



SPIRITUALISM—Progress, the Universal Law of Nature: Thought, the Solvent of Her Problems. SPIRITUALISM

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READ AND STUDY.

Chas. Dawbarn on the Decline of Spiritualism.

I accept the fact as stated by friend and foe of the cult. I have long ceased to expect any new thought from inspired lips, and the old teachings, with their wearisome iteration and reiteration, have become stale as a last week's loaf, or a cold griddle-cake.

Yet two all important truths were framed for exhibition by the Fox girls at Hydesville, and previously by the Shakers and Davis the Seer. Man's immortality and spirit return were proved to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind. Those twin truths stand to-day as natural facts, but they are not the only truths of importance to man the mortal, although the average Spiritualist has acted as if they were. He has apparently stood pledged never to receive a new idea. He has looked through those truths as through colored glass, all everything is tinted to the same shade.

I remember hearing a platform medium tell a man that he had two pawn tickets in his pocket, and a porous plaster on his back. The victim did not deny the statement, and did not punch the head of the impudent medium, who asserted that spirits told him these interesting facts. In one shape or another it has been pawn ticket and porous plaster ever since, and always counted as truth from the spirit world. Yet, as well known to-day, neither pawn ticket nor porous plaster is real proof either of spirit return or of human immortality.

It is well known that middle-aged men and women rarely accept a new idea, and it seems to me, sometimes, as if most Spiritualists had been born middle-aged. They go on attributing everything they don't understand to the influence or presence of spirits, and count "spirit obsession" as explaining most of the mysterious conduct of otherwise respectable citizens and their wives.

Telepathy may be a fact, and clairvoyance a natural faculty, but I have never announced such things. It took an association of mortals to make those discoveries. If the Psychical Society had not been born the monotonous psychometric rapping would still have been counted as a proof of spirit return. That there have been, and undoubtedly are fraudulent phenomena presented as spirit return I do not dispute. But they have after all, little real influence on the status of Modern Spiritualism. You and I, who are capable of being fooled several times in the same way, naturally become the laughing stock of their neighbors, and deservedly so. It is the respectable, sensible, hard-headed Spiritualist, born into the truth in the long ago, who has been the backbone of Modern Spiritualism. He has prided himself on being strictly practical. Having assured himself, often in his own family circle, of the truth of spirit return, he has proceeded to use it, in the pawn ticket and porous plaster style, for his personal benefit. If sick, the spirits were to cure him, and save a doctor's bill. If poor, the spirits were to find him gold and oil, or help him to win on a horse race. If melancholy, over a death in the family, some spirit spirit was to coax him to cheerfulness by tales of the loved ones "over there."

Presently he knew it all, and being practical, stopped at the porous plaster stage. A spirit had told him so and so about the next life, and as that spirit had also miraculously cured his stomach-ache, everything that that spirit said was true. Of course some other spirit contradicted what his own spirit friend had told him, but he must decline to trouble himself about such trifles. It was so much the worse for the other spirit. He himself was a man who knows "what's what" every time.

Mediums have each some incarnated, invisible speck of wisdom, either as master or slave, by whom they swear. One of them will give you many assurances that his noble guide, Rocking Horse has repeatedly told the truth although he seems very reckless as regards grammar and pronunciation. If this particular guide made his first appearance thirty or forty years ago you find him telling the same old stories in the same disjointed style.

So it has happened, as we have said, both medium and the practical spiritist already know it all. But as he has told you it exactly in the same way, it is impossible to draw up a statement of what their various beliefs amount to as actual truths of workable value. Organization is thus barely possible, and at best only nominal for the sake of some special benefit in the way of cheap railway fares, or legal respectability.

There has been nothing in such experience to develop the faith of the believer. He wants to get out of Spiritualism all there is in it—for him. Such is the history of Modern Spiritualism from the standpoint of the great mass of those who have demonstrated the truth of spirit return to their own satisfaction. They rarely care enough for the movement in its world aspect to even take a spiritual paper.

sensitive equally reliable. These good and wise spirits differ like mortals in their prescriptions for suffering ignorance. And they utterly fail us just when they have the brightest opportunity to serve the mortal. If some talented spirit had brought to earth the knowledge of the X-ray, the world would have waited in hushed awe for further revelations and teachings. These "spirit returns" give us no key to the mysterious absence of loved ones, long sought but never found. Nor any solution of the dark problems that leave the returning spirit as shorn of most of his mortal acquisitions as a Wall street lamb. Yet these believers, each, perhaps, a representative of the higher Spiritualism, know it all. They would not accept pawn tickets and porous plaster tests, but each swears by his own guide, no matter who contradicts him. And when a venturesome mortal would explore the unexplored, and by slowly adding fact to fact gain the desired knowledge, they grow weary. They have lost the power of independent thought. A new idea cannot be received, unless brought by a spirit, so they gradually shriveled into a him of stunted, innocuous desuetude and weep as the cruel but practical world passes them by.

The only remedy for this state of mental atrophy consists in powerful doses of common sense, applied daily and hourly to the spiritual spot. They must first recognize that there is much knowledge that a mortal man can gain by a careful study of his own mind. And that this is knowledge that no spirit brings or teaches. Yet further they must be willing to carefully study the limitations and difficulties that inhere to spirit return. In other words, the believer cannot afford to think he knows it all. He must read and think for himself, and listen to what others read and think. He must learn to study. It tries him now to even read a thoughtful article, and he holds every word to the standards of his old beliefs. If his spirit guide contradicts it, that is the end of it for him. His only hope is to begin at once a course of self development by mingling with other thoughts. Let him first subscribe for a first-class spiritual paper, let him not only read but study the arguments of its thoughtful writers, and from the mortal standpoint every time.

The writer emphasizes this necessity of broad-minded study as exhibited in letters to the editor of the "Progressive Thinker." "Subliminal Sally." One worthy soul deprecates all such studies and says: "If every speaker and writer would just leave goodness it would raise the whole world to a higher level." That is the gospel of "goodness." Another says: "The whole world is in a state of confusion. It is the only way to explain the whole mystery of the Misses Beauchamp." He evidently is afraid to tackle Sally, whose brain remains decidedly unclouded. Still another asserts that "the world is in a state of confusion to solve any spiritual problem." In other words he would have us go on in our present ignorance, save that we are to humbly accept teachings of spirits on all spiritual matters. He does not say how we are to decide which spirit tells the truth when they flatly contradict one another. And a correspondent of vast experience says "The Beauchamp case is all explained by obsession." Here again Sally is left out in the cold.

The average Spiritualist has yet to learn to weigh evidence, to analyze facts, and to draw no conclusion the facts will not warrant. So I repeat, let him first study the philosophy as presented to him by editors and writers in the spiritual press. When he has learned by practice what to accept and what to reject he will be ready to blend with other seekers after truth into a creedless society that will compel the respect of the world. Such societies may well, in their turn, combine into a national association with which they may work in harmony, and be worthy of their warm support. It seems to the writer that the present National Society needs only the right kind of support to prove itself a true center of intelligent truth seekers.

When I meet, as I sometimes do, an old Spiritualist who does not take even one Spiritualist paper, I recognize a man who knows it all. Such a man is always in the pawn ticket and porous plaster stage of spiritual progress. He may go to camp once a year, and pose; but that is not what his portrait as that of a genuine Spiritualist.

So I would say, and emphasize to the utmost, if Spiritualism is declining it is because the individual believer does not grow. The reason he does not grow is because he does not read and study. He does not hold himself accessible to a new thought; and asks some spirit what he is to do with a new found fact. Brothers and sisters, develop your own mind, and Modern Spiritualism will take care of itself.

CHARLES DAWBARN.
San Leandro, Cal.

LARGELY CORRECT.

What Spiritualism Stands For.

To the Editor:—It is with deep sorrow that I feel obliged to admit that the statements of the Philadelphia Press of May 7, are largely correct.

Evidently the writer has missed, unfortunately, the demonstrations of genuine mediumship, which is a fact incontrovertible to many minds whose judgment in other realms of knowledge would be accepted without question.

THE GREAT QUESTION

"The Decline of Spiritualism."

Some Extraordinary Statements of a Philadelphia Paper.

Vigorous and Pithy Comments Thereon by Leading Minds.

The pessimism of President Barrett and other members of the National Association of Spiritualists, voiced at the New York meeting, is warranted by the facts. Spiritualism and its sister cult, Theosophy, have lost all their novelty and, in doing so, have lost all their attractiveness. It would be reassuring to believe that the decline of interest in Spiritualism was due to a demonstration of the humbug that is at the bottom of so much that is associated with its phenomena of mediumship. But it is to be feared that however convincing the exposure of the fraud in mediumship has been to certain minds for others it has been as if nothing has been established.

There can be no question of the enormous percentage of fraud in mediumship. It is this that has called forth the hostile legislation that the Spiritualists deplore, and it is this fraud that has inspired the other amiable souls, tenets of Spiritualism whenever any scientific investigation has been made. In fact, the percentage approaches so near to 100 that it is doubtful if there be one true white crow, the one genuine medium among all those who belong to and have their part and lot in the Spiritualistic Association. But it is quite conceivable that every medium might be a fraud and yet Spiritualism flourish mightily among those to whom questions of evidence counted for nothing. And that it does not must be attributed not to the greater critical attitude of the public, but to its craving for variety.

And variety Spiritualism has not offered these many years. Even the easy

communications with the spirit world at 50 cents a head have had a rather depressing effect, since the tawdry motility of the heaven of Spiritualism has palled on the believers and they seek other and more exciting cults that promise more and give results in this world as well as in the next. As President Barrett said, the trouble is Spiritualists "have spent too much time chasing phantoms and have not done enough concrete work." And as the phantoms have proved very unreliable, even Caesar and Franklin and Lincoln, to say nothing of Moses, talking gibberish, and as rivals like Mrs. Eddy and her satellites have done "concrete work," it is easy to see why the Spiritualistic Association loses membership while other cults gain.

The fact is, Spiritualism no longer attracts that large class of people who love mystic and mysterious beliefs. It has lost its popular imagination as it has lost its scientific basis. Its claims have been wholly discounted and no longer interest the general public that at one time stood amazed at the "manifestations." Moreover, its place has been taken by Christian Science, which is just as certainly humbug, but happens to be the kind of humbug that is fashionable to-day, for there is a fashion in humbugs as there is in overalls. As things go now, it looks as if Spiritualism and Theosophy will keep on losing membership and following, alley beliefs, while other queer cults will gain until, in the sure advance of true science, social progress, will be more nearly related to fact than to fantasies.—Philadelphia Press, May 7, 1901.

We have given this entire issue of The Progressive Thinker into the hands of our corps of philosophers for a consensus of opinions upon the merits and demerits of the above article from the Philadelphia Press, and feel satisfied with the interest manifested in this important theme.

EDITOR.

ualists have accepted and relied upon a power and guidance outside themselves to direct their lives.

The fundamental truth taught by so-called Christian Science is, that the real I am of the individual possesses the power to master all conditions of the physical organism and to discern truth and overcome error, though the form of expression of this truth is crude and the negations untrue.

Spiritualism movement has failed to emphasize the fact that we are spiritual beings and that the life which constitutes the heavenly state, the life of love and harmony, can be wrought here, if we seek to actualize the principles that belong to spiritual being.

