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ARTICLE V.

WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST.

BY THE REVEREND CHARLES CAVERNO, LL.D.

SOMEWHERE in the forties Horace Greeley wrote an article for the *New York Tribune* which he entitled, "Why I am a Whig." Such personal frankness was a new departure in politics. But it left its mark, and from that day onward it has been easier for a man to express his personal views in politics, his individual convictions on any topic in the public mind.

I purpose in this article to tell why I am not a Christian Scientist. My excursion will be in the domain of philosophy, and mainly from a psychological point of view. I start out with the following declarations, taken from the works of the founder of Christian Science:—

- "There is but one I, one mind or spirit, because there is but one God."
 "The science of being destroys the belief that man is a separate intelligence from his Maker."
 "Man has no distinct mind from his Maker."
 "The soul of man is God."

At old common law the system of pleadings usually ran like this:—

Declaration : Plea.
 Replication : Rejoinder.
 Surrejoinder : Rebutter.
 Surrebutter.

It will not be necessary to go through all the old common-law forms to find an issue in the case before us. The issue is joined at once on the declarations above. They are, each and all, denied on their simple statement. The exact

opposite of each of them is the truth. There are as many I's, minds, or spirits as there are intelligent self-conscious beings in the universe. The facts of being uphold the belief that man is a separate intelligence from his Maker. Man has a distinct mind from that of his Maker. The soul of man is not God. The issue ought to be plain.

Now, at the outset, I might grant pantheism, idealism, or any system of thought that looks back to an original unity, and that unity, one entirely of mind. What we have to look at is not what things were, but what they have become. It may be that the universe was once fire-mist distributed equally in space, or quiescent stuff at an absolute zero of temperature, or "an indefinite incoherent homogeneity." But such is not the case now. It may be that the speculation of Lockyer may be true, that all the chemical elements were originally one; but that is not the condition now, and we must deal with them as we find them. More than that, they show no signs of willingness to return to that primitive unity. So far they are absolutely refractory to compulsion in that direction. If the elements were originally one, it is a great deal more likely that new ones will appear than that old ones will slide back to community. We are not only adding to the list of the elements others that we before knew not, but, to borrow a term from Clerk Maxwell, it is reasonable to suppose that the process of their fabrication is still on going. This, of course, is speculation. So is the original unity—it is simply hypothesis. We know nothing about it. We do know that there are now, to us, permanent differences in matter, and physical science is largely concerned in observing these differences, and the results that come from variety of combination.

Let this stand for parable. We can trace this differentiation of things into every department of the universe open to the knowledge of man. Mr. Spencer is right: the

homogeneity—if there ever was any such thing for a time, whereof the vision of man runneth not to the contrary—has been, still is, breaking up into heterogeneity,—the like becoming the unlike, the same becoming the different, the indistinguishable becoming the distinct. It may be that an atom is a center of force, and that the force is the Divine will. I do not know but it is so. But then I don't know that it is so. Nobody knows that it is so. Lord Kelvin has just said that the vortex-force theory of an atom is “a dream of a dream.” We know neither the atom nor the vortex of force.

I might grant to Christian Science the claim that we were originally one with the Deity, though that is speculation, pure and simple. Nobody knows enough to say it is a fact; and in my judgment nobody in this mundane condition will ever know enough to posit it as a fact of knowledge. It may be that in the beginning (*ἐν ἀρχῇ*, or *au fond*) we were one with God. But that condition has ceased to be. It may be that we have been derived from the Deity by budding or by fission. But the separation into a different individuality has taken place. There is a time when the acorn is part of the oak, when the child is part of its mother; but when the acorn is shed, and the child born, they will neither of them be again a part of that from which they were derived,

“While the years of eternity roll.”

Whether God made us out of nothing, or shed us from himself, we do not know. The one idea is just as tolerable as the other. Both are unverifiable.

