



# Spiritualism in the Evolution of Philosophy

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## Introduction

The first great philosophers were the Greeks, and some of their earliest speculations were notably materialistic in character, regarding the elements, water, air, earth and fire, in turn, as the basis of existence. These materialistic tendencies in thought were each, in turn, contradicted by idealistic philosophical principles such as infinitism, numerology, love and morality. Eventually the Greek school reached its highest level of thought in the idealism of Plato, and the materialism of Aristotle.

Since those early days, and throughout the whole of its subsequent history, philosophy has been divided into two schools of thought; the idealists, who regard ideas as primary and facts as secondary, and the materialists who regard facts as most Important and Ideas as secondary or derivative.

The Renaissance produced the materialism of Bacon, which in the next century was countered by the idealism of Kant. Modern times have produced a similar contrast in Spencer and Bergson, the idealists always tending more to that which is spiritual and abstract, and the materialists emphasising the material and factual. The great contradictions between the Christian outlook, based largely on the spiritual idealism of St. Paul, and the rational viewpoints of the materialists, eventually reached a major crisis in the nineteenth century when Darwin proclaimed his theory of evolution.

Today the extreme materialists, (Rationalists, Free Thinkers, etc.) deny the existence of the Spiritual Universe whilst the extreme idealists, (Mentalists, Christian Scientists, etc.) deny the existence of the Material Universe. Can the great conflict between the idealism of religion and the materialism of science be finally resolved?

The great need of our times is a philosophy, which can harmonise the facts of both the spiritual and material aspects of existence in one grand synthesis of all knowledge.

The 'Harmonial Philosophy' of Spiritualism, founded by Dr Andrew Jackson Davis, and elaborated and modernised by subsequent Spiritualist writers, is such a philosophy, for it harmonises the spiritual characteristics of idealism with the scientific facts of materialism and embraces all the phenomena of both the spiritual and material universes in one universal principle.

“There is an omnipotent, purifying, and fraternising principle permeating and pervading the Natural, Spiritual and Celestial departments of God's Universal Temple - a principle which unites atoms and planets into one stupendous system; which unfolds spirits and angels as immortal flowers; which endows the Divine Mind with eternal power and loveliness; and which is the divinely inherited treasure of the human soul - and this principle is called THE GREAT HARMONIA.” - A J Davis.

The Harmonial Philosophy of Spiritualism is the crowning glory of all philosophy and presents to man a true picture of the material world in which he finds himself, and of the spiritual life which is his inevitable destiny.

It proclaims the highest spiritual ideals, yet rests on the solid material foundation of the scientific facts of natural law. It brings to a climax a whole age of philosophical thought and resolves the conflict between the idealism of religion and the materialism of science, and gives to man an all embracing conception of his spiritual and material existence, past, present

and future.

With such a philosophy man can enter a New Age, the dominating theme of which will be spiritual progress in love, wisdom, and all other human virtues, in an environment of prosperity and peace. Such is the role of Spiritualism in the history of mankind.

In the following chapters Spiritualism's place in the evolution and development of philosophy is revealed as the culminating development of a whole age of thought and as a certain guide to man's future happiness.

Ernest Thompson MSNU  
Manchester, 1950.

## Chapter 1

### ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

#### ***What is the use of Philosophy?***

What is Philosophy? Philosophy is an outlook on life.

Each one of us, as we look out upon the Universe, formulates a general theory of existence, which produces a certain attitude to life.

What is the use of philosophy? The answer is that as a person acts according to his thoughts, whatever attitude those thoughts are conditioned by is of paramount importance to the life of the individual. For instance if one person holds the attitude that Right is Might and another that Might is Right they will behave in entirely different ways when faced with a given social problem; for one represents unselfishness and the other selfishness. These two opposing viewpoints have their origin in the evolution of man from his pre-existence as an animal to the attainment of the highest spiritual standards of civilisation. "Might is Right" arises from the inbred "survival of the fittest" material tendency which has been established in our psyche by our primitive ancestry, whereas the ideal of "Right is Might" arises from the inherent Spiritual Divinity which is potential in every man, and towards which man instinctively struggles, in accordance with the Divine laws of evolution and progress.

#### ***Idealism and Realism***

What is the essence of selfishness? It is to exploit the world for self. This produces an outlook that regards the world in ideas, which are related to self. The self-centred man will shut his eyes to the unpleasant facts of life, poverty and murder, upholding only those ideas of life which point to his own advantage. What is the essence of unselfishness? It is to become conscious of the needs of others and to render service to those who are less fortunate in life. The unselfish man will therefore entertain ideas not related to self, but to the objective facts and the stark realities of social life, and will sacrifice self-interests, and even business opportunities, to serve mankind. The question of the relation between ideas and reality is the fundamental question of the whole of philosophy, and the answers which philosophers have given to this question have split them into two principal schools of thought. Those who have regarded ideas as being of primary importance, and facts of secondary importance, are the idealists. Those who have regarded facts as of primary importance, and ideas of secondary importance, are the realists.

#### ***Idealist Orthodoxy***

This does not mean that a realist never has ideals, or that he never postulates unproven theories. The point is that as soon as the situation renders his ideals unpractical, and his theories untenable, he will change them in the light of new facts and adopt a new approach. A classical religious example of the idealist attitude to life is provided by the Orthodox Church will, in spite of the changes which have taken place in the world, still clings to outmoded creeds and superstitions, and in the face of modern scientific knowledge still believes in miracles.

This attitude has a selfish origin. Without the dictatorship of creeds and dogmas, and the miraculous element, the priests would lose their power over the people. That is why they

oppose Spiritualism - because of its power to free the people from the shackles of ignorance. Spiritualism means the destruction of Materialism, which places an emphasis on the importance of material possessions, but these mean a great deal to the Church. The Church follows a penniless prophet, yet is the richest landlord in the world. This is the great contradiction of Orthodoxy. Idealism is the source of contradictions, because of the divergence between ideas and reality, and is therefore a misleading approach to life and the cause of error.

### ***Idealist Theosophy***

The philosophical school of realism holds that ideas are derived from natural phenomena having objective reality apart from the mind. The viewpoint of philosophical idealism is that all natural phenomena are merely the production of the mind. This attitude of philosophical idealism is the basis of Theosophy. Paul Brunton, a modern exponent of theosophical philosophy, writes: "Mind and nothing else contributes the elements of its experiences. Mentalism derives its name from its fundamental principle that mind is the only reality, the only substance, the only existence, things being our ideas, and ideas finding their support in our mind. Mentalism, in short, is the doctrine that in the last analysis there is nothing but mind." Part of the results of such a philosophy is the complete denial of returning spirit intelligences and of the reality of spirit communications, with the substitution of fantastic and contradictory conceptions of human destiny.

### ***Realistic Spiritualism***

Contrast this with the clear realism of the Harmonial Philosophy of Modern Spiritualism, which was given to us by Andrew Jackson Davis. "God exists, the universe exists, man exists, and all besides these plain affirmations of the soul must necessarily be relative secondary or demonstrative and mainly inferential, deductive, inductive, probable and possible. God is everlastingly spiritual. Nature is everlastingly material. God is the active or moving principle. Law is an outer manifestation of the modes of the infinite Mind. A full synopsis of man's creations may be obtained by simply interrogating nature, for she points to the eternal Mind which instituted laws that manifest themselves throughout her unfolding and bids us consider the principles of association, progression and development." The appeal here is direct to the objective facts of natural phenomena, in order to discover what is real - the Truths of the Universe, which exist independently of the mind of any interrogator. The foundations of Modern Spiritualism have been built upon scientific research into natural phenomena. Without the demonstration and proof of the existence of independent objective spirit intelligences, and objective physical phenomena associated with those intelligences, Spiritualism would not survive. The mind of an investigator may give him the idea that a spirit is present, but Spiritualism holds that this is not enough. Proof of its objective existence is the only basis for the acceptance of facts. If the facts oppose the mental impression then the latter is valueless. Such is the realistic philosophical basis of Modern Spiritualism.

## **SCIENCE OF CORRECT THINKING**

We have seen how important philosophy is to the life of the individual, and have discussed the two principal philosophical attitudes of idealism and realism. The next important aspect of philosophy to consider is the creation of ideals. As philosophy is a product of thought it follows that correct thinking is important for the production of a practical and useful philosophy. The first great philosophers were the Greeks and it is interesting to note that the

first science of thinking was developed by those famous Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato. In those ancient times the method of thinking, employed in formulating philosophical ideas, was the dialectical method. Dialectics comes from the Greek word *dialego*, to discourse, to debate. The Greek method of developing a discussion on any given problem was for each to try to disclose the contradictions in the argument of the other and then to overcome those contradictions in an effort to arrive at truth. Dialectics is a method of eliminating error from thought with the objective of leaving only that which is truth. The dialectical method was later applied to the phenomena of nature by the German philosophers Kant and Hegel, who studied things in their motions and development.

### ***Law of Motion***

They realised, when forming their Ideas, that it was Important to remember certain universal laws of development as a guide to the interpretation of truth. First and foremost was the law of universal motion in all natural phenomena. All things are in a constant state of motion. This is the basis of all change, development and life. The nebulae whirl in their mighty orbits, thus determining the form of the universe. In the tiny atom the revolving electrons preserve the character of each material element. Orbital motion forms matter, being its internal or static form of motion. Kinetic motion conveys matter, being its external or directional form of motion. It is important therefore, when thinking about the phenomena of nature, to realise that all aspects of it are in a constant state of motion. The life of the individual and of society is constantly changing because of this inherent motion in all things. This motion attains its most complex and wonderful form in the spirit of the individual. The World of Spirit, in the Ether of Space, contains the higher frequencies of motion or energy waves. The radiation of the 'thought' waves of all human spirits, and the 'form' waves of all human souls are transmitted by the ether to the super-normal senses of the individual.

### ***Law of Interdependence***

The motions and changes of a given object cannot however be considered in isolation, but in their interdependence with other objects in their environment. All things are interdependent upon each other. This is the basis of the grand unity of all things. In all movements there is a process of action and reaction, which is equal and opposite. If one object collides with another the reaction of the second body is equal to the action of the first. The movement of a planet is dependent upon the gravitational field of the sun. Events in America have their effects at our dining tables. A hasty word will influence another person's life. Our spiritual futures are dependent upon our present actions. "We reap what we sow". "There is compensation and retribution hereafter for all the good and evil deeds done on earth". Relatively few people realise however, how interdependent are the world of spirit and the world of matter. We are guided, both consciously and unconsciously, by spirit friends and we in turn often help lost spirits. The people of the earth are the future citizens of heaven. What happens here ultimately affects society in spirit. Finally all spirits are interrelated units of the Supreme Spirit of the Universe and we are therefore organically connected with and interdependent upon each other in a common spiritual brotherhood.

### ***Law of Contradiction***

In the motions, which occur in nature, contradictions and opposing forces develop. In turn all developments and changes arise from the conflict of contradictions and the struggle of opposing forces. In the realm of physics, the rotating motion of the earth upon its axis opposes

the gravitational forces arising from its revolving orbital motion around the Sun, with the result that all objects weigh heavier at the poles. Poverty and riches, old and new, ignorance and wisdom, hatred and love are some of the common contradictions of life. The advent of popular education produced one of the greatest social contradictions in the history of man, the contradiction of scientific knowledge and religious beliefs. In the conflict, which ensued, a new development took place producing a unity of these opposites. Education enabled man to realise the religious implications of a scientific investigation of psychical phenomena. Arising from these investigations a new spiritual revelation came to society - the revelation of Modern Spiritualism. This in turn came into contradiction with and in opposition to the Materialism produced.

### ***Law of Change***

Finally, it is important to realise that these changes, arising from the contradictions of nature, take place in definite ways. They proceed by means of gradual, slow and quantitative changes, which accumulate until their existing forms, are no longer capable of sustaining the conflict, which is then resolved by a relatively sudden qualitative change producing a new phenomenon. This is the dynamic method of all evolutionary changes. The octaves of light, sound, sensation and consciousness abruptly end and start when passing from one lower octave to a higher one. After a gradual application of heat, water will suddenly turn to steam. The embryo of the human being takes months to develop but only a short time to become an independent individual.

The Spirit World had for centuries made its impact upon our own, but Hydesville 1848, marked an abrupt change in those relationships, and intelligent communications rapidly spread all over the world. The development of mediumship often takes months before the first psychic perception is experienced. Death suddenly terminates our material life and begins an ethereal one. The spheres of the Spirit World are quite distinct, and reference to different and higher stages of spiritual consciousness have often been referred to in communications from inhabitants of the Spirit World. We are told that long preparation precedes each promotion. The present conflict upon with Spiritualism is engaged with Materialism and Orthodoxy, will some day be triumphantly resolved and society will then, in a relatively short space of time, pass into a "New Spiritual Age."

It will be seen from the above dialectical laws of natural development that they provide an excellent guide to the interrogation of nature, and are a scientific and reliable method of revealing truth - the basis of all true philosophy.

## **THE BEGINNINGS OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT**

The history of philosophy can be divided into four main periods. The first great school of philosophers was that of Ancient Greece which lasted 1,000 years. Indeed we owe both philosophy and its name to the Greeks.

Early Greek speculation dates from Thales of Miletus (585 BC).

Over nine hundred years later (AD 325) Constantine, Roman Emperor, convened the Council of Nicaea; the creeds were established and the Church became part of the state. Roman Catholic dictation of thought maintained the darkness of the ages, which followed. Then in AD 529, the Emperor Justinian put an end to all independent thought by closing the schools of Athens, confiscating their property and silencing their professors. The Roman Empire was

then decadent and practically at an end. This was the beginning of the Dark Ages, which lasted a further thousand years.

Then came the Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which transformed Europe from the medieval order to the modern order. This revival of learning was responsible for the emancipation of the mind from the trammels of dogmas. The reformation, under Luther's leadership, came almost simultaneously in 1517.

The industrial revolution introduces us to the fourth period of modern nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy and the struggle between Materialism and Spiritualism.

### ***First Philosophical Principles***

As we take up the story of philosophy with Thales (585 BC) we must appreciate that human thought had already developed to a great extent in many important directions. The first civilisation had been established in Babylon about 6,000 BC and by the time of Thales, Man had a rudimentary knowledge of astronomy, geometry, engineering and statesmanship. Thales' first philosophical principle was that water was the basis of all natural phenomena. It is conjectured that he came to the decision because life owed its nutriment to its presence and that so many things disappeared when dissolved in water. Anaximander succeeded Thales with the Idea that the Universe originated in the infinite and in somewhat mystical phraseology stated, "into that from which all things take their rise they pass away once more." He also taught that the earth had passed from a fluid to a solid state and that human beings had been evolved from an aquatic animal. Then came the idea that air was the universal element from which all things were made, which was introduced by Anaximenes 546 BC. He stipulated however that in rarefied form it appeared as fire, and when condensed as water and earth.

### ***The Principle of Opposites***

The name of Pythagoras introduces us to one of the greatest of the Greek philosophers, with whom we all associate the religious revival, which was a feature of sixth century Hellenic life and thought. Immortality in particular took a foremost place among the Pythagorean doctrines, being held under the form of metempsychosis, or the migration of the animating principle, after death, from animals and plants to human bodies and vice versa. This was a development of a very primitive animistic conception, which from the earliest times had included the notion of the reincarnation of spirits. The Pythagoreans held, in opposition to Ionian materialism, that numbers were the very substances of which things were made. The Pythagorean system of opposites was however the most important contribution and the foundation of Greek dialectics. A table of antithetical couples was drawn up, the most notable of which were: The Limit and the Unlimited; The One and the Many; Rest and Motion; Light and Darkness; Good and Evil. This idea of an all pervading antithesis in nature had a very powerful influence on the subsequent development of Greek thought. It was the basis of the idea of motion, contradiction and struggle, which was so characteristic of the highest Greek philosophy.

Xenophanes wrote in poetry, and considered that earth was the primordial element. He introduced the Pantheistic conception of God, as being the Spirit or Consciousness of matter, and regarded Earth and God as synonymous. So far, three elements, water, air, and earth had been chosen; Heraclitus of Ephesus (502 BC) however, gave the place of honour to fire. "This



universe, the same for all, was not made by any god or any man, but was and is and ever shall be an ever living fire, kindled and quenched by measure.” He recognised the reign of force and of law. We find him denouncing Homer for the prayer that strife might perish from among the gods and men, for he claimed, “war is common to all, and strife is justice, and all things come into being and pass away through strife.” Parmenides, in opposition to the idea of motion, struggle and strife proclaimed the world to be continuous, homogeneous and eternally at rest. He gave his case away however by constructing a popular cosmology in which he reinstated plurality, motion and negation. In his philosophy the antithesis of “appearance” and “reality” made its first appearance on the stage of philosophy.

### ***Early Idealism and Materialism***

From these early Greeks we pass on to Empedocles, who introduced a new force in nature, under the name of Love, which was not only responsible for the pairing of animals but for all the unifying processes now going on throughout the Universe. God was “a sacred and unutterable mind flashing through the whole world with rapid thoughts.” Empedocles was a psychic healer. Leucippus gave us the notion of the atom. Democritus gave us a philosophy of morality. “Not the words, but the works of virtue should be practised.”

Anaxagoras conceived the present order of things as having been evolved from a primordial chaos. These were the most distinguished of the earlier Greek philosophers who prepared the way for the Father of all philosophy - Socrates (469-399 BC). One interesting aspect of this early history is the appearance of the two distinct schools of Idealism and Materialism.

Note the contrasting ideas between the material principles of Water, Air, Earth and Fire and the more abstract ideas of Infinitism, Numerology, Love and Morality. Later we note the more basic contradictions between motion and rest, appearance and reality. Some philosophers appealed direct to material phenomena, others to pure ideas.

## **THE SOCRATIC METHOD**

The Father of Philosophy was Socrates (469-399 BC). As we look back over some two thousand three hundred and fifty odd years we can picture that great philosopher, clad in his Greek tunic, walking leisurely through the market place in Athens, gathering the young and learned around him in some shady nook of the temple porticoes, and discussing all sorts of problems with them.

Discussion was life to that select group. All the fundamental problems of existence, which are debated today, were thrashed out by that little band of thinkers. Socrates was so immersed in his thinking that it is recorded he even neglected his family. He never worked, and took no thought of the morrow. Xanthippe, his wife, loved to talk too; in fact it is recorded that she made his home life wretched by her quarrelsome tongue. He was the world’s greatest agnostic and he summed up his position by saying, “One thing only I know, and that is that I know nothing.” To doubt one’s beliefs was the essence of philosophy to him, and he held that it was important to turn the process of self-criticism upon oneself. “Know thyself,” said Socrates.

### ***The Dialectical Method***

Many of his predecessors had turned their thoughts to the phenomena of nature, but Socrates considered the mind of man more important. What is man, and what can be come? Were his great questions. When his friends discoursed on such subjects as justice, honour, virtue,

morality, etc., he would press them to define their terms. He would criticise their answers, reveal their contradictions until, by this Socratic method, this dialectical procedure, they arrived as near as possible to truth. He bequeathed to philosophy two very definite answers to two of our most difficult problems - What is the meaning of virtue? And what is the best state? His answers caused his death, but gave him immortal fame. He fought against the orthodox Polytheism of his day and championed the conception of Monotheism. He strove to establish a lasting moral code that would withstand the vicissitudes of religion; a code of ethics which would be as valid for the atheist as for the pietist.

### ***Virtue and the State***

His idea was to teach men to appreciate and realise their true interests, to foresee the ultimate effects of their work, and strive to achieve purposive and creative lives; in other words, a "good life" was the product of intelligence; to be virtuous one needed wisdom. Was not sin, error? All men inherited the same violent, selfish, and unsocial impulses, but the intelligent man could control them better, reflect fewer of his animal tendencies, and therefore sin less. In regard to the state, he considered the most perfect state was one, which returned to the individual, in wide opportunities, more than it took from him in restricted liberty. In such a state it would be to advantage of every citizen to obey the social law, and only intelligence would be required to ensure justice, happiness and peace. Without intelligent leadership in government however, it is difficult to persuade the individual to obey the laws. There is chaos where there is no intelligence, and the masses decide in haste and in ignorance; they are swayed by emotion, and repent at leisure in desolation. The management of the state should be left to its wisest men he concluded. "Virtue is knowledge and vice ignorance," was his famous doctrine.

### ***First Martyr of Free Thought***

This aristocratic philosophy was criticised and opposed by the popular Democratic Party in Athens, and as the wealthy and lettered minority was plotting a revolution, the teachings of Socrates had to be silenced. The revolution came, but the Democratic Party won. Socrates, the intellectual leader of the revolting party, the originator of the hated aristocratic ideology, the "corrupter of youths," was condemned to death. The whole world knows the wonderful story of his courageous defence, in which the first martyr of philosophy proclaimed the rights and necessity of free thought, upheld his conceptions of the perfect state, and refused to beg for mercy from the mob he had always despised. His theory was confirmed when the judges wished to let him go, whilst the crowd clamoured for his death. Woe to him who teaches men faster than they can learn! It was decreed that he should drink hemlock, and as he was now seventy, perhaps he thought that martyrdom would serve a useful purpose.

