

# THE OLIVE BRANCH

Devoted to the Spiritual Elevation of Humanity.

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NO. 1

## The Olive Branch.

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Address,

THE OLIVE BRANCH,

Utica, N. Y.

## COL. INGERSOLL AND HIS CRITICS.

SERMON DELIVERED IN PROGRESSIVE HALL, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH, 1877, BY REV. A. A. WHEELOCK.

SUBJECT.—Free Thought, Free Speech, and a Free Religion, the basis of True Government.

[Phonographically reported by H. E. DEYENDORF, Utica, N. Y.]

The subject for consideration, lies at the foundation of all thought, of all teaching of that grand philosophy of life that expresses itself in the form human, as distinctive from every other form in existence. This philosophy encompasses that faith which men denominate "spiritual," and embraces the unmistakable revelation of spiritual things until the gloom of the grave is illuminated and the light of immortality breaks upon the otherwise darkened conditions of human life.

"Free Thought, Free Speech, and a Free Religion, the basis of True Government," is the subject that, in brief, I ask your attention to this morning; and I only regret the limit of time, and the limit of patience, upon your part, human endurance, in dealing with so vast a subject. Ere I proceed to a concise and special consideration of it, I desire to clear the way by the consideration of some conditions; by examining some of the surroundings that exist here in your midst, that lead me directly to the subject matter. You read in this so-called "holy book," many good things, and many things that are indifferent, that are absolutely cast aside by you. You don't read them at all. But you read that, in the past, there was a certain pool that was troubled by an angel of the Lord, as they believed, and when the spirit troubled the pool those who had diseases stepped down into the water and were healed. An instrument of the Lord had been to this city, and the theological pool has been stirred. The waters have become troubled, and many have unconsciously stepped in, and they realize the pre-ence power and influence of the angel of free thought—God's angel troubling the waters of their sluggish mentality.

First of all, let me assure you that spirits are not silent, uninterested spectators of the human race, because they are in spirit life. They are not uninterested spectators of even the most trifling things that pertain to human interests, much less those of a public character, that, in their influence, stir human thought, and bring to humanity, that divine revelation, and that divine result, in mental healing, that God has decreed. For, it is only by stirring these elements that the agitation of thought can be realized. No truer sentiment was ever expressed, than that the agitation of thought is the beginning of wisdom. And what else so priceless in human life; what so priceless in angel life, as the power revealing the matchless wisdom of God? The agitation of thought is the beginning of such revelation. For, without agitation, there is no thought; there is no possible power, in that direction, manifest. Hence, it lies at the very doorway of all possible realization, in all times and places, either in the mortal form, or in any condition

or sphere in spirit life. As far as I know, this is as applicable to spirit existence, out of the mortal or physical state, as it is to the condition of mind and spirit, in it.

The inquiry comes, then, in the midst of this commotion, Who are agitated, and why? What has been said, what has been done, that should so agitate the tranquil minds of godly men in this community, and cause the troubled waters of their mentality to present the peculiar condition observed at this time? Why, the circumstances are simply these: A gentleman, holding a distinguished position before the public, as an orator and independent thinker, comes to this beautiful city, and gives expression to certain ideas, to certain thoughts, that come in conflict with established sectarian conditions of religious theorizing, religious teaching. And this causes the fluttering you perceive among the clerical birds, which shows how fully they have come under the direct aim of the clear-sighted marksman, whose intellectual bullets have pierced through and through the thick-coated, thick crusted theology in this community. They have entered the heretofore bristling coat of mail, so long shielding the outside, touching, as with the finger of death, the very life essence and basis, upon which these structures rest, and attempt to hold a commanding influence over the public mind.

But only a certain class manifest any particular anxiety. As of old, "the common people heard him, and heard him gladly." It was so with Jesus; it has been so with every bold teacher of the truth, in every age: "The common people heard them gladly." Who could not observe, that evening, a general response, in living hearts, that pulsated in sympathy with the rapid strokes that a decaying system of theology received?

Was there any utterance as against the culture and improvement of the human mind? No. Was there a single sentiment uttered that declared hostility, in any sense, to any human interest, or justice? No. Was aught uttered, but that which reason, justice and true manliness might dictate? No. It does not lie within the power of one, or all the clergymen of this city to show it. Five of them appeared like the foolish virgins, "with no oil in their lamps," as demonstrated by their folly before the newspaper interviewer.

The representative of Catholicism declared that "his Church rested on dogma!" They were satisfied; unconcerned, no matter what the "infidel" might say. As representatives of the Catholic Church, they were so little concerned, that they neither hear, or read, or wish to know what others may know, or what truth may be revealed to any human soul, touched with the finger of inspiration from on high, and revealing the greatest living truth to mortal man, in the midst of the darkness of dogmas and creeds, that comes both through the Catholic Church and its numerous Protestant branches!

Who, then, is it with whom this agitation is manifest to-day? Again, you can turn to the past, and find history repeating itself. This commotion is not new. This manifestation of anxiety, upon the part of those who claim to be, as did those in the past, the vicger-



ents of God on earth, is not new. When a similar agitation was manifest in the past, the same element and a like cause existed. They said of the mighty works of that humble Nazarene, performed in the simplicity and power of truth, "our craft is in danger." Their wonderment and anxiety knew no bounds, as running to and fro, and counseling with each other they said: "Great is Diana, for by this craft we get our gain!" Do not these men say among themselves, "our craft is in danger?" It is easy to perceive the true cause of anxiety upon the part of those who claim to represent all that religion embodies in this community. Of course, there is agitation upon the part of those whose living depends upon their being able to maintain their claim. It could not be otherwise. How desperate their struggle, and how pitiful the public manifestation they are making to save that which cannot be saved! God has decreed that the mighty sweep of truth's sword shall destroy this man-made theology. This is in harmony with the great principles of progress eternal, which this "infidel" "Goliath" enunciated.

And the fact that an "infidel," as they regard him, could stand in their midst, with the majesty of a power which threatened to upheave their very foundations, and proclaim immortality to the people, as the result of a natural life, blossoming daily with kindness, love and goodness, being constantly carried forward by the law of progress in each being, without consent or necessity of the presence or prayers of the clergy, seems to have been the last hair added to their overburdened patience, which they could not endure. This was simply declaring the grand truth of progress, by which human life, spirit existence, and even God's infinite spirit, reveals the possibility and glory of a deathless immortality. That this so-called "infidel" should stand upon a public platform in Utica, with so many ears eagerly listening, anxious to know the truth, and have him declare to them that immortality was not born of creeds, or of man's devices, but was an inheritance of human life, of time and progress eternal, regardless of creeds, you can all perceive, endangers the "craft." Yes, endangers the little theological "dug-out" in which each one of these special representatives of God is paddling about in the community, seeking to pacify, and still hold the public mind and the conscience of individuals to the support of their unimproved devil and Godless theories!

Let me say to these reverend brothers, you might just as well undertake to stop the pouring forth of the effluvia from Mount Vesuvius' top, by holding an umbrella over it, as to stop the flow of God's illuminating truth pouring forth in torrents of eloquence upon the minds of men—even from the throat of this giant infidel of the West. Your theological patent for revealing God's truth is out of date. You have no process by which you can, or will be allowed to put a padlock or a patent upon it, or any other device, so long as free thought, free speech, and free men exist in a free land.

All ideas, whether religious or otherwise, must stand a clear and searching investigation. To entertain ideas, and not be willing to clearly contrast, in reason, those ideas, even with the ideas of an avowed infidel, as the speaker claimed, is not only most illogical, but the evidence of bigotry and barbarism.

Moral ethics, all human thought, must be subject to the law of improvement and progress in every age, as everything else is subject to that law; then it becomes interwoven in the mind, as truth. Religion, as well as all else in this universe of life, must be subject to the law of growth and progress; hence it is not a matter of "grace divine," poured into the human soul at some special prayer meeting, or religious revival, in answer to the prayers of saints!

But what did this soul-destroying "infidel" say? Let me read to you the very gist of his inspired utterances. This is an instrument of God—of the spirit world. His mission to this city was to bless humanity, by opening wide the pearly gates of free thought, through which every human soul was invited to come to the store-house of knowledge. His mission, in part, was to deliver the clergy from the bondage of creeds, superstition and ignorance. He was moved upon by spirit power in his conscious,

normal state. The thoughts that the spirit world desired to give to humanity found expression in strains of eloquence, which charmed, while it awakened new thoughts with all who listened.

Why should these learned critics, claiming to have the advantage of possessing, by simply asking for it, an abundance of "grace divine," so misunderstand Col. Ingersoll's ideas, as to unite in filling the air with wordy declarations and assumptions about that which he did not say, rather than that which he did declare? Set up men of straw to pull down before their admiring flocks, rather than look this giant once square in the face. Why? Is it because these apostles of wisdom do not understand the plain English which an honest "infidel" used? What then causes their intense anxiety and fear? Criticise, O reverend gentlemen, but let your criticisms rest upon the grand and noble sentiments expressed even by an "infidel," in all fairness, that you may follow the teaching of your professed Master, in rendering unto Caesar the things that belong to him; and when you thus criticise, then will the "common people hear, and hear gladly," and though you may deceive some with your sophistry, those sublime truths uttered will have their effect, and the words so eloquently expressed will burn their way into the hearts of men in this beautiful city, and there is no power of pope or priest that can stop the silent working of their influence.

I now read to you some of the grand sentiments expressed by Col. Ingersoll, that you may see what cause for grievous offense this hated "infidel" gave the clergy of Utica, and which some of them have resented with the lamb-like spirit of the tiger. These are the significant words: "I do not say what is or what is not true." Broad, good, grand, noble declaration! Do these critics say this? They profess to tell you what God knows! They profess to be in the secrets of the Infinite, and the devil besides! They claim to know what both are doing, and while his satanic majesty goes about "like a roaring lion," devouring human souls, the Infinite and All-powerful Deity, whom these reverend gentlemen worship, sits upon the throne of the universe and quietly looks upon the sad havoc the devil is making, unconcerned and unmoved, and with less anxiety about the fate of souls than the clergy of Utica have manifested concerning the honest sentiments of an "infidel," honestly expressed. They profess to know what God does, asks, demands of you and others. They can tell you all about it. Especially does God want you, say they, to attend, and pay liberally to the support of their Church. Why God has more interest in this than in check-mating and stopping the devil in his wild career of destruction, they do not explain.

Now note the modesty of this much feared "infidel." He says "I do not say what is true, or what is not true. I simply plead for light." He pleads for more light to beam upon the pathway of mortal men. Is there anything wrong in that plea? Do these men say this? What is their light? They try to spread the rays of a little tallow dip all over God's universe, and by its feeble light are groping around in the darkness, endeavoring to find the path that leads to immortality before the flickering rays go out in death. "I plead for light," says this royal soul, touched with God's inspiration from on high. More! What else? "For room." For light and room. What else? "For opportunity for each human soul." O, the representatives from higher spheres could say no more. God could not say more for mortal man in his present condition. It is what God is saying through every manifestation of light and love upon the planet. Again and again upon this platform I have sought in my own humble, feeble way, to present this truth to you. More light—more room—more opportunities. God is saying it in every spear of grass—in every atom of dust. God is saying it in the mighty forest, in the unfolding beauty of the flowers. In the human structure, God is saying it, both to the child in the cradle and the man stepping into the grave. He is saying for humanity, "Give them light." God is making the plea that this man made for "more light," in the midst of darkness. For "more room" that men may

have, just in proportion to their light and room, opportunities; golden, glorious opportunities; without which death, darkness, silence, absolute nonentity must reign. Do these men say this? They say you must find all the light, room and opportunity for grand royal souls, possessing Infinite possibilities, in the little, narrow, sectarian creeds which they have made, and which taken altogether, make a theological "dug-out" of about the same size and capacity as the one referred to by Col. Ingersoll, which he declared was navigated by an ancient mariner possessing a "spoonful of brains."

"Let everybody think," says Col. Ingersoll. This comes naturally, as the result of "more light," "more room and opportunity." "Let everybody think, and let everybody express that thought." Do these men say this? Why, then, this fluttering, this anxiety? "While I live, I am going to do my own thinking, and to express that thought. That is all I ask, liberty. If I haven't the right to think, for what reason am I a thinker?" All the theology of the universe can't answer that question. It is a direct thrust at every creed that was ever made, that shackles the human intellect, and binds it, as these men well know, to certain set rules, that make the individual a slave, and bring the mind into the condition of that serfdom incompatible with liberty; even the liberty of the true gospel. "If I have not the right to think, for what reason am I a thinker? And if I am going to think anything, why not think my own thoughts? Have I a right to express it? Yes, if any other human being has the right to express it. Standing under the flag of nature"—Ah, too broad for these reverend gentlemen—Standing under the flag of nature, I am the equal of every other human being in that right, (the right to think and the right to express it.) If I have not that right, who has? If I lose my right, when did that gentleman get his? If Mr. Smith has no right to think and Mr. Brown has no right to think, and Mr. Thompson has no right to think, and those three get together to form a Church"—mark, here is another cause for fluttering—"what right have they to think? I claim no more for myself, than I give to all others cheerfully. It is too early in the history of this world, my friends, to write a creed." O, what admonition and sound advice is this, to those who are making creeds, thereby putting shackles upon the mentality of man, woman, and child, in gaining a livelihood in maintaining such creed. Why it too early to write a creed? Here are the reasons: "It is too early in the history of the world, to tell what is true,"—absolutely—"it is too early in the history of this world to write a creed." "Our fathers were slaves. Their fathers were intellectual serfs. There has never yet been a free generation of men, and women upon this globe. Wait until we have had a few ages of liberty. It will be time enough then to say, or undertake to say, what is true. It will be time enough then to give a philosophy to the world."

This is the height and length of the "infidel's" offending; these sentiments I have read to you. What is there in them, in fact or expression, that could cause the slightest feeling of opposition to rise in the mind of any human being, who is not allied in interest, in thought, in education, in feeling, with some superstition or creed? Nothing at all, but what every lover of liberty, every man who believes in the right to think, free from prejudice, would admit as a necessity to every human soul.

I now ask you to consider with me, as directly connected with "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child," what is involved in "Free Thought, Free Speech, and a Free Religion, as the Basis of a True Government." I regret that my time for its consideration is so limited. The freedom of thought is a necessity, whether in the physical body, or spirit life, and is in harmony with the spirit of freedom universal. Not a license, simply, as under certain influences and circumstances, individuals may be persuaded to believe in certain theories or practices; but a grander understanding of liberty, wherein individual thought, first of all things, and the right to think upon all subjects, is regarded as the natural and priceless inheritance of every human being. The



nature of the human structure clearly proves the right to think. If there is no freedom of thought for the individual, there can be none in a larger sense. The claim of independence, in a national sense, or the Declaration of Independence of our fathers, that we glory in, is but the beginning, the blossom and full blooming of individual thought; but the unitizing of the individual right to think, is but the accumulation of this element and power, and those who were engaged in the framing and promulgation of that declaration of freedom, had no right whatever to make it, unless it be based upon the right of every individual to think for themselves.

Religion is not debarr'd from this necessity, any more than the mere concerns of business, in life. The right of freedom to think relates to religion more than all else. It relates to the moral force, with a grander scope, covering the necessities of human life more than it does any other interest in that life. In this mortal form, the priest may deny men the right to think. As you read the history of the race—the history of the past—you shall find priest-craft and king-craft and their interests united. One holding with iron grasp, the physical condition of mankind; the other holding the spiritual and moral powers of the race, and controlling them. If man could be relieved from and brought up out of the influence of such a combination of tyranny, he had first to gain physical freedom. But that could not have come as a boon to mankind, to the extent it has in this new world, unless preceded by free thought, which finally blossomed out into the beauty and glory of freedom in this free land. The physical bonds must be stricken from the race, first, before spiritual freedom could be realized.

The right to think, in the individual, lies at the basis of the acquisition of all knowledge and experience in life. The laws of experience in life, the laws of growth, development, all these are embraced within the right to think. The being who has not this right, has not the power to exercise it. If man did not possess the power to think, even the mighty inspiration of the Infinite could never touch or quicken his soul. What is this human structure, physically, without the power to think? The right to think can be demonstrated by any being who has the power God lays no embargo upon the right of the individual to think. You may question Him as you will, and never get a frown from God. But you can't question a priest five times, without being sent straight to perdition, and never could in any age. But you may question the All Father eternally, and only smiles and joy and rejoicing will answer you back and encourage you to search for the cause of all things. The power and right to think is a primal necessity of being.

