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HAS CHRISTIANITY FAILED?

A SPIRITUALIST GIVES A STIMULATING ANSWER TO AN OFT-ASKED QUESTION

By W. H. EVANS

THE present condition of the world is causing heart-searching in many people, and also some doubt of the efficacy of the Christian Religion and the use and value of the Church.

The Church represents an organised system of belief about the life and mission of Jesus rather than *His* Christianity. This is often expressed in the phrase that after nearly 2,000 years of Christianity it is terrible that the world should be in the state it is. The implication is that Christianity has failed.

But we have not had nearly 2,000 years of Christianity; what we have had is nearly 2,000 years of Paganism with a thin veneer of Christian beliefs. If the world had become really Christian, the present catastrophe could never have happened. It is the absence of Christianity from which we are suffering.

The Christianity we have had, and still have, is not that of Jesus, but an interpretation of it given by the many Christian sects. In its beginnings, Christianity was mainly an individual matter, and its cry was, "Repent," which means, "Change your outlook."

It is clear that the world has not changed its outlook, but is still governed by the instincts of the jungle. The Churches have endeavoured to refine these and give an air of culture to what are really ugly things; and in so doing have made unworthy compromises with the conditions they find in the world. One has only to listen to the speeches of leaders of the Churches to see they are trying to do what Jesus said was impossible—trying to serve God and the World.

Now, although this is true, I do not think we can really blame these leaders. As well blame a man for being blind. A man entering the Church because his family thinks it an honourable calling will very probably be a good man according to his light; but unless he has experienced that repentance which changes outlook on life, he will be nominally but not really Christian. Hence, he will honestly think that the maintenance of the organisation he serves is essential to the promulgation of Christianity. Loyalty to organisation has separated the Church from its Master; and pursuit of the lesser loyalty has resulted

in those compromises that attract the criticism of people outside the Churches.

What was the mission of Jesus? It was to reveal a Way of Life, a way that would bring more abundant life. It is a way so different from our usual mode of life, so full of denial of what we think necessary, that it is regarded as impossible even by many professing Christians. For The Way demands a complete break with the ethics of the jungle, and a change of outlook requiring a reconstruction of our social order—a reconstruction that will make the Way of the Christ as natural as our present system makes its opposite. Thus, the sayings of Jesus, extreme and difficult as they seem, are for individuals and nations. They demand that we abandon the way of the flesh for the way of the spirit. In this respect, the Way of Christ is a promise and a prophecy.

I don't suppose Jesus expected the world to abandon at once its animal heredity and rise to a higher plane. He knew that men have to grow towards the light; that when men reach a certain state of spiritual realisation they find compromises with the world impossible and whole-heartedly adopt in its completeness the Christian ethic. The more individuals there are who do this, the nearer becomes its possibility of being translated into social action.

It is interesting to note that the trend of social evolution in democratic countries is towards the Christian ideal. There is in those countries a struggle between those who believe in "the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest" in commercial life, and those who have the vision to see that this kind of civil war leads to greater war. Fortunately, the larger vision has many followers who are striving, even in the midst of the present terrible war, to lift the world to a higher moral plane. If they can maintain and increase what influence they have, great good may come out of the present struggle. If the instincts of the jungle prove the stronger, then the state of the world will be worsened and the power of Christianity as a civilising force will suffer a deadly set-back.

Why is it our usual way of life seems so easy to us? Because it falls into line with social usage. Competition has been so exalted, and so many benefits have apparently come out of it, that it has become our accepted way of life. We regard competition as necessary—that is, we accept a condition of war, for that is what competition really means—as right and essential to our life. Amidst this emerges the idea of co-operation which has many adherents. Even those who believe in competition abandon it when they see that it is leading to commercial suicide; witness the growth of combines and trusts. So we have the struggle of ideas; and, because we are born into it, accept it as part of our environment and support either competition or co-operation according to our vision. If we accept competition as right, to struggle and fight seems natural and right. Present-day civilisation

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reinforces the instincts of the jungle and gives them a quasi-scientific support by quoting Darwin. How can Christianity flourish in such an environment? Only amongst those whose individuality is stronger than the power of their environment. Now, struggle is natural to us, but I do not believe it need be painful. Owing to the low state of our moral and spiritual being, we find it does cause pain; but, rightly viewed, that pain is birth-travail, the struggle of the kingly man to emancipate himself from the power of his lower nature. When that is accomplished, the struggle goes on to a higher plane, involving no pain, but rather the joy of discovery.

