

## SECTION FOUR

### PHILOSOPHIC APPROACH TO TRUTH

According to Plato, a philosopher is one who apprehends the essence or reality of things in contradistinction to the man who dwells in appearances and the "shows" of sense. He speaks of him as a man who grasps the eternal and immutable and insists upon seeing things together, viewing them as a whole, setting his affections upon that which really exists.

The views of philosophers have been greatly misunderstood through ignorance on the part of those referring to them. Some people have so material an outlook that they fail for a time either to take in or lay to heart even the teaching of this advancing great school of thought, which for years has been endeavouring to get at the truth, and melt frozen dogma with moonbeams.

Take Hume's philosophy, for instance. In Huxley's *Life of Hume* he says: "It is hardly necessary to point out that the doctrine just laid down is what is commonly called materialism. But it is nevertheless true that the doctrine contains nothing inconsistent with the purest idealism." So in the present day the highest teachings are largely misunderstood, and even when partially understood are not often carried out in life practice. It is indeed this partial misunderstanding of truth that makes life practice difficult; while a clear understanding makes life natural, simple, and joyous.

The office of philosophy, which has been called the handmaid of religion, is the same as that of natural science, namely, to correct mistakes. Every man is a scientist, if in disguise, and every scientist a philosopher, although he may be a poor one, and the two must be combined to elicit truth. Divine philosophy is saving the world. It is, to use Plato's words, the apprehension of the reality of things; in other words, a knowledge of God, knowledge of good, that is saving us and all mankind.

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns" (*Tennyson*).

That eminent scholar, Dr. Westcott, who was Bishop of Durham, and who prepared the text which was the basis of the revision of the King James version of the Bible, writing of the Gospel of St. John, shows that by the use of the definite article the absolute is distinguished from the relative. The knowledge of absolute Truth is what we require, not the relative truth that Pilate demanded in the words, "What is truth?" This absolute Truth is scientific. It is the truth about God, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17). Chambers's Dictionary defines "truth" as "agreement with reality," and "relative" as "not absolute."

**Evil is of No Value.**—If God is Mind and this Mind knows of evil, then all in that Mind cannot be good. How can Truth know a lie? Many

people, seeing the logical difficulty, that if evil is real, God knows of it, and allows it, if He did not even create it, try to get out of the difficulty by saying that evil is of value and therefore good, as it turns man to God. This does not make evil good, as it would be far better if man turned to God, good, infinite Mind, to destroy the evil concepts and false sense of limitation, without the incentive of trouble, whether in a lesser or in a worse form. If people would only do this in the first instance, before the wrong thoughts came, they could not be affected by them. Evil cannot be the medium for good. The only outcome of evil is sin, which annihilates itself.

That evil, sooner or later, compels man to turn in thought to God, is one of the many proofs of its non-reality; as this very turning in thought to God leads to the destruction of the evil, and therefore its disappearance. We can only overcome evil with good, intelligent good, God.<sup>1</sup> Anything that is real must have always existed and must always continue to exist, and evil could never have always existed, because of its self-destructive nature.

A false view arises out of a false concept of God as a person altogether apart from man, instead of the true God, whose manifestation is the true man. Then it is seen that God and man are not two, but eternally co-existent as Principle and its idea.

So long as a lie is kept quiet, or safeguarded by public opinion, it has a chance of being believed, but directly it is brought out into the open, the daylight of Truth is brought to bear upon it, when it is seen to be a lie, and loses its power because no one believes it; known to be a lie, it fades away into its native nothingness. Evil in the form of sin destroys itself, because it is continually bringing such punishment upon man, in the form of disease, etc., that ultimately he cannot stand it and gives it up, when the punishment ceases. If knowing how to pray scientifically, he sets to work at once to free himself, freedom is easily gained. Similarly, with sickness, a man will try all sorts of methods of getting well before he turns to God. Ultimately, when every other help fails, he turns to Principle as a last resort, thinking it cannot do much harm and may possibly do a little good. Then he finds out the truth of being, and is amazed to see how blind he has been, and how illogical his previous ideas were; "how great man is, and how good God is."

Jesus hardly ever mentions sin, except in connection with repentance and forgiveness. As Dr. Inge says: "Our Lord's teaching is very severe and exacting, but fundamentally happy and joyous. . . . No war is declared against the ordinary sources of human happiness."<sup>2</sup>

The less we think of ourselves the happier we are. To overcome pride and its twin sister, self-consciousness, we have to deny their existence, and to realise that in heaven man never thinks of himself, but thinks only of God and God's ideas. The spiritual man is never self-conscious. God only is self-conscious. "To make an end of selfishness is happiness. This is the greatest happiness, to subdue the selfish thought of 'I'" (Buddha).

