

MATTER A SHADOW

MRS. ELLA V. J. FLUNO

THE answer to the oft-repeated question, Is there no matter? involves another question, What is matter?

The word matter is defined, by standard authority, as the material, or substance, out of which any object or thing is made, — substance which changes in form according to the evolution of physical law, as seen in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, in their various stages of birth, growth, and decay. Matter is also spoken of as something which relates to the metaphysical, as well as physical, world. The subject-matter of a sermon may be termed its substance.

Every word or statement in any language, defining thought, must be classed either in the scale with Truth, or in the opposite scale with error, falsity; and if matter is a word defining a thought of Truth, then it is evident that every object, of which we take cognizance, must be composed of substance, in some form. What proof may be found for the truth or falsity of this premise?

Again: What proof may be given for any real existence of substance, and what evidence have we that the object is not an illusion?

The materialist, reasoning from the basis of the finite, physical senses, concludes that matter, together with certain laws, or forces, constitutes the primal cause of all phenomena, or effects, and that "dust to dust" may be said of every object or manifestation of life and intelligence. Annihilation appears to him the inevitable doom; and the following axiom would prove the truth of his conclusion: Everything that has a beginning must also have an end. All nature, then, would be only a fleeting, temporal panorama of a seemingly real existence, a mockery of the very idea of things eternal.

The traveller, riding over a vast extent of prairie, and ignorant of the laws of reflection, thinks he is enjoying a fine view of a city close at hand, while the material city, of which the mirage so kindly furnishes him a picture, is miles away. The scene presently vanishes, leaving the beholder to wonder over this optical illusion; and shall uncertain delusive appearances be accepted as the foundation of a superstructure which must stand the test of unchangeable truth?

Let us go back to the beginning, and see if it would be possible to find the origin of Substance, supposing there *were* no substance. What or

whom could there be to create or produce it? Were there no substance, all would be shadow; for that which is without Substance must of necessity be shadow. Now shadow is only the absence of Substance; and so there could not be shadow unless there was first Substance. Shadow is only a negation, which means nothing, a supposition that there is no Substance, which is false. Substance must be self-existent, because there is nothing to produce it; and Substance must include all that is real, all that was ever made. Substance is therefore Truth; for Truth, like Substance, can not be created, there being nothing outside of Truth but falsity, which, like shadow, is only a negation, or nothing.

Substance must be Intelligence; for non-intelligence is only the absence of Intelligence, and Nothing can not produce Something.

Substance must also be a synonym of Life, Love, Mind, Soul, Spirit, God (or Good), there being nothing to create it; and these are not shadow, but reality. Good is supreme; and since there is nothing to create it, there can be nothing to destroy it; and birth, growth, and death, according to mortal conception, must ever be unknown in eternal selfhood.

Is Substance infinite or finite? If it is finite, Substance can not include all, and shadow must be something, to occupy space. This is a contradictory assumption, since Nothing has no power to become Something. Hence Substance must be infinite, and there can be but one Infinite, because infinity means that which is limitless, unbounded, — that which has no end, and which can not be outlined; for if Substance were confined within circumscribed outlines, this would imply limits.

Finity is the opposite of Infinity, and is shadow, falsity, nothingness; because Infinity is Truth, the eternal Substance, the all-in-all of Something.

The origin and ultimate of Substance is found within its own self-existent and unchangeable entity, in which beginning, end, and change, are never seen. Hence the Scripture, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," — which means, without beginning and without end. Substance must forever remain one, complete, harmonious whole, an undivided unit.

Here we have abundant and unmistakable proof of the falseness of the premise, There is substance in the object; since its truth depends upon the subdivision of Substance into finite forms, or objects. What may, then, be said of the outlines, or objects, of which we take cognizance? May Truth self-evident be found to insure the real existence of these outlines?

