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Spiritualism in the Tabernacle.



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DISCUSSION

OF

SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY.

BY

CORA L. V. HATCH,

A SPIRITUAL MEDIUM,

AND

MR. C. H. HARVEY,

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 16, 1857.

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philosophers, have been accustomed to gaze upon effects, and they see man a reasoning, thinking being, a self-existing being ; so they say he is not a part of Deity ;—if so, why is he not, in his manifestations, God, and God forever ? Why ? All principles are silent, still, continuous, omnipotent in their action. The manifestations of this action are always varied, always ambiguous, always presenting a scene of constant change, always outworking newer forms. These changes are not Deity ; these fluctuations are not Deity. Consequently, every action of the human soul upon the physical form and brain, upon the intellect, is not Deity. Neither is it the soul, for inasmuch as the deep elements of life which govern planets in their revolutions, which propel them forward in their course, has never been solved, so the propelling power, the force, the life of the human soul, has never been solved. We only gaze at the mathematical proportions of the soul, at the periodical revolutions of thought, as compared with planets. We gaze only at effects ; and when we see a learned man, a virtuous man, we say, behold, what a soul that man has ! You do not see his soul ; you do not analyze his soul, for it is impenetrable, unsolvable : it is a principle.

“Then, let us compare Deity to a self-existent, positive centre—a sun from whom, or from the elements which surround him, souls have been made. Then the souls are no more a part of that sun than the planets and systems which revolve around their central suns in the universe, are a part of their suns. Although they have received their life from him, although they have received their light from him, although they are kept in their places by that life and light, although the elements of which they are composed were thrown off from the sun, still the planet is not the sun—still they are two distinct objects, forms, formations ; and in this light do we say that man is, and is not, a part of Deity. He is, because the essences of life, of power, of all beauty, of all force, belong to God ; he is not, because he has received a distinct and positive identity ; because that identity has been perfected ; because intellect, thought, reason, have outwrought themselves in man’s brain, through the revelations of inspiration, the revelations of reason and judgment, until man becomes like a planet, revolving around his God, receiving his light and inspiration from God, and perceiving the chain which binds him to God ; yet, he is not a part of God. This is our view.

“To illustrate more clearly, we will refer to nature. All our ideas of Deity must be connected with vastness and infinity—elements which you will acknowledge that the human mind cannot comprehend. Deity may be compared to the ocean, and men’s souls to the drops which compose that ocean. Each drop is distinct, each particle is distinct, each may be analyzed separately, and when taken from the ocean, it becomes a self-existing drop of water ; yet it composed and was a part of that ocean.

When it descends upon the broad, green earth, in the form of rain, and is taken up by plants, what does it become? Not an ocean, not a drop of water, but a principle of life in the plant; and in that degree it is no longer an ocean, but a principle working in that plant—one of the causes of germination—one of the stimulants which that plant absorbs and takes up in its constitution.

“The human soul may again be compared to the seed, which is thrown off from a plant: distinct and positive in its nature, yet it receives all of its life and beauty from the plant or tree. It is again planted in the soil, as human souls are planted in the soil of earth. It germinates from what?—from the unseen of life and beauty within itself; which, coming in contact with the life and beauty in the external world, all these properties become commingled, for the beauty of the universe calls it forth. So Deity has planted the germs of souls within the human mind; so his love, his sunlight, his beauty, is calling them forth as they germinate thoughts and feelings, as they outwork little shoots of affection and religion; and their hues and colors correspond with the hues and colors they attract to themselves from that sunlight, from that Deity. But the essences of all things germinating in Deity, the creation of all things being with him, and the human soul being the apex of those creations, being that which is conceived to be nearest Deity, then, inasmuch as the human soul is the purest, is the most perfect, is the highest form of created existence, so much nearer is it to the Source of all light and beauty, and so much is it composed of the principles of Deity’s own self-hood. And, inasmuch as the human soul has an identified existence, as we have stated before, and inasmuch as it does not become identified until it is externalized, until it has a human form, a human brain, human thoughts and feelings, so that soul, when identified, is not a part of Deity.