<sup>1</sup> See Rom. 12, verse 21.

<sup>2</sup> *The Paddock Lectures*, for 1906.

We have to gain every bit of good, every bit of happiness out of life that we can, and if we have sufficient knowledge of Truth, continual joy will come to us without harming others or ourselves. This is our birthright. We are entitled to be happy, and if we are not continually happy then something is wrong; we cannot be praying properly or sufficiently.

**Process of Self-Destruction of Evil.**—“*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*” (II Cor. 4:17, 18).

10 Evil, although it does no good, appears to do good, for it is caused to destroy itself; as when we see something that is wrong, it reminds us to turn to God and reverse the thought, when the evil, whatever it is, instantly disappears. So any seeming evil can always be reversed, and in this way turned to good account by those who know the necessity for right  
15 thinking, and how to pray scientifically. If there were no suffering or trouble in the world, people would not take any trouble to learn how to pray rightly. They would go on dreaming out their lives, and enjoying what they called good, continuing apparently to die, and be born. They would never work mentally in order to steadily improve upon the so-called good; that is, to get rid of limitations, and to obtain a higher sense of unlimited  
20 spiritual perfection. We have to do this before we can find ourselves in heaven, with nothing left but absolute good, God. Evil crieth out: “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee . . . art thou come to destroy us?” (Mark 1:24). We must not therefore fear when we see troubles  
25 gathering round us, cinematographic pictures posing as dangerous realities. It is only a sign that the end is near, and an incentive to work and rejoice at the approaching end of the sin and ignorance that are the only cause of these false troubles. “Ignorance is the only real evil” (Annie Besant).

**A Present Devil and a Future God!**—According to old, indeed  
30 many present, theories, the devil, if not more powerful, is at least on a par with God. The first sends us good to do us harm; the second sends us evil to do us good. The inconsistency of these ideas is illustrated by the remark of the child as it killed the fly, “Go to God, little fly.”

All sin and subsequent suffering are the result of ignorance, which  
35 Shakespeare speaks of as “the curse of God.” All evils are destroyed by a knowledge of truth. “. . . And ye shall know the truth,<sup>1</sup> and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). “Truth . . . liveth and conquereth for evermore . . . she is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty, of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth” (I Esdras 4:38, 40).

40 “And from the lips of Truth one mighty breath  
Shall, like a whirlwind, scatter in its breeze  
That whole dark pile of human mockeries;  
Then shall the reign of Mind commence on earth,  
And starting fresh, as from a second birth,  
45 Man, in the sunshine of the world’s new spring,  
Shall walk transparent, like some holy thing” (Thomas Moore).

<sup>1</sup> The Greek words are *he aletheia*, meaning “the absolute truth,” as opposed to *aletheia*, used elsewhere and meaning merely “a relative sense of truth,” namely, what is correct in the material world.

What is Truth?—"Truth is a mighty instrument, whatsoever hand may wield it" (Rev. J. Caird).

"O, love Truth, prize it beyond all fame and power and happiness! It is the day-star from on high that shines to us in this gloomy wilderness of existence; there is still hope of him who knows and venerates its light, and dare determine to hold fast by it to the death" (Carlyle). 5

Since Truth is God, one of the three following statements must be true: (1) that all is matter. This is most logically put forward by Haeckel, if his premises are granted; (2) that everything is partly spiritual and partly material, as so illogically held by many people; (3) that all is Spirit, as we 10 are told in the Bible.

With regard to the first, if matter is real or permanent (the two mean practically the same thing), Haeckel and the first proposition must be correct. None of the Churches or religious bodies agree with this view.

If God created evil, then the second is true, but not otherwise. 15

If the third is true, then we have a glorious religion, absolutely practical and scientific, available to all, at this moment and always. It is the religion of absolute and universal good, and divinely true.

**The Truth of Being.**—The following shortly indicates the ultimate conclusion which regenerated philosophy has brought to light, now that all 20 human philosophy is overshadowed and is dropping its mere speculative theories under the correction of Truth. God is cause, Spirit, the Principle of all good. There can be only one cause and that cause must be good. A bad cause as the essence of everything is unthinkable, for the one fundamental basis of all evil is that it is self-destructive. Cause cannot exist 25 without its manifestation. Therefore cause, God, and His manifestation, the spiritual beings,<sup>1</sup> and spiritual ideas, must exist, and must always have existed, absolutely perfect, making an absolutely perfect world, which is called heaven. This is the truth of being.

