientific, because it cuts ethics loose from the world and our conception of the world, and renders thus a clear definition of goodness impossible. It makes of morality a matter of mere sentiment, and does not trace its connexions with the conditions and laws of existence.

Suppose Corvinus were to agree with my exposition of the nature of morality as based upon definite conditions of existence, he would still object to my calling these conditions by the religious term of "God," because he believes that the term "God" is misleading and ambiguous, as it implies an identity with the anthropomorphic God-conception of our religious traditions and even with the foolish notions of the unthinking masses. To which I reply, that to consider the conditions of our life as so many single items is as erroneous, perhaps more erroneous, than to represent them under the allegory of a personal Creator; for they are one, and all their various manifestations are, according to circumstances, so many applications of one and the same principle, power, or tendency, law, or whatever you may be pleased to call it.

But, whatever we may call it, it remains a reality of universal importance, the existence of which can be denied only by those who cannot see it on account of its omnipresence.

He who seeks the omnipresent in the blue sky, or in the statue of a god, or in the sound of a word, or on the altar of a church, will not find it. He must come to the conclusion that either it does not exist or that its existence cannot be proved. Taking this view, Kant proposed to postulate the existence of God,

while I would say that God is an undeniable fact of experience. A God whose existence can only be postulated is a poor God and will be of little use to us. God, in order to be a true God, must be an omnipresent factor in the formation of life and in the shaping of our destinies.

Such is the God of the Religion of Science, and he is different from God, as tradition has shaped his picture, in so far as he is nearer to us, as he is truer, grander, and higher. But should we for that reason call him by another name?

Our God-conception is the direct lineal descendent of the old God conception, and should on that account alone be called by the same name, similarly as every one of us bears the name of his great-great-grandfather in direct father's line, although our great-great-grandfather might have been very different in character and occupation from us, and although he may have spoken a language which we no longer understand.

The God-idea of the Religion of Science is on the most essential point the same as the God-idea of Moses and of Christ. It is the recognition of the eternal omnipresence of such conditions in the universe which make man possible, and by man we here understand a rational, purpose-pursuing, and morally-aspiring being. That the old prophets spoke of him as a personality is unessential; and there is good reason for claiming that this mode of speech was an intentional allegory which was never meant to convey the idea of an anthropomorphic God. This much is certain, that the religious leaders of mankind were prompted by their experiences to teach and to preach. Whatever errors influenced their doctrines, they endeavored to formulate the conditions of man's being in an impressive and popular language and applied the truth, such as they understood it, to practical life.

There are people who object to parable teaching and decry allegories as ambiguities, and I confess that there is a truth in their objection. I for one am always on my guard lest I be satisfied with a fairy-tale instead of grasping the truth. But at the same time I am convinced of the inevitableness of symbolic language, for even science cannot dispense with similes and *quid pro quo's*. Our scientific terminology is full of mythological expressions, and if we try to get radically rid of allegoric speech, we find out that it is the method of language to name classes of things with the help of comparisons, figurative uses of words, and similes. Science in quest of knowledge walks up hill on the zigzag road of approximating truth by a gradual approach to its ideal summit of the perfection of absolute cognition.

I join freethinkers when they deny the errors of traditional religion, when they insist on the foolish-

ness of believing in a God-individual and in a soul-essence, but I part company with them when they proclaim that there is nothing good in the old traditions, that they are a hotbed of poisonous plants, and that they must be destroyed.

The freethinker's criticism is an important factor in the evolution of religion, and will be better understood by religious people when freethought has accomplished its purpose. The keen sarcasm of Colonel Ingersoll awakens the old dogmatists from their slumber; it cuts Christian paganism with its absurdities to the quick, but does not touch real religion, the fountain-head of all religion, the spirit of which lingers even in superstitions and aberrations, although it may sometimes be difficult to trace it.