It is a mistake to exalt pain and suffering as is sometimes done. They are not things in themselves, but results that pass away. But unless they lead to higher life they can only lead to more pain. The man who has conquered, as Jesus did, is master of circumstances. He moulds and uses them; and if in so doing he finds it necessary to go through Gethsemane and carry the Cross, he does it, not as a slave, but as a freed man. In fact, Calvary is a triumph revealing the power of The Way.

But we have not seen it as such, we have wasted our

emotions in pity for a suffering that was healing and strengthening to the One who endureth it.

How, then, may Christianity be transformed from its present shackled condition to one of freedom and life?

First, it must possess the hearts of professing Christians and make them Christians in fact. It must not be regarded as an impossible religion, but as the only Way of Life that can give strength and freedom.

Next, there must follow that social reconstruction that will create the conditions favourable to its way of life, so that it will be as natural for men to be brotherly as it is now for them to be competitive.

That, I believe, will be seen in due time; how soon depends upon how many are willing and ready to accept the Christ-way of life. Once create a vocal public opinion in favour of the higher way, it will come; not without struggle with those who are blind to it, but slowly and surely the ground will be won.

Has Christianity failed? No. In the collective sense it has never been tried. But individuals who have fully accepted it know that the Christianity of Jesus is a glorious success.

WANTED: A NEW REFORMATION

By M. A. ST. CLAIR STOBART

ALL religions base their teaching upon and derive their influence from authority of some kind. And the decline of a religion follows when the Authority upon which it was based becomes discredited. Recognition of this fact helps us to understand a reason for the declining influence of the Protestant Churches to-day.

The Christian religion was based on the Authority of a Great Personality. Unfortunately, in course of time the Christian Church, grown arrogant with increasing power, substituted as its warrant of Authority its own Church Councils. Authority for its teaching was thus transferred to the Church which, through its Popes, claimed infallibility.

The Reformation of the 16th century was a revolt against this Authority of the Church. Luther saw the *reductio-ad-absurdum* of the situation revealed by the system of Indulgences—the system by which the people were tricked to believe that they could purchase forgiveness of sins, and release from Purgatory the souls of the dead if friends on earth would chink a coin into a money-box. And when, on the eve of a Church festival, Luther boldly nailed his 95 theses, or arguments against the principle of Indulgences, on the door of the parish church of All Saints, at Wittenberg, he challenged thereby the authority of the Church and inaugurated Protest-antism.

But, since Authority of some kind is essential for effective teaching, the Protestants substituted for the Authority of the Church, the Authority of the Bible.

And at this moment we are concerned with the fact that, in its turn, this Authority has been effectually challenged. Biblical scholars and exegesists have swept the ground from under the feet of the Protestant Churches, with the result that they can no longer claim the full Authority of Scripture for much of their teaching. This has now to stand the challenge of impartial criticism and it is breaking down under the test.

In this respect, the Catholic unreformed portion of the Church is more fortunately placed than her half-sister; for, while the former has been able to justify for her followers continued faith in the traditional Authority of their own Church, it is no longer possible for the Protestants to disclaim the findings of experts as to the fallibility of their source of Authority—the Bible. And, unless some other source of Authority is available, the Protestant Churches will before long be ringing their bells in vain.

But is there available any other source of Authority upon which the Protestant Churches could legitimately base their teaching of Christianity? We maintain that the Reformation of the 16th century was only the first

half of a Reformation, which could be completed to-day if the Churches would open their minds to a new interpretation of their source of Authority, the Bible—an interpretation suggested by the youngest of the sciences, Psychic Science.

We suggest that, as the Authority of a supposedly infallible Church gave place to the Authority of a supposedly infallible Book, the latter should to-day be replaced by an Authority of a more permanent nature, the Authority of Science, Psychic Science. This interpretation would restore the Bible to its original status as a Book, by no means infallible, but containing valuable records of varying degrees of trustworthiness concerning the opening phases of Christianity.

Survival is either a biological fact of scientific import or it is nothing. And if it is a fact which can be vouched for by Science, it could be accepted without demur by the Churches as Authority of an unimpeachable and permanent nature for their teaching on the great subject of Life beyond the grave.

Science, Psychic Science, alone can provide the Churches with a warrant of Authority for the teaching of Christianity as presented in the Bible, because Science, Psychic Science, alone can restore the original meaning of scriptural records and transpose them from a category of unique and unbelievable miracles to a category of phenomena which are adequately explained and corroborated by analogous phenomena in our world of to-day.

Why, then, are the Churches so reluctant to accept this Authority which would reinstate, though on a different footing, their sole source of information on the subject of their main concern?