### ***Survival after Death***

Socrates was a Spiritualist, and from childhood was visited by experiences, which he described as the warnings of a "spiritual voice." These spirit messages were always prohibitions. He also occasionally went into trance. He believed that the soul was divine, and immortal, and was released at death. The following extract, from Plato's *Phaedo* reveals Socrates' solid conviction of survival after death. "How shall we bury you?" asked his friend Crito, as Socrates was about to drink the hemlock. "Just as you please, if only you can catch me, and I do not escape you," replies Socrates.

And then smiling quietly, and turning to us, he said “Why my friends, I cannot convince Crito that I am this Socrates, the one who talks with you and argues at length. He thinks that I am that other whom presently he shall see lying dead, and so he asks how he shall bury me. All the words I have spoken to show that when I drink the poison I shall no longer remain with you, but shall go away to some blessed region of the happy dead, all my words of comfort for you and for myself are thrown away on him... Dear Crito, bear the matter more lightly. Be not troubled at my supposed sufferings when you see my body burned or interred, nor say at the funeral that you are laying out Socrates, or carrying Socrates to the grave, or burying him... Be brave, and say you are burying my body.”

### **PLATO’S IDEAL OF A PERFECT SOCIETY**

One of the young men who were attracted to the Socratic group of students in Athens was Plato (427-347 BC) who found particular pleasure in Socrates’ game of dialectics in which dogmas were destroyed and ideas pulled to pieces upon the rack of their own contradictions. He became a great lover of wisdom and particularly of his master. “I thank God... I was born in the age of Socrates,” he said. When Socrates died he was only twenty-eight and the cause of his master’s death filled him with a scorn of democracy and a determination that it must be destroyed and replaced with the rule of the wisest. We know now of course that the world was obviously not then ready for a popular democracy and that the Feudal period was the next stage through which society had to pass. Athens became unsafe for Plato and he decided that it was an opportune moment to see the world. For twelve years he wandered from country to country accumulating wisdom from his many and varied experiences, studying the teachings of the scholars of various nations and investigating the numerous religious creeds and beliefs of those early times.

#### ***Justice Depends on Social Organisation***

At the age of forty he returned to Athens, full of the wisdom of many lands, now both a poet and a philosopher, and created for himself, as a medium of expression, the dialogue. The Dialogues remain one of the priceless treasures of the world, the most famous of which is the Republic. One of the fundamental problems of ethics was raised by the following statement. “You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question for equals in power, the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.” Here is the great issue of moral conduct. Which is the basis of justice, might or right? Socrates, who, in the dialogues, serves as the mouthpiece of Plato, answers that as justice is a relation among individuals, and therefore depends upon social organisation, it is better studied in relation to the structure of the community than as a quality of personal conduct. If, he suggested, we can picture a just state then we can describe a just individual. This reveals the great breadth of vision of our philosopher who saw, in those primitive times, the relativity of the issue, and the interrelationship between the citizen and the state; one being the product of the other.

#### ***Two Cities - Rich and Poor***

Why is it that we do not have a just state? He answered - because of greed and materialism. Men are acquisitive, competitive, ambitious and jealous. One group encroaches upon the preserves of another and war ensues. Trade and finance bring class divisions. “Any ordinary city is in fact two cities, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich, each at war with the other.” (423). Then revolution comes, “the poor overcome their opponents, slaughtering some and banishing the rest; and give to the people an equal share of freedom and power.” (557).

Democracy however also ruins itself by excess the people are not sufficiently educated to choose the best leaders. "As to the people they have no understanding and only repeat what their rulers are pleased to tell them." (Protagoras 317). To ensure that a proposition is accepted or rejected it is only necessary to praise it or ridicule it. Mob rule is a rough sea for the ship of state to ride; every wind of oratory stirs up the waters and deflects the course. The inevitable result is that the most unscrupulous flatterer, posing as the leader, rises to supreme power. The remedy is to seek only the wisest and best rulers.

### ***What is Useful, is Good***

In defining what was meant by justice and temperance, Plato would not admit that they implied the sacredness of property and marriage, but boldly identifying the good with the useful, regarded justice as the assignment of each class to its proper function. The industrial class should be occupied with the business of providing the material requirements of life, the soldiers to protect the nation and the rulers to teach and govern. The masses should not interfere with the state affairs, but the rulers should not use their power for their personal material gain. In studying these philosophical ideas of Plato we should not set ourselves to criticise them, but rather to try and understand them. For instance, we must remember that Plato's denunciations of democracy were directed against the Athenian constitution, which was the direct government of the state by a mass vote of the whole assembled people, and the huge irresponsible law courts, where often innocent people were condemned to death as an excuse for confiscating their property. His attacks would not therefore apply to modern democracy such as we know it in Britain.

### ***The Passion for Truth***

For Plato, reason was the supreme faculty. He did not claim, however, that it was the sole avenue to truth, but the test to which all truth must be submitted before acceptance. Plato taught that the philosophic impulse was, at its origin, akin to sexual love. Both were stimulated by beauty and had as their objective birth in beauty - the propagation of beauty everywhere; but whereas physical passion concerns itself with sensible forms and individuals, philosophic love - the passion for truth - rises by successive stages of thought from appearance to reality, sense to spirit, body to soul, the individual to society and from the one to the all. In the sphere of religious beliefs Plato was quite convinced that the human spirit was immortal, contending that it lived for ever, and after death had a continuous existence in a new body which migrated to a higher or lower existence in the after life. There was a state of rewards and punishments after death, but to make people lead good lives by bribes and threats was not in his opinion the true path to salvation. He considered that a religion should be embodied as part of the social order. The ideal of a perfect society was of course his great objective in writing the Republic, which was really a design for a perfect state.

(Reference numbers refer to marginal numbered sections of the Republic unless otherwise stated.)

## **ARISTOTLE'S PRINCIPLE OF "THE GOLDEN MEAN"**

Friedrich Schlegel once remarked that every man is born a Platonist, or an Aristotelian. In other words he meant by this contrast in philosophical outlooks that we are either idealists or realists. We have seen Plato's idealism fully expressed in his famous work the Republic, in which he sets out his conception of the ideal state. Aristotle's approach to the interpretation of

existence and nature was realistic. His ideas arose from direct observation of the world, as he knew it. Aristotle (384-322 BC) became a pupil of Plato in his eighteenth year and remained in his school until his master's death - a period of twenty years. Later, Philip, King of Macedon, the greatest monarch of the time, asked Aristotle, now the greatest philosopher of his day, to become the tutor of his son, Alexander, who was destined to become the master of the then known world. Aristotle was a great naturalist, a collector of knowledge, a collector of books and the first great collector of specimens of natural phenomena. It is recorded that Alexander instructed his hunters, gamekeepers, fishermen and gardeners to supply Aristotle with all he required for his collections, which enabled him to organise the first great zoological garden that the world has ever seen.

### ***Conquest of the World***

The great amount of knowledge arising from studies of his vast collections and books enabled him to supply the world with the fundamentals of science, and a text book of knowledge which became the basis of future progress during the ensuing two thousand years.

His writings were prolific, some records crediting him with 4000 volumes, others with a thousand. What remains is but a fraction. His works on logic and the science of thought are collected under the title of Organon. A second group covers his scientific works - physics, astronomy, biology, etc., a third includes his aesthetic writings, and a fourth his contributions to philosophy - ethics, politics and metaphysics. They constituted the first great encyclopaedia - it was indeed a greater conquest of the world than that of his pupil - Alexander. Science became the foundation of his philosophical writings. Instead of giving us brilliant literature containing philosophy as Plato did, he gave the world science and arising from it a scientific philosophy, which is the essence of realism.

### ***Logic***

Whilst Aristotle and Plato developed, quite naturally, the dialectical mode of thought, it was one of Aristotle's great distinctions that he created the science of logic. Correct thinking and fruitful discussion rest to a great extent upon defining terms or objects. Aristotle held that a definition should have two parts. Firstly, an object should be placed in a class or group whose general characteristics are its own. Man, for instance, is first of all an animal. Secondly, the definition should indicate special characteristics; how the object differs from other members of its group. Man, is therefore according to this system of definitions, a rational animal. In the Platonic demand for definitions there was a tendency away from things and facts to theories and ideas, from particulars to generalities, from science to scholasticism. With Plato his generalities tended to determine his facts, and he was so concerned with ideas that they began to define and select his facts. In the Republic he destroyed the individual to perfect the state. Aristotle was diametrically opposed to this outlook and criticised Plato's idealism. He preferred to deal with objective reality, the 'unwithered face of nature' - the facts as revealed by observation and experiment.

### ***Scientific Work***

"Socrates" says Renan, "gave philosophy to mankind and Aristotle gave it science." His greatest contribution was in the sphere of biology, arising from his studies in the great zoological gardens provided by Alexander. Because of this great collection he was able to visualise something of the grand cavalcade of evolution in the minute gradations from the

lowest forms to the highest. He noticed for instance that “nature makes so gradual a transition from the inanimate to the animate kingdom that the boundary lines which separate them are indistinct and doubtful.” Some species had not evolved to either plants or animals, and from such lowly stages life had grown steadily in complexity and power. Intelligence has progressed in correlation with mobility and complexity of structure. He noted the ultimate development of the nervous system and the brain. His researches were so comprehensive it is really surprising that he never formulated the theory of evolution. He discovered that characters common to the genus appear in the developing organism before characters common to the species or those peculiar to itself.

### ***The Soul***

He also noted that individuation varies inversely according to genesis, which means that when a species becomes highly developed the offspring decrease in number. He was also on the verge of discovering the science of genetics, having noted how a certain woman had married a Negro, and how her children were all whites, yet blacks appeared in the next generation. Where had the blackness been hidden he asked. Of greater importance was his theory of teleology which appeared in *De Anima*, and which asserts that not only in human life, but also in animal life there is an indwelling soul preserving the body from decay, and determining its growth towards completion. In man, this principle appeared in its highest form as mind. Soul was the efficient cause and the end of the physical organism, and was the explanation of organic life as a development from the merely potential to the actual. Aristotle realised that all life was due to motion.

God was the moving principle in nature. God does not create but moves the world; not as a mechanical force but as the total motive of all operations in the world, the drive and purpose of things, the principle of life. Divine providence and natural causes are synonymous.

### ***Ethics***

Aristotle contended that the aim of life was not goodness for its own sake but happiness. To him the life of reason - the specific glory and power of man - was happiness. Like Socrates, virtue was the direct fruit of wisdom and could only be the achievement of a fully developed man. There was no specific guide to this achievement, beyond the “golden mean” between extremes. The “golden mean” was not however the exact average of two extremes, but fluctuate in each given situation, and could only be discovered by mature and flexible reason. Excellence does not develop except from training. We do good deeds, not because of virtues, but are virtuous because of good deeds; “these virtues are formed in man by his doing the actions.” He extended his governing principle of the “golden mean” to politics, and rejected all extreme social and political programmes. It is impossible to convey in the space available, any adequate conception of the work of this great philosopher, who contributed possibly more than any other man to the knowledge and wisdom of the world.

## Chapter II

### MODERN PHILOSOPHY

#### Bacon (1561-1626)

#### THE GREAT RECONSTRUCTION OF PHILOSOPHY

The Dark Ages followed the closing of the schools of Athens. For a thousand years philosophy made no real advance. Then came the Renaissance. This revival of culture in Europe had its roots in the beginnings of the development of commerce. Manufacture produced a surplus of goods, trade expanded, and the interchange of ideas developed. The fifteenth century saw the production of the first books and the birth of Leonardo da Vinci and Copernicus; manuscripts of the Greek philosophers were discovered and published. Under the patronage of wealthy merchant princes, Florence became a great centre of culture. Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope and Columbus discovered America. In 1509, Henry VIII became King of England. The Renaissance was the transition from the Mediaeval Order to the Modern Order. The Reformation occurred almost simultaneously, discrediting scholastic theology. In 1520, Luther burned the "Papal Bull" at Wittenberg. In 1564, Shakespeare was born. It was the beginning of a great new age in which Elizabethan England emerged as the greatest of modern nations and produced the first great modern philosopher - Francis Bacon (1561-1626). The Renaissance moved from Florence to London.

#### ***Philosophy of Utility***

Francis Bacon gave a new purpose and direction to the search for truth, which marked the end of scholasticism. His contention was that knowledge, if unapplied, was useless. This philosophy was an indication of the beginning of the industrial age, when manufacture demanded educated workers in its processes, and not merely labour or handicraft skill. Scientific knowledge, developed from observation and experiment, was the new great demand of society. This rising philosophy of which Bacon was its greatest representative. "Shall we not discern as well the riches of nature's warehouse as the beauty of her shop? Is truth barren? Shall we not thereby be able to produce worthy effects, and to endow the life of man with infinite commodities?" The *Essays* was his finest literary work. These writings were definitely secular and rationalistic, and whilst he has sometimes been accused of atheism, he nevertheless believed in a universal mind. "A little philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." - *Of Atheism*.

#### ***Included Psychic Phenomena***

In the *Essays* his politics nevertheless reflected the still dominant feudalism. The people were far from achieving a democracy and he distrusted the masses. "The lowest of all flatteries is the flattery of the common people." He preferred the aristocracy as the ruling class, and above all the Socratic ideal of a philosopher king. His great plan however was the reconstruction of philosophy; a great undertaking without precedent, except in the case of Aristotle. Its theme was practice rather than theory. "I am labouring to lay the foundation, not of any sect or doctrine, but of utility and power." *Magna Instauratio* (The Great Reconstruction of Philosophy) in his 'Plan of the Work' he commences with the idea that "Nature cannot be commanded except by being obeyed." thus pointing out the importance of the scientific investigation of natural law. So he commenced with a survey of the science of his day. Let us "seat the sciences each in his proper place." Advancement of learning. All available

knowledge was to be the basis of his philosophy. Everything had to be included, and it was a tribute to his greatness that dreams, predictions, telepathic communications and even physical phenomena were considered, “for it is not known in what cases, and how far, effects, attributed to superstition, participate of natural causes.”

### ***A Synthesis of Science***

At the conclusion of his survey of science he pointed out how science was not enough. Science requires philosophy to co-ordinate its facts - a synthesis of science is required. “For as no perfect view of a country can be taken from the flat, so it is impossible to discover the remote and deep parts of any science by standing on the level of the same science, or without ascending to a higher.” Only philosophy can, in the end, give understanding, happiness and peace to life. Philosophy opposed Materialism, and the desire for wealth and possessions. He quoted Virgil in support of this contention: “Happy the man who has learned the cause of things, and has put under his feet all fears and inexorable fate, and the noisy strife of the hell of greed.” “Philosophy” wrote Bacon “directs us first to seek the goods of the mind, and the rest will either be supplied, or not much wanted.” Philosophy gives direction to life, and is to science what statesmanship is to politics. Knowledge is power. His philosophy aimed at the socialisation of science for the conquest of nature and the development of man’s powers. For this objective, man needed a new method of research and thought a new Organon - greater even than Aristotle’s.

### ***The New Organon***

The *Novum Organum* (1620) was Bacon’s most important work. Like the great Greek philosophers, he realised the supreme importance of the science of correct thinking. This work was a treatise upon the conduct of the understanding in systems of enquiry. “The human understanding is no dry light, but receives an infusion from the will and affections, whence proceed sciences which may be called ‘sciences as one would.’... For what a man had rather were true, he more readily believes.” This brilliant attack on Idealism marks him clearly as the first of the modern realists. He adds, “in general let every student of nature take this as a rule - that whatever his mind seizes, and dwells upon with peculiar satisfaction, is to be held in suspicion.” Plato, for instance had described the world as he had fashioned it, but he had revealed Plato rather than the world. Bacon’s advice was “if a man will begin with certainties he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin in doubts, he shall end in certainties... The true method of experience first lights the candle,” (hypothesis) “and then by means of the candle shows the way... commencing as it does with experience, duly ordered and digested, not bungling nor erratic, and from it deducing axioms, and from established axioms again new experiments.” In short we must use the inductive method (from the particular to the general); we must go to nature, not to ideas and theories.

### ***World Economy and World Peace***

Finally, in *The New Atlantis* (his last work) he pictured society in which science had at last its proper place - in control of nature. In the society of the future, government would be replaced with the mere administration of the fruits of the earth. “The end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire to the effecting of all things possible.” He foresaw waterpower for industry, surgical experiments on animals to save human suffering, genetics, air transport and submarines. He also predicted foreign trade without war a world economy and a world peace. This was not



idealistic speculation but a prophecy based on the evolution of the economics and politics of his day, and blind is the person who cannot now foresee a fulfilment of Bacon's prediction in the coming century, in view of the present rapid transition to world economy, and having regard, in spite of our struggles and troubles, to the numerous organisations and institutions which are now binding the men and women of all nations together into a Great World Brotherhood. "The world has been at war for fifty years. I am confident that by the century's end it will have worked out a system ensuring lasting peace." Gen. Smuts, 1948.

## **SPINOZA (1632-1677)**

### **ETERNAL PROGRESS IS ETERNAL PLEASURE**

Spinoza's great contribution to philosophy was created around the basic idea that God and nature are one. This was a very daring and bold philosophy, not only for the times in which he lived, and in a country (Holland) dominated by a virile orthodoxy, but also as a member of a Jewish community which had taken refuge, in exile, in Amsterdam and were consequently indebted to the Dutch Christians for their protection. In fact the Jewish group was eventually forced to excommunicate him to protect their position. In his treatise on Religion and the State, Spinoza has made a critical analysis of the Bible and pointed out that "all scripture was written primarily for an entire people and secondarily for the whole human race; consequently its contents must necessarily be adapted, as far as possible, to the understanding of the masses... Its object is not to convince the reason, but to attract and lay hold of the imagination... The masses think that the power and providence of God are most clearly displayed by events that are extraordinary, and contrary to the conception which they have formed of nature... They suppose, indeed, that God is inactive as long as nature works in her accustomed order; and vice versa, that the power of nature, and natural causes, are idle so long as God is acting; thus they imagine two powers distinct from one another, the power of God and the power of nature... God is merely in concession to the understanding of the people and their imperfect knowledge; that in reality God acts... by the necessity of his nature, and his decrees... are eternal truths." His attitude to Jesus was as follows. "The eternal wisdom of God... has shown itself forth in all things but chiefly in the mind of man, and most of all in Jesus Christ."

#### ***Creative or Vital Principle***

In Spinoza's second book, *The Improvement of the Intellect*, he points out the importance of philosophy. "The love towards a thing eternal and infinite alone feeds the mind with a pleasure secure from all pain... The greatest good is the knowledge of the union which the mind has with the whole of nature. The more the mind knows, the better it understands its forces or strength, the better it will be able to direct itself and lay down the rules for itself; and the more it understands the order of nature, the more easily it will be able to liberate itself from useless things; this is the whole method." Knowledge is both power and freedom. In *Nature and God* he postulates an underlying reality in the universe which he termed substance. This he identified with nature and God. Nature had a twofold aspect; an active and vital process (motion) and the contents of nature (matter). Substance assumes various materials modes - mineral, plant, animal, human, etc., but, in itself, is not phenomenal, but synonymous with the creative or vital principle - God. "I hold that God is the immanent and not the extraneous cause of all things. I say, all is in God, all lives and moves in God." In other words the universal laws of nature and the eternal decrees of God (His will) are one and the same thing.

### ***Good and Evil***

His philosophy was one of determinism, ruling out the Idea that the Universe was governed by an external dictator, which idea had merely been the projection of human ideas and purposes into an objective universe. We project upon the universe the idea of its division into good and evil, beautiful and ugly, whereas such qualities are relative to human conceptions and conditions. God is above our good and evil. “Whenever, then, anything in nature seems to us ridiculous, absurd or evil, it is because we have but a partial knowledge of things, and are in the main ignorant of the order and coherence of nature as a whole, and because we want everything to be arranged according to the dictates of our own reason; although, in fact, what our reason pronounces bad is not bad as regards the order and laws of universal nature, but only as regards the laws of our own nature taken separately... As for the terms good and bad, they indicate nothing positive considered in themselves... For one and the same thing can at the same time be good, bad, and indifferent. For example, music is good to the melancholy, bad to the mourners, and indifferent to the dead... I would warn you that I do not attribute to nature either beauty or deformity, order or confusion. Only in relation to our imagination can things be called beautiful or ugly, well ordered, or confused.”

### ***Mind Needs a Vehicle***

Spinoza’s conception of the mind of God was “All the mentality that is scattered over space and time, the diffused consciousness that animates the world.” God, the universal process and eternal reality of nature and existence, can in this sense be regarded as having a mind and a body. Mind and matter cannot however exist separately but are one indivisible process. The brain is neither the cause nor the effect of thought but merely the outward material manifestation of one process of which mind is the inner spiritual reality. In incarnate man, mind cannot normally manifest without a material brain, nor can a discarnate mind manifest without an ethereal brain. Mind needs a substantial objective vehicle of thought. Thoughts are things. Throughout the universe we find this internal and external duality body and mind, matter and motion.