God is infinite Mind, and whatever Mind knows is the manifestation 30 of Truth, namely, the spiritual universe, including the individual intelligent idea, man, the image and likeness of good.

**Two Horns of a Dilemma.**—You have two horns of a dilemma now before you, (a) to believe in a God that even if he be not evil himself, not 35 only made evil and the awful horrors in this material world, but made human beings so badly that they could not help doing evil, and suffered punishment because they did it, or, (b) to believe in a God that, knowing our troubles, is either unwilling or unable to remove them.

**The Only Alternative.**—The only alternative is to believe in and prove the existence of a God who is All-in-all, who is absolute good, who created 40 the universe, including man, spiritual and perfect, a divine universe, which always was and is now (though hidden to mortals by material illusion) perfect and complete, governed by the Principle of good; and that the whole of this material world, with all its sin, sickness, and suffering, is an absolute delusion with no reality of any kind or description, it never 45 was created, and is not even a dream.

<sup>1</sup> "The universe of Spirit is peopled with spiritual beings" (*Science and Health*, p. 264. Mary Baker Eddy).

**Man's Better Understanding of God.**—Sin, sickness, death, and all evils of every sort are neither Truth, nor manifestations of Truth, and therefore cannot possibly be true. Being untrue, they are lies, and necessarily unreal. It may be stated that you can find to-day thousands, probably 5 millions, of human beings who are rapidly getting rid of sin, sickness, or suffering by merely knowing that it is a lie, that all in reality is God, Mind,<sup>1</sup> and its manifestation, spiritual, perfect, and All. With this additional evidence, can there be the slightest doubt which of the foregoing statements is true, or which you are going to believe from to-day?

- 10 **Two Impossibilities.**—Scholastic theology correctly teaches us that God is Spirit and God is infinite, and yet it even still states that evil is real. If the latter were true, then there would be either evil in God or else evil exists outside what is infinite. Both are evident impossibilities. Habakuk recognised this when he wrote, "O mighty God . . . Thou art of 15 purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity" (1: 12, 13). There is only one logical solution, however difficult it is for poor material, ill-taught, illogical humanity to understand properly, namely, that evil is not real. I challenge anyone to produce any other either logical or demonstrable explanation of the difficulty.
- 20 God is Truth. It follows that evil cannot be Truth, and must therefore be untrue. What is untrue must be unreal. Therefore, to believe evil real must be a mistake of ignorance, and obviously sin, a failure to obey the First Commandment to have only one God. To prevent this sin we must "Watch and pray" and guard our consciousness, the city of the Holy 25 Ghost, as we would guard our children against all evil. Man is not a material thing liable to sin. Man is divine, spiritual and perfect. Evil can have no authority from God, good. Exercise man's divine right and exorcise evil by knowing its unreality. Deprived of its prestige and divested of its self-imposed, false authority, it collapses of its own nature, and man is free.
- 30 Glorious freedom, infinite possibilities, continual happiness, eternal, perfect existence, belong to each of us.

**God Finite if not Omnipotent.**—All great logical thinkers have felt the difficulty arising out of the supposed reality of sin and matter.

- John Stuart Mill said that God could not be omnipotent. Professor 35 James, in *A Pluralistic Universe*, says: "I believe that the only God worthy of the name must be finite." Benjamin Jowett, in *Predestination and Free-will*, wrote: "God is greater by being finite than being infinite." Warschauer tries to prove that God is not All-in-all. He says, in *Problems of Immanence*: "If God is all, *then what are we?* Granted the basal axiom of 40 this type of immanentism, it follows with irresistible cogency that our separate existence, consciousness, volitions, and so forth, are merely illusions." That is so, for there is no "separate existence" from God. It is the material belief of evil as real and necessary, that alone is responsible

<sup>1</sup> "For those who have eyes to see and minds accustomed to reflect, . . . 45 throughout the stellar universe—our own little universe, as one may call it—there is intelligent and conscious direction; in a word, there is Mind" (Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, O.M., F.R.S.).

for any supposed separation between God and man or man and his fellow-man. "There is no real Divine Immanence which does not imply the allness of God"<sup>1</sup> (R. J. Campbell, D.D.), and, it may be added, the goodness of man as image and likeness of and co-existent with omnipresent good.