The mission of the Religion of Science is not to destroy religion, but to preserve it; not to abolish the churches, but to reform and to quicken them; not to annihilate man's faith in the holiness of truth, but to purify it of prejudice, to widen its sympathies, and to develop it to a nobler and higher apprehension.

We are radical, and push radicalism to its utmost extreme; but at the same time we are conservative. We do not mean to begin the world over again, but expect that the new must develop out of the old. Progress is growth, and can only be brought about by gradual improvement and transformation.

Therefore, far from being hostile toward the churches, the Religion of Science comes as their friend. We criticize the dogmas and ecclesiastical practices, not because we are irreligious but because we seek a higher religion. Far from being an atheist in the sense in which Corvinus uses the word, I am a theologian. My work is not prompted by any irreverence or desire to discredit the religious aspirations of the past, but to lead them out of confusion into clearness, out of dreamy haziness into the full light of conscious knowledge, out of mythology into the exactness of scientific truth.

P. C.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE DYING RAHAT'S SERMON. Written in Pâli, has been translated into English and published by C. Samerasingha, Galle, Ceylon.

The pamphlet contains the Pâli text in ninety-eight stanzas, with a literal translation and without any reflexions on the doctrinal terms of Buddhism, such as "the soullessness of the five constituents of the body." Buddha's teaching is puzzling so long as âtman is translated by soul. Buddha denies the existence of the âtman, i. e., of a metaphysical soul-being that is supposed to be the agent behind the real facts of man's psychical life; but Buddha does not deny the reality of these facts themselves. Man's existence is his karma, and the assumption of an âtman that performs his karma is absurd. If the âtman is to be called the soul, Buddha denies the existence of the soul; and in this respect he agrees with the results of modern psychology, which also is sometimes inappropriately characterised as a psychology without a

soul. But Buddha at the same time insists on the immortality of man's karma.¹ These two points come out clearly enough in *The Dying Rahat's Sermon*, which is probably a very old document of Southern Buddhism. The doctrine of the non-existence of the âtman is set forth in the stanzas 56, 57, 58, 59, 62:

"It is absurd to believe in the existence of a soul in this body: a body which is unsteady and perishable as a blaze of fire. The idea of a soul is as absurd as that of a barren woman's son running a race along the shaft of a carriage made of the horns of a rabbit.

"It is rank nonsense to say that there is a soul in this body; a body that is actually soulless and equal to a plantain tree. He that erroneously persists in believing that there is a soul, is indeed in no way unequal to one who attempts to drink, in order to slake his thirst, a draught of mirage out of a cup made of a bubble of water.

"The endeavors of an unintelligent man to impute to a mirage scent extracted from the flowers of a fig tree are all in vain, and in like manner, he that persists in the erroneous impression that there is a soul in this body reaps no benefit, since there is no soul actually in existence.

"There is nothing to constitute a soul either in the five constituent parts (the body, the sensation, the perception, the reasoning, and the consciousness) or in the six personal residences² (the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the organ of touch in the bodily system, and the understanding), and he that persists in the belief of the existence of a soul is evidently compared to one persevering to obtain a solid beam from the stem of a plantain tree.

"As the silly hart in vain runs after the fanciful sight of yonder mirage, taking it to be a sheet of water, so do people give way to desire, purely from a false impression that there is steadiness in the unsteady existence of nature."

The positive element of the immortality of the actual facts of man's soul-life, as manifested in man's karma, might come out stronger; but this apparent negativism is characteristic of the Southern Church of Buddhism. Nevertheless it is plainly expressed. For again and again the rahat inculcates the injunction of not to cling to wealth or earthly goods, but to lay up prudently a store of good deeds, which is the only treasure that is not impermanent. We read in stanza 43:

"Is it wise in any being to stick to life and wealth, when wealth is like wind, fire, or water; when life is like a flash of lightning, which is impermanent."

And in stanzas 30-31:

"Hasten to do good and to obtain Nibbhana, leaving undone what may entail grief and pain on any one.