“Certain of the Jews seem to have perceived this, though confusedly, for they said that God and his intellect, and the things conceived by his intellect, were one and the same thing.” His Idea of the unity, and interrelationship of mind and body is important to healers.

“Nothing can happen to the body which is not perceived by the mind.” Even the embryo is created by the indwelling mind of the fertilised cell. All organs and processes are controlled by the subconscious region in the mind. Spinoza excluded free will. The struggle for existence determines the instincts, instincts create desire, and desire is the origin of thought and action. “The mind is determined in willing this, or that, by a cause which is determined, in its turn, by another cause, and this by another, and so on to infinity... Men think themselves free because they are conscious of their volition’s and desires, but are ignorant of the causes by which they are led to wish and desire.”

### ***Ethics***

Spinoza’s ethics have been regarded as the supreme achievement of modern thought. The objective of all conduct he claimed was the achievement of happiness, which he defined simply as the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain. Pleasure, in turn, was “Man’s transition from a lesser state of perfection to a higher state.” Eternal progress is therefore synonymous with eternal pleasure. “Joy consists in this, that one’s power is increased... Plain

is man's transition from a greater state of perfection to a lower state. I say transition; for pleasure is not perfection itself." To achieve these transitions one must have virtue, and virtue is the power to do things. "By virtue and power I mean the same thing." His philosophy however was not cold and passionless. He realised how dead reason was without passion, just as passion without reason was blind.

"All appetites are passions only so far as they arise from inadequate ideas; they are virtues... When generated by adequate ideas."

### ***Determinism***

To summarise, there is no virtue but intelligence. We are only free when we know. His determinism did not provide an obstacle to a good and progressive life, but an incentive to higher morality; teaching us not to despise or ridicule anyone. Men are "not guilty."

If punishments are socially necessary they should be administered without hate. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." - Jesus. Determinism is but another expression for natural law, cause and effect, and makes us realise more clearly that all things are determined by the eternal decrees of God. We accept the laws of nature more willingly, and realise the necessity of living in harmony with them, and not in opposition to them. What appears to a person as a misfortune now is justified in the eternal scheme of things, and "whether he comes into his own now, or in a thousand years, he sits content." No other modern philosopher has influenced philosophy so greatly as Spinoza.

## **KANT**

### **IS KNOWLEDGE INDEPENDENT OF EXPERIENCE?**

The bold realism of Spinoza and Bacon was soon to be challenged by the Idealists. In the seventeenth century a great controversy arose over the question, "How does knowledge arise?" In his famous essay on human understanding, the English philosopher, John Locke, made history by turning reason in upon itself. He was the first to examine seriously the mind with a view to ascertaining how far it could be trusted to interpret correctly its environment. He discovered that all knowledge comes from experience through the senses. "There is nothing in the mind except what was first in the senses." This was challenged by the Irish Bishop Berkeley who pointed out that this analysis of Locke's merely proved that matter does not exist except as a form of mind! Matter was thus eliminated from the universe. David Hume, the Scottish sceptic, counter-attacked by pointing out that there is no such thing as a mind. Mind is not a substance, and has never been perceived. Mind is merely an abstract name for an organisation of perceptions and memories. The philosophers had thus disposed of both matter and mind and there was nothing left. Philosophy discovered itself in the midst of its own ruins! A humorist remarked at the time "No matter, never mind."

### ***Idealism versus Materialism***

Reason was gradually developing a virile materialism, a growing atheism and a revolt against the Church. Someone had to save religion from reason. It was left to Emmanuel Kant, the German philosopher (1724-1804) to champion this cause.

He openly challenged the English School of Materialists and set out to prove in the Critique of Pure Reason that knowledge is not all derived from the senses. Pure reason was indeed

independent of sense experience, and arose from the inherent nature and structure of the mind. Knowledge can come to us a priori - before experience. This book is one of the most outstanding contributions to philosophy and commenced a great conflict among the philosophers. In it Kant made a most detailed analysis of the origin and evolution of thought, and the structure of the mind. The main issue he expressed as follows: "Experience is by no means the only field to which our understand can be confined. Experience tells us what is, but not that it must be necessarily what it is, and not otherwise. It therefore never gives us any really general truths; and our reason, which is particularly anxious for that class of knowledge, is roused by it rather than satisfied. General truths, which at the same time bear the character of an inward necessity, must be independent of experience - clear and certain in themselves."

### ***A Priori Truth***

This boldly asserted that such knowledge must be true no matter what subsequent experience may prove; being true a priori - before experience. Kant thus laid down the foundations of German Idealism. Experience, he contended, merely gave us separate and isolated sensations and events; but truth came from the mind, which was an active organ and not a passive automatic receptacle for experience and sensation. Mind is not a term for a group of mental states, but an organ which co-ordinates sensations into ideas. Kant termed his study of the laws of thought and structure of the mind - "Transcendental Philosophy." This revealed two stages in the processes of thought: (1) Co-ordination of sensations (or the awareness of stimuli;); (2) Co-ordination of perceptions. The latter process was the grouping or organisation of sensations around a given object. The separate sensations of the form, colour, smell, sound of an animal, for instance, are co-ordinated into a perception, and it is thus that sensation passes into knowledge. Is this process automatic? No, it is directed by the mind, which creates ideas and allocates the various sensations, in space and time, to the various perceptions. But is this perception identical with the object perceived? Does appearance conform with reality?

### ***Appearance and Reality***

Kant made a great contribution to thought when he made the distinction between appearance and reality the phenomenon and "the thing in itself." What develops in the consciousness as a perception from sensation may be different from the object itself. The object itself can never be experienced, for it would have to be changed in its passage, through sense and thought. "It remains completely unknown to us what objects may be by themselves, and apart from the receptivity by our senses. We know nothing but our manner of perceiving them; that manner, being peculiar to us, and not necessarily shared by every being, though no doubt, by every human being." Critique. Kant did not however deny the existence of things, of matter, like the English Idealist Berkeley, or the Mentalists and Christian Scientists of today, but insisted that things were in themselves unknowable. What knowledge we have accumulated regarding our world is based on appearances, which includes an inter-mixture of ideas created by mind, therefore we cannot know what an object is really like beyond our mental conception of it. "The understanding can never go beyond the limits of sensibility."

### ***Basis of Religion***

This new attitude towards reason, and its independence of experience, was also assumed by Kant in relation to morality in the Critique of Practical Reason. Good actions were not

measured by good results but by the conscience, an inner sense of duty, which was a law not founded on personal experience. The conscience dictates a priori for all behaviour. "Morality is not properly the doctrine how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness." This implied complete freedom of will power - the power of the mind to determine experience and the individuals way of life. As this idea lay at the roots of religion, religion should also be based on the practical reason of the moral sense, and not on the logic of theoretical reasoning or moral codes. Revelations should be judged according to their moral values and not creeds. Religion is useful only in developing the morality of men. Kant's appeal was essentially a return to the teachings of Jesus and for the abandonment of creed and ritual. "Christ has brought the kingdom of God nearer to earth; but he has been misunderstood; and in place of God's Kingdom, the kingdom of the priest has been established among us." The idealism of this great Konisberg sage stimulated many new systems of thought in the German school of philosophy, and indeed influenced the whole of nineteenth century thought.

## **HEGEL (1779-1831)**

### **THE DYNAMIC OF HUMAN PROGRESS**

G W F Hegel (1770-1831) has been regarded as Germany's greatest philosopher. So great was his fame that Germany used to celebrate his birthday with a public holiday. He was largely influenced by Greek thought and opposed Kant's subjective idealism with that of objective realism. He flatly denied that things were "unknowable" as Kant had stated. The intelligible reality of things is just what we know best, he contended, and what is unknown will be made known. "The universe is penetrable to thought." Truth did not exist in the idealistic world of Plato, but in the self-realising forms of Aristotle. He greatly developed the Greek dialectic and his fame rested chiefly in his great conception of the "Unity of Opposites" or the "identity of Contraries." To grasp this idea we must first realise that all things are related to one another. Nothing can be considered in isolation. Everything is related to every other thing. Human life is related to plant life and this to the mineral kingdom. Birds are related to human beings in their ability to defend man's crops against insects. But the most universal relation in natural phenomena, Hegel pointed out, was that of opposition. All development arises from the struggle of opposites. Every idea expressed naturally leads to its opposite, eg, poor and rich, love and hatred, wisdom and ignorance, new and old, past and present, spirit and body, matter and motion, etc.

#### ***Unity of Opposites***

Hegel's idea was that every pair of opposites, such as those given above, form a unity within which development takes place, leading to a higher or more complex unity. This dialectical movement is the basic idea behind the whole of his philosophy. It is a modern development of the 'Golden Mean' of Aristotle who wrote that the "knowledge of opposites is one." In all truths therefore there are opposing aspects in organic unity. The whole history of evolution is a continuous series of struggles. The new arises and is opposed, by the old, and after the conflict there is a merging of the two in a new and higher creation. Feudalism opposed absolute monarchy. The barons won, but in the new regime the king was retained. The industrial class came to power in Britain under Cromwell. The rule of the barons was superseded by the Commonwealth Parliament. Charles I was beheaded, but the House of Lord was retained and the throne afterwards restored. In the present struggle between Religion and Science we are witnessing the triumph of science, but out of the conflict is arising a new

religion based on scientific knowledge - Spiritualism.

### ***The Dialectical Method***

Spiritualism however, in turn, has also a contradiction to resolve, because the social products of science are opposed to the survival of the inherent psychic faculties of man. Science has produced an industrial environment, which tends to nullify or extinguish the extra-sensory perceptions associated with mediumship. Consequently mediumship is noticeably receding in the human species. In this new struggle of contradictions, it is highly probable that Spiritualism will overcome the destructive effects of our industrial environment of noise, speed and concentration, by inventing a scientific mode of communication with spirits. When Spiritualism successfully and completely establishes itself upon a sound scientific basis of communication, it will become the dominating spiritual force in the world, because science (its basis) has already achieved an international status. Hegel's dialectical movement can also be applied to the development of ideas. First there is thesis, then antithesis and finally synthesis. By revealing that all things contain their own contradictions and opposites, Hegel has discovered for us one of the fundamental secrets of nature, for this is the great dynamic of all natural development and evolution. He explained the dialectical method of interpretation more fully and definitely than any previous philosopher, and as we study his writings we acquire a key knowledge of natural phenomena which simplifies what would otherwise appear as complex and mysterious. Each higher stage in the grand cavalcade of evolution divides inevitably into its own productive but opposing contradictions, which constitute the driving forces which raise all things to loftier levels of organisation, complexity, beauty and refinement. There is a constant oscillation of events from unity to opposition and from opposition to unity. This applies to the whole universe.

### ***The "Absolute Ideal"***

Hegel's dialectics have revolutionised our philosophical approach to truth by simplifying the interrogation of nature. He has made us realise that the fundamental task of philosophy is to discover first the opposites contained in a unity or the unity embracing given opposites, in order to reveal the dynamic movement of development, change and progress which is taking place in any given situation. We also see more clearly how science unites knowledge; and philosophy, as Bacon pointed out, brings a unity of the sciences. We appreciate the unifying influence of ethics in diverse conduct, and how politics unite opposing groups into the "state." Finally, religion points to brotherhood among different people, harmony among nations, and most important of all, unity with the Supreme. God is obviously the totality of all relationships, movements and progress. God is the whole in which all things move and have their being. Hegel pointed out how man is part of the Absolute. In man, the Absolute develops to self-consciousness, and becomes the "Absolute Ideal." In other words, Man's reason brings the realisation that he is part of the Absolute, which enables him to rise above individual limitations and become conscious of the hidden harmony underlying all diversities and strife. "Reason is the substance of the Universe... the design of the world is absolutely rational," wrote Hegel in his Philosophy of History

### ***Progress from Conflict***

We see more clearly that conflict and even strife are merely stages along the road of progress. Evil must be opposed. Good can only be reached by struggle. The lives of the saints were full of strife, and death was often the penalty for service to humanity. Jesus sacrificed his earthly

life to serve his fellow men. His character was refined by sufferings, and no one can deny that his passion on the cross has had a profound influence upon the progress and civilisation of man. "Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion," said Hegel. Pain attends the conquest of evil, but happiness is the net result. Happiness however should not become the objective of life, but achievement. "The history of the world," wrote Hegel, "is not the theatre of happiness; periods of happiness are blank pages in it, for they are periods of harmony." Hegel meant by this that contentment and self-satisfaction are unworthy of a progressive individual, and that history and advancement are only made when opposing contradictions are being resolved. Thus man is able to create the new from the old, as an instrument of God, in His ever unfolding and evolving universe. "Never did philosophy assume such a lofty tone." - Paulsen.

## **SPENCER (1820-1903)**

### **A PHILOSOPHICAL SYNTHESIS OF ALL KNOWLEDGE**

The nineteenth century was pregnant with fundamental changes for human society. The industrial revolution was in full swing. Vast cities were springing up around the great factories. Mighty railroads and large ocean going liners were being built. It was the epoch of Faraday's electromagnetism, Dalton's atomic theory and Darwin's evolution. Science was taking control of the world. But the sciences needed co-ordination so that they could be directed towards the benefit of mankind. This was the role of philosophy, and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) undertook the task. His Synthetic Philosophy earned for him the honour of becoming the most famous English philosopher of his century. It was natural that a philosophical synthesis of science should arise from the "Workshop of the World." Spencer's philosophy, ripened by age and experience, (he did not write until he was forty), was logical and lucid. He possessed such a clear, realistic and definite style that the whole world became interested in philosophy.

#### ***Concept of Evolution***

First Principles, his most famous work, was published in 1862 and took the same place in philosophy, in the minds of his generation, that Darwin's Origin of Species had taken in science. These two great works became the centre of a mighty battle, which suddenly blazed into action against orthodox beliefs and creeds. In the centre of the fray was Prof. T H Huxley - generalissimo of the new forces. First Principles attempted to unify knowledge and state generalisations of natural law such as the indestructibility of matter, the continuity of motion, the conservation of energy and the transformability and equivalence of forces. His concept of evolution however startled the intellects of Europe. "Evolution is an integration of matter and a concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."

#### ***Diversity in Unity***

Spencer had in mind the integration of stars and planets from gaseous nebulae; the play of the elements upon the rocks and the formation of soil; the transformation of soil into plants, and the changes that convert the proteins and carbohydrates of plants and animals into human tissues and organs. In the mental sphere there was a development of sense experience into knowledge and of science into philosophy.

In the social field we note the integration of families into tribes, tribes into nations and finally, the 'federation of the world.' In the process the dissipation of motion is manifested in the restricted freedom of the individual within the state; the incoherent homogeneity of individualism passes into the coherent heterogeneity of communal life. The activities and motions of the individual are transformed from a state of isolation to that of co-operation. Evolution from nebulae to planets, primitive life to human society, also develops diversity in unity. A nebula is simple in structure but our planet contains myriads of complex structures, whilst modern social life becomes increasingly rich in industrial, political and cultural variety. Sciences breed other sciences, philosophy develops hundreds of new conceptions, and religion takes a thousand forms to meet the needs of an increasingly complex humanity. Integration, the unity of parts into wholes, and heterogeneity, the differentiation of parts into increasing varieties, are the key conceptions of Spencer's idea of evolution.

### ***Terrible Message of Materialism***

He further explained how the processes of evolution arise from the operation of mechanical forces, but he contended that these forces, due to resistance, would ultimately expend themselves. Planets will follow smaller orbits as the sun cools. Life, in turn, will suffer from lack of light and heat and our sources of food will diminish. The human race will gradually disappear. As the uneven forces achieve equilibrium of a dead heat, dissolution will be the dreadful epilogue of evolution. The earth will become a tragedy of decay as energy becomes more and more dissipated. So the mighty drama of Spencer's First Principles no future for the human race. The idea of a benevolent creator was therefore completely inconsistent with such a pointless and purposeless creation. This was the Modern Materialism that enraged the whole of Christian Orthodoxy. The Church fought back. It restated its beliefs in a spiritual future for man. No proof! was the practical reply. Religion must, if it wishes to survive, provide proof of its spiritual principles. Rationalism was demanded everywhere.

### ***A Stimulus to Progress***

The second and third volumes of Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy bore the title 'Principles of Biology'. One of his principles was: 'Life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations.' Another very interesting idea was the opposition between intellectual development and fertility. "Where exceptional fertility exists, there is sluggishness of mind, and where there has been, during education, excessive expenditure in mental action, there frequently follows a complete or partial infertility. Hence the particular kind of further evolution which man is hereafter to undergo is one which more than any other, may be expected to cause a decline in his power of reproduction." Philosophers are noted for avoiding children. He also thought that increase of population beyond the limits of food supplies had been a stimulus to progress. "From the beginning this pressure population has been the proximate cause of progress. It produced the original diffusion of the race. It compelled men to abandon predatory habits and take to agriculture. It led to the clearing of the earth's surface. It forced men into the social state... and developed the social sentiments. It has stimulated to progressive improvements in production, and to increased skill and intelligence."

The struggle for existence had eliminated inferior species, only the fittest survived. In psychology he outlined the evolution of mind and pointed out that problems solved by inherited instinct were simple and related to the established routine of life, whilst those which demanded the reasoning faculty were new and complex. Basically, however, instinct and



reason were the same; reason merely being the struggle of many instincts in the art of thinking.

### ***Society is an Organism***

Throughout his great masterpiece Spencer was constantly concerned with social problems. In *The Principles of Sociology* he sought to explain the laws of the development of society, the causal sequences, with a view to establishing sociology as a science. Society was an organism. It procured nourishment and circulated it. Different sections performed special functions. Its consciousness was reflected in its democratic institutions and government. "A social organism is like an individual organism in these essential traits: that it grows; that while growing it becomes more complex; that while becoming more complex, its parts acquire increasing mutual dependence; that its life is immense in length compared with the lives of its component units; that in both cases there is increasing integration accompanied by increasing heterogeneity."

There was growth from the small shop to the combine, with an accompanying division of labour and trades. He concluded his *Synthetic Philosophy* with *The Principles of Ethics* in which he endeavoured to establish a scientific basis for ethics. "The supposed supernatural sanctions of right conduct do not, if rejected, leave a blank. There exist natural sanctions no less pre-emptory, and covering a much wider field."

For instance, "acceptance of the doctrine of organic evolution determines certain ethical conceptions." A moral code which could not stand the test of natural selection and the struggle for existence was useless. Surely "the highest conduct is that which conduces to the greatest length, breadth, and completeness of life."

Morality also harmonised with his main principle of evolution, for was it not unity in diversity? The highest types were those who achieved a unity of many virtues, qualities, and powers. He surveyed, analysed, and explained nature and society as no other man had ever done. He truly co-ordinated all knowledge in a grand philosophical synthesis.

## **BERGSON (1859-1941)**

### **THE PHILOSOPHY OF CREATIVE EVOLUTION**

It was natural, after the revolution in philosophy caused by the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), and Spencer's *First Principles* (1862), that there should be a counter-revolution against the onslaught of the new Materialism. Spencer had interpreted the world in terms of force and given a picture of a mechanical universe of matter. This view-point dominated philosophy for the remainder of the century. Meanwhile reaction developed and ripened in the twentieth century. A brilliant attack against 19<sup>th</sup> century Materialism was made by the French philosophy Henri Bergson (1859-1941) in 1907, when he published his *Creative Evolution*. His championship of a spiritual view of the world was welcomed everywhere, and he at once became the most popular figure in the world of philosophy. His famous fellow countryman, Pasteur, a biological chemist and physicist had not only discovered how to cure diseases by the use of vaccines but had, through his experiments, discredited the belief in the generation of life by non-living matter. Here was a new basis on which to construct an anti-materialist philosophy.

### ***Free Will***

Man, according to Bergson, is a centre of creative evolution. He is not entirely a pawn in the game between environment and heredity. As he adds new experiences and knowledge to the storehouse of his memory, the variety and range of possible responses in any given situation increases, and therefore his scope of choice is enlarged. As he thinks, he rehearses his responses before he produces the act. His consciousness is therefore proportionate to his capacity for choosing. "Consciousness seems proportionate to the living being's power or choice. It lights up the zone of potentialities that surrounds the act. It fills the interval between what is done and what might be done." - Creative Evolution. We not only know what we are doing, but have free will in choosing what we will do. This was a blow to Determinism. "The primary function of memory is to evoke all those past perceptions which are analogous to the present perception, to recall to us what preceded, and what followed them, and so to suggest to us that decision which is the most useful. But this is not all. By allowing us to grasp, in a single intuition, multiple moments of duration, it frees us from the movement of the flow of things, that is to say, from the rhythm of necessity. The more of these moments memory can contract into one, the firmer is the hold which it gives to us on matter; so that the memory of a living being appears indeed to measure, above all, its powers of action upon things." - Matter and Memory.