Spiritualists as a class undoubtedly prefer peace to war, and would be glad to have it abolished, and the savagery of our commercialism eliminated. But Spiritualists and Spiritualism do not stand before the world as a working force to accomplish the removal of wholesale killing of fellow-beings, or to check the rapacious greed that destroys livelihoods. And so of the prevailing economic systems which are but a mode of warfare. Spiritualists have not by co-operative effort, nor even by any unity of statement, expressed the higher life of love wrought into industrial and economic systems as desirable or necessary, and only by this can rightness, peace and harmony be obtained.

A majority of Spiritualists no doubt would be glad if just systems and equal opportunity for all, even the weakest and down-most, made the needful advantage for a life of development mentally, morally and spiritually. Can it be claimed that the body of Spiritualists and the teachings and associated efforts constituting the cult termed Spiritualism, have directed activities toward the accomplishment of this high purpose?

Or, does Spiritualism, does the body of believers in its philosophy stand before the world as an exponent of a higher standard of social life or any practical co-operation with the discipline in higher realms of being to uplift humanity by improving the conditions of parenthood, whereby physical embodiment would insure more favorable conditions for the unfoldment of the higher nature of man?

Seeking proof of continuous existence beyond mortal state, realizing the satisfaction of communion with the departed, has not unified the purpose and activities of Spiritualists for the uplifting of the race, and re-ordering of social state to accomplish that desirable effect. Mediums have found entering to wonder-seekers most profitable for revenue, and the counterfeiter performer of wonders has brought suspicion upon mediumship.

Yes, it is easy to see that the status of Spiritualism has greatly and significantly changed in many respects. And in the present stage of human evolution no cult or manifestation will achieve valuable and ennobling results in human welfare and elevation that does not tend to unity of purpose for universal benefit.

Spiritualism ought to represent the highest standard of human culture as spiritual beings of human souls, "bound in the bundle of the race," bound for the same goal of eternal progress.

LUCINDA B. CHANDLER.

IS IT TRUE?

Is Spiritualism Going Into a Decline?

A certain kind of pessimism has crept into the ranks of Spiritualism and cast a shadow over the sky whereon for fifty years and more has shone a bright and beautiful star. That star has become the light to millions of travelers along the sands of time. It has sent its effulgence into the inner chambers of souls that had been in midnight darkness, buried in hopelessness and despair. I refer of course to the Star of Spiritualism; the pessimistic shadow has come in consequence of the oft-repeated statement among some of our leaders, that "Spiritualism is going into a decline."

Is it true? I shall take the negative side of this question; not because Spiritualism is so dear to me, nor because I suppose for one instant that truth can be made by popular vote; I do not take this side because I am fearful were I to take the other I would be driven out of the field of active service. I take my position because in my heart of hearts I can see no other way. No fact is ever clearer in my mind, than that Spiritualism stands higher in the estimation of the world to-day, than it ever did before. It never had so strong a hold on the popular heart and is as widely in evidence at the present time, in its work of battling with superstition, as at any previous time in its history.

What has given rise to the oft-repeated statement that Spiritualism is dying out—going into a decline? Let us see:

One of the chief reasons given is that societies are struggling for existence with a smaller membership than formerly, and the lecturers are paid less for their services. There may be truth in all of this, but does the conclusion legitimately follow that this is a cause of a decline of Spiritualism?

Let us reflect a moment: In the early days of Spiritualism it is true that large halls and churches were sometimes crowded to the utmost with those who were anxious to hear the teachings of our philosophy. But what was the condition at that time? There was but one Spiritualist society in a town; besides there were no liberal meetings of any kind; Secular Unions and Free thinkers' Associations were not born. The most liberal churches were the Universalists and Unitarians, and they were very different from the churches from what they are to-day. Many who were included in the gatherings of the earlier times, were curiosity seekers and nothing more. Consequently we had a larger number of listeners, and fewer thinkers and philosophers.

A CASE IN POINT.

When in my early teens, I was engaged to lecture in Boston, Mass., I was a trance speaker. The subjects treated were usually selected by a committee appointed by the audience. I had no knowledge of what was spoken through my lips either in discourse, or in the answers that were given in response to questions offered by the audience. This work was supplemented by marvelous manifestations through the mediumship of Miss Ada Hoyt (later Mrs. Fore); she read names of departed friends in the air, on the walls of the room of her audience, and received messages through raps that were produced in all parts of the hall. The meetings were conducted by Dr. H. F. Gardner; his meeting was the only Spiritualist meeting in that city. Throngs crowded the hall, and probably there were quite as many who were attracted by the phenomenon of a young girl talking in a trance, and the wonderful manifestations produced through the mediumship of the other, as there were those interested in the subject of Spiritualism per se. Later meetings were conducted in Music Hall, in Boston, the audience sometimes numbered thousands, and a generous fee was charged at the door. That meeting was the only one in the city that was patronized by Spiritualists. At present there are upwards of two score of Spiritualist meetings called every Sunday in Boston. A few of the halls are crowded. If all who attend Spiritualist meetings in that city were crowded into one hall, undoubtedly the audience would be quite as large as a quarter of a century or more ago. What is true of Boston, is true of every other large city in the United States.

One cannot judge of the growth of Spiritualism simply by the number of organized societies. There are hundreds of homes in every large city where Spiritualism has its seance room, and in many instances its medium, that are not counted when gathering the statistics of Spiritualism. There never was a time when so large a class of people patronized Spiritualist seances as at present. Never a time when so much Spiritualist literature was published and read as to-day. All of this proves that Spiritualism is not on a decline.

To-day, as never before Spiritualism is turning its great searchlight on the domain of science; the poetical world thrills with the sublime rhythm of Spiritualism; while under its great thrashing life, the heart-side of humanity is slowly awakening and a better religion than the world has ever known is unfolding to the consciousness of man. Spiritualism is not on a decline.

Spiritualism was never so far-reaching as at the present. The result of the work in the Albany Legislature last winter, bears strongly on this point. The three bills that were presented, viz: The Bell, Wagner and Babcock were framed for mischief, and had they passed would have handicapped every medium in the State; besides, other legislative bodies were waiting to see what was done in the Empire State, and sent letters to Albany, urging that the bills pass, that a precedent might be established for other States; the bills did not pass, a most glorious precedent, indeed! Why did they not pass? Spiritualists went to Albany to defend the rights of the people and to explain what the bills involved. The readers of this article know the result. Conse-

quently Spiritualism never stood so high in the Empire State as to-day, and the prestige gained in the battle of last winter assures us that Spiritualism is not going into a decline.

THE FRAUDS.

It is claimed that frauds are killing Spiritualism. Not so. If every person who poses as a medium in the years to come proves an impostor, Spiritualism will live; there may be some who have seen nothing in Spiritualism but the physical side of mediumship who are disappointed and declare Spiritualism is fading out of the world; on the other hand, there are more intellectual people interested in the subject than at any previous time in its history; it is somehow engrafted into works of fiction, in the plays, in the songs, in the philosophy, but not least, in the souls of the people.

But a few words on the subject of frauds. Is Spiritualism the only place where it is found? Is not fraud in the world about us—everywhere? The food we eat is for the greater part an adulteration; the clothing we wear is rarely the "genuine goods" for which we pay. In so-called Christianity we know there is fraud; in social life, sham, and the political world fairly reeks with the corruption of fraud and trickery. We know the commercial side of life is full of deception. Is it any wonder that this element enters largely into that department where our sensitivities are at work, when the breath from all sides of life is thickened with fraud, and especially when there is among those who lack those qualities that make up a sterling character and there is no love for the Cause.

I am not condoning fraud in Spiritualism. I only ask it is strange that these conditions exist? Are we helping matters by continuously talking of and hunting for fraud, if there is anything in the theory of thought-vibration? Would it not be better to make an effort to change conditions by striving to reach that standard in the thought world that we desire Spiritualism to obtain? May we not set to work those vibrations which may in time change the complexion of exoteric Spiritualism?

Spiritualism is developing conditions every day to make for it a success, but nothing hinders more its progress than fault-finding and pessimism among its advocates and followers.

Spiritualism is not going into a decline. It sinks more deeply into the hearts to-day, and soars higher than ever before in the aspiration of its great army of believers. With earnest proper course to our seances, we are individually and collectively seeking to equip our glorious cause in a manner for brave, strong and victorious work.

MATTIE E. HULL.

THERE IS APATHY,

But No Evidence of Decline.

To the Editor:—It is difficult for me to see evidences of the decline of Spiritualism, as I view from my standpoint. There is apathy to a certain extent growing out of want of organization, in state national and county. As a new movement we were so engrossed by the greater truth of immortality that we neglected to take at the time, the only proper course to pursue, namely, seeking for Spiritualism as a movement per se—and hence various cults and societies sprang up as offshoots from the main plant, and threatened to drain the spiritual philosophy of all that we held most dear. We should have formed a trust at the start of the movement, instead of waiting forty-five years to do that sensible thing. We should have thought long ago what we are trying to do now, in a very insufficient way—protect true mediumship.

It is probable from this time on, our enemies will say enough about fakes and fakirs, and leave us, I hope, to deal justly with all mediumship. As there are many minds to be supplied with spiritual food, so we require many fakes and fakirs to keep the public from the truth. We have harped now so long on fraud, that our enemies, I mean the powers of orthodoxy, are making us the synonym or mother of frauds. That our religion is represented by the fakir is taken for granted by the various churches, and one who proclaims himself a Spiritualist is looked upon as the dupe of some trickster. How long shall this remain? It rests with us, and with us alone to remedy this stain from the escutcheon of Spiritualism. We must organize for the purpose of protection of our cause, our mediums, the promoters of our cause, and ourselves, from the imposition of laws, depriving us of those rights ever dearest to an American citizen, the right to a free religion, a free pulpit, and a free system of healing, giving to those having the gift of healing, the complete right to use these gifts, for the betterment and cure of disease.

The mistakes made in the past are mistakes of the head, and not of the heart. We did not combine them, for we feared that combination meant slavery to some particular line of thought; but cannot free men and women, arrayed in the panoply of truth, still remain true to truth as they see it, although members of a religious organization? I hold they can do so. I prefer fighting behind the breastworks of an organization, to fighting alone, out on a picket line.

We must all remember that a new presentation of a grand truth, always provokes criticism, rebuff and obloquy. We need not expect to be an exception to this rule in Nature. Those who would be strong must fight for that strength. To the vigilant, the active, the brave, is success promised. The languid and weak are no help to any new cause. We need strong men and women to proclaim our cause, our soul- uplifting truths, to the hungering multitude, for truly they do hunger after the knowledge of an immortal life. Our duty is to bring this truth to become a palpable reality to the masses. This will require time and patience and labor. Truly the fields are white

UNITY IS STRENGTH.

Esau's Hand, But Jacob's Voice.

To the Editor:—My attention has been called to an article published in the Philadelphia Press, of May 7. It is bitterly suggestive of an intense, malign desire to throw down and trample in the mire, not only Spiritualism, but everything that pertains to it. As an earnest Spiritualist, I beg permission to say a few things. I will try to be calm and talk coolly, through the broad circulation of The Progressive Thinker.

Throughout the whole article, the hand that wields the keen stiletto is that of Esau, but the smooth speech is the voice of Jacob, that incarnation of selfish treachery. It is evident the whole animus is, if possible, to crush by fallacy and utterance of half-truths, the wisdom already partially revealed to mankind.