“But the actions of Deity are infinite; our comprehension of him is finite. His laws are omnipotent, all-pervading, omnipresent; our thoughts are confined to the narrow limits of external reason and intelligence. Sometimes, perhaps, the rays of sunlight burst through, and we catch faint glimpses of inspiration and revelation; but, at the most it is finite, it never becomes infinite, for every thought and every feeling of our brain cannot comprehend infinitude. A part of infinity, as Deity is infinite, could comprehend him; but our souls, although in their distinct essence, thrown off from or created by him, possessing some of the properties and attributes of his being, are not infinite as he is infinite, are not omnipresent as he is omnipresent, are not all-pervading as he is all-pervading, else we would be God, and not humanity.

“Therefore, how shall we define the distinction which we make between God and man? Simply this: the distinction we should make between the

principles of nature and nature itself. All principles are ever permanent, ever powerful, ever the same; all manifestations are varied, changeable, fleeting. So with man. The principles which compose his soul, those primeval elements of his nature which constitute his symmetry, are forever the same, forever unchanging and unchangeable; but the manifestations of those principles are as changeable and as changing as are the manifestations of external nature, or earth, when it is seeking to purify and outwork the primeval elements of its being. It is forever incongruous, forever inharmonious, yet forever existing, forever revolving, and the principles of its motion never tire, and never are exhausted.

"We have presented our views briefly. We have taken neither the affirmative nor the negative; and the conclusion you may arrive at from what we have said, must depend entirely upon what you conceive the human soul to be. We have presented the truth to the extent of the knowledge which we have been enabled to receive from the Spiritual and the External Worlds. We would present nothing as positive; for whoever takes either the positive or the negative of any such question, assumes a position he cannot comprehend; for no one is equal to Deity. If our friend desires to state his views, as they differ or agree with ours, we will be happy to hear him."

MR. HARVEY'S REPLY.

After Mrs. Hatch had retired, Mr. Harvey came forward, and spoke as follows:

"I think I can promise you, that my remarks in response, will be very brief. And, perhaps, it is due to myself, and it is due to the occasion, to state that I did not anticipate, when coming to the house upon the present occasion, that I should have anything to say. Certainly I should not have done so, had it not been for the announcement made at the commencement of the evening. But hearing, as I did, I felt called upon to rise and speak. I will state that my recollection differs quite distinctly from that of the intelligence possessing this lady. On three successive occasions on which the Spirit has been influencing her, or alleged to have been influencing her, I have heard the announcement made in precisely these terms: 'The soul is a part of God;' and also I recollect, in a certain instance, in response to inquiries addressed to the Spirit or to the lady, by an individual, styled in one of our papers a modern Sadducee, because he disbelieved in the future existence of the soul, the answer was: 'The soul is a part of God, and therefore it cannot die; God cannot die.'

"Now, certainly, I shall differ with no Spirit, in the flesh or out, whether it come from a high or a low sphere, whether it come down from heaven or up from hell, that proclaims to me that the human soul is created by the almighty power of the Infinite Jehovah. But when it proclaims to me that the soul is a part of God—that it is in essence the same as God is in essence, I must call for proof, and in the absence of that proof be constrained to doubt. Now, I have not only read it, but I have heard it stated, by the believers in the Spiritual philosophy, that the soul was a part of God. The intelligence that has been addressing us to-night says, 'We will not affirm nor deny.' Why not? Why, it would intimate to us that it is because, in reality, it is ignorant of what that soul is. It cannot draw the line of distinction between Deity and the human spirit. Considered as an individual identity, it is not a part of God; when wrought out into the human form—when inhabiting the earthly house—when manifesting itself through the nervous and physical system—when thinking, studying, reasoning—when exercising all the functions pertaining to this present state, why, it is not a part of God. I answer, if not a part of God then, it never was. Deity is the same now, yesterday, to-morrow, forever.

"Then it carries us back and says that in its primordial state, in its primeval, elementary condition, it is, as we might reasonably infer, a part of God, as the drop of water which once belonged to the ocean, but now separated from it, is a drop, though it is not a part of the ocean, but once it was. I answer, the ocean is a term which we use to denote a collection of waters. It is true, when you have separated one portion of those waters, it is no longer a part of that aggregate—a part of that collection. However, to use the word ocean, and by that term to signify water, and then deny that a drop, a bucket, taken from the ocean, because it is not in the ocean and a part of the extended, swelling mass, is not water, I should think was poor logic. Water does not undergo any change, considered as an element, by transmission from place to place, or by a change of state.

