

UNIVERSAL UNITY

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SCHOLARS of the next age of man, with light of knowledge in their eyes and wisdom of a lofty mould, will be likely to look down upon us as a queer lot. Reviewing the process of the ages, in the murky wastes of a dim antiquity, they will no doubt discover our hieroglyphics and endeavor to analyze our philosophy. Unable to come in contact with the living soul of things, and obliged to base their judgment only upon dead forms, shrouded in the darkness of the past, they will likely conclude that through the various stages of our civilization, we wandered in the wilderness of contradiction, that with all our diligent search for truth, with all our discoveries, inventions and progress, we never found our way to the Canaan of universal order, never arrived at the Baconian Atlantis.

Yes, from Thales and Xanophanes to Plato and Aristotle, from Hippolytus and St. Augustine to St. Thomas of Aquino and Duns Scotus, from Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton to John Locke and Immanuel Kant, from Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer to Albert Einstein and William James, from one stage of our Western civilization to another, the atmosphere is thick with apparent contradictions and seeming incoherences; but in the final analysis these differences are due largely to superficial observation, narrow viewpoint, or fragmentary knowledge. Underneath it all, through it all, and above it all, can be seen gradually and unmistakably dawning the light of Universal Unity.

Even the Doubting Thomases will be generous enough to grant the hypothesis that unity is the universal law of the universe, and that human endeavor attains toward this universal law in its process of evolution. Unity is implied by the very name of universe, which in Latin means turned into one. The Greeks observed its orderly arrangement and called it cosmos. The entire realm of creation

is a system of order in which harmony is king, and contradiction is an outlaw. The matter-world is a unit operating under the universal laws we call physical forces; so too, the mind-world is a unit in which the mental energies work in harmony. These two realms are intimately related, each lower force or energy being involved in the higher. The infinite accord of all physical phenomena is interwoven, and has its parallel, in the system of order and harmony of all mental phenomena. Finally, all substances, all physical forces, all mental energies, are but the expression of Divine Energy, an Infinite Will, who includes all and unites all.

II

The cosmos of the visible universe is readily comprehensible, being mainly a matter of observation. Man can see matter with his own eyes; he can place it under a microscope or in a test tube, and deduct universal laws that govern all matter. By the use of a telescope he can study the planets and the billions of distant stars, and observe their systems and order. He can see the forces of nature respond to the energy-laden rays of the sun, bringing forth vegetable life in wild profusion; he sees that the vegetable kingdom sustains animal life, and he observes the inter-dependence one upon the other. He cannot escape the conclusion that there is a universal order of all things material, and in a poetical vein, can say with Robert Browning:

“For many a thrill
Of kinship I confess to, with the powers
Called Nature; animate, inanimate,
In parts or in the whole, there’s something
Man-like that somehow meets the man in me.”

Then there is the atomic unity of the physical universe, far-reaching in scope and specifically scientific. Remotely conceived by Kanada and expressed in the old Sanskrit literature of India, the atomic theory of matter became “a star in the East” to the “wise men” of Europe, at least in the suggestion of the idea. The Greek philosopher Leucippus, was the first to work out the atomic theory in detail, and the physical principles laid down by this ancient atomist in the fifth century before Christ, might almost pass muster today. Democritus, Pythagoras, Epicurus, and others added to the development of the theory; and it survived the School of

Alexandria, and the slumbers of the Middle Ages, to shine with new luster in a new era. Through researches by Galileo, Descartes, Gassendi, Høygen, Boyle, and others, the doctrine became clothed in scientific dignity, gradually developing into the modern chemical atomic theory, perfected by Higgins and Dalton. The researches of Sir Humphrey Davy, J. J. Berzelius, and Michael Faraday led to the recognition of the atomic constitution of electricity, resulting in the development of the electron theory of matter which is now generally recognized by scientists.

