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### The Democracy of God

Earl Clement Davis

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Unity Church, Pittsfield, Mass. Sept, 25, 1910.

Subject the Democracy of God.

The are two sentences, neither of which is very ex-  
clearly understood, but which are often on the lips of men,  
that I wish to use this morning to suggest what I have to say.  
One is,- "God is a spirit , and they that worship him must  
worship hi in spirit and in truth. " The other is, "Ye can-  
not worship God and Mammon." The Greek word which is trans-  
lated spirit, is PNEUMA, It means Breath. We get our word  
Pneumonia from it and several others of the same nature. It  
does not signify a spirit entity, or a spirit being, but  
breath, or life. The greek phrase 'APHIENAI PNEUMA? means to  
give up the Ghost, to spend ones spirit, or to spend ones  
life , or to die. || The greek word, which is translated "in  
truth", is 'ALATHEIA' ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ <sup>and</sup> means "without res~~x~~ervation."

## Mammonas -2-

The Greek word, which is translated mammon, is the name of the Syrian god of riches, and is equivalent to the Greek God plutus, or the God of wealth. So the meaning of these two sentences is this,- God is life, and they that worship him must worship him ~~in~~ life and without reservation". Ye cannot worship God and Mammon. Ye cannot worship life and ~~xx~~ riches. One of these must be the master.

Not alone the fool but also the wise man has said in his heart, There is no God. I want to consider this morning the meaning of all the feelings that men have had concerning this idea of a God, and what bearing, what strength it has on us in our life to-day.

Let us divest our selves of all the traps and fixings of modern life and go back into the dim days of yore, when as naked savages our ancestors lived their wild and untutored

Each age has made its own God in <sup>the</sup> whose nature and character it has attempted to embody its own culture, developement, and standard of civilization. Men in all ages from the crude savage to what we are pleased to call the modern civilized man have felt the Baffling challenge of the ~~mystery~~ <sup>mystery</sup> of life and the relation of ~~the~~ men to each other and the universe in which they live. During all those years, centuries or ages, we have no reason to think that the real nature of the ~~universe~~ universe, seen or unseen, has changed. But we note as we ~~read~~ study the records of the past ~~that~~ that there has been a constant change in the nature and the character of the gods that men have made and worshipped as the embodiment and the interpretation of life. Each succeeding generation ~~and~~ or age has faced the same ultimate fact of reality, has passed through certain life experiences, has ~~examined~~ reflected and medit-

tated upon those experiences, and out of them has carved its image to serve at once as the symbol and ideal of its interpretation of the deeper and permanent meaning of human life. So we have ~~x~~ a clearly defined evolution of gods, beginning with the crudest conception of places and things inhabited by ~~xxxxxxx~~ <sup>good or</sup> evil spirits and continueing through the varied changes in the evolution of human society up to the present. In the early unorganized society of men placed their faith in a ~~myriad~~ <sup>myriad</sup> of good and eveil spirits. They sought to placate, or to avoid the evil spirits; and to court the favor of the good spirits. As, out of these vague chaotic beginnings of organized society, there gradually developed the tribe~~xxx~~ with its natural leader, so side by side with this growth in new social relations, there developed ~~xxxxx~~ a sililar change in the idea of gods. One powerful spirit gains control over



esting as the mirror of the genius of the jewish people, and the image of their idealism, than he is as the true revelation of that ultimate mystery ~~xxxxxxx~~ and power of life, which in all ages men have signified by the use of that symbolic word God. This is the point that I wish to bring out, not for its intellectual value but for its practical value, that in all ages, including the same process that is going on in our own age, men, in the face of this ultimate life mystery, have fashioned the God of their own times? Into his character, into his nature and his power they have woven the wisdom and the ideals of their life, coloring the fabric thus made with their deepest and most secret purposes. These gods thus made, and the interpretation of their relation to human life reflect in a very faithful manner the social and moral ideals of the people who made them. It follows from this fact

as a practical corollary for our own problems that the nature and character of Jehovah as pictured in the Jewish Bible is of value more as a revelation of the real genius of the children of Israel, than he is as a faithful and trustworthy revelation of the ~~real~~ nature and mystery of ~~life~~ of the universal life spirit. <sup>which he suggests.</sup> Only as we accept the principle <sup>that</sup> the experiences and reasonings of human life tend to approach the ultimate truth, ~~xxxx~~ can we conclude that the Jewish idea of God was in any way an adequate interpretation of the nature and essence of the real life spirit.

