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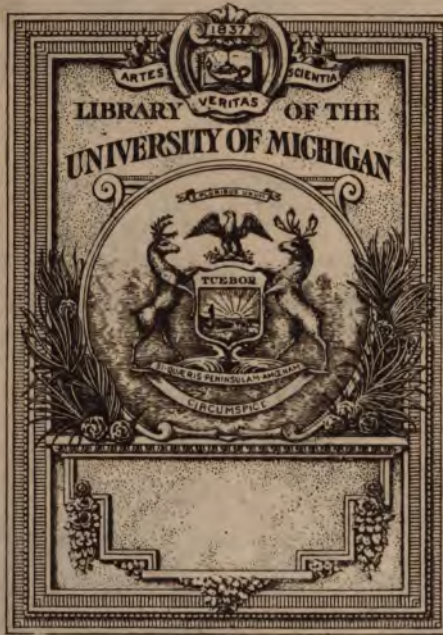
THE  
Dawn of a New Era

BY  
DR. PAUL CARUS

CHICAGO  
THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING COMPANY

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# DAWN OF A NEW ERA

AND OTHER ESSAYS

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DR. PAUL CARUS 1892

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THE  
TO  
GABRIEL GARCIA



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## THE DAWN OF A NEW RELIGIOUS ERA.

THE Parliament of Religions, which sat in Chicago from September 11 to September 27, was a great surprise to the world. When the men who inaugurated it invited representatives of all the great religions of the earth to meet in conference, their plan was looked upon with misgiving, if not with ridicule. The feasibility and the advisability of their undertaking were doubted. The greatest and most powerful churches, it was said, would not be represented. The Vatican, for instance, regards the Roman Catholic Church as the only soul-saving power, with exclusive authority to loose or bind. To allow a comparison between it and other churches on a footing of equality, to appeal to reason, to provoke and favor such an appeal, or to submit to a decision after argument, would be tantamount to the recognition of reason, or logic, or science, as a higher and the highest test of truth. Like reasons, it was thought, would more or less influence other denominations, for almost all of them claim to be based upon a special divine revelation which is above argument, so as to render the mere doubt of it sin.

In spite of all these doubts and fears, the Parliament of Religions was convened, and it proved an ex-

traordinary success. The work grew rapidly under the hands of its promoters, so that the time originally allotted to it had to be increased until it extended over seventeen days. Although discussion had been excluded from the programme so as to avoid friction, it could not be entirely controlled. Nevertheless a good spirit presided over all the sessions, so that criticism promoted a closer agreement and united men of different faiths more strongly in bonds of mutual respect and toleration. The multitudes that filled the halls at the closing session were animated with a feeling that the Parliament had not lasted long enough, that a movement had been inaugurated which was as yet only a beginning that needed further development, and that we should stay and continue the work, until the mustard-seed we were planting should become a tree under whose branches the birds of the heavens might find a dwelling-place.

The idea of holding a parliament of religions is not new. It was proposed and attempted on a smaller basis in former times by Asiatic rulers. It has been predicted and longed for by men of different races and various religions. Of European authors we may mention Volney who in his "Ruins" describes minutely how "men of every race and every region, the European in his short coat, the Asiatic in his flowing robes, the African with ebony skin, the Chinese dressed in silk, assemble in an allotted place to form a great religious congress."

It is certain that similar ideas have stirred the hearts of many. The Shinto High Priest of the Japanese State Church, the Rt. Rev. Reuchi Shibata in one of his speeches said: "Fourteen years ago I expressed in my own country the hope that there would be a

friendly meeting of the world's religionists, and now I realise my hope with great joy in being able to attend this phenomenal congress."

It is but natural that this sentiment should prevail in Japan where three religions, which closely considered are by no means compatible, exist peacefully side by side. The ancient nature worship of Shinto was not exterminated when the doctrines of Confucius were preached and accepted, and the Buddhists wage no war on either. Many families of Japan conform to the official ceremonies of Shinto; they even respect its popular superstitions, and have their children taught the precepts of the great Chinese sage as set forth in the book of rites and other sacred writings, while they themselves seek consolation for the deeper yearnings of their souls in the wisdom of Buddha. There are for these three religions shrines side by side in their homes and in their hearts.

All uncertainty as to the feasibility of the gathering vanished when the Roman Catholic Church most cordially accepted the invitation to take part. "We, as the mother of all Christian churches," said Bishop Keane, in his extemporaneous and unpublished farewell address, "have a good right to be represented. Why should we not come?" And nearly all the other denominational representatives thought as he did. Whether or not it was consistent with traditional orthodoxy, they came none the less. So powerful was the desire for a religious union, representatives of the broadest as well as of the narrowest views met in fraternal co-operation on the same platform. You could see such an evangelist as Joseph Cook sitting by the side of liberal clergymen, such as Jenkin Lloyd Jones, of Chicago, and E. L. Rexford, of Boston. And these

Christians again exchanged cordial greetings with the pagan Hindus and the atheistic Buddhists ; an unprecedented spectacle !

And it was a spectacle in the literal sense of the word. In accord with American simplicity, the men of this country appeared in their every-day attire and our European guests wisely followed their example. Nevertheless, the sight was often picturesque. Cardinal Gibbons, when he delivered the prayer at the opening of the first public session, wore his official crimson robes. The prelates of the Greek Church, foremost among them the Most Rev. Dionysios Latas, Archbishop of Zante, looked very venerable in their sombre vestments and Greek cylindrical hats. The Shinto High Priest Shibata was dressed in a flowing garment of white, decorated with curious emblems, and on his head was a strangely-shaped cap wrought apparently of black jet, from the top of which nodded mysteriously a feather-like ornament of unknown significance. Pung Quang Yu, a tall and stout man, an adherent of Confucius, and the authorised representative of the Celestial Empire, appeared in Chinese dress. There were present several Buddhist bishops of Japan, in dress which varied from violet to black. The turbaned Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, in a long, orange gown, who, as we were informed, lived in voluntary poverty so that as a rule he did not know where he would receive his next day's meal ; Dharma-pâla, the Ceylonese Buddhist, in his robe of white ;— these and many more were the exceedingly interesting men who appeared upon the stage and spoke their minds freely on subjects over which in former ages cruel wars were waged. Differences not only of religious opinions but also of races were represented in

the Congress. Bishop B. W. Arnet, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, confessed that the brotherhood of man had for the first time been taken seriously. When introduced, he said, "I am to represent the African, and have been invited to give color to the Parliament of Religions." Interrupted by a storm of merriment, he continued, "But I think the Parliament is already very well colored, and if I have eyes, I think the color is this time in the majority."

The Parliament of Religion was, I repeat, a great spectacle ; but it was more than that. There was a purport in it. It powerfully manifested the various religious yearnings of the human heart, and all these yearnings exhibited a longing for unity and mutual good understanding. How greatly they mistake who declare that mankind is drifting toward an irreligious future ! It is true that people have become indifferent about theological subtleties, but they still remain and will remain under the sway of religion ; and the churches are becoming more truly religious, as they are becoming less sectarian.

There are two kinds of Christianity. One is love and charity ; it wants the truth brought out and desires to see it practically applied in daily life. It is animated by the spirit of Jesus and tends to broaden the minds of men. The other is pervaded with exclusiveness and bigotry ; it does not aspire through Christ to the truth ; but takes Christ, as tradition has shaped his life and doctrines, to be the truth itself. It naturally lacks charity and hinders the spiritual growth of men. The latter kind of Christianity has always been looked upon as the orthodox and the only true Christianity. It has been fortified by Bible passages, formulated in Quinquages, indorsed by decisions of œcumenical councils

and by papal bulls. Tracts privately distributed among the visitors to the Congress contained quotations such as, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"; and "He that believeth not shall be condemned." Without using the same harsh terms, Saint Peter expressed himself not less strongly, in a speech before the Jews concerning Jesus of Nazareth, saying: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under the heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

There were a few voices heard at the Parliament of Religions which breathed this narrow and so-called orthodox Christianity, but they could hardly be regarded as characterising the spirit of the whole enterprise. They really served as a contrast by which the tolerant principles of our Oriental guests shone the more brightly. "The Hindu fanatic," said Vivekananda, "burns himself on the pyre, but he never lights the fagots of an Inquisition"; and we were told that Buddha said to his disciples, "I forbid you to believe anything simply because I said it." Even Mohammedanism, generally supposed to be the most authoritative of all religions, appeared mild and rational as explained by Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb. Mr. Webb said: "The day of blind belief has passed away. Intelligent humanity wants a reason for every belief, and I say that that spirit is commendable and should be encouraged, and it is one of the prominent features of the spirit of Islam." At one of the meetings a prayer was offered for those blind heathen who attended the Congress, that God might have mercy on them and open their eyes, so that they would see their own errors and accept the truth of Christianity; but



the prayer, made in the spirit of the old bigoted Christianity which believes in the letter and loses the spirit, found an echo neither in the hearts of our foreign guests nor among the men who had convened the Congress nor among the audience who listened to the prayer. Far from being converted, the heathen delegates took the opportunity of denouncing Christian missionaries for their supercilious attitude and for making unessential things essential. For instance, the missionaries, they said, demand that the Hindus abolish caste, and treat the refusal to eat meat as a pagan prejudice, so that in the Hindu mind "Christian" has come to mean "carnivorous." One of the delegates, a Brahman layman, said: "With the conqueror's pride they cannot bring themselves down, or rather cannot bring themselves up to practise the humility which they preach." B. B. Nagarkar, of Bombay, expressed himself more guardedly. Said he:

"Sad will be the day for India when Christian missionaries cease to come; for we have much to learn about Christ and Christian civilisation. They do some good work. But if converts are the measures of their success, we have to say that their work is a failure. Little do you dream that your money is expended in spreading abroad nothing but Christian dogmatism, Christian bigotry, Christian pride, and Christian exclusiveness. I entreat you to expend one-tenth only of your vast sacrifices in sending out to our country unsectarian, broad missionaries who will devote their energy to educating our men and women. Educated men will understand Christ better than those whom you convert to the narrow creed of some cant Christianity."

