

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PÈRE HYACINTHE LOYSON
AND THE EDITOR OF THE OPEN COURT.

NEUILLY PRÈS PARIS, 22 July, 1894.

Dr. Paul Carus.

MY DEAR SIR:— . . . The parts of your *Primer of Philosophy* which I have had translated for my perusal have struck me very forcibly by reason of the emphasis with which you have expounded the necessity of the great philosophical principles which should be established in the human soul as the basis of all certitude and all religion, and which no revelation coming from without, however excellent it may be, can supplant.

I do not know to what degree you are a Christian. As for myself, I worship the Word which is incarnate in Jesus Christ. But I do not forget that before having been manifested in a man and in having thus opened up a new epoch in the history of mankind, the Word was eternal and universal, and, according to the beautiful words of the Evangelist, “the true light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world.”

In their manner of understanding the religion of the incarnate Word, Christians too often miscomprehend the Eternal Word, the uncreated reason which proceeded from the Father before all time and from which proceedeth in time the reason and the conscience of men.

Believe me, dear sir, sincerely yours,

HYACINTHE LOYSON.

20 April, 1895.

MY DEAR SIR:—My slight knowledge of English has hitherto enabled me to grasp only very imperfectly your philosophical point of view, but I now comprehend it, thanks to the French transla-

tions of your works, *L'Idée de Dieu* and *Conscience du Moi*. I have found in these two works many good and beautiful things worthy of a philosopher and a man. But on one fundamental point I differ radically from you.

Not only as a Christian but as a thinker I believe absolutely in God, living and personal,—though not necessarily anthropomorphic,—and in the like personal immortality of the human ego. I say with Maine de Biran, “Science has two poles: infinite personality, which is God, and finite personality, which is the ego.”

I could not live, I should be overwhelmed with intellectual and moral asphyxia, if I were to lose this double and profound conviction.

Truth is not for me an abstract ideal without a living support. It is the direct, unmediated radiation of the divine reason in human reason, and, as the fourth gospel excellently has it, “the light of the Word which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

I remain, dear sir, sincerely yours,

H. L.

The Rev. Hyacinthe Loyson.

DEAR SIR:—Thanks for your letter. I am sorry that on the two most important points, the problems of God and the soul, you find yourself in disagreement with my position; but I am always delighted to meet an adversary of your type, a man of warm convictions and unusual intellectual ability, for you are not loath to give your reasons, and I am sure that they are worthy of consideration. If you point out to me my errors I shall be glad to change my views. I should be glad to have from your pen for publication in either *The Monist* or *The Open Court* an exposition of your standpoint, and if possible a refutation of that view which we, the editors of *The Monist*, call the Religion of Science.

You write that you absolutely believe in a personal God and in a personal immortality of the human ego. These two ideas are to you as they were to Maine de Biran, the two poles of science, and you would be struck with intellectual and moral asphyxia if you ever lost this conviction; and as you understand by personal immortality the continuance of a human ego, so by personal God, you understand plainly an individual being, an ego personality, a concrete though spiritual existence. I can feel with you and I can sympathise with you, for I have been in the same predicament as you. But I cannot follow you. Nor can I approve of the fervor

with which you emphasise your belief as the sole condition for the welfare of your soul. For in doing so you endanger the future of those whom you impress with your powerful personality.

When I was young I was taught as you believe. I was taught that there was no God unless God was a personal God, and a personal God means a God who is possessed of an ego; God was characterised as a self, endowed with a consciousness of self. At the same time I was taught that immortality must be the ensured continuance of our personal consciousness in its idiosyncrasy with all individual recollections and relations. Many struggles would have been spared me if my parents and teachers had not written on the guide-post that leads to a higher and purer religion the words "atheism and nihilism." Thus I was prevented for a long time from attaining a scientifically tenable conception of God and soul. But man cannot help growing, and I had, nevertheless, to march onward, though I could not avoid passing through atheism and nihilism, losing both my God and my soul; for after a most careful examination of these two problems, which, however, at bottom are one and the same problem in two applications, I came, against my own inclination, to the conclusion that there was no God and there no soul. Science has as little room for the huge world-ego of a God-individual as for the puny ego-entity of man, supposed to exist in addition to the psychic elements of which the human soul in the course of a long evolution has been built up. We might as well assume the existence of a metaphysical watch-essence as a distinct entity residing in the watch and representing the unity of its motions. I would gladly have believed in a personal God and in the reality of an ego soul, if I had not plainly recognised the desolate superfluity of these two postulates. It is possible indeed that the world might have been built by a rational being according to a rational plan. But who, in that case, made the rationality of the Creator? Is not reason, which you will readily recognise as intrinsically necessary, eternal, and universal, superior to any individual God-being? Thus Reason would be an authority above God: it would be the God of God.

