

THE  
RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

BY

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# The Religion of the Future,

OR THE

SECOND COMING OF CHRISTIANITY.

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RELIGION is the relation and obligation of man to God and his fellow-man. This involves the relation of spirit to matter, and of ethics to sociology.

Sociology is that branch of philosophy which treats of the science, or laws of social relations.

The laws of social relations are, the application of the ethics of Christianity to daily life.

The religion of the future is rapidly becoming the religion of the present. A New Age is in process of development. It carries with it elements which, up to the present time, have only existed as rudimentary forces. These elements when brought out and fully developed will act with

such transforming power upon their environment, as to effectually separate the New civilization from that of the Old.

This conversion of what are now mere tendencies, into actual, positive forces, may be regarded in the light of a Creative process, since new forms of action have been brought into play which up to a given period, were not in existence. For Creation only implies such a transformation of pre-existing elements, as that they appear in new forms, powers and principles. "All social phenomena, and all the phenomena of life are dependent on the laws of life, and can be understood only when the laws of life are understood." It is therefore of the first importance that the laws under which development occurs, should be studied with special reference to the great and decisive changes taking place in the social world to-day.

*Successive changes* are the means of permanence and growth; they are steps in the ladder of life from one set of conditions to another. The material universe with its planetary and sidereal systems and all thereunto belonging, has passed through *various* stages of growth. That

which now is solid, was once gaseous, and gaseous elements undoubtedly evolved from centers of energy, or force. For chemistry shows us, that matter has three known forms, solid, liquid, and gaseous,—and that one is reducible into the other; that matter is made up of molecules, that molecules are the smallest divisible particles of matter with which chemistry has to deal; that molecules are composed of atoms, and that these atoms are indivisible, elemental substances. They are germ cells of energy, whence growth proceeds. In the last analysis, matter is known to us simply as a mode of force, and force as matter unexpressed in form.

The law of correlated forces, whereby heat, light, sound, electricity, may be transmuted into motion, and into each other, when the cessation of energy in any one given direction involves its re-appearance in another, demands that we should seek in other forces than those of atoms or germ cells of energy, the equivalent for the stupendous glories of universal life.

This can only be found in a Universe of Spiritual forces, which antedated and outworked them-

selves in material forms. The correlative of the universe of matter, is the Thought of God. This is the unknown Force which endlessly persists, manifests itself through ever-varying and multitudinous forms of life.

Thought is the all-creative power; matter and motion are its equivalents and expressions. Motion is the activity of Divine thought: matter is the substance of Divine being. The two, matter and thought, are so related that in essence they are one;—matter being the energy of thought externalized into form.

The transformation of spiritual elements into molecular motion — through the power of thought — was the beginning of matter; — a change from an organically *higher* state to *lower conditions*.

Matter being derived from Spiritual energy, and this energy being derived from the Infinite One, — it follows that the Divine Life of God is *in Nature*; that matter and spirit are two expressions of one substance; that the spiritual and material are indissolubly connected, and stand to one another, as cause and effect; that because of this relation there is necessarily action and inter-

action between the spiritual universe and the material universe: that all growth is the *result* of this inter-action, and that the final outcome must be to reproduce in the earthly, or created the characteristics of the heavenly. There can be no place in the whole economy of Nature where the creative forces of spiritual life are not in active correspondence with material life. Just as in the individual, spirit and matter are two expressions of the same force—the coarser and more ponderable physical organism being distinguished from its permeating spiritual elements, because of their greater refinement and power; one subject to the law of disintegration and death, the other, indestructible,—persisting through all changes,—and yet so related to the body that every thought, feeling, and act of will, have their mechanical equivalent and expression;—so a similar correspondence exists between the worlds of spirit and matter.

There is no gulf—no chasm—between the spiritual world of causes, and the material one of effects. One is an outgrowth or development from the other, the *lower* from the *higher*, and the

whole process of evolution is one of restoration — the spiritualization of humanity; and through this spiritualization, the bringing into unity of Nature, the spiritual and material — the divine and the human.

