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Tros Tyriusquo mihi nullo discrimine agetur.

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*James's Secret of Swedenborg.*

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should not have assumed in this case but for the impertinence with which Mr. Hazlitt has treated dead and living scholars, the latches of whose shoes he is not worthy to unloose, and to express their gratitude to whom is, or ought to be, a pleasure to all honest lovers of their mother-tongue. If he who has most to learn be the happiest man, Mr. Hazlitt is indeed to be envied; but we hope he will learn a great deal before he lays his prentice hands on Warton's "History of English Poetry," a classic in its own way. If he does not learn before, he will be likely to learn after, and in no agreeable fashion.

4. — *The Secret of Swedenborg: being an Elucidation of his Doctrine of the Divine Natural Humanity.* By HENRY JAMES. Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co. 8vo. pp. 243. 1869.

THOUGH this book presents some very interesting and impressive religious views, and the spiritual tone of it is in general eminently healthy, it is altogether out of harmony with the spirit of this age. If we understand the theory which is here presented as Swedenborg's, it is essentially as follows: —

Philosophy and religion are one. The matter of deepest moment to the heart is the matter of deepest moment to the head. That root of existence for which metaphysics inquires is God. The business of philosophy is to explain the relation between being and appearing; but that which alone has existence independent of everything else is God, while all that appears is relative to the human mind, and so is only man; thus, what is and what appears are God and man, and it is the relations of God and man that philosophy has to expound.

In any real object, that is, any permanent appearance, we may distinguish two elements, the permanence and the appearance. The permanence, the reality, is called by Mr. James the *being*; the appearance or emergence into the world of phenomena is called the *existence*. This distinction is no mere logical convenience or necessity, but is a real partition, for it lies in the very *esse* of a thing. The reality is that on which the appearance is founded, and, therefore, the "being" of a thing is its creator, while the "existence" is the creature in himself. But the creature, because he does not contain within his own self the essence of his being, is, in himself, a mere phantom and no reality.

But if an underlying being is essential to existence, no less is manifestation essential to being. It can make no difference whatever whether a thing is or is not, if it is never to any mind to give any sign of its being. Hence, to be without being manifested is a kind of being which

does not differ from its negative, but is a meaningless form of words. Thus, it is of the very essence of being that it shall come forth into appearance, of the very essence of God that he shall create.

An appearance is only in consciousness. To create, therefore, or cause an appearance, is to awaken a consciousness, to vivify. To give being is to give life, or being is life. God's being, then, is creation; is vivifying other things, is living in others.\* Now, to have one's life in others is to love. So the essence of God is love. The creature's being also lies in another, namely, in God; and, therefore, his life too is love; only as he does not confer this life upon that other, but receives it from him, it is receptive or selfish love, while the Creator's is perfect and unselfish love. Since, therefore, the Creator is perfect love, the creation is to be explained on the principle of love.

The Creator, then, cannot have made his creatures for his own sake (for love does nothing for its own sake), but for theirs. Accordingly, he must seek to make them, as much as possible, independent. As long as their being is in God, it is true that any independence they can seem to have will be a mere illusion, but that illusion God must grant. So he gives them a world of phenomena in which and relatively to which they have a reality and a self-determination.

But as all removal from God, all disparateness to his being, is mere self and nothingness, the Creator could not be satisfied with a creation which should stop short at this point, but must institute another movement in creation whereby the creature may be brought back into harmony with him, and thus really appropriate his Creator's being. This return movement is called redemption.

The machinery of this process is man's history, and is, therefore, naturally extremely complex. It has two parts, the redemption of the race, and the redemption of the private man. The redemption of the race is effected by the history of the race, by the breaking down of governmental forms, the development of the family relationship, and above all by the vicissitudes of the Church which culminate in the incarnation of our Lord. By these means a brotherhood is produced among men, such that every man without constraint obeys the laws of society. The redemption of the individual man is produced by his life and the influence of conscience, which lead him to a perception of the truths of religion. In this redemption creation reaches completion.