"Neither his wealth, friends, children, relations, servants, nor his wife, as dear as life, accompany him that is about to depart this life; only the result of his own deeds of merit and demerit done in this world."

We are glad to acknowledge the receipt of three interesting and able papers by Mr. Lester F. Ward, of Washington, D. C. They are all reprints. The first is on *Fossil Plants* and is from Vol. VI. of *Johnson's Universal Cyclopaedia*. It gives a brief but admirable *résumé* of the facts of palæobotany. The second, from *Science*, sketches the life and work of two eminent inquirers in the same field, Saporta and Williamson, both of whom died during the present year. The last paper is a reprint from the *American Journal of Sociology* and is on *The Place of Sociology Among the Sciences*. Mr. Ward regards sociology as "the cap-sheaf and

¹That our interpretation of the Buddhistic doctrine is in harmony with representative thinkers of Southern Buddhism may be learned from the review of *The Gospel of Buddha in The Buddhist*, a reprint of which appears in another column of the present number.

²The elements which constitute man's personality.

crown of any true system of classification of the sciences, and also the last and highest landing on the great staircase of education." We quote the following paragraph, which is interesting both in itself and as an illustration of the influence which our predilections and favorite studies have on our estimate of things. "Comte was typical of the French mind in general when at its best. There is no greater error than that of thinking it light and trivial. I have heard mathematicians, astronomers, and physicists say the same for these great departments of science. Every chemist, anatomist, and physiologist must be acquainted with French thought on these subjects. It was Lamarck who really broke the way to the new biology and gave it its name. Political economy, with all its merits and defects, originated with the physiocrats. In the very word altruism Comte laid the foundation of a scientific ethics. And for moral power in fiction what author has approached Victor Hugo? The French mind penetrates to the very heart of every problem it attacks and is not deterred by practical obstacles. It has thus been the great organiser of human thought, leaving the details and frictional hindrances to the German and English schools. France has furnished the warp of science and philosophy, other nations their woof."

NOTES.

It is a strange fact that liberal religious people are frequently much more narrow-minded than the old-fashioned orthodox ones. As one instance, we publish a review of Subhadra Bhikshu's *Buddhist Catechism* and of *The Gospel of Buddha*, coming from a liberal religious journal. *The Outlook* not only has not the slightest idea of the character of the philosophy represented in *The Open Court*, which it calls "materialistic monism" and "pantheism,"¹ but it also thinks that books that attempt to interpret Buddhistic thought "are unnecessary in the world, at any rate to the world of Western Christendom." While Roman Catholic clergymen at Paris prepare themselves for holding a second Religious Parliament in 1900, *The Outlook* proposes to shut Christendom up in a Chinese wall. The reviewer must have had a dream while reading *The Gospel of Buddha*, for he blames its author for suggesting "that we substitute this for the religion of Jesus," although in the whole *Gospel of Buddha* there is not the slightest attempt at proposing such a substitution. *The Gospel of Buddha* is intended to be a sober conception of Buddhism, written for the purpose of stimulating our religious thought, especially in its relation to the psychological problem. Whether or not it faithfully represents the Buddhistic doctrine, it is for Buddhists to say. We reprint the review of *The Outlook* without further remark, as a warning to thoughtless critics:

"The teachings of Gautama, called the Buddha, were salvation to myriads in the Orient twenty-five hundred years ago, but they are perdition to the world of modern Christendom. It will never be possible to reverse the whirling of the wheel of progress. The growth of the world cannot be undone, the knowledge of the world cannot be unlearned. Two attempts to introduce Buddhism lie before us; they are of entirely different spirit and wisdom. They are also entirely different interpretations of Buddhism. *The Buddhist Catechism*, by Subhadra Bikshu (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York), is a translation from a German version, and is manifestly a propagandist essay. We suspect that in this book Buddhism has passed through a mind surcharged with the Occidentalism of Schopenhauer. Yet the Catechism professes to be consonant with the Singalese sect of Buddhists. This sect is supposed to be nearest the original doctrine of Gautama. As in Christianity,