It follows, then, of necessity, if men possess the power of thought, by the decree of the Infinite, there must be a natural avenue to express that thought. What is it? The grand possibility of speech, by which soul communicates with soul. There are other avenues that the soul employs; the intuitions of being, that not only express, but reveal the inner depths, as speech never can. But the glory of speech, and the necessity of speech, are seen in all the conditions of life, manifested by joy inexpressible, that each being possesses the possibility of expressing the thought that each has the right to think. This is the natural consequence, then, of free speech. The natural sequence to the existence of free thought in the mind—the power to think. Next comes, of necessity, the power to express that thought. In this, as in the blossom, the power of thought is the bud, and the floral kingdom, in all its matchless beauty, possesses nothing like this. "Solomon, in all his glory," was not arrayed like a human mind, budding in infancy, in the power of thought—the bud unfolding in speech—the sweet and perfect blossom of that bud; giving forth the fragrance of the soul, which is perfect love.

To realize the fullest development and benefit of Free Thought, there must be Free Speech. Whoever seeks or attempts to abridge either, is an enemy to mankind! As Free Thought is the bud, Free Speech is the blossom, and these ever give promise of fruit which is found in a free religion. These three form a glorious trinity, and become the basis of all true

government. The cultivation of the moral powers of mankind lies at the foundation of honest, good government, as certainly as they do of a true character for the individual. This is that intellectual quality called conscience, which is the only true measure of men or nations. It is the ripe fruit of bud and blossom in all possible growth and development in both individual and national life, not only in this earthly condition, but in the unfolding and blossoming in a higher state of existence. For this is the measure of men—the measure of angels—light divine. This is the fruit, the ripe fruit. It is the full orb'd glory of that living power. Development of fruit in all that pertains to this life shows this natural truth, and reveals the basis of all things with God or man. An intelligent conscience encompasses all that is good, all that is pure, all that is holy, all that is true and sincere; and naught else. This is the sum total, the vital essence of free religion, "pure and undefiled" from taint of creed, or tyranny of pope or priest. There are other elements of mind; and all nature's forces are employed in the mingling and intermingling of these elements, blossoming in the life of the lower forms of existence; in the base of the brain; in that which pertains to the physical forms of life. But the ripe, rich fruit of the freedom of speech is the freedom of conscience. The evidence of this is seen in the history of the race. It is because conscience has been the polar star to some brave and heroic souls in every age, that man has advanced to his present spiritual development. It is because conscience, as a mighty sovereign, held sway in some minds, in every hour of peril, in the ages past, that the purple flowers of martyrdom and patriotism still bloom upon the graves of the dead centuries! It was conscience in heroic souls that has made possible the ever widening pathway of human advancement up the rolling centuries, sprinkled with the blood of martyrs and patriots in each succeeding age. It is because there is a conscience in man that the grand progress of the race has been possible, from the earlier forms of human life to the present intellectual state. There are unmistakable signs in history, of growth, advancement, and progress, from the lower conditions in which the race once existed and out of which it came. Yes, it must come! There was no other way by which it could come, by which the glorious estate of true manhood—a true life—guided by the divine light of conscience in each individual, can be reached. Would you know the measure of a nation's conscience, take the true measure of the conscience of every man, woman and child in it; you will have the sum total of the nation's conscience. Just in proportion, as you measure that, you will find out the standard of justice in the national life.

And O, when you turn with saddened gaze to the sad havoc that war is making at this time in the East, can you not gauge the conscience of those nations, in their death struggle for the mastery? What elements are chiefly manifest in this bloody contest? The voice of reason is hushed in the din and roar of battle, and the light of conscience is shrouded with the black pall woven of selfishness, strife, and carnage. Mad ambition, hatred, and revenge rule the hour. Again the Cross and the Crescent are in a death grapple. Blood-stained with past contests in the interest of religion, these same emblems of national godliness and piety are now waved over gory battle-fields, of butchery and slaughter. As the thumb-screw rack and gibbet was once used in the interests of religion, so it is claimed that this slaughter of human life, with all the desolation that war can bring, is in the interest of religion. In the light of what history reveals—the desolation that the present religious war is making, the fear, the awful trepidation, the envy, hate, and malice, the united bluster, and *fan-farade* made by most of the clergymen of Urica, because one solitary infidel came here and uttered his thoughts in a manly, honest, straightforward way—in view of all this, and much more we might present of ostracism and persecution at the present day by the leaders and professors of sectarian Christianity—*falsely called religion*—am I not justifi-

fied in exclaiming, as did the heroic Madame Roland, whose indignant gaze fell upon the statue of Liberty while awaiting her execution—"Oh Religion! what crimes have been, and are being committed in thy name!" Why is this, do you ask? Measure the conscience, and you shall find the answer. See those ruffianly fluffies pounding each other's faces to jelly. Measure their conscience. See two religious nations engaged in wholesale butchery of human life. Measure their conscience. See men who claim to have "grace divine"—"wisdom from on high"—who preach and profess to be governed by the spirit of peace and good will to all men, unite to assail and destroy the reputation and usefulness of an honest, upright, intelligent, good man, by shouting "Infidel," "Heresy," "Blasphemy"—simply because there is an honest difference of opinion, and the said "infidel" has the ability and courage to express his thoughts. Measure their consciences.

What do they all need? A baptism of free thought and true religion. If the champions of the prize ring had a higher development in thought, and conscience to correspond, the world would not be shocked with their disgusting brutality. If the masses in Russia and Turkey had been favored with the freedom of thought—of speech—of the press, and could have known and felt the influence of freedom in religion—the full power of an intelligent conscience—the horrors of the present desolating war would have been avoided! Had the clergymen of this city been filled with the spirit of our Elder Brother, whose glorious life they profess to follow and emulate, they could not have sneered at and unitedly assailed an honest man, because of a difference of opinion! All that was essential in the teachings of Jesus was declared by Him to be embraced in "Charity." Blessed Charity! How these lamb-like "followers of the Lamb" have illustrated it! With such a religion, how long will it be before these reverend tigers and infidel lambs will lie down in peace together! Then will the millennium have dawned!

What does humanity need? More "Free Thought," "Free Speech" and "Free Religion;" "More Light," "More Room," more, better and grander opportunities for every human soul! With these must come intellectual development; a broadening and deepening of the individual and public conscience. Then shall men learn war no more; but peace, love and good will shall blossom everywhere in human life, just in proportion as Free Thought, Free Speech, and a Free Religion are understood, appreciated and enjoyed, as the fulfillment of that God-designed liberty which is the natural right of every man, woman and child.

#### THE TRUMP OF FREEDOM.

Awake ye slumbering sons of earth,  
Let freedom's call dispel the dearth  
Which, like a cloud, doth hide the light  
From true investigation.

A call to arms once more resounds,  
With clarion tones the bugle sounds.  
It calls the valiant forth to fight  
For manhood's preservation.

The cannon's roar—the glittering spear  
That filled your land with sorrows drear,  
Now rest in peace. Yet, freedom's cause  
Lies bleeding at your feet!

From priestly halls a sound is heard,  
Like that which led to Calvary's deed!  
"The right to think, the right to praise,  
Must meet with sure defeat.

"Our creeds and customs must survive  
What e'er the cost—'tis thus we live;  
'Tis thus we hold the world in awe  
And make it do our bidding.

"Should we admit the right to think,  
Or from God's fountain let men drink,  
Our crafts would then in danger be—  
Likewise our easy living."



"Our lofty spires like pillars stand;  
Our chimes ring forth over all the land,  
While we proclaim 'tis God's decree—  
These things we must defend."

"If we admit that man is free,  
The oldest one may live to see  
Our time worn systems pass away,  
And freedom's banner floating.

"Our ship's afloat; the waves run high;  
Our craft demands, we do or die;  
No matter what the means employed,  
In this is our salvation!

"But while we hold the reins of power,  
With boldness say, 'tis but a shower'  
Our ark will ride the storm, we know;  
Our cloven feet concealed.

"Now brethren, let us hope and pray,  
That all who oppose may pass away,  
And ask our God, 'their hands to wither  
And palsied be their tongues.'

"Our cause thus flourished in the past,  
By use of force—sweet joys now lost—  
Come dawn again—thy smile we'll greet,  
Blest days of persecution."

The star of truth with light divine  
Will yet illumine all coming time;  
For creeds must die—A brighter day  
Will dawn upon the world.

Nov. 21, 1877.

Poe.

#### THE EASTERN WAR.

Mankind have, in all ages, been subject to differences, both in the action of the mind, and their intentions. It has been said that the heart of man was deceitful above all else. Whether this be true or not, deception is often practiced to conceal from others the real intent of the mind.

It is not from the heart that these conditions emanate; the mind is the fountain or well spring to human action. The heart is a function of the body, but does not possess power of thought. Therefore we must look to the mind if we would fathom the cause of the effects which we see.

The mind of man is a mystery. Its operations upon other functions of the being are absolute. It is the controlling power of the world. It is mind that creates a desire in the soul of the scientist to search after the hidden truths in nature. It is the action of the mind that creates a desire for knowledge. It is mind that plans and directs the destinies of nations. It is mind that directs the two nations now engaged in deadly conflict. In the mind originated the form of the first deadly weapon, and it has caused the perfection of instruments used in the physical destruction of thousands of human beings, often to gratify a base desire for power.

The mind force requires cultivation, moulding, instructing; but as mind is the ruling power, how is it to be governed and controlled. Certainly not by compelling every other function of the being to yield servile obedience to its dictation. Nor by the destruction of those who oppose its rule. Though it have the power to destroy its opponents, the mind force of the victim still lives, and is still a power, though not through the agency of the sword. By the swift-winged bullet, the outer form may be stripped of its power as an opposing body, yet the mind still lives, still acts,

and is a force which, though unseen, may be felt.

The struggle now going on between the two contending forces, presents a fruitful field for study. Thousands are sent daily to our side of life, slain in battle; and for what? What is the cause of the present war. Is it in the interest of humanity, or is there another motive underlying the outward expression? I am aware of the assigned cause, but is it the true one.

Russia on the one hand arrogated to herself the position of defender of Christianity, or of what she considers to be Christianity. Can it be truthfully said that such extreme measures are necessary for the protection of any religious idea? Is it the object and purpose of religion to wage a warfare against a sister nation, and thus send thousands into spirit life who know naught of the realities of that life?

The sinews of war are found in the laboring classes, the ignorant, confiding citizens, who have less opportunity for mind culture than their more favored brothers, who enjoy the surprises that wealth can bring. The suffering victims of war are the poor. What do the peasantry of Russia know of the claims of Christianity? They are a priest-ridden nation at best, trained to serve their masters like serfs or slaves, and they follow their leaders like sheep to the slaughter, led by the false, deceptive teachings of priestcraft. Not only is this deference shewn to the priest by the private in the ranks, but the man who wields the royal sceptre bows in submission to their mandates, and while the battle wages fierce, the low mutterings of the priests are heard, invoking their imaginary God to crown their armies with success! Such is the spiritual darkness and depravity of these brave defenders.

While on the other hand, the followers of Mohammed, with all the zeal of fanatics, rush to the conflict in support of their cause, believing in the justice of it; and who shall affirm that the Russian is not as much in error as they, and the contest, instead of having any vital religious interest at stake, is but two nations contending for the supremacy.

Religion has often been made the scapegoat of individual and national crime. If ambition for an increase of territory has caused war, it has ever been the fate of religion to be the assigned cause. And Christianity, as recognized by the world to-day, has been the cause of more crime and bloodshed than any other system known to mankind. Millions of treasure is expended every year, gathered largely from the poor of your land, for the ostensible purpose of extending a system of religious teaching, that is of itself wholly without a foundation of truth. And yet in support of so false a system, millions of treasure and thousands of human lives are sacrificed yearly. Is it the principle of religion to thus scatter broadcast the hard earnings of the poor, or sacrifice human life, and send its victims unbidden into a world they know not of? If this be religion, far be it from me to countenance it, or assist in its promulgation.

But the question arises, is religion the cause

of this great sacrifice, or is it the passions of men, fed by the greed of avarice; a craving for power and territorial extension! As this proves to be the case, then why attempt to shift the responsibility from the true cause to one based upon supposition.

It has been said that the heart of man is continually prone to evil, but as the heart is not the organ of thought any more than the hand, we must look elsewhere for the power that impels men onward in the road to destruction. The mind force of man is the fountain from whence springs all the evil to which the human family are heirs. It is with the mind we must deal in our criticism of what has occurred in the past, is transpiring in the present, or will become an experience in the future.

It is the mind of man, whether in the visible material form, or in spirit form, that controls the actions and directs all thought. All differences of opinion between individuals or nations, originate in the mind, not in the heart, or the physical body. These functions are subject to the control of this force, and if the mind is subject to influences outside of itself, these forces should be analyzed by the power of reason, ere the intelligence should be brought under subjection by the influences thus operating. It becomes a matter of importance to know what powers are thus operating, and their objects and purposes.

In the case under consideration, it is plain to be seen that the difference arises, not from influences of a Christian or religious nature, but a greed for power. Men are finite, and whether they be priests or emperors, are liable to err; and when their religious sentiments are controlled by powers outside of the individual, it becomes a question whether their professions can be trusted. In this case, instead of endeavoring to bring the matter to an amicable adjustment, through reason, brute force is resorted to.

In my comprehension of the nature of religion, brute force forms no part of its true element or character. When the passions are aroused, reason is dethroned, and the devil in man assumes the ascendancy; the results will therefore be devilish.

Can a more deplorable condition be conceived than that of the poor defenseless women and children, whose homes are outraged by a debased and wanton soldiery, their bodies living sacrifices to human lust and brutality! And yet, it is said that all this in defence of religious principles, for the protection of certain rites and ceremonies!

Is it possible that good can come out of such extreme measures? Is it possible that the Christians' God demands such wanton barbarity, in order to prove his love and kindness toward his wayward children? This is what is seen to be hourly transpiring. We, who are relieved of the physical form, are witnesses of the perpetration of crimes which would chill the blood of any being having the least sympathy for suffering.

Upon this basis in the past, were the present religious systems founded, and their offspring follow most faithfully in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessors. While the shrieks of



outraged women, and the cries of defenseless children are ascending heavenward, the Christian world stands quietly unconcerned, and by their actions stimulate the authors of such base crimes to further deeds of violence; and we listen to the petitions of those filling desks called sacred, who invoke the God of battles to grant success, and crown with victory the arms of the invading foe.

Difference of opinion, whether in matters of a religious nature, or political, is a right granted from the all-wise Father. It is natural for mankind to differ in mind. The construction of the human organism is of such a nature that whether they wish it or not, differences will arise. In these differences, man is sovereign. No power outside of him has the right to say—this is the path, follow it. The first attempt is an abridgement of man's sovereignty, and the man or nation who arrogates the authority to dictate, becomes a usurper. I care not in what department of life, the principle is the same. Actions often speak more plainly than words, and the nation or individual who assumes to dictate the course to be followed by another, becomes a tyrant in fact and deed.

I am aware of the difficulty that has existed for a time between the Turkish government and a weaker power, but does that justify the resort to a merciless war? What are these differences? They are infringements of personal rights. The province of Servia had a right to their own form of worship, and therefore the Turkish government were the aggressors. But is there no method of adjusting religious differences, without resort to carnal warfare?

The religion taught in olden times, was an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Where then is the difference between the Mosaic theory and that of to-day? Is not their position the same? Is there any more spirituality in sentiment or practice than was taught and practiced in the time of Moses and Joshua? Where then are the teachings of Jesus exemplified, and wherein has the world been bettered by the teachings of the Christian doctrine or principles? If Christianity does not teach morality, of what benefit is it to the world? If human passions are only held in check by the force of arms, or the power of law, of what avail is all the preaching and praying listened to every Sabbath, and repeated at intervals through the week. It is not necessary to go away from home to find examples. In the late struggle in your own land, scenes were enacted that will forever stain the fair name of your country. And yet the person who should say that the United States was not a Christian nation, would be branded as a defamer of truth.

Systems of morality, or religious theories that do not possess within themselves principles strong enough to hold in check the passions of men, or the tyranny of kings, are of themselves worthless as instructors. The effect of war is to brutalize the feelings and sensibilities of mankind. It changes the sentiment of whole nations. All the finer emotions are overwhelmed by the feelings that run riot in the individual, and in the life forces of the nation.

Although there may seem no good ground for adjustment of national difficulties that will arise, have men become so lost to moral sentiment that they cannot meet as brothers, and by wise counsel, adjust the differences existing, without resort to the sword? If within the two thousand years that have nearly passed, Christianity has not presented any better way to support her claims than barbarous warfare, then as a system it is a failure.

The nations that are now struggling, are but opening the way to other complications. All the powers of the world are interested in this struggle. In your land a certain class are praying for the success of one side, and the downfall and destruction of another power, thus assuming to dictate to Infinite wisdom which is right, and which is wrong; a truly pitiable spectacle, to see the Christian world thus casting aside the principles of love and charity, and accepting the demon of violence instead. Millions of unfortunate beings who had no part nor lot in the matter, are thus made victims to satisfy the greed of arrogance and power. And in every edifice where men congregate to worship the Infinite Father, are heard the voices of those who claim to be his chosen servants, inciting to increased fury the heated passions of sectarianism.