Wise men have said: "The accusation of mine enemy is better than the praise of my friend, for it often gives us the power to see ourselves as others see us." We are thus permitted the opportunity to remedy our mistakes and errors.

If Spiritualists, prominent from their ability, their labors, or the official places they hold, drop into pessimism, what can they expect of us, the rank and file? No great general along physical lines ever won victories by saying to his troops, "We shall surely be defeated, and wiped off the earth." On the contrary, the most quoted sentence ever made in the fewest words was: "I'll fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer." A born leader has no use for pessimistic word nor action. If, in trying with physical sense to learn the language of the invisible, we have made mistakes, let us try to do better, we have all eternity to do it in.

We cannot deny that we have allowed some of our leaders, who aspired for exalted place and space, to cajole us into the idea that organization and concentration were needless along the spiritual plane of manifestation. But now, standing on the ruins of our past ways, we see the efforts of those who were sure that "united we stand and divided we fall," have been more productive of success and the advancement of the cause we love, than the operations of small guerrilla bands under the leadership that is inspired by sundry and divers motives. These can never manifest that unity which is born of the desire for self-advancement. That we have one another. You often see the desire for self-advancement overruled self-sacrifice; that concession we must make when one becomes two, three or more. If we can only understand there may be uplifted action without concession of spirit consciousness, we could be held and rest within the mighty arms of the Universal Spirit.

It does not follow, however, that our cause is lost, because we have delayed to recognize the fact that unity is no longer a word. After fifty years of power or manifestation is any less, on an average, than it has always been. Any person who has sought to learn concerning Spiritualism from the love of the truth and a real desire to know, will never let go. They are in our ranks, whether living or dead, forever. If they were to die, they would be the leaves and fishes of the physical present, they are bound to drop out, so soon as the supply is, for them, exhausted, and because seeking place and prominence, are just as likely to return to the nauseous twaddle of the churches, as anywhere else. Moreover, the loss is of the smallest consequence to the Spiritualists, for their contributions are generally of the penny, rarely of the nickel variety. They always intend the balance sheet shall be in their favor.

I am positive the cry of "fraud" is overdone. The one shriek of a disgruntled, is magnified by the malign, the self-interest and those who constantly dog our steps with malicious bitterness born of hate. After fifty years of active existence, the only accusations that appear are superficial, and do not concern the reality of Spiritualism. The wonderful unfoldment heralded by the angelic hosts throughout the length and breadth of the earth, has too firm a foundation to be overthrown.

We always find what we look for. If we are satisfied with only making phenomena on the physical plane, as we would go into a sideshow or a dime museum, there are elements of the earth earthy, who will fill our gaping mouths and throats, and nauseate. But if we desire to come into the consciousness of our oneness with the Universal Spirit, as God is said to have taught the angels, and for their teaching, teach us of the spirit that lives forever of the souls we create which do not and of the purified, perfected body whose atoms have come into touch with spirit consciousness and immortal life.

No human being denies the fact of the invisible life. I, in common with many others, have more relatives near and dear in the Beyond than here. Shall I, can I, deny their life, or their power to communicate with me? When I add to this a psychic gift, how can I be other than a Spiritualist? May God and the angels grant me strength to ever assert this belief as mine. A true Spiritualist will never deny his faith by word or deed. Days may come and days may go. Spiritualism is on the earth, to come fully into the hearts and minds of men.

W. P. PHILON, M. D.
unto the harvest, and the laborers are few, and scattered. Can we bring them together, and hold them in the ranks to fight the herded hosts of an old superstition? We hope that a knowledge of our grand truths, and the facts to support it, will aid us greatly in this noble work, and I and all Spiritualists are entered upon.

ALONZO THOMPSON.

Never throw mud. You may miss your mark; but you must have dirty hands.—Joseph Parker.

A JOY AND COMFORT.

After Forty Years, Loves It More than Ever.

To the Editor:—According to the report of the Philadelphia Press, Spiritualism is losing its membership, and Spiritualism is on the decline, and all on account of a scant attendance seen at some of our church meetings. And you ask me to say, from my standpoint, as to what I think is the cause. In reply, I don't know. One thing I do know, Spiritualism is not declining any with me. On the contrary, and now after forty years' acquaintance with it, I love it more than ever. The good ship Spiritualism still hovers around her own deep, blue waters, is not stranded, nor docked for repairs, but floats proudly along, as ever, and with clear, bright eyes, and skillful hands, she is ready to take on board, filling the air with joy and hilarity, to rescue and to save from life's turbulent, dark waters all who in distress cry to her aloud, "Ship ahoy!" and who for safety want to get on board, now as ever. But I do know that there is a great deal of apathy, spiritual apathy or indifference on the part of many advanced Spiritualists, to church-going. Not that they have lost their faith, or are fallen from grace (as the Methodists would say), but they are getting tired of the church-going habit. The advanced Spiritualists have passed through all the different grades, from junior to senior classes in Spiritualism, and many are disposed to think they have got all there is to get in it. Not that they think they know it all, but that, at present, it seems there is nothing more for them in church-going, except to fulfill a pastor's requirements, to breathe an unsatisfying air in badly ventilated halls, or tired with the tedium of a prolonged sermon. Nevertheless, these church absentees, of whom there are everywhere great numbers, are not drones in the hive of Spiritualism, for, like so many missionaries, in large, well-ventilated halls, they are busy disseminating spiritual light, to combat error and forward the cause of truth.

So, Mr. Editor, you must not allow your readers to imagine for a moment that Spiritualism is on the decline. Possibly, the floating procession of curiosity seekers who, in hope of getting tests, do sometimes crowd our meetings, especially when announced that some great platform test mediums are to be on hand, then before next meeting, some great test mediums are re-announced—these curiosity seekers get so badly frightened at these occasional scarecrows, that for a long time again they may not be seen at our meetings, and because of their absence, Spiritualism is supposed to be on the decline. At any rate, the Spiritualists of the world, and now the battle ground, for new religious thought and freedom must not be gauged by church attendance, for if all our churches were closed for want of attendance, Spiritualism, like the universe, would still remain active, and with all its good qualities ministering here, and there, and everywhere, the human mind makes, and for churches. For Spiritualism is not confined to churches, or church services. Nevertheless, churches to some may be useful, but to advanced Spiritualists, churches at present have lost their usefulness. Advanced Spiritualists know that Spiritualism is true, and that knowledge to them is among the dearest things of life. They never can go back on Spiritualism, on the contrary, and as proof, they are the chief supporters of our Spiritual Press, they could not exist and be happy without their regular weekly spiritual journals. And as further proof, they are always ready to extend financial aid, for the furtherance of the cause, when called upon. These veterans are among the thinkers and workers, who in early days championed the Spiritual cause, and despite all opposition and adverse criticism, helped to establish, make, and exalt it to where it is to-day—a sublime ideal religion, a religion based on a rational theology, and in harmony with enlightened reason, and the Golden Rule. And to them, there is noism on earth half so beautiful. They, therefore, will not likely lose that for which they have worked with loving sacrifice, and paid for at so dear a price. There is, such thing in this world, as getting religion and not getting religion. But there is no such thing as getting rid of Spiritualism, for a Spiritualist once, a Spiritualist always.

To the advanced Spiritualist, the new Spiritual philosophy is the grandest truth on earth, and as our experience in it has been the grandest experience of our lives.

Spiritualism has brought us face to face with our beloved dead, and we know therefore that there is no death, they live, we shall live, also. Time without number spirit friends have been to us a very help in time of trouble. They have many times, as if by miracle, rescued us from accidents, danger and death. They have taught us, too, the arts of right living, and thousands of times have directed us in the way of life, so that we know for ourselves that Spiritualism is true. No assaults upon the faith by the enemy, no exposure of imposture, no adverse criticism, can ever shake the faith of the advanced Spiritualist or members of its senior class. Not so the members of the junior class, and there are many of them, in this city, and a large percentage of them, have, from time to time, been numbed through my patients, and I pity them. Many people through exposure to spiritual fraud, are made miserable, on account of those miserable fakers, who have crept in among us, to deceive and defraud for the money there was in it. Few, however, of these juniors in Spiritualism, knew anything whatever of its philosophy, the knowledge of which is the first requisite of a correct estimate of Spiritualism. They had but a superficial acquaintance with it, they scarcely ever subscribed for a spiritual paper, they cared only for phantom chasing, till at length they fell among thieves, who shocked and disgusted them by their impostures.

Many of these juniors have since left the great body of Spiritualists. Some have joined one ism, and some another; others have gone back to their old, original orthodox churches, where they teach and tell of the talking snake, the triple deity, not three but one, not one but three, where also they teach that the first man, Adam, was not born, but made of mud, and other absurd nonsense, open to ridicule. There is no church on earth, so full of nonsense as an orthodox church, except another orthodox church, and there are many orthodox churches, and there are many back numbers. They educate away from truth and reason, and the more you learn from them, the less you know of truth or reason. In a word, orthodox churches are no good, except only for a necessary price to pay, and now, after forty years' experience, Spiritualism, there is to me no word in the English language half so sweet as Spiritualism. Spiritualism means Peace on Earth, Good Will to Man, Spiritualism—a name ever dear to me, has ever been my joy and comfort in the midst of sor-

WHAT IS MOST NEEDED

The Local Status of Spiritualism.

The present agitation with regard to the standing of Spiritualism being on the decline in the United States, is not warranted by the facts. Changes in, and unstable organization of the cause, has made it appear so. It is true that local societies have organized and lived an ephemeral life and passed away leaving innocuous desuetude. In some instances—but usually to permit some other person to try his or her ability to lead and direct. Frequently, these changes occur because each of these would-be leaders will not give support to the other.

Much is said about mediums and speakers being envious of each other. The fact is that the personal conflict usually occurs within the local body between the aspirants for leadership, and is not always mediums in opposition as such, but individuals seeking control of the public work.

The speakers and mediums of standing in our public cause manifest a strong and cordial fraternity. With these there is general good-will. And the public worker is not usually a wrong-doer, but is a patient and long-suffering toiler. These work against many odds of conditions to furnish means and opportunity. The cry goes out incessantly for purity of character and personal education, appearance, energy, and earnestness. A great need exists that these attributes shall be found in the state and local officers and members. The character of the society official works good or bad results in a community for the local effort. The wrong person obtains control more frequently than does the right one.

Ignorance of language and inability to appreciate logic, is often the condition of members and auditors in local meetings, and this handicaps the competent speaker.

I often hear of a capable lecturer who spoke over the heads of the people and was not understood. I have often been asked to talk with plain language as possible, and told by these people that Mrs. — was much the better speaker, when Mrs. — was well known to be a language butcher. I talk with very plain, and often get letters from people who are unable to read, or write with grammatical accuracy. As a rule the ignorant criticise the speaker most. And these are asking for more culture on our platform. The measuring is usually by processes of assimilation sympathetically created by sensuous conditions rather than scholarly merit.

Spiritualism should work with and for the poor, depraved and ignorant—these should not be the managers and judges of the public cause. The more intelligent and capable class have been driven away by the arrogant encroachments of the opposite class. This is one cause for the decline of local societies. Such managers have put their kind upon the platform and labored for an attraction of numbers that at the time at the door may be amply multiplied. The sensational of every character has been given superior place, and the intelligent relegated to the rear. A crass mediumship has served them better than the refined and cultured. This has superior merit been superseded, and the more refined and intellectual members driven into other cults, or to their libraries alone.

