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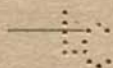
METROPOLITAN INDEPENDENT CHURCH,

HENRY FRANK, EDITOR.

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No. I. 378

The only excuse for the issuance of this little journal is the general demand which has been made for over two years for the publication of the discourses of Henry Frank, who lectures each Sunday morning to the congregation of the Metropolitan Independent Church in Carnegie Lyceum.

The name of this journal was suggested by the ladies of the Independent Literature Association. What a hint this suggests. When women become the independent thinkers of civilization, then good by to old fogysm, conventional captiousness and superstitious senselessness. Does the Independent Thinker forestall the Independent Woman?

The question has frequently been asked, "For what does the Metropolitan Independent Church stand?" I am free to say, if a cut-and-dried answer is required I cannot furnish it. That is, if it be demanded of us that we shall state what creed we profess, we are forced to reply we profess none; on the contrary we reject all. If it be asked for what philosophy we stand, whether for the sensationalist or the intuitionist, the materialist or the spiritualist, the universal or the synthetic, I answer freely, I stand not for any, but for all. I do not believe in schools, divisions or parties.

He is the true philosopher who stands by the Tree of Truth, allowing contentionists to shake down the ripened fruit which he gathers and enjoys at his leisure.

Well, then, does the Church stand for Spiritualism, or Occultism, or Theosophy, or Mysticism, or Pantheism, or Theism, or Christian Science, or any Religion, or no Religion, or does it exist just for the fun of making people guess what it does stand for?

What's in a tag?

A cur with any other rag,

Will always know his master.

If you know the meaning of any of these terms, you will know for which of them the Metropolitan Independent Church stands. That is, if you are wise you will observe that, under the teaching of its leader, it is willing to absorb what of Truth any or all of these duly labelled, hypothetical prescriptions for the spiritual ills of man may contain, without burdening itself with the limitations of any restrictive cult.

Truth is truth wherever it may be found. How much truer can a truth be from whatever source it may come? Why should not the same truism be as true if dug out of the Mahabarratta as if found in the book of Malachi? How foolish all this contention about Bibles! Which is the more sacred, the more truly divine, the more certain revelation from God—the Chinese Book of Kings, or the Vedas, or the Eddas, or the Koran, or the Bible? Go to, thou fool! No book is holy. Only that is sacred which is everlasting. Knowest thou aught that is everlasting but the everlasting Truth? Every blade of grass is as sacred as the inmost utterance of the most secret revelation. For in the blade of grass is written the history of the universe. Know that blade and you can turn over the pages of all time and read the lesson of the origination and evolution of all worlds. Can anything be more sacred, holier, than such knowledge? Truth found in the grass-blade is as divine a revelation as the Annunciation of an Angel declaring the immaculate conception of a Child-Savior.

What is the secret of this fondness of the human for the mysterious and insoluble? Why are some people drawn instinctively to the man whose appearance lifts him out of the common sphere of things, and whose words are vague, far-off and meaningless? Women, especially, bless their credulous hearts, are so prone to follow the vagrant dreamer whose eyes are rigidly fixed upon some ancient sphinx, or some invisible star, following him even to the last ditch, when both he and they disappear. If only some one would come down from Mars or Jupiter, and speak a really unknown tongue, revealing that of which the mind of man had never conceived; if he would only fly in mid-heaven, and careen like some balloon-to-be, from cloud to earth and back again to cloud; if he would only achieve some really startling, bewildering, maddening feat, which once for all would satisfy the abnormal craving of these dear people for the uncanny, the arcane, the "whatchicallit"—how screechably happy they would be!

War ! war ! war ! Out of tune all the pipes of peace ! What a jangle ; what a rumble ; what a roar ! All the great Christian Nations on the qui vive lest their neighbors, armed to the teeth, pounce upon them with one fell swoop and end their existence. And thus it has ever been in Christendom, and shall continue to be till, indeed, the Prince of Peace is supremely crowned. But after all what a farce ; what an unwashable libel on the name and spirit of the Christ !