Is this a religion that should be spread over the land? Rather let it fall into oblivion, and something more in harmony with love and charity be sought for and adopted. It is not the mission of man to destroy his fellow man, but rather to assist to elevate him by education and example.

But you ask, if Christianity is a failure, where are we to look for truth? And how many will believe me when I tell them where! And yet, it is true that there is a way through which mankind can learn of systems that lead not to violence. It is by consulting with those who have passed beyond the material influence of life; who from their positions can read the human soul, and reveal its secret workings. Man reads from the outer surface. He forms opinions from outside observation, and arrives at conclusions from what appears to be the motives actuating others. The cover of a book may present unfavorable impressions, but if the pages are perused, sentiments beautiful and inspiring may be found therein.

I am not here at this time to write in favor of either power, for both are equally guilty of countless wrongs upon mankind. It has ever been thus, when the religious sentiment has been controlled by priestcraft; and the bloody scenes like those now transpiring have been the result. What is the remedy? Let every person be their own highpriest and king. Act upon the intelligence received, which comes through God's appointed channels. Every human soul is a channel through which goodness, love and truth will flow, if not cramped and hedged up by designing men.

To the advocates of Christianity is due the disgrace of those scenes which are now transpiring. When the council of nations in spirit life were able to impress upon the minds of men in high position the necessity of a council composed of all nationalities, for the adjustment of national differences, and such a

council met, the hosts of heaven chanted songs of praise and gladness. There was a prospect that war might cease; but in an evil moment the wise counsels were forgotten, and the warning voice unheeded, and men again found pleasure in staining their hands in the blood of their fellow men. And amid their Te Deums and loud hosannas they seized the spear and sword, and went forth to obey the mandates of a kingly power, by destroying the innocent, and laying waste the goodly heritage of their brothers and fellow mortals.

It has been my mission since passing to spirit life, to aid and assist the weak and defenseless, and in that capacity I have visited the land of strife, to assist the unfortunate who are swept from your sight by the destroying implements of warfare. Could the conditions of those who come from such scenes to spirit life be presented to mankind, and they be impressed with its reality, there would be no more wars, no more bloodshed. The soul of man would revolt from being the cause of so much agony and suffering.

Much has been said in reference to the fate or destiny of mankind. It has been claimed that man forms his own destiny. This is true in a measure, but not in all cases or conditions. When men are allowed the liberty of thought, and no power assumes to dictate a line of action or thought, then man forms his own destiny. And under the like circumstances nations form their own destinies; but when the iron hand of despotism is placed upon the neck of mortals, man's individuality is made subject to the dictation of others, and circumstances thus created form a destiny from which there is no escape, while in the physical form. The power which is thus applied, changes the being. The powers of mind are directed into unnatural channels, and the persons who are thus acted upon, are in a measure guiltless of the acts they perform. Nevertheless the law that has been violated, has its methods of redress in penalties that will be applicable to the guilty.

While in this land dedicated to freedom, the voice of the people is supreme, forget not those nations who still bear the yoke of despotism, with little or no hope of change, until the final change shall come, which will relieve them from the chains of despotism. Let your sympathies extend to those who are now suffering the privations of war. Bear in your petitions the defenseless and the orphan. They are brothers and sisters, bound by ties that cannot be severed, for all nations are members of one family. The difference in sentiment is the result of education, and influences that act upon the mind and create an unnatural feeling which grows and obtains control, often turning men into demons, when love and concord should reign.

If a brother err in judgment, seek to convince him of his error. Do it in kindness, and in sincerity and love. Thus the star of destiny will ever gleam bright in the horizon of your hopes, and guide you in the path of duty to higher realizations in the land to which you are all journeying. Be you American, Russian, or Mohammedan, the same land stretches out before you, when you have crossed the stream. Seek wisdom and inspiration from those who have passed to its shores, and who realize the effects of strife upon the spirit.

THOMAS W. DORR.



## THE LANGUAGE OF THE SOUL.

The nationality of an individual is frequently known and determined by the form and method of speech;—the manner of expressing the ideas. To a practiced observer there is an unmistakable certainty that defies all attempts at concealment. These peculiarities are not always observable when mingling in the throng, but when one is with a few chosen friends, the tongue finds a natural avenue for expression.

There is a peculiarity in every soul life which is distinctively its own, and which will be always manifest, when it is allowed full and free expression. These peculiarities are not expressed at all times and places. Existing customs at times seem to forbid the expression of much that seeks for utterance. Why is this restriction in a land dedicated to freedom, where natural law has decreed that every person should receive protection in their religious ideas? And be it known that the language of the soul, when untrammelled, is always of a religious nature. The fear of what others will say, compels too many to keep within their own bosoms the words that alone could give peace and comfort to the soul.

There is a language of the eye that gives expression to the mind quite as forcibly as words. There is a peculiarity of expression which the hands make, and also other functions. The soul has a form of expression peculiar to its wants and necessities, with more avenues for expression than all other parts or functions of the human structure. The soul of man is the fountain of life to all other organs. The life of a man is the soul power that is ever seeking for expression. The body, which is the instrument, is worthless except for this purpose. It is the temporary home or place of shelter, not unlike the simple hut of the red man, but as the soul grows and expands, it requires a more extended habitation; hence the enlarged condition of the mentality, like the stately mansion, with a variety of compartments, all furnished to meet the wants and necessities of the occupant.

The soul of man is that part of his organism which communes with the higher intelligences through the spirit as a channel, not through the outer form. When the soul enjoys high and holy aspirations, the soul force alone is used. The physical form may perchance be engaged in the performance of duties natural to its sphere of life, but the soul may be holding sweet converse with the angelic hosts whose homes are far removed from the troublesome scenes of earth.

It is said that the tongue is the means of conveying ideas from one person to another. But it can be done without that organ. One person can, by writing, give expression fully as clear as another can by speaking. It is not necessary to have articulation of sounds for the soul to hold communion with the Infinite. Silent meditation is the true language and form of expression used in communion with the powers that control and regulate human affairs. If Deity possessed attributes similar to mankind, it would be necessary to have the use of the vocal organs. But when He is comprehended in His true character, though no

audible words be spoken, yet the Infinite ear can hear, and the Infinite soul feel the wants and needs of even the tender child. It is the communion of soul with soul that brings to mortals relief, when none but the all-seeing eye and the ministering spirits can come *en rapport* with the soul of the being.

The spirit of mortals is the outer form or covering of the soul. No person can see the soul; the spirit form may be seen, and often is by those who possess clairvoyant sight, but the soul never. Neither can mortal or spirit see or know aught of the Infinite soul only through outer manifestations.

Mankind are like the flowers, and there are many beauties even in the most unsightly. When you penetrate beneath the outer form, there is found the soul; and though crushed and denied expression, yet it exists, and though compelled to remain dumb for a time, yet in the future, even the most oppressed will hold sweet communion with the soul life of the Infinite.

A theory has been taught that man was by nature depraved and corrupt, and only by the interposition of Divine power and certain means of grace could this mass of corruption be healed. Is the soul debased, and the spirit defiled by coming in contact with the outer form material? If so, then is nature's economy defective. When we examine man, we do not find such a mass of corruption, as theology claims.

It is true that men perform deeds and acts at variance with nature. But why do they? Because false to nature; and there must be a cause for this false position. The only one I ever knew was the theological teaching, of which it is the direct result. It takes mankind away from themselves and nature, and impregnates their minds with the delusive theory that they are helpless beings, and only by grace divine can their conditions be changed. Were this true, then indeed would mankind be objects of pity.

Jesus paid it all, is a sweet sound for a spiritual bankrupt. How many are willing to sit with folded hands and hope that some dear friend will come and help them breathe heaven's sweet air. If their debts are paid, what care they by what method it is done. It is of little benefit to an individual to know that another has assumed the responsibility that belongs to them to bear. Does it heal the putrifying sores? Are they any more men than before? Are they not worse off? Does not the performance of such an act, though in love, prove an injury to the person thus favored? Certainly, because contrary to nature.

There is a certain status for each person to occupy. When they first enter the world of materiality, they are helpless, and a constant charge upon parents or guardians. Years must pass away before they can be of any use as citizens. What would be the effect upon the mind of the individual, were he taught that all the necessities of life had been provided; that all bills had been paid in advance? What would such a person's life be worth to the world? Yet this is what theology is constantly teaching, in a moral and spiritual sense. "Jesus paid it all." Is it any

wonder that the spirit world is full of spiritual bankrupts and paupers?

These festering sores that fill the moral atmosphere with their offensive effluvia, are caused by those who in their ignorance and blindness teach the confiding soul that there is nothing for it to do, but to exclaim—Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief. Such absurd ideas are moral cancers eating into the soul life of the victims.

Mankind are not naturally vile. There is a spark of goodness in every soul, however depraved. The mind force comes in contact with outward influences, and the soul is ever asking for a recognition of the powers which belong to it to exercise. The soul feels the necessity of work. The mind still adheres to the systems taught, and there is a conflict between the two. If there was a rational system of teaching, this struggle would not exist. If the mind force was educated in harmony with the soul force of the being, the most perfect harmony would exist.

The soul requires the spirit for a covering, as the spirit uses the physical form. If the soul is the measure of the man, it is the amount of soul possessed. The physical cannot limit the size of the inner man, but it is possible for the outer man to so compass the soul, as to leave no avenue for its expression. It is often said that a person who could be induced to perform certain acts in violation of law, and against the recognized demands of a true life, has no soul. The soul exists, but its usefulness has been by a worldly selfishness, that lowers mankind from their natural standard of nobility.

Whenever there is mental oppression, the soul is forced to suffer. It is the inherent desire of the soul to be free. Every aspiration is for freedom. Hence the conflict between man and principles. The soul, through the spirit, is stirring the inner man to action, making him bold to assert his individual rights, while theology forbids it. The soul of man ever responds to the soul of the Infinite, and if allowed the freedom which is its legitimate right, the most perfect harmony in all the various conditions of life will be the result.

Were men by nature depraved, little goodness could be expected from them, for that would imply that the inner man was like the outer—of the earth, earthy. But who will dare assert that the soul, the seat of life, the germ of goodness implanted by the soul of Deity, can be other than pure? It is only the outer man that is affected by the corroding influences of the material. The soul is ever seeking to throw off these conditions, but associations and the influence of education hold and cripple it in its expression.

But in the future the soul of man will rise above the earthly conditions. When the material shall have grown feeble and the spirit strong, then will the soul rise to its proper sphere, and lead on to the paths of peace and holiness.

Few men seem to realize the effect of education upon the soul and spirit. The general custom is to care for the wants and necessities of the outer man, and much valuable time and treasure is spent for this; but when the educa-



tion of the inner man is demanded, little effort is put forth.

All that comes from the inner soul life, if allowed free avenues of expression, will be pure and spiritual. It is the desire of the soul to be brought nearer the Infinite soul. As the infant craves the presence and smiles of the mother, so the soul of man is ever seeking the true, the pure and good. And the time will come when the struggling soul will find that rest for which it has labored long and earnestly. Perhaps not in the material conditions of life, but this is possible. And it is far better if the duties necessary for this experience are entered upon in the earthly.

It is like laying the foundation of a structure. It is better to do it at the proper time, and when you have all the material necessary, you can then lay one stone upon another, and so cement them together as to make a foundation that will withstand all the elements. This the soul asks of you, and beseeches you to do, knowing that in the future, if you labor earnestly, you will faint not, but will be refreshed by the streams of love that flow from the Infinite foundation, whose waters are sweet to the taste, and which make life in spirit one continual season of enduring peace and joy.

T. STARR KING.

#### THE IDEAL AND THE REAL, OR THEORIES AND REALITIES.

The world of materiality is a world of theories. Every man has a theory, but how few are reduced to practice. Each church organization has a theory by which the world is to be remodeled, and made to conform to certain lines carefully drawn. The politician has his theories, by means of which a marked change is to be wrought in the life and destiny of nations.

Each person is sanguine of success, if his or her theory is adopted, for each one regards his own as the sole essence of wisdom. Much confusion and turmoil result from so much theorizing, and so little of the practical.

Generally speaking, mortals live two different lives. Now they live in air castles, and again they are brought to realize that they are inhabitants of an earthly sphere, which has its demands and requisitions upon them. Mortals are prone to follow the shadow rather than the substance; to live in the ideal rather than the real. These dual elements exist in man's nature, and it is well that they do, but man should have a better understanding of himself, and learn that the loftiest ideal may become the real. He should first be able to grasp the realities that demand his attention on the mundane sphere, and then he can truly enjoy the ideal.

The human form, though possessing divine attributes, is nevertheless an inhabitant of the world material. While occupying that form, man is brought into closer relationship with the world of matter than with the spiritual elements, and in that state he belongs more to the material. But he should not devote all his energies to the acquisition of material wealth. If the true ideal of life were considered, there would be a higher conception of its duties, and the mind, accustomed to reali-

ties, would learn to look upon life with a deeper interest.

Wherever only the ideal controls, in the mind, it gives a false color to all things, and naturally grievous disappointment must result. But if there is a proper balance between the ideal and real, it brightens the heart when the storms of adversity beat from without, and gives hope for a brighter condition. It does not then paint pictures in such a false light, but represents what is real. It is natural for man to theorize upon all subjects; and there is too little application of theories. When a theory is proven to be correct, it should be adopted, but when it proves delusive, it should be abandoned. All theories should be thoroughly tested, in order to ascertain whether they are real or imaginary.

This element of mind is divided into two general classifications in the human family; the imaginative and the practical. The former live in the clouds, while the latter retain their relationship with the things of earth. Even the law of gravitation seems powerless to hold the first named at all times to a true recognition of things real. It is not intended that man shall dwell amid ethereal bodies, until he has a form adapted to those localities. It is evident that mankind were expected to occupy positions on the mundane sphere, and while there to familiarize themselves with what pertains to that condition of existence. Thus they become familiar with the realities, and not the unreal.

Men have a theory that all things are the work of God, special creations, the result of special decrees. This has the effect to lead the mind away from the realities of life. God never creates anything, not even man! Men create, devise plans, and form conditions, and continual change may be observed in their works. The Infinite Power in man, and in nature, is the life force. Wherever life exists, there is Divine power manifest, and it is a reality.

All natural productions, whether in animate form, or otherwise, are real, and there is no mistaking their Divine origin, nor can man successfully counterfeit them. Men are taught to look upon their surroundings as special productions, instead of being taught that they are the result of natural law. Nor is this alone the case in religious organizations, but in all phases of life; municipal, State and national affairs are often referred to as Divine interpositions. This creates a barrier to investigation, and instills in the mind a willingness to be led by an invisible power, without questioning the result.

It has been said that man proposes, but God disposes. If mankind knew more of Deity, they would not lay so many acts to his charge. When man learns to view Deity in his real character, he will refrain from importuning Divine assistance in the furthering of schemes and projects that are of his own creation, and designed for personal benefit. This ideal conception of the Infinite enters into all conditions of life. Mankind have been educated to believe Deity an ever present servant, to do the bidding of mortals, or grant their requests in material affairs. The Divine presence is in-

voked to guide the councils and deliberations of those whose province it is to enact laws. But what a hollow mockery it is. It is the duty of the law-making powers to create new systems, which shall meet the emergencies of the present, and revise past enactments that they may be made applicable to the present, and serve as a basis for future enactments.

Mankind alone possess the creating power. All things which emanate from the Infinite, come by growth. And the cause, though unseen, is real, as the effect proves. Man changes. The sentiments entertained to-day are not found practical to-morrow. A person may be on the high pinnacle of fame to-day, and soon down in the deep shadows of forgetfulness, because the foundation upon which he built was not real.

Deity never makes any special interpositions for the benefit of any person, or in the interest of any class. The belief that he does, is the result of education in the ideal rather than the real. If in the church, that which is unreal will be the object of worship instead of that which is real; and the manifestations of the life will show it. There will not be true spirituality, but a desire for outward show, regardless of what the life is.

This is one cause of so many failures in business. The true basis is lost sight of, in the desire to be considered more wealthy, perhaps, than one really is. Past events in the history of many have demonstrated the truth of my statements. Two lives are thus often lived in one. The real life which one must live in their own secret consciousness, and the ideal life which is lived for others.

The butterfly is beautiful, with its golden tipped wings, but its existence is of a transient nature. There are many human butterflies that float in the sunbeams of popular opinion, but when analyzed in the crucible of real worth, they are valueless. Surrounding conditions often bring out the real worth of an individual. These may be regarded as special providences, but if men studied the realities, they would see fewer special acts, and far more natural conditions. God works through conditions. Man cannot do differently. Whatever he does, or wherever he may be, conditions must govern. If he sail in a balloon, either real or imaginary, conditions will bring him to another earth again.

