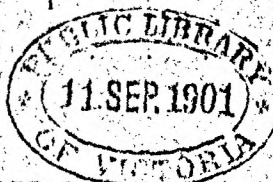


TRUE . . .

SPIRITUALISM.

Being an exposition of the Spiritual
Philosophy and the Spiritual
Religion

BY



JOHN SCOULLER,

Of Melbourne, Victoria (Australia).

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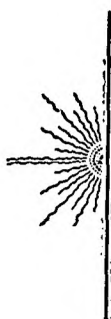
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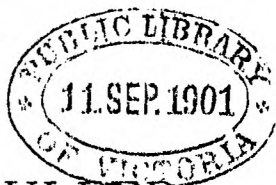


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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

For more than fifty years past the minds of thoughtful men and women have been much exercised in regard to those remarkable manifestations which, during that period, have been associated with what is generally known as Modern Spiritualism. The attitude of the representatives of science and religion generally, in regard to these phenomena, has throughout been characterised by the most marked hostility. By the scientist the whole thing has been stigmatised as merely a gross admixture of "fraud and delusion;" while the religionist has not scrupled to declare that Spiritualism is nothing more nor less than an insidious snare of the Devil. It is true, no doubt, that these opinions are gradually giving place to more rational ideas, and that the facts of Spiritualism are beginning to find some slight recognition amongst the representatives of both science and religion; but at the same time it is no less true that the whole subject still remains enshrouded in mystery and dubiety, so that people generally find it most difficult to form any reasonable opinion in regard thereto.

Now, seeing that it has constituted an important part of my life's work, during the past seven or eight years, to make a searching investigation into the whole question of Modern Spiritualism, by which means I have been enabled to arrive at very decided opinions in regard thereto, I have thought it well to lay before the public some of the more important conclusions at which I have arrived, and I would therefore bespeak the kind attention of the courteous reader while I seek to demonstrate that this much-despised and derided product of the nineteenth century contains within it the germs of the very highest truth.

By way of preliminary, however, it is desirable that I should here lay before the reader some brief statement as to the circumstances under which I was led to devote so large a portion of my life to the study of this important subject.

Some seven or eight years ago I had been led to make a special study of the doctrine concerning the end of the world and the second coming of the Christ, as contained in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. And, as the result of this investigation, it gradually became apparent to me that these doctrines, when stripped of the eschatological ideas of the theologian, are not only reasonable in themselves, but that they possess a strictly scientific basis. The whole of the difficulties by which these matters are surrounded have arisen from the fact that men have accepted the words of Jesus in their literal signification, whereas they are clearly of a mystical and symbolical character. In the light of modern science it is quite evident that the words of Jesus could not have had reference to a literal burning up of the physical world; but when these are regarded as having reference to the conclusion of one Age, or Cycle of time,—together with the systems which had prevailed thereunder,—and to the beginning of an entirely new era in the history of the world, then it becomes manifest that the words of Jesus are in accord, not only with reason, but with the facts of science.

When viewed in this light, it becomes evident that the words of Jesus had reference to the passing away, amid storm and tempest, of the long, sad *winter* of the Iron Age, and to the advent of the world's *spring-time*, bringing with it all the renewed glories of the lost Age of Gold.

It is a very great mistake to suppose that the *Four Ages* of the world were merely the poetic fancies of those in ancient times. They have an undoubted basis in natural facts; for it is unquestionable that the life of our Earth is governed by the revolutions of a larger year—the *Annus Magnus* of the ancients—with its succeeding seasons, or *ages*, of which the revolving seasons of our natural year are the lower analogues. And the Horologue upon which the revolutions of this greater year are registered is the Zodiac, through whose various signs the colure of the sun, at the period of vernal equinox, recedes in a period of 25,870 years.

The *day* in this greater year occupies a period of between 71 and 72 years—the measure of man's life—while the *week* consists

of 500 years, and the *month* of 2,155 years; twelve of the latter going to form the circle of the Great Year, as in our natural year. And thus it becomes possible for us, by means of this Celestial Horologue, to determine the position at which this present generation has arrived in the revolutions of the Great Year. For we are informed that the sun passed from the sign of the Ram, or Lamb, into that of the Fish in the year 255 B.C.; and that it has just passed from the sign of the Fish into that of the Waterer during the past year. Seeing, therefore, that these constitute the opening signs of the Zodiac, corresponding to the first months of our year, it becomes evident that the long dreary reign of Earth's winter season must now be drawing to a close.