Christendom is for Peace—when Peace will pay the dividends of Christendom. Christianity is commercialism, pure and simple. The only religion that goes in this far western, bustling, catch-as-catch-can, devil-take-the-hindmost civilization, is the religion that pays in cold cash. Money talks, not only in Wall street, beneath the sombre shadow of Trinity steeple, but even in the sacred chancel where stands the man of God to preach peace and salvation to a fallen race. The wise get rich and the fools do the growling. Make money; make money; make money! Dig for it; drudge for it; be damned for it; but—make money! This is the gospel of the modern money bag, by the grace of gold, the chief messenger and vicegerent of the Christ of Peace!

Now, sweetheart, do not chide me too severely. I mean not this harsh tirade for thy tender heart;—I mean it for the other fellow; for you yourself see the mote in *his* eye. (Nay, I will not disturb the beam in thine own eye—fear not.) But we will both pounce upon the other fellow, for we both agree his spirit is mercenary, his appropriation of the principles of the Christ is selfish and degenerating. He makes money by hook or crook, by gambling or gaming, by fair means or foul, but money, money is his supreme and insatiable appetite. Ah, he gives to the poor! Charity, charity, the multitudinous sins thou coverest are as the sands of the sea compared with the mite of good thou doest! What a fool Peter Cooper would be if he lived to-day. He assumed to make money honestly, and finding at one time that he was making too great a profit off an article which was a necessity to life, he was idiot enough to lessen the price of it, in order that more people could have it and he would make less money off its sale.

What an ass this Peter Cooper, who feared lest he might become a multi-millionaire ! How utterly inane to believe that he was robbing the people of what they needed, because he had a monopoly on its manufac-

ture ! How much more adorable and eloquent the sublime indifference of the plutocrat who has the nerve to exclaim " The people be d——d ! "

But I have been led into these strains of philosophizing while thinking of the present martial spirit of the age. Why all this clattering of armaments, this clashing of swords, this glinting of bayonets, this apotheosis of the Man on Horseback, when we had supposed that the age of wars had passed, and the epoch of universal peace was at hand ? Why ? Canst thou not answer ? It is because every cannon-mouth belches gold, and every bayonet-tip is burnished copper, and every sword is rich in silver, and every brave soldier is but a commercial commodity, whose life is valued for the capacity he possesses to protect diamond and copper mines, and stay the hand of one commercial robber from filching from another that which he declares his own. On the issues of the Boer-British war the fate of all Europe hangs. If England fails, then woe to the Anglo-Saxon supremacy. Cossack and Pole, Gaul and Teuton, Italian and Spaniard, would fall like hungry wolves upon the smitten frame of John Bull and gouge out his eyes and sever every member from his body. And there are many who would say " he deserved it. "

For I said, did I not, this was an age of peace and the spirit of the Christ is supreme ! We of this country all prefer to see the Anglo-Saxon spirit supreme when that spirit stands for justice, truth and human rights. But if it shall again, as in the age of the Georges, stand for infamous tyranny, gluttonous greed and domineering audacity, then we of America cannot in honor or in sincerity, uphold or applaud it. An Anglo-American alliance would be welcome, indeed, if such alliance shall hold an avaricious and marauding world of commerce in awe, and prevent it executing deeds of rapine and desolation. But if that alliance shall merely mean that John Bull and Brother Jonathan together can whip the whole world, and two bullies are to saunter down through the ages arm-in-arm challenging everything and everybody, seizing weaker nations where they like, whipping into line those who are recalcitrant, shooting liberty into unreceptive breasts, enhancing the commercial spirit of the age which tends to the aggrandizement of the individual millionaire and the degradation and destitution of the submerged masses—then we say without fear or faltering, such an alliance would be the greatest curse which has befallen modern civilization, and would but usher in the same age that cursed triumvirate Rome before the fatal day that the Goths swept down and wiped out all the glory of those ancient landmarks.