Here is the problem in a nutshell:

Take the simplest mathematical theorems, such as $2 \times 2 = 4$, or $(a + b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$. There are two possibilities for the anthropotheistic theologian: either these theorems have been shaped by God to hold good in the plan of his creation, or God has cleverly adjusted his creation according to the laws of arithmetic and geometry. If God shaped these laws, they could not be independent

of Him; but they *are* independent of Him, of an individual God, for we cannot help recognising them to be true whether we believe in the existence of God or not. These rules, as all other rules of mathematics, arithmetic and logic, have not been created; they are intrinsically necessary, unconditionally true, absolute, universal, and eternal. Thus the second possibility remains only. God must have adjusted his creation to the laws of pure Reason, viz., to the eternal conditions of the cosmic order. And if God adjusted His creation to these eternal conditions of the cosmic order they are superior to Him, as being a power to which He must conform. Such, indeed, is Plato's conception of God. Plato, when speaking of "the absolutely necessary," calls it "a necessity against which God himself is unable to contend."¹

In reply to Plato's God-conception, which places necessity above God, we say that a God who is subject to a higher power does not deserve the name of God. Call him a divine spirit, an archangel, the demiurge, the world-fashioner, but not God; for God, as I conceive him, is the highest authority, the ultimate *raison d'être* of existence, and the final standard of truth and righteousness.

On moral grounds the belief in an individual God is not less untenable. An anthropomorphic view of God would inevitably make the Creator responsible for all the untold misery in the world. If we accept traditional Christianity, no compensation is promised to the brute animal world, and for the majority of mankind misery is perpetuated in the sufferings of eternal damnation. And is it not sad that here the human heart that knows nothing of the sternness of scientific proof can take shelter only in agnosticism (the very enemy of any gnosis, scientific as well as religious,) by assuming that we can never comprehend the truth and had better trust in God's mysterious dispensation?

Only after a period of deep despair in which I felt myself forsaken by God and struck with a moral asphyxia such as you prophesy for yourself, did I regain my mental equilibrium.

Now let me tell you that when, after the bankruptcy of my belief in God, I began to calm down; I opened my eyes again and was astonished that I could still see. I applied my mental abilities, and lo! I could still think. I had not lost my moral aspirations; and though I had utterly surrendered my self, such as it appeared to me in my personality, I had not abandoned my ideals, my appreciation of nobility of character, my admiration for beauty

¹*Laws*, 818. Cf. *Laws*, 741, and *Protag.*, 345.

in conduct as well as in art, and above all my love of truth. God had died to me, and I myself had become as dead. The world was so empty that death appeared rather as a redemption than an annihilation. But while I continued to live, I soon felt that the wellsprings of my religious life had not dried up; the realities of life remained as they had been before, and these functions of my soul that, according to the traditional terminology, I had accustomed myself to call a belief in God, continued to operate. I learned through experience that that which in the traditions of Christianity is called God symbolises actual facts. If God, as science unmistakably teaches, is not an individual being, He is after all a living presence, and if the soul is not an immortal ego, we cannot deny the actuality of the soul's pursuits, such as the treasures of science and art and the grand aims of moral endeavor. The main argument that refutes the existence of an individual God-entity affords incontrovertible proof of the omnipresence of an intangible God who, being the rationality of reason, the life of the living, and the ultimate norm of moral aspirations, is alone the true God. Therefore I should not say that the laws of mathematics are superior to God, I should say that they are part and parcel of Him, viz., of the superpersonal God. They are the most important features of His nature. God cannot alter them, because He cannot alter Himself. But if God were an individual being, a person such a one as we are, a deliberating, thinking ego-consciousness, only infinitely greater, wiser, and better than we, the laws of mathematics and all other formal laws of logic and arithmetic would indeed be superior to Him; for mathematical and logical truths are intrinsically necessary and eternal, and a God-individual would have to conform to them in order to be wise and good and great.