The nearer man conforms to nature, the more real will he become, because natural. And the more natural, the more spiritual. The controlling power in nature, is spirit, and the nearer man lives to her requirements, the nearer he will be to the Infinite. It is not necessary for spiritual development that all things of an earthly character should be ignored. Rather try to spiritualize all things around you.

At times the surroundings of life are dark and forbidding in all their aspects and bearings. Darkness and gloom are the effects. What are the causes? Do not accuse Providence with dealing harshly with you, but see if there is not something lacking on your part. Have you furnished the necessary conditions through which the more pure and elevating influences could come. It is frequently the case



that mortals fail to do this, and dissatisfaction is the result. Mankind naturally prefer the good things in life, but all are not inclined to put forth an effort to secure what they covet.

There are many Spiritualists who would like to be known as truly spiritually-minded, but they cannot rise to that standard of human excellence, whereby true spirituality can be secured. There is much surface Spiritualism, as well as surface religion of other kinds. The love of earthly treasures engages attention, while the spiritual elements are seeking for recognition. The individual is conscious of this, but so strong is the love of the transient, that it secures the mastery, while the real treasures are lost to view.

The lives of nations are dual in their nature. There is the ideal and the real. Your own national affairs are more or less affected by these conditions. Can we not see wherein reformatory measures could be instituted, and a more practical system adopted? Every party has more or less of elements or conditions,—one theoretical, the other practical. It is the theoretical that creates differences. When the safety of the nation is threatened, there is a consolidation of forces. The ideal is lost sight of, that the real may be secured and perpetuated.

The late struggle affords an illustration. The South had been educated to disregard the interest of their northern brethren. They considered themselves superior, if not in numbers, in prowess, and had no hesitancy in inaugurating the struggle. The northern men considered their southern brethren inferior in numbers and power of endurance. When the conflict arose, each party was for a time engaged in an ideal warfare. They were above the material plane for a time, but when compelled to deal with realities, they soon began to feel a certain degree of respect for each other. It is so in all phases of life. While the mind is inflated with the unreal, no permanent advancement can be made. It is only when the visionary ideas are replaced by the real, that the mind expands, and progress can be made.

I have alluded to the spiritual elements and conditions, and I wish to consider those matters a little. I may not be considered much of a theological reasoner, but I hope to make myself understood. Spiritualism, to be acceptable to the mass of mankind, must be made practical. At present, Spiritualists are too much inclined to float above the material universe, and do not reach their fellow men. The possession of spiritual knowledge does not, or should not entitle a person to withdraw from the companionship of others.

The possession of mediumistic power is a natural inheritance for the benefit of all. Nature creates no barriers to exclude the honest investigator. If she has imparted mediumistic powers to an individual, it is for practical purposes, that fruit may be gathered. But if you allow the tree to grow so tall that the fruit is beyond the reach of those who would gather it, they will be compelled to await the process of time when the fruit may fall. But in that event, it often receives bruises that are detrimental to its preservation.

Spiritualists should continue to reside in the

material world, and make use of their spiritual power to benefit their surroundings. One great barrier to spiritual progression, is the impracticability of many Spiritualists. There is a class who, like wandering Jews, journey from place to place, with no visible means of support; they are no doubt possessed of mediumistic powers, and perhaps are led by some spirit, as they assert; but what influence has such a character upon an intelligent community? It is not a real, practical life.

Spiritualism is a science, and is worthy the attention of the most scholarly in your land; but such minds naturally seek for realities. When such conditions are demonstrated, it naturally attracts the intelligent. The persecutions so often referred to by Spiritualists, are more ideal than real. Mankind are willing to listen to a new doctrine if it is presented on a basis that can be comprehended. It is folly to attempt to teach the science of astronomy to a person who has not yet mastered the alphabet. Spiritualism is an instructor, and in order to be made instructive, it must be made comprehensible. The spiritual philosophy cannot be compassed in one article, or in one hour's discourse. It is the philosophy of life; old, yet ever new; both theoretical, and ever practicable when properly understood.

The air that is breathed into the lungs is to give life to the body, and keep it in motion. It is to the body what steam is to the engine. You cannot generate steam by theory. You cannot keep the heart in motion by theory. It requires positive application of life's forces. Those who represent Spiritualism should study to make all demonstrations clear and practical.

There is too much floating through space, without chart or compass, by Spiritualists while they are dwellers on the mundane sphere. Do not be too desirous of leaving your old associations. Study to know more of the real in life while in the material. It will be of infinite value when you pass to the world of realities. It is difficult to float in space while encumbered with a material form. Rather study the law of conditions that you may attract to you those who have preceded you to the world of spirit. Relieved of their cumbersome bodies, they enjoy the pleasure of passing and repassing. Your flight would be but the flight of fancy, and not being practical would produce no lasting benefit.

Let your daily lives be such that the world may be convinced you have a reality. As Spiritualism becomes understood, its divine realities become the object in life to be sought for. Its ministering servants are even now journeying earthward, bearing the olive branch of peace and good will to mankind. The unreal in life sinks out of sight before the sunlight of truth, and man unfolded to accept the truth, becomes the real savior of the world; for 'tis truth alone that can give peace. Truth removes the shadows that flit across life's pathway, and opens the gateway to a higher life in the world of realities.

CHARLES SUMNER.

Aug. 28, 1877.

Subscribe for the OLIVE BRANCH.

#### SPIRITUALISM VS. THEOLOGY.

If mankind are naturally vile, why should there be any solicitude for them, if the conditions are beyond the possibility of mortals to change? The vileness which exists is owing to the system of education in force. If you can make a man believe he is of no particular use to himself or the world, he will soon adopt the ideal and reduce it to practice. If you can convince a man that he is a valuable member of society, he will conduct himself in such a manner as to win the esteem and confidence of those with whom he is associated.

If you can impress upon the mind force of the individual that he has a spiritual existence, separate and distinct from the material, you will lead the mind to inquire into the conditions of that existence. If you teach the child that no provision has been made for him, only what he can obtain by earnest labor, he will not sit with folded arms, but will be at work.

The difference between the spiritual philosophy and theology is that one teaches that another has paid your debt, and the other says you must pay your own. Which theory will tend to develop the most complete manhood and womanhood? An answer can be had in the every day transactions of life.

The spiritual philosophy, I aver, is the true method of unfolding all that is true and noble in human life. It places every man upon his own responsibility, and leaves him to work out his own salvation. And there are many in spirit life who have come up through great tribulation, having been compelled to contest their position step by step with the dogmas of theology. They are the victors. They have listened to the voice of the inner man, bidding them be true, be honest, to themselves.

The person who follows the teaching of theology, cannot be true to himself, because at variance with the laws of nature. Mankind are children of nature, and if they would be true to themselves, they must recognize and obey her laws. Theology ignores this, and by so doing ignores the teaching of the All-father, and therefore tends rather to curse than benefit mankind.

The spiritual philosophy seeks to elevate mankind, and the only way to do this is to appeal to the spiritual nature of the being. The body cannot receive any impression. All ideas must be received through the spirit, and this should be free to sanction or disapprove whatever is presented. How little spiritual freedom is enjoyed by mankind. The majority of men are strangers to it. They are deprived of communion with the spirits of their departed friends because theology denies the possibility.

What will not theology deny? Did not the theology of that day, deny the mission of our Elder Brother, and nail his form to the cross? It has nailed to the cross every form of religious free thought that has sought avenues of expression, since time began. Do Spiritualists feel that any exception will be taken in your case? Not the least. Theology has labored to crucify Spiritualism ever since it became a recognized fact, nor will it cease as long as so many willing instruments are found whose only ambition is to live in favor



with the party which exercises the dominating power. Priestcraft in all ages has opposed the revelations made from the spirit world, because it is the means whereby the mentality may be quickened, and the slave become his own master. The world is laboring under the burdens of priestcraft and priestly rule, to-day, quite as much as when our Elder Brother began his mission on earth. Though the forms used to compel obedience differ, yet those in use now are quite as effective in the hands of a devotee of a blind religious delusion.

The question for each one to settle, is whether they will be master of themselves, or bow in submission to the dictates of a power outside of them. The issue is before you. Would you be free men and women, then assert your God-given powers, and repel those who would render you slaves to do another's bidding. The world must look to the spiritual philosophy for full and perfect freedom. Only as the spiritual conditions of mankind are unfolded can there be scientific research, or the mystery of life be solved. Spirit is the soul of all things, and its voice is ever heard in opposition to the limits of the material. Spiritual science enters into all the avenues of human life, bringing out of the unknown realms of spirit power manifestations of the divine. It teaches man his proper position, and how to attain it, both in the material universe, and the spiritual world.

Much of the sorrow that afflicts the human family, is attributable to the teaching that Jesus has done all that is necessary to secure their future happiness. If this be so, what cause is there for anxiety? What is the necessity of religious revolutions or reformation? In order to fully understand the effect of such teaching, it is necessary to reduce it to a material basis, for the spiritual nature of man is so subservient to the material, that they do not have a full understanding of spiritual things.

What effect would it have upon a man, to think that all debts he might contract would be paid by some person, provided he had full faith that it would be done, and felt sufficiently thankful and grateful? Any person can see what the effect would be. It would degrade a man in his own estimation, and his life would be worse than worthless.

How much more noble for every man to liquidate all claims brought against him, by his own hand. This is what every one must do spiritually. No one can escape the results. It is the Infinite decree, that changes not.

T. STARR KING.

The spiritual growth of mankind does not depend wholly upon what they hear, but upon the use that is made of what is imparted. To accomplish the most good to the greater number, generalities, rather than specialties, should be adopted. The specialist, from the nature of that element in the mind force, soon becomes a being possessing but one idea, and often, that idea at variance with what might be seen transpiring in nature around them. This condition may be observed among scientists; but where does

this specialty lead? Not into channels that benefit the masses, for strange as it may appear, all of the leading scientific minds of the age entertain ideas wholly materialistic. The special theory cannot develop the spirituality in man, because it never reaches the soul life of the being, but, as a specialty, deals with the material alone. Hence, in my opinion, until the scientific mind has become developed up to a condition that they can accept the science of the soul and spirit, their teachings to the majority of mankind will be detrimental.

Denying the existence of soul and spirit, their theories are antagonistic to what the spiritual philosophy teaches and demonstrates. Hence, to present subjects wholly of a scientific character from spirit life, through media, would prove an injury to the spiritual growth of mankind. So far as science has demonstrated the facts connected with the subject of creation, and the origin of man, a noble work has been begun; but so long as scientific research takes mankind no further than the grave, it would be better to retain what the spiritual philosophy teaches, than to change for uncertainties. All knowledge is scientific in a degree; far better to seek first an understanding of what God and nature teach through and by philosophy, than to wander off into the unexplored labyrinths of nature, that few minds are as yet capable of investigating even in part.

W. H. B.

December 29.

#### GEMS OF THOUGHT.

—The devil never yet tempted a man whom he found judiciously employed.—*Spurgeon*.

—The readiest and best way to find out what future duty will be, is to do present duty.

—“Mrs. Henry,” said John, the other evening, “Why are you like the devil?” And when she went for him with the needle he had hardly time to save himself by a quotation about “sowing tares;” the other reasons he prudentially kept to himself.

—A St. Louis paper tells a story of a disconsolate widower who, on seeing all that was mortal of his late wife lowered into the grave, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, “Well I’ve lost gloves, I’ve lost umbrellas—yes, even cows and horses; but I never—no, never—had anything cut me up like this.”

—When the plague raged in Athens, as described by Thucydides, the people gave themselves up to frantic dissipation. Had it been in a Christian country it would have been the occasion of a religious fast. Thus every opportunity that acts as a stimulus upon man, whether good or bad, arouses sleeping and often unsuspected passions. All such activity is according to the doctrine of *Latent Forces*.

—Wonderful as was the cure Christ wrought on the withered hand, he taught his disciples that they should do greater works than these that he had done. Following the line of his mission and his great concern, his meaning, no doubt, was that there were moral deformities to be repaired, spiritual members of infinitely more worth than physical hands to be made whole.

—Misfortune sprinkles ashes on the head of the man, but falls like dew on the head of the woman, and brings forth germs of strength of which she herself has no conscious possession.

—A young man having put a crown piece into the plate in an Edinburgh Church by mistake, instead of a penny, asked to have it back, but was refused. In once, in forever, “Aweel, aweel,” grunted he, “I will get credit for it in heaven.” “Na, na,” said Jeems, the doorkeeper, “ye’ll get credit only for the penny ye meant to gie.”

—How our souls will live hereafter is not a greater mystery than how our bodies do live now. This world is not like a parlor, in which we know all the furniture and every corner; if it were, we might well shrink from death and think it a door opening out of the known into the fearfully unknown. Birth, growth, health and sickness, labor wearying the body and sleep refreshing it, food supporting it and poisons hurting it—of life in every way we cannot tell how it is.

And yet there are persons who shrink from the future life, and some that do not believe in it because they cannot tell in what way it will be. They do not like to think of death, because it opens into mystery; while they themselves are living in mystery.

We are afraid of what will become of our souls; as though they could go anywhere else than to God.—*Montford*.

—Power in any direction comes by the faithful use of obscurest abilities and opportunities, and on their climbing the higher bounds of activity and usefulness. The divine life is no exception. However weak and beset with impediments, through a watchful exercise of all capacities, you may go from strength to strength until you stand at last a perfect man.

We emphasize this point. No man is perfect, who has not in active use every function of his being. So no one is spiritually perfect, who has not in lively activity every endowment of soul. Such wholeness is the very meaning of Bible holiness. It is the true spiritual culture. Herein lies the necessity for probation. Perfect through the ordeal of most trenchant exercise! You must learn to follow every voice of duty—lay hold of every opportunity of usefulness—keep hot every forge and swing every hammer, making forever the music of life’s busy anvil.

In the name of all that is pure, right, true and good, you must stand always ready to engage every situation at a moment’s warning—to strike while the iron is hot, and make and keep it hot by striking. So will you have “no withered hand,” no unused and “latent force.” “Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” It is not written, “Talk out your own salvation,” nor wish it out—nor sit or sing or steal it out, but work it out—work it out with fear and trembling as honest men. Our hands will not be trained for harp touching and palm-waving in heaven by being carried in slings all through this world.

They must be strengthened and enskilled for celestial uses by the ordinary duties of earthly discipleship. When such conditions begin to be fulfilled in some of us, then “look up, for the kingdom of heaven draweth nigh.”—*Rev. I. C. Billman*.



## The Olive Branch.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

UTICA, N. Y., JANUARY, 1878.

### TO THE PATRONS OF THE OLIVE BRANCH.

It devolves upon me again to express my gratitude for the generous support extended to our journal. Two brief years have passed away since we launched our bark upon the waves of a restless ocean. The mind force of mankind may truly be compared to the surging billows.

Our little vessel, freighted with precious truths to mankind, must of necessity meet these ever rolling surges; and most gallantly has it weathered the storms of prejudice, so prevalent in the minds of those who are as yet strangers to the fact, that life does not end at the grave, but continues after the physical form shall have moulded back to its mother elements.

It was the desire to awaken a spirit of inquiry in the minds of mortals that led us to enter this field of labor, and through the knowledge which we could impart, assist in quieting the storm, and bring to earth that most precious boon, the positive assurance that we still live, and living, are in possession of all the powers we once possessed.

Having passed the dreaded ordeal, that men call death, we are prepared to speak understandingly of the realities of life in the land of the spirit. A few brief seasons have passed since I was an inhabitant of your sphere, was one of you in all that pertains to the welfare of society and country. No person felt a deeper interest in the unfolding of the mind in matters of a spiritual nature.

Passing to spirit life while my mind was engrossed in the discharge of duties that devolved upon me, in the position which I then occupied; leaving the mundane sphere with all its beauties so attractive to my mind, I found myself an occupant of a higher sphere, differing somewhat in condition from the one I had formerly occupied, yet very similar.

The natural activity of my mind could not find pleasure in idleness, hence it early became a study with me how to employ my time in the best manner possible for the unfolding of my own spirit, and in giving to mankind the facts of spirit existence. Though removed from your sphere of life, yet I was cognizant of what was transpiring among mortals.

The problem was how to bring this knowledge to mankind in a manner that would be acceptable, knowing as I did, the prejudice that existed in reference to spiritual theories, and especially in regard to the possibility of the communication of spirits.

I knew something of the philosophy of controlling a human organism, but not as much as it has been my pleasure to learn by experience. The idea that has found embodiment in the control of human organism, has enabled me to give from time to time what has come under my own observation, of the realities of the two worlds as they exist. It was my desire to do this, but the possibility was beyond

what I expected to realize, until time had so far developed the mediumistic forces in mankind, that the two worlds should have a natural line or channel of communication established, through the agency of those inherent forces that have been implanted in the human soul, but which a false system of education has blinded, and I might say crystalized.

