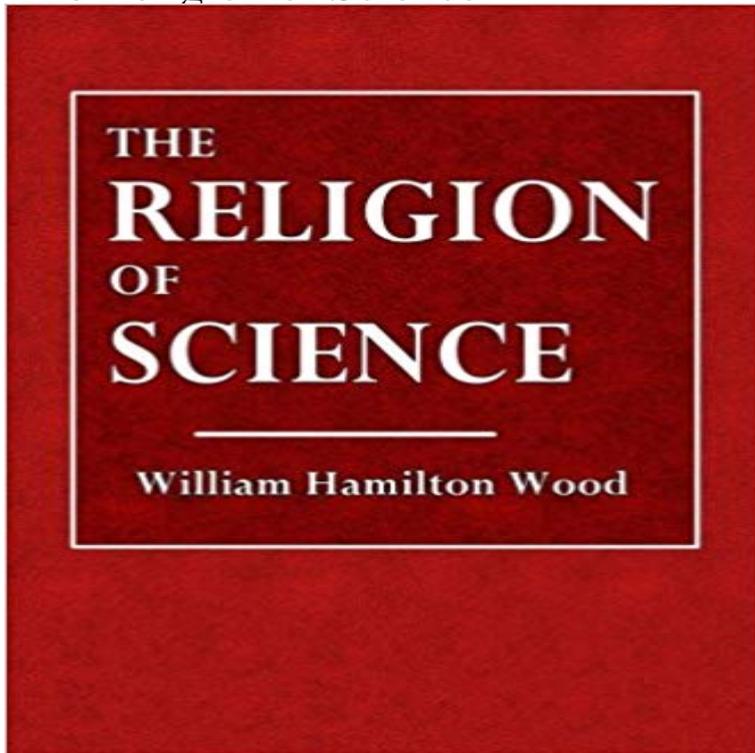


The Religion of Science



From the INTRODUCTION. The religious situation in America to-day seems far from being ideal. On the surface there is criticism, pessimism, belligerency, neglect, or honest bewilderment. The reasons for these conditions are not primarily moral as in the days of the Wesleys in England, but intellectual. This term, intellectual, is used in the sense of beliefs and would express the fact that men of to-day are searching for religious truth which they can believe. We believe that there is present to-day among us an active idealism, and moral qualities of inestimable value. But we feel hampered because of the absence of absorbing, captivating, soul-stirring, religious beliefs. The sources of this situation are plainly discernible. The middle of the last century marks the beginning of present religious thinking. At that time there was a distinct uniformity in the presentation of what Christianity is and teaches. The main items were: Hell fire; eternal damnation; the inspiration of the Bible; no salvation for the heathen; salvation by faith; the grace of God; sin; baptism; and heaven for those who believed and were faithful. Salvation was individual and not social. To doubt was one of the greatest of sins. A spirit of unrest and of revolt began then to express itself, which, when fortified by the acquisition of new knowledge has been functioning ever since. The concrete evidence of the working of this new spirit is the presence of the many varieties of present-day isms. There is the Mental Science movement initiated by P. Quimby now manifest in its two large branches, Christian Science and New Thought. There is Spiritualism, Mormonism, and all the others. But the three movements which have profoundly influenced religious thinking are: Evolution, the Higher Criticism and Socialism. The year 1859 witnessed the rebirth of the idea evolution and the revamping of the theory into its distinctive

form, organic evolution. The conquest of this idea and theory has been phenomenal, and has extended far beyond what sober scientists could have foreseen. The epochal moment in relation to religious thinking came when some men of science determined to leave their own field and venture into metaphysics, philosophy and even theology. These thinkers determined upon the establishment of science as one of the big three: theology, philosophy, science. This goal was reached but the accomplishment of the aim only seemed to whet the appetite for further conquest. As in the case of the camel and the tent, when science once found its head inside the tent of the intellectuals it decided to occupy the whole tent. Instead of being satisfied with a science-theology claim was made to the whole of theology and religion. A religion of science ensued which has now arrived at the point where it is declared to be the real Christianity. Unlike Christian Science, this new religion decided against external forms and organization and elected to live in and control modern religious thinking. This inner life was possible because it has become the fashion to accept evolution uncritically. It is almost taking ones life in his hands to venture a critical examination of this modern fetish. Unless, however, we mistake the signs of the times, there is setting in a strong tide away from this uncritical and worshipful attitude. This tendency is more marked among philosophers and the true scientists than among the religious scholars and leaders. The times now call for a religious and moral evaluation of the principles of science and the theory of evolution upon which this religion of science is based....

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