

Man's Spiritual Foundations

In his earthly, embodied state man is poised between two vast realms of spiritual existence which simultaneously and continuously act upon him and influence the totality of his speech, thought and behaviour. Whether this fact be consciously recognised or not, the truth remains that every individual man is what he is by virtue of the various forces and influences from these two realms which he admits into his life by his own consent and confirmation. Man makes or breaks himself spiritually according to whether he opens himself to an influx of forces, processes and falsities from hell or to an influx of forces, processes and truths from heaven. Heaven and hell are not mere idle concepts or beliefs emerging from the mistiness of an irrational theology, but they are actual realms connected with and yet extending infinitely beyond the boundaries of this earth. Both heaven and hell comprise the spiritual world in which man inwardly moves during the whole of his earth life and to which he automatically belongs the instant that his earth life terminates.

Indeed, it is from the spiritual world that man draws and derives everything that he needs to activate, satisfy and complete his earth life. Man is fundamentally a spiritual being - a soul - who is connected with a mind and a physical body in an outward way and who is inseparably integrated with the spiritual world in an inward way. That which man inwardly receives from the various levels of the spiritual world he externally works out, applies and expresses in the physical world of space, time, matter and energy. All that he receives and applies from heaven is positive, good, useful and wholesome, while all that he receives and applies from hell is negative, destructive and disorderly. Everyone is internally conjoined with both heaven and hell; everyone in some way gives expression to the things of heaven and hell; and every person may, if he so desires, learn to control his life in such manner that the influence of hell is lessened and reduced in favour of the ascendancy of the influence of heaven.

Heaven is not a particular place circumscribed by limited dimensions but is a most universal cosmic state arising from the power and presence of God. Heaven is where God is acknowledged, received and loved, for it is the essential communion between man and the Lord of all. Heaven is the reciprocal conjunction between man and God so that God is in man and man is in God, and the extent to which this conjunction takes place determines the state or level of heaven that is entered into. When man actively seeks spiritual regeneration and allows the power of God to transform his inner life, then heaven becomes for him an immediate and clearly experienced reality.

Hell, also, is a universal state but its origin is with man and not God. Hell is the antithesis of heaven and is that life-state where God is spurned, rejected and denied in favour of self-love and the madness of self-exaltation. It is through man himself that hell comes into being, for it is the totality of all those lowly urges, lusts, hatreds, suspicions, jealousies, antagonisms and falsities which he entertains, fosters and expresses. It is certainly not a place prepared by God as the eternal home for evil-doers. In God there is absolutely nothing whatsoever of punishment, revenge, vindictiveness, hatred, anger or the like, and certainly no plan or provision for condemning evil-doers to hell. Whoever

enters hell does so of his own accord by his willingness to enter into conjunction with those states, qualities and properties that belong to hell, and simply because he takes delight in these things. Hell is the result of man's thinking, willing and acting from himself in all things without reference to, or accepting guidance from, the Lord.

God creates all that is good, true, beautiful, lovely and heavenly as the means whereby man may eternally participate ever more fully in the infinite richness and delight of heaven, but man has acted by his own freedom and has sought to create a world for himself in accordance with his wishes, desires and wants. Throughout the whole of history myriads of human beings have plunged themselves into the falsities of hell and there they still remain as the artificers of evil and as persuasive spirits who connect themselves with men and women on the earth and insinuate into them an endless variety of evil lusts and motives. Hell becomes progressively larger and more populous with each succeeding generation, and a very widespread evil influence incessantly impinges upon the mental and spiritual thresholds of all people. It is little wonder that so much discord, strife, mistrust, mischief, crime, belligerence and war are present among the inhabitants of the earth. People everywhere are unwittingly opening themselves to an influx of force from hell by their small and selfish attitudes and they expose the entire race to a danger that is infinitely greater than the threat of nuclear war; atom bombs and hydrogen bombs are capable of destroying the bodies, but not the souls, of perhaps countless millions of individuals, but the monstrous influence of hell is capable of plunging virtually all people into spiritual death which is the most terrible thing that can happen to any person.

Spiritual darkness has increased with alarming rapidity among the people of this planet. It has always been present to some extent and has been the fundamental cause of the troubles that have afflicted humankind. In this present age of scientific progress and technological development the main emphasis is upon the brilliance of the human intellect and the effective manner in which it exploits the resources of nature and finds ways and means of bringing them under control. The tangible and dramatic findings of science lead many people to assume that visible nature is the only reality and that life itself is merely a natural phenomenon restricted to the earth; they assert that all such concepts as God, soul, heaven, hell, immortality, salvation and rebirth are mere products of the imagination and reject them as 'Junk' inherited from less enlightened ages. Even many eminent ministers of religion have confirmed in themselves these materialistic views put forward by scientific thinkers, and they even openly proclaim that natural forces lie at the basis of life, and that the spiritual life of man is but a development of naturalistic evolution which is the supposed means whereby living things emerged out of the mud and ooze of the primeval earth. Such is the subtlety of the persuasive influence of hell that it causes even those who profess to be the expounders of Divine truth to assume materialistic views that dispense with the notion of a Divine Creator. Even in the great educational institutions of the world where there is supposed to be complete freedom of thought and investigation the theories of materialism are presented as though they were established truths, and the idea of a Divine origin of life is either ridiculed or dismissed as useless.

