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THE APPROACH TO

TRUTH



From;

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WHAT THE DEVIL....?



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INTRODUCTION

Many women are rejoicing in their attainment of equal pay with men under the new Acts of Parliament - an event which is seen by many as continuing the effect of the much earlier suffragette cause. Spiritualism has consistently advocated that woman is the co-equal of man in the heritage of immortality and, because of its progressive thought, was wickedly attacked by the Christian orthodox church which obviously desired the social injustice of the situation to prevail for reasons best known to itself.

However, the harmonial philosophy of Spiritualism has brought light to bear upon many social injustices, even when, due to vested interests, the voice of orthodox religion chose to remain silent. Thus it was during the last century that Spiritualism fearlessly denounced the slave trade which in England had received the financial support of the church in exchange for profits, scavenged from human flesh passing through England's docks to anybody who had the money to buy.

William T. Stead (1849-1912), - a prominent Spiritualist of his day - denounced the white slave traffic and the prostitution of children while yet again the church remained silent. The famous Spiritualist reformer and socialist, Robert Owen, may well have thought that the social injustice of his day would ultimately be resolved as the truth of Spiritualism became more widely accepted - a thought which is shared by every true Spiritualist today.

In order to be worthy of the suffering of those early Spiritualists and to say that we who now carry the torch of truth have not forgotten their courageous efforts on behalf of humanity, let us carefully consider the following resolution which was passed at a gathering of Spiritualists in 1857 at which Andrew Jackson Davis was present, viz:

THAT women, being the mother of the world and co-equal with man in the heritage of immortality, should be favoured with every advantage enjoyed by her brother for physical, intellectual and moral education or development;

THAT all civil and political privileges and emoluments should be as accessible to her as to man;

THAT the same remuneration should be granted to her as to her brother for the same kind and amount of labour; and

THAT in the marriage relationship she should be fully secured in her natural rights to property, to the legal custody of her children and to the entire control of her person, that thereby fewer and better children can be born and humanity be improved and lifted.

We must remember that the foregoing statement of Spiritualist doctrine was made in 1857 and that it is in accordance with Acts of Parliament which

have been passed in the last few years. However, the editor of an orthodox religious publication wrote the following one week after the statement had been made:-

'A.J.Davis claims to have sprung from monkeys and baboons and certainly his doctrine is worthy of such an ancestry. Yet this wretch in human form claims to be a reformer, and it is a sad commentary on the state of public morals that he has numerous followers. The whole vile breed are fit only for a lunatic asylum. This miserable delusion is styled by its victims "the new religion". Such a religion is in the strongest possible sense earthly, sensual and devilish. To every pure mind it is loathsome and disgusting to the last degree. The man and, still more, the woman that will publicly teach such doctrines should be shunned as we would shun the devil whose servants they are. When one is drawn into the vortex of this abominable delusion, there is no hope for him. It is leprosy which defies all cure. It is a signing, sealing and delivering of the soul to Satan beyond all redemption. When will the community have sense enough and moral principle enough to shun these filthy dreamers? Their very touch is polluting and the poison of asps is under their tongues.'

It is difficult for us living over a hundred years later to understand why this editor, a follower of the New Testament, should have been incited to write such a vicious attack upon A.J. Davis who today must be heralded as a man who lived before his time. A study of historical facts will reveal that the church has resisted all progressive thought which did not confirm with its own vested interests. Spiritualism proudly takes its place in the ranks of such people as those who invented the telescope, anaesthetics, birth control, who discovered the rotation of the planets round the sun and expounded the theory of evolution - for the members of this grand company have all been denounced from the Christian pulpit as children of the devil!

Before proceeding further, it must be clearly understood that evil, evil spirits, the devil and his dominions, and exorcism have no place within the philosophy of Spiritualism and that they are archaic superstitions which have been perpetuated by the orthodox church.