The severest rebuke came from the lips of the representative of Jainism, and from the monk Vivekananda. The latter denounced Christian missionaries for offering stones instead of bread. They build churches, he said, and preach sectarian creeds which

benefit no one. They despise the sacred traditions of the Hindu, the profundity of which they are unable to fathom; and, he added, "What shall we think of a religion whose missionaries distribute food in a famine to the starving people on the condition of conversion?"

These were hard reproaches, yet they were accepted by the Christians with good grace.\* The Rev. R. G. Hume of India said, "We are willing to have our Bud-

\* This passage was much commented upon in various newspapers and religious journals, and it appears that the writer's attitude has been misunderstood.

That several hard reproaches "were accepted by the Christians with good grace" is not a slight, not a rebuke, but a praise. It is very doubtful whether a Mohammedan or any other but a Christian audience would have been so patient as to listen good-naturedly to similar censures. Forbearance is always a symptom of strength. None but the strong can afford to be generous and tolerant. Compare p. 18, lines 13-18 of this article.

Among the comments that came to our notice the *National Baptist* of November 23 discusses Vivekananda's statement under the caption, "A False Accusation." Dr. S. W. Duncan writes: "I hope Bishop Keane's denunciation was honest and not a covert fling at Protestants. . . I suspect if the Hindu monk had told the whole truth, all he knew, he would have been compelled to mention by name Roman Catholics. Dr. Bunker has recently given me instances of his being frustrated in his work by Catholic priests preceding him in heathen villages, and buying up the chiefs, giving them money and other considerations of weight with heathen, for their acceptance of crucifixes and Romish rites and enrollment as Catholics. I have made inquiry, and there is not on record a single intimation that any one of our missionaries has ever thus abused his holy calling."

We have a good opinion of Baptist missions, and know at the same time that Roman Catholic missionaries, among them the much-reviled Jesuits, have shown an admirable devotion to the cause of their religion.

Supposing Vivekananda's accusation to be true of some Christian missionaries, we do not take it to mean a wholesale condemnation of all. Nor do we wish to pour cold water upon the missionary zeal. The missionary spirit is the index of the spiritual life of a religion, and we are glad to see it in Buddhists not less than in Christians. But we are sorry that the broad religious spirit which pervaded the Parliament and is present among the Unitarians and other liberal institutions, is too weak to undertake any great propaganda for their cause. How much more effective would Christian missionaries be if they taught religion instead of dogmas, and love of truth instead of blind faith.

*The Louisville Record* of November 30 calls Vivekananda's statement slander, and adds: "When will we get over the harm done by the World's Parliament of Religions?" This reminds us of the parable of the sower, where Christ says: "Some [seeds] fell upon stony ground."

dhistic and Brahman friends tell us how we can do better. Any one who will help us to be more humble and more wise will do us good and we will thank him whoever he be." And Bishop Keane, Rector of the Roman Catholic University at Washington, was not lacking in this broad religious spirit. "I indorse," said the Bishop, impressively, "the denunciation hurled against the system of pretended charity that offered food to the hungry Hindus at the cost of their conscience and their faith. It is a shame and disgrace to all who call themselves Christians. And if Vivekananda by his criticism can only stir us and sting us into better teachings and better doings in the great work of Christ, I for one shall be profoundly grateful to our friend the great Hindu monk."

This is the true catholicity of the religion of mankind, and coming from the lips of a Roman Catholic bishop, it did not fail to find a joyous and powerful response in the audience. To the honor of our Hindu friends we have to add that the fairness and impartial love of justice with which their remarks were accepted by a Christian audience, as well as by their Christian brethren on the platform, were unhesitatingly recognised. Said one of them, "The tolerance, the kindness, nay, the patience with which you listen to the enumeration of your faults, this sympathy with the wrong done to heathendom by Christianity, makes me believe that we have all advanced and are advancing wonderfully."

Heretofore, the broad Christianity has always been regarded as heretical; but as this Parliament proves, times have changed. Judging from what we witnessed at Chicago, the official representatives of almost all religions speak a new language. The narrowness of past

ages is now felt to be due to imperfect views of the truth, and we recognise the duty to pass beyond it to a higher and grander conception. There are still representatives of the narrow spirit left, but their position becomes more and more untenable. What does it matter that previous œcumenical councils did not stand upon a broad platform? Does not religion grow? Was the present Parliament of Religions not œcumenical? And has the holy spirit of religious progress ceased to be a presence in mankind? If ever any council was œcumenical, it was this gathering at Chicago; and although no resolutions were passed, there were a certain harmony in matters of faith and a consciousness of that which is essential, such as were never manifested before.

The narrow Christianity will disappear, for its errors have become palpable. There are still remaining some prophets of the trust in a blind faith, but their influence is on the wane. Liberals are inclined to suspect the motives of the believers in the letter, but they judge without charity. The narrow-minded Christian dogmatists are neither false nor hypocritical, for we have ample evidence of their earnestness and their simple-minded piety. Yet they are mistaken. They are deficient in insight and they lack in understanding. We shall have to educate them and teach them that the gentle spirit of Christ is not with them, but marches on with the progressive part of mankind to the planes of a higher evolution.

We all of us have learned much during these congresses. Our foreign guests have learned to know Christianity better than it appeared to them in the conduct of Christians and in sermons and Sunday-schools, and we in turn have learned to respect not only the

love of truth and earnestness of pagans, but also their philosophical capacity.

The narrow Christianity was represented by a few speakers and the audience endured them with great patience ; but we can fairly ignore them here ; for there is no need of reviewing or recapitulating sermons which every one who desires can enjoy in our various orthodox churches. Dr. Briggs represented progressive theology and insisted that religion must face the criticism of science. The Rev. Mr. Mozoomdar is the leader of a similar movement in India. The Brahmo Somaj, which he and the able Secretary of the Association, Mr. B. B. Nagarkar of Bombay, represented, may be characterised as Hindu Unitarianism. Max Müller and Henry Drummond sent brief papers which showed the warm sympathy of the authors and their substantial agreement with the spirit of the Parliament of Religions.

It is impossible to analyse the details of the various views presented ; but a few quotations from the speeches of our heathen friends whom we had not the pleasure of meeting before, will not be out of place.

Vivekananda explained the central idea of the Vedas as follows :

"I humbly beg to differ from those who see in monotheism, in the recognition of a personal God apart from nature, the acme of intellectual development. I believe it is only a kind of anthropomorphism which the human mind stumbles upon in its first efforts to understand the unknown. The ultimate satisfaction of human reason and emotion lies in the realisation of that universal essence which is the All. And I hold an irrefragable evidence that this idea is present in the Veda, the numerous gods and their invocations notwithstanding. This idea of the formless All, the Sat, i. e., *esse*, or Being called *Ātman* and Brahman in the Upanishads, and further explained in the Darsanas, is the central idea of the Veda, nay, the root idea of the Hindu religion in general."

