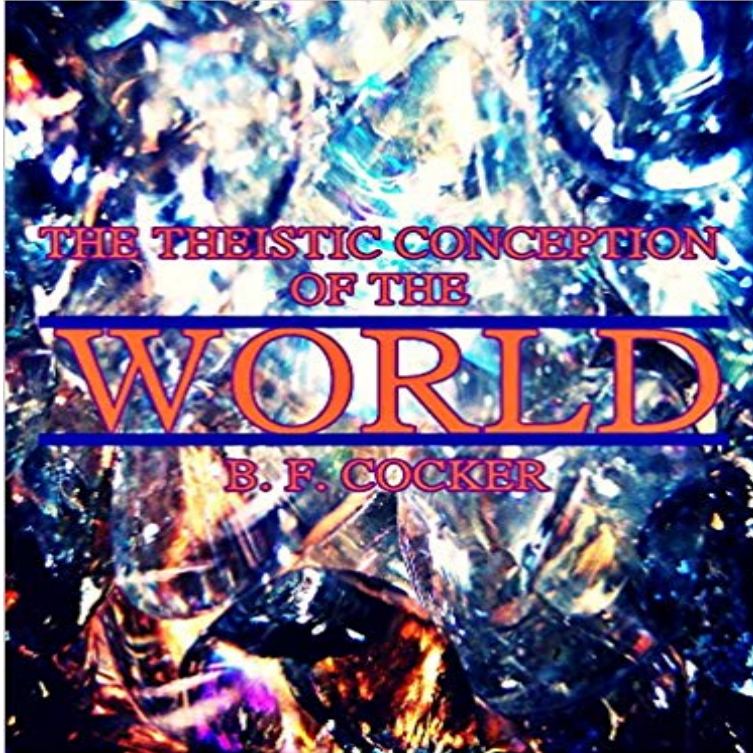


The Theistic Conception of the World (Interesting Ebooks)



Example in this ebook The present volume was announced in the preface to Christianity and Greek Philosophy as nearly ready for publication under the title of Christianity and Modern Thought. Several considerations have induced the author to delay its appearance, the most influential of which has been the desire to await the culmination among a class of self-styled advanced thinkers of what they have been pleased to call the tendency of modern thought. No extraordinary sagacity was needed to foresee the issue, or to predict that it must soon be reached. The transition has been rapid from negative criticism of the Christian religion to direct assault upon the very foundation of all religion the personality and providence of God. Distrust of a supernatural revelation, and denial of all authority to the teaching of the sacred Scriptures, has been succeeded by doubt of the existence of God in the proper import of that sacred name. The Theistic postulate is degraded to the rank of a mere hypothesis, which is pronounced inadequate to explain the universe. A law-governed Cosmos, full of life and reason, eternal and infinite, must now take the place of a personal God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe. This is the New Faith which is to supersede the Old. The question, Are we still Christians? has received a final answer in the words of Strauss: If we would speak as honest, upright men, we must acknowledge we are no longer Christians. And in giving this answer he is confident he speaks in the name of a large and rapidly increasing number of men who once believed in the truth of Christianity The We I mean no longer counts only by thousands. The further question, Have we still a Religion? (understanding by religion the recognition and veneration of God, and the belief in a future life) is also answered in the negative. Religion is a delusion, to abolish which ought to be the endeavor of every man

whose eyes are open to the truth. The only question which now remains for the speculative intellect is, What is our conception of the Universe?the conception which henceforth must take the place of a personal God. The answer of Strauss is explicit, and in his estimation final: The conception of the Cosmos, instead of that of a personal God as the finality to which we are led by perception and thought, or as the ultimate fact beyond which we can not proceed, ... assumes the more definite shape of matter infinitely agitated, which, by differentiation and integration, develops itself to ever higher forms and functions, and describes an everlasting circle by evolution, dissolution, and then fresh evolution. This may be called pantheism or atheism, materialism or idealism, just as we please; Strauss has no solicitude about mere names. If this be considered pure, unmitigated materialism, I will not dispute it. In fact, I have always tacitly regarded the contrast so loudly proclaimed between materialism and idealism (or by whatever term one may designate the view opposed to the former) as a mere quarrel about words. They have a common foe in the dualism which pervaded the conception of the world throughout the Christian era, dividing man into body and soul, his existence into time and eternity, and opposing an eternal Creator to a created and perishable universe. To be continue in this ebook.....

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