Membership has counted for very little. We go on with effort to convert the dear skeptic and then let him severely alone, after conversion—excepting we ask for his contribution to the cause. What we need most in local societies is culture for members—and also spirit communion for their comfort and edification. Soon as a society is organized it runs to public phenomena and neglects intellectual and mediocrity culture. Mediumship is used for public sensation and attraction, rather than the utilities of the society and its members. Herein lies the greatest cause for society decline. No inducement for prolonged membership is offered; but the greater advantage is given the visitor. Whilst we need propaganda, we need more self-culture first, and mutual fraternity always. Let us advance mediumship into a consecration for spiritual unfoldment until we utilize the platform for the education of the public for soul culture and scientific demonstration of life beyond the grave. We need higher ideals—we need more sentiment, emotion and devotion. We are too cold, critical and selfish. Humaniarianism is professed, but not exercised. It is a selfish desire and a low use of the spirits that is brought to the mediums. They are not asked to attract the higher spirit intelligences, so-called as they are to serve as mediums, and to be a link in the chain. A sincere desire for spirit communion is not frequent, but a personal desire for worldly help is incessant. This drags mediumship to low planes and attracts lower intellects to its display.

We cannot expect to have progress under these conditions. The religion of Spiritualism must not be lost sight of. Music and song are neglected—invocations often decided—and the discourses are used by speakers as displays of experimental mediumship. Therein lie some causes for society decline.

The remedy is in the converse conditions, so that we may have a clean and attractive meeting-place, good music and singing, a spirit of devotion that will exalt the mind and quicken the soul—a religious service instead of a ten-cent entertainment of a crude character. Spiritualists are increasing in number; and organization is developing better methods. The decline has been necessary for cleansing purposes. Let us be consistent, and let us have higher planes of effort, and perpetuity will result. Failures show that weakness has existed. Knowing the defects, let us construct upon planes of purer ethics and of devoted fraternity. The great need of humanity is to realize that the dead are resurrected and the spirits of our loved can communicate with us. With that great truth revealed and made continuous, we can erect the altars and consecrate the worship that shall exalt our souls and minds unto such spiritual power that the world's people may be saved from ignorance, superstition and bigotry.

Surely, we should organize and co-operate. And we should teach Spiritualism to our youth, for in the growing generation rests the hope and promise for the future. The Children's Lyceum is a pivot for progress and union. Without it our local societies lack much of the necessary soul force to achieve success. So long as the circle or seance-room comprises all we are devoted to, just that long will our progress be delayed. But, add to this a spiritual and mental culture—and a humanitarian spirit that will lead to practical education, and a necessary price to pay for good, then Spiritualism will be a great help—and not before—in the march of civilization. GEO. W. KATES.

rows. Thus have I written, from my standpoint. DR. E. GREER. Chicago, Ill.

BASIC TRUTHS.

Negatives "The Decline of Spiritualism."

To answer an article in the secular press concerning Spiritualism, a waste of time. To publish that answer in a Spiritualistic journal is like "bringing coals to Newcastle."

If it had ever been known that the secular press took the pains to read any of the literature of Spiritualism; or if the secular press had ever been known to read the subject with any degree of fairness except in a few notable instances, it would be different. But the truth concerning Spiritualism cannot be arrived at by the general public until the general public are willing to read, and the newspapers are willing to publish, carefully written statements on the subject.

However, we feel quite sure the Philadelphia Press has placed a publication upon Mr. Barrett's utterances that neither he nor his coadjutors intended. There is no decline in Spiritualism; nor is there any decline in interest in the subject matter that Spiritualism brings.

Decline in the attendance at local meetings is largely, and almost wholly, due to the fact that Spiritualism has permeated the churches. Nearly every minister of the so-called liberal churches, and many among the clergy of orthodox denominations, are preaching Spiritualism knowingly from their pulpits every Sunday. This operates two ways: It throws the glamour of "popularity" over an unpopular cause, and the Spiritualist who attends a liberal church is freed from the persecution and personal obloquy that for half a century have enveloped the "New Movement."

The liberal churches have thriven because Spiritualism has set men free from orthodox trammels. While the Rev. Mr. Havels, of London, Rev. Herbert Newton, of New York, and a score of others show distinctly by their sermons, and in plain language, that Spiritualism is a great factor in human life to-day.

Another cause of the decline of single local societies, in our opinion, is the fact that there are so many small meetings. With the increasing distances in large cities one meeting place for all is quite impossible. In most places the general attendance is much smaller than formerly, but even where such is not the case there are usually local causes.

In the opinion of the writer, the fact of frauds being perpetrated in the name of genuine phenomena is not the reason for the so-called "decline." If the real phenomena were on the decline, frauds would also decline. The spirit which follows the genuine, and does not follow the counterfeit, is not the reason for the so-called "decline." The genuine is withdrawn.

We feel quite sure, however, that Spiritualism, as a philosophy and religion, taught from Sunday to Sunday in a pleasing and instructive manner would have interested a class of minds that now have recourse to the Unitarian and Independent churches. But the real cause of the apparent loss of the public to the Spiritualist is that he has been afraid of organization; afraid of a declaration of principles, and, therefore, have allowed the principal teachings of Spiritualism to be taken up as new by such later cults as "Theosophy," "Christian Science" and "Psychic Research." The basic truths of Spiritualism and the realms of thought to which they legitimately lead should have been accepted as a permanent part of the entire half-century in which the phenomena and philosophy have been before the world. Spiritualists have held to the phenomena as demonstrating the continuance of personal life beyond the change death. But the intelligence behind the phenomena is the real point of evidence, and one ceases to care for the method when communication is once established.

When at the Semi-Centennial International Conference of Spiritualists in London, held in June, 1898, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace reiterated his statements of spirit return, predicated upon phenomena investigated by him 35 years before, and then read a paper on the solution of social problems in the light of what his Spiritualism has brought. Many of those present thought he had wandered from the subject, or that he was a little out of his mind. Why? Must facts and phenomena forever be reiterated and reiterated? The true solution of the problems of life must be the dual result of a knowledge of immortality.

The recent article of the Hon James B. Townsend in The Progressive Thinker is a case in point. The whole realm of the spirit must be included in the scope of Spiritualism. Whatever can be known concerning the immortal ego must be accepted as a portion of the Spiritualism brings. The scope of this has often said in public addresses, "Spiritualism is not a finality." Primarily because people narrow the word down to the limits of personal phenomena and messages. Instead of enlarging the meaning to include all that the knowledge of the immortality of the soul can bring. Spiritualism offers the only logical and effective method of human life on the spirit after the change called death. Spirits uniformly declare: "We reap what we have sown." The result of a knowledge of this truth must be the planting of better seed in the garden of life. Earthly treasures and possessions cannot belong to the spirit. Therefore, the only object of human possessions must be to use them wisely here, for the sustenance of the body and the upbuilding of human society. Spiritual treasures alone are eternal. "Spirits know this; all mankind are taught it; but the knowledge of it comes home to every true Spiritualist with every message from the unseen realm."

Whether Spiritualism as a name is retained or not, we claim that the demonstrated knowledge of individual existence beyond the change called death is in the world because of Spiritualism. We claim that the added advocacy of immortality and spirit presence in the liberal and orthodox pulpits to-day is the result of Spiritualism. We claim that the literature of the present time is pervaded by that which Spiritualism has brought. "The Gates Ajar," "Beyond the Gates" and other Spiritualistic stories in magazines, and even in the Sunday editions of daily papers too numerous to mention, all are owing to the presence of this light.

The recent testimony of Dr. Hodgson, Prof. James and Hyslop, and others of the Psychic Research Society, while not differing in facts or conclusions from scores of their predecessors, are the latest evidence to the scientific world that Spiritualism in fact is not declining.

The world is taking on a new form for the Spirit of Light; whatever may be its name in the future, Spiritualism has been its mother. The child cradled in the midst of the conflicting forces of the last half of the 19th century, may, perhaps, have a soul-name unknown to us. But the child is growing, and we know that Spiritualism is thus far the only word in the English language that stands for a living evidence of a future life and communion with those

A GRAIN OF TRUTH.

Organization the Great Remedy.

Replying to an article that appeared in the Philadelphia Press of May 7, 1901, we must admit that there is a grain of truth as a basis upon which its exaggerated statements have been founded, but only the smallest kind of a grain. There are fraudulent mediums, too many of them, but they are not 100 per cent, nor 60 per cent, and even doubt if there could be found among the classed with them, and as a result the poor efforts of some of our poetic scribblers, be classed with plagiarism. I will also admit that a few years ago fraudulent mediums were quite numerous among us, much more so than now; but there has been a weeding-out process among Spiritualists and a powerful uprising in the Spiritualists' ranks against them, and as a result they have largely dropped out of sight.

Let us, for a moment, look into the causes of fraudulent mediumship, and then seek to find the remedy. Some of these fraudulent mediums have been made so by the conditions with which they have been surrounded. They are genuine mediums as far as their mediumship goes, but beyond the limits of their mediumship they are frauds. The fraudulence comes because more is demanded of them than their mediumship will warrant. The fault is not so much in them as, in the artificial conditions of society as at present constructed.

The article in the Philadelphia Press has a still and patronizing air about it, and it is not a very fair representation of the truth. It was written by a Theosophist, and the object appears to have been to create a prejudice against all Spiritualistic phenomena. Should this object be successful, we should have the philosophy of Spiritualism shown of its evidences of a life after so-called death. This would succeed but for the fact that we find mediums who are not mediums imitate or try to imitate mediums? It is because of the artificial ethics of our times which have been made to supplant natural ethics. Every individual is forced to obtain a livelihood, which under present conditions is difficult to do. Men are driven to the point of starvation by the death of the physical body—we know it. We can no more reject mediumship than we can the multiplication table. Facts are too palpable. We could as well surrender our convictions of the philosophy of Spiritualism as of the philosophy of the multiplication table.

Why do we not see mediums who are not mediums imitate or try to imitate mediums? It is because of the artificial ethics of our times which have been made to supplant natural ethics. Every individual is forced to obtain a livelihood, which under present conditions is difficult to do. Men are driven to the point of starvation by the death of the physical body—we know it. We can no more reject mediumship than we can the multiplication table. Facts are too palpable. We could as well surrender our convictions of the philosophy of Spiritualism as of the philosophy of the multiplication table.

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SPIRITUALISM

Will Sing Its Silent Song to Every Heart.

I have before me your paper headed "The Decline of Spiritualism," and your request of a brief review of the article printed in the Philadelphia Press. I have taken the time from a very active life to respond, and endeavor to give you thoughtfully the views I entertain as to the present status of the philosophy of life we label "mediumship." I cannot believe the Press correctly quoted Mr. Barrett, as the article would indicate that in his view Spiritualism was retrograding or losing ground. Mr. Barrett did undoubtedly decry against the apparent apathy and decline of local societies, and the editor might well have drawn his deductions therefrom, that local societies are declining in numbers. If that be the truth, it is no more indication that Spiritualism is declining than that truth can be reversed, or the sun refuse to send his rays of light athwart the darkening earth. That Spiritualism, undertaken to be put into the tiny measure of a cult, a religious organization, in the common acceptance of the term, is a failure, is the best thing that could be said so often masquerades in her magnificent apparel, is declining, but states a necessarily logical conclusion, to the truth of which the sooner we remove the bandage from our eyes and accept, the sooner it will be for the development and growth of the spiritual consciousness of the peoples of the world.