IS GOD THE ALL GOOD? *

GIVE me your definition of Deity and I will give you the quality and utility of the religion which you profess. All religions have centered around the interpretations of Deity, as all philosophies have centered around man's interpretation of Nature. If your conceptions of Deity are gross and narrow, limited by the meaner human experiences, your religion will be base, material and fleshly. If your knowledge of Nature is circumscribed and perverted, your philosophy will be distorted and awry. While men believed that the earth was the largest of all the created spheres of space, and that the heavenly bodies rolled around it in humble obeisance, they could shape no adequate philosophy for the comfort and sustenance of man. If philosophy is inconsistent with nature it is not only futile and misleading, but it weakens man's intellectual powers, and is subversive of his ethical qualities. Plato's philosophy with all its sublimity could not be final because his knowledge of Nature was so limited and untrue. True philosophy really never reared its noble head until the dawn of modern science; and in truth Galileo and Copernicus were not only the fathers of modern science, but also the forerunners of that philosophy which must become final and absolute. Philosophy used to be mystifying and mystical because it rested on no solid foundation of facts. It dwelt in the realm of dreams and metaphysical suppositions. It roamed through the nebulous regions of speculation; he who was the best or most plausible guesser became the most popular and adored philosopher. But when fairy philosophy was forced at length to sit meekly at the feet of science, she grew more sane and serious, and in our day has again lifted her wings toward the lofty heights where once she reigned supreme.

Thus is it with religion. Time was when religion was supposed to be not only independent of and superior to science, but if she so much as looked askance at it she was outraged and defiled. The religion that Athanasius or even Augustine adored, was not such as an intelligent school boy of to-day would seriously consider. When religion sought, because of her ignorance, to set herself in authority over Nature and all her manifest laws, she so beclouded the natural vision of man that when at length he broke through the mist and discerned the light beyond, he cast her aside with ugly indignation and swore allegiance to her most embittered enemy.

* The first of a series of Lectures on "Christian Science Compared with the Creed of Christendom," delivered by Henry Frank, on Sunday mornings, in Carnegie Lyceum.

Because she had usurped the throne of knowledge, into whose outer courts she had not even ventured, she was despised even by the tyros whose smattering of intelligence was more prized than all the ages of pious ignorance with which the church endowed them.

Because in those days men believed that religion could be safely founded only in the faith of ignorance and implicit belief in the wisdom of inspired leaders, she sought to divorce herself from the mandates of Nature and the discoveries of science. Because she thought that if God could be scientifically understood or defined, he would no longer be God, but a mere object of idolatry, she refused to hear the myriad voices of the universe which appealed to her for recognition and adaptation in her devotions. But such is the irony of truth, because she refused to acquaint herself with the God of Nature, and preferred the God of mysticism and of ignorance, she was forced to accept an intellectual idolatry which is even more debasing than the idolatry of images and statuary. For she could not resist the natural tendency of the human mind to think, nor could she prevent man's irresistible pursuit after knowledge.

When man acquired a larger acquaintance with the universe, it was but natural that he should throw aside his earlier notions of religion. For Herbert Spencer well reminds us that every religion may be defined as an a priori theory of the universe. "A religious theory is definable as a theory of original causation. . . . Be it in the primitive Ghost theory which assumes a personality behind each unusual phenomenon; be it in Polytheism, in which those personalities are partially generalized; be it in Monotheism, in which they are wholly generalized; or be it in Pantheism, in which the generalized personality becomes one with the phenomena; we equally find an apotheosis which is supposed to render the Universe comprehensible. Nay, even that which is commonly supposed to be the negation of all religion—even positive Atheism—comes within the definition; for it too, in asserting the self-existence of Space, Matter, and Motion, which it regards as adequate causes of every appearance, propounds an a priori theory from which it holds the facts to be deducible."—"*First Principles*," p. 43.

That religion which postulated as a dogma of faith a God who was inconsistent with his own creation, presented a God who was inconsistent with himself. For a being who creates a finite universe, to be self-consistent, must not permit his finite creation to be anywhere out of touch with himself. If Nature is something different from God, then Nature cannot comprehend God, and God can entertain no commerce with Nature. If God is above the laws of Nature, and cannot be read in the symbol of

those laws, then he were as well non-existent ; for there is no other tablet upon which his thoughts can be written. But if the Universe is the tablet on which God has inscribed his thoughts, and those thoughts are the eternal and imperturbable laws of Nature, then those laws must be identical and consistent with himself, or he will be convicted of self-inconsistency, and therefore of self-annihilation.

