

Col. Ingersoll's Lecture on "The Gods."

Col. Ingersoll's Lecture on "The Gods." This is the first of a series of lectures on the subject of the gods, and is intended to show that the gods are not real, but are the product of the human mind.

"An honest man in this world is a rare bird."

Each nation has created a god, and the god has always resembled his creator. He hated and loved what they hated and loved, and he was invariably bound on the side of those in power. All these gods demanded praise, flattery, and worship. Most of them were pleased with sacrifice, and the most of human blood has ever been considered a divine perfume.

These gods have been manufactured after human business methods, and according to the most grotesque fashions. Some have a thousand arms, some a hundred heads, some are armed with weapons of living snakes, some are armed with clubs, some with swords and shields, some with hammers, and some have wings as a cherub.

Most of these gods were revengeful, savage, brutal, and ignorant. As they generally depended upon their priests for information, their ignorance was hardly excusable. Their priests did not even know the shape of the worlds they had created, but supposed them perfectly flat. Some thought the day could be lengthened by stepping the sun; that the blowing of horns would throw down the wisest of a city, and all knew a little of the real nature of the people they had created that they commanded the people to love them.

These deities have demanded the most abject and degrading obedience. Of course, they have always been partial to the people who created them, and have generally shown their partiality by assisting those people to rob and destroy others, and to ravish their wives and daughters.

Nothing is so pleasing to these gods as the butchery of unbelievers. Nothing so enrages them, even now, as to have some one deny their existence.

Few nations have been so poor as to have but one god. Gods were made so easily, and the raw material cost so little, that generally heaven was crammed with these phantoms. These gods not only attended to the skies, but were supposed to interfere in all the affairs of men. They presided over everybody and everything.

When the people failed to worship one of these gods, or failed to feed and clothe his priests (which was much the same thing) he generally visited them with pestilence and famine. Sometimes he allowed some other nation to drag them into slavery.

Each of these gods promised happiness here and hereafter to all his slaves, and threatened to eternally punish all who either disbelieved in his existence or suspected that some other god might be his superior; but to deny the existence of all gods was, and is, the crime of crimes. Redden your hands with human blood; blast by slander the fair fame of the innocent; strangle the smiling child upon its mother's knees; deceive, ruin, and desert the beautiful girl who loves and trusts you, and your case is not hopeless. For all this, and for all these, you may be forgiven. For all this, and for all these, that bankrupt court established by the Gospel will give you a discharge; but deny the existence of these divine ghosts—or of these gods—and the sweet and tearful face of Mercy becomes livid with eternal hate. Heaven's golden gates are shut, and you, with an infinite curse ringing in your ears—with the brand of infamy upon your brow—commence your endless wanderings in the lurid gloom of hell—an immortal vagrant—an eternal outcast—a deathless convict.

Our ancestors not only had their god factories, but they made devils as well. These devils were generally disgraced and fallen gods. Some had headed unsuccessful revolts, some had been caught sweetly reclining in the shadowy folds of some fleecy cloud, kissing the wife of the god of gods. These devils generally sympathized with man. There is in regard to them a most wonderful fact: In nearly all of the theologies, mythologies, and religions the devils have been much more humane and merciful than the gods. No devil ever gave one of his generals an order to kill children and to rip open the bodies of women. Such barbarities were always ordered by the good gods. The pestilences were sent by the most merciful gods. The frightful famine, during which the dying child, with pallid lips, sucked the withered bosom of a dead mother, was sent by the loving gods. No devil was ever charged with such fiendish brutality.

One of these gods, according to the account, drowned an entire world with the exception of eight persons. The old, the young, the beautiful, and the helpless were remorselessly devoured by the shoreless sea. This, the most fearful tragedy that the imagination of ignorant priests ever conceived, was the act not of a devil, but of a god, so called, whom men ignorantly worship unto this day. What a stain such an act would leave upon the character of a devil. One of the prophets of one of these gods having him in his power a captured king hewed him to pieces in the sight of all the people. Was ever any imp of any devil guilty of such savagery?

All these gods threatened to torment forever the souls of their enemies. Did any devil ever make so infamous a threat? The basest thing recorded of the devil is what he did concerning Job and his family, and that was done by the express permission of one of these gods, and to decide a little difference of opinion between their serene highnesses as to the character of my servant Job.

The first account we have of the devil is found in that purely scientific book called "Genesis." According to this the promise of the devil was fulfilled to the very letter. Adam and Eve did not die, and they did become as gods, knowing good and evil.

The account shows, however, that the gods dreaded education and knowledge then just as they do now. The Church still faithfully guards the dangerous tree of knowledge, and has exerted in all ages her utmost power to keep mankind from eating the fruit thereof. The priests have never ceased repeating the old falsehood and the old threat: "Ye shall not eat it, neither shall ye

touch it, lest ye die." From every pulpit comes the same cry, born of the same fear: "Eat, they eat, and become as gods—knowing good and evil." For this reason religion hates science, both detects reason, theology is the sworn enemy of philosophy, and the Church, with its flaming sword, still guards the sacred tree, and like the supposed murderer, curses to the winds the lips of those thinkers who eat and become as gods.

If the account given in Genesis is really true, ought we not, after all, to thank this serpent? He was the first rebel, the first advocate of knowledge, the first enemy of ignorance, the first to whisper in human ears the sacred word "liberty," the creator of ambition, the author of progress and of civilization.

Give us the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith! Establish from hence when you will, but let not the eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge!

Some nations have borrowed their gods of other nations, and we are compelled to say, one is our own. This borrowed god is still a member of some other nation, and this adopted devil still writes the superstitiousness of our people. He is still supposed to be setting his traps and snares for the purpose of catching our unwary souls, and is still, with reasonable success, waging the old war against our god.

To me it seems easy to account for these ideas concerning gods and devils. They are a perfectly natural production. Man has created them all, and under the same circumstances would create them again. Man has not only created all these gods, but he has created them out of the materials by which he has been surrounded. Generally he has modeled them after himself, and has given them hands, heads, feet, eyes, ears, and organs of speech. Each nation made its gods and devils speak its language not only, but put in their mouths the same mistakes in history, geography, astronomy, and in all matters of fact generally made by the people. No god was ever in advance of the nation that created him. The negroes represented their deities with black skin and curly hair. The Mongolian gave to his a yellow complexion and dark, almond-shaped eyes. The Jews were not allowed to paint theirs, or we should have seen Jehovah with a full beard, an oval face, and an aquiline nose. Zeus was a perfect Greek, and Jove looked as though a member of the Roman Senate. The gods of Egypt had the patient face and placid look of the loving people who made them. The gods of Northern countries were represented warmly clad in robes of fur; those of the tropics were naked. The gods of India were often mounted upon elephants; those of some islanders were great swimmers, and the deities of the Arctic Zone were passionately fond of whale blubber. Nearly all people have carved or painted representations of their gods, and these representations were, by the lower classes, generally treated as the real gods, and to these images and idols they addressed prayers and offered sacrifice.

In some countries, even at this day, if the people after long praying do not obtain their desires, they turn their images off as impotent gods, or upbraid them in a reproachful manner, loading them with blows and curses. "How, now, dog of a spirit," they say, "we give you lodging in a magnificent temple, we give you with gold, feed you with the choicest food, and offer incense to you; yet, after all this care, you are so ungrateful as to refuse us what we ask." Hereupon, they pull the god down and drag him through the filth of the street. If, in the meantime, it happens that they obtain their request, then, with a great deal of ceremony, they wash him clean, carry him back, and place him in his temple again, where they fall down and make excuses for what they have done. "Of a truth," they say, "we were a little too hasty, and you were a little too long in your grant. Why should you bring this beating on yourself? But what is done can not be undone. Let us not think of it any more. If you will forget what is past, we will give you over brighter again than before."

Man has never been at a loss for gods. He has worshiped almost everything, including the vilest and most disgusting beasts. He has worshiped fire, earth, air, water, light, stars, and for hundreds of ages prostrated himself before enormous snakes. Savage tribes often make gods of articles they get from civilized people. The Todas worship a cow-bell. The Kotas worship two silver plates, which they regarded as husband and wife, and another tribe manufactured a god of a king of hearts.

Nothing can be plainer than that each nation gives to its god its peculiar characteristics, and that every individual gives to his god his personal peculiarities.

Man has no ideas, and can have none, except those suggested by his surroundings. He can not conceive of anything utterly unlike what he has seen or felt. He can exaggerate, diminish, combine, separate, deform, beautify, improve, multiply, and compare what he sees, what he hears, and all of which he takes cognizance through the medium of the senses; but he can not create. Having seen an exhibition of power, he can say, "Omnipotent." Having lived he can say, "Immortality." Knowing something of time, he can say, "Eternity." Conceiving something of intelligence, he can say, "God." Having seen exhibitions of malice, he can say, "Devil." A few gleams of happiness fallen athwart the gloom of his life, he can say, "Heaven." Pain, in its numberless forms, having been experienced, he can say, "Hell." Yet all these ideas have a foundation in fact, and only a foundation. The superstructure has been reared by exaggeration, diminishing, combining, separating, deforming, beautifying, improving, or multiplying realities, so that the edifice or fabric is but the incongruous grouping of what man has perceived through the medium of the senses. It is as though we should give to a lion the wings of an eagle, the hoofs of a bison, the tail of a horse, the pouch of a kangaroo, and the trunk of an elephant. We have in imagination created an impossible monster. And yet the various parts of this monster really exist. So it is with all the gods that man has made.