Is it not perhaps partly due to two misconceptions: to the supposition that acceptance of Spiritualist beliefs involves rejection of Christianity, this misconception being due to the publicity obtained by Spiritualists who hold those views—Spiritualists who were, however, anti-Christian before they became Spiritualists; and partly to the fact that, by many of its adherents, Spiritualism has been wrongly labelled—regarded as a religion, in rivalry with the religion of the Churches, instead of as a science which should and could be an aid to religion?

But the acknowledgment by science of Survival as a biological fact should counteract these misconceptions and enable the Churches to turn with unprejudiced minds to the serious consideration of accepting the Authority of Science.

Spiritualism—epitomizing in its main beliefs, *Survival*—is the lifeblood of Religion. But lifeblood needs a body in which to function. Spiritualism cannot be both the lifeblood and the body, and surely the body in which

(Continued at foot of next column)

NOTHING TO FEAR IN DEATH

MY friend, there is nothing to fear in Death. It is no harder than a trip to a foreign country, the first trip, to one who has grown oldish and settled in the habits of his own more or less narrow corner of the world.

When a man comes out here, the strangers whom he meets seem no more strange than the foreign peoples seem to one who first goes among them. He does not always understand them; there, again, his experience is like a sojourn in a foreign country. Then, after a while, he begins to make friendly advances and to smile with the eyes. The question, "where are you from?" meets with a similar response to that on earth. One is from California, another is from Boston, another is from London. This is when we meet on the high roads of travel; for there are lanes of travel over here, where the souls go up and down as on the earth, . . .

There are sluggards and dull people here, as with you. There are also brilliant and magnetic people, whose very presence is rejuvenating.

It seems absurd to say that we wear clothes, the same as you do; but we do not seem to need so many . . . Heat and cold do not matter much to me now, though I remember at first being rather uncomfortable by reason of the cold. But that is past . . .

It is easier for children to adjust themselves to the changed life than it is for grown persons. Very old people are inclined to sleep a good deal, while children come out with great energy, and bring with them the same curiosity that they had in earth-life. There are no violent changes. The little ones grow up, it is said, about as gradually and imperceptibly as they would have grown on earth. The tendency is to fulfil the normal rhythm . . .

It is not true that we cannot keep our thoughts to ourselves if we are careful to do so. We can guard our secrets, if we know how. That is done by suggestion, or laying a spell. It is, though, much easier here than on earth to read the minds of others.

We seem to communicate with one another in about the same way that you do; but I find, as time goes by, that I converse more and more by powerful and projected thought than by the moving of the lips. At first I always opened my mouth when I had anything to say; it is easier now not to do so, though I sometimes do it still by force of habit.

(From the book, *Letters From a Living Dead Man*, written down by Elsa Barker, published by Rider and Son, 1915).

(Continued from previous page)

it should function is the Church, whose lifeblood has been ebbing at an accelerating rate.

The function of the Churches is to conserve spiritual values and moral standards—the abiding elements of all religion. These functions are not inherent in the exercise of Spiritualism, whose functions are of a scientific rather than a religious nature.

Spiritualism, at its best, is performing a great service to the world by its demonstration that Survival is a fact which can be vouched for by biology. But a religious reformation is not within the scope of its work.

The Churches, on the other hand, have to-day a unique opportunity of completing the Reformation begun in the 16th century. They could inaugurate a religious renaissance of world-wide import. They have to-day the opportunity of establishing their teaching on the Authority, not of a Church, or of a Book, but on the unimpeachable authority of a Science which restores the original status and true significance of those portions of the Book from which their teaching has been derived.

In accepting this Authority, the Churches would be following the advice of the great 16th century Humanist-Reformer, Erasmus, who said that "By identifying the New Learning with heresy, you make Orthodoxy synonymous with Ignorance."

A MESSAGE TO THE BEREAVED

Sir Oliver Lodge issued the following "Message to the Bereaved" during the progress of the World War of 1914-18, shortly after the death of his own son, Raymond, on the battlefield. It is equally appropriate now, in the midst of yet another World War.

THE amount of mourning and suffering throughout Europe at the present time is something terrible to contemplate. The loss of those who have gone over is not to be minimised: violent death while young is a serious calamity—a man-made tragedy with dire consequences—and lamentation is natural and inevitable.

But it must be remembered that, from the point of view of the individuals who have gone over, there are many mitigating circumstances. They have done their duty; they have sacrificed a useful career here; they have given up all they possessed; and it will be requited to them. By such death, a burden of sin is lightened; some atonement is made. Good friends are waiting for them; their help can be utilised, and is much wanted, for their fellows who are coming over; and they themselves will continue in the joy of service.