If God can be two things at one and the same time, then he is non-existent. For there is no experience in all the universe that stands as the counterpart of such a phenomenon. A thing which is not itself, and yet itself, is not only unthinkable, but wholly outside the experience of the race. Therefore if it is postulated that God is the creator of nature and yet is above and beyond that nature, not identified or subject to the laws which he himself has enacted, yet that there is no other medium through which he can express himself to man, then it follows either that Nature is not a true expression of God, or that God must be identical and coterminous with Nature. If Nature is no true expression of God, then all the efforts of religion to "comprehend nature as an a priori theory of Causation"; that is to find God through Nature and justify belief in his existence because of Nature, have been utterly futile and nonsensical.

We are forced then either to believe in God because of his manifestation of himself through Nature, or because of his failure to so manifest himself to believe in him despite Nature.

If we believe in God because of his manifestation of himself through Nature, then she must be an exact counterpart and fac-simile of himself, with which he cannot but be absolutely consistent. In that interpretation Nature, or the Universe, becomes coterminous with God, and God becomes coterminous with the Universe. The Universe and God are one, as is the universe itself. Here is no chance for misinterpretation or inconsistency.

If we refuse this horn of the dilemma, then we must accept the theory that although Nature does not truly express God, because of its limitations, still God does exist wholly outside of the universe and incomprehensible to man.

The great thinker, Herbert Spencer, strange to say, fell into this very pitfall of metaphysical inconsistency. He sought on a purely scientific basis to find the mutual ground of both religion and science, where a possible conciliation might be agreed upon. After writing many volumes, and delving into the profoundest depths of scientific research, he fetches up at the identical point where the dogmatic religionists of all ages have stood. The religious world, curiously enough, never seemed to grasp the

logic of Spencer, nor appreciated the fact that he had laid the most scientific foundation for their theological superstructure, and consequently they roundly abused him for his pains. But in truth Spencer is the first of all the "profane" philosophers who, since the days of Aristotle or Plato, found a pseudo-scientific basis of union between religion and science. But in discovering this basis he has merely adopted the theory of the theologians, couching his conclusions in philosophical terms. He says: "If Religion and Science are to be reconciled, the basis of reconciliation must be this deepest, widest and most certain of all facts,—that the Power which the universe manifests to us is utterly *inscrutable*."

On this conclusion Spencer founds his famous theory of the Unknowable, to which he invites the submission of the thinking world. But it is easy to see that Spencer's unknowable is as much out of consistency with the phenomenal universe as the inconceivable God of the theologians.

Spencer postulates a God who is both inconceivable and unthinkable because he is unknowable. If anything is unknowable, that is can never become known, then how can it be asserted that it exists. That only can be said to exist whose existence can be known. For if you cannot know a thing, how can you know that it exists? Your knowledge ceases to be such and becomes mere belief, which is an untenable proposition in scientific deduction. In that event science ceases to be such and becomes mere faith. It may be permitted to assert that both religion and science agree in deducing the fact from natural phenomena that there exists within the universe an inscrutable power; but to go as far as Spencer and assert that that Power is and forever will be absolutely unknowable, is to say so far as man is concerned it has no existence at all.

If, on the contrary, we throw aside Spencer's proposition as scientifically untenable, and study it as a mere proposition of faith, as a dogma of belief, as religion ever has, then we shall land in a philosophical inconsistency, which results in natural scepticism. For if God, as the theologians assert, is inconceivable, unthinkable, and unknowable, then there can be no room for him in the consciousness or experience of man.

If He is unthinkable, then I need waste no time in trying to think about Him. If he is Inconceivable, why try to imagine his existence? If Unknowable, why trouble myself about Him? For only that becomes a part of my life which I acquire through my experience. If God cannot enter into my experience, which he certainly cannot if he is not amenable to my knowledge, then He is the same to me as if He were not at all. Hence the logical deduction following the propositions of both Agnosticism and metaphysical theology, are Nihilism and Annihilation, or

Nothingness as the Ultimate Reality, and final resolution of all things into Nothingness, because in the absolute their nature is not known and never can become known.

"Ultimate Scientific Ideas are all representative of realities that can not be comprehended. After no matter how great a progress in the colligation of facts and the establishment of generalizations ever wider and wider,—man realizes with a special vividness the utter incomprehensibility of the simplest fact, considered in itself. He truly knows that in its ultimate essence nothing can be known." Thus speaks Spencer. ("First Principles," pp. 68, 69.)

