

A Spiritual Declaration of Independence by Ernest Holmes.

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This morning I am going to speak on the subject of spiritual freedom, "A Spiritual Declaration of Independence, " what we might consider a spiritual democracy, not politically speaking but intellectually and spiritually speaking. All objective forms automatically take their pattern after subjective beliefs. If the world is dissatisfied with its objective condition, it is really dissatisfied with itself , but does not necessarily understand this. Let's say there is a great corruption in places of public office. We are commenting not only upon the people in those places of public office but also upon the nature of the thought and the intelligence and the spiritual, moral, ethical, and social evolution of the people who put them there, the citizens itself, because all of these are merely external forms of internal ways of thinking. When the public mind is absolutely honest, then public and political corruption, as we call it, will disappear. The public mind must be re-educated, and that must begin individually, until finally, there culminates in the mass mind, a re-education, and then whatever changes are necessary are automatically produced because people change their mode of thought. But we have to begin in the immediate center of our own consciousness. No government can legislate morals or ethics, any more than a government can legislate

happiness or peace of mind. These are qualities which the soul must immediately perceive and immediately experience and do so individually. Consequently, we have not a human problem so much as we have first an individual problem. The problem which comes to each individual is: Am I, in my own consciousness, a free and independent, a happy, a successful, a poised human Divine being? Now if I am not, while it is true that there may be certain external situations which would tend to make me more happy, there is no condition outside myself that can positively compel my happiness because that happiness is an inner quality of the soul. It has to do with my own concept of my own relationship to the universe, with the realization of my own eternal, immortal and indestructible being.

If I am disturbed and discontented and rendered unhappy with a sense of insecurity because of what is going on in the world, whatever it may be, then I am not yet complete within myself. Emerson said that he used to come out of a political meeting and go out in the fields, and nature would seem to say to him, "Why so hot, little sir?" I think that is a beautiful idea and probably we shall do very well to apply it.

Disregarding our individual convictions, we shall do well to remember that there is a universal Something, greater than any of our convictions and that the spiritual system itself is foolproof. "Nothing bad," Socrates said, "can happen to a good person." Since we now know that all people, spiritually conceived, are perfect, we know that nothing evil is going to come to anyone.

We do not have intellectual freedom while we misconceive these spiritual values. In the long run what we are, what we express, what we enjoy and I believe, finally

what we temporally possesses, which is worth having, is dependent entirely upon our conception of our relationship to the universe in which we live. We might put it in another way, Our entire act in the aggregate is dependent upon our conception of God in the ultimate. What is our belief? For instance, do I believe that there is in the one universe a final law of absolute balance and equilibrium, justice so that while I seek to harm, I can be harmed? That is a sane belief. It is not intelligent to believe otherwise. Now do I see enough of that to realize that that belief is not the exclusive possession of any sect, any creed, any dogma, any faith or any belief, no matter how exalted? In the beginning it is hard to understand that when we come to spiritual things we approach universal things from which we have individualized our finite conception.

And so we have the spiritual conception, and all outward forms are born from inward convictions. The outward form is always changing. We do not need to be afraid of change. The one who is afraid of change cannot live in peace. It is only the soul that is stayed in the Changeless which understands that change is merely the play of life upon itself.

We must finally come into this spiritual freedom. What if there is change in the world? What if systems do come and go? Here is the soul that endures. As Jesus said, "Before Abraham was I am. Destroy this physical form and that Divine Principle within me will raise up another one like unto it." As we look about us and see the confusion of the world we realize that we must either enter into it and be destroyed by it or admit it, see it for what it is worth, partly comic and partly tragic but altogether

temporal, altogether transitory. There is something in us that, despite all the change, never changes. Let us consider ourselves as a child, as a youth, as middle aged, as approaching the meridian of human experience and perhaps advancing, I hope without fear, toward the grave and we shall see that through all these changes there has been a permanence. Through all these vicissitudes, up and down, good and bad, sickness and health, poverty and riches, there is a thread upon which these experiences have threaded themselves, but the thread has maintained a continuity. We are left after all the experiences through which we have passed and we shall always remain, no matter through how many experiences we may pass.

There is no external universe, there is no external environment, there is no external government, no external world. I am not denying the reality of the universe in which we live but I Am affirming that it is a fluidic thing and there is nothing solid except the truth. That is not an unscientific thought because the new physics teaches practically the same thing and the old meta physics has always taught it.