Beyond nature man can not go even in thought

—above nature he can not rise—below nature he can not fall. In the olden time the existence of devils was universally admitted. The people had to do with the matter, and from such belief it followed, as a matter of course, that a person, in order to vanquish the devil, had either to be a god or to be assisted by one. All founders of religions have established their claims to divine origin by controlling evil spirits and suspending the laws of nature. Casting out devils was a certificate of divinity. A prophet unable to cope with the powers of darkness was regarded with contempt. The utterance of the highest and noblest sentiments—the most thoughtless and holy life—commanded but little respect unless accompanied by power to work miracles and command spirits.

The belief in good and evil powers had its origin in the fact that man was surrounded by what he was pleased to call good and evil phenomena. Phenomena affecting man pleasantly were ascribed to good spirits, while those affecting him unpleasantly or injuriously were ascribed to evil spirits. It being admitted that all phenomena were produced by spirits, the spirits were divided according to the phenomena, and the phenomena were good or bad as they affected man. Good spirits were supposed to be the authors of good phenomena, and evil spirits of evil—so that the idea of a devil has been as universal as the idea of a god.

Even Christ, the supposed son of god, taught that persons were possessed of evil spirits, and frequently, according to the account, gave proof of his divine origin and mission by frightening devils out of his unfortunate countrymen. Casting out devils was his principal employment, and the devils thus banished generally took occasion to acknowledge him as the true Messiah—which was not only very kind of them, but very fortunate for him. The religious people have always regarded the testimony of these devils as perfectly conclusive, and the writers of the New Testament quote the words of theseimps of darkness with great satisfaction.

The fact that Christ could withstand the temptations of the devil was considered as conclusive evidence that he was assisted by some god, or at least by some being superior to man.

Man, in his ignorance, supposed that all phenomena were produced by some intelligent powers, and with direct reference to him. To preserve friendly relations with these powers was, and still is, the object of all religions. Man knelt through fear and to implore assistance, or through gratitude for some favor which he supposed had been rendered. He endeavored by supplication to appease some being who, for some reason, had, as he believed, become enraged. The lightning and thunder terrified him. In the presence of the volcano he sank upon his knees. The great forests filled with wild and ferocious beasts, the monstrous serpents crawling in mysterious depths, the boundless sea, the flaming comets, the sinister eclipses, the awful calmness of the stars, and, more than all, the perpetual presence of death, convinced him that he was the sport and prey of unseen and malignant powers. The strange and frightful diseases to which he was subject, the freezing and burning of fever, the contortions of epilepsy, the sudden palsies, the darkness of night, and the wild, terrible, and fantastic dreams that filled his brain, satisfied him that he was haunted and pursued by countless spirits of evil. For some reason he supposed these spirits differed in power—that they were not all alike malevolent—that the higher controlled the lower, and that his very existence depended upon gaining the assistance of the more powerful. For this purpose he resorted to prayer, to flattery, to worship, and to sacrifice. These ideas appear to have been almost universal in savage man.

For ages all nations supposed that the sick and insane were possessed by evil spirits. For thousands of years the practice of medicine consisted in frightening these spirits away. Usually the priests would make the loudest and most discordant noises possible. They would blow horns, beat upon rude drums, clash cymbals, and in the meantime utter the most unearthly yells. If the noise remedy failed, they would implore the aid of some more powerful spirit.

To pacify the spirits was considered of infinite importance. The barbarian, knowing that men could be softened by gifts, gave to these spirits that which to him seemed of most value. With bursting heart he would offer the blood of his dearest child. It was impossible for him to conceive of a god utterly unlike himself, and he naturally supposed that these powers of the air would be affected a little at the sight of so great and so deep a sorrow. It was with the barbarian then as with the civilized now—one class lived upon and made merchandise of the fears of another. Certain persons took it upon themselves to appease the gods, and to instruct the people in their duties to these unseen powers. This was the origin of the priesthood. The priest pretended to stand between the wrath of the gods and the helplessness of man. He was man's attorney at the court of heaven. He carried to the invisible world a flag of truce, a protest and a request. He came back with a command, with authority and with power. Man fell upon his knees before his own servant, and the priest, taking advantage of the awe inspired by his supposed influence with the gods, made of his fellow-man a cringing hypocrite or slave.

The foolish doctrine that all phenomena can be traced to the interference of good and evil spirits has been, and still is, almost universal. That most people still believe in some spirit that can change the natural order of events is proved by the fact that nearly all resort to prayer. Thousands, at this very moment, are probably imploring some supposed power to interfere in their behalf. Some want health restored; some ask that the loved and absent be watched over and protected; some pray for riches; some for rain; some want disease stayed; some vainly ask for food; some ask for revivals; a few ask for more wisdom, and now and then one tells the Lord to do as he may think best. Thousands ask to be protected from the devil; some, like David, pray for revenge, and some implore even God not to lead them into temptation. All these prayers rest upon and are produced by the idea that some

power not only can, but probably will, change the order of the universe. If we believe in a power superior to nature, it is perfectly natural to suppose that such power can—and will interfere in the affairs of this world. If there is any interference, of what practical use can such power be? The Scriptures give us the most wonderful accounts of divine interference. Animals talk like men, springs gurgled from dry bones, the sun and moon stop in the heavens in order that General Joshua may have more time to murder, the shadow on a dial goes back ten degrees to convince a petty king of his barbarous people that he is not going to die of a bad cold, fire refuses to burn; water positively declines to seek its level, but stands up like a wall; grains of sand become like common walking-sticks, to gratify a mere freak, twist themselves into serpents, and then swallow each other by way of exercise, murmuring streams, laughing at the attraction of gravitation, run up hill for years, following wandering tribes from a pure love of frolic; prophecy becomes altogether easier than history; the sons of God become enamored of the world's girls; women are changed into sail for the purpose of keeping a great event fresh in the minds of men; an excellent article of brimstone is imported from heaven free of duty; clothes refuse to wear out for forty years; birds keep restaurants and feed wandering prophets free of expense; bears tear children in pieces for laughing at old men without wigs; muscular development depends upon the length of one's hair; dead people come to life, simply to get a joke on their enemies and heirs; witches and wizards converse freely with the souls of the departed, and God himself becomes a stone-cutter and engraver, after having been a tailor and dressmaker.

The veil between heaven and earth was always rent or lifted—the shadows of this world, the radiance of heaven, and the glare of hell mixed and mingled until man became uncertain as to which country he really inhabited. Man dwelt in an unreal world. He mistook his ideas, his dreams, for real things. His fears became terrible and malicious monsters. He lived in the midst of furies and fairies, nymphs and naiads, goblins and spooks, deities and devils. The obscure and gloomy depths were filled with claw and wing, with beak and hoof, with leering looks and sneering mouths, with the malice of deformity, with the cunning of hatred, and with all the slimy forms that fear can draw and paint upon the shadowy canvas of the dark.

It is enough to make one almost insane with pity to think what man in the long night has suffered; of the tortures he has endured, surrounded, as he supposed, by malignant powers, and clutched by the fierce phantoms of the air. No wonder that he fell upon his trembling knees, that he built altars and reddened them with his own blood. No wonder that he implored ignorant priests and impudent magicians for aid. No wonder that he crawled groveling in the dust to the temple's door, and there, in the insanity of despair, besought the deaf gods to bear his bitter cry of agony and fear.

The Church can not abandon the idea of special providence. To give up that doctrine is to give up all. The Church must insist that prayer is answered—that some power superior to nature bears and grants the request of the sincere and humble Christian, and that this same power in some mysterious way provides for all.

A devout clergyman sought every opportunity to impress upon the mind of his son the fact that God takes care of all his creatures; that the falling sparrow attracts his attention, and that his loving kindness is over all his works. Happening, one day, to see a crane wading in quest of food, the good man pointed out to his son the perfect adaptation of the crane to his living in that manner. "See," said he, "how his legs are formed for wading! What a long, slender bill he has! Observe how nicely he folds his feet when putting them in or drawing them out of the water! He thus does not cause the slightest ripple. He is thus enabled to approach the fish without giving them any notice of his arrival."

"My son," said he, "it is impossible to look at that bird without recognizing the design, as well as the goodness of God, in thus providing the means of subsistence." "Yes," replied the boy, "I think I see the goodness of God—at least, so far as the crane is concerned; but after all, father, don't you think the arrangement a little 'tough on the fish'?"

