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## PRACTICAL RESULTS OF MONISM.

A current definition of monism runs thus: "The doctrine of cosmology that attempts to explain the phenomena of the cosmos by one principle of being or ultimate substance."<sup>1)</sup> Arthur Drews, a monist, defines monism as "that view of the cosmos which admits but one principle or one ground of reality." In a recent brochure, Superintendent Repke has sketched the various types of this philosophical theory.<sup>2)</sup> There is a materialistic monism, which reduces every phenomenon in the universe to a basis of matter. Then there is an idealistic monism, which claims that matter has no independent existence; it is a mere conception of the mind; every phenomenon is a product of the spirit. Lastly, there is a pantheistic monism. Its chief apostle is Eduard v. Hartmann, who observes that there is a parallelism between nature and spirit: in nature he finds force and law, or a principle of energy and of order; the counterparts of these two elements in the realm of the spirit are: will and mind. Force and will represent the unlogical, law and mind the logical, in the two hemispheres which monism assumes for its cosmos. But these four elements: force, law, will, mind, are not four different substances, but manifestations of the same, in fact, of the only substance. The multitude of volitions which individuals put forth are but movements of the absolute will; and the host of ideas, or ideal distinctions, become concentrated

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1) Standard Dictionary.

2) *Pantheistischer und deistischer Monismus*, in *Bibl. Zeit- und Streitfragen* VII, 8.

in the unity of the absolute idea. God is the common subject of the consciousness of all individuals and of all volitions of individuals; in other words, wherever there is a thought or a volition, it is God who thinks that thought and wills that volition. This common subject, however, of all thinking and willing which takes place in the world, is himself—or we should rather say itself—without consciousness; He—it—is the all-one, and is diffused as the impersonal will and the unconscious intelligence throughout this world of personal and unconscious individuals.

This is v. Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewussten* in a nutshell. Wilhelm von Schopenhauer praises this philosophy as the only genuine pantheism, because it does justice equally to the  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  and to the  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ . Leonhard Veeh hails this philosophy as an epochal discovery, a mighty step forward on the road of progress, a system which is destined to fructify the entire cultural life of to-day. Arthur Drews pronounces this philosophy the true solution of the world-riddle, and commends it to all who in our day are searchers after truth. Repke acknowledges that this philosophy is dominant in modern monistic circles.

We offer the last remark as part of the apology which, we feel, we owe our readers for inflicting Hartmann upon them. But monism is not a mere fancy of university professors. It threatens to enter—it has entered—in its practical consequences, the everyday life of to-day.

First, as a determined antagonist of the fundamentals of Christian belief.

The pantheistic monist scouts the belief in a personal God. Von Hartmann has declared the personal God an idea that might be tolerated, provided the definition of a personal God be restricted to an individuality connected with will and intelligence. "But," he adds, "as to individuals endowed with will and intelligence, there are many. Still, they do not for that reason correspond to our conception of personality (*e. g.*, brutes, savages, feeble-minded persons). We deny to these the designation of personalities. Why should we not assume the

same reserve over and against an individual which no longer corresponds to the idea of personality, because it is exalted above all the limitations which are the characteristic marks of this idea? A degradation of God, the highest being, must be charged not against those who deny, but against those who ascribe, personality to God."

The pantheistic monist ridicules prayer. Von Hartmann holds that the personal God is an invention of men who wish to coordinate themselves with God whenever they enter into a familiar conversation with Him ("sich auf du und du stellen") in prayer, when they expect of Him to share their feelings, when they piously revere, but actually treat Him as on a level with themselves. Prayer is really a monologue. It has no objective meaning and efficacy, and, hence, it is immaterial whether you direct your prayer to this or that address. Faith in prayer is illusory. The person praying practices self-deception. He speaks to a fictitious being.<sup>3)</sup>

Pantheistic monism rejects Jesus Christ. "Faith in Jesus as a psychological personality is in no respect superior to faith in any other personality, such as Goethe, Bismarck, etc. We have merely a historical, but no religious interest whatever, in the man Jesus. . . . This much, surely, has now been established by Protestant Bible criticism, that the *historic* Jesus was not the Jesus proclaimed by liberal pastors to-day, nor the Jesus of the Gospels, and that the Jesus who is usually exhibited to the masses by theologians in the pulpit and in

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3) "Erwaegt man weiter, dass aus philosophischem Gesichtspunkt der praktische Nerv des Gebets ohnehin schon dadurch gelachmt ist, dass ihm nach der modernen Weltanschauung nur noch eine rein subjektive Bedeutung und Wirksamkeit zugeschrieben werden kann, so erscheint der Wert jenes den Gedanken widerstrebenden Gemuetspostulats auch von dieser Seite mehr als zweifelhaft; denn wenn ich einmal die illusorische Beschaffenheit des Glaubens an eine objektive Bedeutung und Wirksamkeit des Gebets erkannt habe, so ist die Beschaffenheit der objektiven Adresse, an die das Gebet gerichtet wird, voellig gleichgueltig geworden, da es sich in Wahrheit doch nur um einen Monolog handelt, dem die etwaige Taschenspielererei einer bewussten Selbsttaeuschung hinsichtlich eines fingierten Angeredeten an Wert nichts zulegen kann." (*Phil. d. Unb.* II, 191.)

popular discourses, is an ideal figure, decked out for a purpose, and out of harmony with historic reality, except, perhaps, in name and in a few indifferent details."<sup>4)</sup>

Secondly, pantheistic monism has blasted the ethical conceptions of Christianity.

