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## Notes Editorial and Critical

### “ My Witnesses ”

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“Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be My witnesses”.—Acts i. 8.

Nearly nineteen hundred years ago our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ commanded His disciples: “Go ye into all the world; and preach the Gospel to every creature”.

Within the lifetime of some of those very disciples, they and their associates actually went into all the world known to them, and preached the Gospel to every creature therein!

Justin Martyr, who suffered martyrdom in Rome in 165 A. D., wrote: “There is not a nation, either Greek or barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes, or live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the Universe in the Name of the crucified Jesus”.

Clement of Alexandria, who was born about 150 A. D. and died some seventy years later, writing of the Gospel, says: “It has spread through the whole world, in every town and village, and city, converting both whole houses and separate individuals”.

Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, says, in Romans i. 8, “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world”. In Colossians i. 23 he writes: “The Gospel, which ye have heard, which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I, Paul, am made a minister”.

By these testimonies we are fully assured that the original disciples and their immediate successors, actually preached the Gospel to every creature known to them.

Doctor Philip Schaff, in his “History of the Christian Church”, says: “There were no missionary societies, no missionary institutions, no organized efforts in the ante-Nicene age; and yet in less than three hundred years from the death of St. John the whole population of the Roman Empire, which then represented the civilized world, was nominally Christianized”.

#### *The Secret of Apostolic Success*

If it be true that, “other things being equal, like causes produce like effects”, then may we not, by carefully

## "The Religion of the Future"—Some "Cobblers'" Opinions About It

Extracts from a Review of Ex-President Eliot, by Prof. Edward D. Morris, D.D., LL.D., Columbus, O.\*

### (I) The Specialists and their Slender Furnishing

The ancients had a wise word of caution for "specialists", of the application of which the moderns need to be reminded. The caution was addressed to the "cobbler," who was advised to confine his authoritative pronouncements about man to the "sandals", i. e., the part of which he might reasonably be supposed to have some knowledge. His opinions regarding the "soul", or indeed regarding anything above the "sole", were naturally looked upon as having no general validity or value.

Of late the specialist "cobblers" have busied themselves in forgetting the sandals, and trying to reconstruct, without "knowledge", the man above that treads upon the soles. Our readers will be interested in seeing how they have been handled by one of the foremost theological instructors of the past generation in the Presbyterian Church, formerly President of Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, O.

Sir Oliver Lodge, D.Sc., is an English physicist, now Principal of the University of Birmingham; author of books on Elementary Mechanics, Electricity, Life and Matter, and other kindred subjects; knighted for some valuable discoveries in telegra-

phy. Dr. Lodge undertook not long ago, though without systematic training in theological science, to formulate a *Catechism* for the use of parents and teachers in educating religiously the boys and girls of England. Subsequently he found it desirable to publish an explanatory commentary on his Catechism, entitled the *Substance of Faith*. The two productions quite illustrate his naive confession that the drawing up of a creed or catechism is a singularly difficult task,—as he might well have learned beforehand from the extensive history of the formulating of such Church symbols, whether Greek, Roman or Protestant. That the author is a novice rather than an expert in this special sphere—that the result is a remarkable conglomerate of truth and speculation, not unmingled with error, will be apparent to any intelligent, thoughtful reader. Some illustrations of this fact will appear during the present discussion.

Charles William Eliot, LL.D., became after his graduation an instructor and subsequently Professor of Chemistry, and the author (with an associate) of Manuals on Chemical Analysis and Inorganic Chemistry; then for forty years was engaged as President in the expansion and endowment of Harvard University;—an American layman, as he described himself, so disavowing special culture in theological studies, but referring as his teachers along such lines to Darwin and Spencer and John Stuart Mill, to Kuenen and Robertson Smith and Wellhausen. Dr. Eliot recently delivered at the close of the Harvard Summer School of Theology a notable Lecture on *The Religion of the Future*. Such is the eminence of the author in public estimation, that this Lecture was at once printed in full or largely in the secular press, widely commented upon in various quarters, and here and there accepted not only