The advanced religionist, although disbelieving in any great amount of interference by the gods in this age of the world, still thinks that in the beginning some god made the laws governing the universe. He believes that in consequence of these laws a man can lift a greater weight with, than without a lever; that this god so made matter, and so established the order of things, that two bodies can not occupy the same space at the same time; so that a body once put in motion will keep moving until it is stopped; so that it is a greater distance around than across a circle; so that a perfect square has four equal sides, instead of five or seven. He insists that it took a direct interposition of providence to make the whole greater than a part, and that, had it not been for this power superior to nature, twice one might have been more than twice two, and sticks and strings might have had only one end apiece. Like the old Scotch divine, he thanks God that Sunday comes at the end instead of in the middle of the week, and that death comes at the close instead of at the commencement of life, thereby giving us time to prepare for that holy day and that most solemn event. These religious people see nothing but design everywhere, and personal, intelligent interference in everything. They insist that the universe has been created, and that the adaptation of means to ends is perfectly apparent. They point us to the sunshine, to the flowers, to the April rain, and to all there is of beauty and of use in the world. Did it ever occur to them that a cancer is as beautiful in its development as is the reddest rose? That what they are pleased to call the adaptation of means to ends is as apparent in the cancer as in the April rain. How beautiful the process of digestion! By what ingenious methods the blood is poisoned so that the cancer shall have food! By what wonderful contrivance the entire system of

man is made to pay tribute to this divine and charming cancer! See by what admirable instrumentalities it feeds itself from the surrounding quivering, dainty flesh! See how it gradually but surely expands and grows! By what marvelous mechanism it is supplied with long, slender roots that reach out to the most secret nerves of pain for sustenance and life! What beautiful colors it presents! Seen through the microscope it is a miracle of order and beauty! All the ingenuity of man can not stop its growth. Think of the amount of thought it must have required to invent a way by which the life of one man might be given to produce a cancer! Is it possible to look upon it and doubt that there is a design in the universe, and that the inventor of this wonderful cancer must be infinitely powerful, ingenious, and good?

If a god created the universe, then there must have been a time when he commenced to create. Back of that time there must have been an eternity, during which there had existed nothing—absolutely nothing—except this supposed god. According to this theory, this god spent an eternity in an infinite vacuum, and in perfect idleness.

Admitting that a god did create the universe, the question then arises, of what did he create it? It certainly was not made of nothing. Nothing, considered in the light of a raw material, is a most decided failure.

The idea of a creative deity is gradually being abandoned, and nearly all truly scientific minds admit that matter must have existed from eternity. It is indestructible, and the indestructible can not be created. It is the crowning glory of our century to have demonstrated the indestructibility and the eternal persistence of force. Neither matter nor force can be increased or diminished. Force can not exist apart from matter. Matter exists only in connection with force, and, consequently, a force apart from matter, and superior to nature, is a demonstrated impossibility.

Force, then, must have also existed from eternity, and could not have been created. Matter, in its countless forms, from dead earth to the eyes of those we love, and force, in all its manifestations, from simple motion to the grandest thought, deny creation and defy control.

Thought is a form of force. We walk with the same force with which we think. Man is an organism that changes several forms of force into thought-force. Man is a machine into which we put what we call "food," and produce what we call "thought." Think of that wonderful chemistry by which bread was changed into the divine tragedy of Hamlet!

A god must not be material, but he must be an organism, capable of changing other forms of force into thought-force. This is what we call "eating." Therefore if the god thinks, he must eat; that is to say, he must, of necessity, have some means of supplying the force with which to think.

A deity outside of nature exists in nothing, and is nothing. Nature embraces with infinite arms all matter and all force. That which is beyond her grasp is destitute of both, and can hardly be worth the worship and adoration even of a man.

There is but one way to demonstrate the existence of a power independent of and superior to nature, and that is by breaking, if only for one moment, the continuity of cause and effect. Pluck from the endless chain of existence one little link—stop for one instant the grand procession—and you have shown beyond all contradiction that nature has a master. Change the fact, just for one second, that matter attracts matter, and a god appears.

The rudest savage has always known this fact, and for that reason has always demanded the evidence of a miracle. The founder of a religion must be able to turn water into wine, cure with a word the blind and lame, and raise with a simple touch the dead to life. In times of ignorance this was easy to do. The credulity of the savage was almost boundless. To him the marvelous was the beautiful; the mysterious was the sublime. Consequently, every religion has for its foundation a miracle, that is to say, a violation of nature—that is to say, a falsehood.

No one, in the world's history, ever attempted to substantiate a truth by a miracle. Truth scorns the assistance of miracles. Nothing but falsehood ever attested itself by signs and wonders. No miracle ever was performed, and no sane man ever thought he had performed one.

The Church wishes us to believe. Let the Church, or one of its intellectual saints, perform a miracle, and we will believe. We are told that nature has its superior. Let this superior, for one single instant, control nature, and we will admit the truth of your assertions.

We have heard talk enough. We have listened to all the drowsy, idealless, rapid sermons that we wish to hear. We have read your Bible and the works of your best minds. We have heard your prayers, your solemn groans and your reverential amens. All these amount to less than nothing. We want one fact. We beg at the doors of the churches for just one little fact. We pass our hat along your pews and under your pulpits, and implore you for just one fact. We know all about your moldy wonders and your stale miracles. We want a fact for charity. Your miracles are too ancient. The witnesses have been dead for nearly 2,000 years. Their reputation for "truth and veracity" in the neighborhood where they resided is wholly unknown to us. Give us a new miracle, and substantiate it by witnesses who still have the cheerful habit of living in this world. Do not send us to Jericho to hear the winding horns, nor put us in the fire with Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego. Do not compel us to navigate the sea with Captain Jonah, nor die with Mr. Ezekiel. There is no sort of use in sending us fox hunting with Sampson. It is worse than useless to show us fishes with money in their mouths, and call our attention to the vast multitudes stuffing themselves with five crackers and two sardines. We demand a new miracle, and we demand it now. Let the Church furnish at least one, or forever hold their peace.

Nature is an endless series of efficient causes. She can not create, but she eternally transforms. There was no beginning, and there can be no end.

[To be continued.]

SPIRIT MES

We have a number of religious papers who at stated seasons are invited to our rooms. In justice to the public we would be pleased to receive communications from those desiring to be published.

Communications to be answered should be addressed to 7, 103 East 11th Street, New York City. All communications should be addressed to 7, 103 East 11th Street, New York City.

REPORT OF

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS—[C. E. T. and C. communicate with each other, and we publish their thoughts.]

ANS.—Spirits communicate with each other, and we publish their thoughts. They are not bound by the same conditions as you are, and they are not bound by the same conditions as you are, and they are not bound by the same conditions as you are.

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REPORT OF SEANCE.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTIONS.—[C. E. T. and C. M.] How do spirits communicate with each other, and are they attracted by our thoughts?

ANS.—Spirits communicate through their vocal organs as you do, until they rise from their earth-bound condition by purity of thought and action, when they begin to understand each other intuitively or mentally, just as you understand spirits by inspiration or impression. Many spirits, however, like mediums, begin to read each other's minds before freedom from earth-bound conditions. It is an effect of mediumship in earth life, though unconscious of the fact as a mortal. Mediumship means partial freedom from earth-bound conditions, or a partial unfolding of the spiritual faculties in earth life.

Those who have no spiritualities whatever are like children born into this life deaf and dumb or blind. Besides being earth-bound they are in darkness. Purity or love unfolds the spiritual faculties. Temperance in all things makes the mortal either clairvoyant, clairaudient, or psychometric. That gives to the spirit sight, hearing, or sensitiveness, either of which will lead him right. But the more the better. Mortals often have all these developed, only not in use, because not conscious of the gift. But as spirits they manifest immediately upon transition. Through love actions, or sympathy and kindness, you develop intuition or mental clairvoyance. This is equal to having any of the other faculties, for it is a soul faculty, and acts on those of the spirit body for a conscious effect, and makes them more or less active for use. So the intuitive man or woman is often as far advanced as many who have several of the spiritual faculties developed. But love, without purity of the physical, makes a heavy aura, and keeps the spirit earth-bound until freed by abnegation and temperance—suffering for the want of the sensual indulgences, but resisting their temptations. In like manner, physical purity without love keeps the spirit earth-bound. Such must work their way upward by missionary labors, as controlling mediums, guiding mortals, materializing at seances, do slate-writing for incompetent spirits, act as messengers for higher spirits, and so forth. Love expands the soul and brings it into conformity with the spirit. Both must be in harmony with each other; that is, of equal force or volume. Love also attracts to love. God or heaven is composed of love—a principle known as life or causation, and manifested to us as intelligence and sensation, or consciousness and happiness—each becoming active in comparison to obeying our higher impulses, the promptings of law. As love attracts upward, it also attracts spirits to mortals. If you think of a spirit with love, and you feel a response as if you would melt into tears, or feel your heart swelling, that spirit is with you, and will remain as long as you can keep up the love-impulse or feeling. Whatever impression comes to you during that love-feeling may be relied on as the truth, for love never lies or makes a mistake. It comes from the law that governs all.