Without the recognition of Divine Energy working in Nature, in man and through man, in social institutions, the knowledge of phenomena is vague and incomplete. Science, concerning herself only with sequences, — and in its very nature being incapable of dealing with that which underlies phenomena, is fragmentary, and like Noah's dove, wanders about with the olive branch of peace in her mouth, without a place whereon to rest her feet. With the recognition that the material universe evolved from eternally existing spiritual elements, that matter and spirit are simply two expressions or forms of one and the same divine substance, being separated from each other merely by difference in degree of development, there is reconciliation established in the ground work of thought.

Through this knowledge we are enabled to perceive, that man through spiritual laws is di-



rectly related to his Creator, and to his fellow man; and that this relation carries its corresponding obligation. There is a new point of departure and observation established, and a basis laid down for all subsequent individual and social growth. There is also the basis for the positive knowledge of the immortality of the human soul. For that which is within us,—that which thinks, and feels and pervades our organization, is a form of spiritual energy. It is incorporeal, yet it is substantial. It is matter, it is also spirit. It was derived from thought,—it may be denominated thought. It is an active energy; it is thought—feeling—motion. Feeling inheres in, and is the life of thought. Thought and feeling generate motion. The force, which is ourselves is simply elemental, indestructible. It is the life of the body, it forms the body. Life develops from within,—because the force within the body is a Spiritual force. Thought is a Creative Power. It ever shapes and works from within outward. It creates good,—it creates evil. Acting normally, and unperverted,—acting in holiness, its effect is to redeem the body

from inherited tendencies to evil or disease, and institute health in every nerve and fibre. Acting abnormally its tendency is to destroy the body. In either case thought is creative, and acts either to save and bless, or destroy and curse.

The all important fact to be deduced from this relation of matter and spirit, is that of kinship. That God, or the Divine life is in Nature, is in man, is in social institutions;—His expression being proportionate to the degree of development which humanity and social institutions have undergone. That man's thought is God's thought, and is the channel of communication, and that any change from a lower to a higher state of existence, whether biologic or sociologic, results from the outworking energy of Divine life.

EVOLUTION is the mode of Creation. It is a process of growth through endless variations with the final establishment of new and distinct types of life. It is the means of relating and combining into a system all the various forms of Nature. "Every being is the product of modifications wrought by insensible gradations on a pre-existing kind of being." (Powell.)

Evolution is not merely a change of the modes of the subject,—it is that, but more:—the subject itself changes. It develops its forces through successive forms, or modes of expression. The inner or spiritual elements of being make a new environment.

In the intellectual, moral and spiritual progress of the world, there is an evolution corresponding to that in the animal kingdom. The law is equally applicable to sociology, as to biology.

As individual and social growth are the results of the operation of this law, and as they are bound and linked together with all of Nature's genera or orders, the law of evolution governs the individual, the race, and social institutions. Involved in the process of growth, are culminating periods when out of old conditions new and higher expressions of life appear. These culminating periods carry with them a more complete interaction of spiritual and material forces, and may be called Creative epochs. Such an epoch the world is now entering. Civilization is on the threshold of a change from a social order representative of the egoistic instincts of man's nature, to one expressing altruistic sentiments.

This fundamental change in the life of society is the result of untold ages of growth, of social differentiation, and integration. A stage has been reached where the continued action of the selfish propensities is producing results fatal to social order and growth. It has led to the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few capitalists; that concentration is reacting injuriously upon the entire industrial system — paralyzing trade, throwing hundreds of thousands out of employment, lowering wages, and engendering race and class hostility. This is a step backward in the life of civilization. To prevent the suffering consequent upon competition, industrial forces are combining; and this consolidation of the forces of labor marks the end of a competitive civilization, and the beginning of a new civilization of associated interests. At the present time co-operation exists merely as a latent power in the social system, and competition is the active, dominant law. But as the action of this law is rapidly tending toward social deterioration and disintegration, the introduction of Co-operation as a universal Principle, follows as the next stage

in the growth of society. Civilization, as it progresses and unfolds, inevitably reaches a state where it becomes one with religious life.

