



THE IMPLICATIONS OF SPIRITUALISM

by Maurice Barbanell, Editor, Psychic News

ALL religions are founded on the fact that there is some principle in man which defies death and survives. Orthodoxy has built a system of reward and punishment hereafter, based, to a large extent, on the acceptance of certain creeds, dogmas and doctrines.

Nearly every sect has taught in the past, and many still do today, that acceptance of their particular brand of teaching was the only sure passport to heaven.

Obviously, the people who are really competent to tell you what happens in the life beyond this are not theologians, who can only speculate and theorise, but individuals who live there and speak from personal experience.

You soon learn from the dwellers in the after-life that their earthly religious views do not determine their spiritual status in the Beyond. Many an avowed agnostic has reached a higher spiritual sphere than individuals who were most punctilious in their church attendance but neglected the application of ethical principles to their lives.

The truth about religion is that creeds do not matter. Whether you accept the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith or not, believe in the Nicene Creed or not, are a Christian, Jew, Buddhist, or Parsee-- all these have no relevance to the things that matter.

There is only one acid test regarding your spiritual status when you die. It is the way you have lived your daily life. We learn that all the actions we have performed, the words we have uttered and thoughts that have risen in our minds, are indelibly registered on our spirit body. For that reason we are known, after death, for what we are.

We take with us the character that we have moulded in our earthly lives. This determines our position hereafter. We cannot cheat. We cannot pretend. The sinner, to use a very clumsy word, cannot escape the consequences of his actions by uttering a magical formula on his deathbed and thus have all misdeeds absolved for him. He must make restitution for whatever wrong he has committed. There is no progress for him until he has done so.

It is a mockery of divine justice to believe that the saint and the sinner are on level terms from the moment they die. And it is not true. The essential fact that is stressed by all who have had any lengthy experience of spirit life is that we are personally responsible for the life that we live, that is, of course, if we are normal human beings.

Forgiveness does not release us from personal responsibility. The mere fact that the one whom we have wronged is willing to overlook our action does not alter the wrong we have done. A true balance can be struck only when we have made retribution.

The true Spiritualist is always conscious of an urge from the other side of life which stresses that real religion consists of the way one's daily life is led. You may call this morality and not religion, but I reply that religion cannot be divorced from ethics.

Spiritualism enables you to realise that in all ages, prophets and seers have been inspired by revelations emanating from the spirit world. But these revelations were suited to the age in which they came.

The Spiritualist does not despise the inspiration of the past. He recognises that the same natural laws which enable him to obtain revelation today caused the ancients to receive it in their time. But the world has altered, even in the last 2,000 years. New conditions have arisen and science enthroned as the latest god to be worshipped.

There are different problems and difficulties to be mastered. It is foolish to argue, as some clergymen do, that God inspired the children of the year called one, and has nothing to say to His children of 1970. It is foolish to argue that God had a special preference for Palestine that He does not possess for any other country today.

It is not necessary, in religion, to live in the past. Spiritualism proves that the fountain of inspiration still flows into the world, wherever it can find the necessary channels.

Spiritualism is not only a religion. More than that, it is Religion itself. Without Spiritualism, religion is meaningless. Almost every religion was founded around a medium, in whose presence psychic phenomena, wrongly called "miracles," occurred and who could be inspired from the same sources that are still at work.

Properly understood, Spiritualism will be the means of unifying opposing religions, proving that none of them is superior to the other, but that each possesses some grain of truth.

Here, in Spiritualism, is the nucleus of a brotherhood of man and a religious United Nations that would give religion its rightful place in the world, enabling it to become a force to inspire humanity in its highest ideals.

How foolish does the thought of a "holy war" become viewed with this new knowledge? You can look with pity on the frequent wrangling of theologians and the bickering over scriptural interpretations, realising these are trivial. Whether you accept them or not makes no real difference to life here or hereafter.

Spiritualism has no creeds or dogmas, but most Spiritualists accept what are known as the Seven Principles. These were given through mediumship at a time when it was necessary, for churches owning or leasing property, for a Spiritualist organisation to declare its religious beliefs. The law demanded that this body, the Spiritualists' National Union, should submit the religious principles on which its members agreed. These principles are:

1. The fatherhood of God.
2. The brotherhood of man.
3. The communion of spirits and the ministry of angels.
4. The continuous existence of the human soul.
5. Personal responsibility.
6. Compensation and retribution hereafter for all good and evil deeds done on earth.
7. Eternal progress open to every human soul.

Even acceptance of these Seven Principles caused controversy. Many Spiritualists said they would not be bound by any formal statements of belief. To surmount this difficulty it was decided to give Spiritualists' National Union members complete liberty of interpretation.

These principles very aptly sum up the religion of Spiritualism. Sincere religious people could not quarrel with any of them. To a large extent, they would be accepted by most modern minds in the Church.

Spiritualists recognise that every individual must work out his spiritual salvation and that, in the end, man must stand on his own feet. They know that we cannot transfer the burden of our responsibilities to somebody else's shoulders. We get out of life just what we put into it - no more and no less.

We are here to equip ourselves for the next stage of life. Earth is the school of our experience. If we fail to learn our lessons here, we will have to learn them when we pass on.

We take with us the character we have evolved. Nobody else can evolve it for us. We accomplish our own growth and evolution by the way we live our lives. Selfishness

and greed thwart the character. Altruism and idealism help the spirit to grow.

These are natural laws. Man cannot cheat them for they operate inexorably. The more good we do, the better persons we are. The more we fail to help others, the worse we are.

This is no new teaching. It has been taught through the ages by seers, prophets, saints and mystics. Spiritualism proves it. The purpose of life is not to enrich us materially at the expense of others. If we do, in reality we are the poorest of all poor in spirit and character.

Opportunities for service come to each one of us, irrespective of our lot or position in life. We can always do good, if we choose, no matter who or what we are. We can be kind to others no matter whether we are princes or paupers.

Spiritualism is the declared enemy of materialism. It proves that man survives death by a natural law of the universe. It provides mankind with a religion founded not on faith, or fear, but on knowledge.

Spiritualism demonstrates that God is the "Father" of all people. God is not a Christian, Jew, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Methodist, or a Spiritualist. Nor is God even an Englishman, as some people seem to think!

Whether you are orthodox or agnostic, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, a cabinet minister or a crossing sweeper, dictator or peasant, you cannot alter the law of cause and effect as it operates in your life. That is the great message of Spiritualism.

Because you are a spirit you survive death. And because you are a spirit you are alive today. The spirit within you, which causes you to live, is the same spirit that animates every member of every nation, of every race and of every colour. Spiritually, the people of the world are one. Spiritualism reveals the spiritual oneness of all mankind. God has made us all members of one vast spiritual family.

When that fact is understood and applied in human, national and international life, war will be driven from the face of the earth. Man will have learned not to kill his spiritual brother.

Properly understood, Spiritualism will become one of the greatest forces for good in the world. When its truths have spread far and wide, and the majority of people accept its teachings and regulate their lives accordingly, a new era will dawn for humanity.

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