On another occasion the same speaker dwelt on the idea of this panentheism with reference to the soul. Though recognising law in the world, he repudiated materialism. The soul has tendencies, he said, and these tendencies have been caused by past actions in former incarnations. Science explains everything by habits, and habits are acquired by repetition. That we do not remember the acts done in our previous states of existence is due to the fact that consciousness is the surface only of the mental ocean, and our past experiences are stored in its depths. The wheel of causation rushes on, crushing everything in its way, and waits not for the widow's tear or the orphan's cry. Yet there is consolation and hope in the idea that the soul is immortal and we are children of eternal bliss. The Hindu refuses to call men sinners; he calls them "children of immortal bliss." Death means only a change of centre from one body to another. He continued:

"The Vedas proclaim, not a dreadful combination of unfor-  
giving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but that, at  
the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter  
and force, stands One through whose command the wind blows,  
the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth.  
And what is his nature? He is everywhere, the pure and formless  
one, the Almighty and the All-merciful. 'Thou art our Father,  
thou art our mother, thou art our beloved friend, thou art the  
source of all strength. Thou art He that beareth the burdens of  
the universe; help me bear the little burden of this life.' Thus  
sang the Rishis of the Veda. And how to worship him? Through  
love. 'He is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than  
everything in this and in the next life.' "

The breadth of Vivekananda's religious views ap-  
peared when he said:

"The same light shines through all colors, and in the heart of  
everything the same truth reigns. The Lord has declared to the

Hindu in his incarnation as Krishna, 'I am in every religion, as the thread through a string of pearls, and wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity know ye that I am there.'

Parseeism, the noble religion of Zarathustra, received scholarly treatment by Jinanji Jamshedji Modi who repudiated its dualism and represented it as pure monotheism, while he satisfactorily explained the symbolism of the sacred fire. In this way almost every religion was raised to a higher standpoint, than it is usually understood to have, by its representatives, and even idolatry found adroit champions in the Congress.

Said Vivekananda :

"It may be said without the least fear of contradiction that no Indian idolator, as such, believes the piece of stone, metal, or wood before his eyes to be his god in any sense of the word. He takes it only as a symbol of the all-pervading Godhood, and uses it as a convenient object for purposes of concentration, which being accomplished, he does not hesitate to throw it away."

Prince Momolu Massaquoi, son of a native king from the Wey Territory of the West Coast of Africa, a fine-looking youth of good education, which he had received in an American college after his conversion to Christianity, spoke in the same way with Vivekananda concerning the idolatry of African natives.

Mohammedanism, in addition to its representation by Moslems, was critically reviewed by the Rev. George Washburn, President of Robert College, Constantinople, who showed its points of contact and disagreement with Christianity. He quoted passages from the Koran which, in contrast to Mr. Webb's exposition, prove the exclusiveness of Mohammed's religion. The third sura, for instance, declares :

"Whoever followeth any other religion than Islam, shall not be accepted, and at the last day he shall be of those that perish !"

Dr. Washburn's quotation from the Koran reminds us of similar passages in the New Testament ; the old orthodoxy of the Moslems, however, is giving way to broader views. *Tout comme chez nous!* Dr. Washburn quoted the following Mohammedan hymn, composed by Shereef Hanoom, a Turkish lady of Constantinople, and translated by the Rev. H. O. Dwight, which reminds us strongly of our best modern Christian poetry:

"O source of kindness and of love,  
O give us aid or hopes above,  
'Mid grief and guilt although I grope,  
From thee I'll ne'er cut off my hope,  
My Lord, O my Lord !

"Thou King of Kings, dost know my need,  
Thy pardoning grace, no bars can heed ;  
Thou lov'st to help the helpless one  
And bid'st his cries of fear be gone,  
My Lord, O my Lord !

"Shouldst thou refuse to still my fears,  
Who else will stop to dry my tears ?  
For I am guilty, guilty still,  
No other one has done so ill,  
My Lord, O my Lord !

"The lost in torment stand aghast,  
To see this rebel's sins so vast ;  
What wonder, then, that Shereef cries  
For mercy, mercy, ere she dies,  
My Lord, O my Lord !"

Prof. Minas Tchéraz, an Armenian Christian, when sketching the history of the Armenian Church, said sarcastically that real Mohammedanism was quite different from the Islam represented by Mr. Webb. This may be true, but Mr. Webb might return the compliment and say that true Christianity as it showed itself in deeds such as the Crusades, is quite different from



that ideal which its admirers claim it to be. Similar objections, that the policy of Christian nations showed very little the love and meekness of Jesus, were indeed made by Mr. Hirai, a Buddhist of Japan. We Christians have reason enough to be charitable in judging others.

Buddhism was strongly represented by delegates from Ceylon, Siam, and Japan. H. R. H. Chandradat Chudhadharn, Prince of Siam, sent a paper which contained a brief exposition of Buddhistic principles. There are four noble truths according to Buddha. These are (1) the existence of suffering; (2) the recognition of ignorance as the cause of suffering; (3) the extinction of suffering by the cessation of the three kinds of lust arising from ignorance; and (4) the eight paths that lead to the cessation of lust. These eight paths constitute the way of salvation and are (1) right understanding; (2) right resolutions; (3) right speech; (4) right acts; (5) the right way of earning a livelihood; (6) right efforts; (7) right meditation; and (8) the right state of the mind. The Japanese Buddhists are men of philosophical depth and genius, and might have made a deeper impression than they did if they had been more familiar with Western thought. They left, however, behind them a number of pamphlets for free distribution by the Bukkyo Gakkwai, a society at Tokio whose sole purpose is the propagation of Buddhism.\* The missionary zeal of the Japa-

\* These are the titles of the Japanese missionary tracts in my possession: *Outlines of the Mahāyāna as taught by Buddha*, by S. Kuroda, Superintendent of Education of the Jōdo-Sect; *The Sutra of Forty-two Sections and Two Other Short Sutras*, translated from the Chinese originals (The Buddhist Propagation Society: Kyoto, Japan, 1892); *A Shin-Shiu Catechism*, by S. Kato of the Hongwanjiha of the Shin-Shiu sect of Japan (The Buddhist Propagation Society, Kyoto, Japan, 1893); *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*, by the Rev. Prof. M. Tokunaga, translated by Zenshiro Noguchi (Tokio, Kawai Bunkodo

nese Buddhists shows that there is life in Buddhism. The Rt. Rev. Ashitsu concluded his article on the teachings of Buddha with the following words :

"You know very well that our sunrise island of Japan is noted for its beautiful cherry-tree flowers. But you do not know that our country is also the kingdom where the flowers of truth are blooming in great beauty and profusion at all seasons. Visit Japan, and do not forget to take home with you the truth of Buddhism. All hail the glorious spiritual spring-day, when the song and odor of truth invite you all out to our country for the search of holy paradise!"

One quotation from the Japanese missionary tracts will suffice to prove that the ancient teachings of Gautama are still preserved among his adherents of the present generation of Japan. In "The Sutra of Forty-two Sections" we read on page 3 :

"Buddha said : If a man foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love. The more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me. The fragrance of goodness always comes to me, and the harmful air of evil goes to him. . . .

"Buddha said : A wicked man who reproaches a virtuous one is like one who looks up and spits at heaven ; the spittle soils not the heaven, but comes back and defiles his own person. So again, he is like one who flings dust at another when the wind is contrary, the dust will return to him who threw it. The virtuous man cannot be hurt, and the misery that the other would inflict falls back on himself."

The Parliament of Religions is undoubtedly the most noteworthy event of this decade. What are the World's Fair and its magnificent splendor in comparison with it? Or what the German Army Bill, the Irish

& Co., 1893); *Outlines of the Doctrine of the Nichiren Sect*, by Nissatsu Arai, the lately lamented Dai-sōjō. With the life of Nichiren, the founder of the Nichiren Sect, edited by the Central Office of the Nichiren Sect, Tokio, Japan, A. D. 1893.

Home Rule Bill in England and its drastic episodes in the House of Parliament, or a change of party in the United States? It is evident that from its date we shall have to begin a new era in the evolution of man's religious life.

It is difficult to understand the pentecost of Christianity which took place after the departure of Christ from his disciples. But this Parliament of Religions was analogous in many respects, and it may give us an idea of what happened at Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago. A holy intoxication overcame the speakers as well as the audience; and no one can conceive how impressive the whole proceeding was, unless he himself saw the eager faces of the people and imbibed the enthusiasm that enraptured the multitudes.

Any one who attended these congresses must have felt the thrill of the divine spirit that was moving through the minds of the congregation. We may rest assured that the event is greater than its promoters ever dreamed of. They builded better than they knew. How small are we mortal men who took an active part in the Parliament in comparison with the movement which it inaugurated! And this movement indicates the extinction of the old narrowness and the beginning of a new era of broader and higher religious life.

It is proposed that another Parliament of Religions be convened in the year 1900 at the ancient city of Bombay, where we may find a spiritual contrast between the youngest city and the oldest, and pay a tribute from the daughter to the mother. Other appropriate places for Religious Parliaments would be Jerusalem, the Holy City of three great religions, or some port of Japan where Shintoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity peacefully develop side by

side, exhibiting conditions which invite a comparison fair to all?

Whether or not the Parliament of Religions be repeated, whether or not its work will be continued,\* the fact remains that this congress at Chicago will exert a lasting influence upon the religious intelligence of mankind. It has stirred the spirits, stimulated mental growth, and given direction to man's further evolution. It is by no means an agnostic movement, for it is carried on the wings of a religious faith and positive certainty. It is decidedly a child of the old religions, and Christianity is undoubtedly still the leading star. That the faults of Christianity have been more severely rebuked than those of any other religion should not be interpreted to mean that the others are in every respect better, for the censure is but a sign that points to the purification of Christianity. The dross is discarded, but the gold will remain.