Now we are where we may raise this question, Shall we begin in our philosophy at an end of things about which we know nothing, or begin somewhere where we do have some glimmering of knowledge? Instead of starting with an unknown condition of God, or of the universe in the beginning, suppose we come back, and start with our-

selves here and now. After all, we know ourselves a little better than we do anything else. We know our physical sensations and our moral experiences. We may not attain absolutely perfect knowledge from either. We may sometimes be mistaken on this ground; but the errors which we commit here are fewer than we commit in respect to knowledge derived in any other way, or from any other realm. We know psychic phenomena at first hand; we know physical phenomena only at second hand.

That brings us to the threshold of the science of psychology. I will try to give an introduction to that science, to indicate its modes of procedure and their results. Turn to *In Memoriam* (section xlv.), and you read:—

“The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that ‘this is I’:

“But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of ‘I’ and ‘me,’
And finds ‘I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.’

“So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As through the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

“This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of death.”

One will do well to commit that forty-fourth section; then he will have a condensed treatise in psychology always at control. Clark University sits inside those four verses. Tennyson, if not the great Englishman of the nineteenth century, was a very great man, and his greatness is nowhere more visible than in this brief forthsetting of the processes and main result of the action of the human mind. One will read treatises on psychology, and look up and

down the ages for the thought of master minds therein, and not find an essential idea that is not involved in this summary. He has here proved the truth of his own words:

" Truth in closest words shall fail
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at open doors."

The poet, in a tale or song, may successfully cry, "Open sesame," to doors that the didactic teacher with his painfully wrought treatises bombards in vain. Tennyson's genius had almost omniscience in the choice of an executive word. His mind settled to the word that does work, as a divining rod pointed with steel tips to a magnet. Take his word "finds" as it appears in the lines—

" And finds, ' I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.' "

That is a word that covers all mental action from the time the baby is laid in the cradle till the old man is laid in the tomb. All psychic action is a process of finding, or is initiatory thereof or consequent thereon. In the process of his adaptation to his environment the child finds some things hard and some things soft, some hot and some cold, some agreeable to his senses and some disagreeable; and, as he goes on making such and other discriminations, and registers them in his memory, and conforms action to them, he increases in knowledge and power,—he finds himself, and his relation to things not himself round about him. All practical life and all science is but a continuation of this process of finding. The farmer finds what seeds will best grow in what soils, the mechanic what tools and what use he can make of them will bring about the adaptation of materials he desires, and how adaptation after adaptation will bring about still further projected ends. The chemist finds how to dissociate certain elements from compounds, and how to combine elements to make compounds. But the other day we were all interested in the work of

astronomers upon an eclipse of the sun. That work was a finding, or an attempt to find, out on the borders, of human knowledge, certain facts in the science of astronomy which to human comprehension were, and perhaps still are, in uncertainty. The astronomers were trying to find what certain phenomena on the edge of the sun indicated. But their psychology was radically as simple as it was when, as children, they crept to the fireplace, and tentatively put forth a finger toward a dull-looking coal to see whether it would burn or not. The child and the astronomer were each trying to find out something about his environment, albeit the one in this effort was limited to an object on the home hearth, while the other was prospecting for facts at the edge of the sun. Go into court—the court finds law, and the jury facts and a verdict, and then the court may find other law, and set it in motion to execute the verdict.

But “find” is as radical and as comprehensive a word in religion as elsewhere. Coleridge said he believed in the inspiration of the Scriptures, because they ‘found him as no other writings did.’ That was but saying that he “found” in the Scripture what he could not find elsewhere. We used to have in religion the inquiry, “Have you found the Lord?” The question was correct in psychology. And, at this stage in the discussion, let me call attention to the fact that that question, “Have you found the Lord?” did not mean “Have you found yourself.” It meant, Have you found in your environment something or somebody operating upon your moral nature to which you had not given due heed, or which you had misinterpreted?

But all this attempt to find what is in the external world, its uses and meanings—from the essays of the creeping child to the finest spectroscopic analysis of the light of the corona of the sun—results in the clearer differentiation in his own consciousness of man from his surround-

ings. Tennyson has stated this fact so well that we will recur to his mode of putting it.

“ And finds ‘ I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch.’

“ So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As though the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.”