Religion is that which relates man to God and his fellow-man; and social growth is ever toward the incorporation of this law. The essence of the Christian religion is love for our neighbor, or the recognition of human rights. That which has the force and sanction of a Divine command is the governing law of the race. The ethics of Christianity when applied to trade, express themselves in a co-operative system of industry. Not only is there no antagonism between the moral law of identity of interests and advancing civilization, but the whole course of development is toward the fulfilling of the law. The greater the co-ordination of mankind, the higher the civilization. As man emerged from the barbaric condition of primitive life, he learned to co-operate with others, and although development has been slow and synonymous with struggle and suffering, yet social amelioration and increasing happiness have kept pace with increasing inter-dependence. Man's necessities are the instruments of his deliverance from suffering.

Men are beginning to perceive the coincidence of self love with benevolence, of individual with general good, — that more thorough and rapid progress can be made by the utilization of Nature's forces than by their destruction. They begin to perceive, especially the great body of the people, the terrible effects of industrial competition at a time when labor is owned by capital, when wealth is concentrated, when machinery takes the place of human labor, when the underpaid labor of the world is struggling to find employment; and they realize that counter measures of a co-operative character must be instituted, that competition is incapable of meeting the demands of an age replete with inventive thought, with new and wonderful mechanical utilities, and one that is leavened with the idea of human equality, the rights of man, and the brotherhood of the race.

There is not a reform to-day, through which the fibrous roots of the divine idea of human brotherhood is not striking. In socialistic principles and organizations, in trades unions, in consolidated charities, in all benevolent associations, in

rapidly spreading conceptions of democracy, in visions of a new political economy based upon Nature's great law of correlated forces, the thought appears and reappears, giving assurance of a new coming order of beauty, peace, and stability.

The religion of the future is dawning. Its crescent beauty already lights the sky of human hopes and aspirations. It is dawning in the knowledge that the divine energy of Christianity is eternal; that it is a thing apart from perishable human institutions; that it endures when the forms under which it partially disclosed itself have passed away; — that when it has permeated and modified every part of life so thoroughly as to change the entire tone of civilization, it disappears from church systems and organizations, and reappears as a Divine life in man, and in social institutions. It ceases to be local, and becomes universal.

Forms change, underlying principles persist. There is a conservative correlation of the energy of religious systems as well as of physical forces. There is the same law of growth in the religious development of mankind as in the natural world.

In both instances growth is from the simpler to the more complex, and the complexity of an organism, or of a new religious system, is only the gradual unfolding of forces heretofore latent. In the one case as in the other, the unfolding process goes on through endless variations and diversities of types, until from out these diversities, a new order of life—or a new religious system, is finally evolved.

The religion of the future, is Christianity in its "Second Coming" as a spiritual force and power. This second coming of Christianity, carries with it new laws, new principles, and new conditions of life, not involved in the first. It is the same Energy, but under a new form of action.

Because growth is slow, because we have been accustomed to separate matter from spirit, the Divine from the human, and have not recognized that God is in Nature, that His life and thought are affiliated with human life and thought, we fail to read aright the "signs of the times" and see in human affairs and social movements, the out-working of a Divine plan and purpose. We have banished God the Father from the universe, and made a negation of Christ.



It is necessary that we should take a new departure, — that we should realize where we are to-day, and not drift blindly and aimlessly on without knowledge of what is taking place. It is necessary that we relate the Divine and the human, and make God a factor in human affairs ; that we realize we are nearing the end of an order of life known as the natural, egoistic, or competitive, and are entering upon a new and super-natural and divine order. This introduction of a new social condition, this disclosure of new spiritual elements in humanity with their transforming power upon the body, is similar in kind to the evolution of the human from the animal. In both instances a distinct degree of development separates the higher life from the lower.

The end of the present Order necessarily carries with it social upheaval and suffering, because of the ignorance of men, and their unwillingness to adjust themselves to new requirements.