I was pondering over these darkened conditions of human life, when my friend in spirit, Col. W. H. Reynolds, approached me, and revealed the fact of a channel being opened, where the elements for a prosperous commencement existed. In connection with him and other spirits, I entered upon the task of controlling a human organism, that through this channel we might give to the world, as best we could, what was of so much interest and importance to mankind.

The fact that we could communicate, would not benefit the world at large, unless means were employed to give to all the soul-inspiring assurance that life with all its possibilities was continuous. While we could transmit our thoughts and ideas, material means and willing hands and hearts must be found in the earth life to aid and assist us.

Without going into a minute detail of all the circumstances attending our enterprise, let me say we found those who were willing to be used, and those who were willing to contribute of their means to spread the truth of our glorious philosophy, to all portions of your land. For two years have we used liberally of their bounty, and through the means thus employed, hundreds of human souls have been led from darkness to light. It was the darkness of night that theology has for centuries caused to hang like a funeral pall over your fair and beautiful land. Many a sorrowful heart has been made to rejoice, by reading the pages of our paper.

It has ever been our aim to give what could be comprehended by all, explaining the naturalness of life. Instead of telling of a bourne from whence no traveler can return, we bring the assurance and proof that death and the grave are but pearly gates to a heavenly state and place of rest.

Having thus far succeeded in our enterprise, we look forward to greater triumphs in the future; and for that reason, I now appeal to all who have read our paper in the past, to remember that each one has a work to do. Those who would read, should remember those who are used as instruments in circulating the glad tidings of great joy, cannot subsist, and perform their part of this needed labor, without that assistance which comes from the pocket, as well as sympathizing hearts.

Through our suggestion, the price of our journal has been placed at a sum within reach of all, and we trust that our efforts may be sustained, and the world benefited thereby. If all who claim an interest in spiritual unfoldment, in the development of the mind, and in the growth of spiritual knowledge, will take the interest now, that when they come to spirit life, they will wish they had taken, thousands will respond to our call, and as a result, more light, more freedom, more knowledge will be experienced, upon which human life can only

rest in security and peace, as embraced within the Infinite heart of all.

T. STARR KING.

January 1, 1878.

### WHAT NEXT?

We have never claimed to be a prophet or the son of a prophet, but what we did claim as "a safe estimate" of public opinion, in regard to the sentiments uttered by Col. Ingersoll, and which were unitedly assailed by the clergymen of Utica, has been so fully verified by the public expressions of the most eloquent and influential ministers in this country, that we feel justified in declaring that our "estimate" of public sentiment is not only fully sustained, but that the most radical "infidel" utterances of Col. Ingersoll, have been re-echoed from the most popular pulpit in the land, and re-affirmed by the greatest living clergyman!

In an editorial in the December number of THE OLIVE BRANCH, under head of "Spiritualism in Utica," referring to the enthusiastic manner in which the bold, manly declarations of Col. Ingersoll were received, we said:

"We call attention to the fact of the progress in public sentiment plainly manifest by the enthusiastic manner in which the Colonel's most radical utterances were cheered!"

Between two and three thousand people were present. His fierce, eloquent denunciation of the doctrine of endless punishment was cheered to the echo! \* \* \*

With the Bible story of creation exploded, and the doctrine of eternal punishment abandoned with cheers, no wonder the clergy of Utica took fright!"

Since writing the above, as our readers will observe in reading the extract we give from Mr. Beecher's sermon, the gifted expounder and best representative of modern theology stands shoulder to shoulder with the eloquent and popular lecturer of the West, as well as our own humble efforts for years, in declaring to the world that which Mr. Beecher now affirms to be "the most hideous nightmare of theology!"

From the "Amen corner" of the Church of humanity—broad and universal—wherein there is fullest liberty for "man, woman and child," Brother Ingersoll and ourself rise up and "extend the right hand of fellowship" to Brother Beecher, for his brave, earnest denunciation of theology's "hideous nightmare."

But what shall we say to our affrighted brothers of the pulpit in Utica, who assailed Col. Ingersoll's views as "blasphemous and infidel," when denouncing "endless punishment," now that Brother Beecher has denounced it more fiercely, even to the "swearing" against it; though considering the calling of Plymouth's pulpit's great light, the fiery subject and bottomless object swore at, not in the least blasphemous, nor the reverend gentleman in any sense a blasphemer!

What will the clergymen say who denounced the ideas of the infidel? Brethren, you are in a predicament. We sympathize with you. It is not the fault of "Col. Bob," this time. You are respectfully invited to turn your pious telescopes from Peoria, Ill., to Brooklyn, N. Y.—from the lyceum platform to the mightiest



pulpit in the land. Your pulpits rang with loudest reports of all the ammunition your "small arms" could carry, pointed at the back of the great infidel, after he was entirely out of range or reach. Now turn your guns upon Plymouth Pulpit, face and fire upon one of your own number, if you have the courage, because of his "infidelity and blasphemy!" Dare you do it? We shall see!

#### MRS. LOUISE M. KERNS IN UTICA.

This talented medium has been spending a brief time at Utica, N. Y., and visiting some of the surrounding towns, giving her ballot tests; a phase of mediumship in which she excels. Through the manifestations of spirit power and intelligence, which occur in her presence, many sad and lonely hearts have been made to rejoice. Skeptics and materialists have witnessed with wonder and amazement, the accuracy by which those supposed to be dead have demonstrated the fact that they still live. The most skeptical have been compelled to acknowledge the existence of a power, hitherto unknown to them; the materialist, who claims that all power is centered in matter, and the grave the end of all there is to man, have had their foundation swept away, and though reluctantly, yet, have they been compelled, to acknowledge the fact of a power, superior to and able to penetrate matter and give expressions of an intellectual character, which indicate the presence of mind powers, not found in material substances.

There is a peculiarity with this medium, not found in those who practice their profession solely for the love of gain. All her manifestations bear the unmistakable evidences of honesty, her ladylike deportment, under the most trying circumstances, carries conviction of the powers she possesses. At every seance given in Progressive Hall she has added new laurels to her already world-wide reputation.

Such mediums are beneficial to the cause of Spiritualism, and are truly the world's saviors. Through her manifestations, are given unmistakable proof of the immortality of the soul. One seance with Mrs. Kerns under favorable conditions, will do more to establish the fact of spirit existence and consciousness, than all the theological sermons ever delivered upon this planet. Wherever she may go after her labors close with us, she will bear with her the love and esteem of all who have witnessed her manifestations in Utica.

#### VOICE OF TRUTH.

We have received a copy of a paper bearing this title. We feel to congratulate, and extend the right hand of fellowship to our worthy sisters, and bid them God speed. The fields of usefulness are growing each year broader, and we welcome such earnest laborers as Sister Schindler and her lady partner. Having a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Schindler, we can recommend to the reading public, any article from her pen, as coming from a soul touched by the fingers of inspiration from the higher spheres. Let all who can, subscribe and aid in the good work.

Address 206 Union St., Memphis, Tenn.

#### THIRD EDITION READY.

We have been obliged by the large and continued call, to publish a third edition of the address delivered before the Progressive Hall Society, Sunday morning, Nov. 18, 1877, through the mediumship of A. A. Wheelock, in pamphlet form for general circulation. For the benefit of the clergy and others, a few thousand were scattered broad-cast over the city of Utica.

The pamphlet contains the able address of T. Starr King; the challenge of A. A. Wheelock to the clergy of Utica, to discuss the ideas which they unitedly assailed in Col. Ingersoll's eloquent lecture; and a ringing poem from spirit Edgar A. Poe, entitled, "The Trump of Freedom," given through the mediumship of David Jones in the mechanical control of his arm.

The pamphlet will be sent postage paid

1 Copy.....	5 cts.
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50 ".....	35 cts.
100 ".....	50 cts.

Friends of free thought, free speech, and a free religion, this is an excellent campaign document, which ought to be scattered far and near. Get them and spread them round among your neighbors and friends.

Address OLIVE BRANCH, Utica, N. Y.

#### SPIRITUAL CONVENTION IN VERMONT.

The Vermont State Spiritualist Association will hold a quarterly mass convention in H. M. Brace's Hall in Waterbury, on Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday, January 18, 19 and 20 Board at the hotel for \$1.00 per day.

Arrangements have been made with the Central Vermont, Connecticut and Passumpsic River, Montpelier and Wells River, and Woodstock Railroads, to furnish free return checks to all passing over their respective roads, and paying full fare to attend the Convention. Also, the line of stages running north from Waterbury will carry for fare one way. Speakers and Mediums are specially invited to attend. Waterbury being a central point, and amply provided with hall and hotel accommodations, it is hoped and expected there will be a large attendance. Let us have a general re-union, that we may brighten the links in the chain of friendship and fraternity; and if there is any seeming difference in modes, let us be but one in spirit. In addition to our home talent, Dr. T. B. Taylor, author of "Old Theology turned upside down," is engaged to be present on the occasion. Among the most celebrated lecturers now before the people, Dr. Taylor stands the equal if not the superior. Like all the great lights in literature, science, philosophy and religion, he has come up from the people—the common people—a self-made man. The press has never failed to speak in the highest terms of him as a lecturer, and his name stands alongside of Theodore Parker, Higginson and Frothingham. In addition, Dr. Taylor has a large collection of physical phenomena as illustrations of the facts of our philoso-

phy, the results of nine years patient and careful investigation. With the array of talent that will be present, we may reasonably hope to have such a gathering as Central Vermont never witnessed. "Come one, come all," and show the people we are in earnest.

Z. GLAZIER, Secretary.

Gouldsville, Dec. 20, 1877.

—There is an ugly kind of forgiveness in this world,—a kind of hedgehog forgiveness, shot out like quills. Men take one who has offended, and set him down before the blow-pipe of their indignation, and scorch him, and burn his faults into him; and when they have kneaded him sufficiently with their fiery fists, then—they forgive him.—Beecher.

#### THE HIDEOUS NIGHTMARE OF THEOLOGY.

One of the strongholds of theology has again been assailed! The blow this time was from within, not from without. The doctrine of endless punishment has received a deadly thrust. It was not given by that "blasphemous infidel," Col. Ingersoll, of Peoria, Ill., but by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, the sage of Plymouth Pulpit; the most gifted, renowned, and foremost clergyman in America, if not in the world.

Of course there is a quaking among the dry bones of theology, at this fierce assault of one of its main pillars, from one of their own number, but it is one of the healthful signs, that the sacred leaven of free thought and a true spirituality is working in the minds of men, and will yet blossom and bear fruit abundantly.

The following extract from Mr. Beecher's sermon, which we take from the *N. Y. Times* of December 19, will show how completely he disposes of theology's "bottomless pit."

Mr. Beecher's text, yesterday morning, was the ninth verse of the first chapter of Ephesians, and the theme of his discourse was the background of mystery which surrounds, or rather obscures, all attempts to teach or understand the attributes and nature of God. Men must learn these things by their own experience, and, in illustrating the difference between God and man, he said that man's essential faculties are precisely similar to those of God, and differ only in degrees, just as the child of four years, sitting on his father's knee, has the same powers of reasoning as his father, only that power in the father is matured, while in the child it is weak and obscure. A man would not hold a candle out of the window and say it was sunrise, and yet the same light and the same warmth exist in the candle that exist in the sun, though in an immensely different degree. Speaking of the Trinity, Mr. Beecher said that he believed there were three persons united in one God-head, but if any one should ask him why he believed it, he should tell him frankly that he did not know anything about it, only that it was easier to believe that which he thought coincided with the doctrine of the New Testament than to contradict it. But he could not attempt to explain it. Orthodoxy says that men must believe in the Trinity or they cannot come into the Church. That is called orthodoxy, but he called it heathenism. It is not an easy thing,



said Mr. Beecher, for an honest, conscientious man to know just what to preach and what not to preach. A man who values morality, and who has the good of his fellowman at heart, cannot be careless as to the things he ought to teach. His own head had often reeled, and his mind had been greatly troubled when he reflected upon his responsibility in this matter. It was no easy matter to remove the rotten timbers and replace them with sound ones, and not stop the voyage of the ship. It was said that Adam was created perfect. It was also said that Adam sinned, and that in consequence of that sin, the whole human race fell. The human race had existed on the earth for thousands and thousands of years, and had gone on propagating and multiplying, until all the waves of the ocean which had rolled in upon the shore during those centuries did not contain drops enough, nor the sands of the sea particles enough, not all the figures of the arithmetic numbers enough, to compute the preface, to say nothing of the body, of the great history of the human race. The numbers of this human race were actually beyond computation, and for thousands and thousands and thousands of years they had been born into the world, had lived, and struggled, and finally died, and gone where—where? "If you tell me that they have all gone to heaven, my answer will be that such a sweeping of mud into heaven would defile its purity, and I cannot accept that. If you tell me that they have gone to hell, then I swear by the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have sworn to worship forever, that you will make an infidel of me. The doctrine that God has been for thousands of years peopling this earth with human beings, during a period three-fourths of which was not illuminated by an altar or a church, and in places where a vast population of those people are yet without that light, is to transform the Almighty into a monster more hideous than Satan himself and I swear by all that is sacred that I will never worship Satan, though he should appear dressed in royal robes and seated on the throne of Jehovah. Men may say, 'you will not go to heaven.' A heaven presided over by such a demon as that, who has been peopling this world with millions of human beings, and then sweeping them off into hell, not like dead flies, but without taking the trouble even to kill them, and gloating and laughing over their eternal misery, is not such a heaven as I want to go to. The doctrine is too horrible. I cannot believe it and I won't. They say the saints in heaven are so happy that they do not mind the torments of the damned in hell; but what sort of saints must they be who could be happy while looking down upon the horrors of the bottomless pit? They don't mind—they're safe—they're happy! What would the mother think of the 16 year old daughter who, when her infant was lying dead in the house, should come singing and dancing into the parlor, and exclaim, 'Oh! I'm so happy mother! I don't care for the dead baby in the coffin!' Would she not be shocked? And so with this doctrine; and by the blood of Christ I denounce it; by the wounds in his hands and his side, I abhor it; by his groans and agony, I abhor and denounce it as the most hideous nightmare of theology."

[Written Inspirationally for the MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK.]

### THE STRONGHOLDS OF ORTHODOXY.

By THOS. WALKER.

To one whose mind has imbibed the contagious freedom of the nineteenth century, and who has been baptized in the flood of restored science and renovated spiritual liberty, it is a matter for concern and wonder that the human mind should be so loth to relinquish error

and so backward at accepting truth when it is presented in its sweet and native nakedness. A mind formed, based, and cultured in an honest conscience, cannot but imagine that other minds should act from common motives, and with the same incentives give similar results. This, however, is found not to be the case, and ignorance and folly, vested interest and power, are ever at war with reform and progress, truth and justice. The fact that error is so popular and superstition so strong, evidence powerful and subtle causes at work somewhere. In order to remove the deleterious effects everywhere visible around us, to destroy the baneful results of mediæval theology and Pagan Christianity—to banish from our midst the pestilential atmosphere, the moral degradation, and the spiritual bondage, stifling the breathing of man's divinest nature, and cutting at the very root of progress,—we must deal with their causes and repair them. We have in the past too much neglected them, and depended for our success in making proselytes, upon the beauty of our philosophy, the indisputable evidence we have furnished in its support, and the cold but potent reasoning of its adherents. These are all well in their place, and as necessary for true conviction to the matured mind as the sun is to effulgent day. But permit me briefly to point out some of the subtle causes leading to the permanent and popular success of orthodox error.

I will use for my illustrations the Roman Church, the mother of Orthodoxy in all its manifold forms and divisions. It commences practically with the knowledge gathered by centuries of experience of human nature. Knowing well the heart of man, it has taken advantage of every weakness to ensure its own power. There is not a sense in man that in exercise gives him pleasure, but meets with gratification in his religion. Every opportunity is taken advantage of to strengthen the power of religious association, such as connecting days with certain religious observances, and associating certain acts with periodical devotions. Reverence and respect are inspired by the self-denial, celibacy, and profound learning of the priests, in comparison with the ignorance of the people. Awe, wonder, and undying admiration are induced by the finest edifices, the most gorgeous, romantic, and magnificent of architectural achievements of mediæval and modern times. Obedience and submissive piety are the results of the unmistakable power in possession of the priesthood. Enthusiasm is chiefly the child of position, it being advantageous to no slight degree to exhibit zeal when wealth, honor, respect, and powers political, social, and religious, are to be gained thereby. Devotion is called forth by playing upon the same faculties, the religious sentiments, that are either latent or active in all men—the same organs that in exercise make the Hindoo sing Vedec hymns, the Greek to immortalize his deities, the Saracen to worship Allah, and Christendom its Christ, and the truest man, humanity and God. These attributes are undying, and but change as to their associations as man is ignorant or wise.