Then with regard to the second coming of the Son of Man, there can be no question whatever that this doctrine, as commonly held, is devoid of any rational basis; while, at the same time, it is contrary to all the ascertained facts and principles of science. But when viewed in the light of the doctrine of the Metempsychosis, or Re-incarnation, then its reasonableness becomes at once apparent.

It is true, no doubt, that the doctrine of Reincarnation has never approved itself to the materialistic and superficial thinkers of the West, although it has been held from time immemorial amongst the deep-thinking, contemplative races in the lands of the Orient. But, to my mind, the modern scientific doctrine of Evolution, when viewed in its spiritual, as opposed to its materialistic aspect, renders the doctrine of the Metempsychosis an absolute scientific and philosophical necessity. Even the late Professor Huxley himself had the penetration to discern that such must necessarily be the case; and thus we find him admitting frankly that transmigration "has its roots in the world of reality equally with the law of evolution itself." (See "Evolution and Ethics.")

It will thus be seen that the doctrine concerning the end of the world and the second coming of the Son of Man is not devoid of a rational and scientific basis. Moreover, there are several prophecies, dating from the beginning of the Christian Era, which distinctly point to the year 1900 as the time appointed for the accomplishment of these important events. And, as we have already seen, this date corresponds with the time at which the sun passes out of the sign of Pisces into that of the Waterer.

Now, when these things come to be viewed in connection with the fact that, during the past century, the spiritual world would seem to have been stirred to its very centre in anticipation of this divine event,—as manifested in the Millennarian, Adventist, Revival, and other spiritual movements,—then it seems to me that the thoughtful and intuitive mind cannot fail to realise the important fact, that the world is even now standing upon the threshold of events the most momentous which have ever occurred in the whole history of our race.

These ideas having at length attained to some degree of clearness in my mind, it suddenly struck me that Spiritualism, if it had any substantial basis whatever, ought certainly to have something definite to say upon these important questions. Not that I anticipated any great accession of light from such a quarter upon such a subject; for my attitude towards Spiritualism at this time was similar to that of most people of cultured mind—a belief, namely, that, with some slight foundation of occult natural force, there was combined a vast amount of fraud on the one hand and of delusion and credulity on the other. However, a glance into the literature of Spiritualism soon convinced me that my judgment in this respect had been very much at fault, and it was with considerable surprise that I discovered, in the higher teachings of this despised revelation of modern times, a reflex of the thoughts which had been gradually taking shape within my own mind.

This, naturally, had the effect of arousing my interest in the whole subject of Spiritualism,—which I had long been wont to regard as a mixture merely of fraud and folly,—and accordingly, I resolved to make a thorough and conscientious investigation into the whole matter. In this manner it was that I came to devote myself to an impartial study of this important subject, with the view of discovering what of truth and what of error might be contained therein.

It did not take me very long to discover that there is ample testimony in support of the truth and reality of every phase of the spiritualistic phenomena. Marvellous as many of these undoubtedly are, they are supported by a mass of testimony which is simply overwhelming; and I have no hesitation in stating that, if human testimony possesses any value whatever, then most undoubtedly the literature of Spiritualism contains evidence sufficient to convince anyone, who is at all open to conviction, in regard to this point. And, moreover, the very fact that the genuineness of these phenomena is admitted, generally speaking, by all the

most bitter opponents of Spiritualism,—by whom, however, they are attributed to Satanic agency,—is sufficient in itself to guarantee the credibility of the evidence which is adduced in support thereof.

Still, I must confess that this aspect of Spiritualism has never possessed for me more than a very secondary interest. “Signs and wonders,” be they never so marvellous, are not calculated to have any lasting influence upon my mind; for I am too well aware of the wonderful feats which can be achieved by a clever prestidigitator; while the delusions associated with the phenomena of mesmerism and hypnotism are not unknown to me. Moreover, I have always had a conviction that the narratives concerning the marvels performed by Hindu Yogis and Fakirs have a certain foundation in facts. These things have never been able to inspire more than a passing feeling of wonder within my mind; for I am at one with Shakespeare when he said: “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” But, in connection with the study of Spiritualism, that which has possessed for me the chief attraction has been a desire to penetrate into its innermost secret, to learn what it all means, and to find out its bearings as regards science and philosophy, as well as its attitude towards the social and religious problems of the present day.

Such, then, has been the spirit in which I have conducted my researches into the facts and philosophy of Modern Spiritualism, and I am pleased to say that these researches have not been in vain. For by this means I have been enabled to evolve certain fundamental principles which are fitted to constitute the basis of a simple yet profound philosophy, such as, I am fully persuaded, must have the effect of reconciling science with religion, by harmonising the differences which have ever existed between these opposing forms of thought, and of demonstrating the fact that Truth is ONE.

THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY.

The principles to which allusion has just been made are as follows:—

1. That Spirit is the origin and ultimate of all material manifestation;

2. That the Evolution which is clearly discernible throughout nature must, consequently, have reference to a progressive development taking place in spiritual entities ; thus clearly indicating that Evolution has to do with noumenal or spiritual essences, these finding manifestation in material phenomena ;
3. That Life in all its varied phases is ONE, and is all tending to one common *end*—the production of Man, made in the image of God ;
4. That Nature is an absolute unity—one vast organic whole, quivering with life, sentient and intelligent in its every part, and that the Spiritual and Physical are thus but diverse aspects of the one great Reality ;
5. That this Unity comprehends within itself a duality of essences, these corresponding to the male and female, the positive and negative, elements which find a manifestation throughout all nature.

(1). Now I think it will be found by the intelligent reader that these principles are in complete harmony with the highest deduction of modern science. Thus, for instance, if we take the first of these, which has relation to Substance, I think it must be obvious to anyone conversant with the trend of modern scientific speculation, that it is in complete accordance therewith. For it is now coming to be recognised by the foremost thinkers of our time that what we call Matter is simply a *manifestation*, and that it has in reality no substantial basis in itself. For Matter, as we know it, is simply a condensation of gases, and, in ultimate analysis, it is found to disappear into the impalpable ether. True Substance, therefore, is clearly of a spiritual nature, and thus it becomes evident that the entire ground is swept away from underneath the materialistic philosophy.

And, indeed, this has long been recognised by the more advanced thinkers of the past century. Thus, for instance, we find Lange, in the "History of Materialism," freely admitting that materialism has always been faced by the insurmountable difficulty of explaining how conscious sensation could possibly have arisen out of material motion. In Vol. II. (p. 157) he says : "Consciousness cannot be explained out of material movements. However conclusively it may be shown that it is entirely dependent

on material changes, the relation of *external movement* to *sensation* remains inconceivable, and the more light is thrown upon it, only the more glaring contradiction is revealed." Nay, more, he even went so far as to admit that the phenomena of the sense-world are merely products of our organisation, in the widest sense of the word. And, as a result of this, he lays down the following series of conclusions:—

1. That the sense-world is a product of our organisation.
2. That our visible (bodily) organs are, like all other parts of the phenomenal world, only pictures of an unknown object;
3. And, consequently, that the transcendental basis of our organisation remains just as unknown to us as the things which act upon it. (Vol. III., p. 219).

From these conclusions Lange claims that "the consistently Materialistic view changes round into the consistently Idealistic view" (p. 223); and further on (p. 228), he states that "the struggle between Body and Mind is ended in favour of the latter, and only thus is guaranteed the true unity of all existence."

Now the conclusions to which philosophical Materialism has thus been forced are precisely the same as those which were put forward by Bishop Berkeley in the beginning of the previous century. Thus he contended that "no existence is conceivable and therefore possible which is not either conscious spirit or the ideas of which such spirit is conscious." The Universe, according to Berkeley, is inconceivable apart from mind; while existence, as such, denotes conscious spirits and the objects of consciousness. Moreover, all the leading scientists of the present day are practically at one on these points. Darwin, Huxley, Tyndal, Spencer—all have been compelled to admit the fact that, beyond the phenomenal, there is a something which is the *substance* or *reality* of existence; but to this substance they decline to give any name beyond that of the Unknown and the Unknowable. More open and intuitive minds, however, have in all ages united in calling the reality of existence by such names as Spirit, Mind, Intelligence—the *Nous* of the ancient philosophers.

(2). Now, with regard to our second principle, it follows of necessity that, if the *substance* of existence be spiritual, the *mode* of that existence must likewise be entirely of a spiritual nature. And hence it becomes obvious that the wholly materialistic concep-

tion of an evolution of material bodies, as the result of natural selection, acting through the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, must necessarily be false. Consequently, the evolution which Mr. Darwin clearly discerned in nature, and which he developed with so much knowledge and skill, was not an evolution of material forms, but it was an evolution of those underlying spiritual entities which are the hidden causes of all forms—an evolution of spirit, not of matter; of noumena, not of phenomena. Therefore, it becomes evident that Darwinism is nothing more nor less than a gross abortion of the truth. And, indeed, this fact has long been patent to many minds, whose intuitive perceptions have told them that the Darwinian theory cannot possibly be true, though at the same time they may not have been able to say precisely wherein the fallacy lay.