There would be no universe unless it were expressed in the individual. Therefore everyone does reflect God or as Jesus put it, "As the Father hath inherent life within himself so hath He given it to the Son to have inherent life within himself." There is no sadness, no sorrow, no limitation that we ourselves, in our ignorance, somewhere have not created. There is no law but our own soul shall set it, there is no sin but a mistake and no punishment but an inevitable consequence. The universe is eternally just and it is eternally kind. The law of justice compels action and reaction to always equal each other. Just as in physics, we have the law that for every action there is an

equal and opposite reaction, so does the true law of cause and effect, balancing and judging everything, use the act as the criterion. Our own act is our judge, nothing else could be, nothing else need be, therefore we are ourselves heaven and hell. The universe is so kind it has delivered itself in fullness and completeness to our acceptance but the universe always screens itself, as Emerson said, from the profane and we can never draw forth from it the love we would enjoy while we hate. The spiritual democracy of the soul not only cannot have tyranny, it cannot have despotism, it cannot survive in hate. Hate destroys itself until love heals. We may gather our hates into ourselves and they poison us physically, they destroy us mentally, but even they cannot finally destroy us spiritually for love is greater than hate, and finally, love is triumphant and all the misunderstandings and misconceptions of hate are consumed in this divine passion, in this universal flame which will recognize no opposite. All that falsehood can do is to prove itself to be a lie, unreal. We cannot have spiritual freedom until we know this and if we do not know this and do not possess spiritual freedom, then we are afraid of every objective form because we misconceive the whole intent and purpose of life and believe we are but its puppets. How then are we going to reach some degree of realization and embodiment of this divine government portrayed in what we believe is the highest form of objective social system, democracy? How are we going to conceive the spiritual democracy of which inner conviction the physical is but a faint echo? What we do reveals what we believe, it is the objective form of an inner embodiment always. If you find a someone who is never satisfied, who does not believe in the

integrity of anyone, their belief has to create the condition which makes possible the manifestation of that conviction. When we understand the meaning of these things then we shall understand freedom, we shall understand spiritual unity, God, and our own true natures.

How are going to enter more completely into this spiritual democracy? We have to realize first that the entrance is individual. There is a place to which no one may conduct us. There is a destiny for which we cannot purchase a ticket. And there are no specific directions written in the book because the book of life is already incarnated in our own soul and written into the constitution of our own being.

Everyone knows the direct way to God but everyone does not know that they know. Everyone has an inner witness to reality.

When the time comes that we cannot impose tears we shall never shed another one unless it be for joy. When the time comes that we conceive only peace we shall never be disturbed again. And in such degree as we are able to become conscious of life, sickness will drop away, it doesn't matter what its nature is or what its history is, it doesn't matter what it is called, it is never anything of itself. How then could it remain if the individual ceased experiencing it ? So we shall find all these apparent limitations will be shadows and temporal ones, cast upon the screen of our experience. We can only prove it as individually we shall step aside a little from the confusion of life, that we may get peaceful in our own thought and conceive the law of life about ourselves.

Troward said that the sequence of creation starts with absolute intelligence, then the movement of intelligence and then the law corresponding to that movement, and then the form corresponding to that law. When we give a treatment, when we pray, when we make an affirmation and believe it, there is involved in this word in which we speak a creativeness which instantly creates or utilizes the law of creation which goes along with it and now knows how to make itself come through.

That is a tremendous conception and unless we have it we can never conceive the possibility of scientific mental and spiritual treatment, knowing that out of the treatment is going to flow the form by reason of the fact that there is a law set in motion by our conviction in that treatment. The law follows the word because the word specializes the law. If that is true I think we have this great and fascinating conception in our work, that every day we can experiment with this principle to see how much joy and freedom we can get out of the day, how deep a sense of power, how broad a sense of the universality of what we do. This does not depend upon anything external; this depends upon our getting within ourselves in the silence of our own soul, alone with the Absolute out of which is created all that is. "God is alone and in Its aloneness is Its strength."

There is the keynote of the whole thing. In the aloneness of the Allness and the allness of the omnipresent Wholeness is included everything and it is only when we reach the Aloneness or Absolute, which is not at all to be confused with loneliness, that there is strength. Therefore, the more deeply we conceive the absoluteness of that Oneness, the more we find ourselves, in imagination, alone with It, the more powerful the act,

the more dynamic the demonstration. And here we get back to this thought: This I, this self which appears sick, miserable, which appears to fluctuate with the vicissitude of change and chance, is stable, real, definite, dynamic, divine, an individualization of a universal God, Presence, Spirit, Power. This self in conscious unity with God, touching that which is true, no longer denying, no longer even affirming but embodying, has within itself the totality, for one with God constitutes all the power, all the presence, all the law, all the cosmos Itself. Let us then set up this democracy of spiritual independence in our lives until that which was bound is loosed, until the light of heaven, glancing through the shadows, shines on this imprisoned splendor and sets the captive free.

The end

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