The problem of the ego, both in God and in man, commands a wider interest among both professional thinkers and people in the practical walks of life, and justly so, for here lies the root of all difficulties. Man's personality is the most important fact of life. Says Goethe:

“ Fürst und Volk und Ueberwinder,
 Sie gestehen zu jeder Zeit,
 Höchstes Glück der Menschenkinder
 Ist doch die Persönlichkeit.”

[Prince and people, and those who conquer,
 Mankind in totality,
 All agree, the bliss they hanker
 For is 'personality.']

Personality asserts itself in conscious aspiration, in endeavor, in purposed action. Hence the importance of consciousness and of design. Both together constitute the functions of the soul. There would be no sense in life unless there were personality changing indifferent nature into a field of planned activity. The highest we can think of is that which creates and conditions personality. That is God; and the question is only whether or not God is a personality himself.

Our answer is, that the conditions of human personality are the same eternal laws, or necessary relations, or universal verities, or whatever you may call them, which constitute the entire cosmic order, for man's personality is nothing but a concentrated reflexion of the cosmic order, a kind of quintessence of the divinity that is omnipresent in nature. These conditions are not an indifferent anything, but possess a definite character. Nor are they scattered, isolated facts; they constitute a harmonious unity. Considering their unity, we call them in their religious significance in one word "God." The characteristic feature of personality is rational will, consisting in the realisation of purpose; and purpose is design pursued with consciousness.

The cosmic order which reveals itself in the rationality of man, being inalterable and intrinsically necessary, does not only govern this actual world of ours, but, as an investigation of the nature of pure reason teaches, holds good universally for any possible kind of world, and may, therefore, very appropriately be called "supernatural." It is the purely relational, not the material; it is the formal, not the substantial; it comprises not the physical properties of nature, but the hyperphysical order of things which is applicable to any kind of world. It is what St. John calls the Logos that was in the beginning, not as a first-created being, but as part and parcel of God himself. Being the rationality of our thought and the endeavor in our noblest actions, God is nearer to us than any ego-God who is a distinct individuality can be, for God constitutes the very essence of our being.

We may call this conception of God *Nomothetism*.¹ The order of the universe, the irrefragable law that permeates nature, conditioning the tiny molecular crystallisation of metals as well as the grand course of planets, and appearing in its highest manifestations as the rational will of man where it shows itself as moral endeavor, is God Himself. The uncreated and immutable laws of nature are themselves parts and parcels of God; they are features

¹ From νόμος law.

of His being; they are the characteristic aspects of His nature. They are the God whom science teaches. In their oneness we may call them the logic of facts, the world-reason, or Logos. Science teaches that the Logos is uncreated; the Logos is the divinity of God.

Now, God (as I understand him to be), if he be God at all, is not conscious design, but, being the condition of organised unity of any kind, of law and cosmic order, he is also the condition of design, of man's rationality, of purposive action. As such God is also the condition of consciousness, for consciousness is organised sentiency; it is the irritability that prevails among the lower forms of nature, raised to the high level of self-apprehension. Having originated through organisation, consciousness is the product of the order-producing cosmic laws that are intrinsically necessary and eternal.

But should we not admit the hypothesis of a God-consciousness, by conceiving the universe as a great organised unity, as an ego, endowed with the quality of self-apprehension, as a huge being in which the planets play a part analogous to the blood-corpuses of the human brain? We reject this view of the universe as pantheistic, for it will be difficult for us to believe that the planetary motions are accompanied with consciousness; nor do we see any need of this assumption, as our God-idea is complete without it.

Mr. W. E. A. Wilkinson, of Rasra, a reader of *The Open Court* and one of my friendly critics in far-away India, objects to this superpersonal conception of God as follows:

"Evolution is an infinite process and consciousness is manifest at both ends of it. God is a conscious being whose purpose is to develop out of Himself a number of smaller beings like Himself. The process of their development is evolution. The process is somewhat analogous to the birth of a child from its parents. The parent as a whole is a conscious being. The parts of it by themselves are not conscious. There is no consciousness in a man's big toe, as such, but there is consciousness in a perfect child born from the man and containing all the elements that are in him. So also, as you say, there is no consciousness in the planets as such. But there is a consciousness in the whole universe; and there is consciousness in that complete reproduction of the parent called man.