By means of the spiritual philosophy, however, it becomes evident that Mr. Darwin and Professor Huxley, when they laboured so assiduously to establish the doctrine of organic evolution, were in reality contending for the ancient doctrine of the Metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls—a doctrine which has prevailed in the East from time immemorial, and which to-day is held, in some form, by probably one half of the human race.

(3). Our third principle, in which the *unity of life* is asserted, follows as a necessary consequence from those previously stated. For it thus becomes evident that the organic kingdom must be one great whole, pervaded by one all-nourishing life which vibrates through every living thing, each evolving after its kind, and all tending upwards to the high estate of Man, who is a Microcosm of the great Macrocosm. The metaphor which most fitly represents the truth in this respect is that old Norse conception which represents all existence under the figure of a tree—Iggdrasil, the Ash-tree of Existence—a great living unity, wherein is comprehended every form of life, whether vegetal or animal. Moreover, this great Tree of Existence can be extended in thought so as to embrace the whole Universe. And thus we can understand that the vital principle of the Cosmos is that great and awful Being whom we call God, Creator, Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, and who communicates of His own life to every living creature, even the very meanest.

(4). Our fourth principle is that of *Monism*, regarded from the standpoint of the spiritual philosophy. The Monism of science, however, which is the legitimate culmination of the materialistic philosophy, regards the Universe as being one vast piece of

mechanism, without life, without soul, and governed solely by the iron laws of Necessity. As we have seen, however, the Spiritual Philosophy regards Nature as being one vast organic whole, a living and infinite personality, in whose life we and all things live. And in this respect the spiritual philosophy will be found in harmony with the very highest philosophic thought in all ages since first man ventured upon the shoreless ocean of speculation.

(5). Our fifth principle asserts the existence of an inherent *duality* in the infinite Monad.

Now the grounds upon which this duality is asserted are, that such a duality is manifested throughout all nature. Thus in the organic kingdom we find the male and female principles everywhere in evidence, either separately or in combination. In the physical universe, again, the positive and negative elements are no less clearly discernible—light being symbolic of the one, and darkness of the other. And so, also, in the domain of mind, we have the faculties of intellect and intuition, the one being active and the other passive; while in the department of morals we have the phenomena of good and evil. Such being the case, then, it follows that the things which find a manifestation in the various parts must necessarily be inherent in the whole.

Such, then, is a statement of the principles of the Spiritual Philosophy, as I have been enabled to educe them from a careful study of the higher teachings of Modern Spiritualism; and I think the ingenuous reader must admit that they are entirely in harmony with the highest deductions of modern science.

Now, in view of such principles, does it not become perfectly obvious that we have the amplest justification, both scientific and philosophical, for regarding Man as being of divine origin, in accordance with the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth? For, if Man be the highest production of Nature, is it not manifest that, as such, he must necessarily occupy the same relative position thereto which the *fruit* or *seed* bears to the individual *tree*? Seeing, therefore, that the highest principles of the parent organism find an embodiment in the *fruit* or *seed*, so that it has the capacity of developing into an organism of a similar nature, it must surely be obvious to the very meanest understanding that we have herein the clearest scientific and philosophical demonstration of the fact that man—as being the seed of the great Tree of Universal Existence—must necessarily be the son of the living God, the infinite Heaven-Father, of whom Nature is the visible manifestation.

It will thus be seen that the Spiritual Philosophy, by adopting the principles of natural science, in their higher spiritual aspects, affords us the very clearest demonstration as regards the truth of the doctrine proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth over eighteen centuries ago. Moreover it thus becomes evident that his doctrine, as regards the Fatherhood of God, is the exact equivalent of that proclaimed by the ancient philosophers, namely, that man is a Microcosm of the great Macrocosm.

Now these conclusions, so far as I can see, are not open to dispute, and the inferences to be deduced therefrom are of the very highest importance. For, as the intelligent reader cannot fail to see, they afford the amplest justification for a philosophical anthropomorphism. Thus we know that the highest principles of the *tree* are contained within the *seed*; and just in the same manner it becomes obvious that the highest principles of Nature must find an embodiment in man, as being the seed of the great Tree of Universal Existence. Seeing, therefore, that Nature is a visible manifestation of God, the Infinite Father, we can lay it down as a truth of axiomatic clearness and certainty, that God must be Man *in the absolute and universal*; while, at the same time, it becomes equally manifest that Man must be God *in the germ*.