\* This Review of Dr. Eliot, former President of Harvard University, and incidentally of Sir Oliver Lodge, was read before the Columbus Association of Presbyterian Ministers, soon after Dr. Eliot's Lecture was delivered at the Harvard Summer School. It was printed in pamphlet form by the Association for wider distribution. We regret that we can not reproduce it as a whole, since the adequate knowledge and consummate ability of the Professor enable him to go far towards settling the place of the individual specialists and the value of their opinions.—*Editor*.

as a prophetic synopsis of the religion of coming ages, but as an announcement, somewhat authoritative in tone, of a new type of religion for the present day. To this Lecture, emphasized as it is by the prominence and influence of its author, thoughtful, independent, candid consideration may well be given.

One can hardly refrain at the outset from raising the query, whether physicists like Dr. Lodge or chemists like Dr. Eliot, or other like experts in this or that department in the complex science of Nature, are really well qualified to make cat-echisms, define the substance of faith, frame or condemn creeds or theologies, discuss forms of worship, challenge churchly authority, pronounce judgment on Holy Scripture, diagnose religious experiences, and criticise varieties of existing religion; and meanwhile—in addition to all this—to prophesy categorically about some new and universal religion which is yet to appear, superseding all current form of belief and worship, somewhere in the coming ages of the world. This at least is true, that when such scientists leave the special spheres of research to which their lives have been given, to enter the very different sphere of philosophical or spiritual verities, they are no longer Samsons but become as common men. It may also be true that sometimes their scientific rules and processes, misapplied, precipitate them unawares into practical mistake or even serious error.†

In entering on the study of this noted Lecture, we are at once confronted by the preliminary question, "*What is Religion?*" The word is used in many different connections, and with large varieties of meaning; to enter into any detailed definition is hardly necessary here. Three main elements are obviously included in it; *first*, a mental conception, more or less intelli-

gent and comprehensive, of God as an existent Being, and of his vital and permanent relations to the world, and especially to man as his moral creature; *secondly*, a distinct class of sentiments or affections, such as awe and reverence and love, submission and loyalty and adoration, awakened within the soul in greater degree or less by this mental conception of God as He is in himself, and as holding such natural and spiritual relations; and *thirdly*, a life and character conformed more or less fully to what the intellect thus discovers, and what the heart and soul so feel and experience. Without enlargement, this may be accepted as a sufficient analysis of the term; it is for substance the definition more or less utilized by Dr. Eliot in his exposition both of current religions and of the Religion that is to be.

Dr. Eliot introduces his main discussion by an enumeration of a large variety of religious beliefs, dogmas, ceremonies, authorities, forms of worship, which though now existing will, as he affirms, constitute no part of the Religion of the Future. It is a strange, grotesque conglomerate. In this category he first names the adoration of any personified forces or objects in nature, or of any imaginary deities whether kindly or malevolent; the veneration of deceased ancestors or rulers or teachers; belief in devils, satan or witches or the evil eye, or magical arts in the interest of religion; and various other superstitions and usages found more or less distinctly in crude forms of natural religion. In the same category he further names all Hebraic anthropomorphisms of God, the identifying of any human being with the Eternal Deity, faith in the Bible as an inspired guide, the offering of sacrifice in any form as propitiation for sin, the idea of conversion and the new life attained through grace, all assumptions of churchly rule, and other important constituents in what he styles institutional Christianity. All these of both classes, from the lowest superstitions now or formerly existing among pagan peoples, up to the most sacred elements in evangelical Protestantism, even Holy Scripture and the divine Redeemer, are here thrown together in one aggregation as things to disappear from the world when the New Religion shall rise above the horizon.

\* In this connection one easily calls to mind the old suggestive story which Pliny in his *Naturalis Historia* relates respecting Apelles, the illustrious Greek painter. Having finished one of his portraits, the artist placed it in front of his studio, and concealed himself behind the canvas where he might hear the comments of spectators passing by. Among them was a shoemaker, who criticized the painting because there was one eyelet too few in the sandal, and received thanks for his criticism. On another day, emboldened by his success, he began to point out another defect in the thigh or hip of the figure, when Apelles sharply rebuked him in terms which Pliny has preserved in the Latin tongue, and which became a Roman proverb: *Ne sutor supra crepidam judicaret*,—let not a shoemaker pass judgment above the sandal.