QUESTIONS.—[E. F. C.] How can we predicate love and wisdom of creative energy in view of the sufferings of the people of this world?

ANS.—How can we predicate the sweet taste of the asparagus in view of the filth that surrounds it, or which gives it birth? The soul of mankind does not suffer, per se. It is the bodily or material surroundings that suffer, including the spirit body or aura. The body of man can be compared to the soil around the vegetable referred to, which, if it had the consciousness that man has, would make similar complaints. As corruption is necessary to bring forth the sweetest, the prettiest, and the most highly flavored of plant life, so trials are needed to bring forth the most perfected of animal life, which is man; and the keener the sufferings a race undergoes, or an individual is subjected to, the more attuned the soul that is born of it; i. e., the brighter, the stronger, the mightier, the wiser, the happier it becomes. Physical pain is to the spirit of man what fire is to the pestilential region. It is a purifier, a cleanser, a wringer, a washer, or anything you may apply in the way of polishing it up. Of course, circumstances seem to be the main cause. But these are often brought about by spirit hosts for good purposes. Some are the effects of inheritance. But none need suffer for their fathers who obey the intuitive law within, or the higher conscience with which all are alike gifted. The human soul is quick to find excuses for indulging in its physical passions. Hereditary evils were in the world since the first rational being trod the forests' jungles; but they were of the strictly animalistic order. Conscience is allied to omniscience (law, spirit, causation, or God), and the latter prompts all life to right guidance according to its development. The animal understands it by what you have termed instinct. The lowest type of man understands, or feels it, as conscience or intuition, each one to his needs or requirements, his duties and his salvation. The stronger the hereditary tendency, the stronger the opposing influence. But the free will of man goes over spiritual law, though short lived, and to his regret in the end. Every one knows intuitively why he suffers, but hardly one out of a hundred ever acknowledges the truth of it to another. It is as much as he can bear to have self-consciousness of his punishment. It is an intuitive sense of shame in the face of omniscient law that inspires this. It is the love and wisdom and creative energy (a combination of consciousness, force, and sensation) that is struggling for individualization through the process of evolution. The earth is

like sufferer, or would appear so at a distance, like man it will some day give birth to a higher to grin and bear it.

QUESTIONS.—[J. F. S.] Is the ego, at the change called death, incarnated into the new or spiritual body, and does it correspond to the physical? Furthermore, on rising, does it remember its past conditions?

ANS.—It can not be said that the ego or soul is incarnated into a new body spiritual. For it is already formed at conception, and grows with the physical; thus is as old as the owner. But it may look like new, or bright, fresh, youthful, strong, sparkling, ethereal and buoyant, or angelic, according to circumstances. Those near the earth sphere are more like mortals than spirits, and in many respects are the counterparts of those earthly looking spirits that appear at materializing seances. As they develop in spiritually—intelligence, wisdom, love, and will power—they become bright looking and etherealized, and as invisible to earth-bound spirits as spirits in general are to mortals. They never lose their "human form divine," but it is so beautified beyond anything you can imagine, that it would, should you suddenly behold one, appear to you like an entirely different life entity. But being of slow development to such a state nothing is lost or forgotten. Even one's past earth life is not obliterated, though the greatest or most radical and sudden change is from the mortal to the spirit, whether angelic or earth-bound. You no more forget yesterday or the last year of your earth life on awakening in spirit than you do as a mortal. In fact your mind is clearer and more penetrative, and you recall things long forgotten as a mortal. At least such is my experience, and it is no different from others. We are all subject to the same law of growth and development, seeing far beyond our mortal life into the past as we progress toward the future, or that which lies before us in endless eternity.

QUESTIONS.—[C. H. M., Elkhart, Ind.] Do you mean to say that magnetism is known to spirits as a fluid substance, the same as water is perceived by mortals?

ANS.—To say positively that it is a fluid substance would, perhaps, lead to erroneous reasoning. Nor can we call it a material substance, if anything it is the same of which your spirit body or aura is composed. It is not pure spirit or soul substance—that which is intelligent or conscious. To such degree of activity nothing but thought can attain. But it is an entity that stands as the medium between God and man, so to say—between pure spirit or soul substance and matter. It partakes of both entities in being connected with both, and as readily permits itself to be transmitted on the wings of thought and transformed into an influence that is health-giving or baneful—beautifying or discouraging—or attracted by matter and converted into genial, invigorating sunlight or destructive electricity by the way of earthquakes or tornadoes. To denigrate it a fluid gives it a foothold for human comprehension. If you were a spirit you would call it atmosphere, for it is to the spirit what matter, in all its forms, is to you. But being of a more ethereal nature you would find it more difficult at first to comprehend it in any other way—your long connection with matter and material way of thinking causing this. But as your mind or spirit becomes accustomed to its new element you would take another view of it, and most likely conclude it to be a fluid, and as you would give it in reply to mortal questioning on the subject—this being the simplest and most readily grasped definition. Finally you would see intelligence in it, and imagine the whole atmosphere were intelligent or gazing at you intelligently. This comes as you unfold in the spiritual or in wisdom and love, but would find it more difficult to explain in mortal language. So you would stop, and say, come up higher; it is too grand to attempt an explanation. You must experience it. All is love.

QUESTIONS.—[J. F. H.] Do spirits eventually lose their earthly individual identity after a certain period of time?

ANS.—Spirits never lose their earthly identity entirely, for even in the flesh there is an intelligence, a characteristic, a personality exclusively their own, sometimes a humor or a penetrativeness, which is not earthly, but an impress of the interior spirit, and can not be lost. While you may not recognize an old friend by a mole on his face, a hip in his walk, a gleam in his eye, a defect in his body, you will always know him by an intelligent expression, a grace, a characteristic, or some other spiritual qualification which attracted you to him originally and made you familiar with him, however long the time between greetings. Even one who is noted for his lack of originality will be again known by this fact. But those you have only known by their exterior will become strangers to you, because you are not acquainted with the real being. In that respect all lose their earthly identity, unless they are unprogressive spirits, when they retain all of the earthiness until they do begin to advance spiritually. You may apply the same principle to yourself.

QUESTIONS.—[C.] Is it not true that undeveloped mediums often imagine themselves to be beset with bad influences when it is only a stage of mediumship? What is the cause of this excitable and morbid condition of mind, which often afflicts young mediums, and what cure is there for it?

ANS.—Yes to the first question. The answer to part of the second question is involved in the first. The only cure is self-knowledge and self-culture. There are many things in spirit-communion that appear wrong, when they are but misinterpretations of the science of mediumship or the philosophy of spirit-communion. In the former proper conditions are to be made a study by the individual—conditions applicable to him or her alone. In the latter morality or spirituality are to be considered. Physical purity will make conditions right; a charitable and benevolent spirit will attract truthful influences. But it must be a living charity; not simply a demand from the world to be so, and then neglect to practice it at home. Consistency is the first requisite of a teacher or a missionary in the spiritualistic field.

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REPORT OF SEANCE.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

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LIGHT OF TRUTH.

Published every Saturday by C. C. STOWELL, at 708 Race St., Cincinnati, O.

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TO SUBSCRIBERS.

This number and the next contain a lecture by Hon. Robert Ingersoll and other articles. Please remit both to some person who may be led to subscribe for LIGHT OF TRUTH.

Let Us Keep Our Feet Over the Text.

For years our speakers and mediums have profoundly stirred the intellectual, scientific, and religious world. To their influence can be attributed the general breaking up of old beliefs, old forms of worship, and the general dissemination now at high-water mark.

Those who view us from the outside, still see time and strength given to denominational differences and to the splendid machinery of the Church. They see us sometimes intolerant to those who differ from us in what are not really essential points. They see we put the emphasis upon what certain men in a different age have said and taught about God's word, rather than God's word itself.

In all parts of the Christian world population is massing in great cities and manufacturing centers, but in these places with rare exceptions the Protestant Church is not in touch with the wage-earning classes, and is becoming more and more estranged from them.

When you hear the representatives from the Protestant Church of the world tossing such truisms around, is it not time for the spiritual lecturers and spiritual press (ourselves included) to give less attention to the Protestant Church, and turn our eyes inward upon ourselves.

The religious world is in a general ferment, and the spirit world will see that the agitation among themselves continues until the cry is universal, "The world is my country, and to do good is my religion."

What is the corner stone of our structure? What gave you the first peep into the world just beyond? What filled your soul with love toward all? What annihilated fear of death and bid you run, leap with joy into the arms extended just over the way? Spirit-returns. Whose vocation is decided? Our mediums! Who are received with scorn and contumely? Our mediums! Who are subjected to the evil-doers of two worlds? Our mediums! Who by discord and maltreatment are forced into helplessness and premature decay? Our mediums! Who, like a horse after usefulness is gone, are turned out to die? Our mediums! Who are threatened with courts and prisons for obeying the angels? Our mediums! Who should be first considered in this the first year of our organization? Our mediums!