Thus it becomes evident that science and religion are at one as regards man's place in nature; and, moreover, this philosophy serves to explain the teaching of Swedenborg, and other mystics, in regard to the "Grand Man." The Gnostics, also, according to Irenæus, knew and proclaimed that the Propator was Anthropos. "This is the great mystery, namely, that the power which is above all others and contains them all in his embrace, is Anthropos; hence does the Saviour style himself the Son of Man." (See "The Natural Genesis," by Gerald Massey). And, further, I think there can be little doubt that it is this conception, dimly perceived, which lies at the root of all the anthropomorphic ideas which we find associated with the ancient Greek philosophies. It is this same conception, likewise, which constitutes the basis of philosophies so diverse as those of Spinoza and Comte. Consequently, I hold, with Higel, with Spinoza, and with many others besides, that the Absolute *can* be known by man, just exactly in proportion as man becomes assimilated to the Divine Author of his being. And it was in consequence of such assimilation in the case of the gentle Nazarene that he was fitted to become the world's Teacher and Guide.

Now, from these considerations, I think it must be obvious to the intelligent and ingenuous reader that Agnosticism, which is so widely prevalent at the present day, is entirely devoid of scientific or philosophical justification. Indeed, I have no hesitation whatever in declaring Mr. Herbert Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy to be *nothing more nor less than a complete tissue of half-truths*, which, proverbially, are ever more dangerous than *whole lies*.

Such, then, is the Spiritual Philosophy contained in the higher teachings of Modern Spiritualism, as it has revealed itself to me; and I think the ingenuous reader cannot fail to see that it is in entire harmony with reason, as well as with the highest philosophy in all ages, while, at the same time, it gives expression to the true principles of modern science. The modern scientist has declared that man knows nothing and can know nothing outside the limits of the relative and finite; but it is quite evident that the modern scientist has failed to take into account the faculty of *intuition*, whereby man is brought into relationship with the spiritual world. Moreover, if it be true that the natural world is simply one aspect of a great whole, which comprises both the natural and the spiritual, then it becomes evident that the laws of nature must be a reflex of spiritual laws; and, as such, they must bear a strict analogy to the laws governing spiritual realities. And hence the intuitive mind is able, from the things of the natural world, to discern the principles which govern things celestial. And it was for this reason that we find the Great Teacher conveying most of his teaching in the form of parables, based upon natural objects.

THE SPIRITUAL RELIGION.

Now Religion may fitly be described as the *perfect flower of philosophy*. For it is by means of philosophy that man learns to understand his relation to the great Fact of the Universe; while it is by means of Religion that he is enabled to bring his life into harmonious relationship with such Fact. It thus becomes evident that the Spiritual Religion must be the outcome and the highest product of the Spiritual Philosophy. Seeing, therefore, that the latter is identical with the philosophy revealed in the teachings of Jesus, it necessarily follows that the Spiritual Religion must be practically identical with that which was taught by him.

And here it is necessary that the reader should clearly understand that the "Religion of the Christ" is by no means synonymous with the "Christian Religion." The former is only to be gleaned from the direct teachings of the Master himself ; while the latter,—which is, to a very large extent, founded on the writings of Paul,—can only be learned by a study of the decrees of Church Councils, as well as of the various bodies of Divinity, Church Standards, Confessions of Faith, etc., etc. And I am fully persuaded that the study of a whole life-time would not suffice to extract reason and common sense out of this confused babel of conflicting ideas.

Now the Spiritual Religion, being the natural outcome of the Spiritual Philosophy, must necessarily have its basis on the Fatherhood of God, and the consequent brotherhood of all mankind. And, beyond this simple yet all-comprehensive doctrine, what is there to be found in the whole teaching of Jesus of Nazareth? Nothing, so far as I can see! Nor, indeed, is anything further requisite, for it is beyond all dispute that mankind, if they would only believe that doctrine, and if they would endeavour with honesty and sincerity of heart to shape their lives in accordance therewith, would thereby attain to spiritual regeneration, and God's Kingdom would then assuredly come, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And it is just precisely because the world has tacitly rejected the teaching of the lowly Nazarene,—while, at the same time, yielding him a barren lip-homage,—and because men are not prepared to follow in the path which he has marked out, that the world presents that spectacle of moral, social, political, and religious degeneration of which we are sadly conscious at the present time. For nearly nineteen centuries men have been addressing their petitions to the great Heaven-Father, and beseeching that his kingdom might come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven ; but, I would ask, where is the evidence to indicate that any sincere effort has been put forth to give a practical realisation to such petitions? From the early days of the Christian Church, when the disciples "were together and had all things common," I know of none, if it be not the Socialistic movements of the past century, and movements of a similar nature! Is it not true that, at the dawn of this Twentieth Century, such a thing as brotherhood does not exist? The rich despise and oppress the poor, while the poor in turn are envious of the rich ; and the whole world, almost without exception, is engaged in one miserable scramble for material wealth, wherein the one recognised principle of action is that contained in the

