

**THE SPIRITUAL RETURN OF
CHRIST WITHIN
THE CHURCH; PAPERS
ON CHRISTIAN THEISM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649371600

The spiritual return of Christ within the church; papers on Christian theism by Richard De Bary

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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CHURCH

PAPERS ON CHRISTIAN THEISM

BY RICHARD DE BARY

CHAPLAIN TO THE EARL OF SHERBURY

"A crown of righteousness . . . unto
all them also who love His appearing."
2 TIMOTHY IV, 8.

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY
1907

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE book is an essay, or rather an adventure, in Christian Mysticism bearing marks of close kinship with the *Theologia Germanica*, but distinguished from it, and still more from the writings of the Spanish Mystics, St John of the Cross and St Theresa, by the scientific basis of its metaphysics. It is, indeed, a translation of the world-process, as revealed by modern science, into the terms of a theistic metaphysic. The laws of this process are, for the author, but the modes of energy of the Eternal Reason; the sole purpose of that energy is redemptive; and Redemption means the guidance of the whole movement of material life, by the Spirit or Eternal Reason inherent in it, back to the ultimate Rest in Unity which is the natural mode of the Spiritual.

The book, then, is an attempt, very rare in modern theology, to establish the vital connection of human experience and the world-process as both of them expressions of the Word or Eternal Reason of God. Though the appeal is made to experience and history, yet Realism is so extended into conceptions of the Spirit World as to meet the Hegelian identification of *thought* and *things*. But the treatment is not philosophical, but mystical and religious.

PREFACE

CHRISTIAN Doctors teach that Heaven is the fulfilment of each man's Supreme Desire. As the best minds of the Age are wont to place their Supreme Desire in the life of Communion with Nature and Mankind, with the sanction of the Doctors, it may be prophesied that in the true Paradise, Communion with Nature and Mankind will stand together with the secured possession of God.

Communion with Nature must in a supreme sense include the assured results from all that great Labour of the adjustment of Man to his Cosmic environment, which it has been the task of the present Scientific and Industrial Age to fulfil.

If this be true, then the World-Stream itself, with the sum of all its Sciences, Arts, Civilisations, and Cultures, may be thought of as eddying towards some future commingling with the Rivers of Paradise.

Or it may be said that the Blessed Sight of the World-Ransom is only withheld from longing eyes on account of the greatness of the Ransom's con-

taining Heart. The Saints themselves have been accused of narrowness. Christian Communion only too willingly delimit themselves, and are wont to excommunicate one another. But may not all these self-belittlements of men be but part of their own self-education unto seeing and acknowledging the greatness of the all-containing Heart of God?

If this be the case, there is a function to be exercised here by the Christian Seer. From Redemption, recognised by Faith, the Christian Prophet must bear witness to the truth that the World-Ransom is fulfilling itself unto Sight and Manifestation. It is his duty to testify to the reality of the inclusion of the World-Process within Redemption.

The Christian Seer must, then, be an Enthusiast for that Blessed Vision of World-Atonement amid all Social, Industrial, and Religious Conflicts, which would prove itself to be agreeable to God's all-containing Heart. He it is who is the "Theist," the "God-Enthusiast," of whom mention is made in pages that follow. The word "Theism," too, is used throughout for this diviner view of the World-Process, in which naturalness is taken as evidence for divineness; in which every true Artist is seen culling the flowers of Paradise, because he sees Creation merely without disguise. And every true Poet sings of God only; because beauty of Life is of the one rightful evidence of God; and every true Scientist is a Moses of the Eternal Sinai of Atoms of Stars. The very

scepticism of the Modern World is as its penitential retreat into the wilderness from before God's face. Nature-Love and Nature-Worship are in a sense the baptismal tears which will make hearts clean for a Return to Him.

The Christian Seer is aided in this reconciling function by the irresistible trend of all Scientific Conceptions towards "Monism," the doctrine of the living and rhythmic intercommunication of all things in the Universe. Monism gives us the right to measure the All by each single Unit out of which the All is synthesised. The "electron" deciphers the thunderstorm; the multiple electron, called the atom, deciphers Stellar Systems. In like manner may the Christian Theist decipher the purpose of the Universe by the Unit of the fact of Christ. Because *each* Unit is in the All, therefore *this* One is in the All; therefore the Cosmos itself is a Christly Universe, and a Christ is latent in every particle of its being.

On the bounds, thus, of all scientific vistas a Divine Majesty hastens again to greet the sight of mortals. Yet no special authorising is now required to announce His "Spiritual Return" to men. For, so interpreted, does not all Nature foretell His Paradise? and may not every Christian who converses with you be in like manner filled with the ghostly Pentecostal Speech?