### ***Consciousness***

Determinism infers the unimpeded flow of cause and effect, but when a person tries to make a decision the easy inevitable flow of the mechanics of determinism are not apparent. Instead there manifests the burden and obstructions caused by the struggle between the gravitation of instinct and the opposing forces of reason. Consciousness was therefore not the mechanical functioning of brain cells and nerves. These were merely the telephone lines to the intelligence within. The thinking organism could not be the brain as the Materialists had claimed, and so the idea of a separate though interrelated mind became one of Bergson's philosophical concepts.

Consciousness was not only related to the brain however. Did it not extend throughout the body via the nervous system? There was consciousness all over the body.

"Theoretically therefore everything living might be conscious. In principle, consciousness is co-extensive with life." - Mind Energy. The study of consciousness became the basis of Bergson's philosophy. He realised, that the study of consciousness would give a new interpretation of the world. This also led him to the unconscious regions of the mind which revealed to him still greater possibilities. "To explore the most sacred depths of the unconscious, to labour in the sub-soil of consciousness; that will be the principal task of psychology in the century which is opening. I do not doubt that wonderful discoveries await it there."

### ***An Evolving God***

Philosophy had found a new basis - psychology, the newest science of all; the foundations of which were being laid by Freud. It was in direct contrast to the physics of Spencer. Instead of the dissipation of energy, psychology presented the view of a constantly increasing accumulation of vital powers, "the continual elaboration of the absolutely new."

From a different point of view, biology had revealed that where tissues had been regenerated,

functions re-appeared. Something immaterial must be the creative force behind such phenomena. How did the embryo create and develop all the organs of the body? And so Bergson postulated a creative power, an *élan vital*, as the directing intelligence in all nature. There was a constant “procreant urge of the world.” There was also direction and design behind all phenomena, so Bergson associated this creative force with God, and being evolutionary in character, he concluded that God too must be evolutionary. “God, thus defined, has nothing of the ready-made; He is unceasing life, action, freedom. Creation, so conceived, is not a mystery; we experience it in ourselves when we act freely.”

His great concept of Duration arose from this philosophy. All things, mind and matter, life and consciousness, creation and evolution were all forms of Duration. Instead of the old uni-linear series of evolutionary stages, Creative evolution was pluri-dimensional. Eternal duration was the true nature of the eternally evolving God.

Our struggles towards progress were due to the presence of an evolving life force within us. A force which could even overcome its enemy matter and elude mortality. This idea led Bergson to a study of immortality and psychical research. He considered that the evidence for telepathy was overwhelming. He examined the mediumship of Eusapia Paladino and reported in favour of her sincerity, and in 1913 accepted the Presidency of the Society for Psychical Research.

### ***Spiritual Realism***

Bergson’s spiritualistic and metaphysical reply to Spencer’s materialism was a modern parallel to the reaction of Kantian idealism to Bacon’s realism. The history of modern philosophy reveals two great waves of materialism and atheism arising from the explosions of science. First Bacon with his *Novum Organon* in 1620, and the Spencer with his *First Principles* in 1862. The reaction to Bacon culminated in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 and to Spencer in Bergson’s *Creative Evolution* in 1907. There is however a difference between the idealism of Kant and the realism of Bergson for the latter was based on scientific research.

In the long struggle between materialist realism and spiritualistic idealism there was finally produced a unity of opposites in Bergson’s spiritual realism. The study of science had at last produced a spiritualistic philosophy in which we first note the influence of psychology (science of the mind) and secondly of psychical research (science of the survival of the mind.)

Psychical research also became the basis of the new philosophy and religion of Spiritualism, in which the unity of science and religion became a reality for the first time in the history of the evolution of man’s mind. Since the beginning of thought, science and religion had remained in opposition to each other. Spiritualism has achieved the unity of these historic opposites, and in consequence is rapidly becoming the dominating spiritual force in the world. In our following lecturettes we will therefore study the philosophy of this new religion.

## Chapter III

### THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY

#### ***Swedenborg's Scientific Philosophy***

When each new age or epoch is born, it contains the seed of its successor. The 17<sup>th</sup> century epoch of Newtonian and Baconian Materialism also produced the forerunner of Spiritualism, a Movement that was later inaugurated to overcome Materialism. Isaac Newton (1642-1727) had originated his Theory of Gravitation in 1666. In 1710, St. Paul's Cathedral, London, symbol of the power of the Church, had just been completed. In that same year Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a young Swedish scientist had come to London to study Newtonian physics. He was destined to become the St John of Spiritualism. Eventually he became one of Sweden's famous scientists. He was an authority on physics, metallurgy, mining, astronomy, zoology and anatomy. Early spiritual influences were Protestant in character. His father was, in fact, a bishop of the Swedish Church. His first writings were purely of a scientific nature and it was not until 1734, at the age of 46, that he turned his attention to philosophical speculations. These were naturally based upon a very sound and rational basis, for by that time he had acquired an extraordinarily wide knowledge of natural science.

#### ***The Soul is Sublimated Matter***

In his Principia, the first part of his Opera Philosophica et Mineralia he postulated a theory concerning the origin of things, and propounded the nebular hypothesis many years before Kant, Herschel and Laplace. It is interesting in this connection to note that the nebular hypothesis has recently been revised. Then followed the Economy of the Animal Kingdom and The Animal Kingdom. The Latin title of this latter book was Regnum Animale, which really means the kingdom of the soul.

In this book he strove to fathom the mystery of the human soul and its relationship to the body. He believed that the soul, or vital principle, was closely associated with the blood, which he "regarded as the purest of the organs of the body and the most exquisitely adapted for the reception of life." He was certain that the soul was a sublimated form of matter. At this point he came into conflict with Orthodoxy which criticised these peering into spiritual mysteries. He replied by saying that he would not "persuade anyone who comprehends these high truths by faith, to comprehend them by his intellect; let him abstain from my books... But these pages of mine are written with a view to those only who never believe anything but what they can receive with the intellect, consequently who boldly invalidate, and are fain to deny, the existence of all supereminent things, sublimer than themselves, as the soul itself, and what follows therefrom - its life, immortality, heaven, etc..." He was already writing for the new age of scientific and materialistic minds, leading them to God "by the analytic method."

#### ***Body and Soul***

At this point he also came into conflict with the materialistic philosophers. "I know it will be whispered in my ear by many of the most accomplished philosophers of the day, that it is vain and useless to enter the recesses and interiors of the human body, with a view of arriving at the soul... But these arguments may be met by a few opposite ones. Inasmuch as the soul is the model, the idea, the first form, the substance, the force, and the principle of her organic

body, and of all its forces and powers; or, what amounts to the same thing, as the organic body is the image and type of its soul, formed and principled to the whole nature of the soul's efficiency, it follows, that the one is represented in the other, if not exactly, yet quite sufficiently to the life... Thus, by the body, we are instructed respecting the soul; by the soul respecting the body; and by both respecting the truth of the whole." His researches led him to the conclusion that the centre of the soul's activity is the brain, which, receiving impressions from outward things, originated conceptions. These "put on rational forms, and became intellectual Ideas..."

"There is in the cerebrum an eminent sensorium, and intimate recesses therein wither the sensuous rays of the body ascend, and where they can mount no further; there the soul resides, clad in the noble garment of organisation, and sits to meet the ideas emerging thither, and receives them as guests. This high and noble place is the innermost sensorium, and it is the boundary at which the ascent of the life of the body ceases, and the boundary from which that of the soul, considered as a spiritual essence, begins."

### ***Higher and Lower Truths***

Whilst he was a student of Newton in physics, we note in his philosophical realism the influence of Bacon. Dr Wilkinson, in his introduction to the economy, calls Swedenborg the "Synthesis of Aristotle and Bacon... The ascending method of Bacon and the descending one of Aristotle," he says, "are in fact both realised by Swedenborg." He combined "the inductive and synthetic methods." J D Morell wrote: "Commencing by observation, his mind seized upon certain high philosophical axioms; and from them reasoned downwards to the nature and uses of particular objects. Perhaps it is the only attempt the world has seen (with the exception of the unsuccessful efforts of Comte) at rising upward to purely philosophical ideas from positive and concrete facts." Swedenborg contended that higher truth came through intuition whilst the lower truth came through the senses. "These... are so widely separated, that they cannot possibly come together without some uniting medium. Our rational mind is the uniting medium, where mystic meetings are carried on, and sacred covenants ratified... Now since worldly things flow into it from the lowest sphere, through the gates of the senses, and heavenly things from the highest, through the portal of the soul, hence it is the true centre of the universe... We are organic subjects through which the lowest things ascend, and the highest descend; and human minds are the very receiving-rooms of both these guests."

### ***Naturalistic Morality***

He was the first to attempt to harmonise science and religion. "It is then futile to assert that philosophy is not connected with theology; since the contrary is demonstrated by Swedenborg as fairly as any law of matter is demonstrated by Newton. For Swedenborg took facts representing integral nature, and investigated them, and the order and mechanism of structure, and the pervading use or function was found to be such as in every case to furnish truths relating to the moral or social existence of man... Nature... Is the mechanism or means of which truth and good are the end." Introduction by the editor of *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*. In *The Worship and Love of God* he gave an account of his conception of creation. After describing the birth of the earth, from the nebulous ring around the sun, he tells of how its surface contained the seeds of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom. "These seeds or beginnings lay as yet unseparated in the rudiments, one folded up in another, namely, the vegetable kingdom in the mineral kingdom, which was to be the matrix; and in the vegetable kingdom, which was to serve as a nurse or nourisher, the animal kingdom; for each afterwards

was to come forth distinctly from its coverings. Thus the present contained the past, and what was to come lay concealed in each, for one thing involved another in a continual series; by which means this earth from its continued auspices, was perpetually in a kind of birth." These creations however were all manifestations of God, who is the essential substance, and who has always existed. "It is impossible to exist from what has no being, and out of nothing, nothing can be made."

In regard to mankind, "We really here live and walk as little universes, and carry both heaven and the world, consequently the kingdom of God, in ourselves." The transition from the scientific philosopher to the Spiritualist Seer was now imminent.

## **SWEDENBORG'S SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY**

Swedenborg's life was divided into two periods, the first of which was devoted to science and philosophy; the second part (thirty years) has been described as "the opening of his spiritual sight." Swedenborg's intercourse with the spiritual world commenced in April 1745, when he was fifty-seven. He had already enjoyed a very full and rich life of experiences, had become a famous scientist and philosopher, and nobility had been bestowed upon him, in recognition of his work, by the Queen of Sweden. No one was better fitted to interpret intelligently the spiritual universe, which he was now to explore. His Spiritualist writings were therefore executed with an unimpassioned scientific and philosophical approach and he was thus able to proclaim to the world, in a most convincing way, that survival after death, in a spiritual world, was a law of nature. "To Swedenborg," wrote F W H Myers, "belongs the first emphatic announcement that this life and the next one are morally continuous." For nearly thirty years he held daily converse with the spirits of those who had departed this life, and was often privileged to consciously visit the Spirit World and converse as freely with its inhabitants as with incarnate human beings. It was from these experiences that he was able to present, particularly in his most famous book, *Heaven and Hell*, a complete picture of life after death.

Swedenborg has given to man a great revelation and teaching of the nature of life in the spiritual world and of the universality of Divine Providence. He does not however propound these teachings as his own, but constantly affirms that he wrote under the direction and guidance of the Lord, describing himself humbly as the "Servant of the Lord Jesus Christ."

I think that this claim that Jesus was his Spirit Guide can be accepted in the light of modern Spiritualist knowledge and teachings, and provides a spiritual link with the ancient order of psychic prophets known as the Order of Melchisedek in the following order - Melchisedek, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jesus and Swedenborg. Each one became the spiritual guide of the succeeding one.

### ***Bible Interpreted***

In 1749, appeared the first volume of his *Arcana Caelestia* in which we note philosophical speculation giving place to confident statements regarding spiritual matters. He had become a Spiritualist, for his spiritual ideas were now based on psychic facts and personal experience of the hereafter. "It has been permitted me to hear and see things in another life which are astonishing, and which have never before come to the knowledge of any man, nor entered into his imagination. I have there been instructed concerning different kinds of spirits, and the state of souls after death, - concerning hell, or the lamentable state of the unfaithful, - concerning heaven or the most happy state of the faithful, - and particularly concerning the doctrine of faith which is acknowledged throughout all heaven."

Arcana Caelestia is a spiritualistic interpretation of Genesis and Exodus, in twelve volumes. Swedenborg came to London in 1748 to publish them. He spent, on various visits, over five years of his life in London.

### ***Divine Love and Wisdom***

Swedenborg insisted that the intellect should not be subordinated to faith. He proclaimed the need for the exercise of reason in spiritual matters as in other matters, and thus enlarged man's conception of God and his own destiny. His ethics were summarised in the words, "doing good to our neighbour daily and continually, not only to our neighbour individually, but to our neighbour collectively... In whatever office, business or employment he is engaged and with whomsoever he has any connection." He was the prophet of the coming age of collectivisation in cities, factories and offices. To do good for the sake of reward however, was to negate any merit in the act. The truly charitable "place no merit in their works, for they never think of merit, but only of their duty, which as good citizens they are bound to perform."

### ***True Christian Religion***

The fundamental principle of Swedenborg's philosophy is the substantial reality of spiritual things. He attributed this reality to Love and Wisdom. "The truth is that love and wisdom are the real and actual substance and form which constitute the subject itself. The Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom are Substance and Form in itself, thus Very Reality and the One Only Realty." - Divine love and Wisdom. All things therefore derive their being and nature from God the "One Only Substance."

### ***Immanent Conception of God***

Here we note the origin of the modern spiritualistic conception of the immanent, Supreme Spirit, which was later passed on from him, in spirit, to Andrew Jackson Davis. "Every one who thinks from clear reason sees that the universe was not created out of nothing, because he sees that it is impossible for anything to be made out of nothing... God alone is substance in itself, and thence very esse; it is evident that the existence of things has no other source." - Divine love and wisdom. God is a Spirit. "Nothing in nature exists except from a spiritual origin... The essence from which it exists is the spiritual, because this has in itself the Divine esse, and also the Divine power of acting, creating and forming." Apocalypse explained. Swedenborg was consistent with his idea of eternity and did not invent a beginning. Creation was eternally continuous; the spiritual being the cause, and nature the effect.

### ***Doctrine of Correspondence***

This was the basis of his great doctrine of "correspondences," the natural world being a corresponding image of the spiritual world. The Divine Spirit, as it expresses itself, is received according to the state and capacity of matter, and thereby presents infinite variety. God however, although all powerful, does not operate arbitrarily, but by law, and it is part of the Divine law that man shall be free in spiritual matters. Man is placed between forces, some of which are good and some bad, and with his wisdom he is able to choose between them. His science of correspondences was created to enable man to understand the inner reality of creation and existence. There was a correspondence between the spiritual and the material, and also between God and man. Man is a microcosm - a universe in miniature. As God's

Spirit rules the universe, so also man's spirit rules his body. The light of Heaven is wisdom and its heart is love. Light and darkness correspond with truth and error. Light is man's universal symbol of truth. Jesus was the light of the world.

### ***Heaven and Hell***

On the subject of survival after death Swedenborg tells us that "when the soul thus separates himself, he is received by good spirits, who likewise do him all kind offices whilst he is in consort with them. If, however, his life in the world were such that he cannot remain associated with the good, he seeks to be disunited from them also, and this separation is repeated again and again until he associates himself with those whose state entirely agrees with that of his former life in the world, among whom he finds, as it were, his own life. They then, wonderful to relate, live together a life of similar quality to that which had constituted their ruling delight, when in the body. On returning into this life, which appears to them as a new commencement of existence, some after a longer, and others after a shorter space of time, are carried thence towards hell; whilst such as have been principled in faith towards the Lord, are led by degrees from this new beginning of life to heaven." - *Arcana Caelestia*.

On the nature of heavenly existence he states that heavenly joy "is the delight of doing something that is of use to oneself and others; and the delight of use derives its essence from love and its existence from wisdom. The delight of use, originating in love through wisdom, is the soul of all heavenly joy." - *Conjugal Love*.

### ***Conjugal love***

He pointed out how death does not alter either man or woman. Both keep their contrasting and complimentary natures. Sex is not altered for it is not merely a bodily distinction; "the mutual and reciprocal love of the sex remains with human beings after death... Now since conjugal love is the fundamental love of all good loves, it follows that the delights of that love exceed the delights of all other loves... The reason why all delights, from primes to ultimates are collected into this love, is on account of the surpassing excellence of its use; its use is the propagation of the human race, and hence of the angelic heaven; and as this use was the end of ends of creation, it follows that all the blessedness, blissfulnesses, delights, joys, and pleasures, which could possibly be conferred upon man by the Lord the Creator, are collected into this his love." - *Conjugal love*. In most respects heavenly life resembles earth life. There are people and buildings, flowers and trees, mountains and rivers, animals and birds. There are work and play, struggles and triumphs, and as life evolves existence becomes more refined, joyous and beautiful. In all this the spiritual impulses are love and wisdom.

## **ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS**

### **THE HARMONIAL CONCEPTION OF GOD**

The nineteenth century was described by Alfred Russel Wallace as 'The Wonderful Century.' Man's achievements in this period outshone all his triumphs in former centuries. Modern science had given birth to mighty industries which soon over-produced the demands of the world's markets. Man with his new knowledge conquered the world and completely subdued nature to his needs. This new knowledge however, not only changed his material life but also his spiritual life. He began to realise that his knowledge of nature's laws and processes contradicted the relationship, which the Church preached as existing between God and His creations. In fact the hypothesis of a God became unnecessary. Nature was but the



manifestation of blind forces, and so gradually the philosophy of Modern Materialism, based largely on Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Spencer's *First Principles* became acceptable to an increasing number of people, and slowly the Church began to lose its influence over the masses. By the middle of the century the Church was regarded, by an important intelligent section of the community, as no longer a progressive force. It is true that for the greatest part of eighteen hundred years Christianity had fulfilled the historic role of changing the heart of man from that of a savage to a reasonably tolerant civilised person, but now, as that influence was losing its hold, it appeared that it was only a matter of time before man would become devoid of either spiritual guidance or spiritual standards.

### ***New Revelation Needed***

The scientific and industrial revolution had created a spiritual crisis in the affairs of man. A new revelation was therefore needed which would not contradict, but harmonise with man's scientific knowledge. This was provided by Spiritualism which proclaimed a religious philosophy based on scientific research into psychical phenomena, and which proved the truth of human survival and communication with spirits, thus providing religion with a new and certain basis for its continued existence. The philosophy of Spiritualism originated from the combined efforts of Swedenborg, a scientist, who had passed to the Spirit World in 1772, and Andrew Jackson Davis, an American medium, who in 1844 began to communicate the new teachings from the spirit of Swedenborg, and later developed and extended them himself. These teachings became known as the Harmonial Philosophy of Modern Spiritualism. The writings of Andrew Jackson Davis filled thirty one volumes, the most important of which were *The Principles of Nature*, *Her Divine Revelations* and *The Great Harmonia*, the latter appearing in five volumes.

The *Great Harmonia* was "A Philosophical Revelation of the Natural, Spiritual and Celestial Universe," and formed the basis of the Harmonial Philosophy, which now filled the spiritual void that had been created by modern materialism and the incompetence of orthodox religion, and at the same time gave to the world the first great synthesis of science and religion.

### ***A Scientific Conception of God***

A belief in God has always been the fundamental principle of all religions. This belief had originated in ancestral ghost worship and later evolved into the idea of an external, almighty, though very human intelligence which, it was claimed, had created the universe and ruled it very much in the fashion of an earthly king ruling his kingdom. He governed in an arbitrary manner and when occasion demanded, joined forces with his followers, and helped to defeat their enemies; which no doubt he did, as Jehovah was obviously the ghost of a former tribal chief. The advent of modern science caused man to abandon these ideas; there was no evidence in modern times of such a deity. Science however, in revealing how the forces of the universe created and developed natural phenomena, opened the way to the acceptance of the idea that these forces could be regarded as a manifestation of God. Natural laws began to be regarded as the mode of existence of an indwelling Supreme Spirit. Was nature not the body of God, and its motion and life His Spirit? This was the conception of God which Spiritualism, through Andrew Jackson Davis, proclaimed to the world. "God scientific really considered is the greatest fact in the universe - He is the greatest principle - He is the greatest reality. God is, in this sense, the active or moving principle, and is different from nature in this one particular respect, that, while God is active and moving, nature is passive and moved. Inasmuch, therefore, as God is the greatest fact, and the greatest reality in being, it follows,

from scientific principles, or from principles of scientific induction, that he is a fixed fact, a fixed reality.”