We must take the one infinite Principle (in which may be included all the synonymous words indicating self-existent Being) for our foundation, and upon this rock we may safely build a house which will neither be shaken by the variable doctrines and theories of mortal belief, nor destroyed by the opening floodgates of Truth; for each portion of our structure will be measured by the rule of divine law, instead of the human. How may we distinguish between human and divine law, so that one may not be mistaken for the other? Human laws are temporal, discordant, contradictory, variable, and imperfect, without foundation in Truth; while the divine law may be known

by its perfection, harmony, exactness, and by its invariable character. Divine law is self-existent and eternal.

In the Infinite Calculus the Principle is always discoverable, as are the problems which image, express, or manifest the Principle, together with the laws, or rules, involved in such a manifestation. The problem can no more be destroyed, and is no more subject to finite or physical law, than is the Principle.

Science discloses the undeniable fact that Principle has expression, or reflection; and this reflection may be known by the unvarying, unchanging, harmonious laws by which it is governed. Now image, or reflection, is not the thing reflected. The one never becomes the other. This is determined by the unchanging character of the Principle. Infinite Substance must be reflected by an expression which perfectly represents that Substance, and therefore must appear to be Substance, although it must forever remain only its expression. We have shown how Substance includes all that is self-existent. Its expression, then, must represent all that is self-existent, and must perfectly manifest, or picture, — that is, must appear to be — the one omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient Life, Love, Truth, Mind, Soul, Spirit, God, forever infinite and eternal. This immortal image, or likeness, never becomes mortal, but remains a never-fading, never-dying, changeless picture.

The words *thought* and *idea* may be used to designate this expression; as may also the terms *man* and *earth*, as used in the Scriptural record of spiritual creation in the first chapter of Genesis.

All the synonyms in language may be used as steppingstones toward the attainment of the true idea; and when the voice of Infinite Intelligence is clearly recognized and understood, all finite conceptions and terms will cease to be used, and all mistakes and false ideas, or theories, will be needless, unknown, and forgotten.

Can we think of infinite Principle manifested in the thought, or idea, of color, form, and outline, independent of finite conception? Most assuredly! For instance: the circle, or sphere, is an outline or form, representing the infinite Principle, — that which is without beginning and without end; yet ignorance sees manifested in the finite conception nothing but a boundary line or a surface, belonging to an enclosed body or substance. Geometry reveals the infinite principle expressed in an infinite variety of outlines or figures, which can not become finite in any sense.

Shall mortal tongue, or finite ear and eye, attempt to measure the fathomless depths of divine Love, the summit-less heights of self-evident Truth, the boundless light of infinite Intelligence, the changeless perfection of imperishable Substance, or the eternity of immortal, deathless Life?

The idea of Life, Substance, and Intelligence has no real existence except as reflection, or expression, and every object or outline, appearing before our vision, is a thought or picture, an idea of Truth or falsity, of Intelligence or of non-intelligence, of Substance or of shadow; and herein is ignorance or blindness manifested, when the Principle producing the object is unknown, that the falsity, the shadow, or the non-intelligence may appear to be true, while the true appears to be false. All nature is a

manifestation of the infinite Principle of Being; but finite, limited, or false sense would confine the Principle within the manifestation, thus destroying all sense of infinity; and this ignorance is the foundation of innumerable, discordant, distorted beliefs, or pictures, which appear very real, although nothing but illusions; and yet the unknown Principle is often held responsible for all the mistakes of ignorance.

The problem, expression, thought, idea, or man and the universe, are no more affected by this finite and mortal conception, or belief, than is God, the Principle of Being, the true Substance, "in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" and until we learn the all-in-all contained in infinite Intelligence, we can not discern the complete and perfect manifestation of that Principle.

We must become acquainted with the *what* and *why* of every *object*, or reflection, of which we take cognizance, before we may correctly declare the truthfulness or falsity of the appearance.

Matter is that inert, non-intelligent, lifeless substance, which may be moulded into finite forms; and since the true Substance is Life and Intelligence, unchanging in its infinity, matter must mean that which is false. Matter is therefore shadow, illusion, nothingness; hence the assertion, There is no matter.