"I maintain that my conception of God as a loving and all-wise father is far more satisfying than yours; that it is warranted by human aspirations, and that it is not inconsistent with any known scientific facts.

"I require something more than *definite character* in this whole universe; I require consciousness. I believe that there is a consciousness in the whole universe as such. Otherwise I do not see how it can be manifested in the limited parts of the universe called human individuals. There cannot be any 'conditions of sen-

tiency' without sentiency. It is absurd. Consciousness either is, or is not. *We cannot conceive of any elementary state from which it can be evolved.*"

In reply to Mr. Wilkinson's objections I would grant the possibility of the animation of the universe with an ego-consciousness, such as is assumed in his proposition, and I would for argument's sake also grant that man's soul is a part of this world-soul, developing from elements of the world-soul into an independent being like unto its parent soul. But if this were so, would not the God, whom science reveals, that superpersonal presence of law, be still superior to this world-soul?

If Mr. Wilkinson's God existed, I should not call him God, but Brahma, or world-soul, or the great spirit of the universe, and he would be subject to God no less than I am myself or any other person is. If you, however, insist on calling such a being with a world-wide consciousness, God, I would insist that there is something higher than God, and I would deem the belief in God a matter of small concern.

God (*viz.*, the God of science) is truly like a father, but he is not a father. If we speak of him as a father, it is a mere allegory. Take the allegory in its literal sense, as does Mr. Wilkinson, and you change God into a creature such as we are. A child develops from a part of his parents and grows into a being like them; there is no constitutional difference between parent and child, except that if the parent be faithful in the fulfilment of his duties, the son should become superior to his father in mental and moral equipment and start life under better conditions and with wider possibilities than did his ancestors.

While I reject the letter of the belief that God is a loving father, I gladly accept the significance of the allegory, and I would go so far as to recommend belief in the letter of the allegory where its meaning cannot as yet be understood. In a certain phase of human development the belief in the letter is natural for the broad masses of the people who are not yet matured in philosophical thought and will not be able to realise the fact that God is much nearer and dearer to us than any human father can be to his child; if they believe that there is a benevolent father in heaven who guides their lives and watches over them with loving care, they have a truer conception of the world than if they say, "There is no God, let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we shall be no more."

The allegory of a loving father in heaven is true enough in its significance. The order of cosmic laws, which prescribes the

paths of the planets and arranges the wonderful combinations of atoms into molecules, is not only sternly just but also most beneficent and dear. It not only begets us; it also cherishes us and surrounds us with unceasing blessings, infinitely greater not only in amount and proportion but also in kind, than any father or mother could bestow on their children.

If God were an individual being, even though he were conceived to be eternal and infinitely great, he would after all be one of us; he would be the first of all beings, the most powerful of living things, the monarch of creatures, the demiurge or world-builder, the progenitor of life, the father of all, but he would be in the same predicament as other beings are.

The father of a family is as much an individual and a mortal as are his children. Therefore God is comparable to a father, but he is not our father. He is infinitely dearer to us than a father. God's relation to his creatures is incomparably more intimate and at the same time more authoritative than the relation of a father is to his children.

Nor is God's relation to the world that of a king. We may compare him to a king; but God's majesty is radically different from any ruler or monarch of any description. God is not a legislator, not an individual being that issues ukases, he is not a deity who creates laws, but he is the eternal order of all natural laws itself.

Supposing there were a God-individual who rules the world after the fashion of a king, he might surpass all other beings as much as a noble-minded sovereign, a King Arthur, or a Charlemagne, is greater than the beggars in the streets of his capital; but after all he would not be their absolute superior. For he would not be the ultimate standard of truth and morality.

According to the letter of the law in monarchical institutions, the sovereign of a country is above the law; but that is nominal and means simply that he should not be judged in court for any offense he may give; practically he is as much a subject to the law as are all his subjects. He is the first citizen of the country but not the measure of justice. The law is practically above him, and, if he be wise, he knows it and will act accordingly.