But in addition to all these devices, which are sufficient to ensure the continuity of a

Church, there are other methods employed to preserve the superstition of the past intact in the present. On the Sabbath morn the parish bells chime out their merry tunes, and the joyest peal sends the music of the ancients to the ears enraptured by the sound. The still summer morning, the air laden with the fragrance from the rose, the buttercup, and daisy; the chirp of the happy robin, the song of the high-soaring lark, the flutter of the thrush as startled from the hedge it gives a shrill and pensive note; the brook that ripples through the dell to the music of its own murmurs and whispering of the neighbouring trees, all remind one of, and are generally associated with, the sunny days of childhood, when the Church was a Sunday luxury. In Church the organ shakes the roof and very spires with its mysterious tones and makes one tremble at its powers; the stained-glass windows take the mind a-wandering, and as the sunbeams through them steal revealing the scenes and characters there depicted, we are with Jesus on Mount Olivet, with Peter in his prison, with Mary at the tomb, or more probably with Simon in a trance or Joseph in a dream. The half-sung *Dominus vobiscum* from the priest, the rendition on the organ, the anthem from the choir, combined with the robes, ceremonies, and conduct of the pastor, the fleeting, flitting, gowned group of boys assisting in the performance, completely intoxicate the intellect and senses and drown the voice of reason. Then the good father may lull and soothe his hearers, exhort them to practical faith and their duty to the Church. He may raise their sympathies by relating the stories of oft-repeated martyrdom of the saints and fathers. He may indoctrinate them as he pleases, for they cannot resist his rhetoric or raise one dissenting voice to what he says. The sweet smell from the altar hath sacrificed their judgment, and the light from the flickering tapers has blinded their perception.

The Sabbath passes and saints' days, fast days, and feast days follow, into the spirit of which the good Catholic enters. New ceremonies, imposing, grand, and incomprehensible, crowd themselves one upon the other, and he who witnesses is filled with awe and fear, followed by devotion. In the dizzy whirl of form and ritual—this giddy display of meaningless action and scenic effect—who can stop for a single moment and think? Who, in witnessing, can ask the origin of all these? It is thus that, unquestioning, we accept these rites and trust all dogmas.

And is not heresy guarded against most effectually? The confessional terrifies the weak-minded, and prevents all investigation into forbidden realms. The fear of excommunication, from such a formidable luxury, gives reason shackles, and conscience the cradle. And in the past more than mere excommunication was to be feared. The fates of Bruno and Hypatia, the banishment of Nestor, Arius, and Pelagius, the imprisonment of Galileo, the excommunication of Copernicus, the Spanish Inquisition, and the massacre of St. Bartholemew, are undying lessons of what the Church in her power had done when insubordination had been manifested; and she stands over the



minds of the ignorant throng, like clouds ready to burst again, or like the sword of Damocles threatening to cut the thread of safety if occasion should demand it. And even outside of the Roman Church the same spirit in the past has been manifest. Servetus burned and witches hanged. The Puritan history is one of persecution and tyranny. But these matters are in the past, and the feelings of revenge, hatred, and cruelty that were fostered in the breasts of such men as Calvin, Beza, Knox, and Melancthon, however good in other respects to those who differed from them in belief and religion, have little effect or weight on the minds of the men of the nineteenth century.

In our day the Church is maintained and perpetuated by its inherent charms—wealth and power; not by the fear of persecution by its members, though this is a factor in giving it security, for it requires no small share of boldness and force of character to break forth from its ties and then to submit to the sneering laugh, the sarcastic ridicule, and the unprofitable contempt of your friends, and those upon whom for your worldly comfort you are dependent, and who henceforth give you the cold shoulder.

Above all that I have mentioned, before which the oracle is powerless, or in comparison to which priestcraft is as nothing, and to which the Church is wide awake, is the education of the young. Mythology, theology in its pagan form, ceremonial religion—call it by whatsoever name you will—is wonderfully adapted to the young; its strange and glittering practices dazzling and narrowing their mental vision, and its teachings moulding their characters. At an age when all the populace of earth were children, priestcraft had its rise, and childhood is its happy season of success. If man had never grown—if his faculties had never unfolded in the beneficent adjuncts and products of civilization—if we had forever remained the children of the dim mythic ages, in the twilight of the world,—we never should have had a Socrates or Buddha, a Jesus or a Mohammed, a Lucretius or a Celsus, who dared to rise from the traditions of the times. What means the clamor for the Bible in the schools, prayer-meetings for the young, and the attention paid to the youths of the rising generations? It has to my mind an ominous meaning, and says in so many words, "Give us the young and you can take the rest." If the orthodox world could only carry out their scheme of having the secular and religious trainings combined then they would make a genuine knowledge subservient to faith and religion, and would retard true knowledge as much as possible, or, if giving information or instruction upon such topics as history, science, or reform, would make it appear that they were all derived from and dependent upon the priestly order and oriental theocracy, thus giving religion a supremacy. Does anyone doubt this? If so, let him but study the lessons of the past, and judge the present by the light of experience. Examples are not so remote that we may presume with safety that the motives of men have changed in our day. Still we have a vast army of priests to keep, of clergy to support, and peripatetic parsons to feed and clothe; and all

this depends upon our submission and belief, as well as their continued power over us. It would be folly to say that they cannot recognize this fact, and it is with something akin to fear that they witness every innovation upon the old path, or see the workings of reform. Every outspoken voice, every liberal paragraph in our newspapers, every spiritual rap, means diminishing tithes, fewer churches, and poorer preachers. But let us withdraw our support, and there is scarcely one who will continue the work as a labor of love. The fact is, religion is remunerative, for our indulgences are many. Then what are the priestly orders to do to make sure of their livelihood in the future, and to bequeath a remunerative profession upon posterity? Simply to recruit the ranks of Orthodoxy from the young, and to mould the minds of the plastic to their own liking.

Now what are we to do—for surely our love for humanity will not allow us to remain idle whilst so much tyranny is on every side, and so many of our brothers and sisters are inveigled into the hopeless snares of error and modernized superstition? Louder than the methodistic cry of "What shall I do to be saved?" ought our cry to be, "What shall we do to save others?" As I said in the beginning, we must get at the roots, at the causes, the strongholds of Orthodoxy. Keep our children from their Sunday-schools, and give them (the children) the wholesome Lyceum. Let us have education compulsory, free, secular, and unsectarian. How often have I known families where the parents were Spiritualists, and all the children promising well for Catholics or Protestants in some form or other, attending Sunday-school every week? And yet these Spiritualists talk glibly about the abominations of priestly rule. Oh! consistency, thou art a jewel! How many times have I found Spiritualists who avowed Spiritualism the loudest, having a pew in church, paying regularly in its support, and yet could not afford to subscribe to a spiritualistic journal, or purchase good progressive literature?

Spiritualists in many instances are stingy, cowardly ecclesiastics, who having got what they want, cease all worry about anyone else. If they had half the enthusiasm our Methodist brethren have, we could reform the world, armed as we are with truth, in less time than we now spend in talking over it. If they were half so liberal as the generality of religionists, we should have funds to carry on our journals, build schools, and disseminate useful literature. There are of course in our ranks some of the most unselfish and hard-working, who lend influence, labor, and funds to the cause, but the majority stand by and watch the willing hands do the work.

Into the field, all of you! Get lecturers, and erect comfortable halls. Have music and social enchantments in your services, not copying from our orthodox brethren, but giving adornment to the mind by methods more in keeping with modern advancement and progress. Take hold of the young and train them to think freely for themselves, neither thinking for others nor allowing others to think for them. Let every Spiritualist be a worker, fearless yet loving, and soon we shall reap an abun-

dant harvest: error shall rumble like an earthquake, and the ghost of Orthodoxy shall be laid.

Sidney, Australia, August 12th, 1877.

The preceding article, copied from the *Medium and Day-Break* of London, presents many ideas it would be well for Spiritualists of America to consider. It is a recognized fact that in the young are found the elements necessary to the growth and future prosperity of the race. The Catholic denomination, more than all others, grasp this growing power, and utilize it, moulding it after the designs of priestcraft, and in harmony with the teachings of their religious systems. It thus becomes the foundation upon which the Catholic Church rests. Delusive and degrading as it is to the intelligence of mankind, yet valuable lessons may be gathered therefrom, which Spiritualists should study and profit thereby.

If the spiritual philosophy affords such sweet satisfaction to the adult mind, does it not possess equally the same elements to feed the young? It instructive to the child of mature years, is there not reason to believe the child of tender years may receive benefit from being made familiar with its teachings and precepts? Spiritualists, as a class, seem to think that it is only for the grown child that spiritual revelations are given; and acting in accord with the idea, they feast their hungry souls on the delicacies, and give their children the tasteless husks, that can never afford satisfaction to the soul, nor food to the mind. It is time Spiritualists began to take some definite action with reference to the young, to shield them from the influence of Orthodox and Catholic teaching. This can be easily done, by placing in their hands, spiritual books and papers, giving them opportunities to study and learn what the spiritual philosophy teaches, thus laying the foundation for a spiritual manhood and womanhood that shall blossom into beauty as they grow in years and intelligence. There is a manifest lack of interest among Spiritualists, in reference to sustaining publications, that are issued in the interest of our philosophy. There are far too many who love to be fed, but who shirk the responsibility of sustaining those who present them with the necessary means whereby they learn of the future life, and listen to what is given from those who have passed beyond the veil. Is this justice? If the spiritual philosophy affords so much comfort and solace, should not the channels through which these messages come, receive a fair compensation for the time and means employed in preparing this food for distribution? Let every Spiritualist ask themselves when feasting upon the rich truths placed before them, am I doing my duty in not lending to those who are used as instruments, my sympathy, and an equivalent in more substantial means, that their hearts may be strengthened, and their souls refreshed, by seeing that their feeble efforts are appreciated? If every Spiritualist will take this matter home and ponder it over in their own mind, spiritual publications will not sicken and die for want of support, nor the cause stand shivering on the brink of a dishonored grave.



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

It has been said that knowledge is power. Admitting the adage to be true, we are led to ask, of what benefit is knowledge if not wisely applied? If considered a power, we are led to make further inquiry whether at all times a perfect balance is preserved, that, in its application, benefits may result.

Knowledge does not always imply the possession of wisdom, and must not be mistaken for that element. If knowledge gives power we desire to make the further inquiry whether at all times wisdom is displayed in its manifestations. Power without wisdom to guide and direct its application, becomes a destroying element. If it is the result of knowledge, there must be a balancing element to hold in check the devastating forces which might otherwise be observed in its manifestations.

Knowledge must be classified, to become beneficial to man. If the mind be the reservoir wherein knowledge is preserved, it is equally necessary that the embankments be sufficiently strong to resist the pressure brought to bear against them. But if not strong enough to resist the power thus confined, destruction follows as a natural result.

Power is a combination of elements that are never seen. They belong to the unknowable in life. Yet the effects are seen. The sweeping cyclone and the devastating hurricane by which human life and property are ruthlessly sacrificed to the ungovernable tempest, are manifestations of power in which mankind fail to discover any wisdom displayed. Yet there must of necessity be a knowledge of these elements ere they could be brought together, or in contact with other forces sufficiently to produce the results referred to.

These and similar demonstrations are often referred to as special providences, having a hidden meaning which mankind have no right to inquire into or question. Admitting that mankind are morally bound to recognize the laws of nature, whether they comprehend them or not, I also assert that he has a legitimate right to question all things that affect his interest materially or spiritually.

The alphabet to knowledge is the ability to question. By the legitimate use of this prerogative alone is knowledge obtained. Whatever is of too sacred a nature to be questioned, is worthless, because if a power, there is no knowledge of how it may be applied, and hence it were better that no instruction from it be received. As I view the subject, Infinite wisdom was displayed in the construction of that important organ in the brain force, causality. And upon the same basis I recognize wisdom in the construction of other organs to act in conjunction, thus creating a balance wheel that holds in subjection the power possessed by any one of the numerous organs, and by this influence creating an equipoise in the mind force.

Those who believe in special providences think also that Deity cannot perform an unwise act, and that all things he has made are good. And it is farther claimed that man is the highest type in form, and the embodiment of the highest creating power of the Infinite. Man reasons thus because 'tis said that he was

made in the image of Deity; and in the realm of life man is far in advance of all other forms.

Admitting all this to be true for the sake of the argument, what does it prove? First, that all there is in the human structure is the result of Infinite design. If the outer form is the work of Infinite wisdom, it is logical to conclude that the inner man must be also; with all its faculties, which, though not seen, are known to be a part of this wonderful mechanism. If there be certain organs which by their operation create a desire for inquiry, it is proof of the original design, and the exercise of them shows the design in their construction, or in other words, it is a natural expression of powers guaranteed. Hence, if there be a desire to question any manifestation pertaining to the spiritual of man's nature, or the material, it is a legitimate exercise of the functions imparted, and no power other than that which granted the same, has any right to interfere or limit the circuit in which investigations are being made.

Knowledge then needs to be analyzed, that the power contained therein may be understood. All special demonstrations of power either in the interest of, or operating against the welfare of mankind, should be examined always with a desire to ascertain the truth.

Knowledge is not confined to one object, or one branch of education. It extends to, and embraces all things in the universe of life. There is a science connected with the smallest manifestation in life. The particle of matter that shines in the sunbeam has a history, and a life record. By inquiry into all these, is knowledge attained. Mankind learns of himself by study and comparison, and the information thus gained becomes a power.

If mankind were to sit with folded arms, and look to Providence for food to sustain the physical form, none would be received. There must be some action on the part of the individual. According to the methods of reasoning adopted by a large majority of Christian people, all the ills that attend them through life are considered special acts of Providence, to teach them the way that should be followed. In many cases it might be said that the means applied fails to secure the desired result, and knowledge is not attained.

On the other hand the success which attends a line of action honestly followed, is ascribed to the same cause. But how few return thanks for being thus specially remembered? If the theory is believed in, it fails to impress itself upon the mind in such a way as to leave an abiding influence. The cause is not inquired into, and mankind are educated in ignorance of certain fundamental laws which have an important bearing upon them from childhood even unto old age. There is a lack of balance in the mind force; a yielding to the dictation of another, which causes the gross ignorance that is observed in reference to the vital principles that must be understood ere knowledge can be obtained.

There is a balance wheel in every human organism, and if this is allowed to act, mankind will understand themselves and the relationship existing between them and all other

forms. No matter how elevated may be the conceptions of an individual in regard to the powers possessed by him, there is a link that connects him with all other forms in existence. The cause of these selfish opinions, is a belief in supposed special providences. While a belief in such vagaries is cherished, mankind will wander in ignorance, and that element wields its sceptre with a power that few who yield obedience to its mandates, comprehend.

It is ignorance of the relation man sustains to nature and the Infinite, that produces the many ills of life. They are the result of violated law. A knowledge of self would cause obedience to the laws which nature has enacted. There are minds so attuned that they perceive readily the true relationship existing, and they have the power of mind to act upon the impression received. They are ever in advance of the other class, who have been taught to refer all matters to priestly authority before action is decided upon.

In the first case the person allows the balancing power in his own organism to act. By the power thus exercised over the mind, knowledge is acquired. Such an one lives not by faith, because faith ever leaves a feeling of uncertainty. That is the controlling influence with that class who refer all things to clerical decision.

The balance wheel to human life, is the spirituality they possess, which makes each individual a sovereign ruler over self. The necessity for this element is apparent. Man, physically, tends earthward. The aspirations of the material, are for worldly gain and popularity. The spiritual element is directly opposite to this.

These two elements in man's nature are continually warring for the mastery, from which has arisen the idea of an ever present form of evil. This power has been transformed into countless images, representing every form of animate life known to man; while the power of good is represented in but one form, proving the superiority of one over the other. Goodness needs not the cloak or devices of evil.

There is but one path to follow, if goodness be the controlling principle in life, but it may not at all times be strewn with flowers. A knowledge of good and evil is requisite to attain a true conception of life and its duties.

This cannot be secured from traditions. It must be a personal knowledge. Evil often assumes the garb of goodness, to lead men astray. It therefore becomes necessary to investigate all things, even those which are called sacred.

The writers of the Bible very ingeniously inserted occasional paragraphs forbidding any investigation, and thereby lessened the regard that might otherwise be entertained for a book which contains much that is beneficial. But when the doors of investigation were closed, the inquiry arose, why is it so sacred? Of what use are the reasoning faculties of man, if they are not to be used? And if they are for use, surely the use is not to be confined to earthly matters alone.

Knowing how transient is the earthly existence, and regarding the material conditions as



attendant upon the spiritual, that part of man's nature becomes the all-important subject for consideration, and the laws which apply to that phase of life should be understood. In no other way can there be compliance with nature's demands.