To the writer's mind, Spiritualism is the philosophy of life, the science of the soul, the religion (if you please to call it) of the soul; it is so comprehensive in its nature and attributes as to comprehend and embrace the sum total of all existence, all externalized life on this plane of existence, and all other incidents of the soul heretofore expressed or hereafter to be expressed in any form of human endeavor, limited or unlimited, and incomprehensible. This necessarily includes all the duties and obligations of life to the individual soul, to our neighbors, to humanity and to the state. In other words, it bounds and contains every duty and obligation to humanity, society and government, the inevitable and necessary consequence of which is the individual cannot evade or shirk.

Spiritualism may be said to be, in other words, the science of life. But however you labelize it, however you define it, however you may undertake to characterize it, it transcends immeasurably the suggestion or idea of a religious cult or organization framed upon the narrow grounds of such an idea.

As a student of this profound philosophy, I observe from an examination of such data as has come under my observation that the world of to-day is a modern day those convinced of its truth did not range themselves into an organization, yet many were induced to listen and accept. At the date of the Hydeville manifestations, the world was immersed in the bigotry of ecclesiasticism and superstition on the one hand, and in the withering and blighting thought of materialism on the other. The world of to-day is a modern day those convinced of its truth did not range themselves into an organization, yet many were induced to listen and accept. At the date of the Hydeville manifestations, the world was immersed in the bigotry of ecclesiasticism and superstition on the one hand, and in the withering and blighting thought of materialism on the other.

What, think you, has accomplished this marvelous result? It was the growth of the spiritual consciousness of the angels, awakened by the inspiration of the angels, who, in honor to the torchbearers of truth, to those who held high the lamp of inspiration until it penetrated morass and swamp. But do not for an instant think this splendid accomplishment, this surpassing achievement was produced by organization along modernly suggested and exemplified methods. Do not think these splendid results can be bottled up in a little cult and labeled religion, as have been the efforts of the past, or that another graft upon ecclesiastical dogma named religion? Spiritualism as viewed and taught by many who call themselves Spiritualists demonstrates that there is life after so-called death. Such persons bandage their eyes with a strip torn from the magnificent garment of Truth and seek for no more light.

If Spiritualism means anything, it means much more than a religion. It means the cultivation of the opportunity of externalized expression of the soul's attributes of the soul; it means a study of self, of the sublimity of the conscious human ego we denominate soul; it means the awakening of self to that degree of spiritual activity that can comprehend that we are parts of a greater whole, and that we are denominated the creative or formative principle of life; it means the awakening to the wondrous knowledge that called within this principle we call soul are powers transcendent that are only circumscribed in their expression by our ignorance and the limitations we ourselves place upon them. In short, it means the discovery of profound truth, the truth that we are not, as we are appropriated and absorbed by our human hearts. A truth discovered to the intellect amounts to but little in the growth of the soul. Too many of us are intellectual Spiritualists and are content to rest upon an intellectual acquisition instead of going to the point where the truths discovered become a part of our life, and are expressed in our daily conduct, with our every thought, word and deed.

You ask me what is the cause of the decadence of Spiritualism? I answer that Spiritualism, as embodied in the external principle of religion, grows through the universe with a deeper, grander anthem for the listening ears of humanity, with tenderer, sweeter vibration than ever before in the history of man. Her garments are woven out of human acts and worthy deeds. They are perfumed by the tears and sighs of human grief, which are faintly but with charity whose fragrance is love.

You ask me what we shall do to promote the growth of Spiritualism? I answer: Spiritualize our own souls; recognize our own kinship to the Infinite; recognize our soul's wondrous possibilities; develop its magnificent attributes and externalize the development in our conduct, with our brother man and sister woman; live the truth we have gleaned; but good enough, brave enough, honest enough to follow whithersoever it leads.

You ask me how I shall know the truth? She is so beautiful, her raiment is so unapproachable that the most unlearned soul readily recognizes her splendid habit. The soul is never so blinded, never so shrouded by ignorance, gloom or superstition but if permitted cheerfully points to the right.

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UNFAIR, MISLEADING.

There is No Decline in Wisdom.

To the Editor:—The article from the Philadelphia Press entitled "The Decline of Spiritualism," to which you called my attention, is manifestly unfair and misleading. While there is truth in it, the truth is clothed in such garments that it appears in a false position: Taking an unprejudiced and unbiased view of the condition of Spiritualism as it is found to-day, there can be no decline discerned. Never in the history of the philosophy have there been such numbers of the more intelligent class of people embracing its truths; never has there been such revision of creeds among other religions to bring them more into line with the teachings of Spiritualism. Even the straight-laced Presbyterian or Methodist must liberalize his views or withdraw from his accustomed pew. I believe as Moses Hull stated on a Chicago platform a few months ago, "Spiritualism is an aristocracy among religions, the very best that can be found for an intelligent person, but not calculated for fools or persons not mentally well-balanced." Certainly the tendency of the best thinkers of our day is in the direction of the philosophy, as is evidenced by the large numbers of orthodox ministers who have come out of their churches to embrace its truths before the public.

I can speak from personal knowledge of the progress of Spiritualism in my own state the past year, and can say that never in the history of Wisconsin has there been the interest manifested in the work among intelligent, thinking people that there is to-day. Fourteen months ago the State Association was organized, chartered and incorporated under the state law, and without a dollar in its treasury at its inception it has collected and expended as much money in the placing of true Spiritualism before the people of the commonwealth as any state in the Union. Chartered societies are affiliating with the association, and are working in an organized and thorough manner to stamp out fraud and trickery and present on our platforms and in private nothing but what can be relied upon to be the truth.

One drawback which I find to the advancement of the cause in this state has been the lack of opportunity for many societies disbanding because they cannot obtain a lecturer, and it will always be so until organization has had a chance to overcome the weakness and the present custom of itinerant speakers is a thing of the past. We number in our enrollment many of the best minds of our state—lawyers, doctors, judges, teachers and preachers. Is this decline? No, and when the people of the world wake up to the fact that the philosophy of Spiritualism is a truth which can be demonstrated in the privacy of their own home, where no chance of fraud or trickery can enter, and then lend their energies to effective organization, instead of the decline as depicted by the Press, we shall witness, first, the upbuilding of a strong Spiritualist church, and second, the liberalization of the world of existing creeds to conform to common sense and the absolute truth.

While I will of necessity admit the falling off in numbers of members of organized Spiritualists, I believe I am right in saying that the elimination of fraud and deceit has played its part as one of the causes, and that the organization to-day is better because of it, as the world is better for the wisdom which it has lost in the number of kernels, it has suffered little in weight and improved its value. I mean that to-day there are more of the best minds, of the thinkers of this country, in our ranks than there ever has been, and that when curiosity hunters, sign seekers, and material Spiritualists have been winnowed out, we shall have a following of honest, intelligent, earnest, thinking men and women who can and will do "concrete work."

Spiritualism on the decline? Never! When the philosophy taught by organized Spiritualists of to-day declines, then must fall the whole fabric of religion now known. Facts are facts, and while the erudite minister of the gospel tries to prove the falsity of Sir Isaac Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation, the law of gravitation remains the earth, the facts remain. So it is with Spiritualism, it does not matter who as-sails it, the truth will prevail and the fact will remain. And

TRUTH IS ETERNAL.

Spiritualism the Best Truth of Heaven.

To the Editor:—After carefully reading and re-reading the article from the "Press," I have come to this conclusion, the pessimistic view in regard to Spiritualism is wholly unfounded, for as the great truths and sublime teachings of Spiritualism are gradually arising, to their own proper attitude. When Spiritualism came to us over fifty years ago, like all other old truths in a new garmenting, it was received by two classes of people. The one, who held it sacred and made careful investigation of its facts; the other, who held it as marvelous and endeavored to make Spiritualism strange, mysterious and wholly supernatural. This invariably wears away. The truth remains, while the flouting banners of mystery are put aside.

The Press speaks of Mr. Barrett's "pessimistic" view. I think this is an error, as our worthy president does not fail to see the steady uplifting of the higher Spiritualism of to-day. We recognize, and regret, that Spiritualism has had its victims in the ranks, who have injured, apparently, the cause. But truth cannot be injured; it is only a false representation, and this of necessity must die. All churches have their banners and serious drawbacks. The world does not feel that the church is being destroyed because a few years ago a fanatic of Ponceas destroyed his child in what he thought a worship of Jehovah. And the constant tragedies that are going on in the numerous churches do not make their adherents feel that all is lost or destroyed. In the same manner Spiritualism, with all it has had to dishearten it, has gone steadily on reaching the comprehension of the classes who are an honor to its ranks.

We do not understand the phenomena of nature, whether in the circle of the private home or in some established place for such avenues of spiritual manifestation. But we desire, as all true Spiritualists do, the falsehood that attempts to pass itself off in the garmenting of truth. For years we have been steadily teaching error must die, truth is eternal. We have decided in our home Temple that nothing shall be taught from our rostrum but the highest and purest truth, and the lessons given to the children were far too old for their juvenile comprehension, and they could not grasp the matter in the form it was presented to them. Hence, they sought something of easier comprehension.

The fact that many of our prominent Spiritualists and mediums are attending the meetings of several churches, we recognize fully, and the reason is this: That in these meetings they receive spiritual truths elegantly expressed by talented speakers, which are not followed by any proceedings on the platform that would bring the blush to the face of a sensitive and refined Spiritualist. Not long ago we had the honor of giving a lecture before a cultured and refined society in one of our eastern cities. It was announced that we would be followed with tea and music. Individual of the masculine gender arose after our lecture and improvisations and delivered what he termed "tests" in such a manner that our friends who were present looked mortified and chagrined. His language was illiterate, ungrammatical and coarse. When a lady refused to admit the statements he had made, he said, "I was so impetuous, but that she let the ball, her eyes swimming with tears. Turning to the audience he said: 'I guess I hit her pretty hard. It is truth or she wouldn't flutter so.' Now this class of people, in our estimation, no matter how sincere and honest they are, need first of all a little home culture and careful training before they go upon the platform. Further than this, Spiritualists who are in command of our societies should use far more care in their ordination, and not putting the power into the hands of unreliable persons.

We have had here in Texas very recently an experience where a few of us have had to stand very firm to keep a notable person from obtaining clerical ordination from the State Association. I believe we need a thorough sifting in the ranks of Spiritualism, and the sooner it comes the better. I am in favor of having two names for two kinds of people; call the phenomenalists, Phenomenalists, and those who are really seeking spiritual truth, Spiritualists or Progressive Spiritualists.

I heartily endorse your statement, that Spiritualism pure and undefiled represents the grandest truth on earth to-day. Aye, it is the best truth of heaven as well. It is soul-elevating, it is strengthening, and it is a blessing that we cannot afford to cast aside. Let us who are Spiritualists endeavor to live our Spiritualism, to prove it by the simple acts of each day, and to make Spiritualism self-sustaining and respected. A great many people spoke sturdily of Spiritualism five years ago when we came to this city, who today respect and adore it. All this because a few brave, energetic men and women have made Spiritualism all that they could in giving it pure and truthful representations. We have had to battle against the usual number of charlatans and conjurers and all feel the menace of their presence coming from some direction toward our city. Spiritualism to us is the great unfold of humanity. It has gone into the churches to lift them out of bigotry; it has reached thousands of people who were not for this other class, would stand up bravely and boldly for it.