These things, however, are not scientifically established. Mr. James says that "no cordial lover of truth can long endure to reason about it"; and he himself is a very cordial lover of truth, in that sense. That his

\* Swedenborg holds time to be an illusory appearance, and therefore it does not follow that God cannot be without at the same time creating.

doctrines are incapable of being established by reasoning is, in fact, plainly stated by him more than once. This being so, why call them philosophy? The "sanction of the heart" he rightly says is their only voucher. "We need not expect," he says, "to find Swedenborg justifying himself in a strictly ratiocinative way, or as men deal with what they feel to be matter of opinion merely, but affirmatively rather, or as what they feel to be matter of precise knowledge." This is not the language of a philosopher. Aristotle, Euclid, and Newton did not apply strict ratiocination to logic, geometry, and gravitation, because they did not feel them to be subjects of precise knowledge. What men treat by mere affirmation are matters which they do not believe will be questioned, together with such as they conceive cannot be questioned. But what is in the mind of a writer who talks of *justifying himself affirmatively*? His affirmative justification can amount to nothing but energetic assertion, or energetic denunciation of others. Hence we cannot be surprised at meeting frequently in Mr. James's writings such phrases as, "incorrigible fool," "abject blunder," "transparent quibble," "silly," "impossible for human fatuity ever to go a step farther," "these disputatious gentlemen," "not honest," "utter unscrupulous abandonment of himself to," "flat-footed and flat-headed," "wilful and wicked antediluvian,"—epithets harmless enough, but not wisely applied to thoughts and men that are great historical factors.

Perhaps Mr. James is of opinion that to appeal to the "sanction of the heart" is to appeal to experience, namely, to religious experience. Anybody who can make the truth of this evident will do a good thing for religion; but, as yet, it has not been made out. The reasoning of natural science is valid because it proceeds from outward appearances only to outward appearances. If religion could, in a parallel way, restrict its conclusions to spiritual experiences, it might find a scientific foundation in spiritual experiences. But it cannot. Religion must be supreme or it is nothing. It has to assert, not only that such and such a proposition is one altogether delightful and comforting, but that outward appearances will always be found to conform to it. Religion may be made to rest on religious faith, and a philosophical justification may be given of such a procedure; but it fails to be philosophy while it appeals not to the head, but only to the heart. In saying this, we do not in the least oppose the Scotch philosophy which makes all knowledge finally to repose on what are sometimes called ultimate beliefs; because these beliefs are the common sense of mankind which belong to all men and which no man can resist. If religion can be traced to such premises, it becomes truly philosophical. But to rest it upon propositions which appear to be doubted by some minds is, until that

appearance is proved to be illusory, a procedure which, even if philosophically shown to be worthy of a rational being, nevertheless fails to satisfy that impulse in man which gives rise to science and philosophy. Mr. James, therefore, whose doctrine has "no other voucher but what it finds in every man's unforced delight in the truth," has no right to call his work philosophy. The very distinction between reality and fiction rests on the fact that our taking delight in a belief is, in itself, no sign that the thing believed in is true.

Though deficient in argumentation, the book contains some interesting philosophical doctrines. The most prominent of these is a theory of the relation of matter and form. The form is represented as the archetypal, creative idea; the matter as that in virtue of which a thing attains actual existence. The former gives the thing all its qualities, the latter its mere quantity. The form is the essential element which belongs to the thing even in its mere potentiality; the matter is the element of actuality, which is merely contingent. So far the view is sufficiently familiar. But it is less usual to add, as Mr. James does, that since actuality is only the bringing of a thing into the realm of possible experience, while the potential essence is eternal and absolute, therefore the form is the real and objective element, while the matter is phenomenal and subjective. Moreover, the matter is not only in Aristotelian fashion made the generic element which the form differentiates, but also the principle of individuation (a doctrine maintained by very few). In the case of man, the matter is what sets him off from God and gives him being in himself and consciousness, while the form is the Divine element in him, whereby he is brought back into harmony with his Creator; that is, it is his conscience of good and evil. The form is the element of love in man, the matter the element of self.