They would like their friends here to recognise that, and not to mourn them unduly; above all, not to consider them to have gone out of existence, as extinguished and no longer real. Sorrow at their departure is inevitable, but grief which is excessive causes them pain.

They did their work here, they will do it there; and in good time reunion may confidently be looked forward to. If the truth of these matters were only clearly and widely realised, the mourning would be not only more resigned, but actually more helpful.

Death alone is not to man the greatest evil, and in some sort they are happy in the opportunity of their death. This ought to be recognised by those who survive, and we should not grieve unduly for those who have only gone on before us.

(From the book, *Letters from Sir Oliver Lodge*, compiled and annotated by J. Arthur Hill, author of *Experiences with Mediums, Towards Cheerfulness*, etc., first published in 1932 by Cassell, now out of print).

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EDITOR

- - - GEORGE H. LETHEN

AS WE SEE IT

"TESTAMENT OF IMMORTALITY"

IN a book which he has entitled *The Testament of Immortality* (Faber and Faber, Ltd., 8/6) an author who hides his identity behind the initials "N.G." has brought together a very fine collection of passages, in prose and verse, in which Immortality is presented as a Speculation, as a Hope, and as a Certainty. The author explains that he made the collection during his search "for some words of comfort after a sore bereavement," and without any thought of publication, which was pressed upon him by friends to whom the manuscript was submitted, so that—as Mr. T. S. Eliot says in his preface—"it might serve a similar purpose for others." Certainly in these days of sudden and painful bereavement, there is need for every word, written or spoken, which can bring comfort and hope to mourners or inspire with courage the hearts and minds of the multitudes of men and women who are called upon to face danger and death by day and by night as part of their war-time experience.

Some indication of the author's nationality and identity is given in his words of Dedication which read: "To the memory of my beloved son Nitu, who came to our tavern for 21 years and then passed on to the eternal journey. 'He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;'" also in the fact that many of the quotations are from the sacred books of India.

NOTE OF CERTAINTY

Notwithstanding the note of Certainty sounded in the Dedication, the majority of the passages—all of them beautiful and helpful—quoted in the Anthology take the reader no further than Hope that there may be a Life beyond Death and that reunion may be possible. Their call is for Faith, not Knowledge:

"Faith is the means by which we go to seek undying treasure;

Faith alone reveals the way to Deliverance."

But the note of Certainty keeps recurring. There are the well-known lines by Longfellow:

"There is no Death! What seems so is Transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the Life Elysian
Whose portal we call Death."

There is also the less known but beautiful words of Shelley:

"Peace, peace! He is not dead, he doth not sleep,
He hath awaken'd from the dream of life;
'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife."

Looking through the book, Spiritualists will find various passages which put into words some of the facts they have ascertained about Death and Survival—some by writers well known to them, some by writers with whose work they may not be so well acquainted. Thus, Lyman Abbott is quoted as saying:

"Life is continuous; there is no break; there is not a sleep and a future awakening; there is not a shadow-land from which, by and by, the spirits will be summoned to be reunited to the embalmed corpses. Life

goes on without a single break . . . The thread in the weavers' loom is not cut; it simply disappears from human vision."

CONTINUITY OF EXPERIENCE

Then—in contrast to the out-of-date belief in a fixed condition being reached immediately after death—we find G. Lownes Dickinson saying:

"The immortality which I hold to be desirable, and which I suggest to you as desirable, is one in which a continuity of experience analogous to that which we are aware of here is carried on into a life after death, the essence of that life being the continuous unfolding, no doubt through stress and conflict, of those potentialities of good of which we are aware here as the most significant part of ourselves."

Most of the authors quoted in the Anthology speak of "Immortality" as if it were synonymous with "Survival"—thus disregarding a distinction which Spiritualists have learned to regard as important. But there are exceptions.

SPIRITUALIST AUTHORS

Only two authors are quoted who can be clearly described as Spiritualists—Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. J. A. Findlay. Both emphasise the Continuity of Life. Mr. Findlay says:

"Death is but the name given to the door through which we enter, to reach another sphere of existence. What appears a dream between the shores of birth and death is a great reality, and though we seem to stand upon the verge of crumbling time, to love, to hope, and disappear, yet it is the greatest of life's many certainties that each individual life will never die, because each one of us is part of the Divine Mind."

Another note—the note of the scientist who distinguishes between the Man and his bodily instrument—is sounded in the quotation from Sir Oliver Lodge's writings, which reads:

"Death, so far from being an end, is not even an interruption of continuity; it is an episode in continuous existence, an adventure through which every individual has to pass. The Body is not the Man but his instrument, a mechanism which his own real self gradually constructed and more and more inhabited during the period of its incarnation in matter. But, when set free from the flesh, his more unhampered, more real, more wakeful, more intelligent, more hopeful existence begins."