It is strange, indeed, that so keen a thinker does not see that if in the last analysis nothing can be known, then that is the last analysis beyond which there is nothing more to know. The incomprehensible does not lie beyond, because there is nothing left to comprehend.

Some think that because the universe is infinite, man will always be in ignorance. But the truth is that man's mind is also infinite. For who has ever dared to set bounds to the possibilities of the human mind. We never catch up with nature, because she is always just beyond us, seeing that the universe is much older than organized mental powers, and hence has eons in advance of man in his race after knowledge. But the fact that man never ceases to learn; that Nature can never successfully defy him; that he is ever delving deeper and deeper into her arcana and dragging up from her mysterious depths the wonders of discovery and invention; that he laughs at the defeats of the past and challenges the future, confident that there is and never can be anything in the compass of the universe which he will not grasp and utilize by his redoubtable and infinite faculties; this proves that when man, by a process of thought, clearly sees that he has reached the end, and ultimate analysis affords nothing more to learn or understand, then there is nothing more to learn, nothing more to comprehend: it is the end, and man has in thought reached the ultimate of being.

Here is the true union of science and religion, of science and philosophy. Not in agnosticism, which cries amid its tears of despair, beyond is the vast unknown and ever to be unknown; the abysmal depths of intellectual darkness, which the superstition of the past has ever peopled with ghosts and "goblins damned"; or with gods and invisible beings of light. Not here, in despair, can the comforts of religion mingle with the delights of science and exclaim "Eureka." For despair can never afford comfort to the human mind, ever eager for "more light," more truth, more knowledge.

But in the recognition that the Ultimate Reality is the Ultimate Invisible, which is not incomprehensible, because it is an element of human consciousness and experience.

The Universe in its last analysis is not resolvable into nothing, the incomprehensible, the inconceivable, the unknowable; but into invisible substantiality, which is ever revealing itself into visibility; the unexperienced ever manifesting itself in experience; the unconscious ever awakening and rising above the threshold into the abode of the living Conscious.

From this union there can be no revolt either by believer or thinker. It appeals to faith; it appeals to logic. Here Abelard, the rhapsodist, sees face to face with Spinoza, the pantheist. Here Augustine finds, in his "City of God," a Kant, who thinks himself into Deity, and a Hegel, who thinks Deity into himself and the universe.

The only reason, therefore, that there have been atheists in all ages is because the prevailing authority placed limitations on the interpretations of Deity. The effort to define a Deity has ever resulted in religious failure, and has proved a futile effort of philosophy. The reason is not because Deity is philosophically indefinable, but because the philosophy, as the religion, by which He was defined, was narrow, unscientific and bigoted.

This is proved in the fact that the world's greatest atheists have been ever its greatest spiritual leaders. Paradox though this be, it is true. Atheism has ever been colored by the complexion of the prevailing religion. Atheism is not a universal quantity, everywhere to be alike defined and comprehended. The Atheism of one age becomes the devout theism of another; the skepticism of one epoch the most hallowed faith of another.

Socrates was one of the world's great atheists, and for that he was condemned to drink the fatal hemlock. Yet who to-day thinks of Socrates, who was merely battling against the debauching influences of the popular uses of the prevailing religion; who always exalted the notion of the One Supreme Deity before whom all the inferior gods must bow,—who can think of this Socrates as an atheist? He was atheist to the debased and debasing gods of his day, because he discerned a being who to him was so superior to all the others that the worship of any was idoltry.

Jesus Christ was the greatest of all the atheists of the ages, and because of his very atheism he rose to supreme height among the devout worshippers of all lands. The Father of Jesus was not the Jehovah of the

Sanhedrim. The God of love whom he preached was the very antithesis of the stern and ostentatious deity of the pharisee who overpowered and condemned him. Because he refused to accept the God of the Synagogue he was persecuted and hung upon the accursed tree. At him was pointed the scornful finger of every child of the faith; the defiant condemnation of every judge of the Sanhedrim. No Jew in his day who followed him not but denounced him as outcast and atheist.

Yet to-day he is to countless millions the embodiment of Deity and the fullest manifestation of the theistic theory.