Despite all the discoveries and benefits provided by science and despite the neat logical presentation of scientific philosophy, there still remains in the majority of people an inner restlessness and yearning that can never be satisfied by outer things. This nebulous internal feeling is the soul crying out for attention and endeavouring to bring its needs into the focus of consciousness. Man's soul, the very foundation of his earthly existence and the instrument for his spiritual existence after death, lies buried and neglected beneath the trivial thoughts and theories that flood and obscure the mind. The soul is man's power-house and the source of his ability to think, feel and act; it is the receiver of life from God and it relays this life to the body so that an active existence in the world becomes possible; and it is the man himself, the spiritual reality which supports and sustains the outer bio-psychological man.

Although it is quite impossible to exist without a soul, millions of people live as though they do not have one and in their speech and reasoning they declare that the soul is a meaningless concept. When such persons pass through physical death and find themselves still very much alive in a new order of existence they are amazed and bewildered. They hardly know what to do for they had never formed any conscious connections with the great Life of the universe, and find themselves as strangers in a new environment. Furthermore, by their neglect of the soul during their earth life they have allowed it to fall prey to troublesome influences that lead it astray and so produce unnecessary confusion and unhappiness in spiritual life.

All people enter the spiritual world with the attitudes, beliefs, habits and characteristics they held whilst upon the earth. Death does not miraculously transform a person into an angelic being, and certainly does not eliminate the evils and falsities assimilated in a life-time. Instead it strips away the veneer of personality and reveals the real person in his true state before the inhabitants of the spiritual world. No secret vices, evil practices or false opinions are spared, but everything in a person is 'shouted from the housetops' as it were. It soon becomes clear whether a person has qualified himself for heaven or hell because the qualities and characteristics he has confirmed during earth life become either the gravitative forces that pull him downwards to corresponding states in hell or the levitative forces that draw him upwards into corresponding states in heaven.

Hence, justice rules the universe, for every person places themselves exactly where they love being most of all and it is what a person loves that they confirm and make their own, be it good or evil. In the world a man may successfully conceal his real lusts, motives, hopes and aspirations so that outwardly he appears to be very different from what he is inwardly. The cunning art of duplicity enables an evil man to create the impression of being honest, righteous and noble; but when his earth-life ends this double game ceases and the buried evils are dramatically displayed for anyone to see. The soul is the cardinal fact and central pillar of human life and requires all the attention, care, nurture and consideration that is possible in order to flourish, to evolve and to come into spiritual and celestial maturity. In order that the life of the soul should prosper it is necessary that man should learn to regard himself in the light of eternity and to so conduct himself that his earth-life corresponds to the harmonious unity of the celestial heavens.

Man simultaneously lives in two worlds - the spiritual, where his soul moves about and enters into various relationships with many beings, states, forces and influences; and the natural or physical world, where his body is located and where his life-activities are centered. Because he is so deeply involved in his small-scale activities, his earth-bound interests, and his ego-centric illusions man has practically no awareness or understanding of the spiritual foundations of his existence. Indeed, he is quite ignorant of the fact that he is endowed with two sets of perceptive mechanisms - one to connect him with the natural world and the other to connect him with the spiritual world. There was a time when many people enjoyed the use of both sets of faculties and were able to see, hear and commune with spiritual beings just as easily as they could commune with one another. In full consciousness they were able to conduct their earth-lives under the guidance and inspiration of higher celestial influences and so lived in an atmosphere of harmony, mutual togetherness, bliss, understanding, love and wisdom. Gradually mankind fell away from reliance upon inner spiritual perception and began to depend almost exclusively upon the things, forces and materials of the external world. As this falling away from spiritual reality continued there came into the world a series of prophets and teachers whose inner faculties were intact, and who endeavoured to inspire the human race to accept the gifts of the spirit and to follow the pathway to heaven.

Jeremiah's plea:

‘Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths,
Where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest
for your souls’

This is typical of all the prophets, and is as true today as in bygone ages. There are ways, or paths, that lead inwards and enable man to become conscious of his soul and what his soul receives from God. These ways do not demand that he should renounce his outer activities, unless they happen to be vicious or dangerous, but lead to the completing and perfecting of his life upon the earth. It is enormously important for every person to become a fully developed being who is inwardly and outwardly awake and consciously conjoined with the whole of reality.

Whereas man's formal education at school, college and university prepares him for an active and efficient outer life, it does not concern itself with his essence or soul. He thus enters life as a half-formed being and is not unlike a house which has a bright and pleasing exterior but is uninhabited, dark and dusty inside. A second education is therefore necessary to awaken, vivify and develop the soul in order that its embodiment upon the earth shall not be wasted, and so that its eternal existence shall be one of delight, harmony and use. If the individual wishes to enjoy a full and significant life and is to comprehend the purpose of his existence, then it is essential that he make every effort to bring about a thorough inward and outward development. That is to say, his goal is to become a whole being.