But inasmuch as growth is governed by law, and law but expresses the Divine mind ; and, inasmuch as the competitive system, or the organized selfish instincts of the race, is revers-

ing its action for good, and is tending and must tend to anarchy and ruin, — the opposition of men can only increase the evils of the present hour. It cannot change conditions, or turn back the movement of society. For when civilization reaches a point, when it can no longer prosper on the selfish or competitive plane, — when its wealth becomes concentrated, when its industries contract, when the increasing impoverishment of the people, reacts upon the whole industrial and social system, and trade languishes and stagnates, — when the preservation of the social state demands that wealth shall undergo diffusion, — and when, in order to effect this, the people combine their interests, organize their forces, and obtain control of their industries and the laws under which they act, — when the state, or the government ceases to be the representative of a class, and wields its delegated power in the interests of all, — then, insensibly, society adjusts itself to Nature's higher law of mutual helpfulness, religious and social forces are correlated, and the energy of the race that now goes to waste is conserved. The ethical law of Christianity is Nature's higher law,

The mighty forces now grouping themselves for the greater happiness of mankind are directly traceable to the influence of that Divine Spirit who made of Nature's laws and human duties a religious obligation; who codified all religious commands and statements into one broad formula of divine and human relations and obligations: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Contained in that formula are the laws governing social growth, — the violation of which carries national suffering, decay and death. The law of correlated forces is the primordial law of Nature. It is this which holds the planets in their courses, and connects the visible and invisible worlds of life. The law of evolution is only a repetition of this law on another plane of action. It declares the unity of life, and the correlation of all natural forces. The law which governs cosmical relations, and which binds in one chain the universe of life is yet to be completely expressed in all *social* relations.

"Then comes the statelier Eden back to man: —  
Then reigns the world's great bridals, chaste and calm."

Nearly two thousand years have passed since the law of Divine and human relations was formulated

as a religious principle, binding upon mankind. Now that civilization is outgrowing conditions once essential to it, and is unconsciously preparing to adjust itself to this eternal law, Christianity is beginning to be seen in a new light, — that of the Saviour of the world from all the multitudinous evils of existence. For Love is the fulfillment of the Law, and is the only saving power on earth, or in heaven. We are yet to enter more fully into the mysteries of life, of which up to the present time, we have merely stood upon the threshold, and learn what the salvation that is in Christ really means — the salvation which results from the correlated forces, of the Divine and the human.

The spirit of Christ coming into closer, and in many instances conscious union with the spirit of man, reappears as the guiding power of life, and ushers in a new spiritual dispensation. The first advent was of the form; the second is of the Spirit. The form disappears from sight — the Spirit endures and enters into communication with humanity.

Nothing is lost. There is only a change from one mode of action to another. The energy of

conscious intelligence is indestructible. It is not dissipated, or transformed into merely spiritual elements. It forever persists and discloses itself as an Individualized Thought of God. The energy or Spirit, of Christ, is the energy or Spirit of God — it is the energy of the race. The Power who works in Nature,— who moved the universe of matter from state to state, from inorganic to organic — who out of the animal evolved the human with all his higher endowments, is the same Power that uttered itself in the religious and social law of love to God and love to man.

The spiritual life and force which intermingles like the atmosphere with the life of man, has undergone the same process that everything in Nature undergoes,— that of unfolding. Spirit and matter ultimate themselves in a Being, who summed up and expressed purely natural forces, — and also, Divine forces.

Jesus of Nazareth is the representative of humanity ; he is the representation of Divinity ; he is the head of the race. He is the culmination, not only of the religious life and thought of Judea and of the age in which he lived, but of the

thought and life of the world. He summarized and epitomized all that previously existed, and is the active force of the world to-day. He based his teachings upon the unity of God and man, — because he knew what that unity was.