maxim "Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." And this principle, which is the very apotheosis of the Spirit of Selfishness, has been exalted to the dignity of a natural law, and is openly and unblushingly proclaimed in the various treatises on Political Economy.

Such a devil's gospel, thus openly proclaimed, has had the effect of corrupting the very soul of humanity, until we may well believe that it stinks in the nostrils of High Heaven! As an example of the corrupting influences of this anti-Christian mammon worship, let the reader take the following extract from a letter written by Sir Walter Besant, and published in the Melbourne *Argus* a few years ago: "We honour," says our literary knight, "and we rightly honour, the strong, the successful, and the *rich*. We despise the weak, the dependent, and the poor."

Now, while it is true that Sir Walter does not go the length of saying that we *rightly despise* the weak, the dependent, and the poor, it is evident from the construction of the sentence that such was his meaning. And surely it is a most ominous "sign of the times" when we find one of the recognised and honoured guides and teachers of the people thus openly controverting the doctrine of the world's greatest Teacher by proclaiming the very rankest of Mammonistic doctrine. Could anything more clearly indicate the condition into which the world has sunk by reason of its degrading Mammon worship? Nor has Sir Walter Besant been chosen because he is a greater offender in this respect than others, for I regard him as being a very worthy person—as the world goes; but I have simply chosen him as being a typical example of the blighting influences of the Mammonistic spirit of these latter times, even in the case of the best of men.

And as it is in social life, so is it also in the larger arena of the political world. For, while the various sovereigns of Europe profess to own allegiance to the lowly Prince of Peace, is it not the case that Europe at the present moment has been transformed into one vast armed camp, and that the earth resounds to the tread of many millions of men in arms, who are sworn, at the word of command, to fly at the throats of their fellows, and to engage each other in death-dealing grapple? Was it in vain, I would ask, that the Prophet of Galilee put the question to his disciples: "When the Son of Man cometh will he find faith in the earth?"

Such, then, is the spectacle presented by the world after some nineteen centuries of the proclamation of the "glad tidings" first announced to the world by the Teacher of Nazareth. And surely it is one which is calculated to fill the heart with feelings of the most profound sadness. But still, the fact has to be recognised that things could not well have been otherwise; because hitherto the world has not been sufficiently ripe to give effect to that thrice blessed message. Each succeeding generation, since first the "good seed" was sown by the Son of Man, has appropriated just as much of the divine teaching as it was capable of assimilating; and although it is true that the records of the Christian Era are defaced by many sad blots, still it has to be recognised that they are clear and bright, as compared with those of preceding ages. But the signs of the times all go to show that the period has at last arrived when the principles announced by Jesus of Nazareth, and in attestation of which he freely laid down his life, must at length triumph. The mystical *three days and three nights*, during which the Son of Man was to be in the heart of the earth, have been accomplished; and God's Holy Temple—a spiritual temple, made without hands—stands ready to be revealed. Nor can any power on earth or in hades prevent the accomplishment of the Divine purposes; for at the present moment there are moral and spiritual forces at work, against which all the combined powers of evil must contend in vain.

It will thus be seen that the Spiritual Religion, as contained in the higher teachings of Modern Spiritualism, is identical with that proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth—nay, more, that it is the full fruitage thereof, just as the doctrine of the Nazarene gave expression to the higher spiritual aspects of the Mosaical teaching.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SPIRITUAL RELIGION.

Now true religion is a thing of the *heart*, and not of the *intellect*. It is the answering of Spirits unto the great Father of Spirits; and it was so in earlier and more unsophisticated times. But when man had eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he began to form to himself the conception of an *extraneous* Deity; which conception was necessarily an *image*, quite as much as if it had been graven by the hand of man. And, moreover, that image could not possibly be other than a glorified representation of man's own inner nature or *selfhood*. When, therefore, men began to bow down before the idol-god which they had conceived

within their own hearts, the necessary result followed, of alienation, estrangement, from the loving All-Father, whose tender mercies are over all his works. By this means the consciousness of the divine Sonship was lost; and, as a natural consequence, those feelings of Brotherhood which had formerly prevailed very soon gave place to feelings of envy and strife.