A God-individual would not condition the cosmic order but would only conform to it. The eternal norms of reason, of rightness, and of righteousness would be as absolutely above him as they are above us. In a word, being a particular being, he would

not possess the marks of Godhood, intrinsic necessity, intrinsic eternity, intrinsic universality, intrinsic omnipresence.

Man naturally fashions his views of God after the pattern of his own personality, because he regards God as the mould from which his manhood has been shaped. But we must learn to understand what is the divine and what the human in man's personality. The divinity of man does not consist in his being an individual; for every crystal, every plant, every brute, is also an individual; the divinity of man consists in that feature which raises individuality into the higher domain of personality, and the distinctive feature of personality is the faculty of rational thought and rational action. In rational beings, feelings develop into self-consciousness, and self-consciousness finds expression in the notion of egoity.

The egoity of man is a very important feature, but it is not that feature which constitutes his divinity. Man's reason is divine, his conscience is divine, his comprehension of the truth is divine, but his ego-consciousness is simply the psychical expression of his selfhood, it is the awareness of his being a distinct individual, and this distinct individual can become divine only when its sentiments are guided by reason, conscience, and truth.

Our ego-consciousness is like a flickering flame now rising to bright clearness, now sinking into sleep's darkness, finally to be extinguished in death.

What is consciousness?

Consciousness is a function, and the peculiar nature of each conscious state, of every sentiment, every sensation, every idea, every word we think, every volition we have, depends upon the form of the nervous structure that is in commotion. The function of consciousness is a process of oxydation; it constantly feeds on new material and discards the old waste products. Thus the consciousness of every moment in life is a new consciousness. Nevertheless, there is an uninterrupted continuity, and, according to the laws of organised life, the form is preserved in the metabolism of the tissue by a constant renewal of the material used. The renewal is an assimilation, that is to say, it preserves the form of the wasted structure. The preservation of the form of nervous tissue is the condition of the continuity of consciousness, rendering the main bulk of our past experiences accessible in the shape of memories.

Memory, accordingly, is the salient feature of man's personality.

I have come to the conclusion that Maine de Biran's compari-

son is in a certain sense both forcible and true: God and the ego are indeed like unto the north and the south poles of our starry heavens. They are the direction of astronomical lines, but if we were to go out in search of them among the stars, we should not be able to discover them. They are useful for certain practical purposes of astronomy from a terrestrial standpoint, and represent, as such, real and indeed very important relations of the earth to the surrounding universe; but they are no entities, no things in themselves, no tangible or concrete objects, no individual things.

I am not a Pantheist. I do not identify God and the universe, for God and nature are different. God is the omnipresent law, and not the sum total of all existences. Nor is the term God (as I use it) an empty abstraction, but a word of intensest significance, for indeed God is that which gives significance to the world.

I do not say that God is impersonal, for God is not a vague generality but possesses a distinct suchness. He is not indefinite, but exceedingly definite in character. We can positively say what God is and what God is not, as we can distinguish between truth and untruth, between right and wrong, between good and evil. If you understand by personality definiteness of character, God is personal; but God's is not a human personality, his is a divine personality. His personality is not confined to the limits of individual concreteness; that is, His will is not a particular aspiration, but the eternal rightness that constitutes the condition of the cosmic order, the physical aspect of which can be stated in a body of formulas,¹ called laws of nature.

While in one sense God is personal, being possessed of a definite character, we must insist on the truth that in another sense God is not personal. God is not personal in the sense that an individual being is called personal. God is not an individual being; he is not a particular existence; he is not a concrete ego-self; in a word, he is not a creature; but if he is God, he is truly God, i. e., He is that which is omnipresent, absolute, intrinsically necessary, universal, eternal, the reality of all truth, and the norm of all righteousness. Being the condition of everything conditioned, he determines the suchness of all creatures and is especially also the condition of all personality in rational beings. For what is personality but individuality developed into the domain of rationality and

¹The unity of a system of truths is frequently compared to an organised body, and it is in this sense that Puddhists speak of the three bodies or Kāyas of Buddha, the Nirmāna Kāya or body of transformation, Sambhōga Kāya, the body of bliss and eternal rest, and Dharma Kāya, the body of the law or the revelation of the truth as developing in the evolution of the Buddhist religion.

endowed with moral aspiration. Being the condition of personality, God is superpersonal.