EVIL

Spiritualism teaches that all life is in a state of progressive refinement, and that the spirit element in man is moving back along a pathway of experience towards its Divine source. Inwardly man is the repository of infinite possibility, whilst outwardly he is the sum total of all the hereditary forces which meet in him together with environmental and educational influences. Outside human consciousness there is no problem of good and evil - a fact

which reveals man's superiority of consciousness over the lower kingdom. He has already discovered that harmonial balance is achieved by the application of natural laws and he will ultimately awaken to the fact that in order to achieve complete and integrated harmony he must obey the laws of the spirit. It is when he transgresses the laws of his being that the pure forces of God are hindered and the effect is manifested as so-called evil.

Every infringement of spiritual law brings an adequate effect which guides him back to the pathway of progression. Should, however, the infringement be persistent and severe, in accordance with spiritual law the individual gravitates after physical death to a spiritual sphere of existence in order to learn more and reap the results of such action.

Variations of the hereditary, environmental and educational processes interact with the individual will-power, and there are those whose heredity is a stronger influence than their environment and vice versa. Where the spiritual consciousness has begun to unfold, the will-power is correspondingly strengthened and the individual is able to resist the negative elements of mis-direction whilst, in another, poor environmental forces could inhibit the unfolding of spiritual consciousness. Praise and blame are, therefore, eliminated. 'There, but for the grace of God, go I'.

Man is slowly raising himself above the law of the jungle, as the benefits of his past physical, emotional and mental developments are now contributing to his spiritual unfoldment. This will result in an eventual recognition of the fact that law-breakers are not responsible beings but are obeying forces which they have no power to combat, forces which reach back through all the subordinate kingdoms and are lost in the mists of pre-history.

When society is sufficiently enlightened, such people will receive human treatment in an effort to awaken the higher spiritual nature which, in the words of A.J. Davis is 'buried beneath the psychic wreckage of pre-natal influences'.

Mis-direction at the hereditary, environmental and educational levels is the source of evil - the effects of which make a man evil rather than an evil man. All universal creation, including man, receives and transmits the love of God to greater or lesser degrees according to individual harmonial relationship with the Godhead. It is necessary, therefore, to pay special attention to our inner and outer relationships to each other as members of the human family and our position in the material and spiritual worlds, establishing thereby union between the human and divine which could raise the level of human existence.

THE CURE FOR EVIL CAN ONLY BE EFFECTED BY REMOVING THE CAUSES OF MIS-DIRECTION.

GOD IS LOVE

Plato's statement "He is the greatest physician who can remove love from where it should not be and place it where it should be" draws attention to the greatest human mis-direction - that of love, the most dynamic force in the universe. When love is mis-directed, the very life force is mis-directed because God is love. This cause gives rise to the following effects:

1. Conjugal love destroys constancy of affections and causes debauchery. When inverted it becomes unsocial, unkind and bestial.
2. Parental love causes spoiled children and when inverted a dislike of children.
3. Fraternal love causes indiscriminate associations and when inverted hatred revenge and wars.
4. Filial love causes undue reverence for superiors and when inverted, disrespect and scepticism.
5. Universal love causes hastiness, impetuosity and unruly power. When inverted the individual despises himself and everybody else and is the greatest power and influence to evil deeds. It is rarely that this love becomes inverted, but if it should flow back into the other expressions of love they will be empowered to accomplish mighty evils under their respective forms of manifestation.

Society advances as man advances and vice versa, but the profit element shows that mis-directed self-love demands not 'what can we do for each other' but 'how may we use each other for personal gain'. However, there are those who see the need to change the basis of commercial life and to produce things for use and not for profit. The harmonial philosophy of Spiritualism states that the evils we are suffering from arise mainly from mis-direction of self-love, but it will not always be so because the other loves and wisdom attributes slowly awake and clamour for gratification and mis-directed self-love results in the starving of the higher nature. When that goes on for a long time without redress, violent changes take place and a higher state of civilisation is often only reached through a cataclysmic period of destruction - and this because we will not or cannot open our eyes to our true nature and our good.

The doctrine that one member cannot suffer without the other members suffering with it lies at the foundation of social reformation. It is undeniable that the present antagonistic state of the trades and professions generates hurts and animosities among individuals and it is likewise undeniable that the teachers in all modern theological institutions do very much towards discouraging social and individual reformation by instilling into the present and rising generations the baneful conviction that the world is all a vale of tears under the Adamic curse, suffering the penalty of the original sin: hence, that

reformation independent of the church is impossible and is considered impious.