If Greece laid down the laws of physical beauty, which to-day govern the world of art — so Judca laid down the laws of *moral* beauty, which shall for all time direct the world of humanity. Starting like a small rivulet in the early history of the race, the thought of moral beauty flowed on, ever gaining strength and power. Not in all the literature of the world has the beauty of right action, of conduct, been sung in strains of such diverse tones, as in the Old Testament ; — and this when experience had not garnered its fruit, and when the moral nature of the race was in its infancy. Nowhere else has evil with all its terrible consequences both here and hereafter, been so forcibly depicted as in the Old and New Testaments ; one dealing principally with the life of earth, the other with the Spiritual world. Nowhere else save in the New Testament has the Law and Gospel of life been formulated into one statement of Divine

and Human relation and obligation, — “On these two hang all the law and the prophets.”

The Prophets and Seers of the Old Testament, stand grave and solemn, like snow-clad mountains, catching the rising beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and reflecting them upon an awakening world!

Is it strange that the strong current of religious life flowing into the world mediately by the Jews, should at last culminate and be focalized for all time in the person of a Jew? Strange indeed if it did not! If three generations of thoughtful men only are requisite to produce, it may be genius, — what should we not expect when generation after generation, for more than a thousand years flowed on bearing the accumulated wisdom and love that had poured through the souls of Prophets and Seers? The Race was leavened with that enduring thought of a “Power that makes for righteousness,” and in the fullness of time, that knowledge and thought was crystallized in the person of Jesus, who became the living embodiment of that light which, in broken rays, had descended upon the Prophets and leaders of the race.

In Jesus, humanity attained its summit of thought and being, and that was God, or Divine Life, manifested in the flesh. All things in Nature had manifested the power of God: but in Jesus, God became known. "God manifest in the flesh," said Coleridge, "is eternity in the form of time." God manifested in the flesh, is spirit in the form of matter.

Jesus was a necessary step in the evolution of life. He was a new force projected into Nature. He was an organized expression of the world force.

Just as higher forms have arisen from lower, just as man was evolved from the animal, — so the Divine Man, the Head of the race, was evolved from the human, and stands midway between the Infinite and the finite. The Religion of the Future is the Religion of Humanity, with Christ Jesus as its Head.

The life that is in Christ, is only in a lesser degree in ourselves. We are growing into His fullness and power; and this growth brings man into conscious relations with the Father of all — with Christ — and the world of invisible intelligences. For there are other avenues of perception than

those of the senses; there is the knowledge to be obtained from contact with the external world and there is also intuition, or inspiration. The coming of Christ has so long been regarded in the light of

"Some far away, divine event: —  
Toward which the whole creation moves."

That we have lost sight of the means whereby that "coming" might be possible. We have failed to identify it with any corresponding movement on the part of humanity, and to see that because His coming was Spiritual — His Spirit operating more closely upon our spirit, so that we become conscious of this Divine interaction, — spiritual development on our part was requisite, and that the development of the spiritual elements of being is governed by absolute law.

Christianity is coming again into the world with a force and power never imagined by its devoted adherents. It is coming internally as a Divine life within human life; it is also coming externally to the whole civilized world, and saying in tones of authority: "Make your neighbor's interests identical with your own, by instituting



justice in all business relations, or your neighbor will destroy you and your institutions."

God is in the movement of society:—His Thought is behind the thought of the poor and needy, and is its impelling force. He is the Power working for righteousness; and now that a great natural law is working unnaturally, destroying multitudes and wrecking the happiness of tens of thousands to center luxury in a few hands,—the power within Nature—within man, within society, says: "thus far and no farther." Out of competition, out of this blind mad rush after wealth, where conscience and honor play no part, must come co-operation,—so that all may share in the material blessings of life.

Nature is democratic. She will not forever allow the many to toil in ignorance and want—that the few may lead selfish lives of ease and luxury. Sooner or later she adjusts the social balance, even if in so doing she causes perturbation and destruction.

We need to realize as never before, that man is God's vicegerent; that His Kingdom can never come upon the earth—and His will be done, save

through human agency. That in this complicated social movement, in this passage of society from a competitive to a co-operate state, man must act. He must use the faculties with which he is endowed. He must study the laws of social growth, and remember that his reason, his thought, his action, are the only means whereby catastrophies may be avoided, and civilization carried forward into new activities, and adjusted to universal needs.