The religion of the future, as the opinions presented indicate, will be that religion which can rid itself of all narrowness, of all demand for blind subordination, of the sectarian spirit, and of the Phariseism which takes it for granted that its own devotees alone are good and holy, while the virtues of others are but polished vices. The religion of the future cannot be a creed upon which the scientist must turn his back, because it is irreconcilable with the principles of science. Religion must be in perfect accord with science; for

\*It may be well to add, and those who are interested in the religious development of mankind may be glad to know, that the work of the Parliament of Religions may be continued. Under Mr. Bonney's direction a local committee has been formed among the members of which are Dr. Bristol, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Gilbert, Dr. Dellano, Mrs. Harbert, and the writer of this article. The committee is in connexion with advisory councils all over the world, and it has been decided to name the new movement "The World's Religious Parliament Extension."

science—and I mean here not the private opinions and hypotheses of single scientists—is not an enterprise of human frailty. Science is divine, and the truth of science is a revelation of God. Through science God speaks to us; by science he shows us the glory of his works; and in science he teaches us his will.\*

“We love science,” said a Catholic priest, of Paris, at one of the sessions in the scientific section, when protesting against a thoughtless remark of a speaker who broadly accused the clergy of being opposed to science. “We love science,” Father D’Arby said, emphatically; “the office of science in religion is to prune it of fantastic outgrowths. Without science religion would become superstition.”

The human soul consists of two elements, self and truth. Self is the egotistical desire of being some independent little deity, and truth is the religious longing for making our soul a dwelling-place of God. The existence of self is an illusion; and there is no wrong in this world, no vice, no sin except what flows from the assertion of self. Truth has a wonderful peculiarity: it is inexhaustible, and it, likewise, demands a constantly renewed application. An increase of knowledge involves always an increase of problems that entice the inquiring mind to penetrate deeper and deeper into the mysteries of being, and however serious and truth-loving we may have been, there is always occasion to be more faithful in the attendance to our obligations and daily duties. Self shrivels our hearts; truth makes them expand; and the ultimate aim of re-

\* This view of a religion of science was presented by the writer before the Parliament in an address entitled *Science a Religious Revelation* (published in pamphlet form by the Open Court Publishing Co.)

ligion is to eliminate self and let man become an embodiment of truth, an incarnation of God.

We must welcome the light from whatever source it comes, and we must hail the truth wherever we find it. There is but one religion, the religion of truth. There is but one piety, it is the love of truth. There is but one morality, it is the earnest desire of leading a life of truth. And the religion of the future can only be the Religion of Truth.

## THE NEW ORTHODOXY.

**O**RTHODOXY is the confidence that a certain proposition is right and that all other propositions which contradict it are wrong. Accordingly, orthodoxy, or rightness of opinion, is the natural aim of both science and religion, and what we need most in our churches, schools, and universities is genuine orthodoxy. But how shall we obtain it? Is not orthodoxy, perhaps, a *fata morgana*, an unsubstantial vision which eludes our groping hand and surrenders us to the illusion of blind faith? Indeed, it has come to pass in these days in which agnosticism is the fashionable philosophy of the time, that a religious indifference like a spiritual blight has taken a strong hold of the human mind so as to discredit any kind of orthodoxy, and the doctrine of the vanity of all faith, be it scientific or religious, has come to be recognised as the sum of all human wisdom. But the very existence of science plainly demonstrates that whatever errors we may have inherited from the scientists and the religious teachers of the past, we must never lose faith in the ideal of Orthodoxy, which implies that there is truth and error, that the truth is one and self-consistent, and that whatever conflicts with the truth is error. This is no denial of the theory of the rela-

tivity of knowledge, nor does it imply the assumption that a man can become omniscient; but in spite of the relativity of knowledge, and in spite of the insufficiency of our means of investigating all the details of the immeasurable universe, we must remain assured that man can discern between truth and error, he can solve the various problems with which he is confronted, and he can realise, at least in part, and step by step, the ideal of orthodoxy.

Science has made many new discoveries in this century and has established truths which widen our spiritual horizon and deepen our philosophical understanding. Under the conditions it is but natural that our religious beliefs, too, will have to be revised and restated. They must be purified in the furnace of scientific critique, and I trust that thereby they will not lose in religious significance. On the contrary, they can only gain in every respect; and after the fusing and refining religion will be purer and shine brighter than ever.

There is no need either to defend or to denounce the old orthodoxy, but it is important to understand the nature of the ideal of orthodoxy and to propound on this basis a new conception of orthodoxy which is the only possible ground of a reconciliation of Religion with Science. Agnosticism will not save us, and blind faith has no warrant, but we must broaden both our science and our religion until our religion becomes scientific, and our science religious. On the one hand, we must scientifically and fearlessly investigate the eternal psychical, social, and cosmic facts upon which religion rests; and on the other hand, we must recognise the divinity of scientific truth, imbue it with religious devotion, and seek its religious significance.



How often has Religion been denounced in the name of Science as superstition, and how often has Science been pilloried in the name of Religion as ungodly and profane! Scientists may err and religious doctrines may be wrong, but Science cannot be anti-religious and Religion cannot be anti-scientific; for what is Science but the search for truth, according to the best, the most reliable, and most accurate methods of investigation, and what is Religion but the love of truth applied to practical life!

It is understood that we must be on our guard not to accept the opinion of a scientist as genuine Science, yet we should not denounce Science itself or the principles of Science. However much we may distrust the calculation of an example, and the logical conclusions of a syllogism, we cannot question the reliability of arithmetic or the trustworthiness of logic.

Such is the narrowness of our traditional conceptions of Science and Religion, that both are sought in their externalities. Religion is defined as a belief in dogmas, or as worship of one or several gods, or as the practice of ceremonies, such as incense burning, baptising, and mass-reading, while Science is described as a mere collecting, classifying, and collating of facts. And it is noteworthy that there are scientists who misunderstand the spirit of Science and there are clergymen who have no idea of the meaning of religion. How is that possible? Indeed it is natural; for the routine workers in both fields are so pre-occupied with the exact observation of their traditional practices that they become absolutely unfit to understand the significance of their professions in the universal economy of mankind.

And can there be any doubt about the cause of the

conflict between a one-sided Science and one-sided Religion? The cause of the conflict is on the one hand the paganism of those who, forgetful of the fact that dogmas are symbols, urge a belief in the letter, which inextricably implicates them more and more in absurdities until they begin to hate reason and decry the light of science because it blinds their eyes. On the other hand we are confronted with a lack of trust in truth that is widely spread among the men of science. There are many scientists who judge religious questions from their limited field of inquiry, and imagine that the lower spheres of nature are the whole of nature. Chemistry is expected to solve the problems of psychology, morality is subsumed under zoölogy, and science is identified with materialism. Man because he is an animal is supposed to be a beast. This is no exaggeration, for such and similar statements have been actually made by prominent naturalists. No wonder that, where such a confusion of thought prevails those who set their trust in the letter of their sacred traditions will glory in the bankruptcy of science as being the best evidence of the truth of religion, while science will fall a prey to agnosticism and pessimism. No lesser authority than Huxley pronounced the dreary theory that nature and the laws of nature, including the laws that govern the social relations of man, are intrinsically immoral.

Here is not the place to refute the self-contradictory argument of those who rejoice in the alleged bankruptcy of Science and vainly attempt by logical fallacies to prove the fallaciousness of reason. Suffice it to say that the extinction of the light of Science will never make Religion brighter. The moon is better seen when the sun is hidden; but if you extinguish

the sun, even the moon will cease to shine. By rendering the Logos illogical, you not only make Science impossible, but also change Religion into the superstition of mere traditionalism. The acceptance or rejection of Science means the parting path between genuine Religion and superstition.

What is Science that, in the name of Religion, it should be abused and denounced? Science formulates the facts of our experience in natural laws; it searches for and describes the eternal of nature. Thus science is the embodiment of the immutable world-order of the Logos that was in the beginning, of God in His revelation, and truly, "this is the stone which was set at naught of the builders, which is become the head of the corner." (Acts, iv., 11.)

Science offers a description of experience from which the purely subjective elements have been discarded. Science eliminates sentiment, passions, and prejudice, and undertakes to establish objective truth. Science drops the human of man; it liberates him from the limitations of the senses, and reveals before his mental vision the secret inter-relation of cause and effect, and the order of immutable laws. In a word, Science is super-human; it is the Jacob's ladder, which at its bottom touches the world of sense, while its top reaches into the heaven of spirit.