"Now, when we speak of Deity, we speak of one upon whom we all depend. That we are his creatures, the Bible teaches, and reason sanctions; but that we are a part of Deity, as a drop resembles the ocean, I do not believe. That drop of water is the same as every other drop of water. She speaks, also, of planets proceeding from suns. I have heard this spoken of before. When they are formed as planets, they say, they are not like the sun, but having proceeded from the sun in different periods of the past, why the sun is their parent, their natural creator. It is very seldom that a human spirit embodied in the flesh, would make such an assertion as this; and I will express my surprise that Spirits from the other world would come here, supposing that we are so ignorant as not to be able to see that this hypothesis embodies a direct contradiction. No

planet ever belonged to the sun. You will find that in no instance can you produce a motion that is not in the direction of the propelling power. If there are different forces acting in different directions, the motion will be intermediate between them, so as to exactly balance them. Now, all our planets revolve *around* our sun. Whence did they derive that centripetal force? There must have been a force in a line directly at right angles with that of the sun, otherwise our motion around that central body could never have been produced. Now, if this orb is derived from the sun, it was by a force which carried it off from the sun. What force gave it this direction, or what force met it at right angles with the force of the sun, and gave it this elliptical course around the whole?

"Friends, I will present one or two thoughts in objection to the hypothesis that we are, as spirits, a part of God. One of them is, that a whole is, of necessity, as its parts, and only equal to its parts. If human spirits are a part of God, then it would inevitably follow, that whenever we speak of God, we must include in that term every spirit that has proceeded from him, that is a part of him. Therefore, when you say God, you mean me and yourself, and not us alone, but every other individual, the aggregate of all spirit existences in earth and in the Spirit world. Now, certainly this is aspiring a little further than, it seems to me, it is becoming us in the condition in which we are placed; it is exceeding the sanction of human modesty. What! you a part of God? I a part of God? Peter a part of God? John, in the Isle of Patmos, a part of God? Why did they not, then, receive the homage offered to them by the creatures?"

"There is another objection to the proposition that the soul is a part of God, and that is, God is immutable; and are not you and I changing? I need but mention this, to be perceived by all. God is pure—God is holy. Can this be predicated of you and me? Has not man transgressed the law of Nature and the laws of Nature's God? No matter whether you receive the Bible as from God, or not—this thought you cannot but receive.

"We would expect to see harmony between the soul and its God if the soul were a part of God. More than this: we would expect to see harmony between man and man, spirit and spirit. But how stands the fact? What were the feelings of that heart which drove a dagger to that other heart in the street, but a little way from where we now stand? [Referring to a recent murder.] Whence all our strife, the jostling of nations against each other? Why, we are a pretty Divinity!

"As I said before, I would not detain you long. I will leave the subject precisely here."

MRS. HATCH'S REJOINDER.

At the conclusion of Mr. Harvey's remarks, the medium—still in a trance state—stepped forward, and proceeded thus :

"We are very happy that our friend disagrees with us, as it gives us an opportunity of presenting our ideas still further. He recalls at first, as his memory refreshes him, two or three occasions when we have stated positively that the soul was a part of God. We answer, as we answered in the commencement of our previous remarks, that whatever the gentleman might have understood us to say in answer to inquiries of our friends, spiritually, we have never made that remark without qualifying it. We will make a distinction between soul and spirit ; our friend does not seem to make any. The soul, as we have stated before, is the divine essence implanted in the human form, and as such is a part of Deity ; the spirit, or the manifestation of that soul, is not a part, but only a function or manifestation, as the human mind, or as the various capacities of the human mind, compose the external intellect, and are a part of it—are attributes of the intellect.

"Again, our friend seems to criticize rather closely our comparison of God and the ocean. We answer, that God is an ocean, that the soul is as a drop in that ocean ; but when we consider it as an ocean, the soul taken away is not a part of it. But we perfectly agree with him that we should consider any man a little less than a man who should contend that it was not water, since it was taken from a body of water. So we should say the human soul, if taken from the Deity, must, if it be his creation, have some of the properties of that Creator. Every thought and feeling which ever man possessed or outwrought, bear the impress of its founder, or originator ; all the great and mighty temples which man has dedicated to science or to art, partake of his thought. Whatever a man does, he leaves his impress there, and he stamps upon it the image of himself, which you all may see. So all things that God has created, actually brought into existence, must have some affinity with the Source whence they sprung : must have been created from within himself, else they were not his creations. Consequently they must be stamped with some of the principles which compose his existence. We consider this a logical conclusion—it may not be one.