The great question is, how shall we sustain this truth, and how shall we entirely outlive the monster barnacle that fastens at its side? Our answer is, if every Spiritualist would read the magnificent literature that has been published, keep in touch with our Spiritualist papers, be advised by them who and what to believe in, use their own judgment in the careful research of spiritual truths, have their own circles, and not run after fortune tellers, fakirs and mediums of uncertain quality, spend their money for the support of legitimate societies and these alone, we should soon starve out the other class and sustain with renewed vigor and strength the real in Spiritualism.

I am yours in the cause of upholding that which is true, and denouncing all that is false. I have been elevated and enlightened by the best method, entirely ignoring those banners which attach themselves here. We are uncertain whether this has proven a wise course or not. A barnacle has recently been removed, but the removing has carried with it thousands of dollars from the credulous and the unsophisticated of our city. JENNIE HAGAN BROWN.

Fort Worth, Texas

POSITIVE DENIAL

Of the Decline of Spiritualism.

Reading with the greatest composure the Philadelphia Press report of the recent Spiritualist mass meeting held in the Quaker City, I said relative to the reported "pessimism of President Barrett and others of the N. S. A., and there is no danger so long as the Spiritualists are united. Admitting his existence, his ambition was admirable, his free-thought advocacy inspiring and his industry commendable. I am here reminded of what Lowell so grandly said:

"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown Standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above his own."

But to the subject-matter, "The Decline of Spiritualism." This alleged "decline" I most positively deny. Spiritualism is a truth—a divine truth, and never a truth perished. Allied to the eternal fitness of things it is immortal. Kingdoms may clash and fall, men may come and go, but the truth goes on forever.

Spiritualism is of God, because God is Spirit—the Infinite, all-energizing Spirit of the universe; and because inhering in and originating from God, it does not rest alone upon phenomena, but rather in the highest sense, upon Spirit—the eternal, religious, and spiritual constitution of man, which constitution requires such spiritual sustenance as inspiration, heavenly impressions, angelic messages, visions, trances, and perpetual baptisms from the celestial spheres of love and purity.

No, emphatically no! Spiritualism is not on the "decline." Its star is ascending. It is permeating the churches; it is liberating the people; it is modifying materialism and kindling the fires of inspiration afar in the isles of the ocean. It is the prophetic stone cut from the mountain. It is the potent leaven of truth hid in the meal and destined to leaven, enlighten and uplift the multi-millions of humanity.

Inspirationally and philosophically speaking, there are but two great dogmas, namely, materialism and Spiritualism. The former is false, and truth is its authority. It abounds in and is the churches. It is divinity in humanity. It is not on the "decline." Angels and highly exalted altruistic spirits are its divine messengers, and refined, conscientious, pure-minded sensitives are its willing message-bearers. Their beautiful teachings are reverent and uplifting. They are the inspiring forces of the great reform, and the grandest of the past century. They are the hope of the present, the prophecy of the future.

On the contrary, spiritualism is of and from spirits—mostly border-land spirits, dwellers in the earth's atmosphere—ancestral familiars. Leaving their bodies they took with them not only their individualities and their idiosyncrasies, but their selfish worldly tendencies. Death is their market place of savages, not philosophers of Fiji Islanders.

These spirits, once mortal, had their various schemes. They have them over there. They may assume false names. They sometimes possess human beings. They are too selfish to organize. Some were vampires while vested in mortality, sponging their living. They are vampires still, and make a mockery of making great pretensions; others set mediums to hunting for gold mines, digging for oil wells, seeking pots of buried treasures; others still give advice about "divorces" and point out congenial "affinities." This class of spirits are strenuously opposed to organization. The helms are the hot-beds of disorganization, atheism and obscuring demerit.

With all these incongruities connected with spiritualism directly and indirectly, it has its uses. There are agnostics still needing it. Its phenomena proved a future existence. Its thunder-claps of facts, often coarse and crude, startled the materialists. It was the terror of old theology. It was the breaking-up plough—the pulverizer of creeds. It was, in brief, individualizing, and it was destructive. It was necessary iconoclastic work, however, is about done. Its cycle is ending.

And now the pressing question is, are there enough sound timbers in these old declining spiritualistic structures to erect a new temple? Can selfish rule-or-ruin spiritualists further organize? If so, how long would they stay organized? And, moreover, what would spiritualists get, other than to have to organize around? What cohesive magnet have they? What central standard? Am I pointed to the fact of spirit return? This is not new. The old Akkadians had it and their empire died. The Chinese have this fact and they are dying. The Mormons have spirit revelations. The New Jerusalem Church had the fact that spirit communications were the founder, conversed with spirits good and bad, for twenty-seven years. There is nothing necessarily moral, religious or organic in mere spirit converse, any more than there is in telegraphy.

The N. S. A., in good faith, put forth a platform of principles relating to Spiritualism, and, regarding belief in Infinite Intelligence. This was pronounced "infinite nonsense," and has been the butt of ridicule and sneer by many Spiritualists ever since. Others have pronounced that ancient mediumistic martyr of Nazareth (which Andrew Jackson Davis, Judge Edmunds, Prof. Hare, Brittan, Kiddle, and others spoke so reverently of) a "myth," or a "beggar," or a "ramp," or a "thief," or a "barrat." They have pronounced prayer a "snake-charm," or "perspiration," and worship a "silly sham."

Is it strange then, that with the meager support given to the genuine intermediaries—that with the above sort of belligerent spiritism pushing itself into print and onto camp-meeting platforms, "a great many prominent Spiritualists and mediums," as Brother J. R. Francis states, "are attending the meetings of liberal churches." Thoughtful people of culture, of refined religious nature, will not listen to such rubbish, often devoid of charity, reason, rhetoric, and the truer, higher philosophy of life.

Spiritism took a chill when a national association convening in Troy, N. Y., elected Victoria C. Woodhull its president, thus indirectly endorsing her unsavory doctrines. And it has been suffering ever since from natural and periodic attacks of differentiation. It is noted for more to-day for its heterogeneity than for its homogeneity. It has too many "ambitious" would-be leaders; and yet it opposes a divine leadership. It has in its seance embraces Roman Catholic spirits, atheistic spirits, Christ-hating spirits, clownish spirits, and all the rest of the very jargon of opposing spirit teachings, and yet, each teaching is authoritative with a certain class of spiritualists. Surely, there is a "parting of the ways." Spiritualism, as aforesaid, is of God. Its symbol is the Apocalyptic angel, flying in the midst of the heavens, pleading for peace on earth and good will towards men—pleading for fighting Christians to become civilized,

A VETERAN'S VIEW

On the Decline of Spiritualism.

As a veteran advocate and defender of Spiritualism, I feel called upon to take notice of a recent diatribe from the Philadelphia Press, which seized with avidity upon what it termed "the pessimism of President Barrett and other members of the N. S. A., and there is no danger so long as the Spiritualists are united. Admitting his existence, his ambition was admirable, his free-thought advocacy inspiring and his industry commendable. I am here reminded of what Lowell so grandly said:

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for sectarian Christians to become Christianized, and for spiritualists to become Spiritualists. Spiritualism is a science, a philosophy and a religion. It does not antagonize. It is constructive. It enunciates truth and leaves it to work its way into the souls of men. Kindly unbury the Egyptian box, exposing its poison, and let the lovely vase of white lilies that their beauty may attract and their odor all cottage and temple with the most invigorating fragrance. Its charities are unobtrusive, sweet and tender. Its creed is mercy; its aim perfection.

Remember, therefore, indulgent reader, that Spiritualism, rooted in God, and embodying angel ministries and sages—embodying the good, the true and the beautiful; embodying the principles of love and wisdom; of faith, repentance, prayer, and purity; and being vital God's living witness of immortality, is not, I emphatically repeat, is not on the "decline," but under some name it will go on and upward to be soon crowned with the laurels of victory. J. M. PEEBLES, M. D.

LET GO!

No Use for Churchy Institutionalism.

To the Editor:—"The decline" of local Spiritualism seems to be the one live all-absorbing subject of "thought and discussion among the leaders of the N. S. A. movement; "the decline" is in evidence and has been for ten years; its present recognition by our leaders and the great odds they make, is all there is wonderful or surprising about it.

The almost universal decline in all religious and reformatory movements, may be accounted for in many ways, but no doubt there is a common—general—cause, for the sifting, and shaking-up of all forms of institutionalism; let the sifting go on, truth and justice will not suffer.

The cause and tendency are questions of interest to the student and reformer. A great multitude of reformers are rejoicing in the decline of orthodox Christianity; why not rejoice in the decline of all shades and expressions of religious institutionalism? What does this decline signify to Spiritualists? I can only answer, not at all surprising. It signifies letting go of the old and reaching for something better; it signifies growth and change; it signifies that the past is outgrown, and that the demands of our leaders and their methods are not endorsed, and cannot be sustained. It signifies that our leaders do not understand the present situation. The people are shaking off institutionalism and our blind leaders are trying to hitch on to the old rotten, worm-eaten, churchy fraud.

It signifies the people who pay the bills want nothing in the world of the old degenerate churchy schemes of our spiritual leaders, and if they (the leaders) have eyes to see and ears to hear, it would seem to the writer that they would face about, cease to howl and wail, and join the throng that have let go, and recognize the crisis and change that is upon us, recognize the new world that is being made, fit for civilized man to live in; this new world cannot be made from the old pattern, a patchwork of ignorance, superstition and priestly deception; its first move is to wholly ignore the old churchy frauds and the present churchy frauds.

The old world is the deepest dyed deception, by that unscrupulous tyrant Constantine, and has been perpetuated by all manner of crime, fraud and church tyranny.

Ignorance, superstition, downright deception, and a constant appeal to the most degrading fear, have been the methods and means of keeping the masses in the grip of support; this is the worst of all deceptions, the worst of all deceptions. None of this for the new world.

Science, invention and discovery have broken down the walls of superstition and fear, to such an extent that the dark places, and ignorant minds, cannot longer resist the light of truth and influence of universal education. The new world is being made, and it is being made by the people who have let go, and recognize the crisis and change that is upon us, recognize the new world that is being made, fit for civilized man to live in; this new world cannot be made from the old pattern, a patchwork of ignorance, superstition and priestly deception; its first move is to wholly ignore the old churchy frauds and the present churchy frauds.

The tendency is not towards churchy organizations, but plainly and surely towards their disintegration; nothing is more apparent to the common observer. The old world is unclean, they won't hold the new way.

When such men as Tolstoy, Prof. Herron, Rev. Savage, Newton, Gregory, and F. E. Roberts of Kansas City, and a score more join the heretical ranks, it would seem stupid to an ordinary layman, for any well-informed Spiritualist to go about making a big fuss because of the decline of any sort of religious organization. It is not that there was anything of value involved there would be no decline. Why not let the societies out of date, gone to seed, decline in peace? Spiritualism will get along nicely without any churchy attachments, yes, without any. The Christian Scientists depend upon the phenomena of healing, and seem to be getting along nicely, they have made a departure from the old custom of supporting expensive preachers, and we hear no complaint, it surely looks at this time as though people were outgrowing so much precept, and are asking for living examples. One of the serious mistakes of Spiritualists has been to deprecate phenomenal manifestations, we live in a phenomenal world, nine-tenths of all the Spiritualists were converted by phenomena; to be sure a religious conversion is a good thing, but it is incidental, and the old selfish teaching cuts a small figure with Spiritual converts; when convinced that life is continuous, that the Christian heaven and hell are myths, that their souls are safe, fear is removed and some of them take a long and selfish rest, making but little effort to improve the world about them, or their own lives.