Embracing a period of twenty-five centuries in its development, and championed by eminent philosophers of every age, the doctrine of the atom brought down to date, may be summarized as follows:

All matter is composed of atoms; or rather, the smallest particle into which matter can be divided is called an atom. It is the ultimate unit of each of the ninety-two elements that constitute all matter. It is so small that no one has ever seen an atom, not even with the strongest microscope. About a million atoms could be placed on the diameter of a human hair. Now, the atom itself is an aggregation of negatively charged particles of electricity, called electrons, which revolve at enormous rates around a central nucleus of protons carrying a positive charge. But all atoms do not contain the same number of electrons and protons; an atom of hydrogen contains only one electron and one proton, while atoms of heavier elements contain a larger number; an atom of mercury contains eighty electrons and eighty protons. One element differs from another only in the number of electrons and protons composing the atom.

According to the most recent physical science, light is nothing more or less than free electrons, that is, electrons which are not bound up in atoms; and liberated electrons always travel at the highest possible velocity of which matter is capable—186,600 miles per second. The dualism of matter and energy, therefore, falls into the discard, since the two are found to be one; and even the hypothetical ether is no longer needed, since the liberated electrons need no such medium of conduction.

Here then we have the atom as the unit of all matter, including light and every other form of physical energy; here then is the evidence of universal unity of the entire physical universe.

Someone may raise the objection that all this is theory and that

theory cannot be submitted as positive fact. Now that the atom has been weighed and measured, and classified as to contents of electrons and protons, it would seem that the atom has passed from the theoretic to the scientific stage; but be that as it may, the great fact remains that the atomic structure of matter is the finding of those who have weighed the evidence adduced by twenty-five centuries of investigation and research, and for want of better evidence, the verdict stands.

III

Interwoven with the physical or objective universe, but extending beyond it, is a subjective or intellectual universe, the product of the human mind, a universe of unseen realities, a universe of mental phenomena. It embraces all sense-perception and holds in addition thereto the entire wealth of purely mental conception. It is the universe of ideas.

Democritus and Pythagoras advanced the notion of "soul atoms" and the atomic theory of knowledge, materializing all mental phenomena. Modern sensationalists and materialists hold much the same view. On the other hand, Plato held that the senses are deceptive and cannot yield reliable truth, that the immutable does not exist in the world of sense, but in the world of ideas. Immanuel Kant combined the two and asserted that every scientific judgment necessarily contains sensible elements and pure or rational elements. Will Durant gives the matter a modern cast in these words: "There are two modes of approach to an analysis of the world; we may begin with matter, and then we shall be forced to deduce from it all the mystery of the mind; or we may begin with mind, and then we shall be forced to look upon matter as merely a bundle of sensations. For how can we know matter except through our senses? And what is it then for us but our idea of it?" No matter which viewpoint is taken, the domain of the mind exists even though quite in unison with the domain of matter.

According to Kant the mind of man is not so much passive wax upon which experience and sensation write their abstract and imperfect impressions; nor is it a mere abstract name for the series or group of mental states; it is an active organ which moulds and co-ordinates sensations into ideas—an organ which transforms the chaotic multiplicity of experience into the orderly unity of thought. Herbert Spencer holds that knowledge of the lowest kind is ununi-

fied knowledge, that science is partially unified knowledge, and that philosophy is completely unified knowledge. The essentiality of unity, therefore, is apparent in the functions of the mind as well as in knowledge, the product of the mind. Nietzsche testifies to this unity when he says: "Too long we have been fragments, shattered pieces of what might be a whole."

There is a truly universal philosophy, combining, as Leibniz puts it, "whatever there is of good in the hypotheses of Epicurus and Plato, of the greatest materialists and the greatest idealists." The materialist Democritus admits that everything in nature has its reason for existing, and the idealist Plato assumes the existence of things material. The atomist Herbert takes for granted a first cause, and Hegel, his antipode, considers the atom as a necessary form of being. The optimist Leibniz and the pessimist Schopenhauer both teach that "effort" is the essence of all things. Spinoza, in his "one and indivisible substance" acknowledges two attributes: extension and thought. Newton's law of inertia is not so much contradicted but rather extended by Einstein's doctrine that it is natural for matter to be in motion, nothing having been discovered to be at rest. Philosophers may become widely separated in their explorations of the unknown, but the territories they discover are ultimately united in the realm of the known.