All man's knowledge of the external world emphasizes the fact of his own isolation—helps to make the chasm wider between himself and it, between himself and what is not himself—defines himself to himself. Science does not tend to make a man confound himself with what he sees and touches. All that he has invented in the way of instrumental helps to his senses pushes further out the boundaries of the “not me,” and at the same time strikes deeper in consciousness the consciousness of self—the conviction of individuality, of personality. Man enlarges himself just as he enlarges knowledge of the realm of the not self. So stands the case with our experience derived from the external world of matter and of force.

But now this same fact of the conviction of his isolation comes to man out of religion as well as out of science. Is it not common knowledge that the great effort of religion is to wake man up to the perception that there is some other personality besides himself, adjuvant or antagonistic to himself according to his own modes of adjustment to that other personality? The voice of religion to man heretofore has not been to recognize himself as God, but to be “reconciled to God,”—a somewhat different personality from himself. It is just as important to distinguish between self and God in religion as it is to distinguish between self and the external world in physics. God is as objective to the human soul as is the external world. Spirit with spirit can meet. So can you and I, but we are

you and I still. God may have communication with you—you may be unable to prevent it; but you are you, and God is God.

But let us take a statement of this matter at the outset from a source that cannot be suspected of traditional theological bias. Matthew Arnold, in trying to put into form something expressive of common religious experience that would bear scientific inspection, gave us the phrase, "The power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." I call attention to the fact that Matthew Arnold has completely objectified this power that makes for righteousness by the modifying clause "not ourselves." The more one thinks of it, the more he will be astonished at the greatness of Matthew Arnold in giving us that definition for theism. He not only put in our hands a weapon which we could use against the atheistic and agnostic science of his day, but one which we can use against the Christian Science of our own. If there is anything that can be verified by experience and testimony, it is that the power with which we deal in our moral nature is one "not ourselves." I can go no further, in exposition of the verity inclosed in that phrase, than to make appeal to common consciousness, and to Matthew Arnold as its prophet.

Joseph Cook was not a small man, and he found Matthew Arnold's phrase "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon" for his hand. We are weaklings, if we cannot use that "not ourselves" to some purpose. President Patton, of Princeton University, has recently given us a sentence that we should remember as well as Arnold's,— "What religion demands of philosophy is a God separate from his works, and each man with a soul of his own." That may seem to obscure the principle of the immanency of God. But that principle had better be obscured when it is pushed to the extent of the obliteration of the personality of God and of the individuality of man. Against such im-

manency it is better to go over to the transcendency of Dr. Watts—

“ And where the stars are not,
Nor ever sun hath shone,
Beyond the flight of human thought
There thou art God alone.”

There is nothing confused about that. And that last term holds in itself the judgment that philosophy must pass on Christian Science—it is *con fusion* in the philological sense of the word.

It may be digression, but pardon it. Christian Science has an easy way opened to it by the use that is commonly made of terms expressive of our relation to God. This trouble has grown out of the transfer of thought from the transcendent to the immanent conception of the Deity. But neither view can be discarded. If everything is put on transcendency, the foundation is laid for the notion of an absentee God. If everything is loaded on immanency, then the path is straight to Christian Science or a pantheistic idealism or materialism. Much harm is wrought by the use of terms in a double sense. From the days before Aristotle, the distinction has been made between substance and quality, and it is well to observe that distinction. The word “divine” is double-decked, and one should be careful to have it understood upon which deck he is walking. To say that a man is divine in substance is to say what nobody knows. To say that every man may become divine in quality is to say what any one can comprehend. We know nothing about the metaphysical substratum of any being. We can know qualities, especially of the moral sort. Qualities we know; and we know the pull of something not ourselves toward some qualities, and the push against other qualities.

It is a more than questionable intellectual operation for one to talk about “the God in man,” or that every man has “something of God in him,” when what only we know

to be true is the possibility or actuality of man's taking on or in divine qualities. God and man can communicate as man and man can. God can influence men—so can men. No man becomes God by being good. He simply becomes a greater and a better man. "Spirit with spirit can meet," but they are yet as wide asunder as the sum of the radii of the individualities, and, though they meet, they may be as diverse in moral quality as are heaven and hell. Though you cannot keep God from contact, impact, entrance if you please, into your soul, your soul is your own, nevertheless. The phenomena of righteousness, as distinctly as the phenomena of sin, prove God to be "not ourselves." Arnold's formula is true, read this way, The power making for righteousness is not ourselves.