there is a vast difference between the various sects of Buddhists. We are not yet in the position to say with dogmatism what is the only, or the *realist*, Buddhism. Perhaps there never was an absolute uniformity in Buddha's own day. It is clear that, as his sayings are reported, he uttered many things hard to reconcile. This Catechism will be useful to those theosophists who have not yet got beyond the stage of archæological occultism. Dr. Paul Carus, in his *Gospel of Buddha*, speaks to a different audience—the rational, not the mystical, folk. Nevertheless, this rationalism is mystical. He redeems Buddhism from the atheistic bondage only to chain it to his car of materialistic monism. He emancipates the Gospel of the Light of Asia from the service of nihilism in order that it may minister unto pantheism. His explanations are facile. We would gladly assent to his preaching if behind his pulpit we did not detect the evil spirit of a blank materialism. Buddhism, in one of its forms, is precisely the garb to fit Dr. Carus's teachings. It suits the purpose of the Philosopher of Chicago, and, so far, all is well. But when it is suggested that we substitute this for the religion of Jesus, we ask, not as Christians, but as philosophers, 'Dr. Carus, are not you nodding?' Of course, there is much that is fine in Buddhism, especially as Dr. Carus expounds it, and there are also not a few superficial resemblances to Christianity; but would Dr. Carus in all seriousness be willing to live in a world entirely Buddhistic? and does not he understand that in their essence Christianity and Buddhism are diametrically opposed? For these reasons, if for no other, we feel indisposed to seriously consider these two books. They are unnecessary to the world, at any rate to the world of Western Christendom. (The Open Court Company, Chicago.)"

"*The Buddhist*. A Weekly Magazine and the Organ of the Southern Church of Buddhism," published in Colombo, Ceylon, contains in one of its latest numbers (Vol. VII., No. 36) the following editorial on *The Gospel of Buddha*: "Under the above title is a work before us, compiled by Dr. Paul Carus on Buddhism from old records. His method of treatment of the subject is at once original, succinct, and comprehensive, thereby making it less tedious than most works of the kind produced from different points of view of the system, as well as through motives other than a desire to faithfully represent its true character and value. We are glad to find, that in the work under review, the latter unfair element has not entered into the mind of the author, except the good wish to judge well and to impart the result of such labors to others. The eminent feature of the work is its grasp of the difficult subject and the clear enunciation of the doctrine of the most puzzling problem of *âtman*, as taught in Buddhism. So far as we have examined the question of *âtman* ourselves from the work of Southern canon, the view taken by Dr. Paul Carus is accurate, and we venture to think that it is not opposed to the doctrine of Northern Buddhism. The conception of soul by advanced thinkers of the present day, is in strange agreement with the Buddha's teaching thereon. The theory of *âtman* was, in the time of our Blessed Master, carried to such absurd extremes, that He was obliged to deny the existence thereof in man. The Brahmans believed that the soul is a metaphysical entity behind the Samskaras, pre existing in its essential purity all throughout its various changes, and being the one witness of all the phenomena of the senses. The Master saw the mistake, and pointed out the utter inconsistency of the teaching, of the Brahmans in thinking to make an already pure thing still purer by personal works, and in the necessity of its [the soul's] having to descend into matter to get back, after many incarnations, to its starting point.