### ***Hormonal Conception of God***

In his Great Harmonia Davis describes God as “vitalising all things to the universal satisfaction of all things, and substantialising everything to the universal realisation of substances, God dwells in connection with all substances and elements, and individualises His motion, His life, His sensation, and His intelligence in them. Inasmuch as God is a fact, a reality, a principle, it is agreeable with science to suppose that He is substance - is matter. Being substance in and of Himself, and exerting an active and moving power continually in the empire of matter, it is reasonable to conclude that his attributes and elements are also matter or substance, and that they are apprehended, but not acknowledged as such by the superficial observer of objects and phenomena in external nature. Therefore, according to scientific principles, we are led to the legitimate conclusion that all the life of plants and animals, and all the phenomena of attraction, gravitation, and of the imponderable elements are referable to the active and moving principle called God.”

### ***Infinite Intelligence***

The harmonial conception of God however is not a mechanical philosophy. It claims that this supreme Spirit of nature has supreme intelligence, for it manifests according to law and order, and all nature demonstrates that its possibilities, organisation and development are infinite. “Science considers God in reference to things, effects, and phenomena, philosophy... as the great cause, around which infinite and universal effects congregate, and from which infinite effects proceed, and He appears as the great central source of all life and love, of all order and form, and as the sustainer and unfold of all things - the magnificent universe! Beholding the infinite cause of all existences in His works, the mind is irresistibly persuaded to believe that God is an infinite organisation and intelligence. That He is an intelligent being is seen by what He does. The proofs are that all things flow into forms, series, degrees, and progressive organisations.”

### ***Individuality of God***

This God, this directing Spirit and organisation of the universe, can also be regarded as an individual on the same basis that the directing spirit and organisation of a human being is regarded as an individual. God’s Spirit is the consciousness of the universe just as man’s spirit is the consciousness of his being, and that is why Davis wrote, “God as a consciousness of personality,” but the word personality, when used in this sense, must be free of the limitations of human personality which are finite. God has an infinite personality for His nature has infinite possibilities. Without this conception of God as an individual, we cannot fully realise or become conscious of our part or share of that individuality. “As is our God, so are we. If He is apprehended as an organised principle, organised as the human soul is in its most interior principles; and if it is accepted that He operates according to eternally established laws or rules of action, which being in themselves so surpassingly righteous that they produce a kind of necessary freedom, or independence, and which rules cannot be violated with impunity - then will our Spirits bow with all the pleasure of an intellectual obedience to the laws or will of our father, and feel a beautiful freedom in the fact of moving in harmony with universal nature.” From this conception Spiritualists based their principle of the “Fatherhood of God.”

## ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS

### THE SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY OF MAN

In surveying the whole realm of universal nature one cannot help but be impressed with the high position occupied by man. Materialists explain this by stating that this has only come to pass because man survived more successfully than other species in the struggle for existence, and that at one time it was an even chance on insects ruling the world. Nevertheless it has been ordained that man shall rule the world, and the fact stands out clearly that the whole of nature is today at man's command and subjected to his use. Materialists will also point out that man is merely a parasite, and exists on the carcasses of other life which he kills in order to survive. There is however a higher aspect and deeper explanation of our dependency on other forms of life for existence. Our mode of subsistence is also a means whereby lower forms are absorbed to produce higher forms. In the struggle for existence higher forms have emerged, and this struggle has been the dynamic of progress. In general, plant forms have evolved by absorbing mineral forms, plants in turn have helped the procreation and development of animals, and animals of humans. These four main stages of evolution have had the human spiritual principle as an ultimate. Our great universe (it is all made of the same basic substance) seems specially adapted for the ultimate creation and maintenance of immortal human spirit.

#### ***Harmonial Philosophy is Evolutionary***

The attitude of the Harmonial Philosophy in regard to man is an evolutionary one. Man is obviously, so far, the crowning effort of creative power, and all forces and manifestations of nature play direct or indirect parts in the production of this great masterpiece of creation. This is not an egotistical view, but quite a reasonable conclusion, which A J Davis sums up as follows. "First, the stupendous universe is organised for the ultimate purpose of developing and organising man. Secondly, the anatomical and psychological construction of man are designed to receive and elaborate the animating elements of nature into an immortal and endlessly progressive soul." Man is the culmination of nature, and has power over nature. The vast spiral of ascending forms in creation strove to be man. Man is indeed an epitome of nature; energy and matter, plant and animal. Some argue that a man's Spirit exists prior to the physical body but the Harmonial Philosophy teaches, on scientific grounds, that if the purpose of a material world is the elaboration and individualisation of the spiritual substance, man as an individual, cannot have existed prior to his birth here on earth. The potential man has, of course, always existed, but the actual man has not. Potential man has evolved through millions of years, under the direction of Eternal Spirit, through energies, gases, minerals, plants and animals. The potential human spirit has evolved as it has risen from lower to higher forms. Simple motions have become complex sensations, but matter has always been the vehicle of spirit, for spirit is the directing power, and matter the forming substance which has evolved into the human body.

#### ***Harmonial Health***

Hence it will be seen how close is the relationship between spirit and body, and this relationship is most important from the point of view of health. It is common knowledge how the mind affects the body and vice versa. What a mighty power is faith in the recovery of health, for faith is will in action. "Perfect health," wrote Davis, "is perfect harmony. By perfect health I do not merely mean that the stomach, or liver, or lungs, or other members of

the structural brotherhood are free from disease, but I mean that state where the immortal spirit is circulating harmoniously through every organ, tissue, and ramification of the organism." Illness is therefore a state of disharmony between spirit and body. This does not mean only mind and body, for the mind is merely the directing ego or nucleus of the spirit. Every part of the body is filled with the human spirit, and the human spirit directs the humblest operations of life in the numerous spheres of its organisation. "The internal spiritual principles must be correspondingly harmonious. In pure health, the spirit permeates, penetrates, and actuates, every particle in the human body," and therefore "a truthful system of medical practice will be found to rest wholly upon a truthful recognition of the vibrating essence." This spiritual moving principle acts magnetically upon the organism. "Magnetic action here means the galvanic action which begins at and with the brain, and thence expands in a corresponding manner throughout every department of the organism." It will be seen therefore how this law lies at the basis of psychic healing.

### ***Origin of Human Spirit***

The Harmonial Philosophy is very illuminating regarding the wonderful function of the brain and its part in finally transforming human substances into human spirit. Pure spirit is of course simply the directing or moving principle. When this principle creates a 'human Spirit' it does so through the vehicle of a very refined and highly evolved substance, and it is the brain which acts as the crucible for the final refinement of matter for use as the vehicle of organised intelligence. "The brain is the most positive and superior stomach or digestive apparatus in the organism." Gross matter is absorbed by the stomach and is passed through numerous refining processes so that "particles are refined and sublimated, far beyond the power of chemical instruments to detect, ere the brain or spirit receives, prepares and appropriates them to its own constitution." Eventually the elements are so refined that they are absorbed into the "very organisation of mind or spirit itself. Thus we see that the spirit sustains and perpetuates itself upon the same principle of refinement and reciprocation as that by which the physical organs, nerves and muscles are rebuilt and actuated. But it may be asked - from what substances does the spirit draw its appropriate nourishment? I reply - the spirit not only draws from the food which enters the stomach, but from the electrical and magnetic elements which pervade all nature, - it draws from the atmosphere which enters the lungs; from the element of light which inspires the eye and permeates the system; it draws from the odours that penetrate the senses - in truth, the spirit draws from all nature, and appropriates to itself every particle which is capable of assimilating with its exalted organisation."

### ***Sleep and Death***

Each day is like a little lifetime, at the end of which we grow weary and are glad when slumbers overtake us, but we go to sleep knowing that we will awaken again. So also after a full life, the aged grow tired and enter their last earthly sleep - also to awaken again - but in the glorious life of the spirit world. These sleeps are caused by the fatigue of our physical bodies, but the spirit of man never sleeps for it is endowed with eternal motion that never tires, so pure is its substance. One of the functions of the spirit in sleep is to keep life going in the body, but its highest function is digesting the spiritual experiences of the day. Sleep on a problem and it will often solve itself. Sometimes we can remember these spiritual processes and we call these remembrances dreams, but often the spirit travels far from the body in what is called the soul or etheric body. Sometimes these travels are on the earth plane and sometimes in the spirit world. It is in this spirit body or soul that the human spirit initially

takes its leave of earthly life, and maintains its individuality in the Spirit World where, with his etheric senses, man is able to continue consciousness of his spiritual evolution. Man is therefore, on this earth plane, a triune individual, consisting of spirit, soul and body.

## **ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS**

### **SPIRIT DEVELOPMENT**

We have seen how man is part of God. He is not an isolated entity but a spirit, which is very much bound up with, and inter-related with all Spirit and all things. When he is born he comes into being bearing the spiritual and physical qualities of the family and race which produce him. His mental and bodily qualities have been laid down for him by millions of years of evolution, and he inherits strong and well-marked characteristics. He is placed upon the ladder of progress by his ancestors and parents, and finds himself in an environment which is not of his own choosing. In other words his beginning is completely determined for him, and from his first moment he becomes a spiritual focus of struggle between his inherited powers and his environment. His sphere of action is limited and conditioned from the commencement, but he can become conscious of his limitation, and in contrasting his own with other lives can desire progress. His capacity to compare and desire is however also limited by his degree of consciousness, but the fact that he is part of a greater spiritual process than himself which, while determining and fixing his start in life, can equally facilitate his development. Friends and ministering angels help even the helpless, and there are some alas, who are practically helpless. This is the function of "The Brotherhood of Man," a principle which all people should uphold.

#### ***Determinism or Free Will?***

The Harmonial Philosophy of A J Davis is definitely deterministic in its attitude, and holds that a man has not free will to do as he pleases. It is pointed out that free will implies immunity from the laws of cause and effect, which is a purely idealistic attitude, disregarding the real facts of life. This would reduce a world of law to one of chaos. The Harmonial Philosophy teaches that true freedom is found only in obedience to natural law, and that Spiritualism is essentially a teaching of that law. Natural law cannot be broken, but breaks those who disobey it. If a person upholds the principle of complete free will, he implies that no law can hold dominion over him. What actually happens is that our environment offers us certain alternatives, and our instincts offer several tendencies, and we can choose between them. There is a vast difference between choice and free will. The capacity for choosing is of course at first fixed, but the Harmonial Philosophy regards man as an evolving being whose consciousness expands, whose wisdom and loving attributes are constantly developing, and therefore whose power to govern his life and direct his progress is always increasing from experience and study. To Spiritualists, determinism is not mechanical and fixed, but a spiritual process in which the individual takes a constantly increasing share in the determining process. He evolves from being determined by his environment to the power of determining his environment. The former condition dominates earthly life, but the latter is the chief characteristic of spirit life when the faculty is developed to perfection.

#### ***Determinism is More Humane***

The great spiritual value in the philosophy of determinism is that we can achieve a greater understanding in dealing with the outlaw, thief and murderer, who may have inherited strong

tendencies to act in a criminal way. It also makes us realise that to apply punitive measures is wrong, and that the correct course is to apply remedial ones. Surely it is wrong to hang a man, whose inherited animal instincts have been so strong that he cannot help committing murder? What is required is mental adjustment and healing. Punishment is contrary to natural law for nature never punishes; there is simply cause and effect. Any suffering which emerges is really remedial and in the end benefits the whole.

It will be seen therefore that determinism is more humane than the free will doctrine. Further, moral standards are constantly changing and all we can expect from members of society is to try and live up to current moral standards. This is where the principle "Personal Responsibility" operates. It is very important however, to remember always that an individual is not an isolated phenomenon of nature, but is part of and shares in, the well being or distress of all nature, especially human nature. This should be particularly borne in mind in the times of natural calamities and war. For this reason the Harmonial Philosophy, which is realistic, does not involve idealistic contradictions with facts.

### ***Love and Wisdom***

In regard to the relationship between the individual and society, Davis wrote, "individuals by a combination of their constitutional tendencies and impulses, develop families, societies, nations, and circumstances. These same individuals become the victims of their own developments, and consequently they bear the impress of those circumstances, customs, opinions, and superficialities, which they were instrumental in establishing among men. Individuals not only create and develop, but in their ignorance become the victims of the conditions of one another." Ignorance is the root of all evil, but it is clear that man in his evolution is proceeding from states of ignorance to states of enlightenment. He is not falling but rising, and is overcoming ignorance with love and wisdom, "love is found to be the parent or residence of all those feelings and impulses and sentiments which characterise the spirit in its three fold external connection with nature, with society, and with nations. And wisdom is ascertained to be the parental fount of all form and order, beauty and precision, which environ the intelligent individual, and which are the natural companions of erudition. In this philosophy of the human soul, it is well to remember that Will is considered more as an effect of a class of faculties than as a faculty by itself; hence, that it is manifested only when love, unguided or guided by wisdom, as the case may be, prompts the individual to action, emotion, or determination of purpose."

### ***Harmony***

In the Harmonial Philosophy, love is regarded as an omnipresent actuating principle in all things; the union of atoms in a molecule, the bonds between a man and woman, and the brotherhood of all peoples. Love is the life of God. Wisdom is the governing principle in the direction of self, family, nation, world and universe. There is an evolution from self-love and ignorance to universal love and wisdom. "In everything and everywhere is manifested an indwelling principle of life and motion, which is love; and over all things there seems to preside a governing principle which is wisdom. Harmony is the most perfect form and highest manifestation of all attributes of wisdom; it is the guardian angel of universal-love; and its mission is to teach that proper organisation, cultivation, and direction of the innate elements of the soul, will result in the unfolding of a useful, a just, a powerful, a beautiful, an aspiring and a harmonious individual."

## ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS

### THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

The fundamental characteristic of all life is that it struggles to maintain existence. Man has an innate love of life, and uses every device to preserve himself. The fear of death has always been his greatest dread and that is why his greatest hope has been immortality. To civilised man immortality means something more than mere continuous existence, it is the prospect of continuous evolution and progress towards greater works, vocations and pleasures.

To the majority of people however, the prospect of a life after death is still a vague hope wrapped up in orthodox faiths; but to Spiritualists, who have received undeniable proof of the continued existence of those whom they once knew in the body, life after death is not only a certainty, but an assurance that “Eternal progress is open to every human soul.” Now the fact that we survive this material life is no proof that we survive eternally, but it does give us some assurance that, if we can survive one death, we shall continue to exist after further changes have taken place. Andrew Jackson Davis, in his Harmonial Philosophy, endeavours by an intelligent interrogation of nature, to reveal those life principles which indicate that immortality is indeed the natural destiny of the human spirit.

#### ***Divine Vital Principle***

In the first place, matter and spirit are regarded as the dual manifestation of one universal substance or God (or Eddington’s ‘Mind Stuff’). According to the laws of modern science this substance could not have been created out of a void, for astronomy and physics reveal that it has always existed. The eternal nature of the universe is supported by the First Law of Thermo-dynamics (the Conservation of Energy); the Second Law (Entropy) can only be applied to a given stellar body; therefore a beginning and an ending of things is illogical and has no support in scientific knowledge. Davis’ first postulate is a universal and eternal “Divine Vital Principle” which gives movement and life to all natural phenomena. It is energy, law, love, wisdom, and everything else which nature and human nature manifests. It is present in all things, infinite in operation, and dual in nature, for everything is generated and regulated upon the fundamental law of positive and negative, “by and through the unitary operation of these reciprocal male and female principles.” His next proposition is: “What is usually termed inert matter contains not only all form but also all force; that inorganic substance clasps and embraces the essential principles of both shape and vitality - the laws of both body and soul - and therefore, also, the power to construct them, and the nutrition wherewith to nourish them.”

#### ***New Bodies for Old***

After explaining the evolution of stellar bodies and the cooling of the earth, he deals with the origin of life within the chemical actions, which eventually produced the first forms of life. “These electromagnetic beds of gelatinous matter contained the first germs of life out of which all nature awoke from the profound solitude of countless ages of inanimation.” He then traces the evolution of man and explains the evolution of his triune nature. “As the physical body is the fruit of vitalised matter, so is the spiritual body the fruit of its vitalised exterior. This spiritual embodiment evolves and perfects the spirit, not in essence, but merely in form and organisation.” The essence of spirit or pure spirit is the activating Spirit of God, man being merely an individualised expression or unit of this spirit; in short the spirit of man and the eternal Spirit of God are one, and therefore share divine and eternal characteristics. Jung’s

depth psychology has indicated that the entire past is recorded in the subconscious. The germ of our immortal nature is of the Spirit and not of the body. Our bodies change and evolve, new bodies replace old bodies, the etheric survives the material, but the spirit is never replaced for it is part of the immortal principle of God. Its manifestation is always changing, but the principle is an unalterable and eternal law. The spiritual principle however is always embodied in some form of substance in which it is able to organise nature. Within each given form there is constantly being evolved and refined a more perfect form, for the spirit, after a period of development, suffers a contradiction between its old external form, which becomes unsuitable for further progress, and its more refined and higher vibrations. This contradiction is resolved by the death of the old external body and rebirth in the new more etherealised internal body.

### ***The Spirit's Internal Affinities***

His final proposition is that “the mind’s internal affinities are inter-cohesive and stronger than all extrinsic attractions.” The evidence provided by Spiritualism, of the survival of the human spirit, gives proof that the mind’s “internal affinities” are stronger than all “extrinsic attractions” of physical nature. “The foundation of this argument,” Davis continues, “is that the human soul is the focalised, concentrated action or epitome of all forces and vitalic laws which fill, inspire and actuate the immeasurable empire of nature and God.

If it were otherwise, if we should discover outside of the soul, a single force, essence, property, or quality not to be found in man, we would in that moment also discover a fatal defect in the foundation of our whole superstructural evidence, that man’s interior personality will survive and outlive unchanged the perpetual destruction and construction of physical forms. If man is not the summit of a proper proportion of all known and unknown forces, if he is not a concentrated inter-affinitised combination of all that exists essentially outside of his soul and spirit, then the time will come when an attraction, somewhere beyond his own interdependent centre, will dominate and separate those elements which constitute his present individuality. But methinks it has been definitely shown that man’s soul is a repository; and that when man knows himself, he has found a treasure opulent with all things ultimated. Firmly standing on this incontestable ground, I affirm that the soul of man (including the spirit) possesses internal and self-tending affinities stronger and more positive than any that are external; in a word, that there is no attraction, outside of men, superior in strength to that which pervades and prevails within.”

### ***Origin of Spirit World***

Finally, after stating his theory of immortality Davis proceeds to describe, from his own personal experiences, observations and proofs, where the spirit of man continues to live after he has survived the change called death. We have seen how various kingdoms have evolved in the development of Spirit; energy, gas, liquid, and matter; cell, plant, animal and human; so also have innumerable more advanced and refined kingdoms come into being beyond the material sphere of universal evolution. In one ascending octave of the eternal spiral of evolution, fine cosmic mists have been transformed into solid human bodies. In the next spiral we note a return to more refined states of existence. “The Spirit World is developed by a reverse complementary action of the ‘materialising’ process.”

“The spiritualising process must repeat on a higher scale, in reverse order, the cycle of the career of world building, because action and reaction are equal. The Spirit world is made up



of the aggregate emanations, in zonal forms, of all the teeming planets of one great circle of suns, each one of which contributes its quota of spiritualised elements. The earth as it revolves through space, becomes more dense; its inner life flowing from it; where does it go? Out into space like an aura." This is in complete harmony with Einstein's Vector Field Theory. "It is a process of eliminating what you call 'matter' into spirit, unfolding its powers and qualities, and making it real, substantial, perfect, and beautiful hence, the relation between the Spirit world and this earth, or other earth, that are peopled or unpeopled, must be first an elemental relation." He concludes by describing the appearance of the Spirit world, the difference in the various spheres, the mode of travel by will-power, and how social life is governed by the law of affinity, of interests, development and refinement, and how all the facts point to the eternal progress of the human spirit in these infinite realms of spiritual existence.

## Chapter IV

### MODERN SPIRITUALIST PHILOSOPHY

#### ALLAN KARDEC'S PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRITISM

In many countries, and particularly among the Latin races of the world, the philosophy arising from the facts of psychical phenomena, is divided between two conceptions of what course man's evolutionary development takes after his transition to the world of spirit. The majority outside of the English speaking nations, follow the ideas which Allan Kardec developed, the dominating principle of which is that the human spirit must reincarnate again into this earthly life for further spiritual progress, whilst the minority adhere to the principle that it is in the Spirit world where further spiritual development is achieved, and that this is only possible in the more refined spheres of spirit life. Whilst Spiritualists are divided upon this important principle, both sections uphold the truth of survival after death and communication with spirits. Only in Theosophy, which is also based on Reincarnation, are the basic facts of mediumship denied and indeed ridiculed. For this reason both Spiritualists and Spiritists have been able to unite in world federation to uphold and propagate the basic truths of survival after death and communication with spirits.