It is a law of life that the inner spiritual essence is prior to the outer, material form. Life is lived from within outwards and this order can never be reversed. But, from appearance alone, it often does seem that life is maintained by all that enters the body and mind from the outside world. This is a dangerous fallacy, for when man convinces himself that he is completely maintained by the substances, forces and data from the environment he effectively closes the door to his spiritual resources and denies the reality of all that cannot be discerned with the physical senses. He does this despite the fact that his very power of thinking is made possible by an inner influx of spiritual forces. Not only his thinking but his feeling, willing, acting and all of his Life-processes are truly spiritual powers adjusted to the needs of the mind and body. No matter how perverse, abnormal or aberrated the contents of these processes may be they remain spiritual and inexhaustible.

Once man begins to understand - through insight and direct experience - the motivating sources of his existence he is empowered to regulate his behaviour and to exercise discriminative choice, with regard to the infinity of influences that act upon him. Man's success or failure depends entirely upon the specific influences he allows to operate in and through himself. It is not enough for him to integrate himself with the universe at large, for he may merely affirm within himself that natural forces and processes are the cause of his existence and progress. Such a belief destroys man's spiritual possibilities. Recognition that Almighty God is the absolute, infinite source of all is the beginning of inner education, or spiritual rebirth, and acceptance of the ineffable ways of God is the method of receiving everything that is necessary for the complete transformation of the self. This act of recognition opens up the internal channels of communication and prepares all the inner spiritual organs for the reception of an abundant and never ending influx of Life from God.

Such recognition ought to be made a daily event and carried out repeatedly and sincerely until it becomes a dynamic reality for the individual. Care must be exercised not to permit this act to degenerate into some form of autosuggestion involving the mere mechanical repetition of a verbal formula, but it should be thought about, sensed and felt with one's whole being in order to bring about a complete and harmonious inner agreement concerning this fundamental matter. Even as an innocent child stands in awe and wonder before the many aspects of creation, so the adult should likewise innocently experience the immense impact of the truth of God's prior and central position in the total cosmos. Everything that exists from amoeba to man, man to angel, and electron to supergalaxy is related to God and depends utterly upon Him for continuous existence. Through the infinity of forms and functions to be seen in the whole of nature the eternal truths of God are transmitted to all sentient beings. Man's privilege and duty is to learn to read this universal language and profit thereby.

Every person constantly receives from God an incredible superabundance of potentialities, capacities, energies, wisdom, and knowledge but is normally unable to make use of these things owing to complete ignorance of their presence. Because life flows from within outwards, and because an infinite array of spiritual possibilities dwell in man's soul and are incessantly being received inwardly, then whatever situation, problem, challenge or task that arises in the external world the internal capacity to

effectively master the situation is present. This is what might be called 'the law of demand and supply', only in the spiritual realm the supply is present long before the demand comes into existence. There is no external situation which is so unique or odd that it can never be met and mastered by an inexhaustible flux of spiritual resources. No matter how new an outer problem may be the power of the spirit already has myriads of dynamic processes and exact details of knowledge to completely solve it and immediately open up channels for fresh advances.

Life is truly a fountain of endless spiritual possibilities that flow through man to become established realities. Yet, because these processes are so intimate and personal to each individual it seems to him that he solves the problems, he makes the discoveries, he initiates new advances, and he masters the environment. Such is the order and pattern of creation that every creature has this extraordinary conviction that it lives from itself, and in the case of man his egotism unceasingly makes the most monstrous claims for himself when in truth he has simply acted as an instrument for the spirit which is the wisdom, knowledge, power and competence that flow through him. Once man recognizes the truth of his own life-situation and begins to understand the spiritual forces that empower and maintain him at every instant, he will begin to lead a richer, fuller and more satisfying life. He will grow in confidence when he firmly understands that so long as he remains faithful to the spiritual laws and principles of life he can never fall or suffer reversal. The coexistence in man of an endlessness of potentialities, powers, knowledges and wisdom is the abiding presence of God who is the absolute source and foundation of everything that exists.

Individual differences reign supreme in all existing things. No two organisms of the same species are exactly alike, and no two human beings can be completely identical down to the last cell. Endless variations within a given pattern reveal the non-ending spiritual potentials that continuously flow into the natural world. Every individual human is, or should be, the focus point and channel through which a minute fraction of the Infinite is brought into expression and application. That which is actualized through one person can never be actualized in exactly the same way through another person owing to the different way in which the experience is received. From the one God of creation all things proceed into manifestation and development, and through the members of the human race the highest and best gifts of the spirit are transformed and developed. Of necessity each person must be differently endowed than the rest otherwise there would be a restriction upon the reception and unfolding of the endless forms, qualities and potentials that seek completion in man. These differences of inflowing possibilities and differences in personal receptivity of spiritual things are admirably set forth by Paul:

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of Healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Cotinthians 12:4-11)

Part of Chapter 1 from 'Spiritual Foundations'
Dr. P Groves to be published in 2007 © S.B. Groves