## (II) Their Ventures Above the Sandals, and the Abortive Results

Dr. Morris exposes the monumental ignorance, and more than monumental incapacity of these men, shown in their dealings with the Commonplaces of Theology. By their entire misconception of the essential truths,—of God's Immanence in the World, running headlong into Pantheism; of the

more important doctrine of God's Moral Transcendence Above the World; of Sin Actual and Salvation Possible; of the Nature, Work and Worship of the Christian; of the Future Life, the Life Indeed,—they have left the Christian system an incoherent and self-contradictory mass.

## I. Defective Views of the Doctrines of Sin and Salvation

Some paragraphs from the strictures of Professor Morris on the sutorial view of the particular Biblical Doctrines of *Sin and Salvation* will serve to illustrate the crudities of the men who have never seen anything in the theological man above his sandals. He says:

The next point to be noted in the scrutiny of this remarkable Lecture relates to its teaching concerning *Sin and Salvation*. If God is indeed above the world as well as within it, and is administering an equitable and majestic government over man and life, the question whether human nature, disposition, and conduct are acceptable with Him, or otherwise, becomes one of transcendent interest; and all types of religion must be estimated largely according to their answer to this fundamental question. That sin exists—a general, pervasive and fearful fact—no one can deny who fairly, honestly surveys and studies human life, human conduct and character as they actually appear, the whole world over. The Bible does not create sin; it only records it and describes its effects. Yet it is true that the most comprehensive biography of human sinfulness in all its dark varieties, to be found anywhere in literature, may be read in the pages of the Old Testament; at the bar of its arraignment, humanity stands a culprit, and from its condemning testimony no man can escape.

As to such sinfulness, Sir Oliver Lodge avers that the fall of man was not a fall downward but upward—an ascent from a state of mere animalism to a point where

he could for the first time distinguish between right and wrong. Dr. Eliot also casts aside the entire conception of man as a fallen being, or of any moral alienation as existing between man and God. Lodge describes good and evil as antithetic forces with which man has to deal in life, having acquired the ability to discern their difference and to choose between them. Eliot rejects all such antitheses between good and evil, spirit and matter, wickedness and righteousness, as inconsistent with the rational concept of one eternal and omnipresent Energy, inspiring the whole creation, and especially the world of humanity, in all its parts and members at every instant of time. Lodge defines sin as the act of a free agent, who sees the better but chooses the worse, because he is moved by a selfish nature; yet he delineates it as akin to disease and ugliness and misery, rather than to positive transgression against God and his law. Eliot nowhere defines sin, or uses the word except informally, preferring the word evil, as a substitute—a word which as he uses it points to the consequences of sin rather than toward the moral source from which such consequences proceed,—forgetful of that cosmic saying of Jesus: An evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things. Yet while the British physicist approaches the truth more nearly than the American chemist, it cannot be gainsaid that both alike fail signally to apprehend the real nature of sin, or adequately to estimate its baleful activities in the individual man and in the world. And yet, there the solemn Fact stands, awful in its vast magnitude, still more awful in its influence and result, while both

men are practically dumb, if not unbelieving, in its presence. As well were it to question the occurrence of a solar eclipse at some hour when the whole earth lay chill and silent under its benumbing shadow!

But it will be obvious to every careful reader that in their dealing with the problem of salvation, both the Catechism and the Lecture are singularly deficient. The Catechism starts with the hypothesis of Evolution, follows along rationalistic rather than biblical landmarks, represents Christ as only a man in whom the immanent God has chosen specially to incarnate Himself, regards the Holy Spirit as only an impersonal influence flowing off from the divine immanency, and describes the Bible as inspired only in a sense like that in which the great teachers, prophets, poets and saints of all ages have been. It indeed uses such terms as revelation and regeneration, grace and salvation, the kingdom of heaven, eternal life; but in senses largely different from their ordinary acceptance. In words it recognizes a divine scheme or method of redemption from the potency of sin, and urges faith and obedience and love as present duties. Yet nowhere does it recognize distinctly the claim which the divine justice makes, or set forth any atonement or any divine ministry of sanctification; in a word *it nowhere offers to the guilty, fallen soul any comprehensible foundation or warrant for a hope of salvation.*