Yes, philosophers are divided into multitudinous groups by multitudinous doctrines; there are monists and pluralists, spiritualists and materialists, idealists or rationalists and sensationalists or empiricists, dogmatists and sceptics, and many others; and volumes have been written on the perpetual differences of the rival movements and schools; but these disagreements are largely due to the subjective elements which play an essential part in the formation of systems and mouldings of philosophers. Professor Alfred Weber, in his *History of Philosophy* says: "Take away from each that which is the result of circumstances under which it was produced, the self-love of the philosopher, his desire to be original, all the particular, accidental, and fortuitous elements due to his nationality and individual character; take away, above all, the numberless misconceptions occasioned by the imperfections of philosophical language,—and you will find, at the bottom of all these theories, one and the same fundamental theme, one and the same philosophy, one and the same system, to the construction of which each philosopher adds his share."

The love of bringing the unknown into the perspective of wisdom and converting it into beneficial agencies, the study of life in its redeemed and unredeemed complexities, the pursuit of the science of things divine and human, in short, the search for truth has ever provided the impulse and determined the direction of human thought and progress. The only mental achievements, therefore, worthy of consideration are those that deal with the discovery, classification and application of truth—truth in the physical sciences; truth in logic, esthetics, ethics and social science; truth in metaphysics and all its kindred branches; truth in the sum-total of human knowledge, adjusted, weighed and balanced in the universal science men call philosophy. As the atom is the building-stone of the physical universe, so truth is the building-stone of the mental universe. Truth is the unit of all knowledge, permitting of no contradiction, because truth cannot contradict itself.

IV

The voices of matter and mind have spoken and have testified to their individual and common unity; but no word was uttered as to their metaphysical nature; no answer was given as to their ultimate reality. We are, therefore, faced by the third and final phase of our hypothesis—that all substances, all physical forces, all mental energies, are but the expression of Divine Energy, an Infinite Will, who includes all and unites all.

What is it that makes electrons and protons act upon each other the way they do? What is the origin of sensation and consciousness and rational thought? What is truth, beauty, harmony, love, faith and hope? Why the apparently preordained orderly arrangement of nature? What is the ultimate cause of all things? What is the answer to the riddle of the universe? We ask our senses, and the answer is, God. We ask modern science, and it corroborates the answer of religion, God. We ask the sages of the ages, and the only answer is, God.

Every religion on earth teaches a more or less developed notion of Deity, or a Supreme Being, whether he be Buddha, Brahma, Allah, Jehovah, or just plain God. No matter how crude the conception, even the worship of ancestors, or lifeless images, express the groping of the human soul after the Divine. According to Emerson, "all things proceed out of the same spirit, and all things conspire with it. Whilst a man seeks good ends, he is strong by

the whole strength of Nature. The perception of this law of laws awakens in the mind a sentiment which we call the religious sentiment, and which marks our highest happiness. This sentiment is divine and deifying. It is the beatitude of man. When man chooses to do the good and the great deed, guided from on high, then deep melodies wander through his soul from Supreme Wisdom."

At the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, its president, Sir William Bragg, in the course of his address, uttered these words: "There are some who think that science is inhuman. They speak as though students of modern science would destroy reverence and faith. I do not know how that can be said of the student who stands daily in the presence of what seems to him to be the Infinite. Science is not so foolish as to throw away that in which the slowly gathered wisdom of the ages is stored."

Thus religion has spoken and science has recorded its findings; but in the final analysis, it is up to philosophy to answer the fact of God. Philosophy, as completely unified knowledge, includes religion and science as well as metaphysics, and must answer the ultimate cause, and therefore, the reality of God.

