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The Coming Revival of Religion.

That a revival of genuine spiritual religion is needful in all Christian countries at the present time will probably be admitted by all who have thoughtfully considered the signs of the times; but differences of opinion exist as to the nature of the revival that is needed.



There are many sincere persons whose conceptions of such a revival are limited to mere manifestations of religious excitement, to zealous outpourings and professions, to a marked increase of goody-goodyism and punctilious religious observance, to puritanical tirades against the drama or tobacco smoking, or to denunciations of 'higher criticism' and scholarly search after truth.

But those who have really apprehended our individual and national needs and our social evils, those who have thoughtfully regarded with observant eyes the many evi-

dences which exist of our natural degeneracy, our unbelief, and our spiritual dis-ease, know full well that what we really need is a revival of the *spiritual religion* which was revealed and exemplified by Jesus; a re-exaltation of his sublime, practical and humane ideals; a re-cognition of the supreme importance of those *weightier* matters of the Law upon which He placed such emphasis; and a reproduction on the part of his followers of that beneficent Christ-life and ministry which He manifested.

More *doing* and less *talking* are wanted in these days—more spiritual knowledge and less purblindness and creed-worshipping—more honesty and less sanctimoniousness—more *love* and less *'cant.'*

For there can be no doubt that popular belief in many of the dogmas which have been added to the original and essential Christian doctrine, by our forefathers, is rapidly waning. And in these days of increased enlightenment,

scholarship, and individual exercise of thought, all religious conceptions which are irrational and undemonstrable, or discordant with our intuitive sense of truth, or suggestive of ecclesiastical diplomacy, are ceasing to be regarded seriously, and are being classed with other mediæval superstitions.

But it is encouraging to know that whilst the people of Christian countries are repudiating so many of our traditional and non-essential religious misconceptions, they are manifesting an increased reverence for, and belief in, the great Revealer of Nazareth and His message to the world.

Most of us realize that the teaching of the Christ, although so simple when rightly understood, was eminently adapted to meet our human needs, to bring about the solution of our social problems, and to promote the spiritual upliftment of our race.

And instinctively we feel that the need of to-day is a revival of *true discipleship*, so that *our* lives, also, may be characterized by that altruistic and beneficent spirit, that understanding of spiritual verities and facts, that love of Justice, Truth, Compassion, and Humaneness, that filial obedience to the Will of God, and that fraternal love and service, which marked His life on Earth—and which will for ever constitute *true orthodoxy of heart*.

And when this is brought about, Christianity—the real thing—will again attract all classes of the community. For it is a combination of spiritual science, genuine philosophy, and practical philanthropy, and there is nothing yet discovered that can take its place.

How it is Coming. But how is it to be accomplished? While multitudes admit the necessity of such a revival and deplore the lack of religious vitality which is everywhere apparent in our Churches, and are ready to exclaim—

"'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
Richer and fuller life we want."

very few apprehend, as yet, the way in which this spiritual Renaissance will be brought about.

I believe—and my belief is strengthened by many statements which I have personally received from Christian workers who have passed through the experience called

physical death—that it is not by the setting up of any new theological system that a revival will come, but by a great influx of Light and Love from the Christ-sphere; by new revelations of Truth and the outpouring of God's spirit upon His sons and daughters in these latter days, as foretold by the Prophets; by the restoration of communion between the Church militant and the Church triumphant; by the breaking down of the wall of separation that exists through ignorance, fear, and misunderstanding between human souls who are incarnate and those who are discarnate; by the increase of knowledge concerning the unseen world, and the evolution of spiritual faculties hitherto undeveloped; by the testimony of a great cloud of witnesses to spiritual verities hitherto unrealized; and by the ministry of Angels.

For thus will Truth and Immortality be made apparent and the reality of 'the life to come' be demonstrated. And by such means will be produced a clearer apprehension of the operation of spiritual Law in connection with human affairs, a re-statement of the Christian position, and a more spiritual interpretation of the Christian Scriptures.

Thus, also, will the materialistic position, with its limitation of understanding and experience, be made untenable; and all classes of society will be led to apprehend the supreme importance of preparing themselves for the life beyond the grave, and of seeking entrance into the Kingdom of God.