But in reply to this the man who believes in a supernatural religion, supernaturally revealed, will say that our knowledge comes not from experience and reflection upon experience, but through supernatural channels, and is marked with the trade mark of authority. To this all we can say is that such a supernatural religion, which is beyond our wisdom

and experience , is also beyond our use, for that knowledge which we cannot think, that truth which we cannot experience neither can we use.

In the various stages of Christianity <sup>also</sup> ~~even~~ this same process <sup>if God working</sup> has been going on, ~~and~~ While we have maintained the continuity of ~~thought~~ form in the use of the word God, we can by no means assert that the God as pictured by the pious man of the middle ages with his long army of heavenly lackeys, saints and other ~~para~~ accessories, is the same as the hard cruel god of Calvin or Luther, or the maudling, commercialized bribe taking God as pictured in <sup>ecclesiastical</sup> ~~the~~ some of the thought of our own time, and set up as an appeal to the decent and selfrespecting manhood of our times as an object of worship. Strive as hard as one may he cannot draw a picture of any of these, and make any one of them, or all of them together

look like the picture painted by the human loving ~~man~~ carpenter of Nazareth as his ideal of the great life mystery to which he conceived it to be his mission to bear witness in

life and without reservation." *Each age has made its own God in its own image, as its explanation of the life of it.*

But what is the great human need, the great human faith that is back of this age long process of the making of gods. ? Some will tell you that it has simply been the ~~rising~~ insidious work of self seeking priests, who were thus striving to gain a living in the world and to gain control over the ~~man~~ popular mind. That may be urged with ~~objection~~ some plausibility against the those priests whose efforts have been expended in the vain attempt of holding up dead Gods, or trying to make the dying live beyond their allotted time. But ~~when~~ when it comes to fashioning of new gods, to the embodiment of new ideals in <sup>To</sup> new interpretations of life, we have ~~another~~

another situation. That task calls for men, not men who are after power and an easy living, but men who are after the truth. Do you think that Christ was seeking priestly power ? Do you think that Savonarola was seeking priestly power ? Do you think that Darwin, brave worker in the making of the God of our own times was seeking for bread and meat ? Do you think that Theodore Parker , or Emerson were seeking bread or courting popular favor or power ? Any man who knows anything of history or life, knows that such an explanation of a ~~the-~~  
~~process~~ process that has been going on through all the known history of man is simply absurd. ~~#~~ But I will tell you what the real human need, the real human conviction is ~~that has been~~ behind all this great dramatic process, and is working in human life to-day as it never worked before. In spite of the fact that the long faced theologian will tell you that

that this <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ a vale of tears, and that this life is a thing evil and vile, and that we must free ourselves from its ensnaring allurements, in spite of the fact that the belated survival of a bygone age will tell you that humanity is under the curse of sin, and is entirely depraved, ~~and~~ that it can hope for nothing short of an eternal punishment as a reward for having been thrust into a <sup>godless</sup> ~~evil~~ life; in spite of all this unwholesome, morbid, offensive remains of a great and vigorous people, humanity as a whole laughs in their carriage-like faces, and dares to believe that life is not all a mockery, dares to believe that all these great human forces, these great dreams, these great hopes, these great sorrows, these great strivings, these great loves that fill the soul of humanity with a resistless power are in us because they belong there; that they have been born in our beings, and are growing and maturing in the human soul, because they <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~there~~.