AN OMISSION

As we see it, the book has many merits and only one serious defect—it contains no indication that Certainty of Survival can be, and is, based on solid evidence, as distinct from Speculation or Hope, so that readers may well question the grounds upon which Hope and assertions of Certainty are based. Yet, Sir Oliver Lodge might have been quoted as saying that his Certainty was based on evidence carefully examined by himself, and that he had satisfied himself that the evidence was scientifically sound and reliable. Mr. Findlay could have been quoted in a similar sense, and possibly some of the other authors included in the Anthology. Even if, for any reason, "N.G." did not wish to indicate the psychic nature of the evidence, he could have given his readers assurance that such evidence exists; so that those who failed to find satisfaction in Hope, or even in unsupported assertions of Certainty, could, if they wished, make further enquiry.

It is a feature of the age that, on the subject of Survival, numbers of people have ceased to be impressed by calls to believe or by mere assertion, whether from pulpit or press; they want, at least, to be assured that evidence exists; and had "N.G." given this assurance, as he easily might have done, he would have added greatly to the value of a really valuable and attractive Anthology.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE WAR

By H. ERNEST HUNT

MANY people are asking where Spiritualism stands in this present crisis, and whether Spiritualists have any message to give the world. I think they have.

The central point of Spiritualism is the proven fact of the Survival of the Soul; this is its one definite teaching and pronouncement without ambiguity or qualification. The soul of a man survives the loss of his physical body, and obviously it must survive in a "world" to correspond with its super-physical nature. This super-physical world, concurrent with and interpenetrating this, we term the next, but it is only "next" in the sense that our engagement with it follows upon our disengagement with this present realm.

A single world might conceivably be accidental, but two sequential worlds, with our own lives sharing both, could not rationally be considered as two accidents; they bespeak purpose, plan, and design. This design is assuredly not that of mortal man, so we are driven to postulate a Divine Designer, for whom we need no better name than God.

God therefore has planned these sequential worlds upon certain principles which we recognise as Nature's laws. These condition our physical lives, and it is impossible for us to contract out of them. A study of the course of human lives also assures us that there are corresponding laws in the realm of Mind, to which we are bound to conform; and the probability is that there are similar ordinances in the realm of Spirit. Spiritualists believe that this is so.

The observed purpose of life, in the long view, is the development of evolution in the direction of Spirit; for humanity tacitly acknowledges that the Saint and Sage are higher in the rising scale than the burglar or the swindler. To this end, life continually interacts with its environment, which, according to law, is consistent in its reactions.

Since environment is consistent, the variable factor must be the man himself, and we are given a limited measure of free-will; for without choice there can be neither responsibility nor progress. Those courses of conduct which are in line with our evolutionary growth produce harmonious reactions; those opposed to it produce disharmony, pain, trouble, and disaster. This is the backbone of the Moral Law, with right and wrong on either side.

The same principle holds with nations; policies that conduce to the world's welfare promote happiness, and those opposed to it result in trouble, disorder, and chaos. In the war conditions of to-day, chaos is already with us, because the world is effectively materialistic in its philosophy, and therefore non-spiritual. But this result is entirely logical and consistent, arising from the policies of the world at large. Sooner or later the nations will be compelled to learn, and to revise their philosophy so as to produce less painful results. They will be shepherded anew into the paths of Spirit, and evolution will resume its interrupted progress. The ultimate issue of the war thus is certain.

So far, I suppose most Spiritualists will be with me. But I personally am compelled to go much farther, having now spent several years familiarising myself with what is known as the "Great Law," a modern spiritual revelation reinterpreting the Christian thesis. It has a mathematical backing which very much appeals to me, for here are new and verifiable data to act as sound credentials for the information.

Their effect is, firstly, to indicate Reincarnation, or a chain of successive human lives, as a mode of evolution. The Adam (B.C. 4184) Son of God, incarnates to speed up the long, slow climb of humanity's million years or so. He reincarnates as Jesus Christ, the second Adam, or Adam redivivus; the former typifying the "Fall" into matter, and the other its "Redemption" from the thrall of rebirth, the overcoming of the last enemy.

This "speeding up" influence was centred in the Hebrew nation, and involved a segregation from the surrounding pagan tribes with their immoral rites and psychic black magic. This is the reason for the prohibitions in the Bible which are now mistakenly cited against Spiritualism. Eventually, the Hebrew tribes were divided into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah; from the latter derives the modern Jew, and from the former the modern Britisher or Anglo-Saxon.