Such is the interpretation of that mystical and symbolical parable which speaks of the "fall of man," as it has revealed itself to me. And it is quite evident from the sequel that this *fall* was very soon followed by strife and bloodshed, as represented in the slaughter by Cain of his brother Abel. Moreover, it is evident, I think, that the same truth as regards the alienation and estrangement of man, find a representation in the parable of the Prodigal Son, who left his father's house and went into a far country, where he spent his substance in riotous living. Those ancient writings are most certainly fraught with a depth of meaning and significance which the mere intellectualist can have no conception of.

Now it must be admitted, I think, that the interpretation which has just been given of the story of the fall of man offers a reasonable and philosophical explanation of the introduction of sin into the world; while, at the same time, it is strictly in accordance with all the facts of the case, so far as these can be gleaned by us from the records of history. For it must be evident, I think, that sin cannot be anything positive in itself, seeing that what one man regards as being sinful may appear quite harmless to another. And, moreover, it is manifestly impossible to predicate sin of any mere animal. It is manifest, therefore, that sin must be a thing related entirely to the *intellect* of man; thus proving the truth of Shakespeare's words, when he said that "there is nothing either good or bad but *thinking* makes it so." It becomes obvious, therefore, that the consciousness of sin cannot arise within the heart of man until he has first set up within his own mind the idea of an *extraneous* Deity, endowed with the highest qualities of which he can form any conception. And it is only when he is guilty of acts contrary to those principles wherewith he has endowed the Deity of his own conception, that the *god within*—which is nothing more than his own highest ideal—becomes his judge, condemning his unrighteous acts, and giving him no rest until he has either purged his conscience, or else drowned its voice by callous disregard.

This is the true explanation of Conscience, in regard to which there has been so much controversy in days gone by. Conscience is simply the judgment which a man passes upon his own acts; and it is thus a perpetual witness to the essential divinity of man. But, at the same time, by disregarding the voice of conscience, man eventually loses the inner light, and becomes transformed into the diabolical. It is evident, however, that the man who continually lives up to his highest light can have no consciousness of sin, any more than the birds of the air can be conscious of guilt.

Now, from these considerations, I think there can be no question whatever that the entire sin and misery of the world have arisen solely and entirely owing to the loss by mankind of the primitive conception of the infinite and loving Heaven-Father, and to the substitution in His place of the conception of an extraneous Deity, who could not possibly be other than a glorified image of *Self*.

And here I think it necessary to state that my words have reference to the primitive Aryans—the latest development of the genus *Homo*—with whom, there is reason to believe, the conception of the infinite Heaven-Father originated. Moreover, it is my opinion that the Adam of the Hebrew Scriptures was meant as a symbolical representation of that race.

Now it is evident that this extraneous Deity would necessarily assume different aspects and characteristics, according to the mental and moral development of the various peoples by whom such conceptions were formed. Consequently, I think there can be no doubt that it was religious differences, arising from these false conceptions of Deity, which led to the disruption of the Aryan race, and to their dispersion over the whole earth. Moreover, it is evidently this same idea which finds symbolical representation in the story of the confusion of tongues which took place in connection with the building of the Tower of Babel, although this evidently refers to a later development in the history of our race.

When viewed in this light, I think it must be obvious to the intelligent reader that these varying conceptions of an extraneous Deity afford a sufficient explanation to account for all the sin and consequent misery by which our earth has been cursed throughout the ages. For it is notorious that the most bloody wars by which the earth has been devastated, from the earliest period down to

the present day, have had their roots in these false conceptions of Deity. And, moreover, the divisions which separate mankind into such vast numbers of hostile sections have no other basis than this.

Now, seeing that the spiritual malady which afflicts mankind is of this nature, it is evident that the remedy, in order to be effectual, must be of a nature to meet the demands of the case. And, indeed, such was essentially the nature of the doctrine proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth. For in his teaching concerning the Fatherhood of God, we have the sure antidote to those false conceptions of an extraneous Deity by which the world has so long been cursed. Moreover, this new conception of the great All-Father, from whom men had strayed in order to follow their own devices, was shown to necessitate a complete change in man's attitude towards both God and his fellow-men—a change which was the equivalent of *regeneration*. And this change was symbolised in the rite of Baptism, when the repentant follower of the Nazarene, going down into the baptismal font, saw his old life completely blotted out—buried in the mystic grave of waters—from which he arose fully resolved to walk henceforth in the new life. Baptism was thus a beautiful and fitting emblem of a spiritual change—a solemn dedication of heart and life to the cause of God and Truth—which was calculated to have a lasting influence upon a man's whole future life. All this, however, has been completely lost in that solemn farce which consists in the sprinkling of a few drops of water on the face of an unconscious babe—a rite which is as utterly without warrant as it is devoid of rational meaning.