"Then again, if the soul is the one witness of all the phenomena communicated through its windows [the senses], how does it not see, smell, taste, hear, and feel whenever it opens any one of the windows? On the contrary this *âtman* self, our teachings

¹As to our opinion on the subject of materialism, see *Fundamental Problems*, second edition, pp. 350-354, and on the subject of pantheism, see *Homilies of Science*, pp. 90-94. Compare also our criticism of that kind of monism which regards "matter" as "the thing-in-itself," in *The Monist*, Vol. IV., No. 2, p. 228 et seq., Vol. V., No. 2, p. 282 et seq., and other articles.

assert, is a mere chimera, and is the root of all error, doubt, ignorance, and consequent evils. To forget self, and to abide in virtue, pity, and universal love are the watchwords of Buddhism; and the cumbersome rites, ceremonies, and worship which the priesthood has imported into it from time to time, are the wretched glitter of its exoteric paraphernalia. But on that account Buddhism is not materialistic, nor less spiritual in its final end and purpose with its expressed recognition of the theory of Karma, Samsara and Nirvana. 'Ex nihilo, nihil fit' is an axiom, which was admitted by the Master, when he asserted that two things are eternal, changeless, causeless, and Karmaless—they being the Nirvana Dhātu and the Akasa Dhātu. These two co-exist, and are the Pratyā and Hetu of all the cosmos—though dual in nature they are but one eternal beingness. Putting into modern intelligible parlance, the Nirvana and the Akasa Dhātus, are primary *mind* and *matter*, which according to inherent laws—Swabha Dharma—manifest themselves, in the various ways we observe them, for the working out of a final end. In the process of evolution the 'chitta-Paranparawa' [continuity of mind] is unbroken—like an extinct flame that has kindled another, or a string which is tied to opposite poles with numberless beads strung on: and hence the identity of the individual is preserved—*nāca añño*.

"We might now touch upon the septenary principles of man according to theosophical teachings, to point out the strange coincidence of its views of ātman with that of our conception thereof. The principles are: *Rupa, Jiva, Linga, Sarira, Kāma-Rupa, Manas, Buddhi* and *Atma*. And all things in nature, not excepting man, are constituted of more or less of these principles, and in a degree varying in accordance with the stage of individual development. Strictly speaking there is not now among us any one man who can lay claim to the possession of the three higher principles to-wit, Manas-Buddhi-Ātman. In fact there is none, who has got the pure spirit (ātman) in him, but a distant ray only of it; thereby showing that which man has, is not the ātman, but a distant ray of it bound up with the samskaras. Man must in the due course of events be purged of the deadly poison of the *Kāma Tanha, Bhava Tanha*, and *Vibhava Tanha*, to realise the pure eternal light of Nirvana—ātman—bliss everlasting. The higher planetary spirits and even Mahatmās, according to theosophical teachings exist in their three higher principles—and they are thus far remote from being called pure spirits. The great Beyond unknown, is not a safe field of speculation, and must therefore be left untouched.

"The above remarks, are simply incidental to our recommending the *Gospel of Buddha* as a very safe and handy book to the student of our Agama, and even to those who, to some extent, studied the subject from other sources.

"The value of the book under notice, would be apparent to those who read the brief statement of the tenets of Buddhism and explanations appended at the last page of the said work."

Emperor William of Germany has designed a picture, in which Buddha riding on the Chinese dragon is represented as threatening the civilisation of the Christian nations. The fact is that the Chinese question is simply due to the jealousy of those powers who expect to receive the lion's share of the spoils when poor China is no longer able to hold her own against her many enemies.

We ought to add that while China is covered with Buddhistic pagodas and monasteries, the policy of the government is by no means Buddhistic. The private life of the people is strongly influenced by Buddha's doctrines but not the government, a fact which appears most prominently in the bloody sacrifice of a white bull without blemish that is annually offered by the emperor to Shang Ti, "the Lord on High," who is worshipped as the highest god, creator, and sovereign ruler of the world. If the Chinese government were Buddhistic, no bloody sacrifice would be tele-

rated. The higher classes of the Chinese nation are under the influence of Confucius rather than Buddha. It was one of the principles of Confucius neither to affirm nor deny the existence of gods and ghosts, and he refrained from teaching anything concerning the immortality of the soul. The religion of Confucius is practically nothing more nor less than agnosticism and his ethics consists in reverence of the sages of yore who preached filial devotion and submission to established authority in politics as well as in literature and science.

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