Distinct traces of the influence of Platonism upon Swedenborg appear in this philosophy. What Mr. James calls the form is the Platonic idea or form, and the doctrine that God is the highest idea or form, the idea of good, and the form of forms, belongs of course to Plato. The singular conception that form is from its nature living is decidedly Platonic. So also is making numerical unity to depend upon form, and quantity upon matter. The statement that matter, or what exists besides God, is nonentity, is made with equal clearness by Mr. James and by Plato. The doctrines that there is a spiritual perception which is at the same time an act of abstraction of quantities from qualities, that nature is a mere manifestation or revelation of the Divine idea, that this manifestation is, in some sense, an inverted one, that there is a world-soul or *maximus homo*, and that the divine part of the human soul corresponds to it, that the Divinity in the soul is to be com-

pared to the sun shining on the world, that our cognition of necessary truths is a sort of memory, are doctrines which are to be found both in this book and in Plato or Plotinus; though they doubtless occupy very different positions and have very different colors in the two theosophies.

We must fairly warn our readers that all the hard study we have devoted to an attempt to understand this book may have gone for nothing, for it is terribly difficult. Not to mention the fact that we have not the thread of close argumentation to guide us, Mr. James uses terms so peculiarly that we stumble at the commonest words, which often receive meanings apparently quite unrelated to those we are accustomed to attach to them. All philosophers use words in peculiar senses, but they usually define their terms at the outset, and that Mr. James seldom does; even when he does, his definition often only substitutes several mysterious symbols for one. In first opening the book we are puzzled at finding identity attributed to things of which it would seem more consonant to the general drift of the author's thought to deny it. But after being confounded repeatedly by such statements, we begin to see—or think we see—that Mr. James, by saying that A and B are identical, means little more than that they coexist in nature. In like manner we find it difficult to comprehend our author's opposition to idealism until he gives us as its synonyme, "the invention of the world of things-in-themselves." So incessant is this cryptic use of terms, that the reader finally comes to lose all assurance that the commonest word is used in a sense analogous to its usual one. We read of the social destiny of woman, but whether by woman is meant those singular creatures whom we ordinarily so designate, or whether man is not meant, or some faculty of the mind, or merely the Aristotelian matter, is a question far beyond our humble powers. It is true that Mr. James supplies us with a synonyme for "woman," namely, "vir"; but it must be allowed that this does not in itself fully clear up the difficulty. On page 49 there is an attempt to explain the words male and female. "Male and female; that is to say, organic and functional, static and dynamic, generic and specific, universal and particular, public and private, outward and inward, common and proper, objective and subjective." From this we should incline to think that form was intended by woman. But a little below we find another definition: "Woman as woman or, what is the same thing, . . . the subjective . . . and moral content of human nature." This inclines us to think that by woman is meant a certain faculty of the mind. But further on we read of "the *minimus homo*, the moral or conscious Eve, the petty, specific, domestic *vir* of our actual bosoms, who embraces in himself the entire spiritual world, the universe of affection and thought, and to

whom all the facts of life, i. e. all the events of history, great and small, public and private, and all the results of experience, good and evil, true and false, exclusively pertain." A missionary from China some years ago, on his return to this country, in order to illustrate the difficulty of making the Chinese comprehend Christianity, told how the "inner man" throughout the New Testament is supposed by the Chinese to mean the woman, it being the idiom in their language. This seemed to us at the time to argue want of acquaintance with Chinese on the part of the translators; yet here is Mr. James, to whom English is vernacular, whose English is extraordinarily idiomatic and racy, who yet constantly, without any explanation, but as the most natural thing in the world, uses woman and inward man as synonymous. We cannot, however, close without saying that it is our firm conviction that this book can be understood by the right mind with the right preparation, and that, to many a man who cannot fully understand it, it will afford, as it has to us, much spiritual nutriment.

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