Is it not the text? From every section of our land let pennies, dimes, and dollars flow into our treasury at Washington. Speak of it at the opening and close of every lecture, ask for special donations, give festivals and entertainments to aid the sacred fund. Soon, very soon, State legislatures will be in session; there will be no time to talk and confer. Your national organization should not then be required to arouse our own people to the necessity of doing something. No, there should be nothing else in hand for them to do but to scotch the snake. Spiritualists keep your feet on that text!

Hon. David A. Wells and the Money Power.

Hon. David A. Wells has an interesting article in the October number of "The Financial Times" in which he repeats the parrot phrases belonging to the baggage of foreign sentiment regarding our monetary system. He very ably cites the depreciation of silver and the fall of certain financial policies. True to the prevailing school of thought he repeats the parrot phrases belonging to the baggage of foreign sentiment regarding our monetary system.

For this nation to assume a position of trucking allegiance to the money power of Europe is not a whit more contemptible than to admit allegiance to the political power of Europe. And yet every writer on current financial matters is guilty of this trucking knavery to the money gods and standards of foreign nations.

This constant reference to the monetary policies of foreign nations is poor policy for finding the causes at work in our financial affairs. We respectfully urge upon the attention of Hon. D. A. Wells a sentiment uttered by one of the old party leaders, one whom the honorable gentleman will hardly take exception to, Thomas Jefferson: "Banking institutions are more dangerous than standing armies. Put down the banks—coin basis—and if this country could not be carried through the longest war against her most powerful enemy without knowing the want of a dollar, without dependence on the traitorous class of her citizens, and without loading the public with an indefinite burden of debt, it would be nothing of my countrymen."

Shall We Have a Priesthood?

Every now and then the process of mental incubation hatches a man who imagines his office in the world to be the arbiter between the infinite and the finite. He assumes to tell the people everything he doesn't know himself. If he should tell what he does know his vocation would be gone. The men are either papers on the bounty of knowledge, or like Cerberus at the door of hades, stand with drawn swords at the gate of knowledge.

One of the latter class, W. L. Sheldon by name, in an article published in the October number of "The Non-Sectarian," gives his reasons for denouncing a too general investigation of Spiritualism. "I do not say it should not be investigated, the question simply is: Who is to do it?" In answering his question he says, science should give it a thorough investigation. This is well, but what is science? He says: "We are bidden to study the supernatural and see that it is supernatural." We have never heard before that Spiritualism is a study of the supernatural, or that its purpose is to establish the supernatural.

He follows this by saying we are not sure that we should all be competent judges in exploring the domain of the supernatural. Who, then, are to be the judges? Mr. Sheldon says that "the best way, as we all know, to conquer the belief in ghosts is not to think about it."

Do we not think as we are environed? Thought is not evolved by molecular brain vibrations. It becomes a part of us through and by contact with persons and things—our experience. By what process are we to think or unthink ourselves out of it? He further says the "tendency is so strong to look to invisible agencies for an explanation of

mental events that it ought to lead a man to distrust his own judgment on such matters." What, then, does man's judgment rest upon? He goes out of his hole, however, by declaring that we should ask the men of science to investigate these facts and decide whether they can be accounted for otherwise than by attributing them to spiritual intelligence.

He fears lest the people may have taken up this new faith before it was fully investigated, and for this reason he is glad that the Society for Psychological Research has been organized. Well, there is no doubt but that all societies of this character are good, but how are they to establish their authority? He says: "When there is a consensus of opinion among men of science that there are facts here which call for scientific explanation, then we must give the subject the most serious thought."

His whole plea is the echo of an inquisition chamber. His reason is that of the apoplechic, and his light the ink of malediction against the choicest flower that ever bloomed in the garden of human love.

Mr. Sheldon would have it incorporated in spirit investigation under the command, "Thus saith the scientists and the Societies for Psychological Research." This would be nothing more than the establishment of a priesthood, and as a consequence truth would become crystallized and brains become atrophied. Mr. Sheldon need have no fear about the demoralizing influence an investigation of Spiritualism has upon the mind.

To the Speakers and Mediums of the United States.

We believe it would be a source of great profit to yourself and the cause of Spiritualism had you been able to read the letter of Mrs. R. S. Lillie in the last number of the LIGHT OF TRUTH. In substance it was a reproduction of her lecture delivered under control on the theme of the national organization. At the close of the lecture she quoted a suggestion made by Mrs. T. J. Skidmore, one of the directors of our new associations, saying: "All may not see the purpose of the association clearly or think how much good can be done, and you speakers must go forth and talk it, write it, inspiring the people to action." We affirm the declaration. It lies with you alone as to the outcome of this movement.

It is impossible to here give the names of all those zealous ones who participated in that assembly. You have selected from among you as a president and vice-president two of your number in the chair. Had it not been for the force behind we know you would never have succeeded in bringing order out of the chaos. On the floor Mrs. Richmond pressed on with a great power behind her, grave and serious, grappled with every difficulty as it arose, while countless numbers of others in all parts of our great country had a hand in shaping and forming the organic law of Spiritualism. It is claimed that the convention and the organization resulting therefrom are superfluous things, that the Churches are about to absorb Spiritualism and carry on the work of the angels through existing institutions. We believe that the integrity of Spiritualism depends upon our maintaining the individuality of mediums and speakers as they now exist.

The Boston Investigator says, "We see that New York is frightened by forty cases of small-pox; that it has been shown that vaccination is no protection against this fearful disease; that small-pox is nothing more or less than the outgrowth of filth; that the city that will cleanse itself of all foulness need not fear its coming; that if you will take pains to keep thoroughly clean you are in no danger of infection."

And yet some authorities are dense and stupid enough to order a legal poisoning of all the children who desire to attend the public schools; at the same time threatening the parents with punishment by fine if they are kept away from school to avoid being murdered by vaccination, or an old-fashioned cramping process of a half dozen or more different studies each day, when one or two would teach them more than a larger number skipped over or crammed down against nature.

INCLUDING Swedenborgians, Jews, Mormons, Spiritualists, and back-sliders, the Church can claim but 20,000,000 members, says the Boston Investigator. Are these 20,000,000 to govern the other 45,000,000 United States citizens?

IN THE New York Sun, Elizabeth Cady Stanton says: "A government and a religion that do not recognize the complete equality of women are unworthy our intelligent support."

A 1900 generations ago Jews were confined to certain quarters in many of the European cities, because they were offensive to the sight and feelings of cultured and refined, or sensitive people. Since they have become more refined themselves, this system has been abolished. As the saloon today has become a like offensive sight to a certain class of sensitive people, though still loved by a majority to judge from its existence, would it not be a good compromise and a means of quieting the minority to confine it to certain quarters of those cities that must have them?

The recent broadside of the religious press on "Church and State" showed general agreement in support of the Sixteenth Amendment for dividing State Churches in the States and sectarian appropriation of money everywhere. Christian States.

Is a paper on Mohammedanism read before the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, it says: "Any professed Mussulman who is untruthful, dishonest, irreverent, or fanatical, falls utterly to grasp the meaning of the religion he professes." Christianity might take a lesson from this, and exclaim: How many in our own ranks fail to grasp the meaning of the religion they profess?

THE King of Italy is trying to borrow one hundred and twenty million dollars. Why not do as the Mexican government once did when bankrupt, which was to sell the useless and surplus Church property, as old convents, inquisition-buildings, etc.? The Vatican, for example, would make a beautiful site for a macaroni factory, a more useful article of diet than Popes and Cardinals.

THE mob-element is still colicky to judge by occasional mutterings in a certain direction. A little soothing syrup might prevent further incivility by keeping its leader's head clear of fowl emanations.

New York Notes.

Another week has rolled by, and your correspondent with much pleasure records the progressive March of our cause in this great metropolis.

The New York Psychical Society held its usual session on Wednesday evening, October 19th. Mr. Snipes occupied the chair, and after the singing by the audience, the president read the report of the last meeting, and some extracts from a lecture delivered by Annie Besant, and called upon Walter Howell, who was present to address the meeting, to answer. The speaker contrasted the theories of theosophy with the facts of Spiritualism and his remarks were frequently greeted with applause.

Mr. J. Frank Baxter again spoke for the New Ethical Spiritualist Society, on Sunday, October 15th. Mr. Baxter's subjects were, morning, "The Facts and Philosophy of Spiritualism," evening, "The Practical Benefits of Modern Spiritualism." No doubt the last meeting was handled in a most able manner by the lecturer. It is to be regretted that your correspondent is not at times omnipresent. Report says Mr. Baxter is greeted by excellent audiences.

Walter Howell delivered his last discourse before the First Society of Spiritualists on Sunday the 15th inst. Morning subject, "Divine Providence," was well received. The speaker affirmed the universal reign of law to declare that no people were the favorite of God to the exclusion of other portions of the human race, but through the laws of nature we may discern the onward progress of the planet, the angelward tendency of man and the final development of our highest faculties through ages of struggle in the effort to adjust ourselves to our environment. The evening lecture considered the "Religious element in man." The lecturer argued that the religious element in man inhered in his spiritual nature; that it was universal, indisputable, and the most potent for good when wisely directed, or evil when perverted. He suggested the direction this sentiment should take in our day, and pointed out that Spiritualism offered the widest scope for its expression.

