

demonstration, whether or not we are working with temporal dynamite; and inasmuch as pragmatism considers none of these things: I wish to suggest that it is not altogether admirable when applied to politics.

At first sight it must appear ungrateful to quarrel with a school that proclaims faith as the greatest of human forces. For no one could ask a better inspiration. But what is the faith that is to be this force? Here pragmatism is silent, giving us a handle, but no tool. Strange, then, that its most brilliant exponent should begin his lectures upon it by this quotation from Mr. Chesterton. "There are some people—and I am one of them—who think that the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe. We think that for a general about to fight an enemy it is important to know the enemy's numbers, but still more important to know the enemy's philosophy. We think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether in the long run anything else affects matters." Where so much is granted to theory, what, may we ask, is left to practicality?

In point of fact, however, the quotation from Mr. Chesterton is most inapplicable to pragmatism, which usually is careful to disclaim any attitude so superior, so dogmatic, as the theoretical. It is unsparing in its criticism of the absolute because the absolute does not achieve. It has an utter contempt for all the treatises "on God, and Love, and Being, helplessly existing in their monumental vacuity." There is, indeed, a certain amount of justification for this standpoint. A philosophy, above all a political philosophy, which exalts the human will but never dallies with short cuts to human victory, which bids men enter by the door and not climb up some other way, is apt to leave considerably comfortless those children of men who could perhaps be wiser in their generation than the children of light. Idealism mends no broken hearts. It is no lasting substitute for bread and butter. If we seek in it the omnipotent prescriptions of quackery, we shall not find them. But while it cannot profess to cure the evils of