#### ***How Spiritism Originated***

Allan Kardec (1804-1869), whose real name was M Hippolyte Leon Denizard Rivail, investigated the claims of Spiritualism in 1850, at a time when the news of the Hydesville rappings was beginning to excite the attention of Europeans. He investigated the subject through the mediumship of two daughters of a friend. In the spirit messages which ensued he was informed that "spirits of a much higher order than those who habitually communicated through the two young mediums, came expressly for him, and would continue to do so, in order to enable him to fulfil an important religious mission." His means of communication with these spirits were the planchette and rappings, so he decided that the best way to compile the teachings to be given was to draw up a series of questions relating to the problems of life and put them to the communicating intelligence's. Upon the replies he received to his questions he founded his system of Spiritism. After two years he made the following statement: "The instructions thus transmitted constitute an entirely new theory of human life, duty and destiny that appears to me to be perfectly rational and coherent, admirably lucid and consoling, and intensely interesting." He published these teachings in *The Spirits' Book*, which appeared in 1856 and this was eventually adopted by the Spiritist Movement as their textbook of spiritual philosophy. In 1864 he published *The Mediums' Book* which is a guide to mediumship.

#### ***The Spiritist Philosophy***

In the introduction to the *Spirits' Book* Kardec sums up his philosophy in the following words: "Spirits having to pass through many incarnations, it follows that we have all had many existences, and that we shall have others, more or less perfect, either upon this earth or in other worlds. The incarnation of spirits always taken place in the human race; it would be an error to suppose that the soul or spirit could be incarnated in the body of an animal. A Spirit's successive corporeal existences are always progressive, and never retrograde; but the rapidity of our progress depends on the efforts we make to arrive at perfection. The qualities of the soul are those of the spirit incarnated in us; thus, a good man is the incarnation of a

good spirit, and a bad man is that of an unpurified spirit. The soul possessed its own individuality before its incarnation; it preserves that individuality after its separation from the body. On its re-entrance into the spirit world, the soul again finds there all those whom it has known upon the earth, and all its former existences eventually come back to its memory, with the remembrance of all the good and of all the evil which it has done in them. The incarnated spirit is under the influence of matter; the man who surmounts this influence, through the elevation and purification of his soul raises himself near to the superior spirits, among whom he will one day be classed.

He who allows himself to be ruled by bad passions, and places all his delight in the satisfaction of his gross animal appetites brings himself nearer to the impure spirits, by giving preponderance to his animal nature. Incarnated spirits inhabit the different globes of the universe.”

To the question, “What is the aim of the incarnation of spirits?” Kardec received the following reply. “It is a necessity imposed on them by God, as the means of attaining perfection. For some of them it is an expiation; for others, a mission. In order to attain perfection, it is necessary for them to undergo all the vicissitudes of corporeal existence. It is the experience acquired by expiation that constitutes its usefulness. Incarnation has also another aim, viz., that of fitting the spirit to perform his share in the work of creation; for which purpose he is made to assume a corporeal apparatus in harmony with the material state of each world into which he is sent, and by means of which he is enabled to accomplish the special work, in connection with that world, which has been appointed to him by the divine ordering. He is thus made to contribute his quota towards the general weal, while achieving his own advancement.”

The principle of Reincarnation had not been included in the principles adopted by the Spiritualists’ Movement because there is no scientific proof to support the doctrine, and was therefore wisely omitted from a philosophy which enjoyed the strength and security of foundations laid upon scientifically proved facts. It is difficult enough to propagate the philosophy of Spiritualism to a materialistic world, even with the demonstrable proofs provided by mediumship, but to include a theory which cannot be demonstrated would be to seriously weaken the whole case. It is not surprising therefore that the British and American movements, which do not include reincarnation in their professed principles, are the strongest and most virile organisations.

### ***Psychological Influences of Preconceived Ideas***

Swedenborg, Davis, Tuttle, Peebles, Britten, Moses, Owen, Evans, Findlay and several other great Spiritualist writers were unable to accept this theory. William Howitt, one of the pioneers of British Spiritualism, thought that “the thing strikes at the root of all faith in the revelations of Spiritualism. If reincarnation be true, pitiable and repellent as it is there must have been millions of spirits who on entering the other world, have sought in vain their kindred children and friends... Has even a whisper of such woe ever reached us from the thousands and tens of thousands of communicating spirits? Never.” The Hon. Alexander Aksakof, who was contemporaneous with Kardec, wrote, “That the propagation of this doctrine by Kardec was a matter of strong predilection is clear; from the beginning reincarnation has not been presented as an object of study, but as a dogma. To sustain it he has always had recourse to writing mediums, who, it is well-known, pass so easily under the psychological influence of preconceived ideas; and Spiritism has engendered such in

profusion; whereas through physical mediums the communications are not only more objective, but always contrary to the doctrine of reincarnation. Kardec adopted the plan of always disparaging this kind of mediumship alleging as a pretext its moral inferiority. Thus the experimental method is altogether unknown in Spiritism.”

## **BLAVATSKY**

### **THE TEACHINGS OF MODERN THEOSOPHY**

The scientific marvels and industrial enterprises of the nineteenth century had many remarkable effects upon society. Transport and communications linked up the East and the West in such a way that customs, diet and apparel became more and more international. Manufactured goods travelled east and raw materials travelled west. Trade was also a means whereby ideas, philosophies and religions were spread and propagated. Christian missionaries travel led to India and China, and Eastern religious beliefs returned by the same trade routes. The seeds of Oriental doctrines took root in many Western minds, which had already been cleared of the weeds of orthodox creeds, now withered under the purifying flames of scientific Rationalism. One of these seed carriers of Eastern doctrines was Madame Blavatsky who had been brought up in a home life saturated with superstition and fantasy as the story of her life reveals. Between the ages of seventeen and twenty-seven she “led a wild, wandering life for ten years all over the world in search of mysteries.” She found them in the colourful, esoteric and abstruse teachings of Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., and embodied them in her system of Theosophy.

#### ***Karma***

The two most fundamental concepts in Theosophy are “Karma” and “Reincarnation.” “Karma,” in the first place, rejects the idea of God, who Blavatsky regards in her Key to Theosophy, as a “gigantic shadow of man, and not of man at his best either. The God of Theology, we say - and prove it - is a bundle of contradictions and a logical impossibility.” Nineteenth century Rationalism had already refuted the idea of God so that the way was open to many people for the acceptance of “karma,” which Blavatsky describes as ‘unerring law which adjusts effect to cause, on the physical, mental and spiritual planes of being.’ In her Secret Doctrine, Blavatsky writes, “Those who believe in karma have to believe in destiny, which, from birth to death, every man is weaving, thread by thread, around himself, as a spider does his cobweb, and this destiny is guided either by the heavenly voice of the invisible prototype outside of us, or by our more intimate astral or inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the embodied entity called man... The only decree of karma - an eternal and immutable decree - is absolute harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of spirit. It is not, therefore, karma that rewards or punishes, but it is we who reward or punish ourselves according to whether we work with, through and along with nature, abiding by the laws on which that harmony depends, or - break them.”

#### ***Karma Creates Nothing***

The Secret Doctrine then proceeds to state that “the law of karma is inextricably interwoven with that of reincarnation... It is only this doctrine that can explain to us the mysterious problem of good and evil, and reconcile man to the terrible and apparent injustice of life. Nothing but such certainty can quiet our revolted sense of justice. For, when one unacquainted with the noble doctrine looks around him and observes the inequalities of birth

and fortune, of intellect and capacities; when one sees honour paid to fools and profligates, on whom fortune has heaped her favours by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbour, with all his intellect and noble virtues - far more deserving in every way - perishing for want and for lack of sympathy - when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering, one's ears ringing and heart aching with the cries of pain around him - that blessed knowledge of karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men as well as their supposed Creator... This law, whether, conscious or unconscious, predestines nothing and no one. It exists from and in eternity truly for it is eternity itself; and as such, since no act can be coequal with eternity, it cannot be said to act, for it is action itself. It is not the wave which drowns the man, but' the personal action of the wretch who goes deliberately and places himself under the impersonal action of the laws that govern the ocean's motion. Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plants and creates causes, and karmic law adjusts the effects, which adjustment is not an act but universal harmony, tending ever to resume its original position, like a bough, which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigour."

From the foregoing it would appear that whilst "karma" directs a spirit into a given body, for the purposes of compensation and retribution, and thus determines its existence, a spirit can apparently act outside of "karma," and even create causes, and is therefore independent of "karma" in its actions according to the philosophy of Theosophy.

### ***Spirit Return***

What has Theosophy to say about the return of our spirit friends and relatives as proved by the psychical phenomena of Spiritualism? Let us refer once more to the writing of the founder, Madame Blavatsky, for our authority. Key to Theosophy she states, "if by 'Spiritualism' you mean the explanation which Spiritualists give of some abnormal phenomena, then decidedly we do not. They maintain that these manifestations are all produced by the 'spirits' of departed mortals, generally their relatives, who return to earth, they say, to communicate with those they have loved or to whom they are attached. We deny this point blank."

"Spiritualism is a word of manifold and wide significance. I really do not know what Spiritualists mean by the term; but what we understand them to claim is that the physical phenomena are produced by the reincarnating ego, the Spiritual and immortal 'individuality.' And this hypothesis we entirely reject." She writes rather vehemently (on page 149), that she would "rather accept the 'New Jerusalem' with its streets paved like the show windows of a jeweller's shop, than find consolation in the heartless doctrine of the Spiritualists. The ideal alone that the intellectual conscious souls of one's father, mother, daughter, or brother find their bliss in a 'Summerland' - only a little more natural, but just as ridiculous as the 'New Jerusalem' in its description, would be enough to make one lose every respect for one's 'departed ones'. To believe that a pure spirit can feel happy while doomed to witness the sins, mistakes, treachery, and above all, the sufferings of those from whom it is severed by death and whom it loves best, without being able to help them, would be a maddening thought."

According to Theosophy, Karma functions principally through the process of reincarnation in the development and progress of our spiritual natures. Annie Besant, Blavatsky's greatest disciple and interpreter, explains in her book lectures on Theosophy, that in order to achieve spiritual progress a spirit must be reborn over and over again in a long series of reincarnations. After each life on earth the spirit returns to the Spirit World to assimilate its

experiences, “and only when the experiences of one life are assimilated does he return to earth for another life, in order to gain more... He passes away to the other side of death to learn, by the lessons of pain, the errors which he has made, and by the lessons of enjoyment, the right thoughts and feelings he has had, and during the later part of that post-mortem life he assimilate what he gathered on earth.” There is however no memory of former incarnations whilst on earth; they are only revealed in heaven. Reincarnation, Mrs Besant explains, is necessary from the standpoint of logic, science and morality.

### ***Logical, Scientific and Mortal***

Her Logical reason is that we return to earth because, “if all our best and wisest and noblest are taken away into worlds where there is no opportunity to use the wisdom they have garnered, into worlds where wisdom is useless, because every one is irretrievably saved or damned, then the whole of human life becomes irrational, and the whole of human experience is thrown on the rubbish heap of nature.” Scientifically reincarnation is sound, she asserts, because Darwin’s theory of evolution, which was based on the transmission of qualities from parent to offspring, was “not the view of the scientist of today; he now tells us that parents do not transmit their mental and moral qualities to their offspring; on the contrary, he says that the higher the intellectual qualifications, the lower the reproductive power.”

Since Mrs Besant’s day however the science of genetics has proved that mental characteristics are also transmitted from parent to child at birth. She argues however that as parents are young when babies are born, mature experience cannot be transmitted. She overlooks the enormous influence of elementary education which has taken place before marriage. School life, for many people, constitutes a most important phase in their mental development. In this period much of the fundamental knowledge of civilisation is assimilated.

Morally reincarnation is sound, she continues, because the criminal is merely the reincarnation of “a young, not yet unfolded spirit, a savage; the other, (the genius) is a spirit aged in experience; both are the results of their own past, self-created from within.”

### ***Fixed Number of Egos***

Several questions arise from this philosophy. Is there a definite number of spirits or egos, and if so how does reincarnation account for the steady increase in population throughout the history of man? “The answer,” she states ‘its a very simple one: those who are in incarnation at any one time form a very small minority of the egos who are tied to the wheel of births and deaths.’ The population ‘might increase’ very much in the number of egos present at any given time, without increase in the total number of spirits. Those who are out of incarnation remain longer away from earth as they evolve, as mankind progresses, for the higher types of men reincarnate more slowly than the lower... One may point out however, that there is no reliable proof that the population of the globe is increasing; look back, for example, to the invasion of Greece by Xerxes and notice the immense army that was gathered together then, and you will see that though the census was not taken in those days, there are proofs enough that the world was thickly populated!”

### ***Destiny Determined by Karma***

Apparently according to Mrs Besant, on page 77, a spirit can will himself to reincarnate into a particular body for a specific purpose. On another page however she states that human destiny

is determined by the law of karma, as for example in the case of the death of a newly born babe. "Such an ego had become indebted to the law by causing the death of some one, but without malice, without intention, killing by some passing carelessness or folly. "In regard to this case she states "I am speaking here from facts which we have looked back and seen. But in such cases", she continues, "for the most part, it is the karma of the parents which is the chief cause of such a birth, and an ego is chosen for their child who owes such a debt as I have mentioned, in order that their heavier karma may be worked out. It is the parents' karma which plays the larger part in the cases of children who die soon after birth."

### ***Animals and Human Egos***

In regard to the evolution of nations this "is brought about by more and more highly developed egos being born into that nation thus lifting it up step by step to a higher level; for they themselves are the nation... And when a nation has reached its highest point, so that the physical type has reached its limit, can go no further, but must change in order to advance, then comes the time for its decay." When the type becomes "too low for the incoming egos; the human race has outgrown it; and when there are no longer any souls so little developed as to inhabit these bodies, the women cease to bear children, the type diminishes and gradually dim out. That is what causes the stoppage of the influx from the animal kingdom. There is now a gulf between the lowest human and the highest animal stage. The human types have perished with which nature originally bridged the gulf, and so egos rising out of the animal kingdom can find no bodies low enough for their use. They must therefore remain at rest, until, in another world, types are born sufficiently simple and low for their indwelling."

### ***Between Reincarnations***

There is the whole question of people being born in deformed and crippled bodies. "That is the result," Mrs Besant claims, "of cruelties inflicted upon others, paid for by deformities in another birth. What then is the period spent between reincarnations? In the long heavenly life - lasting sometimes for thousands of years - the whole of the time is spent with the people you loved upon the earth, and when you come back you tend to come back in groups, together with those you loved before. There is nothing more striking, in tracing a series of lives, than to see how husbands and wives, relations and friends, come back together. If for other reasons they have been born on opposite sides of the world even, they will be drawn together as friends and lovers, if they had love for each other in the past.'

### ***Remembering Past Incarnations***

To the question, why do people fail to remember their past births, Mrs Besant answers that the new physical brain is to blame. "The brain is new. How should the brain that was not in the past life remember the events of the past life? Your desire-body is new; how should it remember the desires felt and satisfied in its predecessor? Your mind is new; how should it remember past thoughts? It is only you, you yourself, the living immortal ego, who can remember because he has passed through all the experiences, and he forgets nothing." From this it would appear that the physical brain and the memory are regarded as synonymous by Theosophy. It appears however that the memories of the past can be recovered by meditation (page 96). Generally speaking, "karma" is the law which forces spirits to reincarnate for the purpose of compensation and retribution, eg, for correcting the evil man by making him suffer for his past deeds. If however Mrs Besant's early contention is true, that it is possible for a man to choose his own reincarnation, it makes it difficult to believe that an evil man would

prefer a painful existence, that is if the operation of this law of “karma” is universal, and true.

## **STANTON MOSES**

### **TEACHINGS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD**

It was natural, when means of communication were well established between the Spirit world and our own, through mediumship, that important information was soon forthcoming concerning the life after death. This knowledge has a profound philosophical content, confirming some, and denying other conceptions associated with current religious beliefs. This was to be expected, as all religions were based upon the principle of survival at their original. Now the chief requirement for the transmission of philosophical thought from the Spirit world is a medium with an intelligent brain, so that the ideas can be psychologically reflected with a reasonable degree of accuracy. In 1870, such an intelligent, mediumistic person, William Stainton Moses, MA (Oxon.) (1839-92) a Church of England clergyman, began to take an interest in Spiritualism and unfolded his psychic powers. He thus presented the spirit people with an opportunity they had been waiting for. Among his various mediumistic faculties they decided to use his susceptibility to being controlled by them when writing. Soon they began to give, through his hand, the higher teachings of the Spirit world. These however were in direct opposition to the orthodox faiths and creeds, which Stainton Moses had held, and at first he resisted and opposed the new ideas. This was rather good evidence of the existence of another mind controlling his personality, quite apart from the fact that he often used to occupy his mind with reading and other interests whilst his hand was recording the messages, in order to test the reality of the controlling entity.

#### ***Eternal Progress***

His most famous book, *Spirit Teachings*, is not only a treasure of Spiritualist philosophy, but also a long drawn out argument between Moses and his spirit guide, *Imperator*, in which, by sheer opposition of contradictions, the fundamental differences between the Spiritualist and Orthodox outlooks are most sharply drawn. In the beginning *Imperator* made it clear that “that which seems contradictory is not the Word of God, but in the mind of man. Man was not content with the simple message. He has adulterated it with his glosses, overlaid it with his deductions and speculations... but it is necessary to destroy man’s rubbish before God’s truth can be revealed.” Then he commenced to lay the foundations. “As the soul lives in the earth life, so does it go to spirit life. Its tastes, its predilections, its habits, its antipathies they are with it still”. To the question “is life eternal?” *Imperator* answered “Yes; we have every reason to believe so... The soul that gains most is the soul that keeps ever before it the work that has been allotted to it, which has laboured zealously for its own improvement and the benefit of its fellows, which has loved and served God, and has followed the guidance of its guardians. This is the soul, which has least to unlearn, and which progresses rapidly. This is the one desire of spirit. More Progress! More Knowledge! More Love! Till the dross is purged away, and the soul soars higher and yet higher towards the Supreme.”

#### ***Violation of law***

With regard to the earth plane *Imperator* claimed that our “earth is the highest of seven spheres; that there are, succeeding the earth life, seven spheres of active work, and succeeding these, seven spheres of divine contemplation. But each sphere has many states.” In the spheres below the earth, “the slopes of Avernus are dotted with spirits hurrying to their



destruction, sinking with mad haste to ruin. Each is a centre of a knot of malignant spirits, who find their joy in wrecking souls and dragging them down to their own miserable level. In these spheres they must remain, subject to the attempted influence of missionary spirits, until the desire for progress is renewed. When the desire rises, the spirit makes its first step... They that will not seek for anything that is good, that wallow in impurity and vice, sink lower and lower, until they lose conscious identity, and become practically extinct, so far as personal existence is concerned; so at least we believe. This is the sin unto death of which Jesus told his followers; the sin against the Holy Spirit of God of which you are told. It is the sin of exalting the animal to the extinction of the spiritual... The unhealthy passions prey on themselves; and the voice of the spirit is heard no more. Down must the soul sink, down and yet down, further and further, until it is lost in fathomless obscurity... Punishment is ever the immediate consequence of sin; it is of its essence, not arbitrarily meted out, but the inevitable result of the violation of law." Remorse, loathing for sin, and a desire for good is the way out. "The spiritual atmosphere is changed, and into it good angels enter readily and aid the striving soul. Slowly the results of former sin are purged away and the soul begins to progress."

### ***Marriage Ties***

In regard to marriage ties Imperator wrote, "All things with us are subordinated in the education of the spirit, which is perpetually being developed. There can be no community of interest save between congenial souls. Consequently no tie can be perpetuated which is not a help to progress... All souls that are mutually helpful remain in loving intercourse so long as it is profitable for them. When the period arrives at which it is more profitable for them to separate, they go their way without sorrow, for they can still commune and share each other's interests." The reverse of such law would only perpetuate misery, and eternally bar progress, but "spirits filled with mutual love can never be really separated. You are hampered in understanding our state by considerations of time and space. You cannot understand how souls can be far apart, as you count space, and yet be, as you would say, intimately united. We know no time, no space. We could not obtain really close union with any spirit unless the intelligence be absolutely on the same mental and progressive plane. Indeed, any such union would be impossible for us. Soul may be linked with soul in bonds of affection, without any intimate connection such as we mean by being on the same plane of development. Love unites spirits at whatever distance."

### ***Religion***

Then Imperator began to touch on religion, emphasising the difference between reason and faith. "Religion, to be worthy the name, must have its two sides - the one pointing to God, the other to man. What has the received faith, which is called orthodox by its professors, to say on these points; and wherein do we differ in our message; and how far is such difference on our part in accord with reason? For, at the very outset, we claim, as the only court to which we can as yet appeal, the reason which is implanted in man." Blind faith can be no substitute for reasoning trust. What has the Spirit world to say about God? "In place of an angry, jealous tyrant it reveals a loving father who is not loving in name alone, but in very deed and truth; into whose dealings naught but love can enter; who is just and good and full of affection to the lowest of His creatures. It does not recognise any need of propitiation towards this God. It rejects as false any notion of this divine being vindictively punishing a transgressor, or requiring a various sacrifice for sin. No such anthropomorphism finds any place in our creed. God, as we know Him in the operation of His laws is perfect, pure, loving and holy, incapable of cruelty, tyranny, and other such human vices" but "operating in strict accordance with

those laws which are a necessity of orderly existence... The theology of the spirit is simple and confined to knowledge. We value as nothing mere speculation. Eternal justice is the correlative of eternal love.