The answer of the Lecture is even more defective. It denies that man is or ever was in any sense fallen or corrupt in nature, or that God in sovereignty is ruling and judging men according to

their lives, or that Christ is an atoning Savior, or that the Holy Spirit is present as a sanctifying and restorative power in the world. It affirms that no such mediation is needful; and so waives aside the entire idea of salvation from either the guilt or the power of sin. It counsels us not to make so much account of the evil and the ugly in the world, to cease speculating on the origin of evil, and to fix our thoughts rather on the good and the beautiful in life. It declares that in the Religion of the Future the spiritual redemption of the individual man, either in this world or any other, will not be a primary consideration; sudden conversions here, or some sudden paradise gained hereafter out of a selfish or sensual life, will be no part of its message. It will teach men that repentance can wipe out nothing in the past, that propitiation in whatever form is useless, and that moral restoration or growth is a personal process only. Other kindred declarations are scattered here and there through its pages, and underneath all lies the dark hearsay that the Man of Nazareth was not a divine Savior but a man only, and that the Book which reveals Him and Salvation through Him, is an uninspired volume, unworthy of human credence. *But in all this there is no approach to a solution of the momentous problem either of sin or of salvation; it is merely bold and flat negation throughout, with a large admixture of naturalistic unbelief. Assuredly, if the vaunted Religion of the Future can say nothing loftier, nothing more consoling than this, it never can become the accepted, welcomed, satisfying faith of our sinful, sorrowing world.*

## 2. Speculations About "the Church of the Future"

Dr. Morris does not accept the current Unitarian and infidel misrepresentation of the Christian Church, especially as represented by Protestant Christianity. He affirms—and affirms justly—

"It may safely be said, notwithstanding the adverse opinions of Drs. Eliot and Lodge (and the animadver-

sions of that large class of kindred critics who fabricate a religion for themselves out of the recognizable defects in existing religions) that the Christian Church, especially in its Protestant forms as representative of historic Christianity in contrast with the various natural religions, is the grandest institution to be found in the

best civilizations the world now contains".

With some paragraphs on this Church of the Future in contrast with the Christian Church of the present, this extended notice must close:

It is almost painful to contrast with this Church of the living God, with its holy psalms and praises, its lofty petitions, its adoration and hallelujah—to contrast such a Church with the worship and the organization which Dr. Eliot foretells and depicts as characterizing the Religion of the Future. He writes out the creed of that Religion as consisting of one doctrine only, the doctrine of an immanent and loving God; and of one duty only, the duty of service to other men.\* He describes the rites and observances of that Religion, as consisting in the commemoration of the good thoughts and deeds transmitted from former generations; its symbols relate not to sacrifice or dogma, but to liberty, truth and beauty; and its sacraments are not supernatural or miraculous, but signs of natural and spiritual grace only. He portrays its priests as leaders, heralds, prophets—men specially qualified and trained for its service. He speaks of its canonized saints, of its heroes, and of its communions—communions with the Great Spirit, with the spirits of the departed, and with one another. In language eloquent but vague he thus describes the worship which his Religion will cultivate; but he nowhere mentions confession of sin or gratitude for divine mercies as elements in that worship, neither does he anywhere refer to prayer as a form of adoration, or as a power effectual

\* It would be amusing were it not amazing to see the physicist and the chemist, after their profuse denunciation of existing creeds and churches, each sitting down in solemn earnest to write out, as each has done, a suitable creed for the Religion of the Future. Dr. Eliot labors under a two-fold delusion at this point—*first*, that the private members of the various Protestant communions, as well as those holding official positions, formally subscribe to their respective Confessions; and *secondly*, that such Confessions are somehow imposed or forced upon officials against their will and their personal belief. Nothing could be more untrue in fact. No protestant minister is required to assent to a church creed unless he voluntarily accepts and approves it as expressing in substance what he personally believes. The door of exit is also always open; and no man is more despicable than he who continues to eat at the table of a church or stretches out his hands for a stipend from its treasury, while forswearing the church faith which he has of his own accord pledged himself to uphold.

with God. And while he does not use the term church, as descriptive of this Religion, he suggests that some form or measure of organization, and even of authority, may be needful in sustaining this unique faith. In a word, he portrays a thin and pale and spectral church,—natural in every feature, resting on human foundations only, and devoid of propagative efficiency. To imagine that such an organization can ultimately spread itself over all the continents, and become the dominating Church of mankind is only a grotesque and unprofitable fancy.