The whole case may be summed up thus: Christian Science, as well in physics as in theology, starts with an assumption, and lets findings take care of themselves; whereas a sound philosophy starts with findings, and lets assumptions take care of themselves. Assumptions are to be discarded if they comport not with findings.

Here I might call attention to the confusion of things in physics that Christian Science makes as well as in theology. It neglects to notice the, to us, permanent distinctions in the things about us. All things are one; therefore, one thing is as good as another. Now it may be true that elementally muriatic acid and maple syrup are one and the same. But a man wise and sane will note somewhat carefully the present-day distinction between them. Unity may be a good philosophical principle, but is bad as a guide to practice. Attention to differentiation comes in there. God may not ache, but a man may; and the man had better heed the fact of the difference. "Never mind" is entrance on the path that leads to Nirvana. Right-about-face "mind" is the entrance on the path that leads to science and to life. "Never mind pain"; but the pre-

occupation or will that obscures pain is itself stress that may lead to nervous exhaustion and collapse. "People live on their will." Yes; and people die on their will. It is as hygienic to give up as to resist.

And now to "the law and the testimony," as the older theologians would say in appeal to the Scripture. When one says that "the soul of man is God," it can be said in reply, that that contradicts the letter and the spirit of the Bible from the first chapter of Genesis to the last verse of the Revelation. Sanity has departed from a man's mind who can assert that all that is meant by the Garden-of-Eden story is to set forth Adam and Eve talking to themselves. Take out every bit of the scenic element of that story, reduce it to psychological transaction, bring the whole story to the tame level of our own experience; yet there cannot be eliminated from that record the intent of the author thereof to set forth the fact that Adam and Eve were called to an account for some action by some power or person "not themselves." They had to have a reckoning with a third party, no matter how the meeting was brought about. Come down to the Psalms; we do not read, "I am my shepherd; I shall not want"; "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for myself is with me." Dualism of persons cannot be obliterated from the Psalms. Come down to the New Testament. The Lord's Prayer is a senseless collection of idle words if the distinct personality of God and the distinct personality of man is not in it. Take the book of The Revelation; it not only asserts the individuality of man in this life, but that it continues further along in the life to come. "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell

on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." The very last vision in the last chapter of *The Revelation* runs thus: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the saying of this book: worship God." With that the visions close. Now it may be submitted if throughout the Bible the separate personalities of God and man are not as distinctly set forth or implied as in these visions of its last book. It is going beyond the limits I had set for myself for this article, but I want to refer to these last quotations from the book of the Revelation of St. John because of the bearing they have upon the continuance of our personality beyond the bounds of this life. All pantheism, if it carries the idea of immortality at all, rests, and must rest, in the theory of the absorption of the human being in the divine. Christian Science must logically take that plunge. But I find personality so distinctly realized in this life that I deem it uncalled for to surrender it for the life to come. Go back to the last verse of the quotation which I made from Tennyson:—

" This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of death."

Thus it lay in Tennyson's mind. The experiences we have with our "findings" in this physical condition are necessary to define to us our own personality, so that we may not have to go through with that rudimentary pro-

cess in a world to come. We may start with the conviction, in that sphere of being, that "I am I." We shall not be sent to grope for the definition of ourselves by the processes of contact with or study of our environment. The first factor of consciousness will be personality. We shall have that vantage with which to begin. "I am that I am," is a definition of the Divine consciousness, why is it not, or why is it not to be, the definition of our own? When we get the consciousness of personality, we shall have the undisturbed intellectual conviction of immortality. Is it not one of the ends of religion to produce the conviction that as God *is*, so, *pro tanto*, man *is*?

One more allusion to Tennyson, for his conclusions are of value. Tennyson gave direction to have "Crossing the Bar" put at the end of every edition of his poems. Listen to this:

"For though from out this bourne of time and place
The floods may bear me far,
I hope to see my pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

And so the great Englishman glides away from us on the shoreless sea, in stout insistence upon his own individuality, to meet the eternal personal God.