The exercise of this power meets with decided opposition from theologians, because it strikes at the foundation of their profession, and is opposed from a selfish basis. Again, some are so deeply imbued with the sanctity of spiritual matters that they are fearful of offending a never changing Deity.

The devil has ever been a fear of the Christian Church, because he always inquires, and always reasons, and effects his purposes according to natural law; that is, he presents a rational method for what he proposes. If this important, though meddling person were understood, he would not be feared as so bad an enemy to mankind. Many important events have been recorded, which, though ascribed to an evil spirit, have been of Infinite value to the world. For instance, the result of that interview with the woman in the garden, was the dawning of intelligence. Man is represented as being in a state of blissful ignorance, which was changed. By the knowledge thus transmitted, a power was acquired to discover between good and evil. It is one of the main objects of theology, to hold the minds of mankind in a condition similar to that in which they hold that man was created. To do this, certain measures are resorted to, and the first is, a denial of their right to question that which is represented to have come from a spiritual source.

It should be known that it is the spiritual faculties in man that create a desire for knowledge. They exercise a guardianship over things material, and cause mankind to inquire into the relationship of the spiritual to the material. When understood, both elements are necessary in their respective phases or conditions. Left in ignorance of the combinations in the life forces, mankind wander into forbidden paths, violate law, and suffer untold anguish as the result.

The spiritual philosophy opens new avenues of thought, establishes confidence in the powers man possesses, and thereby becomes a saving influence. Man learns to reason from effects, to ascertain the cause, and thus is brought into close relationship with the Infinite Power. It is degrading to live in ignorance of self, but theology teaches—take all things for granted, and trust in Providence. Reliance upon such a theory proves an unbalanced condition of the mental powers.

These conditions should be removed, that knowledge may be imparted, and the soil prepared for the reception of spiritual seed. The first step is to awaken a desire for spiritual knowledge, from a spiritual source. But here you are met with the assertion that Spiritualists deny the Bible. While they may well deny its divine authorship, they accept all that is good. What can be made to harmonize with nature and her known laws, is accepted by all Spiritualists. But how are you to know that it is divine, if debarred from making inquiry? Is it of any benefit for

another to inquire? Will that produce satisfaction? It does not in matters of a material character. If a person tells you he has discovered a mine of wealth, and denies you access, it will not benefit you.

The immortality of the soul is the most priceless of all gems, and man should not be debarred from learning all he can in regard to it. He wants positive evidence. Faith cannot afford relief, while belief is equally powerless. Only a knowledge of its reality can make life beautiful, and it thus becomes a power for good.

Spiritual knowledge is the balance wheel needed in human life. It holds in subjection the evil influences that prey upon the good. It opens the spiritual sight, and enables man to look beyond the present to the life that is to be. And it does not allow the once awakened faculties to slumber again. New ideas are thus constantly evolved that require analysis, and knowledge is thereby increased.

Spiritualism becomes a divine teacher when comprehended in its true light. It seeks not the destruction of recognized forms of government for society, but rather seeks to awaken the spiritual faculties of mankind, and create a desire for information, thus elevating the race to a higher standard, morally, intellectually and spiritually. It teaches how the material life should be spent, that the greater amount of good may be accomplished.

No person lives to themselves alone, and the farther removed from material conditions, the greater the influence exerted. Spirituality is not selfishness. A truly spiritual person is known, whatever their position in life. Their influence cannot be destroyed, for it lives in the spirit.

Spiritualism teaches the fallacy of many of the ordinances regarded as sacred, and proves that many of them were copied from the heathen traditions of the past, and are yet in practice by the idol worshippers of the East. It thus becomes an instructor. Through its philosophy can man learn what he is, and what he may be.

There is a marked difference between the spiritual philosophy and other forms of religious instruction. It throws its doors open, and invites investigation, and the farther the investigations are pursued, the deeper becomes the interest, because it is natural. Instead of filling the mind with supernatural ideas, it offers a plain solution of all the manifestations witnessed. It opens a field for study that grows in interest as the mind unfolds. It thus becomes a blessing to the race.

Though opposed and ridiculed by the clergy, it wields an irresistible power for good. It imparts just ideas of all things, both material and spiritual. But above all things it brings mankind into closer relationship with Deity. The spirit of inquiry which it imparts leads the mind away from material objects, and opens a line of communication with the unseen forces of life. This paves the way to a more exalted conception of Deity, and man's responsibility thereto.

In this light would I offer you this philosophy, and ask that you examine into it, and thus come into closer relationship with Infinite

power, where will be found knowledge and wisdom to guide in every path you may be called to follow.

THEODORE PARKER.

Aug. 27, 1877.

### SLEEP.

"So He giveth his beloved sleep."—Psa. cxxvi: 2.

He sees when their footsteps falter, when their heart grows weak and faint,  
He marks when their strength is failing, and listens to each complaint,  
He bids them rest for a season, for the pathway has grown too steep;  
And folded in fair green pastures,  
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

Like weary and worn-out children, that sigh for the daylight's close,  
He knows that they oft are longing for home and its sweet repose;  
So He calls them in from their labors ere the shadows around them creep,  
And silently watching o'er them,  
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

He giveth it, oh, so gently! as a mother will hush to rest,  
The babe that she softly pillows so tenderly on her breast;  
Forgotten are now the trials and sorrows that made them weep,  
For with many a soothing promise  
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

Weep not that their toils are over; weep not that their race is run;  
God grant we may rest as calmly when our work, like theirs, is done!  
Till then we would yield with gladness our treasures to Him to keep,  
And rejoice in the sweet assurance,  
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

—Golden Hours.

### REFORMATION.

The day of reformation dawaeth:  
List, ye mortals; catch the strain;  
Shout aloud, The angels cometh—  
Truth triumphant comes to reign.  
Hear ye not the nations calling,  
Come and help us, spirits come;  
Superstition's throne is crumbling—  
Onward till the victory's won.

Cease not, though your load be heavy;  
To the victors, crowns are given;  
Freedom's cause is one of glory,  
'Tis the cause of joy in heaven.  
Truth divine like stars are gleaming,  
Shedding light o'er all the earth,  
Creeds of men are trembling, falling,  
Hail with joy the march of truth.

Angels bright are journeying thither,  
From their homes in heaven above;  
Flowers they bring that never wither,  
Tokens of their deathless love.  
Joyful news to worlds terrestrial,  
Borne to earth by seraph song;  
Peace on earth from worlds celestial,  
Chant in praise—your notes prolong.

Bless'd spirits, ever near us,  
Fill our souls with light divine,  
Let no gloom or doubt oppress us,  
Ere we reach yon heavenly clime.  
Come and breathe your soul's emotions  
Draw us by your cords of love  
Far away from earth's commotions  
To that fount in heaven above.

ACHSA W. SPRAGUE.

Nov. 8, 1877.



UNIVERSALISM AS I TAUGHT;  
SPIRITUALISM AS I NOW  
TEACH

It is a most delightful task to assume control of human powers for the expression of thought, no matter what the phase, so it be within the compass of our limited powers; for although a spirit, I am bound to certain limits and regulations. Outside of these I can do nothing. Within their scope and compass all things which belong to the finite mind are possible. The human mind like all else in life, is subject to the law of change. There is not an atom, even the minutest form that glistens in the sun's rays, but what has the law of change written upon it.

What man is there in the mortal form who has not changed his opinion in regard to peculiar ideas and conceptions growing out of educational teachings? Indeed, if we change not, we are of less value than the rock, for even the sands on the seashore are continually changing. It is the Infinite decree, and whoever raises his voice in opposition to it, opposes Infinite law, and the result of this teaching inharmony and exciting to contentions must be met, if not in the mundane sphere of life, then in spirit life. It makes no difference where you are. The law of compensation will find you, and you will change in conformity with its requirements. This law, like all just laws, is absolute, and there is no appealing from it.

These ideas are not very objectionable to a Universalist. There is quite a similarity between the two; only a little more of the one than the other. One has found the pearl of great price, while the other is seeking for it. This is about the difference between the Universalism I taught, and the Spiritualism I now teach, which I will style the essence of all other issues purified, and the good compressed into one.

Why should I not leave the good for that which is better? Were I addressing only old friends and neighbors, it would not be necessary for me to explain my ideas in the past, or my religious teachings. As I never was sectarian, (or if I had a leaning that way in my earlier days, I did not in my latter years,) I could not comprehend sectarian Universalism; the two are as unlike as the temperate and frigid zones; one warm and genial in temperament, and the other cold and freezing to such an extent as to defy human skill to penetrate through its outer covering.

The Universalism which I taught was that taught by Murray and others who preceded me in the ministry, and who preceded me also to spirit life, where now we can review the past, and derive satisfaction from the assurance that our work was well done.

All forms of religious teaching have their special mission, but none were ever directed by God's spirits or angels to continue in the same grooves or line of thought that their forefathers occupied. Wherever there is intelligence, progression may be seen, not in one thing, but in all things; not in one religious idea, but in all. The voice of God commands—go forward. How few hear it, or if heard, how few obey. False teachings and false

statements regarding the character of the Infinite, and the attributes supposed to be possessed by him, have alienated the soul of man from the requirements of the Infinite.

All denominations have come into existence under peculiar influences, and for a specific purpose. When that object is secured, their work is complete. Let us for a moment glance at the past, and if possible trace the line of religious ideas down to the present. Beginning with the earliest accounts mortals have of the race, we find no sect or denomination. This was before the time when it is said sin came into the world. When mankind became more numerous and began to congregate in bodies, worship assumed a more tangible form; but not yet in costly palaces, but in nature's edifice, beneath the shadowy trees of the forest, God's own temple.

The Jewish form of worship which preceded yours in the religious history of the race, was sectarian. They claimed to be the chosen people, and all outside of Judaism were, according to their belief, outcasts, and aliens from God.

This form of religious teaching continued in force down to the advent of our Elder Brother, when through his teaching and example, more broad and liberal ideas were inaugurated. But the Jews still claimed that theirs was the right way, and continue to do so, up to the present time.

From out of Judaism came Catholicism, retaining the peculiar ideas of a priesthood, and though new in form, yet all the paraphernalia which priesthood used in the past, was adopted by this new sect. The Jews rejected our Elder Brother, but the Catholic adopted him, and the mystery which enshrouded his life was woven into their creeds and systems, and continues with them until the present.

The Jews did not recognize the humble Nazarene, but were hoping for the advent of some one who should come and make their city his place of abode, and their people his choice, among the nations of the earth. This idea is still entertained. The Catholic element believed in the divinity of Jesus, and interpreted his words as referring especially to them. Peter is the accredited architect of Catholicism. There are many good things in its teachings, but its object has long since been accomplished. It was a step forward in the line of human progress.

Next to this came what is denominated Episcopalianism, breathing a greater liberality, but still sectarian; casting off part of the yoke, but retaining that exclusiveness which make them so exclusive that they do not affiliate with other sects. Indeed, it is an offence against the established usages of that Church for a clergyman of the Episcopal faith to enter the desk of a Protestant, or allow a Protestant brother to preach in their sanctuary. There is an element of exclusiveness thrown around the clergy which carries the mind back to the ages when Judaism was in its glory. Some in the Episcopal faith have felt the necessity of reform, hence a more liberal branch has sprung into existence, but does not keep pace with the times.

Protestantism, through the energies of

Luther, Calvin, and Wesley, was brought into existence, and embraced in its teachings, many of the principles found in the forms from which they sprang. The doctrine of endless punishment still found a place in their minds, and with as much tenacity as the Jew or Catholic they insisted upon their peculiar belief being accepted as the only true and divine revelation from the Infinite to mankind. One by one the senseless forms have been dropped or laid aside; the power vested in the priesthood became a mooted question. With the unfolding of power in the human mind, the scales that had been placed upon the vision of mortals, began to drop off little by little until at last man began to question the authority of pope, priest and bishop. The cloak of sanctity had been worn so long that it was growing thin and gauzy. Intelligence began to look through its folds to discover if possible what there was of a special nature that should demand such reverence. It was found upon examination that no special sanctity existed. Those who wore the robes were found to be as other men, finite.

These conditions were not secured without labor and persecution. The Jew, in support of his belief, crucified the Nazarene, hoping thereby to forever banish from the minds of the people, all remembrance of him as a teacher. When Catholicism perceived her commands disregarded, she followed in the footsteps of her predecessor, by putting to death the Protestants who avowed their disbelief in papal or priestly edicts. The Protestants resorted to the stake, use of the gibbet and sacrifice of human life, to enforce their belief. All had manufactured glasses peculiar to the ideas they professed; some were greener than others, and some were remarkable for the deep coloring of blue. Some of these blue glasses are yet in use.

It will be observed by tracing the mental conditions and unfoldings of the race, that these revolutions in thought were but outward expressions of an inward force, rounding out into more perfect manhood the children of earth. Thought can no more be stayed by human commands or edicts than the heaving of the sea. The power that causes the waves to roll mountain high, pays no attention to the petty ideas of men, but they roll onward in defiance of all power, or prayers emanating from mortals.

The statement may seem strange, but the mighty ocean presents a perfect type of the effect produced upon mankind by the awakening in the human mind of the power to think. But such a state of continual agitation could not exist without manifest injury to the welfare of mankind. A season of calm, of rest, is just as essential as breathing the pure air. There are limits to the physical endurance of man. The mental faculties require rest and time to recuperate.

It may be observed that in ages past there have been times when human passion like the whirlwind, proved to be as regardless of human life. Every such storm had a tendency to purify the atmosphere, and the calm that succeeded was the spring time, when the seeds of more liberal ideas were sown. And what finally



blossomed into Universalism was the result of the agitation created by the numberless persecutions, and the absurdities that still struggled for recognition.

It has always required great firmness of character to engage in any new enterprise which was not in harmony with the prescribed rules of the Church. Persecution always followed. It was so when the noble Murray, in the face of the whole world, denied the existence of a local hell. Though but a comparatively short time ago, let me tell you it required some nerve to be known as a Universalist; and not only in the days of Murray, but at a period of more recent date, even in my own native city.

Universalism as I understood it, was the gathering up of all the better elements of thought and ideas found in or expressed in all religious denominations. It was a mental process by which all the good, all the liberality could be condensed in one form, and from the light which this condensation threw upon the character of Deity, came the system of religious thought, known as Universalism.

Who would have supposed that men professing a belief in the universality of God's love to his children, would have stooped so low as to class themselves with sectarian denominations, and yet this has been done. Think of it! Sectarian Universalism. What a misnomer! Yet it is seen, even in your midst; aye, even in my own city the name or term applied to convey the true meaning and design of the organization, has for the sake of gaining popularity, allied itself with the ordinances Universalism came to suppress.

I could never see the necessity for a creed. The system was too broad in its purity, to admit of creedal laws and alliances. I never taught the necessity of a creed. My Universalism embraced the whole world. I did not seek popularity, but expressed my convictions. Those who knew me in my earth life can state whether this be so, or not.

Universalism, like all other forms of religious thought, had a mission to perform, which was to combat the idea of a bottomless pit, full of human beings writhing in eternal torment. Old systems of religious belief could not grapple with this giant error. All their mental training had become allied to a belief in such an unnatural thing, and it required new elements; a different style of argument; a long stride in advance of popular ideas.

When that fiery furnace had become cooled off, the special mission of Universalism ended. But those who at present belong to that denomination seem not to comprehend it. And not having any longer a special duty to perform, ideas similar in form to what may be heard in Orthodox denominations have been instituted, for the sake of gaining popularity.

This is not the Universalism which I taught. In my day Universalism signified progression. I regarded it as a stepping stone to the next higher grade of development; but instead of this, there has been a retrograde tendency. The vicarious atonement has become the corner stone upon which it now rests. This is the foundation of Catholicism, of Episcopalianism,

of Presbyterianism, of the Baptist doctrine, and of Methodism. All denominations of the past rest their hopes of a future existence upon this, the most senseless of all ideas ever conceived in the human brain.

The Universalism which I taught made man his own savior. In that I have not changed. But liberal as were my sentiments in the past, they have become more liberal. As I have advanced in knowledge, what I saw through a glass darkly, I now see with more clearness. What was but dimly foreshadowed in the past, has become a most pleasing reality. The bickerings of men in support of different ideas, has ceased to affect my mind, but in the full consciousness of right, I am moving on and upward in the scale of spiritual attainments, hoping to reach the summit of those beautiful hills which loom up in the distance, and from which inspiration sweet and blessed comes to my soul like the dewdrop to the flower, refreshing, and instilling new life, that enables me to perceive the duties which are still mine to perform.

As I have observed, each succeeding denomination has partaken more of liberal sentiments than those which preceded them. The unfolding powers of mankind have made this a necessity. Theology sees the necessity of compliance with this demand which is thus made.

