

**THE SPIRIT OF MAN; AN
ESSAY ON CHRISTIAN
PHILOSOPHY**

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The spirit of man; an essay on Christian philosophy by Arthur Chandler

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ARTHUR CHANDLER

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THE SPIRIT OF MAN

AN ESSAY IN CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

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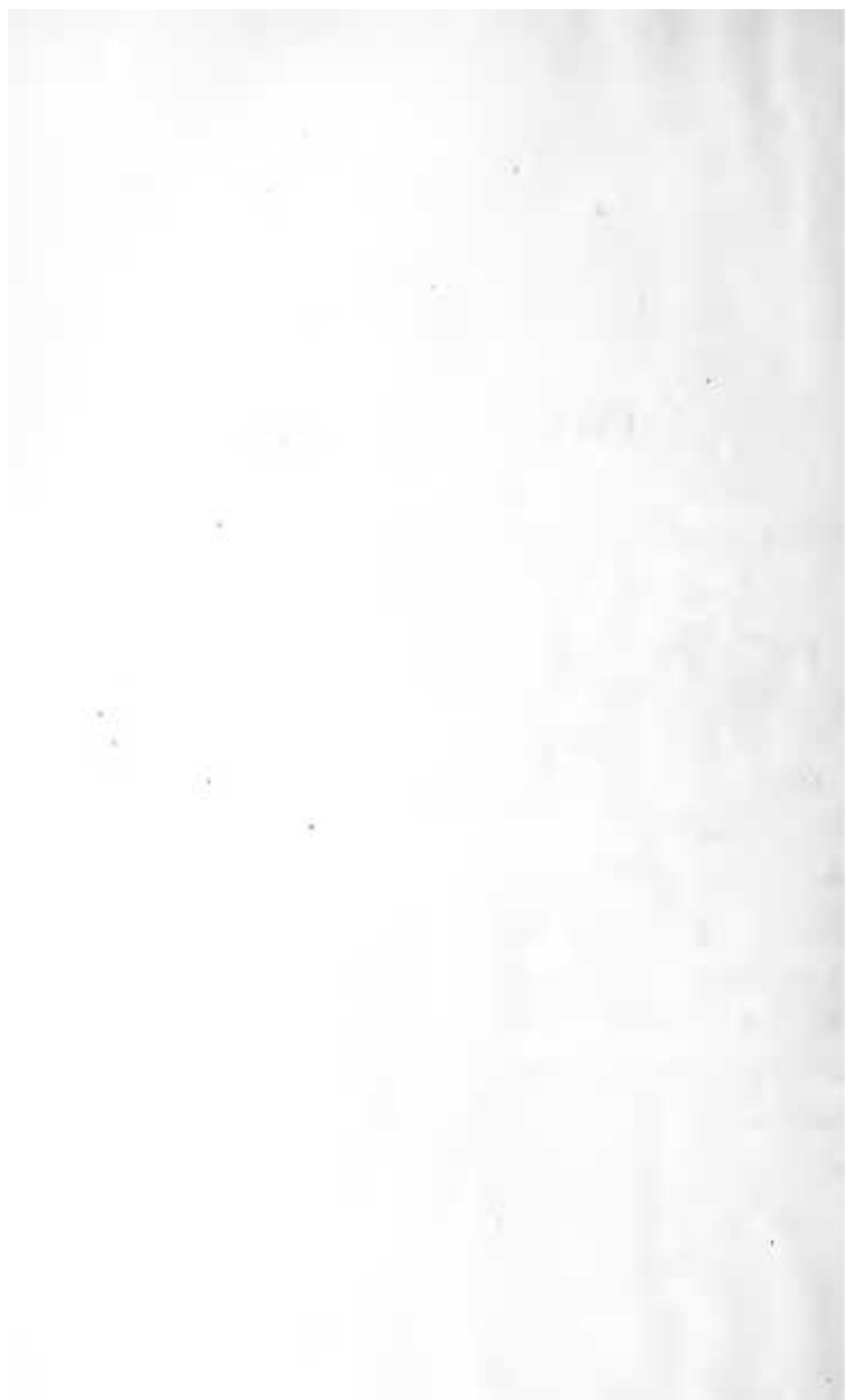
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INTRODUCTION

THIS ESSAY is an attempt to suggest a few of the philosophical implications, theoretical and practical, which Christianity contains. I have ventured to make a humble contribution to a work which much wants doing. Of late years the historical claims of Christianity have been ably vindicated; the strength of its documentary evidence has been successfully displayed. But, still, everyone must necessarily approach the consideration of evidence with certain antecedent notions and prejudices. Certain facts he is ready to accept if sufficient testimony can be adduced; against others he inexorably sets his face, and is resolved to regard their so-called evidence as mere delusion which must be explained away. These preconceptions

may be roughly termed philosophical. They rest on the views which a man entertains as to the nature of knowledge and the nature of morality. He is bound to reject a religion which seems to involve false corollaries on these subjects ; and, on the other hand, if its metaphysical and ethical implications seem sound and valuable, he will be ready to give a fair hearing to its historical attestation. The subject is thus a vast one, alike in its area and in its importance. In touching upon it I have kept strictly to a single line, and have merely emphasized the doctrine of *individual personality*, which Christianity seems to me to contain, and which is, as I think, the only true foundation for a theory of knowledge and conduct. Thus in the first chapter I have tried to show that the Christian doctrine of creation guarantees individuality in the acquisition of knowledge without destroying the unity of truth, and allows us to recognise a difference between reason and sensation without thereby falling into dualism. Of course it is true that Christianity, as such, is committed to no special analysis of knowledge ;

and I have merely contended that the doctrine alluded to adds completeness and intelligibility to an analysis which commends itself on general grounds. In the second and third chapters I have argued that this personality is essentially spiritual, that it was the work of Christ to re-create it in its true nature, and that it is exhibited in an eternal life to be lived on earth as well as in Heaven ; in the fourth, that such a spiritual personality sets the freedom of man on the only firm and intelligible basis ; in the fifth and sixth, that its perfect development throughout the human brotherhood is the goal alike of morality and of the institutions of society. Further, I have illustrated what I conceive to be the Christian theory on these subjects by contrasting it with the views of various philosophers. These views I have had to state shortly ; if I have misstated them, it is not due to malice or, in many cases, to lack of admiration. In particular, I am anxious to express my general obligations to the philosophy of Hegel, and can only regret that, in spite of his extraordinary insight into the facts of life, he should have

consented to sacrifice individuality to the exigencies of Dialectic.

There are dangers as well as advantages in the strong protest against individualism which is making itself heard on every side. The individualist is the Sophist of modern times, and is being tracked out and hunted down with a zeal and success not unworthy of Plato. His philosophy has been laid bare as a great complex fallacy, comprising sensationalism in Metaphysics, nominalism in Logic, sensualism in Ethics, natural rights in Political Philosophy, and Calvinism in Theology. The exposure has come none too soon, and is matter for rejoicing. But the reaction is tending to carry some thinkers to the opposite and equally false extreme. It seems to be supposed that the individual is necessarily an individualist, and accordingly individuality itself has become an object of suspicion and dislike. Under the hands of writers belonging to most various schools the individual is made to disappear altogether. In metaphysics and morality he is resolved into an 'accident' in the life of a world-