Since I understand that God is superpersonal, I cannot help looking upon the belief in a God who is a concrete and individual being, endowed with an ego-consciousness, as a pagan notion. It is a belief that takes an allegory literally. Paganism, in my opinion, is nothing but a literal acceptance of a symbol or a myth, where we ought to seek for the truth that is conveyed to us in the form of a parable.

The superpersonal God as I conceive him is neither vague nor illusory, but definite and actual. As Newton's formula of gravitation is not an unmeaning phrase but a description of actualities, so the word God (in the sense in which I use the term) defines a reality of omnipresent effectiveness. The reality is not material but incorporeal; not bodily but spiritual,¹ not individual or concrete, but universal, yet at the same time definite.

This conception of God, far from being atheistical, obviates the objections of atheism and shows the old truths of religion in a new light; it is in harmony with the most stringent critique, and is not only tenable on scientific grounds, but will be recognised as the sole philosophical basis of science formulated as a religious term.

The God of science, it is true, is not an individual being, but he is after all a reality as much as the law of gravitation; He is not an ego-entity with a limited range of consciousness, but is for that reason not a nondescript generality; he is definite in character and his qualifications are unmistakable. When we take the attributes of God—eternality, omnipresence—seriously, we shall understand that God cannot be personal, but for all that He is superpersonal. He is the condition of all personality, the prototype of man's reason, the norm of all moral purpose, the inspiration of ideals. He is the determinedness of the universe and the intrinsic necessity of the cosmic order itself. God cannot be an individual; He is not a man, He is God; He is not *a* God, but God.

God's thoughts are not acts of thinking, they are verities such as mathematical laws. God does not think in syllogisms as we do; His ideas are not a chain of arguments; he does not deliberate, ar-

¹ But please do not interpret "spiritual" in the sense that spiritualists represent ghosts. It is here used in the sense of the Platonic term *αιτιώδης*, i. e., the causal, viz., that which is the determinative in causation; frequently translated by "formal," because form is the feature that gives character to a thing and is the decisive element in the processes of transformation.

iving finally at a conclusion and coming to a decision. In Him the problem and its solution are one. His thoughts are not representations of the conditions of being, but the laws of pure being themselves.

Man's thoughts are representations. God's thoughts are eternal verities.

When we find a proposition that is intrinsically necessary and universal, a law that is uncreated and uncreatable, we must know that it is a thought of God. While thinking it, our thoughts are on holy ground, they are face to face with the Eternal.

It seems that glimpses of this higher God-conception are not foreign to the Gospel-writers. According to St. John, Christ did not say God is a spirit; he said *πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός* (God is spirit). And again he did not say God is a loving personality, but "God is love." And when He was asked, "Where is thy father?" He replied, "I and the Father are one." The two poles of science which you seek, viz., God and man, are not special spots in the universe. The two poles of science are a direction which is laid down in one line of "definite direction," in the God man, Christ, the Logos incarnate; here, if anywhere in our aspiring hearts, must we seek for God.

Here I agree with you that the Logos doctrine contains a great truth. The Logos, or World-Reason, takes shape in him who is perfect, in the God-man, the realised ideal of manhood, the paragon of mankind.

The Logos is incarnated not only in Christ, but in every rational being. The perfection of the Logos is not mere rationality, but moral endeavor, purity, holiness, charity, love; and the incarnate Logos is in its perfection as much divine as the eternal world order, God the Father. Nor is it less divine in the various ideals of mankind as they appear to-day in the advance of civilisation, in science, art, invention, and social progress, all of which in a word may be comprised under the name of the spirit manifesting itself—the holy spirit of the New Testament.

Allow me to add here that the trinity doctrine of the Church and the conception of the Logos or World reason as an aspect of God Himself is quite tenable upon philosophical grounds, provided we do not believe in the letter of the dogma but comprehend its sense. There are not three God-individuals who are one, but there is a superpersonal God who has three aspects which are allegorised in three personalities. As soon as the personality of God is construed to mean an individual God-being, the trinity doc-

trine becomes absurd. Hence the various rationalistic¹ reactions against this most fundamental dogma of traditional Christianity, and hence probably your own deep-felt sympathy with the deistic teachings of Islam.