Certain promises are on record in the Bible to Israel, which are now clearly in process of being fulfilled to Britain and in no sense whatever to Jewry. This war is between the principles of Christ and those of anti-Christ, of evolution or retrogression, and the final issue is never for a moment in doubt. But the modern Israel (or more correctly Ish-ril, the "man of the right hand") must to itself be true.

THE "LATTER DAYS"

These are the "latter days" referred to in the New Testament; and men, nations, and policies are being winnowed and tried as by fire. There are even hints of some orientation of the physical world which would, literally, make "all things new." Nothing is haphazard, everything is planned, though not by ourselves. The key to the plan lies in the reinterpreted Bible.

The evil is running to its end and a new era is on the way, and the personality of Jesus Christ is the hinge upon which the whole process turns. As matters proceed, it is likely that the world will suffer more disillusion and trouble as the material landmarks topple one by one. At long last, chastened by disaster, mankind will come to recognise the essentially spiritual nature of life, with the Godhead as Supreme Spirit, and Jesus Christ as the divine Master of Men.

I can therefore see no reason for dismay or loss of confidence and hope. Whatever happens, important as it may be to us as individuals, must be looked upon as part of the great unfolding plan; for ourselves it is at most a question of "here" or "there," and never the end. There is great trouble in the world, for learning is generally painful, and it is difficult to see why any of us should be immune. But the measure of our Spiritualism is exhibited in our fortitude and comprehension, in our quietness and strength, and in the ability to discern the larger Spiritual issues.

For Spiritualism itself, I believe that its survival value will lie in dissociating itself from the anti-Christian bias which is exhibited in certain quarters, and in an active acknowledgment of the paramount position of Jesus Christ in this His own world.

MISTAKES CORRECTED

THERE were, unfortunately, several mistakes in the wording of Arthur Clough's poem published at the end of the article by Miss H. A. Dallas in our issue of October 24th. Several readers have drawn attention to the mistakes and asked that a correct version should be published as follows:

"Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth—
And as things have been, they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers;
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright."

2—CLARION CALL TO RELIGION, SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

By J. CECIL MABY

FOR modern war, there can be little doubt that scientific progress, and, still more, scientists themselves, are much to blame; since their well-meaning efforts only put dangerous weapons into the hands of unscrupulous men, enabling them to wield a power out of all proportion to their natural capacity, thus coercing the masses in an unprecedented way; but immature scientific theories have also temporarily undermined the whole spiritual foundation of religious faith—pending a general acceptance of the new witness of Spiritualism and Psychical Research. Scientists, therefore, stand indicted of a great, however unintentional, crime against society; and, so far, all that they have done to try to right the many diseases, social problems and neuroses that their discoveries have indirectly caused, has been to produce various material palliatives of purely local and temporary efficacy.

Whereas what is most urgently needed is *not* more medicines, surgical appliances, labour-saving devices, artificial fertilisers, synthetic substitutes, new plant species, and so forth—additional complications that should not be needed in a well regulated life—but, rather, such things as schooling of the public in hygiene, eugenical breeding, physical culture and, above all, more widespread knowledge of human psychology and of the motive principles of family and social relations.

What we all need is a better understanding of the strange workings of our own minds and how to keep them normal and healthy: then civil commotions and international wars would quickly become impossible—the majority of men would be too sane and wise ever to let them happen.

Perverted mechanistic science lies at the roots of the entire modern unrest, as well as of Hitler's war machine in particular. And had statesmen had a better understanding of psychology, sociology and past human history, the Great War of 1914 to 1918 might have been the last. What the world requires of modern science, therefore, is an improvement of the Biological, as opposed to the purely mechanistic sciences, such as Physics, Chemistry and Mechanics. For it is worse than useless for man to possess supreme control over physical and mechanical forces if he cannot first regulate his own mind and passions; and wisdom, even of an apparently simple and "primitive" kind, is vastly more important than a surfeit of wits and ingenuity.

Again, if the Church and our official Philosophers had not lost their own faith and sound principles, and so let their pupils run amok, all might yet have been well, despite the advances of Science. The teachers and leaders in general are, therefore, to blame for having lost their grip and spread false doctrines—materialistic and unspiritual and hence, in the end, immoral and dangerous, doctrines which quickly spread and subverted the masses. For both philosophy and religion, as typically preached, have been ethically dead in the West for some two centuries, despite a spark of vital reaction that has flamed up here and there from time to time. And without these things the people perish like plants growing in soil and air that possess all the necessary foodstuffs, yet lacking water.