Whenever God speaks to man, it is not in the earthquake of bigotry or dogma, nor in the fire of fanaticism, but he comes in the still small voice, and the still small voice is heard in Science, for Science is an utter surrender of what we wish to believe to a recognition of the actual fact. Science is a hushing of all thoughts of self, so as to give room to a calm conception of truth.

If you want a Religion that is truly catholic, let it be in accord with Science.

Catholic is that which is universally acceptable, and what is more catholic than Science? For the establishment of a Catholic Religion, therefore, we must select the objectivity of scientific truth as the cornerstone. This and nothing else is the eternal Logos which is exemplified in the noble lives of the prophets, and the incarnation of which constitutes the sonship of God. This and nothing else is the basis of Religion; and no man can lay another foundation.

Science is sometimes erroneously supposed to be a human invention; it is represented as the truth of man, which is contrasted with the divine revelation of religious dogmas as being the truth of God. But Science is not of human make; Science cannot be fashioned by man as he pleases; Science is stern and unalterable; it is a revelation which cannot be invented but must be discovered. There is a holiness in mathematics, and there is ethics in the multiplication-table. On the other hand, dogmas such as the various churches have formulated as their platforms, are the expressions of human opinions. They have been framed by the religious leaders of the past and have been accepted or rejected through majority decisions of so-called œcumenical councils. They are, I regard, sacred documents of what our ancestors thought to be the truth; they have been cast in the mould of great personalities, but they are merely a reflexion of the spirit of their age, including all its noble aspirations and shortcomings.

Our traditions and the formulations of beliefs set forth in the Credos of former centuries, are unquestionably important statements; they must be con-

sidered and reconsidered, and are in a sense authoritative, as coming from men whom we respect, but they are not a final decision of all problems; they possess no absolute authority and can bind neither our reason nor our conscience. It is our sacred duty to revise them again and again in the light of that direct revelation of truth which is always and constantly accessible to man. Man can find salvation only through a scrupulous self-examination and a right comprehension of the events of life.

If you find traditional formulations of faith acceptable, let them stand on the same principle as scientific truths. Scientific truths are always liable to revision, and no scientist makes the slightest objection to having his propositions revised. Why should theologians do so? Scientific truths once rightly formulated need shun no criticism, since upon re-examination they will be corroborated; and, if they be misunderstood or forgotten, they can be rediscovered.

Science, it is true, appears as an enemy of the old dogmatism, which to the unthinking made religion easy. Science discredits blind faith and rejects the trust in the letter. It may destroy many long-cherished prejudices that have become dear to us. But if a dogma cannot stand scientific criticism, if it is not true, how can it comfort us? Let a dogma that is untrue go, and have trust in truth. The truth, whatever it be, let us be assured, will be the best. Truth is better than the most beautiful dream, and, if truth appears bitter at first sight, let us be patient. If Science destroys, it is sure to give us something better.

While dogmas, viz., the platforms of the various churches, are man-made, we should not forget that they nevertheless reflect the truth of a revelation that

is superhuman. They may not be true in their letter, yet are they full of meaning. The truths of this meaning appear in a new light with every advance of civilisation and will be better understood at every stage reached by Science. Let us always bear in mind that Religion, although it must be one with Science, is not Science; the province of Religion is the broad field of practical life, and its aim is to teach moral truths to the masses, not by proving them in logical deductions, but by explaining them in allegories, and the symbolic nature of ecclesiastical dogmas has never been doubted except by the most narrow-minded dogmatists. The Church actually calls the confession of faith a "symbolum,"\* and Christ declared that he spoke in parables only. It is a perversion of the fundamental meaning of our religious revelation to demand a belief in the letter where confessedly from the beginning nothing but a symbolic expression of a deeper mystery was offered.

Neither the prophets, nor Christ, nor the apostles ever intended to set up a system of revelation that

\* The word *symbolum* (σύμβολον) is derived from the Greek *συμβάλλειν*, to throw together, meaning the fitting together of the two pieces of a ring or amulet broken in twain. There was in ancient Greece the institution of mutual hospitality among certain families in various cities, which was hereditary. A stranger who came to Athens from another Greek community went to the house of that Athenian citizen whose ancestors had entered into a bond of hospitality with his own ancestors; and there he presented, for the sake of identification and legitimation, the broken piece of his symbolum. When it fitted to the other piece that was in the hands of his host, he was recognised as a friend and welcomed as a guest. Thus, symbolum originally denoted a mark or sign by which friends could recognise one another, and came to mean a ticket or a check, and also the watchword of soldiers. The early Christians used the word in the sense of token by which to recognise one another. He who knew the Christian symbolum by heart was, in times of persecution, freely admitted as a friend to their meetings; and it is natural that the symbolum in the religious conviction of the early Christians was expressed in those very words and allegories which, in accord with the established tradition, seemed to them the most adequate expression of the truth which they believed.

should be contrary to Science. It is true that they proclaimed many truths which the sages of their time did not grasp,—love of enemies and charity; but a deeper comprehension of the facts of life proved that, upon the whole, their ethical injunctions were right in spite of their apparent impracticability.

Let us not be afraid to analyse religion. Do not think that if the nature of the symbol is explained, nothing will be left. If the myth is understood, we become acquainted with the truth itself, which we formerly had merely seen as through a glass, darkly, in the tinsel deckings of poetic imagery.

Authority is sometimes contrasted with Argument, and the weight of a name is proffered to check the boldness of progressive thought. But there is no sense in speaking of Authority as opposed to Reason; for if by Authority is meant the confidence which we have in a person, what is it but our respect for the soundness of his judgment? Indeed, there is no authority of person; all authority is ultimately the authority of provable truth; it is the authority of Science, and rests upon the superpersonal authority of the divine Logos.

To praise Authority at the expense of Science and Reason is like accepting a greenback and repudiating the gold which the greenback represents. An unredeemable greenback is a mere scrap of paper, and authority not based upon experience that can critically be tested and verified by renewed experience, is a mere usurpation of power. There is no genuine authority which when analysed is not reducible to experience, and as science is systematised experience, we should think that there is no sense in the contrast between Science and Authority.

While we must insist on the recognition of the authority of Science, we should not be blind to the great preference of Religion in having been the first to point out that justice is more powerful than violence, and charity stronger than vengeance. At present, Religion being naturally conservative is lagging behind Science, but there was a time when Science was lagging behind Religion. Religious prophets have in former ages propounded moral ideals, sternly demanding their practical application, the rationality of which the scientists of the time were not sufficiently advanced to prove. Religion anticipated many moral truths which modern Science is only now beginning to understand. When commending Science as the ultimate criterion of truth, let us not forget the great service which Religion rendered while Science was still in its swaddling clothes!

To sum up: any faith that is irreconcilable with Science is doomed. He who rejects Science blights the life of Religion. For the spirit of genuine Religion is the same as the spirit of genuine Science. Science is a divine revelation. Contempt for Science and a deliberate suppression of reason is an intellectual sin; it is the sin against the spirit which cannot be forgiven, but must, if persisted in, ultimately lead to eternal perdition.

Therefore, what we need most dearly is Orthodoxy, but let our Orthodoxy be genuine.



## THE LATE PROFESSOR ROMANES'S THOUGHTS ON RELIGION.

ALL THE publications of the Open Court Publishing Company, purely theoretical though they may appear to be, are brought out with a very practical end in view, which is nothing less than the reconstruction of religion upon the broad basis of modern science. When we publish scientific works, like Ribot's psychological inquiries, Max Müller's expositions of the nature of language and of thought, Ernst Mach's *History of Mechanics* and his *Popular Lectures* on the methods of scientific research, we do so because we trust that the spread of sound science is the best and most effective propaganda of true religion. We acquired from Prof. George John Romanes the right of publishing the American edition of his book, *Darwin and After Darwin*, because we recognise in the doctrine of evolution one of the most important and fundamental religious truths, upon the basis of which the old traditional dogmas will have to be revised and radically remodelled; and we also brought out the American edition of the same scientist's posthumous *Thoughts on Religion*. It is this latter book to which the present essay is devoted, for it seems necessary to explain why we should promote the circulation of a

book which in many important points differs from our own solution of the religious problem.

In our opinion, science and religion are not two separate spheres which must be kept apart, lest the one should interfere with the other; but, on the contrary, both form integral parts of man's spiritual being and are closely interwoven as the web and woof of our souls. Science is the search for truth, including the results of the search; it is the best recognition of the truth according to the most accurate and painstaking methods at our command; and religion is the endeavor to lead a life in agreement with the truth. What is religion but truth in its moral bearings upon practical life!

In opposition to this standpoint the *Thoughts on Religion* by Professor Romanes are antiscientific and agnostic; indeed, they stand in certain respects so much in contrast to the labor of his life, as to appear a disavowal of his former position.