Here we find expressed the influence of certain religious ideas upon our social life. It is clear that wrong beliefs, closely held and instilled into the mind of the child have a definite influence upon society. The struggle between the various sects to influence the education of the child is evidence of the importance of having true ideals relative to our spiritual nature. To teach men that they are tainted with original sin is to hinder progress for, if it enters into consciousness, the individual will not make an effort to rise of himself. Indeed, many of the religious conceptions of the western world are wrong and altogether contradictory. On the one hand the theologians say that man has freewill and, on the other, that he is tainted with original sin, i.e. the man has a constitutional bias towards evil. If he has a constitutional bias towards evil, how can he have freewill?

The result of this is that man is taught to mistrust his own powers and to look outside for his salvation. There are today thousands of people who are looking to the coming of some great world teacher to pull the world into shape. The world will never be righted in that manner for, while these people are looking to the coming of some special teacher, they are likely to neglect trying to right the world themselves.

It is very strange, but only in our harmonial determinism do we get a right conception of our responsibilities and are directed to the great mines of social wealth and power within ourselves. Consequently, we see how essential it is for us to have high and lofty conceptions of the capability for splendid service which lies within our human nature.

DOES THE DEVIL EXIST?

In the process of growing up, man attempted to rationalise his environment and, whilst still in his evolutionary infancy, formed certain concepts, the majority of which have long since been superseded in direct proportion to his capacity for ascertaining the truth. 'When I was a child I spake as a child, but now I am a man I have put aside childish things.'

However, some of these primitive ideas have survived as superstitions, particularly where the benefit of education is suppressed or lacking. Evil was attributed to God and the cure used by the priestly magicians was appeasement in the form of sacrifice. Deities proliferated and the Christian Devil is an amalgam of pre-existing concepts projected upon the pagan god Pan complete with cloven hoofs. In our modern world such a superstition is an abomination to the Godhead, and mankind is still reaping the effects of this priestly error which has been perpetrated to enslave the minds and will-power of the gullible and weak. Only in recent years has the church attempted

to use low-key methods where its devilish doctrine is concerned but 'what a tangled web we weave when first we practise to deceive'.

Having invented the devil and his dominions, the church then had the effrontery to designate him the inventor of Spiritualism!

We can only assume that the church was trying to dispose of this unruly progeny, but the superstitious monstrosity can only be dissolved when its inventors are prepared to admit their grave error in retaining primitive doctrines in an attempt through fear to imprison the human family.

However, at the end of the Middle Ages, the church started to lose its stranglehold upon European life with the collapse of medieval concepts and the empty churches of today are proof that the liberating power of truth is deposing falsehood.

In a radio broadcast in 1975 I was asked to comment upon the case of a young man who had taken his own life due to a mistaken belief that he was possessed by the devil. The responsibility for this and for other tragedies is clearly that of the church which should instruct the public, once and for all, that the devil is a figment of fevered imaginations which laboured in the darkness of barbaric and cruel creeds.

On 3rd January 1975 I wrote the following letter to a national weekly magazine:

"Sir,
I refer to "Does the Devil really exist?" in the January issue, and statement "Belief in the Devil is not confined to churchmen and Spiritualists." Spiritualism has never subscribed to this superstitious belief, and I would be obliged if you would make this clear to your readers. Little was heard of the devil until Jerome, secretary to Pope Damasus I (366-384) was instrumental in issuing a decree which stated that the spiritual gifts so praised by the Apostle Paul were to be abolished from the church and elsewhere. The prophets and seers were degraded from office as "oracles of God" to that of "servants of the devil".

Thus the Jesuit teachings of compassion and love were replaced by the doctrine of fear and superstition which Jesus had sought to vanquish in His ministry. Belief in diabolical forces has been encouraged and perpetuated by orthodox theologians for reasons best known to themselves. Spiritualists have no need for such beliefs because we know that there is but one force in the universe which works for ultimate good within the Divine Plan.