Mercy is no divine attribute. It is needless; for mercy involves remission of a penalty inflicted, and no such remission can be made save where the results have been purged away. We deal with practical life: and our creed may be briefly written:- Honour and love your Father, God (Duty to God). Help your brother onward on the path of progress (Duty to neighbour). Tend and guard your own body (Bodily culture). Cultivate every means of extending knowledge (Mental progress). Seek for fuller views of progressive truth (Spiritual growth). Do ever the right and good in accordance with your knowledge (integrity). Cultivate communion with the spirit land by prayer and frequent intercourse (Spiritual nurture)."

As man ascends the eternal spiral of progression he unfolds within himself more and more of the divinity of which he is part. Wisdom and love have ever been the two greatest virtues, which have evolved in man, and with them he has been able to increase correspondingly his understanding and communion with his divine parent. It has been a constant revelation. In the words of Imperator, (Spirit Teachings) through the hand of Stainton Moses, "So much of truth is given as a man can grasp, no more under any circumstances, but just as much as he can grasp., as much as suffices for his present craving." As the spirit people have experience of two worlds the average spirit entity has more knowledge of God than his earthly counterpart, for more has been revealed to him, and he can therefore impart to us a greater understanding of life and destiny, but as Imperator pointed out this knowledge has to be given through the instrumentality of a medium, and consequently "the purity of the Spirit message depends much on the passivity of the medium and on the conditions under which the message is communicated. Hence, in your Bible there are traces here and there of the individuality of the medium; of error caused by imperfect control; of the colour of his opinions; as well as of special peculiarities addressed to the special needs of the people to whom the message was first given, and for whose case it was primarily adapted." The re-interpretation of the Bible, in the light of psychic knowledge, is therefore one of the many important blessings which have to come to us as a result of spirit teachings. "The inspiration is divine but the medium is human," and this applies to all the so-called words and commands of God in the Bible, bearing in mind that the spirit messengers were but mediums of divine wisdom also.

### ***Relative Conceptions of God***

Imperator points out that, "if no one seer can satisfy his ideal, he selects from many of the points which please him, rejects the remainder, and manufactures his own revelation piecemeal... With a theology so framed, we are accused of being at variance. It is true. We have no commerce with it. It is of the earth, earthy; base and low in its conception of God; degrading in its influence on the soul; insulting to the Deity whom it professes to reveal. We have no part in it. We do indeed contradict and disown it. It is our mission to reverse its teaching, to substitute for it truer and nobler views of God and of the Spirit." As no man has ever seen God however, no man can know what he is really like. There is speculation about God in the spirit world just as there is on earth and therefore, insists Imperator, "to press to the end of literal accuracy any spirit teaching about God is mere folly. All the revelation of God is characteristic of the age in which it is given... Indeed, since the conception which each frames for himself is to him his God, it cannot be that revelation can be in advance of capacity. It is in the nature of things impossible... You have made your God, and you have made Him act as you see fit." God can be "known to you only by His operations, and through

your conceptions of His nature and attributes.” The wave of materialism which was then sweeping the world (19<sup>th</sup> cent.) had its uses Emperor thought, and referred to “the destructive criticism of German scholars who have dealt a much needed blow to blind belief in the verbal exactitude of human utterances.”

### ***Prayer***

Imperator was very revealing on the subject of prayer. “The fancy of a prayer to the ear of an ever-present God, who is willing to alter unalterable laws in response to a capricious request, has done much to discredit the idea of prayer altogether. Believe it or not! Prayer - the spontaneous cry of the soul to its God, through the friends who, it knows are near, and are every ready to catch up the unuttered petition, and bear it upwards and ever upwards till it reaches a power that can respond this is no matter of formal preparation.

It consists not in any act of outward show. It trammelled by conventional form, or bound up in stereotyped phraseology. True prayer is the ready voice of spirit communing with spirit: the cry of the soul to invisible friends with whom it used to speak: the flashing along the magnetic line a message of request which brings swift as thought, its ready answer back. It is the placing of a suffering soul in union with a ministering spirit who can soothe and heal. It needs no words, no attitude, no form. It is truest when these are absent, or at least unstudied. It needs but a recognition of a near guardian, and an impulse to communion.”

### ***Christianity***

One of ‘the most important revelations in Spirit Teachings is the new attitude towards Jesus which Spiritualists have adopted. “Man has gradually built around the teachings of Jesus a wall of deduction and speculation, and material comment, similar to that with which the Pharisee had surrounded the Mosaic law. The tendency has increasingly been to do this in proportion as man has lost sight of the spiritual world. And so it has come to pass that we find hard, cold materialism deduced from teachings, which were intended to breathe spirituality, and to do away with sensuous ritual. It is our task to do for Christianity what Jesus did for Judaism. We would take the old forms and spiritualise their meaning, and infuse into them new life. Resurrection rather than abolition is what we desire. We say again that we do not abolish one jot or tittle of the teaching, which the Christ gave to the world. We do but wipe away man’s material glosses, and shows you the hidden spiritual meaning, which he has missed... He preached the religion of daily life, the moral progress of the spirit in the path of daily duty forward to a higher knowledge. Repentance for the past, amendment and progress in the future, summed up most of his teaching... The true attitude of the spirit is one of striving earnestly in the hope of reaching a higher position than that which it has attained. In perpetually progressing it finds its truest happiness... The religion which we teach is one of acts and habits, not of words and fitful faith.” In these spirit teachings the principle of “Personal Responsibility” replaces the conception of a vicarious atonement of sins by a saviour. “Man’s responsibility,” wrote Imperator, “its in proportion to the light which is in him; man’s duty is not lessened but increased by the quality of the revelation of which he is the recipient.” The essence of the principle of “Personal Responsibility” is that man must work out his own salvation. To make retribution for sin, each spirit, must journey through remorse and uncongenial labour; for by no other means can it be purified. Selfishness must be eradicated by self-sacrifice. Idleness must be rooted out by laborious toll. The spirit must be purified by suffering. This is for it the only upward path of progress.”

### ***The True Atonement***

“Ministering angels will advise and help, for it is their mission to help on the aspiring, and to cheer the fainting soul. But though they may comfort, they cannot save one pang, nor palliate by one jot the penalty of transgression. No vicarious store of merit can avail; no friend may bear the burden, or lift it from the weary back. It must be borne by the soul that sinned, though helps and aids be given to strengthen and support the failing energies... This is the true atonement! Not, indeed, a reconciliation of sin-stained humanity to an angry and holy God, purchased by the sacrifice of His sinless son, but a higher and truer atonement in the ennobling of the nature, the purifying of the spirit; the making of the human and the Divine one in aim and purpose:- the drawing of man’s spirit, even whilst incarnated, up nearer and nearer to the Divine... Man makes his own future, stamps his own character, suffers for his own sins, and must work out his own salvation.” In this there is no final judgement as taught by Christianity. “The Judgement is complete when the spirit gravitates to the home which it has made for itself. There can be no error. It is placed by the eternal law of fitness. That judgement is complete, until the spirit is fitted to pass to a higher sphere, when the same process is repeated, and so on and on until the purgatorial spheres of work are done with, and the soul passes within the inner heaven of contemplation.” Accompanying the process “there is a gradual sublimation or refinement of the Spirit body, until by degrees all gross elements are purged away. The higher the sphere the more refined and ethereal the body.” Finally the great central truth of all spirit teachings, as in the revelation of Jesus, is the abolition of death and the proof of immortality. “The immortality of man, held not as an article of faith, a clause in a creed, but as a piece of personal knowledge and individual experience, this is the keynote of the religion of the future. In its trail come all the grand truths we teach, all the nobles conceptions of duty, the grandest views of destiny, the truest realisations of life.”

## **VALE OWEN**

### **LIFE BEYOND THE VEIL**

Astronomers are now beginning to detect planets in the regions of certain stars, and we are now assured that the sun is by no means the only star with a planetary family. Now stars, according to the astronomers are in different stages of development. Some are hotter and some colder than the sun. Millions of years have to pass however, before there is any appreciable difference in the temperature of a star. If we assume therefore that the solar system is not an exception, and that the majority of the millions of millions of stars have attending planets, it is reasonable to suppose that millions of planets similar to our own have produced life and perhaps civilisations, millions of years ago. As all the facts point to the universality of cosmic law, and assuming that the spirits of intelligent beings made their transitions from millions of planets, millions of years ago, vast legions of spirits must now be in a very advanced stage towards godhood and possess enormous powers. The idea that there does exist a great hierarchy of very high spirits possessing tremendous powers, far beyond human understanding, is a common belief with many advanced spirits, who have communicated this information to us through mediums.

### ***Higher Spirits***

Zabdiel, who claimed to be an evolved spirit living in the tenth sphere gave such an impression of a great hierarchy of higher spirits. When communicating through the Rev. George Vale Owen in 1913. The spirit inspired writings of this Church of England clergyman were eventually brought to the notice of Lord Northcliffe, who published them in serial form

in the Weekly Dispatch in 1920. In the Highlands of Heaven (one of the five volumes which is contained the work, *The Life beyond the Veil*.) Zabdiel states that all forms of life, in the various kingdoms of nature, evolve, develop and progress under the supervision of higher spirits. One of the laws governing the watchers and workers is “that among all minor and temporal variations, and seeming diversity in operation of the powers put in their hands, the guiding principle should be by UNITY, towards which all should tend eventually.” Just as man is more and more assuming the lordship of the earth, there are greater ones than he, and as he rules the lesser kingdoms so they rule the affairs of man. “There are manifold classes and companies who have in charge the various departments of creation - mineral, vegetable, animal, human, terrestrial, solar, and stellar. Beyond this, also, the stars are grouped together and dealt with by hierarchies qualified for that great task. It is by this same method, then, of the transmutation of energy, that systems are gradually developed into worlds, and these worlds furnished with form and then enabled to produce vegetation and animal life. But, this being so, you will note that all life, and all development, is consequent on the operation of spiritual energy obeying the dictates of the will of spiritual beings.”

### ***Light and Vibrations***

In the beginning, according to the Bible, God said “let there be light,” and there was light. Truly the universe is saturated with light - more than most of us imagine. In fact man is only conscious of a single tiny octave of light out of possibly millions of octaves. We see the human form within the lower octave because matter can only reflect this particular frequency of wave motion, but as spirits advance they reflect higher light frequencies according to their more evolved and refined ethereal bodies, which vibrate at higher rates. Zabdiel tells us that those who live in the fourth sphere for instance cannot penetrate into the fifth sphere until they have developed, and so increased their vibrations and refined their bodies sufficiently to bear with ease and comfort the intensity of the light of that sphere. Those who live in the dark spheres do so because they lack the ability to see in greater light. When spirits descend to a lower plane of light they re-adjust themselves to the lower frequency of light only with difficulty. They must train themselves to return to a sphere, which was once their home.

### ***Presence Forms***

In the Ministry of Heaven the communicating spirit ‘leader’ introduces the conception of a ‘presence form.’ Many descriptions are given of higher spirits (particularly of Jesus) descending to lower spheres and appearing in ‘presence form,’ whereby they are able to make themselves visible to those living in lower frequencies of vibrations. It appears that it is a law of nature that an exalted spirit may become consciously present, by an effort of will, in any sphere through which that spirit had formerly passed. This is not merely an extension of the consciousness of the spirit from a higher realm but a manifestation of the actual spirit in that plane. Many spirits have appeared on earth from time to time when the ordinary conditions for materialisation have been absent; occasions when the manifestation has been obviously the result of the power of the spirit. Perhaps the appearance of Jesus before Mary at the tomb was such a ‘presence form’ and not a normal ectoplasmic materialisation. The spirit inspirers of R J Lees have been known to manifest in his study when no incarnate person was in the room. Miss Lees once opened the door of her father’s empty study, and saw two familiar spirit friends of the family standing talking to each other. She, incidentally, is not a medium.

## ***Hell***

The writing of the Rev George Vale Owen abound chiefly with descriptions and happenings in both the higher and lower spheres and are very helpful in trying to build a picture of the after-life. Typical of the lower spheres (the hells), where exist evil powers and hierarchies beyond our comprehension, is the following description: “above us was blackness. We seemed to be now not in a cavern, but in a deep pit or ravine, the rocky sides rising up until we could not follow them, so deep were we below the land surface. But tunnels here and there penetrated deeper still and most were in pitch darkness, except where at times a light flickered and went out again. There was a sound as if a wind blew about us, the sound of one long drawn and perpetual sigh. But the air was not in motion. There were also shafts sunk into the ground into which men went, climbing down the vertical sides by steps cut in the rock, to fetch the ore up from the tunnels and galleries deeper still, bored in the rock far below the level on which we stood. From the plateau there sloped down paths towards other openings, which in their turn led to workings far away, either in the ravine itself or through corridors cut into the sides of it. It was a very large region, a region deep below the level of that dark lane. Oh, the desperate anguish of the helplessness of those poor souls - lost in that immensity of darkness and with no guide to lead them out. But although they must have felt so, yet every one is noted and registered in the spheres of light, and when they be ready for help, then help is sent to them, as it was even now.’

## ***Heaven***

By contrast the following is a typical description of part of the Summerland. “As we gaze out over the wide plains and valleys of the Heavenly Land, we are scarce able to remember the effect of the atmosphere of earth as it had relation to our vision of terrestrial things. But we do remember certain qualities, which here are absent. Distance is not obscured, for instance. It fades away. Trees and plants do not appear for a season, and then die. They bloom perpetually, and then, when plucked, they are fresh for a long time, but they do not droop and wither. They too, fade or melt away into the atmosphere. This same atmosphere is not always white. In the neighbourhood of the City of the Prince Castrel there is a sense of golden sunshine all around. It is not a mist, and does not obscure, but bathes all things in its golden radiance without invading the various colours themselves. In other places it is of a faint pink or blue. And every region has its own peculiar tint, or sense of colour, according to the nature of the people and their employment and bent of mind.”

## ***More Sublime than Spirit***

Leader, in the Ministry of Heaven gives some hint of the infinity of evolution by suggesting that there is an even more advanced state beyond the world of spirit. “We here have come to know that spirit, sublime as it is in essence, is not the sum of being. As beyond the realm of the material stretches the spiritual, so beyond those, far and distant heights of light impenetrable, and holiness in awful purity, towards which we think our way, there lies being which is not Spirit alone, but which into itself absorbs all that Spirit is at its whitest sublimity, and encompasses the sum total of spirit resultant in a universe of sublimity higher still... So far as we are able to project our minds into that far immensity of life and being, we cannot see any end to our outward going.”

## W H EVANS

### A MODERN APOSTLE OF A J DAVIS

When Spiritualism commenced, in the middle of the nineteenth century, there was given from the Spirit world a series of teachings, which has been, called The Harmonial Philosophy. Under the inspiration of Swedenborg (in spirit) Andrew Jackson Davis gave to the world numerous volumes of writings which propounded an entirely new outlook on life, revealing the spiritual nature and destiny of man in a modern and scientific way. This philosophy was however somewhat in advance of its day and the Spiritualist movement instead of being built primarily upon the principles of the Harmonial Philosophy tended more and more to rely upon the demonstration of phenomena. Psychical phenomena attracted hundreds of thousands of people and many of them became convinced Spiritualists. They brought with them, however, their orthodox ideas, and Spiritualist services resembled, from the outset, Christian services, with phenomena as the outstanding feature. Christian ideas were added to Spiritualist ones, but orthodoxy was by no means the only ideology, which took root in the virgin soil of Spiritualism. Gradually the purer and truer teachings of Davis tended to be overgrown and choked by the weeds, which sprang from foreign seeds.

#### ***Lectures on the Harmonial Philosophy***

One great obstacle to the propagation of Davis' teachings was the rather bulky literature, which contained his philosophy, and relatively few had the courage or indeed the enthusiasm to master his great works. Davis needed a champion, an apostle who would popularise the Harmonial Philosophy. W H Evans was such an apostle. When he first suggested the publication of the Harmonial Philosophy as a series of popular pamphlets there was no support forthcoming.

He then decided to go on a lecture tour and spread the new philosophy in that way. Evans' lectures made an impression and eventually the Spiritualists' National Union was persuaded to publish them in book form in 1924. The state of the philosophy of the Movement was such however, that there was still a lack of appreciation of Davis' writings and after a while the entire stock was sold at a very low price to a bookseller. This book has nevertheless been largely responsible for keeping Davis' noble and sublime philosophy before the Movement.

#### ***Personality of God***

Evans, in his own writings, has always closely followed the principles of the Harmonial, and has thus kept its presentation up to date by adding his own interpretations of its doctrines. He has certainly enriched its teachings, particularly in his Spiritualism, a Philosophy of Life.

This was written at a time when his inspiration was at its zenith, (he is a Spirit inspired writer). One thing he endeavours to clarify more than anything else is the idea of the personality of God. He has achieved a most difficult philosophical task in presenting a rational conception of the Fatherhood of God, which satisfies the demands of both scientific and religious minds. "A God who has no distinct individuality is no God at all," but a nebulous abstraction... the ideal of God is ever becoming: is ever being realised, and is a continuous revelation. We cannot escape it, we must press on, and he whose soul is aflame with the divine fire of love, and whose intellect is alight with the sacred wisdom of God, will always hold to the central thought that the dwelling of God is not in temples, not even among the starry flowers of the purple night, but is within the sacred precincts of the heart of man.

God is spirit. Spirit is substance, the great reality from which there is no escape. Spirit is infinite; infinite in essence and in attributes. Eternal, changeless; yet ever throwing on the screen of matter an infinite variety of changes. Unity at the heart, but not uniformity of expression.

### ***Bible of Science***

“Science has found the Bible of God writ on tables of stone, His law revealed in grand epochs of time, the slow accretions of ages working out the sublime will of Him who faltereth not. The fire-mist rushing through space, its shrill note toning down to a prolonged musical hum as it cooled, contracted, solidified, marked the birth of our planet earth. Out of the mists of the past it flashed, a fiery steed, until the invisible rein drew tight and held it in its place. Mighty upheaval succeeded upheaval. Minute motions in the oozy bed of the sea, proclaimed in softest whisper, tremulous with a hitherto unknown joy, that life was there and had manifested. Those protoplasmic stirrings, how great was the promise they held!... After the process of ages, man stood upright upon the earth, crude, uncultured, but with the golden germ of immortality within.” The Universe, to science, is merely a mighty organisation of matter and motion, but so also is man surely. But we say man has a spirit, a mind, a consciousness, then why not the universe? Man, once an animal, has created law and order, built his civilisations, and supervised the progress of the plant and animal kingdoms. Out of primeval chaos also has come the law and order of solar planetary systems and mighty constellations of stars. “Order and law,” maintains Evans, “bespeak a mind capable of formulating such principles. The mechanical argument demands a mind that can think in mechanical expressions. As you and I can take matter and mould it, and as we know we could never make the simplest machine without first formulating in thought our desire, and taking matter to clothe our thought, so we feel that the vastness of the universe is no argument to advance as showing that mind is not necessary to produce it... We fail to understand the meaning of life apart from the conception of God as the underlying reality. And every expression of the universe but reveals something more of that sacred being who is God.”

### ***Good and Evil***

Is the universe divided between the forces of good and those of evil? Many people label certain things as divine and others as not. In answering this great fundamental question, Evans points out in his philosophy of life that “apart from human limitations there is neither evil nor good. It is the contrasts, which our rising spirituality compels us to draw, which cause us to speak of good and evil. But in the divine economy all is wisely ordered. What to our limited comprehension seems evil is but the outworking of the divine will in directions of which we know but little. The question of pain cannot exist apart from us. But pain per se is not an evil, it is part of the divine process of evolution... The greatest blessing that ever came to man was that which he called evil. For evil is a manifestation of love. Yes! the thought may seem strange, but there is nothing but love in God, and in the working out of His purpose we shall yet see that the things we have deplored are the things which have been of most use to us... We see the universe governed by law, and we pause not to criticise that which is done better than any human being could do it... We are tried in the fire of trial and sorrow, and slowly there dawns upon us the knowledge that the things which we regard as evil, and from which we try to flee, have been blessings in disguise.”



### ***Free Will or Choice***

Evans in his writings re-states the 'determinism' of the Harmonial Philosophy. "The whole of our jurisprudence is based upon the conception that man is a free agent... Theologians have placed man between two contending forces of equal strength, one good and one evil. In this state of equilibrium he has the choice of going over to either. But anything in equilibrium cannot be said to have choice, and If man chooses the good instead of the evil, he will do so because the pull on the side of the good is strengthened by the inherent goodness in himself. The conception of man having absolute freedom of choice, although defended by theologians or metaphysicians, is not true... It is a good thing that we are not free in the sense that we have been taught to believe. Such freedom would degenerate into license.