It was in this manner that the great renunciation was accomplished in the case of the early Christian disciples. By this means *self* was effectually crucified, and the true followers of Jesus became dead to this present evil world, with all its affections and lusts. No longer did they crouch before the demon-god which had formerly been enshrined within their hearts; but they stood erect in their manhood, as became the sons and daughters of the infinite All-Father. They felt themselves raised to the dignity of kings and priests unto God and the Father; and from thenceforward they refused to bow the knee to any earthly potentate however exalted. They declined to call any man father on the earth, knowing that they had one Father in Heaven. And so, also, they refused to recognise any earthly master, because they had one Master, even the Christ within, while they recognised all men as their brethren. Thus the early Christians became God's

free men—the only freemen in a world which is in subjection to the Spirit of Darkness. And with such principles as these it is not surprising that they withstood and ultimately triumphed over all the mighty power of Rome.

Now such was the religion proclaimed by the gentle Nazarene; and even such is the Spiritual Religion, contained in the higher teachings of Modern Spiritualism—as I have been able to make it out. Consequently the true Spiritualist utterly repudiates the theological “plans of salvation” and “schemes of redemption,” as well as all those false doctrines which are associated therewith. He absolutely declines to accept of an atonement, purchased by the suffering of an innocent victim, because he finds such an idea repugnant to every sense of right and justice implanted by God within the human soul. In short, he cannot but recognise the fact that the entire theological foundations upon which the structure of ecclesiastical Christianity has been raised are of purely human origin, whether these have emanated from the Church Councils of Rome or from Westminster Assemblies of Divines, or whether they claim the authority of a Paul, a Luther, a Calvin, a Wesley, or any other teacher. And, moreover, these facts are gradually coming to be recognised amongst the more intelligent and ingenuous of the religious teachers of the present day, and they would very speedily find rectification were it not that these teachers have bound themselves hand and foot with theological gyves and fetters. These ancient fallacies have served their day, and it is surely time that they were cast to the moles and to the bats from whence they emanated. No doubt these doctrines did possess a soul of truth for our earnest-hearted forefathers, because they were able to read a truth into them,—a thing which has become for ever impossible to us in these more enlightened days. It must be our endeavour, therefore, to rise to higher conceptions of truth, in accordance with the higher light which has dawned upon the world.

CONCLUSION.

Now, from what has been thus advanced, I think it must be evident to the ingenuous reader that the typical Spiritualist, the pattern of all *true* Spiritualists, was none other than Jesus, the Nazarene. The records of his life are undoubtedly mingled with much that is mythical and unhistorical; but, at the same time there is amply sufficient to show that his life was guided entirely

by the Divine Voice, which spoke within the depths of his own consciousness. His trust in the Divine Father was absolute, and he was obedient and submissive to the Divine Will, even unto the shameful death of the cross. That he held communion with spiritual beings is evident from the facts which transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration, as well as in the Garden of Gethsemane; but, at the same time, it is absolutely certain that his power and inspiration came direct from the infinite source of all wisdom and strength. I hold, therefore, that the true Spiritualist is the true follower of Jesus of Nazareth, altogether apart from the colour of his theological opinions, and notwithstanding the fact that he may be very much opposed to the idea of spirit-communion. The very fact that such an one endeavours to follow the highest light which shines within the soul, and that he lives in the fullest reliance upon the guardian care of the infinite Father of Spirits, constitutes him a Spiritualist in the truest sense of the term, whether he like the name or like it not. Moreover, I hold that *true* Spiritualism and *true* Christianity are essentially one and the same thing.

But, on the other hand, I maintain that those who put their confidence in what may be termed *objective* Spiritualism—the mere dabblers in spirit-phenomena, who are continually seeking after “tests,” and whose lives are not controlled and guided by a spirit of love and trust in the infinite All-Father—such as these are assuredly no *true* Spiritualists, by whatsoever name they may choose to call themselves. These latter represent what may fitly be termed *Pseudo-Spiritualism*; this, however, must form the subject of a separate paper.

JOHN SCOLLER.

London: May 1st, 1901.

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