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A SPIRITUAL HYPOTHESIS.

BY PHENIX.

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INVOCATION.

Infinite Parent; Thou Giver of all good; Thou All-wise and All-loving God; Thou to whom all nations must turn, and to whom, finally, every spirit must bend, receiving the benediction of adversity or of prosperity, of sorrow or of joy, of shadow or of light according to the need; Thou Who hast fashioned alike the snowy garments of winter and the vernal beauty of spring, and beneath Whose law suns and systems have their birth, and the great night of chaos and of darkness is overcome by the splendor of Thine orbs; O God: from the night time of human life, from the chaos of human darkness Thy children turn to Thee as the living splendor of the universe; Thou art its sun; Thou its ever living glory, and Thy love is that which bringeth the day from night, order from chaos, divinity from the dust: unto Thee in praises every heart would turn, thanking Thee for every blessing, and praising Thee for that shadow that turneth aside the seeming blessing that we may know how brightly Thy love, and Thy beauty, gleameth beyond the clouds. May every heart be uplifted in praise; may every life turn toward the truth, and in its triumph perceive where Thy love sits enthroned, Thy law and Thy justice reign forever.

DISCOURSE.

If you take a pure ray of white light it is not possible that the human vision shall behold it. So the sight of man is constructed with reference to the earth's atmosphere, it is only the broken ray of light that man can perceive

by the refraction in the earth's atmosphere; therefore man is only able to perceive objects relatively. But whether he perceives them inaccurately or whether his vision is correct must depend upon what his standard for accuracy is; since every human vision differs. The human sight is only focalized with reference to the broken rays of light. All objects that man touches or that he comes in contact with in the senses must be, therefore, in that degree focalized to his physical senses. Does he really see anything as it is? This is not only a question for philosophy, but for metaphysics to solve. Since the eye is only focalized to the broken rays of light, objects appear to him through that lens, and it is a fact that he cannot see correctly so far as the objects are concerned. The same is true of hearing; man's hearing is attuned on the average to hear the vibrations of sounds that come within a certain limited range; if he could hear other vibrations the sounds of earth would be unbearable; if he could hear the smallest vibration like the fluttering of an insect's wing every ordinary sound would seem louder than the thunder's tone; so his hearing must be tempered, must be focalized to the conditions of mortal existence, and this varies according to his own state, for men hear differently; they frequently hear that which is not spoken at all.

The same may be said to be true of the other senses; for it is true that the senses upon which man relies for his information concerning physical things are after all only a compromise between his state of imperfection and the state of perfection that is in nature. Then may it not also be true that everything predicated upon this compromise is only approximately correct? Mathematics reveals that you cannot rely upon the human vision at all; that certain vibrations of light appear in certain forms when they are not in reality in those forms; that any rapid motion cannot be perceived by the vision; that all man sees is a certain compromise between himself and the light of the universe, that he may more perfectly, perhaps, be adapted to his external conditions.

The science of mathematics says that his hearing also is only a compromise, and that according to certain vibrations of sound which are discoverable in music, there is necessarily a discord in order to make them adapted to the human senses; so that if absolute harmony were played upon an instrument, if the chromatic scale included absolute harmony, the ear of man could not hear it. In other words that which is perfect it is not possible for the eye to see nor the ear to hear, nor for the the senses to understand. The comprehension, even, of perfect mathematics is not a physical, but a purely mental power. If we follow out this line of reasoning it will leave the senses the lowest in the scale of all the attributes with which man is endowed; and he is expected to comprehend the universe in the inverse order. Instead of making the senses the crown they should be considered the most inferior of the attributes which God has given for man's comprehension of the universe while here.

In the camera obscura the picture or reflection of the figure that is to be photographed is inverted, but when the picture again is revealed it is perfect. We may say that this is precisely the position of the senses with reference to man's spirit. Everything pertaining to his spiritual nature when seen through the camera of the senses is reversed, but when the picture is again set free in the light of spiritual vision, there is perfect perception, everything is correct again. Man is not willing to accept this standard, the boasted sciences of earth fail to declare it; still the truly scientific mind is perfectly well aware that there is no system of science that can be called perfect that is an experimental science, like geology, chemistry, or any of the other purely physical sciences, while at the same time he

insists upon basing his knowledge upon experiments which are imperfect, in a realm where observation is imperfect, upon standards which are, in themselves, but a compromise between perfection and man.