"Again, as regards the revolution of the planets ; we will not contradict our friend's assertion. Our remarks had reference, not to the law of their revolution, but to the primeval elements of all planets, which our friend will acknowledge, as a direct inference from known facts, must have

been taken from somewhere ; and all astronomers acknowledge that, if this earth, together with the planets, did not originate in the sun, still they are governed by it ; consequently, they have something of the attributes of the sun—some of the elements of it, or affinity for it—as the same laws which govern and the same motions observed in the sun as a centre, also are visible in the planets.

“Again, our friend states what his views are in contradistinction to ours, and says that he would be ashamed to assume that his soul was a part of God—that human modesty would forbid it. Jesus of Nazareth was manifested in the human form ; Jesus of Nazareth was not ashamed to be called a man—to be called a God ; and, inasmuch as man’s soul resembles his, or receives and partakes of any or all of the principles which pervaded his soul, so much must he be like Deity, taking him for an example.

“Again: Peter, James, John, Isaiah, Moses, and Elias, all the prophets and seers of Biblical history, claim or were conceded to receive inspiration from Deity. We ask, in the name of the laws of logic or of Nature, can anything which does not resemble, which does not partake of the properties of any other thing, itself receive any impress from it? If the human soul contains not the principles, powers, thoughts, elements of Deity, can Deity make an impress upon the human soul, either by inspiration, revelation, or otherwise? We answer no, according to the strict rules of logic ; and according to this principle all, Nature, the manifestations of all Nature, are like Deity, are controlled by him, receive inspiration and life from him. And the human soul, as the apex of external creation, or, as a direct creation of Deity, must contain some of the elements of Deity, in order to receive inspiration or impression, thought or feeling, from our Father.

“We do not desire to occupy your time and attention too long ; but we will say, in continuation, that although we seem to differ with our friend with regard to our presentation of views and principles, still we state, as before, that the human spirit, either within or without the form, can never make a distinct analysis or draw a distinct line between itself and Deity. What our friend chooses to contend as the inharmonious manifestations of crime among the lower grades of created intelligences, cannot be regarded as the parts of Deity, although, as he says, all the parts are equal to the whole. We answer, that we have stated that the spirit was not a part of Deity, but the identification of it was according to laws and principles which proceeded from him ; and the very reason or free-will of man gives him that distinction and that identity. But the good which man sometimes chooses, proves that he has some of the elements of goodness in him, else he was not created by Deity. As far as the knowledge of Spirits is concerned, or as far as the presentation of them from the Spirit world is concerned, we will answer our friend that we do not claim to be infallible.

If we differ, and differ erroneously, it is our misfortune; and yet we are very sincere in our difference. We claim no greater knowledge in infinity, or self-perfection, except as the physical has been thrown off, and we are let in, perhaps, one step toward the spiritual; yet we can see only by the eye of faith and revelation.

"We have presented our views, and if our friend desires to answer again, we will listen;—and the audience, being all free agents, having reasoning minds, will be left to judge, as they were before."

MR. HARVEY'S REJOINDER.

Again the medium sat down, and Mr. Harvey came forward. He said:

"I did not anticipate, and I do not of course propose, to take the laboring oar on a question, upon which I occupy negative ground. There has seemed to be, as I should certainly style it, if I were arguing with a person alive in the flesh, a lawyer at the bar, or a doctor of divinity—what I should call a trimming course which has been pursued. Now if Spirits believe that the soul is a part of God, on what do they found that belief? That is what I wish to have brought out. If that is not their belief, why not say so? Here the Spirit has been entertaining you to see how near we can agree. I do not claim infallibility; I want to be taught, I want to know what Spirits believe and know, and on what they base this knowledge and belief of things. The Spirit will not affirm nor deny. In some respects it says the soul certainly is not a part of God—in some respects it may be a part of God. I rose this time to refer to Jesus of Nazareth. I grant you that Jesus did receive addresses to him as though he were man; I believe he was a man. I grant to you more: that Jesus of Nazareth did receive and claim worship, and authority, and attributes, and power, and glory, which speak that he was divine. I therefore believe and receive the testimony, that in Jesus of Nazareth we behold God made manifest in the flesh. But I do not look on myself, I do not look on the race, as in anyway to be compared with Jesus, who suffered, bled, died, rose, and ascended, and now appeareth at the right hand of Majesty on high as our advocate with the Eternal Spirit. I do not look on that race as having equal claims to honor and distinction with Jesus of Nazareth, who died for them. No, no; far, far, far from that. But, friends, there is a spirit in man, and the Almighty giveth him inspiration. I believe that man, as the Bible declares, was created in the image of God. By humbleness, faith, and prayer, the soul