The meeting held at Carnegie Hall Sunday afternoon for phenomena and experiences is always largely attended. Col. S. P. Kase, of Philadelphia delivered the opening address. He reviewed the facts in relation to President Lincoln's spiritualistic experiences. Mr. Kase was present when the president received spirit communications in relation to the emancipation of the slaves. Col. Kase thinks Churchian and political influences have been at work to cause Mr. Lincoln's son to attempt to refute the statements made by Nettie Maynard and others in reference to these facts. Mr. Robert Lincoln was only a little boy at the time when these experiences were enjoyed by his father, and it is more than likely Mr. Lincoln would have stepped from becoming a public gossip, and a boy so young would not be informed of such experiences. It is to be deplored if truth is to be sacrificed to man's ambition. Mr. Robert Lincoln may honestly believe himself correct in his recent statements, but the witnesses are credible who have put themselves on record, and one day the truth and the right shall be vindicated. Walter Howell followed Col. Kase and spoke acceptably. Mr. Henderson gave some good readings, and Mr. Harlow Davis entertained the audience with several wonderful tests. Mr. Miller, of Brooklyn, read some communications obtained in a closed glass jar, through the mediumship of George Cole, and the meeting adjourned.

Notwithstanding our progress, there are causes for regret. In the cities of New York and Brooklyn, he said to the disgrace of Spiritualists, there is not a Children's Lyceum. We minister to the intellectual wants of adults, we present the phenomena to the equirer, but our children may go to the orthodox Sunday school, or anywhere they please, so far as we seem to care. Our lack of interest in the children must impress them in after years as evidence that Spiritualism was not a vital principle with us, but a kind of pastime. The Spiritual Lyceum may be made the most attractive institution for children the world has ever known. "If Spiritualism is good enough for you, it is good enough for your children."

Delroit, Mich.—Mrs. Nellie S. Baude holds regular services every Sunday evening at 7.30 at 209 Woodward avenue. The price is invited.

Letter from Abby A. Judson.

As your readers are aware, through the reports in your paper, that I am speaking during this month for the Spiritualists in this city, so it does not seem worth while for me to speak of my public labors in this letter. I will, therefore, tell you something of a line of thought into which I have been led in the course of some correspondence.

We all know how frequently new mediums at first receive what seem to be the manifestations from the spirit side of life. But after a little time there is a change, and the communications are absolutely untruthful, or they come altogether from some stranger spirit, who acknowledges that he is bad, and seems to take pleasure in teasing and bewildering the medium. Such experiences are often communicated to me by correspondents. As they themselves are not yet thoroughly grounded, and they have Church friends who are always ready to say to them: "There I told you it was the devil," some are ready to go back on Spiritualism, and have nothing more to do with it.

Some years ago, two lady friends of mine used to sit much at the table. One of them had so much physical power that if she laid her fingers on a heavy new iron safe, which she had no strength to move, the machine would follow her across the room, turning out of the way of other furniture at her suggestion. This medium had varied experiences, but she has profited by them, and is faithful to her mediumship and to the cause of Spiritualism.

The other lady, though brought up a Protestant, had at one time joined the Roman Catholic Church. Though she is now a Protestant again, we know well that our Roman friends never let their hold on a proselyte, or one who was brought up in their fold.

These two ladies had wonderful manifestations, often reported to me, and I sometimes sat with them. But after a while I found that the second lady was using all her influence over the more mediumistic one, to interest her in a New Orleans lottery, and to find out from the spirits what numbers would "draw" the largest sums. They put in \$20 apiece on the number that the spirits declared positively would draw several thousand dollars, intending to divide the proceeds.

Well, the time of drawing came, and the number drew nothing at all. The medium was thrown into a sad state of bewilderment, and the second lady lost all her interest in Spiritualism, and has turned to the Church, declaring that communications from spirits are all from the devil.

Spiritualism was not to blame. It was her desire to make money through the aid of spirits that was to blame. Heavenly gifts are not to be prostituted. The two ladies misused their mediumistic power, and were corrected therefore. One profited by the lesson, and the other discarded the beautiful gift which she had received.

There are all kinds of spirits, just as there are all kinds of mortals. There are two reasons why it is easier to come in contact with lower than with advanced disembodied spirits. One reason is that there are more of the lower ones, and the other reason is that the undeveloped spirits are the very ones that are the closest to the earth plane. Those who have begun to progress leave the earth plane, and find their more congenial home in a more ethereal stratum. Progressive spirits often return, however, either led by love to their dear ones who are still embroiled, or by a general interest in the advancement of mankind. While it is true that those there who love us do not wish us to suffer privation for the want of money, and may under certain favoring conditions give us good advice, on even material subject, and will avail themselves of the gifts of any medium through whom they can come, yet we should always remember that our progressing friends care more for soul development than for material good; for they are in a condition where they see the true relations between the two. And those who go to "business mediums" go to the mediums whose controls are still in such contact with the earth plane that they can do the eye-making and corner-cutting as they please. We believe that those who use Spiritualism for personal gain and profit are prostituting it, and that much of the obloquy that attaches to the name is due to their working on that plane, and to those who patronize them.

But I have somewhat wandered from my theme, and the bewilderment that besets the investigator, how finds that baser spirits begin to come. One of my correspondents wrote me that after the means given in my book on "Development of Mediums," she began to write automatically, the communications being from her father, an educated and thoughtful man, and being such as one might expect from him. But later, another spirit wrote, gave his name in full, and declared himself to be an "undeveloped bad spirit." Sometimes names of friends were given, but on asking if they were real, they were given, he would write, "No, I am the bad one."

The same lady was also thrown back by Ella Wheeler Wilcox's last essay in the "Irena." I wrote to her that Mrs. Wilcox is a Theosophist, and advised her to have nothing to do with theosophy, as it would lead her astray; that the earlier communications were from her father, but that "naughty George" saw them sitting, and wanted to get in, too; and that they must be patient and wait, and meanwhile do all they could for the naughty one, so as to help him to begin progress. I wrote somewhat thus, though I have no time to keep copies of the scores of letters that I write.

The dear lady has since written to me, "naughty George" wrote a few days ago, "I will be good if you will let me write." My reply will remind her that the blessed gift of mediumship is not only to give us and others news and instruction from the spirit world, but also to help the millions of spirits who have got out of the physical body, but need our help, as well as the help of the disembodied, in order to start on the joyous road of endless progression.

I will close by a bit of poetry that I saved from a newspaper, because I thought it pretty, but I see its true meaning far better now than I did then. It is an allegory, and we will explain it in this way. The day's journey is life, both here and there; the distant bourne and the greeting is the joy we anticipate in dwelling with our loved ones in the spirit home; the stile is the many obstacles to the progression of the soul; the many lame dogs are the poor souls, both here and there, who need our help; and the last star expresses our determination to help all who need help, before we seek our own comfort and rest.

"A long day's journey there lay before / I crossed the meadow at breaking morn; / I saw the road wind by the stile, / Beyond the hills was my distant bourne. / "I thought of the greeting I should win— / What was it moaned at my feet the while? / A poor old terrier, lame and thin, / I stooped and helped him over the stile. / "Then would have crossed, but a dreary yelp / Arrested me, and I turned to see / A limping poodle, whose need of help / Was manifest, and I helped him, too. / "Of every nation and tribe are they, / And each has a fresh, resistless wile; / Rich says in his own peculiar way, / 'Just help my lame dog over the stile.' / "They're greyhound, Skye, Pomeranian / They limp along in an endless file; / They're smooth or curly, black or tan, / But all are lame, and would cross the stile. / "The shadows deepen o'er hill and dale, / Dim is my pathway of many a mile, / But I'll only renew my journey when / The last lame dog is over the stile."

—ABBY A. JUDSON.

CORRESPONDENT

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Boston Letter.

There is a deep and abiding interest in the development of spiritual science, which can not be shaken by all the argument and denunciation which the skeptical world can bring against it. All kinds of theories are presented to account for the tests and manifestations given by the spirit world. Some will say that it is a guess-work of the medium must have known something about it, but we have noticed that the same things are ever ready to inquire regarding the fact of spirit return, and they often hear say they would be glad to know that it was true, but they do not believe that our friends care to come back after they lay off the care of earth. Knowledge seems to be the ground-work of Spiritualism. We are not obliged to receive everything by faith, but we can say with positiveness that we know whereof we speak, and can testify regarding that which we have seen. There can be no doubt, then, of the ultimate triumph of our spiritual philosophy. Early education has very much to do with the slow progress made. The old dog was taught us in early life cling to us, and it is almost impossible to rise above them and step out into the sunlight of spiritual truth. We find more or less of this in every meeting we report. We hope to live long enough to see error and ignorance melt away before the light of truth.