It is not surprising that this should be the case, since man's mind is so perverted through the observations of the senses that if he has a spiritual perception it must force its way through some terrible calamity, adversity, or inspiration in order for him to perceive it.

Man does not like to contemplate future existence because it is through the decease of the body that he is led to it. He would fain close his eyes to the fact of physical death and thereby shut out the immortal world, but he is driven by some law of approximate arrangement of instinct to contemplate physical death that he may all the more discover that life does not belong to the physical form. When physical birth is considered it is a question of great rejoicing in the world, the law of life hails the visible beginning of each form with gladness; with something of the same sort you gaze upon the opening flower, upon the blossoms which give promise of the fruitage upon tree and vine, and declare this to be life. It is only the approximation of life; the blossom of the Spring, is only an imperfect expression, after all, of the tree, or of the vine, and then the very smallest portion of the fruitage contains the visible germ which finally is to be set free and bring life into created or generic existence. But man speaks and acts as though he thought the forms of life around him were really life itself; as though the leaf of the flower, the petal of the rose, the foliage of the tree, the harvests with their golden sheaves, were the culmination of life itself, instead of being superficial forms expressing that which, after all, lies enfolded in a deeper and more absolute mystery, the one absolute life that interpenetrates every form.

According to the physical basis, that which insists upon matter as the cause everything in the universe, depending upon physical causation for existence, going on to physical perfection, and leading but to physical results, would have, indeed, no foundation for being. The flimsy excuses which are called existence; the fleeting life which is but a momentary expression of hope and fear, affection and hatred, that belong to man's mortal career, would give but little promise of the existence of the universe and its divine potentialities, were it not for something that is deeper and diviner still.

It is but the mask of life that you perceive; the form really is but the external covering, which really has its foundation in the spiritual part of man; there is the source and cause for everything.

There is a spiritual cause for everything. The cause of the shadow is in the inversion or subversion of light, the lack of that radiance which makes perfect the absolute nature of man's soul. The cause of evil is in the inverted revelation, in the various degrees of human life and in the atmosphere which causes the refraction of truth's rays, and compels him to see with inverted vision the light of that truth instead of to stand upright and contemplate it serenely. This may be the excuse and the explanation for the imperfections in human life. Seeing "through a glass darkly," according to Paul, is the light which you see darkly through the senses. The stained windows of a cathedral, the narrow crevice in the dungeon cell, the light that streams in through some scarcely unbolted prison door, these are illustrations of the flickering light of truth perceived by man in the mysticism and dungeon cell of the senses. Only prophets, only those who contemplate human life and its facts from the highest standpoint, can burst these barriers and view life in all its divine splendor.

It is not to human science, however carefully adjusted and arranged, that man can ever look for the solution of the moral problems of the world. As said before, the very basis of human science is a compromise; the very foundation upon which it rests is a superficial foundation. In order to have a perfect solution of the problems of life man must have access to a knowledge of the life immortal; in order to combat error he must know what truth is; in order to conquer the life that is not eternal he must dip his wings in the fountains of the life that is eternal. Therefore, as said before, no experimental science, no arrangement of the various theses of existence predicated upon matter, will suffice to explain anything. There may be formulation of methods, but the explanation of causes lies in a far different realm.

The Spiritual Hypothesis is, that the cause does not, necessarily, resemble its effect. We mean by this, that which is apparent. There is no more resemblance between the hydrogen, oxygen and the elements that enter into the composition of water, and the effect of steam, than there is between the absolute nature of man and the manifestations of man in human life. The results of chemical combinations do not resemble the original primates, but not the less is it true that the combination of certain primates will invariably produce certain results. This, if applied to man's spiritual nature will, necessarily, explain why, when the human spirit acts upon the human organism, the results are not always in keeping with the spiritual nature. Nor can it be said that there is the slightest resemblance between that which the spirit produces through the organism and the spirit itself. It is only when the organism is vanquished, only when the physical being is overcome, that the spirit reveals itself in its true nature.