Philosophy, ancient and modern, centers around the fact of God. Xanophanes, proclaimed as the real creator of philosophical monotheism, found that there is one God, one only God. Socrates believed in the supernatural and strongly emphasized the universality of Providence. Plato taught that God is life and the creator of life. Aristotle proclaimed that God is the object of philosophy, embracing the principles of all sciences and first causes of everything that exists. During the Middle Ages theistic philosophy built its structure on the ruins of the ancient world, and championed by the early church fathers, by St. Augustine, Scotus Erigena, Abelard, St. Thomas of Aquino, and others, the christian conception of God became firmly fixed in the groundwork of a new civilization. Modern philosophy, though largely devoted to the problems of the physical sciences, is nevertheless rich in theistic thought brilliantly interpreted by Bacon, Descartes, Montague, Pascal, Leibniz, George Berkeley, Thomas Reid, J. J. Rousseau, F. H. Jacobi, Victor Cousin, and a host of others, to say nothing of the religious leaders. Even the atheistic philosophers, from Protagoras and Epicurus down to modern materialists, have but a negative philosophy of God.

Bacon testifies: "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud and the Alcoran than that this universal frame is without a mind." Spinoza teaches that God is the invariable sustaining order of the universe and says: "the mind of God is all the mentality that animates the world." Voltaire reasons that, "perceiving, on reflection, the wonderful relations between all things, I should have suspected a Workman infinitely able." Herbert Spencer, in his final summary concludes: "Amid all mysteries, there remains one absolute certainty: we are ever in the presence of the Infinite and Eternal Energy, from whom all things proceed."

Yes, the fact of God, the wisdom of the ages, is slowly but certainly evolved by philosophy, ancient and modern, scientific and religious. God is in the electron and the atom as well as in the widest realms of the universe and infinite space. God is in life, consciousness and rational thought. God is in truth, beauty, harmony, love, faith and hope. God is the ultimate unit of the universe. In him and through him matter, mind and spirit are harmoniously arranged in universal unity.

V

From the foregoing postulates, brief as they are, it is altogether reasonable to conclude that universal unity is the common ground upon which science, religion, and philosophy can stand; it is the apex of all knowledge; it is the one road by which civilization has ever advanced to higher and higher ground. It has in it the assurance that the discovery of a bit of truth anywhere in any age is in harmony and fits in with every other bit of truth discovered anywhere in any age. It means that contradictions are but the dross from which the truth must be freed. It implies the assimilation, classification, and unification of all truth.

The inventor who discovers a new principle in mechanics, the physician who finds a new cure for disease, the physicist or chemist who discovers a new truth in the test tube or under the microscope, the botanist or biologist who reveals a new fact about plant or animal life, the geologist who reads a new lesson in the layers of the rocks, the astronomer who discovers a new law in regard to the heavenly bodies, or finds a new nebula—all of them add their bit to the total of truth that enhances human progress.

The same principle holds good in the subjective universe. The

psychologist who adds to the understanding of the mental functions, the logician who intensifies the process of reason, the mathematician who clarifies calculations, the ethicist who ennobles the sense of human duty, the theologian who makes a bit clearer the relation of God and man—all of them add their bit to the total of truth by which the human race advances.

Throughout the ages man has ever been on the search for truth, and though tossed about in a sea of contradiction, befogging the mind and retarding progress, he has ever added bit by bit to the sum-total of truth. This accumulating wisdom of the ages is gradually bringing men to a better understanding; it gradually breaks down the barriers and lends impetus to progress; it gradually makes the possibilities of devastating wars a bit more remote, and gradually awakens the principle of universal brotherhood of man, and the universal fatherhood of God. Bit by bit the human race is evolving into a better, nobler and finer type of men, with light of knowledge in their eyes and wisdom of a loftier mould. The advent of the next age of man is heralded by man's progress in this age on the road of universal unity.