Thus, both public and private life have become increasingly degraded, as exemplified by the general tone of the daily press, the radio (including British radio), and some of the unnatural obscenities of modern pictorial art and music, which any psychologist worth his salt can at once trace to morbid and pathological origins. And the so-called emancipation of women, though it has vastly improved their beauty, intelligence and physical fitness, has played a large part in the recent decline, owing to unsettlement of the home and the fancies of most young women regarding their

"rights" to personal careers (rather than marriage) all kinds of excessive leisure and extravagances that their husbands' incomes can seldom support, irresponsibility towards children, and so forth. And in the creation of economic instability and resultant discontentment, motor cars, radio sets, electrical appliances, etc. "for all" have been unquestionably a main factor. So that the "model home" has become little better than a cheapjack shop window, with nearly all the emphasis on the *model* and very little on the *home*.

All this has, of course, been inevitable in view of the allurements of modern advertising, increased education of the working man (making him dissatisfied with humbler conditions) and the democratic movement as a whole. But what is clear is that, while it has brought added health and beauty, more amenities and a wider horizon of thought to a great number of people, it has lessened rather than increased their security and general contentment.

WHAT IS NEEDED

As an experiment, therefore, modern democracy, backed by modern science, has so far failed miserably; but that may be due largely to a decline of religious and ethical values, as pointed out above, and a decrease of old-fashioned wisdom and common-sense.

What is urgently needed is a nice balance between the old and the new; for more wisdom *plus* more material amenities would be an ideal combination. But up to the present, basic education has not managed to keep pace with the growth of material luxuries, so that the common man has become grossly spoiled and self-seeking. In short the revolution has been too sudden—within a single generation mainly—to be secure.

At the time of writing we are, I believe, seeing the modern counterpart of the destruction of Atlantis, that vast mythical civilisation of the past. By that I do not mean that the great metropoli of our Western world will suddenly be decimated or engulfed in the twinkling of an eye, but rather that their *ultimate* fate is now sealed, so far as their present size, functions and way of life are concerned. And the sooner each of the belligerents realises that the mere construction of more and more aircraft and war machines will only add to the general conflagration, the sooner will the welcome dawn of a new day for mankind appear clear and bright on the horizon.

The materialistic war-spirit has, however, now got such a stranglehold on the world, and the emotional cry for reprisals become so pressing, that one cannot well visualise any other end to the present struggle except a more or less complete annihilation of city by city and machine by machine, in Wellsian fashion. It remains, therefore, for those few of sufficient common sense and insight to withdraw as far as they can from the turmoil by accepting a simplified and more rural existence without repeating the commonplace folly of Lot's wife, who looked back regretfully towards the past, with all its gilded follies, and so was overtaken by the very fate which she was hastening to escape.

There will be some who will decry these sentiments as weak, pessimistic and defeatist, and point out that we shall soon have the mastery of our enemies—meaning Italy and Germany. To them I can only answer that they are deluding themselves with the vain hopes of wishful thinking, and making the gross error of mistaking the mere outward and visible sign for the inward and less obvious unspiritual disgrace—a mental disease afflicting man at large.

True enough that, in the defence of our country and of London, we have shown—and shall, surely, continue to show—many gallant and unselfish characteristics

which are too often submerged in peace time. And in making men more neighbourly and less selfish such a national crisis is an invaluable tonic. But unless the main lesson is learnt, and unless we realise the root causes of our troubles and take immediate and permanent steps to remove them, rather than merely to return as soon as possible to our old habits of life and thought, we shall really have achieved nothing, and in a little while similar, if not worse, horrors will again descend on our children.

CITIES AND MACHINES

These things were correctly predicted by Spengler, Wells and others, including the present writer, some years ago ⁽³⁾. They are now in process of fulfilment, despite all the contrary wishes, arguments and boastings of the mass of men to whom such prospects, or else the necessity for a radical change of life, were unwelcome. And although we now have no alternative, in view of the disposition of our opponents, but to continue to administer a materialistic medicine, in the form of aeroplanes, bombs, tanks, shells and so forth, until the war-mongers and dealers in might and frightfulness are convinced of the tragic absurdity of their doctrines; yet, as soon as the operation has been completed and the diseased members effectively eradicated, it is our solemn duty to return to pacific and truly spiritual methods, so that Materialism shall be destroyed and the domination of life by cities and machines brought to an end.