Of one thing, however, we may rest assured—that *it is coming*—and in the near future! Already the premonitory signs of a great awakening are apparent; and occurrences are everywhere quietly taking place which evidence the fact that the immortals are working in our midst for this great end—revealing themselves in the sanctuary of the home to spiritually-minded watchers, giving tangible proofs that "there is no death," and expounding to earnest seekers after truth "the things which God has prepared for them that love Him."

The Christ-Sphere.

Just as, in this physical world, there are different social spheres which represent different degrees of soul-culture and mental and spiritual attainment, so it is in the ethereal realm which overshadows and inter-penetrates our own, and where the majority of human souls are now living and working their way upward.

For each sphere that we recognize *here* there is a corresponding sphere *there*; the same dividing barriers exist between them, but in a more complete form; and every man, like Judas, "goes to his own place."

Even in *this* world real intimacy and communion of soul is impossible between a man of sordid ambition, unenlightened mind, or debased appetite, and one whose aspirations are noble, whose tastes are refined, and whose disposition is spiritual and philanthropic.

Though the former may be a millionaire, or an aristocratic exquisite of the 'smart set,' and the latter a poor but spiritually-cultured artisan, there is a great gulf fixed between them. And though the soul that is spiritually enlightened may temporarily descend to the level of those less highly evolved, in order to help or

uplift them, these cannot, because of their more elementary condition and their spiritual ignorance, enter a sphere that is above their own until they become qualified.

Much more, then, is it so in that realm where the fleshly mask is no longer available and where the true condition of each soul is at once perceived by spiritual eyes that can discern its past record as well as its present status.

And, just as we recognise intuitively that the 'Christ-life' is the highest life of which we are cognisant *here*, so is the 'Christ-sphere' regarded *there*. For in that sphere dwell those who are most like unto God; those who are able to bear the intense spiritual radiance and vibration that emanate from the Great White Throne—because they have been perfected in wisdom and love.

From the Christ-sphere a perennial and abundant stream of life, illumination, and love is being outpoured. Through the higher and intermediate spheres it reaches the lower ones, and through various media. And like the rays of our sun, this stream of influence imparts energy, vitality and happiness to those who receive it, though in different degrees according to the capacity of the recipient. And the true secret of spiritual progress and attainment is to open one's heart to this divine influx.

Spiritual Deep-Breathing.

We all know what *physical* deep-breathing is, and how it nourishes the brain and nerves. There is also a corresponding *spiritual* deep-breathing, which produces the same effect on the soul as atmospheric inspiration does on the body.

Instead of appropriating oxygen only, as in the former case, we can inspire by this spiritual effort the energy, sympathy and enlightenment which is outpoured from the Christ-sphere. And those who have learned how thus to appropriate this spiritual vitality and magnetism, by aspiration and faith, can testify to the remarkable effects that result.

Just as the solar rays disperse our physical gloom and depression, and drive away "the blues," so this spiritual sunshine disperses our spiritual depression and lack of energy, and tends to make us helpful and kind and sympathetic towards every living creature. But the effect is 'according to our faith'—for this is the spiritual law.

A man who does not believe in the efficacy or potency of solar magnetism and who regards the sun as being merely a conglomerate mass of incandescent gases, will derive but little benefit from its kindly rays. He is not in a receptive attitude, and does not create the conditions for experiencing a physical revival within himself.

And, just so, the man who does not recognise or open himself to the radiant vibration of the 'Sun of Righteousness'—the centre of the Christ-sphere—of whom *our* sun is God's symbol in the heavens, cannot receive the help and blessing that is being freely outpoured upon those who feel their need of spiritual revival, and who create the requisite receptive conditions by prayerful faith.

That great Spirit who manifested in and through the human body that was born of Mary of Nazareth in the

village of Bethlehem, that 'Son of God' who spake words that transcend in their significance the words of any other Spirit who has yet appeared on this Earth in human flesh, affirmed his power to impart spiritual life to all who came to Him with trustful confidence and sincerity of heart.

Thousands of witnesses have confirmed the validity of that claim by their testimony and by their fruitful lives, and have not hesitated to seal such testimony by facing death in its cruellest forms. And what is the value of the negative evidence of the unbeliever or the agnostic (the man who admits he *does not know*)?