Local, State and National organizations, however or later recognize the condition of the Spiritualists, they are dealing with; when they do so, they will, in my opinion, see that the tendency is not towards any more religious organizations, but, strongly, towards personal growth and culture of body, mind, and spirit.

Spiritualism signifies more than all religious professions, it signifies support and aid, and it signifies equality, justice and equality, are present day watchwords.

Standards are being considered, and raised; immutable law, and unerring justice are making demands for a great change; the crisis is on, we are called upon to save ourselves from ourselves. Time is limited, struggling overtake us, we have not time to look back to the "flesh pots" get out of the old, into the new and better life, or we will be swept down into the oblivion of the past. Any further effort to graft Spiritualism upon any of the old religious stock, will meet with the same silent determined rebuke, that previous schemes have received. Face about, friends, is the order of the day.

DR. M. E. CONGER.

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SPIRITUALISM

A Fact in Nature, and Needs No Defense.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again." The lone voice of Bruno against a maddened mob breathed a now accepted fact; Columbus inspired thereby, resisted contempt of friends, condemnation of church and mutiny of sailors to yield the discovery of a world of unlimited resources to coming generations; Jesus, regardless of a Peter, a Judas and a monarch's power, sent a theme reverberating down the ages, with promise of an ever welcome place in the craving soul of man. These and thousands of similar incidents in religious and scientific advancement are not discoveries but inspiration from the human resources of unthought of but possible things.

So Spiritualism stands to-day with the light of Divinity on its brow, the gleam of Wisdom in its brain (philosophy), the strength of Infinitude within its limbs (principles), for they are grounded in Nature's laws; yet, while the flash and gleam and buoyancy of inspiration is innate, the shadows of "foul" "rouse" or like the mind of man cramped by prenatal influence and environment, are the superstitions (charms, talismans, etc.) which ignorance has made by perversion.

For the past fifty years from every church, cult and creed has been heard the lone voice of "satisfied by an unquestionable evidence," but not until the last nine years has there been an effort to gather them home. Some have remained for association, many have withdrawn disgusted with impracticable organization, and hosts in the varied stages of their development have come to the experimental home of Spiritualism. So we must expect a decidedly varied expression until each is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of tolerance. Psychics and clairvoyants will necessarily arise, for a time, and when one is in the ascendancy its followers sing songs of rejoicing, when the others utter low murmurings. All this to try and test, and raise those who stand the discipline, to broader fields—nearer to an understanding of spirituality expressed to souls in the form.

Mighty revolutions have evolved the grand triumphs of the world and the human race, and the world is now being civilized by the power of the mind. Seasons of transition are necessary, and through them we but need the patient watch and earnest trust of the optimist.

Who in the dark cloud's silver lining, Sees reflection of some light, Who speaks of day and shuns reaping In the long and restless night; Who braves the storm, or waits the calm.

With a stout and patient trust; And feels that tears oft yield a balm, Courage lends, and whispers "must."

The uneducated demand of investigators has caused impostors to cloak themselves in mediumship, and, as you say, Mr. Editor, the schools for teaching the occult, the occult, and the occult, necessary paraphernalia are well established; yet they affect the truth of spirit communion no more than a thousand candles would affect the brightness of the noonday sun. We need not expect to exterminate the impostor. As long as the genuine exists the counterfeit will sneak along.

We must sustain such organization as we have, uncluttered by the "occult," and rising generations may know and love the cause of truth for Humanity, and encourage thorough local organization to cement the individual forces. Here in Texas, and is it not the same elsewhere? we feel the sore need of settled speakers to educate the public, circulate literature, encourage association, learning, and enlarging local mediums, and visit the occult society from time to time worthy phenomenal mediums, and in company with the speakers to visit neighboring territory yet unoccupied by organized Spiritualism. We need to sustain what is organized, to retain ground already occupied.

"Spiritualism no longer attracts that large class of people who love mystic and mysterious beliefs."

This places me in a quandary. It shows that the flash of sensationalism is past and the steady ray of life from truth comprehended shines in the lives of many. Fancy yields to fact and mystic skulls from law.

The illumination of spiritual philosophy has cleared away the miracle and myth, the phantom and phenomena, and established a solid world, a solid, continuous, unbroken, as the manifestation of law. This attracts the scientific, who are quiet and careful.

So we are to-day emerging from these waters of experience, and while dripping let us consecrate ourselves for renewed effort.

Spiritualism (life everlasting by law, not chance), is a fact in Nature and needs no defense, but it is to be Spiritualists, to know the knowledge and light we must attune the vibrations of our nature thereto. From this statement we find that we are all in different stages of development, so we must be tolerant—extremely so. Tolerant to individuals and loyal to principle.

If living where an organization exists, support and defend it for its principles, regardless of the persons connected with it. If they are not even distasteful. If isolated from organization, contribute your portion to some striving organization. If only a mite, set the example. Our Spiritualism is not declining but, the wonder-seekers having, to an extent, withdrawn (with the murmur and hallo) is raising us from fancy to fact, from mystery to law, from clamoring mass to organized organization. Surely, as established in the knowledge of Spiritualism and living in its truth can look upon these attacks as cleansing fires to test our worth, for none of them can in any way change the eternal. This hopeful, trusting vein of mind qualifies me to realize most certainly the care necessary to our growth.

While we cannot prevent any one from expressing his ideas, even if he call it Spiritualism, we can be very careful of our endorsement and little by little the light will spread the darkness.

I am always, JOHN W. RING, President of the Texas State National Association of Spiritualists, Galveston, Texas.

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KILLING IT OFF.

The Delusion That Spiritualism is Declining.

A portion of the secular press is forever killing off Spiritualism, although it brings to mankind the sweetest, grandest and sublimest truths that the world has ever seen. How many times they have had it dead and buried, and yet they seem to realize that there is some strange truth about it, and for four that it may come to life again they continue to batter away at it so that if possible, it may become more dead.

The Philadelphia Press and other papers have made themselves ridiculous by talking about what they do not understand. If they were acute enough to understand these subtle agencies, they would see that there is a psychic wave sweeping over the world greater than has ever been known. They would see that psychism or what is usually called hypnotism is invading even the older and slower schools of medicine and that already every leading university of the world has a chair of psychical. They would see that in spite of all the fraud practiced by pseudo mediums and seances, there are still a large number of genuine psychics who are able to demonstrate beyond all guess-work, to candid minds, the wonderful fact of human immortality. They would see that although the novelty and the noise and the astonishment connected with the phenomena are not so great as they were thirty years ago, yet the spiritual current itself is far deeper and broader, permeating every civilized land.

According to the report given by the president of the National Spiritualists Association, Mr. Harrison D. Barrett, there are 625 local associations in the United States and Canada, 350 lecturers, ministers and platform mediums, 1,500 public psychics and some 10,000 medium who act in a more private way. While there are but 150,000 who belong to Spiritual organizations, this is but a small fraction of the real number. Taking those who are Spiritualists or at least Spiritualists within and without the churches, there are doubtless several millions in the United States and Canada and millions more in Europe. Of course we admit that Spiritualists if set on fire by enthusiasm for their great cause could do ten times more than they are now doing, but this is not the case. Of course a great many of the frauds will always creep into so genuine a thing as Spiritualism and a plenty of people who will "steal the liver of heaven to serve the devil in," but what of that? Shall we then back out of the whole matter, wrapping our garments around us as being too good to associate with these people? Some of the divinest people that live, are Spiritualists, and the most earnest every reform, and Spiritualist, yet they affect the truth of spirit communion no more than a thousand candles would affect the brightness of the noonday sun. We need not expect to exterminate the impostor. As long as the genuine exists the counterfeit will sneak along.

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CAUSE OF DECAY.

Hindrances and Special Obstacles.

Considering Spiritualism as a movement silently and invisibly working for the spiritualization of humanity, bringing to bereaved and mourning hearts consolation in the hope or knowledge of continued life and continued love, carrying to the doubting the assurance that physical death does not end conscious life, lifting the hearts and desires above the sordid material things of earthly existence, imparting to them zeal and energy for the attainment of higher objects, spreading among them the realization of true altruism by teaching that all are one in the bosom of the Eternal, Spiritualism knows no decay. It is living, throbbing, working in millions of human breasts and millions of human lives are benefited thereby.

Considering Spiritualism as a movement externally, and publicly working, by associated effort endeavoring to spread abroad the evidences of continued life, to carry the hope of immortality to those who have it not, to add to the number of its public professors, to take a stand in the world as a teaching body with great truth to teach, Spiritualism is decaying, hastening, unless the decay be checked, to dissolution.

Not because it has outlived its usefulness. It is needed now as it ever was. Not because it is advanced in age and must give place to other and younger systems better adapted to the needs of the hour. It is not an infant in years. It has not even fairly commenced its life's work. It is decaying because it has absorbed the germ of a corrupting disease which has been allowed to remain, has been nourished and nurtured until it has covered the body with pestilering sores which have sapped its vitality and rendered any spots upon its surface painful, even loathsome to behold.

This may be thought strong language. No language is strong enough to express the truth of the matter. It will be called pessimistic. It is not pessimism to view conditions as they are. Diseases cannot be cured by denying their existence or refusing to look at the diseased spots. They can be cured by asserting the power of the will to overcome them and by exercising the potency of the will to expel them.

We have placed before us a curious object lesson. We cannot fail to see it if we open our eyes to see. Spiritualism, true spiritual philosophy is spiritualizing almost every movement, every school of thought on earth, giving to each, according to the ability and willingness of each to receive, a means of life, stability, power and spiritual utility. Spiritualists, those who claim for themselves the special title, stand almost alone in refusing to be spiritualized and are more materialistic than those who pride themselves upon being materialists. More materialistic for while materialists are content with the material conditions of one life, sometimes considering it to be more than enough, the so-called Spiritualists usually seek to carry his material conditions into the beyond and, worse still, to fetter and bind to these conditions those already there. Worst of all, we have much reason to believe that in both these lines of work he meets with terrible success.

This is the most rotten, the most infectious, the most death-breeding ulcer on the Spiritualistic body. It seems to be that which most of its physicians and would-be physicians dread to touch. It has eaten so deeply into the system, it has so penetrated into the very marrow of the bones, that to attempt to remove it is like tearing out the life from the body. Yet only by its removal can the body live.

It is not fraud that is our worst enemy, although both fraud and error usually inflict an external wound. In a healthy system such wounds soon heal. It is not attack by open foes upon the truths we represent. Truth always prevails. It is not financial weakness. There would be financial strength if the many in our ranks were willing to make the same sacrifices that the few are making. That they do not is owing to the corrupting disease which has gained a hold over their spiritual faculties. They seek communion with the departed for selfish, personal, earthly ends. They have no desire for spiritual advancement. They want business advice.

