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## THE MARRIAGE OF RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

BY CHARLES S. PEIRCE.

What is science? The dictionary will say that it is systematised knowledge. Dictionary definitions, however, are too apt to repose upon derivations; which is as much as to say that they neglect too much the later steps in the evolution of meanings. Mere knowledge, though it be systematised, may be a dead memory; while by science we all habitually mean a living and growing body of truth. We might even say that knowledge is not necessary to science. The astronomical researches of Ptolemy, though they are in great measure false, must be acknowledged by every modern mathematician who reads them, to be truly and genuinely scientific. That which constitutes science, then, is not so much correct conclusions, as it is a correct method. But the method of science is itself a scientific result. It did not spring out of the brain of a beginner: it was a historic attainment and a scientific achievement. So that not even this method ought to be regarded as essential to the beginnings of science. That which is essential, however, is the scientific spirit, which is determined not to rest satisfied with existing opinions, but to press on to the real truth of nature. To science once enthroned in this sense, among any people, science in every other sense is heir apparent.

And what is religion? In each individual it is a sort of sentiment, or obscure perception,—a deep recognition of a something in the circumambient All, which, if he strives to express it, will clothe itself in forms more or less extravagant, more or less accidental, but ever acknowledging the first and last, the  $\Lambda$  and  $\Omega$ , as well as a relation to that Absolute of the individual's self, as a relative being. But religion cannot reside in its totality in a single individual. Like every species of reality, it is essentially a social, a public affair. It is the idea of a whole church, welding all its members together in one organic, systemic perception of the Glory of the Highest,—an idea having a growth from generation to generation and claiming a supremacy in the determination of all conduct, private and public.

Now, as science grows, it becomes more and more

perfect, considered as science; and no religionist can easily so narrow himself as to deny this. But as religion goes through the different stages of its history, it has, I fear we must confess, seldom been seen so vitalised as to become more and more perfect, even as judged from its own standpoint. Like a plucked flower, its destiny is to wilt and fade. The vital sentiment that gave it birth loses gradually its pristine purity and strength, till some new creed treads it down. Thus it happens quite naturally, that those who are animated with the spirit of science are for hurrying forward, while those who have the interests of religion at heart are apt to press back.

While this double change has been taking place, religion has found herself compelled to define her position; and in doing so, has inevitably committed herself to sundry propositions, which, one by one, have been, first questioned, then assailed, and finally overthrown by advancing science. Seeing such a chasm open before her feet, religion has at first violently recoiled, and at last has leapt it; satisfying herself as best she might with an altered creed. In most cases the leap has not seemed to hurt her; yet internal injuries may have been sustained. Who can doubt that the church really did suffer from the discovery of the Copernican system, although infallibility, by a narrow loophole, managed to escape? In this way, science and religion become forced into hostile attitudes. Science, to specialists, may seem to have little or nothing to say that directly concerns religion; but it certainly encourages a philosophy which, if in no other respect, is at any rate opposed to the prevalent tendency of religion, in being animated by a progressive spirit. There arises, too, a tendency to pooh-pooh at things unseen.

It would be ridiculous to ask to whose fault this situation is chargeable. You cannot lay blame upon elemental forces. Religion, from the nature of things, refuses to go through her successive transformations with sufficient celerity to keep always in accord with the convictions of scientific philosophy. The day has come, however, when the man whom religious experience most devoutly moves can recognise the state of the case. While adhering to the essence of religion,

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and so far as possible to the church, which is all but essential, say, penessential, to it, he will cast aside that religious timidity, that is forever prompting the church to recoil from the paths into which the Governor of history is leading the minds of men, a cowardice that has stood through the ages as the landmark and limit of her little faith; and will gladly go forward, sure that truth is not split into two warring doctrines, and that any change that knowledge can work in his faith can only affect its expression, but not the deep mystery expressed.

Such a state of mind may properly be called a religion of science. Not that it is a religion to which science or the scientific spirit has itself given birth; for religion, in the proper sense of the term, can arise from nothing but the religious sensibility. But it is a religion, so true to itself, that it becomes animated by the scientific spirit, confident that all the conquests of science will be triumphs of its own, and accepting all the results of science, as scientific men themselves accept them, as steps toward the truth, which may appear for a time to be in conflict with other truths, but which in such cases merely await adjustments which time is sure to effect. This attitude, be it observed, is one which religion will assume not at the dictate of science, still less by way of a compromise, but simply and solely out of a bolder confidence in herself and in her own destiny.

Meantime, science goes unswervingly its own gait. What is to be its goal is precisely what it must not seek to determine for itself, but let itself be guided by nature's strong hand. Teleological considerations, that is to say ideals, must be left to religion; science can allow itself to be swayed only by efficient causes; and philosophy, in her character of queen of the sciences, must not care, or must not seem to care, whether her conclusions be wholesome or dangerous.

#### RELIGION INSEPARABLE FROM SCIENCE.

THERE is no limb or organ of the human body which is entirely separated from the rest or leads an independent existence; and in the same way, there is not one action or operation or domain of operations in man's being which can be regarded as disconnected from his other activities: for man's entire activity constitutes one interconnected whole. Thus, when we speak of science and religion, of art or of ethics we create certain artificial boundaries more or less definitely determined, but which do not constitute separate domains.

Science may briefly be characterised as the search for truth, and religion as a certain conviction regulating our conduct. Now whenever the result of thought or inquiry is of such a nature as to be a conviction which

serves as a norm of our moral life, a scientific idea has become a religious ideal.

Says Professor Peirce:

"Teleological considerations, that is to say ideals, must be left to religion; science can allow itself to be swayed only by efficient causes; and philosophy, in her character of queen of the sciences, must not care, or must not seem to care, whether her conclusions be wholesome or dangerous."

Certainly, when we search for truth we must not approach a problem with a foredetermined conclusion. Scientists and philosophers must make their inquiries without any anxiety about the conclusions to which their results will lead. In this way alone truth will be found. But to say that "teleological considerations," that is to say, ideals "must be left to religion" is in so far incorrect as we cannot dispense with science as a critic of our ideals. We cannot by mere religious sentiment determine whether or not an ideal is truly feasible, practical, and advisable. There are some ideals so-called which closely considered are mere dreams or mirages, and to pursue such will-o'-the-wisps would not only be a loss of time but might even lead us into danger. If there is anything that must be subjected to the most rigorous critique of an unbiased inquiry into truth, it is our teleological considerations. If our purposes, plans, and ends are not in concord with the real state of things, we shall soon find our position to be very difficult. And this is true not only of our business enterprises when we attend to affairs which seem to concern merely ourselves and our own well-being, but also and even more so of our religious convictions which serve us as guides for the regulation of our moral relations to our fellow beings and to mankind in general, including the future of the human race.

We can nowhere, neither in practical life nor in our religious sentiments and convictions, dispense with a rational inquiry into truth; that is to say, religion is inseparable from science.

P. C.

#### THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL IN LITERATURE.

BY CHARLOTTE PORTER.

AN important discovery has been made within this century by writers of history. The discovery consists in the recognition that the "personal adventures of kings and nobles, the pomp of courts and intrigues of favorites," "drum and trumpet history" in short, is not so vital a subject for investigation and record as the manifold quiet, common incidents of that "constitutional, intellectual, and social advance in which we read the history of the nation itself."

A corresponding discovery awaits recognition in literature. In the coming of the people to their own in literature, as in government, consists the real eventfulness of the time. If literature is to deal with this it must paint it in the imaginative glow that belongs

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