While our religious convictions are quite definite and outspoken we do not propound them dogmatically. We simply submit them to the world for consideration; we solicit criticism from all quarters, because we trust that they can stand the severest strictures. However, supposing they could be proved to be erroneous, we shall not hesitate to publicly confess our errors; for it is not our aim to propagate our views because they are ours, but because we believe that they are true. If it be right that we must in religious questions sacrifice our intellect and cease thinking, let the truth prevail.

When the doctrine of evolution first dawned upon Romanes, it came to him, not as a religious idea, but as a revolutionary doctrine, which was slowly but

radically destroying the very basis of his most sacred belief ; and in order to understand the struggles which at that time distracted the mind of the young scientist, we ought to bear in mind that he was in his inmost nature not only deeply religious, but even uncommonly reverent and pious. Judging from his essay on Prayer, which he wrote in 1873, when still a youth, and by which he gained the Burney Prize at Cambridge, he was possessed of a childlike trust in the Lord, his Creator and Heavenly Father, whom he regarded as governing the world by general laws. Would a youth so settled in his convictions give up his faith when confronted with scientific conceptions irreconcilable with the errors of his traditional religion? How could he help it? Science is not of human make ; science is the superhuman power of the silent voice of the Holy Spirit, who reveals himself to mankind in an accumulative revelation, and no one can withdraw himself from its irresistible influence.

Romanes had thoroughly imbibed the rigid definitions of the traditional dogmatism. In order to substantiate the so-called orthodox conception of Christianity our ecclesiastical instructors have gotten into the habit of telling us again and again that there is no religion save such as is theistic, and that there is no theism, save such as is a belief in a personal God, and a personal God means a distinct individual being with an ego-consciousness like that found in man, only on an infinitely higher plane—a view which we call anthropotheism. Accepting explanations of religion, such as these, it was natural that Romanes, as soon as he became convinced of the errors of his narrow church-theism, should fall a prey to a desolate scepticism, and already in 1876, if not sooner, he wrote a

book entitled *A Candid Examination of Theism by Physicus*,\* which analyses the crude conception of the traditional God-idea, and finds it wanting.

We quote the following passage from the book, which is sufficient evidence of the author's sincerity :

" And now, in conclusion, I feel it is desirable to state that any antecedent bias with regard to Theism which I individually possess is unquestionably on the side of traditional beliefs. It is therefore with the utmost sorrow that I find myself compelled to accept the conclusions here worked out ; and nothing would have induced me to publish them, save the strength of my conviction that it is the duty of every member of society to give his fellows the benefit of his labors for whatever they may be worth. Just as I am confident that truth must in the end be the most profitable for the race, so I am persuaded that every individual endeavor if unbiassed and sincere, ought without hesitation to be made the common property of all men, no matter in what direction the results of its promulgation may appear to tend. And so far as the ruination of individual happiness is concerned, no one can have a more lively perception than myself of the possibly disastrous tendency of my work. So far as I am individually concerned, the result of this analysis has been to show that, whether I regard the problem of Theism on the lower plane of strictly relative probability, or on the higher plane of purely formal considerations, it equally becomes my obvious duty to stifle all belief of the kind which I conceive to be the noblest, and to discipline my intellect with regard to this matter into an attitude of the purest scepticism. And forasmuch as I am far from being able to agree with those who affirm that the twilight doctrine of the ' new faith ' is a desirable substitute for the waning splendor of ' the old,' I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness ; and although from henceforth the precept to ' work while it is day ' will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words that ' the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the

\*The book appeared in 1878 (at Trübner's), and we read in the preface that it was written *several* years before, but had been left unpublished.

lonely mystery of existence as now I find it,—at such times I shall ever feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible. For whether it be due to my intelligence not being sufficiently advanced to meet the requirements of the age, or whether it be due to the memory of those sacred associations which to me at least were the sweetest that life has given, I cannot but feel that for me, and for others who think as I do, there is a dreadful truth in those words of Hamilton,—Philosophy having become a meditation, not merely of death, but of annihilation, the precept *know thyself* has become transformed into the terrific oracle to Ædipus: ‘Mayest thou ne'er know the truth of what thou art.’”

While Romanes pursued his scientific work unswervingly, completing works on *The Mental Evolution in Man*, *The Mental Evolution in Animals* and *Animal Intelligence*, and beginning his *Darwin and After Darwin*, he wrote several essays bearing on religion. They are;

1. “Mind and Motion.” A lecture, published in *The Contemporary Review*, July, 1885, p. 74.
2. “The World as an Eject,” published in *The Contemporary Review* in 1886, p. 44.
3. “The Evidence of Design in Nature,” a paper read before the Aristotelian Society in 1889, and published in its proceedings as a contribution to a Symposium.
4. Three articles on the “Influence of Science Upon Religion,” written in 1889, but remaining unpublished for unknown reasons.

In these essays Professor Romanes takes an unequivocal stand on the ground of monism, yet when he comes to the question of theism he assumes an attitude of agnosticism which does not venture to decide the problem but “leaves a clear field of choice between theism and atheism.” The secret reason of his position which probably was hidden from his own

mind was in our opinion this: he felt instinctively that there was some truth in theism, yet he could not discover by his reasoning powers what it was. He saw the errors of the narrow church-theism, but he did not venture to broaden his idea of God so as to conform it to his better scientific insight.

Professor Romanes's world-conception coincided with the monism of *The Monist* in all important points except in one—his agnostic reservation of leaving the question of theism undecided. I took the occasion to discuss our differences in an editorial article (which appeared in Vol. III., No. 2, pp. 249–257 of *The Monist*) hoping that he would either refute my strictures and fortify his arguments or alter his position which appeared to me half-hearted and untenable, and adopt a more scientific God-conception. At that time Professor Romanes's health broke down and I did not consider it proper to urge a reply from him before he would have thoroughly recovered. He went in the winter of 1892–1893 to Madeira, and it is probable that he never read what I had to say about his agnostic view of theism.

The agnostic reserve of Professor Romanes's position might have easily appeared to his readers as an unwillingness to decide a dilemma, which, whatever horn he chose, could only involve him in troubles of various kinds; but the fact is that he was sorely perplexed in his own mind. On the religious problem all his sympathies were enlisted against his rational faculties, and he saw no other hope for the defence of the faith which he so dearly but vainly longed for, than by denying his rational faculties the right to have anything to say in the matter, and this, his attitude,

he called, in distinction to the Spencerian agnosticism, "pure agnosticism."

Between the lines of Romanes's *Thoughts on Religion* we can see the distress of his soul. What a poor evidence is agnosticism! It is like a straw to which a drowning man desperately but vainly clings. For it goes without saying that agnosticism of every color is as much favorable to dogmatic Christianity, to Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, theosophy, and mysticism of any description, as to Freethought and Nihilism.

With such sentiments Professor Romanes pondered in the last year of his life on the problems of theism, faith, free will, the existence and origin of evil, causation and creation, regeneration, revelation, the miracles, Christian dogmas, such as the Trinity, and Incarnation, the fall of Adam, and Christian demonology. The notes which he wrote down on these topics a few months before his death were originally intended to counteract or offset in a measure, to his own or other people's satisfaction, the propositions contained in the *Candid Examination of Theism by Physicus*. He expected to work out a book on the subject which should appear under the title *A Candid Examination of Religion by Metaphysicus*, for he had found in the metaphysical  $x$  the sole place of safety for the God of Christianity. After his death the notes were handed to the Rev. Charles Gore, Canon of Westminster and a friend of the deceased scientist, who was to do with them what he thought best. Canon Gore decided upon their publication together with other materials and his own editorial comments, and the book bears the title "*Thoughts on Religion*, by the

late George John Romanes, Edited by Charles Gore, M. A., Canon of Westminster."\*

The book contains :

1. Two essays by Romanes on the "Influence of Science Upon Religion," written in 1891, the third essay being omitted, because, as the editor declares, "Romanes's views on the relation between science and faith in revealed religion are better and more maturely expressed in the notes" (pp. 37-88).

2. The Notes for a work on A Candid Examination of Religion (pp. 91-183).

3. Editorial Comments. Both parts open with editorial prefaces (pp. 5-33, p. 105, and pp. 91-96), and the whole book closes with a "Note by the Editor" (p. 184).

Mr. Gore claims that "both Essays and Notes represent the same tendency of a mind from a position of unbelief in the Christian revelation toward one of belief in it" (p. 6); and although Romanes's conviction cannot be described as "a position of settled orthodoxy," although he did not recover "the activity or habit of faith," we are told (on p. 184) that he yet "returned before his death to that full, deliberate communion with the Church of Jesus Christ which he had for so many years been conscientiously compelled to forego."

There are people who think that there is no salvation except in the Church. For their benefit be it stated that such a man as Professor Romanes was in the darkest days of his boldest scepticism a better Christian than many a minister and preacher, who finds no difficulty in avowing allegiance to the thirty-nine articles of the Anglican Church.

\* The Open Court Pub. Co., Chicago and London.