We know that true freedom comes by obedience to law, and when we obey the laws of our being we do not feel the restriction of those laws, but are conscious of that sense of freedom which renders life thoroughly enjoyable and happy... In the undeveloped man, choice is largely determined by outside influences. He acts automatically according to the strongest impulse, without reasoning very much upon it. But as we rise in the scale of development we found that the range of choice becomes wider, and the ego decides what it shall and what it shall not do. There is a difference in the ego deciding and the choice being decided by outside influences entirely. One is impulse, the other is the result of intellectual and moral perception. This again is a development resulting from the combined influences of heredity and environment. In fact, these influences have been developing in us the power of initiative and choice."

## **ARTHUR FINDLAY**

### **OUR VIBRATIONAL UNIVERSE**

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century the scientific basis of modern industry changed from steam to electricity. The new vibrant power was a hundred times more adaptable than its mechanical predecessor and the productive capacity of man enormously increased. Researches into the phenomena of electricity revealed that our material universe was really an organisation of vibrant electrical forces. The electron replaced the atom as the fundamental brick of nature, and it was found that it had the enormous "frequency of  $124 \times 10$  to the power of 18 oscillations per second." This new view of nature had its effects upon philosophy, not least of which was to undermine to a very great extent the materialistic view of nature. Eddington was forced to the conclusion that the universe was created out of "Mind Stuff." The new industries demanded a more intelligent type of worker, and as education became more scientific, this in turn had a serious effect upon orthodox religion, which rested upon beliefs, creed and dogmas. The intelligent worker was now no longer content to accept the most important facts of his life, unless they could be explained or proved to him within his new scientific outlook. Could life after death, and the invisible world in which spirits were supposed to dwell, be explained to him in terms of vibrations? This was precisely what Spiritualism was able to do and leading in the new interpretation of man's destiny was Arthur Findlay.

### ***Universe of Vibrations***

His famous trilogy, *On the Edge of the Etheric*, *The Rock of Truth*, and *The Unfolding Universe* gave a new and up to date scientific basis for Spiritualism, and marked a new trend of thought in the movement. "The universe" he wrote in *The Rock of Truth*, "is composed of

a gigantic scale of vibrations. Those, which we appreciate on earth, are only a small range of vibrations between two fixed points, namely, between 34,000 and 64,000 waves to the inch, or from 400 to 750 billion waves to the second. That is the section of the universe, which appeals to us, which makes up to us the physical world...

The vibrations of the Etheric world, I am told by my informants in that world, commence just above those of the physical world. We have confirmation of this through the knowledge obtained from psychic photography and clairvoyance, and from the fact that etheric beings, called ghosts, have been seen from time to time through the ages. Thus their lowest vibrations must be just about touching our normal physical range of sight... The Etheric world is just a continuation of the vibrations beyond what our senses can perceive.”

### ***Mind the Image Maker***

The basis of Findlay’s philosophy centres on the mind - the Image-maker. When sitting with Sloan, the medium, he made many experiments to discover the functions of the mind. What he discovered is told in his various books, the following quotation coming from *The Curse of Ignorance*. “When we think, we form a series of pictures which we call ideas, and, if these are correctly assorted, we think rationally. Our plastic mind is forever in motion making pictures of what it sees, feels, hears, smells, or tastes. When awake we relate these rationally one to the other, but in sleep our mind recalls past pictures irrationally. This we call dreaming, and it is caused by our reasoning power being dormant and at rest. Thus we are refreshed, but our mind is never still, though the pictures it makes during sleep are generally forgotten. What we call ‘seeing’ consists of the pictures made by the mind, the colour of what we see being the colour produced by the mind. We see something, and our mind produces the object in colour according to the frequency of the objects vibrations, which cause the mind to become what we call coloured. An objects size and colour are therefore the picture formed by the mind by vibrations, and, if we look at an object which we call blue, the picture formed by the mind is of the nature we call blue. Thus we think blue, but as most objects seen are a variety of colour, the mind-picture consists of all the colours produced by the different frequency of movements of the vibrations, reflected by the electrons in the atoms which make up the object. If we saw the mind at work it would be like looking at a Technicolor film, the colours and objects continually changing, as our eyes roam from place to place. Reality is centred in the mind, as without mind, the picture-maker, nothing would exist. Our head can be compared with a cine-camera, the eyes being the lens, and the mind the film which is always picturing what takes place within its orbit, the only difference being that mind-pictures are also formed by hearing, touch, smell and taste. The state of awareness to our surroundings, this mental film forever picturing our environment, we term ‘living’, which is agreeable or disagreeable according to the way our mind reacts. The mind has developed according to a certain mould, which we call normal; anything abnormal, or different from what has been its custom, being more or less resented to be called pain, discomfort, or annoyance.”

### ***Mind over Matter***

In *The Rock of Truth*, Findlay points out how incarnate man is evolving towards the higher conditions of spirit life whilst here on earth. Man on earth is developing the power of his mind over his material environment in a manner which somewhat resembles the more perfect control of the spirit mind over its etheric environment. “We shall get the forces of nature to work for us under intelligent direction, and with the expenditure of very much less manual labour. Gradually the superiority of mind over matter is asserting itself and becoming

increasingly evident, and some day we shall be able to mould physical matter into the shapes and conditions we require by the minimum of exertion, thus bringing our conditions on earth more in line with those prevailing in the Etheric world, where creative thought can make conditions in a way not yet understood on earth.”

“These thoughts,” he continues, “may help us to understand what our etheric friends mean by saying that they are in advance of the earth, and that what we now have they have enjoyed for long... We follow a long way behind them, but fortunately we shall continue to follow. We are learning to take control of our surroundings, as they have known to do for ages. That is why scientists and philosophers in the Etheric world are greatly in advance of those on earth, as many of the latter refuse to be taught by their superiors, greatly to their loss,” but “the kingdom of Mind on earth is receiving more respect today than ever before. What one is, mentally and morally, now receives more consideration than what was one’s social position at birth, whereas in the days of old the reverse was the case. Slowly Mind on Earth is coming to be recognised as King, and to have all things subservient to it.”

### ***Universal Mind***

Just as Eddington was forced to the conclusion that the Universe was made of ‘Mind Stuff’, Findlay regards the Universal Mind as the thinking substance of the universe, which is forever seeking expression. “We appreciate it on earth only when in contact with physical matter, and in the Etheric world it is appreciated when in contact with etheric substance. What makes the electrons and protons revolve in an orderly way within the atom? Each atom must contain a minute proportion of this thinking substance. All matter contains this thinking substance, this mind, as without it motion would cease, and without motion there would be no universe. Mind is at the back of all physical substance, and whether it be a stone or a human being, each is controlled by mind of a different degree.” Universal mind is individualised in each human being and “the individual mind of each of us, our ego or our self, is therefore trained in creative thought through contact with earth, which training conditions our surroundings here and hereafter. The mind never dies but continues developing forever, and with its increasing command over its surroundings, both time and space become of less and less account... Our minds will ultimately be in complete control of our surroundings, and as we think, so shall we be. Then I surmise the vibrations of our surroundings and of our mind will be at an equal frequency, that is, in unison, and we shall be inhabitants of the Realm of Mind our eternal home.”

### ***Selfishness and Unselfishness***

He wisely stresses in *The Rock of Truth*, the true basis of all goodness and progress, all sin and retrogression. The simple issue is whether a man is selfish or unselfish. “To put it briefly, all sin can be described by the word selfishness, and the more selfish we are the more sinful we are... If we wish to acquire knowledge for the purpose of helping others, if we become less selfish, then the path is opened to us, and as we gain in wisdom and character we draw nearer to perfection... Progress is dependent on desire; as the mind develops, the etheric body responds to finer vibrations, and thus we are enabled to rise naturally to higher planes. This is a faculty possessed by the etheric body, but not by the physical body.”

### ***Changes Await Us***

Spiritualism maintains and proves that a human being survives the death of the physical body,

and continues to live in a spiritual world with an etheric body. Spiritualism goes further and postulates that man is capable of progressing as a spirit eternally. This raises an interesting question. Did man's animal ancestors have minds powerful enough to sustain individuality indefinitely as spirits, and if not when did the species evolve sufficiently to, maintain eternal progress as spirits? Arthur Findlay when answering this question in his book *Rock of Truth* stated, "How long this combination of mind and the etheric counterpart continued apart from physical matter in the days of primitive life, no one can say; but this we know, that a time came when the combination did continue, when mind was strong enough to retain its individuality and persist in the Etheric world as an individual unit. Before this time, doubtless, the individual mind unit was not sufficiently strong to stand alone and it merged into the mass mind of the universe, to manifest itself again at some later period in some other physical form." He maintains however that the minds of animals "are not sufficiently developed to retain their individuality permanently as man does. They retain their individuality for a time only on the animal plane in the Etheric world, and then with memories dissipating like a dream, their minds return to the mass mind of the universe. They have not the power to continue image-making. Animals, therefore, have only a temporary individuality which persists for a short time in the Etheric world, but affection on the part of an etheric being for an animal can retain that animal's individuality for a longer period than is possible if no human affection exists... To put it briefly, creatures guided by instinct only, retain their individuality after death, for a period, but with man, guided by intelligent thought, the personality persists."

One of the fundamental differences between our material life and our future etheric life is the enormous power of the mind in its direct control over its etheric environment. "The mind plays a much larger part in the Etheric world than it does here, and so it can attune itself to the surroundings for which it is fitted in a way it cannot do on earth. We all know people who are out of harmony with their surroundings on earth. That does not happen there.

Here on earth we are all living on the same surface. We are meeting the good and bad, the intelligent and the ignorant, though we may have nothing in common with those we meet. There, those of the same type of thought meet and live together. There, the power of mind is so much more in evidence that like draws to like in a far greater degree than here. Here, our work and every day occupations bring us into contact with minds of all types, but there, minds of like development congregate together, and the higher the development the higher is the surface or plane they live on."

### ***The Incomprehensible Universe***

Scientists today, with their telescopes of increasing magnitude, are searching cosmic space but cannot find a boundary to the universe. The physical universe cannot be encompassed, and when we think of this from a psychic angle of thought, we realise how futile it is to try and grasp the universe as a physical entity. If there are boundaries to the universe the question naturally would arise as to what is beyond them. Spiritualists know that when they die they enter into surroundings, which form a new aspect of the universe. Then physical matter ceases to count and we contemplate only the etheric universe. Surely it follows that an explanation of the universe is impossible solely from the physical standpoint and that one will only be found when we are ultimately in a position to survey it from all its aspects, a matter which cannot be done on earth. Findlay stresses this aspect of thought in his various books, and in *The Curse of Ignorance* he writes as follows: "Everything (such as space, time, matter etc.) is relative and determined by our place in the universe, our appreciation of our surroundings being

decided by the velocity at which the earth is travelling through space. On earth we can only interpret the universe from our point of view, namely the earth standpoint, but to someone in some star or planet it would be different because of the different velocity of his travel. A delicate experiment with a beam of light confirmed this, and laid the foundation for Professor Einstein to develop his revolutionary metaphysical theory of the universe, which gives a new conception of natural law, and lays low the old orthodox scientific materialism so long accepted without question. A more complete understanding of the unification of nature is now being attempted, as reality must always be the same everywhere throughout the universe, and science is coming to realise that this is only possible by regarding the universe as a mental conception. Plato, whose opinions were for long overshadowed by those of Aristotle, has come into his own again. Here on earth we can only appreciate physical reality, but other realities are before us which we shall experience after death. Then our consciousness will regard our environment from a new angle, the physical outlook being a purely relative one, and our earth experiences consequently likewise so. After death our new environment will become real to us and the earth unreal. Now the earth is real to us, but much occurs in our environment to which we are blind and deaf. What we do not see, feel or hear we consider unreal, but that is because of our physical limitations, and only when we are freed from them will the unseen become the real and what is now see the shadow.” This leads on to Findlay’s conception of:

### ***The Etheric World***

Has the Etheric world a definite locality in space like the material world? Findlay asserts in *The Rack of Truth* that the Spirit world is an astronomical locality. “It is not in some far off region in space, but is part of our world and goes round the sun along with this earth. Just as our earth turns on its axis, so the Etheric world turns along with us. It is all part of one whole. The earth is like the stone in a peach and the Etheric world is like the fruit surrounding it. Just like the stone, so the earth is the life giving seed to the Etheric world.” The Spirit world “is made up of seven spheres interpenetrating each other, and if we include the earth there are eight spheres. Each sphere has a surface, called a plane and above the surface of the first sphere is the surface of the second sphere. Those on the surfaces of the spheres below can look through the surfaces above them, must as we on earth are looking through all those surfaces and do not know it. Each succeeding sphere is composed of finer substance, and consequently the surface that is of finer substance than the one below cannot be seen by those on the lower surface. As development proceeds, those who progress become more and more attuned to the finer substance beyond and above them and so parting takes place there as here. Call it death if you like; but there is no body to bury, and those who pass to a higher plane can come back to their friends at will. By lowering the vibrations of their etheric bodies, by thought, they come through their own surface plane to plane right back to earth, but they cannot rise above the surface to which they are mentally and bodily fitted.”

### ***Reincarnation***

Do spirits reincarnate? Findlay replies: “To return would be retrogression and we have no evidence that this is nature’s plan. It sounds simple and believable to those who have never thought out how we obtain our individual minds and become individual beings. These come from our parents as already explained. There is no mystery about it, so the one who believes that he or she is the reincarnation of some individual who once lived, must explain how this separate individual mind took the place of the combined minds of his or her parents at conception. It is caused by misunderstanding of the facts and sprang from minds, which could

conceive the virgin birth, an old belief with no scientific authority behind it. To me, the reincarnation of a strong individualised mind is impossible to image, though the weaker undeveloped minds may possibly return to the mass mind, just as do the minds of animals, but I have nothing to support even this suggestion. These views, I may say, receive the support of my informants in the Etheric world, who say that they know of no one who has incarnated again on earth. They have with them those who live on earth thousands of years ago, and those not with them have gone on to higher planes. It is reasonable to imagine the universe as a whole, as one great developing thought, or as a series of myriad small thoughts connected into one harmonious whole. As we know by experience that developing thought never goes back, but only changes, so we must assume that thought is continually evolving to higher heights of expression. There seems no end to mind, so there is no end to thought and no end to life. What we know is occurring in this world of ours we can assume is likewise occurring in different degrees in other worlds in the Universe.”

## **CONCLUSION**

### **SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY FOR A NEW AGE**

Over two thousand five hundred years ago, Thales of Greece postulated that water was the basic element of the universe, and ever since the world has been interpreted as a material phenomenon. Slowly man has added fact after fact to his knowledge over the centuries and as I have tried to indicate in this series of lectureries, each advance in scientific knowledge has had a corresponding influence on philosophical thought, which in turn has advanced the process of civilisation. In 1945, an atom bomb exploded at Hiroshima and decisively confirmed certain scientific theories regarding the nature of matter, revealing an entirely new view of the universe, which the scientists had been piecing together since the beginning of the century. The atom bomb abruptly and finally brought to an end the fundamental philosophical concept, held over two thousand five hundred years, that the universe was an entirely materialistic phenomenon. It proved that what we term matter is but the external manifestation of something which is more fundamental. The scientists are now agreed that the basic element of the universe is an invisible immaterial force. Even the electron is but a crude expression of this underlying force or energy, which is so ethereal that Eddington coined the word MIND-STUFF to explain it. In short, MIND is behind matter. The invasion, “beyond the veil” of matter, into the ethereal universe has dealt a deathblow to materialism and given philosophy an entirely new basis. Man however is still more interested in material values than in spiritual values, and whilst modern scientific discoveries have caused rapid changes in his economic life, their influence on his spiritual and moral life has been much slower. The lag between science and philosophy consequently tends to periodically form a contradiction between the two. Note for instance the present contradiction between science and theological dogma and its disastrous effect upon religion.

#### ***Material Survival***

The scientists Rutherford, Einstein and others have destroyed the basis of materialism, but materialistic ideologies still dominate the world. In the womb of the ‘Material Age’ however, there has been slowly and imperceptibly growing a new spiritual force, which is an offspring of modern science. During the last hundred years the searching fight of science has been turned upon psychical phenomena, which had remained throughout the centuries a mystery to all but a few enlightened ones. Psychical research has laid the foundations of a new spiritual view of existence, and after a century of painstaking investigation the philosophical

significance of psychical phenomena is becoming doubly clear, as we witness the collapse of the scientific basis of materialism. The 'Material Age', which is now coming to a close, has been chiefly characterised by man's struggle with matter. Man has evolved during the last ten thousand years to a high degree of civilisation, largely under the drive of his animal materialistic instincts of self-preservation and lust for power. History records how the fittest peoples have conquered and the weak have gone under. In his struggles and conflicts man has gradually refined his soul and spiritual forces have slowly been able to establish themselves. These forces are now maturing and becoming so virile that they will soon give birth to a new 'Spiritual Age.' The developing contradictions and conflicts between the new spiritual forces and the old material ones are the basic cause of the birth pangs of change from which the world is now suffering.

### ***Greater Love and Wisdom***

In the struggle against selfishness, man's social institutions are becoming more humane and refined. Human co-operation is replacing human exploitation, and social security is becoming a fact because of man's greater love for his neighbour. Man is also increasing his wisdom. Christina Foyle has told us that three times as many books are being sold today (1953) as were sold before the last war, less than ten years ago, and that readers are showing a keener discrimination in their newly evolved limb - the machine, and concentrating upon the development of his mental powers. When he becomes a little wiser and agrees to distribute the products of the earth on a world co-operative and not on a national competitive basis, he will never again resort to war for world's markets and raw materials and thus periodically and foolishly destroy what he creates. He will also discover that to maintain his material needs he will only require to work at the most for four hours each day. His major problem of material survival will come to an end and economic security will ensure lasting peace. A 'New Age' will begin.

### ***Spiritual Survival***

This 'New Age' however will bring new problems, which will unfold man's latent spiritual powers. Instead of material survival he will be forced to struggle for spiritual survival. In his struggle with matter, he has been fully occupied, but a scientifically planned economy will bring him long hours of leisure, which he will have to spiritually survive or become decadent in material luxury. His increased leisure will become his major problem, but will also provide him with the greatest opportunity he has ever experienced for spiritual progress. It is very interesting to note that the new movement of Modern Spiritualism has revealed that the life towards which all men are evolving, is one in which the need to produce and distribute food and other human requirements for the maintenance of our bodies is non-existent. It is also very significant that the life after death is chiefly one of mind, the spirit body drawing its energy food directly from its ethereal environment. Spirit life is chiefly characterised by spiritual survival, for without spiritual struggle and progress, retrogression and degradation are the inevitable consequences. There is no guarantee of heavenly bliss without effort, for personal responsibility is a universal law. These are some of the facts upon which the philosophy of Spiritualism is founded, and the great significance of the Spiritualist movement becomes doubly clear as we realise that its philosophy not only prepares man for his future life in heaven, but also for his future life on earth. The new Spiritual Age, towards which he is now rapidly moving will be chiefly one of intellectual and spiritual development; MIND will reign supreme, and social life will evolve progressively towards the standards and conditions of existence in the Spirit world, until there is a gradual merging from one to the other.

Spiritualism is therefore a timely revelation for this epoch of transition, and provides effective and appropriate spiritual guidance to the solution of man's present world problems.

The Age of Materialism has also been characterised by the gradual integration of the human race into one great social unit by various forms of land, sea, air and radio communications. Today we are familiar with what is happening to our brothers and sisters in the most remote parts of the world. We know more about Truman and Dewey, Molotov and Vyshinsky, James Mason and Wilfred Pickles than we do about those who live in the same street as ourselves. We have evolved an internationalism, which takes many forms. The 'Spiritual Age' will also be characterised by an ever-greater union of the human race. This will become possible by the invention of a new scientific means of communication, which will provide links and contacts between the Spirit world and our own, at least as effectively as the telephone and radio now link the Western and Eastern hemispheres. This union between terrestrial and celestial societies will provide the basis for a new UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD of the human race. By means of this new form of communication 'Cosmical Society' will become a reality. The love and wisdom of the highest spirits will descend to earth more effectively than at present, and the human race will march forward into the new 'Spiritual Age' with greater opportunities of achievement and progress than ever before. Meanwhile man needs a philosophy, which will prepare him NOW for his glorious future. This philosophy must rest upon the principles of the unity of all Spirit, the brotherhood of all men, discarnate and incarnate, the facts of survival after death and communication with the Spirit world, and the concept of eternal progress. This philosophy must be supported by scientific truth, and not belief, as in the past, and come transformed into religion by its practical application to life's problems and not held as a pious platitude. Spiritualism is such a philosophy. Spiritualism is the philosophy of the coming 'Spiritual Age' and Spiritualists have therefore a great responsibility. To them has been assigned the task of world spiritual leadership and the future wafts for them to honour that responsibility.