Dr. Eliot speaks of Christ as a Teacher with some measure of recognition and regard; closing his Lecture with the prediction that the revelation of Jesus will become more wonderful in future ages, and claiming also that the New Religion, as he sets it forth, will be in essential agreement with that revelation. Yet he also declares that religion is a matter chiefly, if not wholly, of *this world*, and that duty simply consists in doing what is to be done here and now, without looking much toward any other life than this. He accuses current Christianity of attempting vainly to control sinful men by incentives drawn from eternity, and of offering consolations from that eternity which are too dim and distant to be of much value to the suffering and sorrowful here.

How contrary to truth these affirmations on both sides are, the experience of myriads is ready to testify. But Dr. Eliot goes much further by asserting that the prevailing Christian conceptions, as he calls them, have hardly more influence with educated people than Hades and Olympus,—that the fear of hell does not deter men from wrong, and that heaven—the heaven which our Lord so clearly revealed—has never yet been described in terms very attractive to the average man or woman.

And finally he places himself in open antagonism not merely with the belief and hope of universal Christendom, but with the direct and unchallengeable teachings of Christ Himself, in *the frightful declaration that heaven and hell are in fact unimaginable, and that there would be but slight loss of power toward good, or away from evil, if heaven were burnt or hell quenched.* And this dark heresy he presents as one of

the tenets of that Religion of the Future of which he claims to be a reliable revealer. It may be added also that it is at this point that his naturalistic rationalism exposes most clearly its real nature and its unspir-

itual and destructive tendency; nothing more is needful to indicate the practical outcome of the type of Unitarianism which he conspicuously represents.

### 3. Two Concluding Queries Propounded and Answered

We may pause for a moment further to glance at the concluding paragraphs of this notable Lecture. In these paragraphs Dr. Eliot states and briefly discusses two final questions—whether this New Religion, supplanting what he calls archaic and crude Christianity, will ultimately expand and grow until it becomes at length the universal faith of the race; and when, if ever, such a consummation shall be reached.

As to the *first question*, he bases confident expectations on the *simplicity of that Religion*, in contrast with the complexities and disagreements of current religious beliefs; on its freedom from all dogma, ritual and ecclesiastical domination; on its ground in the scientific reason and in the natural virtues; on its ethical teaching and influence, and on its special harmony with the intellectual, social, political developments attained in this enlightened age. On such grounds he claims for it a unique adaptability to all the moral and religious needs of mankind, and also a special potentiality which will finally lift it far above the limitations of what he depreciates as family or tribal or national religions, and give it a scope and range as wide as humanity. He admits indeed that, so far as outward organization is involved the progress of this Religion will be but slow; and that its potency may appear chiefly in its modifying and ameliorating influence on existing churches, beliefs and usages,—such educative ministries bringing about at last what he oddly describes as Christian Unity.

As to the *second question*, Dr. Eliot confesses that the date of this cosmic apocalypse of faith can not be foretold: experiment alone, he adds, can supply the answer. He acknowledges that the progress of the New Religion toward such a consummation is conditioned by many natural causes, such as the extension of general knowledge, the measure of scientific attainment, the degree and quality of human civilization—a humane religion, he truly says,

must wait for a humane generation. He seems indeed at times to claim that this Religion is already in sight, and that its full evolution may be the crowning glory even of the twentieth century. But what he says at other times clearly implies that many a century must pass before the world can get itself ready to understand and embrace such an exalted type of faith—disclosing itself sometime, somewhere, to the reason and heart of our waiting race. One can not refrain from wondering whether he seriously thought of Asia and Africa with their benighted millions, or of the blindness and unbelief prevalent in many a Christianized land, while his fancy was portraying the universal spread and acceptance, under existing conditions, of his ideal Religion of the Future!