Meanwhile, the machines themselves are achieving by brute force what men of their own good sense and volition were too weak and selfish to do; for they are

fast destroying themselves, their creators and their origins. And it is just possible that repentance has not come too late for those who still have eyes to see and ears to hear; though the majority, alas, still persist in the short-sighted error of regretting the material desolation, blaming it all on the Dictators, whereas the Dictators are, as we have seen, simply blind products of their own age and tools of Destiny, however iniquitous—like earthquakes, tornadoes and the like cataclysmic phenomena.

Let us hope, however, that a coming generation will appreciate the dire necessity of the present chaos, making of it the birth-pangs of a new and better age in which philosophers, the Church and Spiritualists will co-operate with psychologists, biologists and educationalists of good sense to inculcate truer and less materialistic ideals into their flocks and pupils.

If the new world is to be soundly built, now is the time to start, before the old world has completely crumbled to dust and the mind of man become lost in another Dark Age, or his spirit finds itself outcast from that primal Garden of Eden which is its birthright. In other words, while the mass of men is intent mainly to *destroy*, thus fulfilling the mandates of a hard destiny, let those few of a more thoughtful disposition be intent, rather, to *recreate*. For never before to-day were spiritual and creative forces and ideals so sorely reeded by a blind, distracted, bleeding world as they are at present.

⁽³⁾ See foregoing footnotes and article "Metamorphosis" in my little book *By Stygian Waters*, Stoughton Publishing Co., London. 1932.

WHAT READERS SAY

S.P.R. AND SIR OLIVER LODGE'S SEALED LETTER

Sir,—I have read Mr. W. H. Salter's letter in the issue of *LIGHT* for October 24th.

May I be allowed to put this question to Mr. Salter? If a correct description of the contents of Sir Oliver's sealed envelope should be given to the Society through or by any Medium, and before the sealed envelope is opened, would the Society, in its official capacity, admit that Sir Oliver's survival of death was proved, and that he had communicated from the spirit-world after the death of his mortal body?

CHARLES L. TWEEDALE.

Weston Vicarage, nr. Otley, Yorkshire.

SPIRITUALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Sir,—The article by Mrs. St. Clair Stobart in *LIGHT* of 10th October contains, as in all her past writings on this subject, a number of very misleading and inaccurate statements, to which it is necessary to reply briefly.

The term "Mystery Religion" may be left entirely out of the question, as it merely confuses the issue when applied to present-day beliefs.

It is true that some Spiritualists seek to supplant Christianity by Spiritualism, but others claim that it is an addition, and an extremely large and important addition, to the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth; that it is, in fact, a New Revelation, which mankind was not sufficiently progressed to receive 2,000 years ago.

The statement that "Spiritualism is in no position to rival the claims of Christianity to world recognition" ignores entirely the fact that the former is a storehouse of information of the actual conditions of life beyond physical death, whereas the latter contains no information on this matter of transcendental importance.

Moreover, the utterances of Jesus were often of such a cryptic character that endless discussion and controversy as to their true meaning have existed for centuries and have divided His professed followers into

so many different warring sects that a new and clear exposition of spiritual truths and knowledge in modern terms was necessary to disentangle the truth from the confused mass of conflicting creeds and doctrines which had grown up around them. The teachings of Jesus should be studied in the light of this later revelation.

Opposition to the creeds and dogmas of the orthodox Christian sects does not imply opposition to the pure teachings of Jesus, so far as it is possible to understand them, and the suggestion that *any* Spiritualists are aligning themselves with the forces operating in the Dictator countries to destroy the ethical basis on which modern civilisation, in its higher aspects, stands to-day, is, of course, utterly absurd.

W. HARRISON.

A DREAM PUZZLE

Sir,—I wonder in what light J. Cecil Maby would regard this dream?

On Friday, the 20th of August, I dreamt that I saw two men in a railway carriage, and one said to the other: "We'll go to Grange Road, Brighton." I tried to find out whether anyone in our house knew of Grange Road, Brighton, but no elucidation of the dream seemed forthcoming, and I left it.

On Sunday, the 22nd, I accepted an invitation to lunch with a friend at 1 o'clock on Monday, in Kensington. Just before I set out, the engagement was cancelled; and though I decided to go to London, I completely changed my time and my route; therefore no one knew for some hours where I was. I boarded a train at Kingston, getting into a carriage for ladies only; the train had started when I jumped two men, flinging their luggage before them. The very first words uttered were: "Change at Clapham Junction, Brighton in an hour and a half."

Then I chipped in and said: "Grange Road, isn't it?" At which the men, very astonished, exclaimed: "It is so, and how did you know?"

This dream is not an isolated one. Does Mr. Maby's theory extend to persons one has never met or heard of?

JULIA HOWELL-SMITH.

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