We attach to the book a great importance, for it proves the depth of Romanes's religious sentiment. There may be a doubt whether it was wise and just to publish the notes—just toward the sacred memory of the deceased; and we feel sure that many friends of the late Professor Romanes will regret the appearance of the booklet, for the notes are quite unfinished and incoherent. Indeed, the looseness of argumentation indicates that their author, when he penned them, was no longer at his best. Nevertheless, we believe Canon Gore was right in not withholding them from the world, because Romanes was great enough even for his weaker productions to command a general interest, the more so as they throw a searchlight into the most secret recesses of his innermost soul; and it is of interest to us to know not only how a man like Romanes argued but also what he longed for and on what side his sympathies were most strongly enlisted. Taking the notes as they stand, and bearing in mind that their author's life was cut short before he could revise them and work his way out from the narrowness of agnosticism into a clear comprehension of the glory of true religion, we take them as witnesses of Romanes's deep love of God, whom he still harbored in his heart after his mind through scientific investigations had lost belief in his existence.

We can now understand what an abyss of desolation lies in the question which Romanes uttered in the concluding chapter, page 418, of the first volume of *Darwin and After Darwin*, "Where is now thy God?" And his answer bids us be resigned. He says: "And when the cry of Reason pierces the heart of Faith, it remains for Faith to answer now as she has always answered before—and answered with that

trust which is at once her beauty and her life—Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself."

Concerning Professor Romanes's progress from a position of unbelief toward one of belief, we are unable to discover any evidence of great consequence. For the agnostic position as the sole refuge for believers is already indicated in the *Candid Examination of Theism*. Even here Romanes says:

"Although the latter deductions have clearly shown the existence of Deity to be superfluous in a scientific sense, the formal considerations in question have no less clearly opened up beyond the sphere of science a possible *locus* for the existence of Deity; so that if there are any facts supplied by experience for which the atheistic deductions appear insufficient to account, we are still free to account for them in a relative sense by the hypothesis of Theism. And, it may be urged, we do find such an unexplained residuum in the correlation of general laws in the production of cosmic harmony."

On the other hand, instead of retracting his opinions in the Notes, Romanes expressly retained them, only proposing several important modifications and limitations. While he feels that "further thought has enabled" him "to detect serious errors or rather oversights," in his book he still thinks "that from the premises there laid down the conclusions result in due logical sequence." He continues, "as a matter of mere ratiocination, I am not likely ever to detect any serious flaws, especially as this has not been done by anybody else during the many years of its existence."

Romanes finds two faults with his former work: undue confidence in merely syllogistic conclusions, and a lack of care in examining the foundations of his criticism. He says:

"The metaphysics of Christianity may be all false in fact,

and yet the spirit of Christianity may be true in substance, i. e., it may be the highest 'good gift from above' as yet given to man."

How true! But granted that it is true, should we not rouse ourselves to investigate what is the spirit of Christianity so that we may do away with its false metaphysics? Professor Romanes turns for help to the wrong door. Agnosticism, even Professor Romanes's "pure agnosticism," will never make us take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees; and agnosticism, if we are willing to believe, makes us credulous, while if we are unwilling to believe, makes us indifferent, for what is the use of our troubles if the truth lies in some super-scientific field, where we can never hope to approach it?

Passing by the comments on Adam and the Fall, the blindness of reason with regard to the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity and similar utterances,—topics the serious discussion of which we should not expect from the author of *Darwin and After Darwin*,—we think that the weakest part of Professor Romanes's arguments are his contradictory applications of his principle of pure agnosticism. In one place he complains about "*professed*" agnostics who refused to go to a famous spiritualist, or to test the art of a mind-reader, and he says of them that they violated their philosophy by their conduct (page 109), yet when dogmatic questions appear, such as whether Jesus was the son of God, he argues that we are, *quod* pure agnostics, logically forbidden to touch them (p. 106 and *passim*).

After all, Professor Romanes makes less use of his agnosticism than appears consistent and attempts a reconciliation between religion and science. He says:

"I intend to take science and religion in their present highly developed states as such and show that on a *systematic examination of the latter by the methods of the former*,\* the 'conflict' between the two may be not merely 'reconciled' as regards the highest generalities of each, but entirely abolished in all matters of detail which can be regarded as of any great importance."

The principle of deciding the conflict between science and religion by "a systematic examination of the latter by the methods of the former" is the fundamental contention of that aspiration which we have defined as the "Religion of Science." In full agreement with the maxim of the Religion of Science, Romanes insists upon theists abandoning all the assumptions of which they have been guilty, saying:

"True religion is indeed learning her lesson that something is wrong in her method of fighting, and many of her soldiers are now waking up to the fact that it is here that her error lies,—as in past times they woke up to see the error of denying the movement of the earth, the antiquity of the earth, the origin of species by evolution, etc.

The only possible condition to fighting, says Romanes, lies in the distinction between the natural and the supernatural,—a distinction that has always by both sides been regarded as sound (p. 121). He now proposes to efface the boundary line that separates the supernatural from the natural and says: "Once grant that the supernatural is 'natural' and all possible ground of dispute is removed." †

This is the reconciliation between religion and

\*Italics are ours.

† Compare on the "supernatural" such passages in *The Monist* editorials as Vol. V. No. 1, p. 99: "We deny the existence of the supernatural in a dualistic sense; but suppose we call such higher features of nature as appear in man's ethical aspirations hyperphysical or supernatural because they rise above the lower and purely physical elements of the universe, we must confess that the supernatural lies hidden in the natural and is destined to grow from it according to the cosmic law of existence."

science which we propose, and it may be formulated in analogy with Christ's words: "Render unto Science the things that are Science's!"

\* \* \*

There are many more things that ought to be said, but they are of less importance, and we can only lightly touch upon some of them in a few disconnected remarks.

We believe that Romanes's distinction between Huxley's and Spencer's agnosticism is neither clear nor correct (p. 108.) Professor Huxley's agnosticism is not what Romanes defines it, viz., "an attitude of reasoned ignorance touching everything that lies beyond the sphere of sense-perception." Mathematics lies beyond the sphere of sense-perception, yet Huxley does not extend his agnosticism to mathematical methods or conclusions.

The fact that St. Paul's epistles are regarded by the critics as genuine is mentioned three times (pp. 155, 168, 169), and it is claimed that this is "enough to show the belief of Christ's contemporaries" (p. 169). Indeed! But what of it? Have we not sufficient evidence of the belief of our own contemporaries in the various Christs who have risen among us? Schweinfurth and Teed are living in our midst, and the authenticity of their publications cannot be doubted. The important question is not whether or no Paul wrote his epistles, but whether the ethics of the epistles is good or bad; and, granting that Paul said many noble things, I yet wish to see the orthodox clergyman who would venture to defend Paul's low, not to say vulgar, conception of marriage!\*

\* "The sole motive for marriage which St. Paul proposes is, 'It is better to marry than to burn.' The holiest instincts that would induce men and women

Romanes speaks of "some superadded faculties of our mind," explaining them in one place as "the heart and the will," as the "religious instinct," and other moral sentiments, and also as "spiritual intuition," or an "organ of spiritual discernment." He glories in the "infinite of mystery sufficient to satisfy the most exacting mystic." We say that the "super-added faculties," which are such as man's conscience, his religious aspirations and moral ideals, do not lie without the pale of scientific investigation. On the contrary, the better we understand their nature, the greater is their chance of nobler development and purification.

Such phrases as "first cause" and "infinite mind," which are world-combinations without sense, abound unduly in the notes and help not a little to increase the difficulties which present themselves to the mind of Romanes and which have become sufficiently bewildering through the sensitiveness of his religious nature.\*

Romanes gave a great deal of his thought to the problem of the existence of pain in the world. How is it possible that God, if he be good, can allow his creatures to be hopelessly exposed to "hideously cruel" and terrible sufferings? Romanes says in his

to join their fates in a sacred alliance are utterly ignored. Nothing is said of the mutual sympathy and friendship that bind soul to soul much more closely than sexual appetites. No consideration is taken of the children to be born, and the very lowest desires alone are given as an *excuse* for entering into the state of matrimony, the holiness of which St. Paul does not understand. His view of marriage proves that he had no right conception of the ethics of human sex-relations. We admire St. Paul in many respects, but we must say that his view of marriage is un-Christian; it is unworthy of his sacred office as an apostle: it is a blemish in our Bible."—*Science a Religious Revelation*, pp. 11-12.

\*For an exposition of the errors which lie concealed in the phrase "first cause," see *Primer of Philosophy*, pp. 146-147, and *Fundamental Problems*, p. 88 et seq. As to "infinite mind," see *Homilies of Science*, p. 102 et seq.

second essay on "The Influence of Science Upon Religion," after speaking of the agonies of a rabbit panting in the iron jaws of a spring trap :

"What are we to think of a Being who, with yet higher faculties of thought and knowledge, and with an unlimited choice of means to secure His ends, has contrived untold thousands of mechanisms no less diabolical? In short, so far as Nature can teach us, or 'observation can extend,' it does appear that the scheme, if it is a scheme, is the product of a Mind which differs from the more highly evolved type of human mind in that it is immensely more intellectual without being nearly so moral."