To the Lord of the Christ-sphere, then, must we look for a revival of religion in our own hearts and in these Christian lands.

And we must remember that He stands at the head of a great multitude of other Spirits, who also have dwelt in human flesh, and to whom He gave power to become also 'Sons of God'—human souls who, also, have attained the transcendent and overcoming life, having washed their robes in that vital stream which was symbolised by His blood ("for the blood is the *life*.")

They are all "*ministering spirits* sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation." Should we not, then, avail ourselves of their help and co-operation in the great work of self-transformation and the upliftment of our race from carnality, ignorance, and transgression, to Spirituality, Wisdom, and Love.

The reformers of the past, who strove to live the Christ-life and to carry on the divine work, are reformers and Christ-workers still. They are not 'sitting upon clouds' nor 'continuously playing harps,' according to the childish ideas of some of our ancestors, but are more in earnest than ever about the salvation of mankind, so that their Leader, the Christ, may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

And with increased experience, enlarged powers, and emancipation from the limitations which appertain to incarnation in physical bodies, they are better qualified to mould the affairs and destinies of men than when their wearied feet trod the stony paths of their earthly pilgrimage.



The Signs that will follow. But when it comes, when the *religion of Jesus* is revived, great changes will be produced in our thoughts and in our lives. For He considered it more important to relieve and cure the suffering and afflicted, to feed his hungry disciples, to comfort the broken-hearted, or to lift a distressed animal out of a pit into which it had fallen, than He did to "observe the Sabbath" in accordance with the strict conventional notions of the religious authorities of his day.

And as the men and women of these modern days become imbued with the same spirit of sympathy and the same apprehension of eternal verities, we shall see a wiser and more fruitful expenditure of religious energy, a more strenuous combatting of the *real* evils which afflict our generation, and less vapouring concerning those which are imaginary or comparatively unimportant.

We shall probably think more about assisting *others*, and especially those who are more heavily handicapped than we are, to reach the heavenly state, than about securing an abundant entrance for *ourselves*.

We shall be more anxious to do the Will of the Father and to obey His Laws, and less inclined to shirk our duty, or to think we can shift the penalty of our shortcomings and transgressions on to other shoulders than our own.

We shall think more of increasing human happiness, and of lessening the world's suffering than of religious exercises or psalm-singing; and we shall realize our responsibility to engage *individually* in Christian ministry, instead of thinking that we can fulfil our obligations by paying some other man to do our duty for us.

And instead of being indolently satisfied with the most childish and elementary ideas about the laws and conditions of the spiritual world and our eternal destiny—ideas which will not bear any thoughtful investigation, and which are repudiated with pitiful contempt by the true scholars and thinkers of every land—we shall earnestly seek after that knowledge of Truth which Jesus said would make us free from the bondage of error, and misunderstanding. And as our ignorance gives place to enlightenment, our lives will become transformed.



The Hour of Opportunity.

The spirit of revival is in the air just at present, and now is the time to direct our own aspiration and that of our contemporaries into *practical* channels.

Spiritual influences are being exerted, and many are being helped (even though it be by such simple means as soul-stirring music or the emotional magnetism of large audiences) to experience, perhaps for the first time in their lives, spiritual aspiration and sensation of some sort.

And it will be deplorable if the beneficent tide which is reaching us from the spiritual spheres at this special time should end in nothing more serious than the signing of church registers and the making of public professions by those who have been recently led to regard seriously the religious life and its opportunities.

The world's need is great, for it is hungering after the abundant life, sympathy, and love of the Christ-sphere.

Consecrated souls are wanted who can be utilised as instruments through whom a wealth of spiritual influence and power can be outpoured upon the spiritually famished multitudes of our own and other lands.

As in olden days, so in our time, in the Councils of the spiritual world the question is being heard, "Whom shall we send, and who will go for us?"

And it is our high privilege to dedicate ourselves to the service of God and Humanity in some practical form; to seriously consider how we may best further the Divine Purpose, and help to bring about the doing of the Divine Will upon Earth as it is in Heaven—and thus aid in the great work of transforming this sin-cursed world in which we live, into a peaceful dwelling place where Wisdom, Love, and Equity shall abound.

Sidney H. Beard.

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