So when I hear from those who sit in authority that Spinoza was an atheist, I turn to his philosophy and I read "Besides God no substance can exist or be conceived to exist. . . . Whatever is, is in God; and nothing can be, neither can anything be conceived to be, without God." — "*Ethics*," Propositions xiv. xv.

What then do they mean by denouncing him as an atheist? Merely that his definition of Deity was not in agreement with the prevailing and orthodox interpretation. He defines Deity as substance which to the ear of the uneducated metaphysician has so material a sound that he at once denounces him as a materialist-pantheist. Nevertheless Spinoza entertained the most spiritual conception of the universe of any philosopher since the age of Plato.

Now in our own day a philosophy has become popular which stands in direct opposition to the orthodox, prevailing conception of Deity, and bids fair to finally overthrow it. It is the same notion, which formerly by Spinoza, by Kant, by Hegel, by Fichte, by Schopenhauer, and others, has been preached, but heretofore without its religious garb, and as a mere cold philosophical proposition.

Just as Jesus caught the threads of all the passing religious truths of the ages and wove them into one unique and superb garment, which fit the deeper spiritual intelligence of his age, so this New Thought has seized upon the highest metaphysic and philosophy of past centuries and has practically applied it to the commonplace necessities of human life.

Spinoza defined Deity as Ultimate Substance, therefore invisible, universal and one. Kant defined Deity as Ultimate Being, the Absolute, the "Thing in itself," therefore the last, the All, the Universal. Hegel defined Deity as Ultimate Thought; Schopenhauer as Ultimate Will, without personality; von Hartmann, as the Unconscious, impersonal, impervious and ever unfolding; Spencer as primary, persistent and universal Force. In the last analysis all these definitions are identical, and should give rise to no differentiating schools.

Indeed, were it not for the notion of personality, which has entered into the orthodox conception of Deity, that might be identified with the others and a common ground of philosophy be discovered.

But here is the crux—the battlefield. So positive were the religionists in their declarations that no adequate conception of deity could be entertained without the quality of personality (which necessarily is limitation) that the philosophic mind has divorced itself from religion and refused to entertain even ordinary respect for its claims.

Here let me ask a serious and crucial question.

Why has the unscientific and unphilosophical idea of Personality ever seemed essential to the religious mind? Why has that ever been blank Atheism to the believer which assumed to define Deity, shorn of personal individuality?

I use the term personal individuality advisedly. For philosophically we may speak of God as individual (indivisible and universal); but it is a contradiction of terms to speak of him as personal. If we mean personality in the sense of individuality, then there need be no war. For the universe, properly construed, (not merely the visible but the ever invisible universe—that universe within a universe, so to speak, that is the norm and groundwork of all) is indivisible, that is individual. Deity is this indivisible universe—the all-conforming and sustaining, though invisible forces that co-ordinate and establish the universe. He therefore is indeed individual, but not personal, as we construe that term. To distinguish Deity (the invisible Force and Intelligence within all) from the manifestation of this force—the phenomenal universe, we may speak of him as personal-individual, inasmuch as his all-pervasive presence is all diffused throughout the visible world.

Let me illustrate this idea. Unthinking people speak glibly of matter. They insist that Matter is the be-all and end-all of Nature. Matter is their God, their heaven, their hell. But when you insist that they shall scientifically define matter they find their Waterloo. No scientist up to the present hour has ever pretended to define it. Huxley very keenly reminds us that "in itself it is of very little moment whether we express the phenomena of matter in terms of spirit; or whether the phenomena of spirit, in terms of matter: matter may be regarded as a form of thought; thought may be regarded as property of matter—each statement has a certain relative truth."

"On the Physical Basis of Life" (Humboldt ed. p. 462) Huxley tries very hard to free himself from the charge of materialism and approaches very near to the philosophy of Monism. He says: "There can

be little doubt the further science advances the more extensively and consistently will all the phenomena of nature be represented by materialistic formulæ and symbols. But the man of science, when he slides from these formulæ and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism, seems to me to place himself on a level with a mathematician who should mistake his x's and y's . . . for *real entities*." (p.462.)