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**Is God Unwilling or Unable to Abolish Evil?**—W. R. Inge, M.A., D.D., an exponent of the latest views of theology, in *The Paddock Lectures* for 1906, delivered at the General Seminary, New York, referring to the religious problem of evil, spoke as follows: "That problem has been stated once for all in the words of Augustine: 'Either God is unwilling to abolish evil, or He is unable; if He is not willing, He is not good; if He is unable, He is not omnipotent!' No Christian can consent to impale himself on either horn of this dilemma. If God is not perfectly good and also perfectly powerful, He is not God. . . . The only other alternative, if we refuse St. Augustine's dilemma, is to deny, to some degree, the absolute existence of evil, regarding it as an appearance incidental to the actualisation of moral purpose as vital activity. And in spite of the powerful objections which have been brought against this view, in spite of the real risk of seeming to attenuate, in theory, the malignant potency of sin, I believe that this is the theory which presents the fewest difficulties."

Now the difficulty is solved. Light is pouring in upon the world. We retain our perfect God, infinite and omnipotent, and hurl all sin and trouble for ever from its self-erected pedestal into its native nothingness, the dust of materiality from which the false belief in it arose. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2:7). What a parody upon man created in the "image" and "likeness," of God "in his own image" (Gen. 1:27).

"Then came that voice as soundless as the light. . . .

I saw no phantom shape, no sound I heard,

But life unveiled itself in vivid thought,

Distinct, imperative, and luminous. . . .

For now mine eyes had seen Eternity,

The source, the truth, the work and urge of all;

The soul of things, the light ineffable

That all the wide star-spaces floods with life;

This, *this* was God, and there was none beside" (*Albert D. Watson*).

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**The Evolution of Philosophy.**—A rough summary of the conclusions arrived at by the leaders of the different schools of thought in the past may be of interest, showing how, although some have been quite close to the truth, they have failed to grasp it, or to give us any reasonable explanation of the universe, or practical method of how to get out of our difficulties. (See Appendix.)

It is not of importance that we should recognise the gradual evolution of philosophy until it agreed with religion and science, but it is of interest to see how this evolution was gradually brought about, and it is of value to understand it when talking with those who have studied philosophy and look at life from this point of view, so as to be able to help them.

<sup>1</sup> *Divine Immanence and Pantheism*.

**The New Theology.**—This movement, the theologian's latest attempt to amalgamate religion and philosophy on a semi-metaphysical basis, is a sign of the awakening of the world to the glorious news, the second coming of Christ, namely, the knowledge that we are all spiritual beings  
 5 in heaven now, each an individualisation of the Christ, God's consciousness. Some of those who partially see the truth are trying to fit it in with their old ideas. This is impossible. New wine cannot be put into old bottles. Consequently they are continually finding themselves in an absolutely illogical position.

10 Many, for instance, believe that God made the material world for some good reason, and that the spiritual man, the perfect, divine likeness of God, which always has existed and always will exist perfect, is, in some way impossible to explain, improved by the troubles to which the material man, whom they do not recognise as merely a counterfeit, is being sub-  
 15 jected. Others doubt the miracles of Jesus, failing to perceive that matter being a false concept of "thought," appears and disappears in accordance with the thought held. The New Theology is simply an attempt on the part of the more spiritual workers to break through the chains of old theology that have hitherto fettered them, and they are getting closer and  
 20 closer every day to Truth, lifting the human thought heavenwards.

"If Christianity is anything at all, it is the teaching of absolute Truth; and if absolute Truth is not scientific, then there is no science in the world" (Frederick Dixon).

### HOW TO UNDERSTAND ADVANCED WRITINGS

25 A difficulty that has, unfortunately, prevented many able thinkers in the past from trying to understand the Bible is that they have not apprehended the real meaning of inspiration, which is due to the normal action of God on a human being, that causes him to exceed his usual capacity, and enables him in a scientific way to obtain otherwise hidden knowledge,  
 30 by thinking of God. "We are, indeed, more than we know, and occasionally hear ourselves utter things we know not" (Emerson).

**Misinterpretations of Truth.**—It has been often said that you can prove anything to be true from the Bible, and that all sorts of meanings can be "read into it," attributing to writers statements of facts that never  
 35 entered into their calculations. The same accusations have been levelled by some against correct interpretations of spiritually scientific writings.

There is only one permanent scientific basis of all truth, and upon this foundation all true statements must rest. This being so, they do not admit of any possible final mistranslation, because truth understood can always  
 40 be demonstrated in visible proof of its right reading. Every true statement thus proves itself consistent all through the degrees of our understanding of its meaning up to infinity.

The correct reading of any statement will always be demonstrable if true, and will also be found consistent with progress in all its degrees  
 45 upwards. These degrees are absolutely independent of any direct intention on the part of the writer, who can never change the original root meaning,