The problem of the existence of pain in the world is an unsolvable mystery on the hypothesis of the traditional theism, and no theory of "probation" can satisfactorily explain the difficulty. But Romanes declares that, after all, we are not bound to adopt the idea of a "carpenter-God," as Mr. S. Alexander calls the anthropomorphic notion of a Creator (see p. 94), which implies that the world-order is a "scheme."

As to God's responsibility for pain, we should bear in mind that one of the most obvious features of anthropomorphism in the God-idea is the attribute of "moral goodness." In the same way that God is not an individual being, that he is not a huge ego or person like ourselves, but a superpersonal omnipresence, so he is neither moral nor good nor ethical; for God is the standard of goodness; he is the norm, conformity to which is the condition of ethics; he is the ultimate authority for all moral conduct. He is neither moral nor immoral, but unmoral, or let us say "supramoral." If God were the carpenter of the world, he would be responsible for its laws and arrangements including all the cruelties implied by them, and he could not escape the condemnation of immorality.

Romanes has found the right answer when he says :

"For aught that we can tell to the contrary, it may be quite as 'anthropomorphic' a notion to attribute morality to God as it would be to attribute those capacities for sensuous enjoyment with which the Greeks endowed their divinities. The Deity may be as high above the one as the other—or rather perhaps we may say as much eternal to the one as to the other. Without being supra-moral, and still less immoral, He may be un-moral: our ideas of morality may have no meaning as applied to Him."

Such was Romanes's pious disposition of mind that, if it ever had been possible to defend the old traditional dogmatism before the tribunal of reason, he would have done so, and we can repeat the quotation from Virgil, which D. F. Strauss applied to Schleiermacher, without hesitation of Romanes:

"Si Pergamum dextra defendi posset  
Hac certe defensa fuisset!"

\* \* \*

There is one more point to be mentioned. Professor Romanes adopted the idea so often proclaimed in the pulpit, that "no one can 'believe' in God, or *a fortiori* in Christ, without also a severe effort of will," and he adds:

"Yet the desire is not strong enough to sustain the will in perpetual action, so as to make the continual sacrifices which Christianity entails. Perhaps the hardest of these sacrifices to an intelligent man is that of his own intellect. At least I am certain that this is so in my own case."

Romanes rummages his brain for arguments to silence the voice of reason. He says (p. 167):

"The force of Butler's argument about our being incompetent judges is being more and more increased.

"The unbiassed answer of pure agnosticism ought reasonably to be, in the words of John Hunter, 'Do not think; try.'"

And he tried! What tortures this man must have suffered in his eagerness not to think but to believe! His religious struggles may have been the physical



cause of his premature death; for distraction of mind is more injurious than overwork. And after all he was anxious to attempt the impossible. We read on pp. 132-133:

"Yet I cannot bring myself so much as to make a venture in the direction of faith. For instance, regarded from one point of view it seems reasonable enough that Christianity should have enjoined the *doing* of the doctrine as a necessary condition to ascertaining (i. e., 'believing') its truth. But from another, and my more habitual point of view, it seems almost an affront to reason to make any such 'fool's experiment,'—just as to some scientific men it seems absurd and childish to expect them to investigate the 'superstitious' follies of modern spiritualism. Even the simplest act of will in regard to religion—that of prayer—has not been performed by me for at least a quarter of a century, simply because it has seemed so impossible to pray, as it were, hypothetically, that much as I have always desired to be able to pray, I cannot will the attempt."\*

Is it not a shame on our Church dogmatism to let a man like Romanes, an intellectual giant, torture himself on the rack in efforts to conform to the religion which he had been taught to love with all the fervor of his soul? † Professor Romanes imagined that

\* Kant condemns "the *prosopopœia*," or face-making, of "hypothetical" prayer as hypocrisy, and says: "The consequence of this is that he who has made great moral progress ceases to pray, for honesty is one of his principal maxims. And further, that those whom one surprises in prayer are ashamed of themselves."

† How true is what Mach says of the conflict between science and theology! In his *Science of Mechanics*, p. 446, we read: "It would be a great mistake to suppose that the phrase 'warfare of science' is a correct description of its general historic attitude toward religion, that the only repression of intellectual development has come from priests, and that if their hands had been held off, growing science would have shot up with stupendous velocity. No doubt, external opposition did have to be fought; and the battle with it was no child's play. But investigators have had another struggle on their hands, and by no means an easy one, the struggle with their own preconceived ideas." Professor Romanes is the most modern instance of the severity of the conflict which often distracts the soul of a scientist. Oh, what a noble mind was there o'erthrown—and by what? By his devotion to dogmas, the spirit of which he felt to be true, and the allegorical garb of which he knew to be full of errors.

God requested from him the sacrifice of his intellect, and what was he not willing to do for God's sake! As Abraham went out to sacrifice his only son Isaac, so Romanes seriously tried to slaughter his reason on the altar of faith.

My blood begins to boil at the thought, for I remember my own experiences and the dark hours of despair in which I had, against my own will, lost my God and my religion, and felt all the miseries of hell. However willing I was to sacrifice my vanity, my egotism, my pride, my pleasures and joys, my self and my fondest hopes, I was yet unable to surrender my better knowledge, and only after many hours of sore trial did I work my way out again into the glorious liberty of the children of God. I came to the conclusion that no such sacrifice is expected of us as a surrender of our intellect; for our intellect is but the reflexion of God's nature in our soul. Man's reason is the light of his life; it is a product of that world-logos which science traces in all natural laws, and it is the seal of man's divinity which constitutes his similarity to God.

What is the lesson of Romanes's *Thoughts on Religion*?

Romanes's posthumous work is a *mene tekel* which reminds us of the importance of the religious problem. We cannot and must not leave it unsettled in worldly indifference. We must attend to it and investigate it bravely and conscientiously. We can no longer denounce reason or silence our intellectual needs, for it is God himself who speaks in the voice of reason; and the progress of science is his most glorious revelation, which ecclesiasticism cannot smother. Indeed, the suppression of reason is the

sin against the Holy Ghost which cannot be forgiven but will inevitably lead, if persisted in, to eternal perdition.

The sad case of Professor Romanes's religious struggles reminds us of the significant words of the late Field-Marshal von Moltke who, with reference to dogmatic religion, says in the posthumous, deeply religious *Thoughts of Comfort*, which contain his confession of faith: "I am afraid that the zealot in the pulpit, who will persuade where he cannot convince, preaches Christians out of the church."

Our Church Christianity is not as yet free from paganism. By paganism we understand a belief in the letter of parables or allegorical dogmas to the detriment of their spirit; and tradition and habit combine to make our theologians worship the letter that killeth. A one-sided training warps their judgment. Their notions of God, the sacraments, miracles, inspiration, prayer, Christ's sonship, and other religious ideas are, as a rule, more pagan than they themselves are aware of. The constitutions of most churches are so formulated as to make a belief in the literal meaning of symbols the test of orthodoxy, and Christians are urged to set their trust upon myths. For the higher education of the clergy we would propose, therefore, that every theologian should study at least one of the natural sciences or mathematics. It would be the best way, perhaps the only way, to teach them the sternness of truth and to dispel their anthropomorphic notions of God.

The narrowness of ecclesiasticism has estranged many noble minds from religion. Let our clergy see to it that room be made for intellectuality in our churches; and the light of science will purify the dark

corners in which the superstitions of past ages still continue to exercise their baneful influence.

Romanes has much to say of the inner voice, intuition, and inspiration, but whatever form the subjective instincts of our religious nature may take, they possess merely preliminary power of decision and have no authority in comparison with objectively demonstrable truth. The verdict of conscience is very valuable, because it frequently reveals deep moral truth in a prophet's vision: yet is it neither absolute nor reliable, for it must seek its ratification before the tribunal of science. So far as human evolution has gone, science alone is possessed of that catholicity which is so sorely needed in religion.

There is no peace of soul for him whose religion has not passed through the furnace of scientific criticism, where it is cleansed of all the slag and dross of paganism. If God ever spoke to man, science is the burning bush; and if there is any light by which man can hope to illumine his path so as to make firm steps, it is the light of science. Let us, therefore, make religion scientific and science religious. Let us, on the one hand, imbue religion with the spirit of science, with its rigorous criticism, strict exactness, and stern devotion to truth; and on the other hand, let us open our eyes to the moral and religious importance of the results of scientific inquiry. The ultimate aim of science is to reveal to man the religion of truth.

Let the light of science illumine both our minds and our sentiments; for science is holy, and the light of science is the dwelling-place of God.

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