The answer of orthodox Christianity to these two questions is short but decisive. It points to the Arianism once popular and flourishing in the Orient, but overcome and rejected at Nicaea; it points to the modified varieties of that heresy which gained currency during subsequent centuries in Europe, but were at last cast out everywhere as in substance heretical; it points to the reproduction of the ancient error in the Socinianism of the Reformation, skilfully advocated but finally overthrown, more by Biblical and reasonable argument, even than by persecution; it points to the speculative Unitarianism of Clarke and Priestly in England, attractive to many especially for its ethical temper and teaching, but so far discredited as a proven error that it declined finally into a relatively insignificant form of religious belief in the British Isles. And in view of such a historic record of a type of belief, always seeking recognition as Christian but always repudiated by the concurrent consciousness of Christendom, it safely concludes that, *whatever may happen to existing orthodoxy, this heresy can never become the dominating faith of the world.*

But orthodox Christianity is not content with a negative conclusion; it has its own very different vision of the Religion and the Church of the future; it looks for another, more reasonable, more inspiring apocalypse. It still believes in a personal God, infinite in His being and in every perfection, above the world as well as within it, and everywhere and evermore supreme. It still reverently accepts His just government and His holy law revealed in both nature and Scripture, as the ultimate rule of human life and destiny. It still rejoices in the blessed Immanuel, the Son of God, who came down from heaven and dwelt among men for their salvation, and who is, and is to be, their one and only Teacher and Priest and King so long as the world standeth. It still rests in His redeeming power and grace and sacrifice as the only ground of human hope; and accepts His exemplified life and character as the divine norm and model for all mankind the world over. It welcomes for this life that career of duty and service which He has appointed for His disciples; and anticipates an eternal state of reward and blessedness where He already is, and where those who love and follow Him here shall finally be gath-

ered to worship and enjoy the one triune God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, forever. And meanwhile it steadfastly labors, and will ever labor, for the final triumph of His Gospel, and expects a millennial age of righteousness and peace on the whole earth, secured through His love and His omnipotence.

Thus believing, trusting, serving, hoping, our orthodox Christianity can not even imagine that the day of grace and salvation, which is already pouring its benign radiance even on many pagan lands, and which promises in its ascension to flood the whole world with its redemptive glory, shall sometime pause on the way to its ordained zenith, and shall then turn, downward and backward, into the obscurities of some dim and chill twilight, either of Arianism or of speculative naturalism. While it thus hopes and labors, it waits for no New Religion to rise up, out of the earth, and disclose itself to our humanity somewhere in the remote future; it rather watches and prays for the New Jerusalem, which is to come down from God, out of heaven, in His own appointed time, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband, the Living, Eternal Christ.

## A Revelation or an Evolution---Which ?

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The central content of the problem which to-day divides Biblical scholarship and distracts religious thought is in the question—Is the Bible a Revelation or an Evolution?

Through the Christian centuries the faith of the Church has been that it is a revelation from God, supernatural (albeit through human channels), and therefore of divine origin and authority; for holy men produced it as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter i. 21). But "modern thought", in the enouncements of higher criticism and new theology, declares it to be neither supernatural nor divine (except as all nature-processes are divine), and therefore merely human.

Professor Charles Foster Kent, of Yale, in his "The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament", exploits the idea

that in Genesis i. 1—ii. 3—the first story of creation, the "E" document so called—Deity is always designated as *God* or *Elohim*, and is conceived of as a spirit, accomplishing his purpose by progressive stages through the agency of natural forces, and because of which representations "it is not difficult to recognize at once the work of a late priestly writer" (p. 226).

On the other hand, in chapters ii. 4—iii. 24—the second story of creation, the "J" document so called—*Jehovah* is the name of Deity, and he is conceived of after human analogies, as intimately associating with men and as revealing himself directly to them by word and visible presence; and so "the work of an early prophetic writer is evidently before us" (ibid).

Other considerations, to be sure, are ad-