Our reason, our life, and our moral ideas are not human inventions; they are intrinsically necessary and cannot in their fundamental nature be other than they are according to the unalterable conditions of existence. The cosmic prototype of our existence, that something through the agency of which we have become intelligent and morally aspiring beings, is what I call God, and, thus, I recognise God as the ultimate norm of reason, the all-quickenning wellspring of life and the obedience-enforcing authority of moral conduct, acting with the never-failing certainty of natural law.

The immortality of the soul remains a mystery so long as we still believe in an ego-entity, for we fail to understand the possibility of a continuance of our ego-personality, but when we learn that our thoughts and aspirations are our soul, that *they* constitute our personality, we see at once that we shall continue beyond our grave. Our thoughts will be thought again. The examples we set will be imitated, and our life will remain a factor in the evolution of mankind, not otherwise than every act of ours remains during our entire life with us as a living presence shaping our fate for good or evil. When we are gathered to our fathers, we shall remain active realities in the spirit-life of our race; we are and remain citizens of the Kingdom of God which is not beyond the clouds but in the hearts of men.

Although the whole combination of a man, his bodily frame, and the energy that manifested itself in the discharges of his nervous activity breaks utterly down in death, all the personal features of his soul remain according to the actions which he performed during life. Man's life is transient, but his deeds are immortal, and deeds are soul-activity; deeds constitute the soul, indeed, they are the most characteristic features of personality. Our deeds are not extraneous or foreign to us, they are we ourselves; and our deeds continue according to the law of causation, for the same reason that every event which takes place continues in its effects and that every thought of ours lingers with us as a memory. Effects may be modified and offset by other effects, but they can

¹ "Rationalistic," not "rational." By "rationalistic" I understand the theories of the rationalistic school. Such rationalists are Arius, Pelagius, Mohammed, the Deists, the Unitarians, etc.

never be annihilated; they remain for ever and aye modifying the universe in exact proportion to the range and nature of their causes.

Here again we must understand that the soul is spiritual, not material, nor kinematic. The soul does not consist of substance, nor is it an energy or a force; the soul is the significant form of life, and thus it constitutes the essential and determinative feature of a being.

Here is an illustration: A poet writes a verse to a friend, and it so happens that in the course of time the ink fades and the paper crumbles into dust. Is the verse itself thereby destroyed? No, not at all. The verse (that is to say, that peculiar sentiment expressed in definite words) cannot be destroyed, for it is not of the earth earthy; it is spiritual. Previous to the destruction of the writing the verse was received and read; it was copied and printed; and its sentiments are now repeated by hundreds and thousands of people. The copy which the poet wrote is transient, but the life of the verse is not limited to the single copy. By being read it impresses itself upon other minds and thus acquires the faculty of resurrection. It will reappear, according to the power of its intrinsic worth in combination with external conditions that may favor or obliterate its reappearance. But be it ever so neglected, it will remain forever and aye an indelible modification of the constitution of the universe.

The immortality of the soul is of the same kind. It is spiritual, not corporeal. But it is real, and among all the realities of the world, it is the most important, the most essential, the most vital reality; and the recognition of this reality is the most paramount religious truth. Thus it appears that the pantheistic notion of the soul as being dissolved in death into the All is from this standpoint a gross error. First, because the soul is not a fluid that could be absorbed by or resolved into a large reservoir of a kindred fluid, as a river loses its identity in the ocean; and, secondly, because the deeds of a man, that is to say, his spiritual existence, or his soul, retain all their peculiar and characteristic features, just as the verses of the poet preserve their identity throughout all the time to come even after the destruction of the original copy.

We may compare man's life to the writing and type-setting of a book. Life is labor, and death is the consummation of our labor. While the bookmaker toils there is life in his efforts. After the distribution of the type his labors cease, but his book does not cease to exist; it enters a higher career of existence. Thus, if a

man of science passes out of this life, the truth he has found is not lost; when a mother sinks into the grave, the fruits of her maternal care and of the example she gave to her children are not buried with her; when a hero dies for a great cause, his ideal remains with us. The body dies, but the soul lives; and the soul is purely spiritual, not an essence, not a sense-function, not a force. It is the significance of man's life-work in all its definiteness and in all its personal identity.