Yours sincerely"

EXORCISM

The difficulties and problems of communication with the spirit world are well-known to every genuine medium, many of whom devote years of their lives to its development. Possession by an evil spirit assumes that such spirits are free to visit the earth and that they are not subject to the same difficulties of communication as those spirits of loftier intent. Both assumptions are incorrect, and Spiritualist teachings clearly state that mis-directed spirits automatically gravitate to their appointed sphere of experience, there to learn from and reap the results of their actions.

Spirit laws are constant and cannot be flouted, and the concept of possession by an evil spirit is the residue of medieval practices unfortunately preserved by ignorance. No individual subscribing to such beliefs can be a Spiritualist and would be well-advised to study the laws and principles involved in an attempt to understand that the fundamental message of Spiritualism is one of beauty and love, a message which prompted A.J.Davis to write:

"We repudiate that man's wilful or self-derived affections rule his thoughts and attract corresponding controlling influences from the spirit world".

Also in 1852 he wrote:

"And the idea of demoniacal possession is not yet extinguished: we are occasionally challenged from modern pulpits to prove that maniacs are not subjected to satanic influences".

HOW TO CAST OUT THE DEVIL

The following is an extract from a Spiritualist publication of 1861:

"A mother, having little faith in the Swedenborgian phase of Spiritualism, and considerably more faith in good old-fashioned New England Presbyterianism, is alarmed for one of her eldest children who is a partial medium, thinking it possible that some evil spirit has taken possession. The symptoms are variable, but the following is given as a synopsis: occasional flushes or a circumscribed spot on one or both cheeks, the eyes become dull, the pupils dilating and an azure semi-circle runs along the lower eyelid, the nose is irritated, swells and sometimes bleeds, occasional headache, an unusual secretion of saliva, furred tongue, breath foul particularly in the morning, appetite sometimes voracious with a gnawing sensation in the stomach, at others entirely gone, occasional nausea and vomiting, vident pains in the abdomen, bowels irregular, at

times costive, belly swollen and hard, urine turbid, respiration occasionally difficult and accompanied by hiccough, uneasy and disturbed sleep with grinding of the teeth, temper variable but generally irritable.

CAUSES AND REMEDY: Our decision in such a case (religious predilections being set aside) is that the patient has not been well-educated in matters of eating and drinking, has from childhood used too much sugar, ate too many buckwheat pancakes and that, as a sad consequence, the patient is a medium for evil and diabolical spirits in the form of worms. We cheerfully give directions for the exorcism of the invaders.

In order to successfully cast the devil out of your child, first reform the diet, abolishing bad bread and all sweet articles of consumption. Secondly give the sufferer a cup of tea made of a little of each sage and sweet fern every forenoon or rhubarb and charcoal once or twice a week. May the devil soon depart both from your creed and family."

The following is extracted from a letter which I wrote to a northern newspaper on 5th June 1975:-

"For decades we have warned against the superstitions belief, encouraged by orthodox theologians for reasons best known to themselves, in the so-called devil and his minions, - a belief which surely belongs to the Dark Ages rather than to the modern age.

This has been used in the past to hold people in the bondage of fear but, with the benefits of education, mankind is throwing off the shackles of ignorance. May we suggest that the church should learn from Spiritualism and teach that God is love and that, to perpetuate this belief in devils is an offence against God and mankind. The problem of exorcism must remain the responsibility of its inventors and, unless they are prepared to admit that this is an outworn superstition, they must also accept responsibility for the human suffering which is even now only too obvious."

Please do not try to apportion blame to Spiritualism, its ministers or members, who have consistently warned the public against these practices, and which has no connection whatsoever with occultism or superstition." R.J.B. 1976

It is my earnest desire that this book will help in some small measure to dispel the modern craze manifested as a belief in demoniacal possession and the human suffering which results from such belief. I call upon the church leaders of today to rectify the mistakes of their predecessors, thus discharging their grave responsibility. Let the mis-direction of religious education be removed and replaced by love, truth, wisdom and compassion.

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