The meetings on Sunday at Berkeley Hall were well attended, and the morning session opened with "beckoning hands," by the vocalist, Miss Maude M. Davis. Mrs. Nellie J. T. Brigham, was again welcomed as the speaker of the hour. After an invocation she proceeded to answer questions presented by the audience. To the first question, "Is not immortality a law which necessitates the eternal justice of everything?" The guides gave affirmative answers. In answer to another question the power of clairvoyance was explained at length. Those having this power see spirits present, and often times go far away and describe spirits of the dead and the living. The Bible is full of stories regarding clairvoyant sight. At the crucifixion we read that graves were opened, the saints therein appeared unto many, and this was simply clairvoyance.

In the evening the hall was well filled at an early hour, and Mrs. Brigham spoke upon "The Altitude of Spiritualism." The speaker said that Spiritualism had reached every country upon the globe, but we are to speak of its altitude. How high is it? We say as high as the moral and intellectual nature of man can reach. It is the grandest truth the world has ever known, teaching us of another world full of grandeur and beauty. It promises the widest and fullest development to childhood, the divinest purity to woman, the greatest unfoldment of the spiritual nature to man, and these things shall show the divine altitude of Spiritualism. It is progressive, and in this element of progression its altitude will be plainly revealed. The proof of spirit return that comes to us will bring us such light as has never been in the faith of the Church. Several subjects were given for improvisation, which were given in a clear and rhythmic manner. Mrs. Brigham has engagements for week-day evenings in Malden, Quincy, and several other localities.

At the First Spiritual Temple Mr. Lyman C. Howe occupied the platform and answered questions presented by the audience, very much to their satisfaction, interspersed with several fine inspirational poems.

At Commercial Hall, Dr. N. P. Smith, president, in his opening remarks presented the truth that some form of religion was to be found in every nation on the face of the earth.

Dr. E. K. Brown spoke of the wide difference between the faith of several Churches and the knowledge which comes to us through Spiritualism.

Dr. Hoot gave communications from several spirits present.

Readings and tests were given by Mrs. E. C. Dickinson, which were well recognized.

Mrs. Josephine R. Stone spoke of spirit "Onionah," who gave her considerable instruction and assistance in the every-day duties of life, and gave psychometric readings.

Miss Jennie Rhind entertained the audience with visions and descriptions in a poetical strain. She said that in physical phenomena we have first the blade, then the leaf, afterward the full corn in the ear.

Dr. C. D. Foster gave some very characteristic descriptions and tests. He has located himself again at 275 Shawmut avenue, where he gives scientific marriage treatments.

Excellent tests were given by Miss Soule, a young medium.

Miss A. J. Webster closed the meeting with an improvisation full of grand, beautiful thoughts.

Mr. F. Alex's Heath was present and briefly referred to the attitude of the pulpit and press, following his remarks with the full names and descriptions of several persons who had passed through the gates ajar, which were recognized.

At Eagle Hall very interesting meetings were held throughout the day and evening. Tests were given by Mr. George Trask, who has lately entered the mediumistic field, and bids fair to do a good work upon the platform. Tests and readings were also given by Mrs. M. A. Chase, Mrs. J. K. D. Conant, Mrs. Lizzie M. Shackley, Dr. E. A. Roy, Mrs. A. Wilkins, and others.

In the afternoon Dr. J. E. Ditson spoke upon "The Spirit Body," address full of earnest thought, and clearly defined. Public meetings are held in this hall every Wednesday afternoon.

Dr. E. M. Saunders has opened meetings in Abbot's Ford Hall in the Charlestown district. Mrs. Sarah H. Byrnes gave one of her eloquent lectures, which was eagerly listened to.

Mrs. Dr. C. E. Bell, one of Boston's excellent test mediums, was present in the evening, and gave some fine tests.

A new public meeting has been opened at Irving Hall, corner of Dover and Washington streets, Mrs. O. A. Robbins, conductor. At the Sunday morning session Mr. James Varcoe gave a very interesting address upon "Spiritualism and its relation to the coming of Christ and its teachings hereafter." Tests were given by Mrs. Dr. Roy, Miss L. E. Smith, "Minnie," and others.

Dr. E. T. Albro spoke in the evening upon "The Responsibility of mediums and the duty of those whom they serve."

In Malden, Dr. J. B. Thorndyke, of Ashland, N. H. spoke in Odd Fellows' Hall last Sunday, upon "Circumstances," a very able address. Malden is a beautiful city, only five miles from Boston, and we consider it one of its suburbs. Many of the Malden Spiritualists fraternize with the societies in Boston. It is a stronghold of theology, having been the home of several well-known divines. Bishop Haven of the Methodist denomination, having made that city his home for the last forty years of his earth life. But the Church people are inquiring regarding the truths of our philosophy, and some of the best members of Spiritualist Society were once Church members.

On Wednesday evening, October 18th, the Helping Hand held a reception to Mrs. Nellie J. T. Brigham, the speaker of the Boston Spiritual Temple. The president, Miss Lucette Webster, extended a hearty welcome to all, and especially to the guest of the evening.

Mrs. R. S. Lillie was present after her long absence in the itinerant work, and spoke earnestly in praise of Mrs. Brigham's devotion, and her self-sacrifice for the cause of Spiritualism. She added that Spiritualism is the greatest truth the world has ever received, and Mrs. Brigham one of its best advocates. There should be inscribed on her banner "faithful service well performed." Mrs. Lillie is the regular speaker of the Boston Spiritual Temple, but was glad to congratulate

the temple on account of its being favored with Mrs. Brigham for the month of October. Dr. Mayson added his most cordial greetings and said that we were making too slow progress in our work, we are not advancing as we should. We are the only people who make the study of spirit a special work and in the most distant future we shall have the grandest religion in the world. We are with one of his beautiful songs, which was recited with hearty applause. President Webster recited "Flag at Half Mast," a poem devoted to woman. Jacob Edson, Esq., gave one of his face-tious speeches, concluding with the serious thought that every one of us should have some object in life and pursue it faithfully to the end. We should be so positive in our knowledge that those who come in contact with us will be inspired with the truth we advocate. Mr. William H. Banks, president of Boston Spiritual Temple, spoke of the deep religious thought given by Mrs. Brigham upon the platform of Berkeley Hall. Mrs. Nellie J. T. Brigham, the honored guest of the evening, was reduced and gave some of her early experiences in the lecture field. In the town of Bennington, Vt., where her early life was passed, there was no liberal thought whatever, but the doctrine of the Baptist Church was the only one. She had, consequently, been led by the spirit world into her medi-umistic work directly in opposition to her early education. Mrs. Brigham gave her first spiritual lecture when only thirteen years old, having been six weeks in the academy, consequently, her home, school houses, parlors, and, indeed, always held herself in readiness to speak for the truth everywhere. The beautiful flowers upon the platform furnished Mrs. Brigham with a subject for an inspirational poem. After another song from Mr. Lillie, Mrs. Carrie Loring of Baltimore expressed her pleasure in listening to the euc-cunions bestowed upon Mrs. Brigham, with the hope that her voice might be heard for many years in the advocacy of spiritual truth.

We are pleased to report that another society has been instituted in good old Boston, to en-lit the ladies in the benevolent work of relieving suffering humanity, and aiding in the advancement of spiritual truth. It is known as the "Ly-cum Ladies' Aid Society," holding meetings in Dwight Hall, 514 Tremont Street, on Wednesday evenings. Maggie P. Butler is President, which is sufficient to insure its success. At their last regular meeting supper was served at 6 p.m. and the evening's entertainment opened with a piano solo by Miss Blanche Houston, and a fine musical selection by Miss Louise Hoener. Remarks were made by J. B. Hatch, Jr., President of Children's Progressive Lyceum, Mrs. M. A. Brown followed with some very fine tests under the control of "Lula" her intelligent spirit guide. Mrs. Sarah H. Frost and her son Mister Harold entertained the Lyceum with a fine duet upon the piano, which was heartily enjoyed. Dr. Hoot gave some very clear tests which were well recog-nized. Little Minnie Ireland closed the enter-tainment with a character song entitled "Coming thro' the Rye."

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VOICÉ OF THE PEOPLE.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION.

In your issue of October 15th I am glad to see you have, to some extent, answered the question so often and naturally asked since the return of delegates from the convention. "What was done at the convention?"

Your extract of proceedings so far as the preamble, constitution, etc. goes, furnishes all that is important to know, perhaps, until the whole proceedings shall be printed in pamphlet form, which the secretary was authorized to prepare. I am sorry to notice in that section providing for membership or who shall constitute delegates to annual conventions, that the member is restricted to one delegate for each one hundred members, on the major part of one hundred—that question was debated at some length in the committee upon organization, and I am quite sure the opinion prevailed and was so reported and adopted by the convention, viz., that all societies having complied with the requirements of the constitution should be entitled to one delegate, and for every additional member over fifty they should be entitled to an additional delegate.

The argument that was urged that there was danger of increasing the number of delegates to an inconvenient number practically, must have been induced from the large number present at the first convention. Forgetting that at future annual meetings, the great attraction, (the World's Fair) will not be a factor. And while I have great faith in the ultimate success and permanence of our organization, I see the importance of extending every inducement to increase and foster auxiliary societies in the more sparsely settled and destitute parts of the West and South.