Thus death is not a curse, nor is it an annihilation, but merely a going to rest. It is the consummation of life's labor, but not an end of its usefulness and its significance. The dead are blessed, for "they rest from their labors," but their works do not cease; they continue to be a living influence in the world.

I sum up: Traditional religion is based upon belief, and I do not deny that a belief in what children are told to believe, a trust in their spiritual fathers, is, within certain limits, beneficial, but let me add, belief is not as essential to religion as is commonly thought. Belief characterises a stage of religious immaturity. The highest religion is a trust in truth. The facts of life, of our own experience in addition to that of the human race, are, if they are carefully weighed and rightly interpreted, the safest basis to build upon. They are a divine revelation which teaches us the solidarity of all existence, demanding of us to suppress passions and to seek comfort for affliction in charity and good will. Such a religion (a religion based on facts) is possible, and as it is purified in the furnace of scientific criticism it may be called "the religion of science."

Science and religion will both gain by their alliance. Science is not profane (as many think): science and its sternness in searching for the truth is holy. And religion is neither irrational nor anti-scientific; religion is nothing but obedience to the truth; it is man's enthusiasm to be one with truth and to lead a life of truth.

I conclude my already too long letter:

Try to understand the position which I have laid down before you and show me its errors. Years ago I thought as you do but have been compelled to surrender my position. Can you persuade me to return to yours? The question does not concern you and me alone, but mankind; for there are thousands who share your views but are beset with doubts, and I venture to say that there are not a few (un-churched people as well as members of various denominations and religions) who have progressed on the same road with me. If the new path of the religion of science is the narrow path

of life, as I trust that it is, this conception of religion will become in time the religion of mankind.

If we would understand that growth is the plan of life, we would see that intellectual, moral, and religious growth is as necessary as the progress of science and invention; we would comprehend that God's revelation is not as yet a closed book, and that we are here to decipher its writings. And the duty of the hour is to make scientifically definite what has come down to us in the shape of prophetic symbols.

With kind regards and profound respects

I remain, dear sir, yours very truly,

PAUL CARUS.

MY DEAR SIR:—I have read with deep attention the remarkable letter which you have been so kind as to write me on the doctrinal points wherein we two differ. Nevertheless, it has not convinced me.

At the present moment I have absolutely no time at my disposal for discussing your arguments with the thoroughness which they deserve, but I hope to be able to do so later.

For the present, therefore, I shall restrict myself to saying that your reasoning simply proves, so far as I can see, the profound and infinite difference there is between the personality of God and that of man or of any creature whatsoever. With this understanding I am quite willing to say with you, that God is not personal but superpersonal.

I admit also that in the future life, or at least in the definitive state of the future life, the only one which we can call eternal, our personality, without ever being of the same nature with that of God, will yet be so stripped of its present infirmities that it will exhibit a character far superior to that which it possesses now. Nothing will be destroyed. All will be transformed. "Man shall end where God commences."

What I affirm is that the immortality of the personal ego of the intelligent, moral, and religious agent is not a purely ideal and abstract thing but a living and real one. "Because I live, ye shall live also," saith the God of Christians.

As to your statement that the laws of mathematics and ethics are not dependent on the *free will* of God, I have always believed that they were. But it does not follow from this that they are a power superior to him and of the nature of an impersonal God set above and dominating over the personal God. These laws depend

on the very constitution of the eternal and necessary being of God, and as that being is conscious and intelligent he sees them eternally and necessarily in his own proper bosom. It is what the Christian theologian, who perfected the doctrine which he inherited from Plato, admirably says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was the Light."

I must beg your pardon for these hurriedly written lines, but if you believe them of any value you may publish them in your magazine with my preceding letter and the answer which you made to it.

If later I can send you a more complete discussion of the subject, I shall do so with pleasure. But to-day I am just on the eve of starting for a tour through Constantinople, Cairo, and Jerusalem.

With sympathetic regards, I remain,

Very truly yours,

HYACINTHE LOYSON.