Modern Christianity is exceedingly accommodating. It can be made available in all cases, or any emergency. If you require a little water, you can be supplied. If you require much, there is an abundance. If you possess but little of divine grace, more will be added, if asked for. It is so convenient to have in the house in case of an emergency. What a sorrowful plight should the minister call, and the family not be able to respond favorably to certain ideas; such as a knowledge of who made the first man, and who was Cain's wife. This was a mystery to me for a long time, and is no doubt to many celebrated divines of the present day. Senseless as all these claims are, they become far more so when entertained by individuals who claim superior intelligence.

It was the mission of Universalism as I understood it, to do away with all such absurdities, by teaching a liberal religion and establishing a liberal system of education for the young. For a time this was adhered to; but alas for human frailty, the glittering bauble of popularity has proved too much for those who now claim recognition as teachers of Universalism. Like Esau, they have bartered away the principles handed down to them, for less than a mess of pottage. A desire to be recognized among the Orthodox Churches has led to this.

While I have changed somewhat in sentiment, I still have a deep reverence for true Universalism when found, which is extremely rare. It was but the forerunner of a more liberal system of teaching, which naturally follows it. The time has come, the day has dawned, when the liberal mind and liberal thought must take the place of set creeds and theories. The world is moving on at a rapid pace, and it cannot be stayed. The mind force of man is an irresistible power for good or

evil. The present, more than any preceding time, seems to favor an outpouring of spirit power, and its effects are seen in every hamlet, and I might almost say in every house throughout the length and breadth of your land.

Universalism was the last stepping stone to this grand realization, but its day of usefulness as a liberalizing element is past. Something better has taken its place, and with those it hath taken to its bosom, it will ere long be known only in history. The wave of liberalism is sweeping over your land with irresistible force.

In all portions of it, is there an increasing desire for more light. Can we who see the requirements of mankind, stand with folded hands, and ask Infinite wisdom to assist them, and we not put forth the slightest effort in their behalf? Were this the action of spirits, we might continue through endless ages, and this desire of man still remain unanswered. God helps those who help themselves, and only in this way can mankind receive blessings from the All-father.

The field is large and broad; the grain is ready for the reapers. Do not longer glean a few straws when you might fill your storehouse with the choicest grain. The spirit world care little whether religious organizations are in harmony with the ideas they unfold, neither do they stop to inquire whether Mr. Smith has made up his mind to take part in the measures adopted, or not. They move steadily onward, and my friends of the Orthodox faith will find it necessary to ascertain whether they have a residence in any particular locality or not.

I have changed somewhat. I find a necessity for so doing. Upon examination I find I was not altogether right, and had I refused to change my mind upon seeing the true path, I should have had no right to expect recognition as an intelligent being. All wise men see the necessity of change. The ignorant seldom change, and they are numerous. It would not be difficult to select a few even in this city. The word progress is unknown to such men, and the definition is a still greater mystery. I have moved on in advance of such minds. They make poor Universalists, and poorer Spiritualists, and I am at a loss just where to locate them. They are living monuments of a blind faith, and a blinder superstition.

I have changed because I saw the necessity; perceived the benefits I should derive from the change. Another reason is that I find Spiritualism to be true, and that is reason enough for any man to change his ideas or convictions. And I thank God for the change. I see no longer as through a glass darkly, but feel the beating of the Infinite heart as it throbs and pulsates through the vast system of worlds, of which I am a part.

I have given some of the reasons why I advocate Spiritualism. I have still other reasons, and may at no distant day transcribe them for perusal, in the hope that what is said may prove a blessing to all who may read. That good may come to all, is the prayer of

DOLPHUS SKINNER.



## TRY THE SPIRITS.

There is an old adage which I remember to have used in my earth life—"a word to the wise is sufficient." Whether this is true at all times, and under all circumstances, is a mooted question. I have treated upon this subject in former communications, and I find that many who read have not proved themselves wise, hence I fear the saying is not true in all cases.

In Biblical lore the world, or the inhabitants thereof, are divided into two classes; the wise and the foolish; those who teach and those who listen. And we are also told by the same authority that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings shall the truth be spoken. A very common saying, in worldly vernacular, is that children and fools speak the truth. This would seem to imply that the wise are not wholly given to truthful assertions.

Hence we have the admonition to try the spirits; for 'tis not the man who is seen that speaks, but the unseen man. If it were the former, there would be less difficulty in ascertaining the truth, but because of the unseen man, you are admonished to try the spirit that gives expression, and ascertain if possible if it be of good or evil, whether the communications tend to uplift the mind, or to degrade the whole being.

You will perceive that there is something for you to do. You are not told to let your pastor or the elders of your church decide for you, but you must try the spirits. It is an individual matter, and man is responsible to the Infinite for the use he makes of the powers imparted to him as an inheritance to be transmitted to succeeding generations.

Every person's life is a record that affects those who come after them. It matters not how obscure the individual, an influence is wielded for good or evil. These influences are constantly felt, in the thronged street, in the various relationships of life. When the rain drops leave the clouds overhead, each drop is independent of all others, but when they reach the earth they become absorbed in the accumulation of this element, and each particular drop is lost sight of. It is thus with the influences that affect mankind. They are countless in number, but if analyzed when their approach is perceived, the man becomes master of the situation. If he fails to analyze and understand them, he will be surrounded by a combination of influences that cannot be separated, and will be of no value as a citizen. It thus becomes necessary to examine into whatever is presented, and learn its meaning, in order to be prepared to judge of the relative merits.

All things in life, whether animate or inanimate, have their fixed position in the world of matter, and exert an influence over other bodies within a certain radius. With people, this differs, according to the power of the mind force. No two exert the same influence. With those who possess scientific minds, and speak and write upon the same subject, and analyze the same object, a peculiar atmosphere will be seen enshrouding one that will not be perceived attending the other. This atmosphere that is brought around you by coming in contact with the mind force of the person,

is the influence that person exerts over you, and that is one thing referred to in the admonition to try the spirits.

As it is my intention to treat the subject from a spiritual basis, I will ask why the writer uttered this precaution, and to what character of spirits he referred. The term is used in a connection besides that of the disembodied life forces of mankind. But we are led to infer, from the connection, that reference was here made to the spirits of men or beings not inhabitants of the mundane sphere of existence. He said many false prophets have gone out into the world.

It is evident that John wished to enforce a certain class of ideas upon the minds of those to whom he addressed these words, admonishing them to beware lest they be deceived. "Hereby know you the spirit of God." It is evident that John entertained the idea that the spirit of God was abroad in the land, seeking to gain an advantage over other spirits equally in earnest in making proselytes to their form of belief, and he proceeded to give instruction regarding the method by which judgment should be rendered.

It will be perceived that he assumes for them the position of individuality, and the right to decide according to the testimony presented, and the judgment of the reasoning powers. Following closely upon this liberal statement, he gives a standard by which the decision is to be rendered. If John believed in the miraculous birth of Jesus, he would be influenced by that belief, and if another different in opinion regarding the miraculous claims set forth, John would say they were unholy influences.

There are many Johns in the world at the present time, self-constituted judges of what should be believed in, and what should be rejected. Hence I reiterate the admonition to try the spirits. You ask how are they to be tried. If we take a theological view of the question, it would be much easier asking than answering the question. The possibility of judging of a matter, implies the necessity of analyzing it, in order to arrive at the truth. There must necessarily be a presentation of facts, that can be examined and viewed in the light of reason.

If a person be beyond your reach, how can you judge of the motives actuating them? If, as theology claims, the spirit of man is not allowed to leave the place to which it was transported at the time of change, how are mortals to judge of them, and how senseless was the admonition of John; but if it be a fact that spirits can return and influence or control mortals, then the admonition is entitled to some weight.

If the latter be true, then theology has no rightful claim upon John, because he was a Spiritualist. As the two elements are antagonistic, there can be no fellowship, for one is a condition of light, and the other of darkness. Taking it for granted that spirits can and do return, it becomes the duty of each individual to study their own lives, and see what powers of attraction they possess. There is no law in spirit life that compels us to do this. But there is a law of sympathy, a desire to instruct our fellow man, and aid him in securing

knowledge of that which is of Infinite value to him. It is through sympathy that we are attracted.

But how can mortals judge of us. If I, in my personality as a spirit, approach Mr. A, how and by what law is Mr. B prepared to judge of me, or vice versa? No two persons are influenced precisely alike. The difference in mind force must be considered. If all were the same development mentally, there would not be that diversity in life that now exists. If the organic structure of the brain in all mankind were the same—if for instance, caution was largely developed in all, the whole race would be so cautious that grass would grow in your streets. There would be such a dread of offending one another, that every person would forever hold their peace. If a different organ was developed, there would be continual scenes of strife and contention. Nature has wisely decreed that no two persons can be precisely alike, and hence in the application of spirit influence by the same spirit, a different manifestation is produced.

This law of control was most beautifully referred to by Paul, who said there were different gifts, but the same spirit; that is, the effect was of a wholly different character. The same spirit may control two different persons, in the same room, alternately; one may have the organ of mirthfulness largely developed, and while under control, this faculty may be exercised; while in another case the person controlled may be of a sedate character, and there would be no attempt at mirth, even were the same thoughts impressed upon each. But it might seem strange to an observer to claim that the same intelligence controlled in both cases.

Thus it may be seen that no one person can judge for another, and evidently John had this in mind when he advised them to try the spirits. If it was necessary in the days of John, it is just as much so at the present time; and hence I say unto you in the words of John, try the spirits.

You desire to know, first, that there is something to try. To prove the fact of spirits returning to earth, I will refer you to Bible testimony, that being the anchor that holds the Christian ship from drifting into the bottomless ocean of infidelity. Whatever has been a possibility, whatever has been a reality, may be experienced and realized again, under similar conditions. If, at any time, in the history of the present race, spirits or angels appeared, they can appear again. There has been no changing of the laws of nature. They are as unchangeable as the Infinite power that governs and directs the universe.

If an angel appeared unto Mary, then is it possible for me to return and hold communion with mortals. If Moses and Elias appeared with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration, then it is equally possible for Dolphus Skinner to appear. If the prison doors were opened, and the two disciples set at liberty, it is equally possible for other spirits to come and unlock the prison doors of your souls, and set your minds at liberty.

The teachings of theology had nearly closed the avenues by which spirits come to mortals; and



once closed, it seems to be their determination to keep this broad highway barricaded. There is an equal determination on the part of the spirit world to remove all barriers, and set at liberty the sons and daughters of men.

Much is said by sacred writers in reference to spirits and their relationship with those of earth. But the wise men of the ministry assume the position of unerring expounders of the true meaning of those sentences. It makes little difference how absurd may be the position assumed; if some celebrated divine gives a version of his conception of them, it is regarded as authoritative.

If the opinions of those in the material are antagonistic to mine, I being a spirit, are not my views entitled to have weight, as evidence, of the facts which I proclaim? But as my claim is worthless without proof, let us see on which side the greater amount of evidence can be adduced.

An individual makes the assertion that spirits cannot return. What proof can he offer in support of his position? A simple statement amounts to nothing, only so far as it is the expression of an individual opinion. A person thus believing cannot be supposed to try the spirits, not believing they are near enough to come in contact with him. Of course the admonition to try the spirits has no effect upon him, for there are no spirits to try. On the other hand, I assert that spirits do return, and not only do I make the assertion, but I manifest my own presence as a personal witness of the fact. Spirits do not come on idle missions. There is ever and always an object to be accomplished. And there are persons in the mortal form who have seen me in a materialized form. I have controlled human organisms and given my views in public; true, not so naturally as I could in the form once so familiar to many, but enough for my own gratification, and the edification of those who have listened to my voice.

There is this difference between the two views. The first rests wholly upon traditions, superstitions, bigotry and prejudice; while on the other hand are living witnesses. Now which should be believed? Certainly not the former, for in a simple justice court it would be non-suited for want of evidence.

But as the admonition is general, it can be made applicable to spirits robed with mortality, as well as those disrobed. While mortals claim the right to try spirits, that have left the mortal form, we, as spirits claim an equal right in regard to those in the form. And were we to judge as severely, or scrutinize as closely, as mortals do with us, we should find many who are weighed in the balance and found wanting. Evidence should be weighed with care ere final judgment is made.

The method adopted by many who claim superior knowledge in reference to spiritual matters, is to ignore all natural laws as not applicable to spirits, and set up a new code called the supernatural. There never was such a thing as a supernatural manifestation, nor can there be. If there were, it would be beyond the range of human intelligence, and could not benefit man at all. It would only tend to mystify the mind.

Mankind are natural productions. They form opinions and estimations, in accordance with the laws of their being, which is a natural law, applicable to other forms in the material universe, outside of man. The same law that applies to the smallest insect, applies equally to mankind, in their respective positions. Man cannot go beyond the natural. When he seeks to establish the supernatural, he attempts to do that which it is impossible for him to do. It is only superstition that creates the supernatural, and the more superstitious the being, the more supernatural will all things appear.

Leaving this realm of fancy, we come to a natural basis, and how different all things appear. Even what seemed miraculous can be accounted for, because man's reason is called into requisition, and analyzation begins. The difference between the two positions is this: One is governed by reason, the natural organs of sense are used; while in the other all these are disregarded, or used in perverted sense, and the individual is governed by prejudice, or feeling of some kind.

No person wishes to be considered inferior to others, but rather the peer of all. But how are they to sustain the position unless through the exercise of the intellect? No one will claim that the knowledge they possess is supernatural. It is the natural result of the powers which belong to them. From whence are these powers or functions derived? I answer from nature. Natural laws encompass all living objects, seen or unseen. As it is impossible for men to die; or for any thing in nature to die, (they may change,) then are all things within the radius of this law. Spirits disrobed are equally subject to law as mortals; nor can we depart therefrom any more than mortals.

There is therefore no mystery in spirit life. All claims of fancy are forgotten, and we assert our positions as men and women, and seek to analyze for ourselves in accordance with John's advice. Hence we find it necessary to try the spirits of men, and we do not stop at one trial, but we keep on trying continually. If it were not for this process, little of an intelligent nature could be given from our side of life.

A person who is sensitive to the accusations of his fellow men, and is honest in his intentions, seeks the society of similarly constituted persons. When in the society of such, he is at home. But suppose by some unforeseen circumstance, he is forced into the society of those who have no regard for truth or honesty, though possessed of intelligence. What would be such condition to that sensitive mind? It would be a living hell, and if there was no escape, it would seem to be bottomless. Now the same experience applies to the disrobed spirit when brought in contact with mortals, in whose souls there is not purity, manliness and fidelity.

How are we to judge of motives? Only by the effect. How are mortals to judge of us? By the results we produce. This difference must be borne in mind. When upon the material plane, every person can act independently so far as they realize the position they

occupy. Spirits disrobed of the material, if they manifest their presence at all, must do so through another individuality. For the spirit to manifest true to itself, the medium must possess elements of character similar to those possessed by the spirit, or the manifestation will not be satisfactory. Pure water cannot pass through impure soil without being impregnated with the elements with which it is brought in contact. It is the same with the spirits.

Therefore we find it necessary to try the mediums we would use, and to the best of our judgment secure intelligent, reliable mediums as far as we can. When this is accomplished, there is no mystery connected with the matter. A truthful person deals not in mysteries. It is error that ever cloaks its acts with the marvelous and mysterious.

It is equally incumbent upon mortals to try the spirits that come to them, for as I have said, they always have an object, and as there are many paths in life surrounded by both right and wrong; the true and false; with motives, pure and truthful, or false and deceitful, it is a matter of deep interest to ascertain what the motives are which actuate the spirit. Evil oftentimes steals the cloak of its neighbor, to deceive by appearances; and evil disposed spirits at times seek to lead astray the pure minded investigator. Thus it becomes necessary to put them in the crucible, and make a careful analysis, in order that all impurities may be known. Natural laws and human reason are this crucible. As Deity never violates natural law, all that is claimed to be of a supernatural character, should be analyzed in the crucible of reason; and all powers and forces that are brought to bear upon mankind, which do not harmonize with reason, should be disregarded, because they are of human origin, and the object is evil.

Human life has ever been considered a warfare, not of man against his fellow man, but of unseen forces in man. Paul illustrated what I wish to enforce upon your minds, and I will quote his words, found in the 6th chapter of Ephesians, 12th verse:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

It is evident that man's condition in the days of Paul, was similar to what are experienced at the present time. The minds of the people were being led away from the truth, to false gods. As I now see the condition of mankind, and the forces operating upon them from without, I am led to take this view of what was intended by Paul.

Mankind formerly regarded all things that claimed to be spiritual, or of spiritual origin, as coming from the Infinite. As Deity never spoke to man, only through and by the revelations of nature, we are led to the position that all which claimed to have a supernatural agency, was a mere fancy, or purposed fabrication to deceive the people. Though presented in a spiritual form, and clothed upon with all the devices which the mind of man can conceive, it was but to deceive, and while possessing the form and features of spiritual-