## legitimate fruit of human life!

because the universe in which we live nurtures and nourishes such as these in our conscious lives, - because the great life spirit calls for them, and they have grown up out of the soil of the infinite past in response to the alluring warmth of ~~the great life spirit~~ of that which we dare to call the ~~spirit~~ Spirit of the Living God. The pathways of history are strewn with the remains ~~with~~ of dead Gods, but each one in his own time has been the living embodiment for a people or a race of this great conviction that the world in which we live is a world of integrity, and that the longings and hungerings of the human soul for a satisfying life shall be realized. Working from that same great human conviction to-day we are painting to day our God of democracy, fashioning it in the lines and colors and forms of our own hopes, ideals and purposes.



does not recognize its claim to be the master of ceremonies,  
is error, irreligious atheistic, and a menace to society. The  
good Calvinist is of the same mind, and likewise the pious  
one of the evangelistic type. I do not want to say anything  
about them, but I do want to say <sup>that</sup>, if atheism consists in refusal:  
ing to worship a God who crushes the power of reason from  
the soul of man, I cannot worship such a God, I do not believe  
that it gives any right idea of the real life spirit. Nor can  
I give my allegiance to that God that dooms the millions to  
eternal misery for no fault of their own. I do not believe  
that I live in a universe dedicated to such a preposterous  
mockery. Nor can I believe that the God of the Church of  
Commerce, who accepts the bribe of buildings and charity

and endowment funds as a propitiation for wrongs <sup>inflicted upon</sup> humanity <sup>men</sup>.

*is a true picture of the life spirit.*

I do not believe that a God who accepts a bribe of any kind

is a correct picture of the real nature of the great life spirit . I cannot believe that a God fashioned by the people of feudalism, or the God fashioned by the people of commercialism or the god fashioned by the people of industrialism, is a ~~not~~ correct image of the deepest and truest spirit of our times. I have no faith in those gods, they disgust me, as I believe they disgust you. But I do believe in the God which is true to the spirit of our times. I believe in the God of democracy . I believe in the democracy of God. I believe that men today who have <sup>the</sup> faith that we may answer the age long prayer for ~~its~~ daily bread, men who have faith that we may yet attain our eternal longings for justice, that we may ~~yet~~ deliver ourselves from evil, men who have faith that human life is divine, and that the deepest richest possibilities of the human soul shall be attained, I believe in them, in their faith, and

*slavery*

*or a God fashioned by the people of*

their unmade God. When I see humanity looking up from its tool, its want, its misery, its evil, and, with a look of hope on its face and the ring of faith in its voice, send out its challenging call to the building of the God of democracy according to the principles of the democracy of God, I feel as if I must take the shoes from off my feet for I know that the place whereon I am standing is holy ground.

No, I do not believe in a far off God who rules the world of men, as a king rules his empire, no I do not believe in a God who has made us ignorant without the capacity of ~~us~~ learning, or evil without the power of God. No, I do not believe in a God who has filled our beings <sup>with</sup> ~~us~~ longings, ~~and~~ hopes ~~s and~~ dreams and loves, only to have us learn through the experiences of life that they are hollow mockeries. But I do believe that our hunger for a rich satisfying life is ration-

al, I do believe that our dreams of justice are right, I do believe that our cravings for wholesome whole-souled human fellowship are founded on the nature of our beings, and shall be satisfied. I do believe in the eternal sanctity of human life in ~~all~~ its relations. Yes, and when I sometimes get discouraged over some of the shallow mockeries of life, and long ~~for~~ <sup>to</sup> humanity leap forward to its own, I am strengthened and given courage by the inexplicable conviction that in and ~~xxx~~ through all the surging, boiling turmoil of human life, the great life spirit is working towards the consumation of those very hopes and loves that are dearer to ~~me~~ than life itself. Call that great mystery what you may, law, ~~life~~, matter, ~~xxx~~ force, tendency, or God, there ~~is~~ it is. We are the fruits of its manifold workings, children of its spirit, filled with the esseense of its nature. As I marvel over the strange ~~xxxx~~

vicissitudes of human life, the tremendous products of the human mind, and the baffling mystery of it all, I ~~am~~ fain to say that God is life, we, who whosrip him must worship ~~i~~ him in life and withour reservation.