may approach him. God does impress the spirit, inviting it to the arms of his love, of his redeeming mercy. And if the intelligence we have listened to to-night believes the same, I have no quarrel with it. If it believes otherwise, I am willing to embrace its belief when it is made satisfactory. What I want is this: I wish to know the ground on which Spirits, if they be Spirits, believe that the soul is a part of God? What evidence have they of it? I do not propose to take the ground which involves no responsibility, but to take the responsibility of a respondent. All I want, and all you want, or ought to want, is truth, for truth is of God, and, walking in its light, we are safe; turning aside from this, we are in danger. And it is better not to suffer ourselves to be dogmatized by man in the flesh or out of the flesh, by Spirit here or in viewless distance."

MRS. HATCH'S REJOINDER.

Having concluded his remarks, the reverend gentleman sat down, and Mrs. Hatch replied:

"As the time of our control is about drawing to a close, we will simply state that we see, or imagine we see, that our friend is a little unjust in his first proposition, that we have stated no grounds upon which we base our conclusions. It has been the entire subject and object of our efforts on this occasion. If we have not done so, we can find no evidence or illustration which can present the idea in the form of language. We have conceived God to be good. Take this as an illustration: to be good, wise, just, loving, kind—to possess all the virtues, which we term virtues, in contradistinction to things which are less beautiful, which are evil, so termed. The human mind conceives this goodness; it loves in a certain degree. If there is any goodness in the human mind, as possessed in an infinite degree by Deity; if God is good in the infinite and man in the finite, so much man is allied to Deity; so much that goodness implanted in him is a part of Deity. So we might analyze the beauty of the human mind, every property which is beautiful, or holy, or just, and see if we could not arrive at a conception of the relation man sustains to his Father.

"Again: our friend answers our reference to Jesus of Nazareth. He admits what we claim: that Jesus was goodness, purity, love, charity, benevolence, manifested in the flesh, and that he was God. He states that he was sometimes addressed as the Son of Man, that he claimed sometimes to be the Son of Man, in reference to his physical form; and that he claims to be the Son of God, in reference to his spiritual analogy. Inasmuch as Jesus of Nazareth, although he might be ten thousand times

better, purer, infinitely greater than man; inasmuch as he possessed one property, one power, one faculty, which reached man, one beautiful example which man endeavors to follow, that endeavor in man's brain, in his heart and soul—though it may be as small as the smallest particle in the universe—is like the great goodness in Deity. These are our views. The foundation on which we base them, is every thought of goodness, of purity, of virtue, of charity, of benevolence, of wisdom in the human mind. That manifestation of goodness, that conception of purity, that idea of God, must bear some semblance to him, must be made somewhere in his image, must contain something of his essence, else it can never conceive purity and goodness as belonging to Deity.

“Our friend also states that we take neither the affirmative nor negative side of the question. In our second remarks, we distinctly stated we would take the affirmative. He asks if we do not believe it, why do we take it? We do believe it; we do believe that the soul is a part of Deity, and we base our belief upon the foundation we have just stated. We agree with our friend in his last remarks as regards the beauty and glory of the life and death of Jesus; we agree with him as regards his human form, and as regards his divine origin. How much more he is, we cannot tell, for we have never fathomed infinity, and never expect to, entirely.

“Our friend states that if he were reasoning with a lawyer, or with any man in the form, he should conceive, if that lawyer or man took the course the Spirit did, that they were trying to quibble or trim, to bring the subject somewhere within reach of his own views, to avoid controversy. We stated that our view was, not to discuss to disagree, but to agree; and we have endeavored to follow that out. We have believed that the rules based upon the usual controversies of lawyers and doctors are not profitable. [Cheers.] In the first place, they do not engender the principles of Christianity, the great commandment of which is to love one another, and to agree; in the second place, after the controversy, they are no more likely to arrive at a reasoning point than before.

“In justice to the organism through which we speak, we shall be obliged to withdraw the influence, hoping we may meet at a future time to discuss the second question.”

The lady came out of the state of trance, and the audience dispersed.