If, however, I am mistaken and the convention did endorse the provision in regard to delegates, as stated in the section published, and it is found to work an injustice, there is adequate provision made for a change of the constitution, so that no societies or persons who desire to form them, need feel any apprehension, however small their numbers may be.

It is not to be expected that every provision necessary for the perfect working of the organization could be adopted at the first convention or foreseen. I feel that one important step, and in the right direction, has been taken, and as you very properly say, much remains to be done, which can only be accomplished through perseverance, harmony, and concert of action, by all who are in sympathy with the great work so auspiciously inaugurated at Chicago during the world's greatest exhibition—contemporarily great acts.

A FALSE HOPE.

Written for the LIGHT OF TRUTH.

I have observed several times in the LIGHT OF TRUTH reference made to the Constitution of the United States, as guaranteeing freedom of religious worship, and claiming that the State laws made restrictive of Spiritualism are contrary to the Constitution. I reviewed this subject a couple of years ago in the Better Way and showed the error of this belief. It is just the other way around. The right to legislate on religion is reserved to the States. The people of a State have the legal right to legislate upon, or even to establish a State religion, if they think it to their interest. They may also in their legislative bodies prohibit any kind of religious worship. Congress may not do this but a legislature can. It is a right reserved to the States by Article X of the Amendments. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution Maryland was strongly Catholic, and a fear was expressed by some that if the national government were at any time strongly Protestant it might employ its power to prohibit special forms of worship, and to ally such a change or fear, Article I was adopted. It is a great pity it did not say "Congress or no State shall make any law respecting an establishment of religion, etc." In the Jackson case in Tennessee the judge took the same view that I had previously announced; and I feel very confident if a case is ever carried to the Supreme Court it will result in non-suiting those who believe that the Constitution protects any one in his religious belief. I wish Spiritualists to clearly understand this subject as they will be the better prepared to take care of themselves. Their strength lies in organization and co-operation. Only by this line can they enforce respect. There are Spiritualist voters enough in almost any State to overturn the State government at election time. If the Cincinnati Commercial Gazette knew that by its course of persecution and falsification about Spiritualism, all the voters of that belief would vote against their candidate, it would have something else to find fault with beside Spiritualism. If Spiritualists wish to be exempt from persecution and prosecution they must adopt the same means of defence that are effective in other cases. According to the law of evolution, anything that is so weak that it can not take of itself is unfit to survive. It will be exterminated as not adapted to the time or condition of things. I do not believe Spiritualism is destined to extinguishment; but it may need the stimulus of a little persecution. Faiths are strengthened by resistance just as the oak toughens under the assaults of the storm. It may not be to the interest of the people of a State to legislate against mediums or a belief in spiritual phenomena, but they must be made to comprehend this. In the mean time Spiritualists should not "lay the flattering unction to their souls" that the United States Constitution protects them in their belief or what.

COMMENTARY.

Ready for Anything that Comes.

I want to say God bless you for your manly outspoken words in your issue of the 15th inst., headed "Americans Wake Up." Some of your readers may heedlessly say that you are dabbling in "politics." Not so, this is Spiritualism itself, "Spiritualism in motion." Spiritualists, of all people, should be able to see through these financial questions as through clear space and act accordingly, quickly, and precisely. They have traveled through the highways and byways of life in search of truth, and know what "that tiresome feeling" is. Of what use is it then unless applied for the benefit of the race? We have come to the parting of the ways, and many less developed are dependent on us and our decisions for their future advancement or otherwise. Not to the Church, law, or party can we look for aid but to the "great plain people" of the land.

Truth not Sectarian.

I feel I am one of many who will heartily endorse Mr. Terry's idea of popularizing Spiritualism, and Mr. Bacon's suggestion in LIGHT OF TRUTH of October 7th. I long for the time to come when our speakers and teachers, without exception, will explain our "beautiful philosophy" in such a way that all who hear, whether Christian or infidel, will recognize the truths as they are unfolded. I will venture to say not one Spiritualist who may chance to read this but has had the finger of scorn pointed at him by an orthodox "friend." What was the result; did it make Presbyterians or Methodists out of them? No, "you never can convince a man that he is wrong by ridiculing his ideas." I do not feel capable of ever making a suggestion, but it does seem the only remedy is to organize; adopt the Golden Rule as our foundation, then teach it and live it, and peace and harmony, and all the charms of the spiritual philosophy will be held more sacred, and its influences felt wherever we may be.

The Priest and the Cow.

A little story is printed in a Catholic paper which will probably suggest its own moral. A poor woman appealed to her priest to cure her sick cow. He at first declined; but fearing to lose her confidence, he finally consented to make an attempt. The cow was brought out of the shed, and the priest for some time walked around it, mumbling this chant: "If you die you die; if you live you live." It so happened that the cow lived. Some time after, the priest became seriously sick. The woman went to the house, and said she could cure him. The physician thought her offer absurd; but she was so importunate that he allowed her to see what she could do. She had the sick priest moved on his bed to the middle of the room and walked around it, crooning, "If you die you die; if you live you live." This so amused the priest that he set him into a violent fit of laughter, which so affected his nervous system that he at once began to recover. The question remains—in which thing was he the meener? Was it when he first cheated the woman, or was it when he could laugh at the blind faith of his dupe? This story can not be set down as a Protestant lie.—Boston Investigator.

LITERARY REVIEW.

Dr. G. H. Miller, medium and author, 2333 Hickory Street, St. Louis, Mo. Price 20 cents; eighty-two pages. This is a neat little brochure, containing much interesting truth and philosophy. The writer claims to have received the information from different members of his band who occupy various spheres in the spirit world. We have no reason to doubt him. The subject matter reads like truth, and we may therefore believe that the same comes from a truth-loving medium, who attracts truthful spirits. It is Christianity and not Spiritualism that tolerates laws, punishing unlicensed but honest men for writing a prescription that cures, and permitting grasping ones to advertise abortion pills or committing the crime of abortion directly under protection of a medical diploma. Before attempting to legislate against Spiritualism again, good Christian law makers should see that their own Augean stables are cleansed of their many monstrous evils, of which the aforementioned is a sample. We fear there is little hope of redemption from communities which tolerate such law makers—the latter representing the former.

LIGHT OF TRUTH

BOOK LIST

For Sale at the Office of THE LIGHT OF TRUTH, ROOM 2, 206 Race St., CINCINNATI, OHIO.

The following list contains most of the best works on the philosophy and science of spiritualism and kindred subjects, which are kept in stock at this office. Remittances by postal note, money order, registered letter, or draft on Cincinnati or New York. Do not send drafts on local banks. Shipments will not be made on payment. Send all orders and make all remittances payable to C. C. STOWELL, Room 2, 206 Race Street, Cincinnati, O.

Why We Became a Spiritualist, by Abby A. Judson. Cloth bound, 32 pages. Price 15 cents. Faith Brander's Vision, a description of a spirit world, and answers in question form, exercises upon each lesson, and a series of questions without replies. Just what is needed in every household. It is so written that all minds may find the lessons of practical value. Bristol board cover, 32 cents each. How per dozen, \$2.50 per set.

The Reason Why, or Spiritual Experiences of Julia Child Smith, M. D. Price 25 cents. The History of Jesus, and the Medical Genes and Topography of Esotericism, by George M. Massey, who proves irrefragably that Christianity is a borrowed from the ancient Egyptian religion. 320 pages. Price, paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents; postage 5 cents.

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The Development of the Spirit after Transition; its Origin of Religion, by M. Paraday. Price 10 cents; postage 5 cents. The Process of Mental Action, or How We Think, by M. Paraday. Price 15 cents; postage 5 cents. Jesus Christ a Fiction, Founded upon the Life of Apollonius of Tyana, translated by M. Paraday. How the pagan priests of Rome, by their Christianity, stealing confessions of its founders, and pages. Price, boards, 75 cents; postage 5 cents.

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Side Jottings, by Mattie H. Hull. Essays, sketches, poems, and songs, gathered from the highways, byways, and hedgerows of life. Price \$1.00. Later Papers, by Mattie H. Hull. Essays in Spirit Life, including Later Papers, Carrie H. B. Twigg, medium. 41 pages. Price 25 cents.

Contrasts in Spirit Life, and Recent Experiences of the Author, by Carrie H. B. Twigg, medium. 142 pages. Price 50 cents. Interview with Spirits, by Samuel Bowles, Carrie H. B. Twigg, medium. 32 pages. Price, paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents; postage 5 cents.

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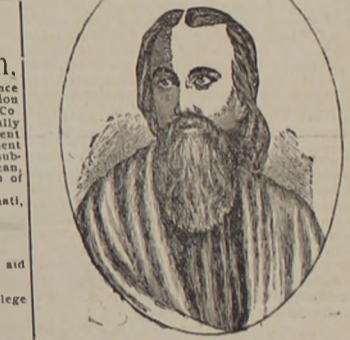
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