It acknowledges no such thing as personal responsibility. Everything that a person thinks, wills, or does, is chargeable to God. "Everything must, with equal directness, be referred back to God, sin as well as grace, faith as well as unbelief, knowledge as well as error, grief as well as joy."<sup>5)</sup> Personal guilt is impossible, since the authority at whose tribunal man would have to render an account of his conduct is the cause and originator of man's action. In other words, God can judge no one, for He would only be judging Himself.

Pantheistic monism spurns the idea of sin, and of a divine law determining what is sin and fixing its consequences. Nietzsche distinguishes between "Herrenmoral" and "Sklavenmoral." To the mind of lords the proud, exalted feelings of the soul would appear virtuous, while the mind of serfs would pronounce humility, resignation, love of fellow-men virtues. There is no objective basis for determining what is good. The monist Braun<sup>6)</sup> declares: "In our view, ethics is . . . the enactment and unfolding of our true self." Individuality is the real virtue. There must be no subordination to any norm that is considered superior to the individual. Braun grants that, on this basis, any whim, fancy, desire, etc., for which individual propensity exists must be permissible. Drews differs from this view. He considers individualism the source and root of all evil and suffering. He draws a distinction between self and *ego*. The self in man is consubstantial with God, the *ego* is a foreign element which must be overcome. Self-consciousness must expel *ego*-consciousness. This is done by man fixing his own laws, not by a mere subjective caprice, but in

4) Arthur Drews, *Die Religion als Selbstbewusstsein Gottes*. I, 201.

5) Schrempf, *Monismus und Christentum*, cited by Drews, l. c., p. 197.

6) Braun, *Monismus und Ethik*, cited by Drews, l. c., p. 129.

obedience to his teleological ends, *i. e.*, to that destiny which God in His world-plan has settled for him. Nietzsche insists that the true unfolding of man's self must be effected, not by the exercise of love and pity, but of relentless force. "We must seek out those things that make us hard. Steel is hardened by fire: we must steel our will in the fire of unbridled passions. Such fires, however, have ever been kindled by what is evil, cruel, savage, tyrannical. Hence, man must become better by becoming ever more evil. The evil is man's best strength." He advocates that cruelty be increased in order that life may become more intense. "The serpent must first become a dragon; then some one may become a hero by slaying the dragon. When large and powerful animals tear each other to pieces, there is a more glorious selection afterwards from the still larger and more powerful which survive, and the most splendid type is that largest and most powerful one which conquers all." This is simply teaching that might constitutes right, and that unchecked lust and passionate impulse for gratifying lust is the law of right living and of fulfilling one's mission.

Pantheistic monism regards death as the apotheosis of man. "God can never be anything but man's real self." "Man, in his essence, is himself God." This fact is fully realized in death. Death is the complete dissolution of the *ego*. The *ego* was a mere delusion. This delusion is dissipated by death. Man sacrifices his substantiality and *ego*, and at this price purchases the absolute supremacy of his self. By dying, man proves that his *ego* was "a mountebank acting the role of a king." Death is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the *ego*.<sup>7)</sup>

Pantheistic monism speaks of a redemption. To redeem means to recognize the illusory character of the *ego*, to dismiss the *ego* from one's sphere of interests, to elevate oneself so far above the *ego* as no longer to entertain any hopes, fears, or desires concerning it, and to consider oneself merely as an

7) Drews, *Die Religion*, pp. 445. 495. 513.

organ of the absolute and his super-individual ends. In this manner man assumes internally a changed attitude toward the evils in the world which continue unchanged. This attitude does not engender positive delight, but it removes tedium, or reduces it to a minimum. This is "an ideal redemption." However, inasmuch as the sorrow of man is the sorrow of God, man's redemption affects God. Accordingly, it is not God who redeems man, but God is redeemed by man.<sup>8)</sup>

Lastly, pantheistic monism is outspoken in its hatred and contempt of the Christian religion.

Ernst Horneffer regards the Christian religion as a mortal assault which the baser Asiatic race made upon the more refined race of Europe, whose first representatives were the Greeks. "What is Christianity? What is paganism? Not to believe in man, in the innate strength of man, is Christianity. To believe in man, in the self-sufficiency of man, in the nobility of every being, is paganism. In particular, faith in a revelation, in a fixed and abiding religious truth and religious authorities, is of Asiatic origin; for in the Orient there has prevailed since times immemorial the fettered spirit, that tight-laced mode of living within firm and unalterable conceptions and rigid immovable forms."<sup>9)</sup> Such a faith he regards as an impossibility, "Unding," on European soil. He calls Christianity Oriental atavism, barbarism, "eine Unkultur," *i. e.*, the opposite of culture.

Leonhard Veeh says: "There are foreign racial instincts enslaving the German mind. Above all, there is a dualistic theism corroding its marrow. War must be declared against these . . . elements foreign to Germanic culture."<sup>10)</sup>

We drop the curtain on this loathsome view of abysmal apparitions. We recognize the spirit who speaks through these vaporings, and we shudder.

Let us, however, not forget that pantheistic monism is not confined to Germany. Many of its ideas have been appro-

8) Repke, l. c., p. 19.

9) *Die kuenftige Religion*, p. 9.

10) Repke, p. 12.

priated and crudely reproduced in Christian Science. How much destruction of Christian faith it is working in our country in this form is apparent even to the casual observer. But also in its formidable scientific garb it has appeared in our country in the works of the Cairds and especially in Josiah Royce's *The Conception of God*, and *The World and the Individual*. Prof. Beckwith, indeed, holds that "a thorough-going pantheism has been precluded among English and American thinkers by a practical, common-sense quality of mind."<sup>11</sup>) But it is not safe to indulge such optimism in the land of the proverbial humbug.

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