This is the usual outcome of alleged materialistic philosophy. It utterly loses itself in the fog of phenomena and seems wholly incapable of differentiating between what is spirit and what is matter. The natural conclusion for the rational and unbiased thinker to reach, is therefore that there is no real scientific and final differentiation between these phenomena, and what is called matter is, in its last analysis, spirit; while what is called spirit is, in its visible manifestation, matter.

With this conception clearly outlined in the mind, no one will ever again be perplexed with the conflicting theories of the universe.

Let us take a globule of water. Ages ago to the then unscientific mind water was water and nothing more or less. Water was one of the chemical elements to the old Aristotelian school. Investigation did not go behind phenomena.

To-day we know that water is not only not merely water, but that it is both something more and something less. It is more, because when analyzed it dissolves into two original elements, which in combination constitute a substance that is different from either of them. It is less, because as water it cannot perform the functions of either of the elements of which it is constituted. Therefore we see that water is neither a final element, nor is it merely a combination of original elements; but it is a product of certain invisible forces which inhere in nature and which play upon the original elements to produce out of them the third substance wholly unlike either of them.

The indication of all modern science is, then, that in the last analysis we shall comprehend nature only as a congeries of certain invisible and ever active forces, which are spiritual in their nature and unmanifest in their original and pure qualities. The real Nature, therefore, the ultimate and eternal universe, is not the visible, the apparent, the substantial; but the invisible, the permanent, the universal.

Now this invisible, this universal, this all-pervasive, can be the only permanent and ultimate both in fact and in thought, because out of its unitary or homogeneous matrix all the visible and ever-changing entities of the phenomenal world are evolving. The invisible, then, is the only constant; the invisible is the only real; the invisible is the only eternal.

Now the final problem in the analysis of the universe is What is the quality of the trend, the push, the outcoming of this ever-present and sustaining invisible substance?

At this juncture we reach the problem of the ethical conduct of Nature; and here the modern school has achieved a notable victory. For the cry to-day is All is Good! What does this mean?

Bearing in mind that in its last analysis Nature is a spiritual Force, and that all manifestations of matter are but variations of this constant Force, we shall find that there is a dynamic quality in the very terms of goodness, truth, light, love, virtue, etc.

We are now reaching the crucial reason why through all ages the notion of personality was attached to that of Deity. It is because man ever believed that God was a force for good that prevailed in the world to assist him in all his needs and pursuits. It was the quality of goodness that was ever adored in Deity. The power of might in Him was ever feared; but when it resulted in evil to the humankind, then it was transferred from God to the Devil.

But half-educated man has ever entertained anthropomorphic notions of Deity, and when he perceived that it was the quality of goodness which was adored in God, he forthwith transformed the quality into a personality and worshipped it as Deity.

He adored the Good and he worshipped the Giver of the Good. Being himself a conscious agent subject to limitations, he could not conceive of the Giver of Goodness as other than himself, and thus he construed him as personal and found for Him a habitation in the skies.

This is the real reason why men cling so tenaciously to the deific personality. It is purely selfish. It is grounded in the notion that if Deity is dissolved in impersonal, howbeit intelligent and ethical force, he will not be subject to the direct appeal of each of his subjects, and they will be forced to fight their battles unassisted by his supernatural hosts of power.

But the modern vitalistic or melioristic philosophy teaches that those very qualities which heretofore we have attributed to a personal Deity, possess in themselves certain dynamic characteristics, which utilized may become more useful to the race than ever the alleged anthropomorphic attributes of God.

Hence the popularity, the enthusiasm, in behalf of the so-called Christian Science, which with all its crudeness has almost annihilated the popular theology of prevailing religion.

However fond one has grown of the superstition of a supernatural per-

sonality, intellectually this conception has always seemed an inconsistency and a source of confusion. If the same moral and spiritual effects could be secured from a more rational presentation of the same principle, the thinking masses would only too eagerly accept the modified statement. But heretofore men ignorantly have cried, "If we give up our God what have we left? To whom shall we appeal in hours of sorrow for consolation, in moments of distress for peace and serenity? When the gloom of the last dark house receives the remains of all that we have loved in this world, then who shall cover us with the mantle of consolation and reassurance? If the All-Father is transformed into an unsympathetic universe with which the soul of man cannot commune, where shall we find the offices of religion to nurture our decaying souls?" This has ever been the unanswered cry of superstition, till in our own day the answer came from an unsuspected source.