It is the mistake with Spiritualists, oftentimes, to suppose that the life which is manifested in the earthly state, that human passion, imperfections, and the results of physical being, are expressions of the life which will belong to the spiritual state. You might, as well, say that the petals of a flower, revealing themselves in wondrous glory and hue, are exactly like the chemical compounds of which the germ is composed and the rays of light enwoven. It is impossible that man, with his spiritual perception, shall mistake the spiritual life for the expression of it in human beings.

If you consider the expressions of human life, we mean the adverse expressions, those that are enveloped in the shadow, those that have their sources seemingly, in darkness, you will find that before you can discover the real source or cause of any state of human existence you must trace the expression through its various digressions, through that which causes the refraction of the rays of light, and then perceive that they resemble not at all the light of the spirit, until by the clearness of spirit purpose all shadows are overcome and dispersed.

The object of life is not simply to express physical being, to discover any number of material terms, to analyze nature from hypotheses that are in themselves imperfect, but, from the imperfect to the imperfect, to at last discover the only perfect solution. It is not found in the chemical analysis of life which was attempted, not very long ago, by an eminent man, in one of the German schools of science, who believed that he had discovered the ultimate molecule; who thought that he had arrived at the actual cosmic dust; who, through various chemical experiments thought he had found the solution of the great primal action of things; yet he failed to discover the sources of any thought, any aspiration, or of anything that in man gives him power so to analyze nature. This together with kindred experiments from less ambitious minds, proves that no purely physical hypothesis can ever be successfully maintained if carried one degree beyond the merely

physical experiment of life, and even there, if endeavoring to discover the ultimate cause, it must fail and fade, and the man who attempts the experiment becomes insane, because there is nothing but insanity after purely physical laws have fulfilled their uttermost, there is no realm then for the mind of man or spirit.

If it could be possible that from chemical combinations alone a human being could be created, as in one of the romances of this century it has been pictured, with aspirations, with attributes, and with powers chemically constructed without the aid of an immortal impetus, then there would be no other realm for man excepting insanity; for that which can think a thought not in the universe, that which can aspire to be what is not provided for in the universe, that which can set the seal and stamp of its superiority upon that which is inferior to itself and yet from which it sprung, that which having already perception and aspiration finds no excuse for aspiration and perception, that in man which can crown the physical being not only with investigation, experiment, analysis, arrangement, and discovery, but can enter the realm unprovided for by nature in fulfillment, is bound to be insane, if there is nothing but the material hypothesis for existence. But if on the other hand the inverse is true with every physical hypothesis, if according to the realm to which it belongs there is still another solution, that like the higher mathematics discovers what the lower has not been able to solve, so in the realm of the spirit man can be at home; as the basis of all existence ultimately he can find the spiritual level; he is not obliged to be blind as soon as experimental discoveries have exhausted their powers, to say, there is no other cause for causation, but he can with absolute certainty predicate his compromise upon the basis of the whiteness of the light of the spirit, and know as surely as the experimentalist knows that there is a light which can be perceived in the atmosphere of earth, and which can, by spectroscopic analysis, be found, so in the clearness of the spirit, in the life that attests the divine, the one whiteness of truth is revealed, and man is compelled to adopt the only solution for the problems of life, found in the spirit.

Under this hypothesis there is excuse for experiment. Under the Spiritual Hypothesis there is excuse for the shadow; under this there is excuse for the imperfection even of the most perfect attestation of science; under this there is found the keynote to all that harmony that is in the universe, despite the discord and jargon of man's material senses, and the blindness with which he gazes on the perfect light of heaven.

If all the adaptations of life lead to ultimate wisdom they will be found as portions of the plan, but if there is no plan the portions will be without avail. Just as the segment of the circle has no meaning without the hypothecated circle, if there is no purpose then the portions of life that are revealed are without meaning and everything is chaos, but there being a purpose the fragments that are revealed through the imperfections of the senses help to make up the reality that is behind them.

Of certain phases of spiritual phenomena it has been asked, by many eminent men in religion and science, why such crude manifestations occur; how certain forms of manifestations are to reveal immortal life unto man; of what value are they in the great work of spiritualizing mankind? As the shadow is valuable in revealing the light in its presentation to man's sense of perception, so that which appeals to the human senses, notwithstanding, reveals something beyond the senses. It is not merely to please the eye, nor to charm the ear, nor to ravish the senses, but it is because under man's refracted light it is the only

way of reaching his consciousness; is just as valuable as that you should have words to express ideas, or any method by which the spirit is enabled to express itself while in the form.

Then many say: But these manifestations and messages are so crude, they do not betray the exaltation of the spirit, they partake too much of the nature of earth. Has man so far outgrown earthliness; is he so independent of earthly methods that the perfect expression of spirit would be perceived by him? If there were thousands of angels in the upper air today he has no eyes, as yet, to perceive them, no comprehension to understand them, and but for the adaptation to his senses he would not even know that they were there. Until man can see with clearer vision and know with better understanding, he should not criticise the methods that his condition requires, that his mind demands. As to the crudity of the form of message this has nothing to do with the message itself. Surely the average human beings do not think the best thoughts? Only in hours of prayer, in solemn exaltation, or when the life has been awakened to a higher and deeper impulse, then these may exalt, but the narrow arrangement of life, even the wings of science or of the imagination, do not form a fair and transcendent flight from the clod in which man is imprisoned. When the world shall have recognized the higher vision, when man is willing to forget the stained windows of his mortal dwelling that he may see the light better, when he is willing to burst the prison walls and let in the free air of heaven, when he is willing that the narrow bonds and gyves that hold him to the clay shall be broken asunder that he may see the glory that is beyond, the spirit world will no longer adopt those imperfect methods to their imperfect human states that belong to the conditions that are necessary in human life.

The more exalted the message from the spirit world the fewer there are to listen. If some one should speak today from the standard of the Sermon on the Mount, how many would there be ready to listen? If some speak today from the standard of the prize ring, or that intellectual prize ring misnamed a court of justice, there are thousands ready to listen, and if others should speak from the still lower standard of the worship of gold there are hundreds of thousands who would listen with open mouths, and ears out stretched, to catch the slightest sound from the invisible realm, that could change the dross of earth by some subtle alchemy into gold; but for that which shall change the real dross into the gold of the spirit, for that which transfuses the clod into things divine, for that which shall reveal the jewels of celestial life there are few who bend their brows, few who care to listen, few who understand its meaning, fewer still who would wish to incorporate it into their lives.

Until the world is ready for the spiritual hypothesis of existence it is not ready for what that hypothesis means. Say what the many will, it is from the standpoint of the dust that most people expect to rise into the kingdom of paradise. Make your standards higher, let the heavenly state be the home of the spirit, and, however much the garments of the skies may have been trailed in the dust, there is whiteness enough in the celestial morning to fan every shadow away.

SPIRITUALISM AS A MEANS OF HUMAN PROGRESS.

[IMPROMPTU POEM; THE SUBJECT BEING SUGGESTED BY THE AUDIENCE.]

True progress must be from the spirit's throne;
 You cannot make the lily white
 By weaving meshes of the sun alone,
 Nor by any form of outward sight;

But from the germ which is within
 The lily unfolds its petals fair,
 And its true whiteness it must win
 By growth within the summer air.

The spirit must give man's growth, conceals
 Where he grovels a creeping thing,
 Until the spirit of life reveals
 The splendor of the angel's wing.

And like the germ from out the sod
 He rises an angel unto God;
 And Spiritualism lies between
 The world above and man's demesne.

Progress from messages that come
 Through the pinions of celestial light,
 From voices that in the heavenly home
 Breathe only in love's accents white;

They are as chimings downward sent,
 Like lilies in the upper air;
 Like messages from heaven lent
 Leading your thoughts, your feelings there.

But for the message from the skies
 That through the ages hath been given,
 Man could not know of paradise,
 Would never dream of the light of heaven.

But as he grows to meet that state
 The glory of the light above
 Bends down, and amidst strife and hate
 He learns the message of heavenly love.

Shine on thou spirit message given,
 Until the world and its dull gloom
 Shall see the glorious light of heaven,
 The glory bursting through earth's tomb.

BENEDICTION.

May the messages of life, as the soft snow-flakes that cover the earth, incircle you with their whiteness; may the rays of God's love, like the sun bursting through the clouds, ensphere you with their divinity. Amen.



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