The answer is that God is a human term used to express a universal principle. The principle exists in nature; the term is a mere symbol of the mind to express a spiritual experience. The mind instinctively looks for goodness in a world of evil, for peace in a world of confusion. When the soul has found this peace, this goodness, and become able to appropriate them, it has performed the true offices of religious worship, whether it has revealed or denied a personal deity.

It is the moral and spiritual efficacy of these natural principles for which man yearns, and for the sake of their procurement he has always assumed the existence of anthropomorphic gods, who were the supernatural agents through whom alone these benefits could be secured.

But now he learns that he may appeal directly to the principles themselves and secure from them all the efficacy of their application.

Once men thought that electricity was the eye of God flashing his anger through the skies. They feared the lightning, and grew worshipful in its presence, but missed the practical benefits of its dynamic qualities. Such false worship of God led away from the truth and from the direct benefits which Nature was ready to confer on man.

Thus God as a personality has been falsely worshipped by man in order to procure from this supernatural source such qualities as love, goodness, virtue, serenity, hope, life, etc. But while seeking for the unrealizable God, the quality sought for has often escaped the grasp of man. Not till the lightning itself was scientifically examined, its nature comprehended, and its force directly applied to human events, was it of any real value to man. Thus, not until the moral and spiritual qualities for which man has ever prayed are themselves analyzed and directly applied to his uses and experience will they fully avail for his happiness and progress.

In short moral and spiritual qualities, which heretofore have been regarded as sublimated and impossible somethings, are now grasped as dynamic principles and real forces in Nature. By worshipping them, that is by mentally communing with and appropriating them, are we really worshipping Deity.

To say and realize, then, that All is Good, All is Love, All is Truth, All is Light, merely means, scientifically, that you are employing certain

natural forces which you can appropriate to your daily life and compel their application to your necessities.

All the superstitious worship of God since the beginning of history has not as much spiritual efficacy in human experience as one profound glimpse of the eternal truth, that spiritually Light prevails and not Darkness, Truth and not Error, Love and not Hate.

These are the permanent forces in Nature ; the qualities out of which the constructive universe has been reared. These are the qualities which underlie all human growth and individual unfoldment. If these qualities are apprehended and their scientific potencies utilized, human nature can be revolutionized and the social world blessed with a reformation such as has not been witnessed since the beginning of history.

It is this thought that I desire to emphasize. Spiritual qualities are dynamic principles in Nature. Thought is only a higher dynamic principle than electricity ; but generically and in application it is identical. To utilize electricity its vibratory nature must be understood and proper reciprocal instruments employed for its transmission and conduct through practical channels.

Likewise with thought ; the difference lies only in the fact that the reciprocal instruments required to conduct and transmit thought are in the human organism and need but awakening and education for their surprising development.

Heat is a dynamic principle in Nature ; so is love. Their elements are much the same and their dynamic efficacies could be comparably measured. I am not permitted at this time because of a want of space to elaborate this idea ; but I have given you a sufficient hint of its argument to appreciate its value.

If these spiritual qualities are dynamic principles in nature as are heat, light, electricity, etc., then we need but study the laws by which they are brought into play in the process of mental and spiritual development to compel them to avail in almost miraculous results.

We find then that there is a scientific principle underlying these seeming vagaries, and instead of rebuking those who study and seek to appropriate them, we would ourselves better investigate and seek to learn.

With this thought I leave you this morning. If the God of mythology has been removed from the heaven of your superstition, you need not mourn if in its stead has been placed an object worthy of rational adoration. If religion, divorced from reason and common sense, and prostituted by an ignorant and begloomed theology, has ceased to satisfy your intellectual natures or to awaken your higher spirit, behold her as she comes, new-garmented and clothed in her right mind, presenting not shallow credulity for food or mystic imagination for knowledge, but genuine discovery and scientific wisdom for your regeneration and spiritual quickening. Superstition is demeaned but science is exalted. Error, "writhing in her pain," is dying in the dust ; but Truth, "though crushed to earth," is once more rising with exultant wing, filling the world with light and love. Each may receive as he desires—let the measure be full and overflowing.

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