It is not to be denied that occasionally, unsought by us, we may receive from some one, passed on impressions concerning certain spiritual matters connected with our material interests. We may be, sometimes, warned against certain courses of action which might involve us in serious loss or trouble. Here this kind of spiritual influence legitimately ends. We have our own battles to fight, our own work to do. Herein lies our development and no wise spirit, in our out of physical body, would be guilty of it. The attempt to throw our own responsibilities upon the shoulders of another must lead, sooner or later, to a disaster which will teach us more sense. It may require many hard lessons, but we must learn at last. To mind our own business and leave other people's business for them to mind, is the teaching of every earth life. The less regard we pay to the advice of an oracle, the more we earn it, the better for us and for them.

Business advice given in circles or sittings is usually worthless in itself and disastrous in its effects. Given from the platform to individuals at a public meeting it is disgusting and repellent to all who have a grain of spirituality or any sense of the fitness of things. Whether the advice be a genuine spirit message or not is of no importance. Except for the friends of the medium like a swarm of angry hornets about his ears. And that is the average result in such cases.

Again: Who is to be the judge? Who is to decide what medium is correct and genuine and which is not? Is it the man in front or the man behind—as in the instance referred to? If there is no tribunal or tribunal, no authority to decide, and the only noise about the impracticable?

Take the case of the president himself. When he took control of the Banner he swept out every medium's advertisement and announced that no one could get back into its columns until after a visit to the Banner office and a test of their mediumship. It was but a brief time till all were back—of course after meeting the conditions prescribed. Yet this led embroiled all the old-timers, and for years, some of the frauds cry for years, some of them being it to-day. And a like fraud will attend every like attempt. And why?

Because many people, editors as well as others, will not recognize what mediumship is—a born condition—as independent of mental or moral attributes as is sex or stature, or the color of skin, hair or eyes. A woman may be a medium and a very good one in every characteristic of her nature, yet be a born fraud and a natural rascal. And these things being so, what are we going to do about it? Simply recognize character in such cases as we do in every-

FRAUD IN EVERYTHING.

Outcry Against Fraud More Harmful than Fraud.

To the Editor:—Yours, enclosing an article from the Philadelphia Press with a request to state views upon it for a symposium in The Progressive Thinker has been under consideration for some days, and unless you print this explanation as to why the task is to be avoided, it may be all that will be left to say.

You know from personal interviews the opinions held as to this whole "fraud" question—that more harm is done by the incessant outcry about it from press and platform than from the actual thing itself. This hue and cry has demoralized the rank and file, and the enemies of Spiritualism furnished food for just such bigoted attacks as that of the Press. It is in no way agreeable to the chief officers of the N. S. A., but as he has been taken as the witness on which the malignant article of the Press is based, it cannot well be avoided. And candor requires the statement of the opinion that the president and a few who seem to echo him have done more injury to the progress and good fellowship of Spiritualism in the popular mind than all the "frauds" of which complaint is made put together.

There is fraud in everything—from your grocer to the doctor and priest—even to civil procedure, jury trial and elections. So organic is the thing that as long ago as 1678—more than two hundred years—the "Statute of Frauds" was enacted in England, and which is part of our jurisprudence to-day. It would be strange indeed were anything agreeable to a chief officer of the N. S. A. to get money that would not find crooked practices employed.

This Press screed is but one sample of a constant flow of popular prejudice and obloquy—yet why should Spiritualists fret over it any more than the other "humbugs" enumerated—Christian Science, Theosophy, etc.

Then, too, there is a cowardice about these fraud shirkers that of itself should advertise them. If there are so many and so notorious why not tell us who they are and denounce them by name and place the public on their guard? One solitary instance of this needed courage stands out—that where Will C. Hodge squelched a party forever.

The fact is, that there is not one-tenth the fraud mediums these croakers would have us believe. The writer has known some in his experience, but they were short lived and soon disappeared—seldom as a rule getting beyond the place of origin. The Spiritualist who is called a fraud and who will fail to stand guard. No one is fit to discuss the question who is not a well posted student of phenomena—and there are few who talk so much about it who dare. A brief conversation with them will disclose that fact.

People who insist so much on "scientific" and "respectable" Spiritualism and mediums, forget the fact that mediums are born among savages, barbarians, ignorant illiterates as well as civilized, educated and refined people. Socrates was a medium, so is the African voodoo and the Indian medicine man. Indians know there is "good medicine" and "bad medicine," and why not we be as near to nature as they are? For the very reason that mediumship is a natural born condition is why all attempts to make a religion or a cult out of it have and will fail. It is a natural thing, and it will always exist and all humanity cannot be in one class as learners, there will be different names given and necessary, to each branch of this one complete Soul Science and Universal Religion. The Philadelphia paper is laboring under a grave error when it makes the statement that there are no true spiritual mediums. There are hundreds of true, purely spiritual mediums in the world. In most parts, are unknown to the public. They make use of their sacred gifts for self-improvement and aiding those about them, earning their living by any kind of honest work they can secure and are able to do; for it is only too true, that a premium has been put upon the phenomenal phases of mediumship, so that one who cannot give tests and sittings for selfish ends, can get no credit, and are therefore despised, and it is impossible for a truly spiritual medium to serve on commercial lines. There is too wide a gap between those planes, which needs to be considered.

However, all who are true to their trust on any plane of service, are of equal importance as to their services, and entitled to equal respect and support.

Many well-meaning, but only partially developed mediums, rush into business, which is a great detriment to themselves and to the cause. Here is where training schools for mediums are a necessity to properly educate those having these gifts, to develop them for public service.

I have seen clairvoyantly, that persons of strong will and prejudices visit mediums who under ordinary circumstances or conditions might be able to receive and give true messages from exanimate spirits, but this element brought into their presence was too strong for them. Such persons create their own conditions and hold the conditional balance in the presence of such a medium, and a stupor comes over the latter, the eyes blur, mind gets muddled, and he or she gets into the "fog-land" of Prof. Dabrowski's description, and is for that time at least, the helpless victim of a force that is stronger than her or his invisible helpers can muster; then there is failure and—Mr. Editor—you know the rest. Now here is where so many Spiritualists have stoutly defended mediums who in their presence gave unmistakable spirit messages, but who were failures in the presence of others for reasons just explained. The people in many instances are the more guilty parties. They do not act fair, and come under many pretenses into the presence of mediums, creating their own conditions and forcing results.

Spiritualism pure and simple is not on the decline, but a separation and classification is going on which is good, for those who are true Spiritualists will remain true and all who embrace Spiritualism for purely selfish ends, of course cannot be counted on to defend and support the organized movement.

Van Wert, Ohio. MRS. M. KLEIN.

A CLEARING UP.

Forcing Mediums into the Fog-Land.

The statements made by a Philadelphia paper under the headlines, "The Decline of Spiritualism," are not to be wondered at, as they are but an echo of our own Spiritualist press.

The first point is "the humbug that is at the bottom of so much that is associated with its phenomena of mediumship." It is not a humbug, it is a colossal fraud, and truly it is a colossal fraud which cannot be treated one-sidedly, or set down as the practice of one special class of people. Justice demands that the problem be viewed from every side and from every point, and analyzed as to the relative of demand and supply.

We find at the bottom of all fraud practiced under the sun, the double-faced, lying avarice and deceit, and as a rule it is dressed in bright colors. A close analysis proves that all fraud is relatively wrought, there is co-operation between fraudulent practitioners and their victims, which seems not to have been considered, but a conditional study reveals to us this, viz.: that any person or persons not active in thought and desire on the force lines of purity and truth principles, come by this impure thought and desire, to be classed and rated on those planes where indifferent and constantly shifting currents of mind supplies and exchange hold sway.

They are then impinged upon by the general thought output of that kind and swayed by such force currents, thus bring them their ratio of supplies for such semi-fraud desires. It is therefore, by this co-operative force, fraud, no matter in what form practiced, by gamblers in stocks or by persons calling themselves mediums who, in reality are only traffickers on the world's own commercial lines. The fraud is all of one piece, but all who wear the livery called spirit or spiritual, are the devil of avarice, by desire and should receive the punishment such a violation of law and order deserves.

Spiritualists en masse, have been charged as having aided this fraud practice in their ranks. Well I am of the opinion that these charges are, in the main, unwisely preferred.

I know some things at least, from experience with observations. We are a number of us banded ourselves together some thirty years ago, to learn all we could of spirit return and control, and not only to learn, but to live and teach truth for its own sake. We still hold forth. We have had various experiences and in years past were imposed upon a few times by persons posing as great mediums, and it was to our detriment; but we look back and see how no clairvoyant, no differences, no voice, helped them to accomplish it. In this wise: We were too free to tell them everything they wished to be informed about, etc. Now this is the way the Spiritualists in general have aided frauds innocently; but for the most part they have learned their lessons on those lines and prefer to hold communion by their own firesides and in company with their friends and true friends. This truth of spirit return, exanimate communicating with those in forms of clay is not on the decline, instead, it is becoming a universal knowledge, fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus that "The time cometh when all shall worship God in spirit and shall know the truth." So it is coming, the door is open, all can have direct knowledge of this truth and it will become the universal law, and all humanity cannot be in one class as learners, there will be different names given and necessary, to each branch of this one complete Soul Science and Universal Religion. The Philadelphia paper is laboring under a grave error when it makes the statement that there are no true spiritual mediums. There are hundreds of true, purely spiritual mediums in the world. In most parts, are unknown to the public. They make use of their sacred gifts for self-improvement and aiding those about them, earning their living by any kind of honest work they can secure and are able to do; for it is only too true, that a premium has been put upon the phenomenal phases of mediumship, so that one who cannot give tests and sittings for selfish ends, can get no credit, and are therefore despised, and it is impossible for a truly spiritual medium to serve on commercial lines. There is too wide a gap between those planes, which needs to be considered.

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COMMERCIALISM.

The Bane of Spiritualism.

To the Editor:—I have read with interest the criticism of the Philadelphia Press of May 7th, 1901, on the Decline of Spiritualism, and am much struck with a degree of justification—compelled to admit the impeachment to be well earned. While the phenomenal facts which first heralded Spiritualism to the world in a manner to insure recognition, and when certain questions were shaking our country to its foundation even to the jeopardizing of our country's stability, in the continuance and extension of slavery, and which swept into spirit life thousands of our dearest and best, like a holocaust of destruction, peopling that other world prematurely by devastating the homes of this; when the life of the republic hung in jeopardy, in the few succeeding years following the conflict, the interests of the two worlds were linked as one, it is difficult to understand how the spiritualists could be so mundane and the celestial held in rapport the one with the other, and that communication not only was a necessity but inevitable; that by the means of which greater disasters might be averted, and to modify the awfulness of the situation, and give direction and guidance to a more successful outcome of the chaotic condition.

In that day there was no thought of it in a commercial sense; it was a revelation with a holy mission and without price. Our teachers and leaders sought for wisdom and light through spirit intercourse. Through intercommunication came the revolution of evolution and set the established forms of religion to tottering and brought science to her knees.

There seemed a purpose of high aim and no thought of fraud. The character of those who were its investigators and exponents, Lincoln, Edmonds, Talmage, Owen, Finney, and a host of the brightest and most learned and influential men of the times in two hemispheres, lent dignity and guarded its integrity, and even those opposed gave it respect.

With its growing prosperity came its danger. When its management undertook to sustain the character of Spiritualism through phenomena at the expense of its intellectual and moral teachings, it was as fated as to attempt to maintain the legitimate drama through vaudeville, or the dignity of the church through the sale of pews.

The money-changers entered the temple and the phenomena were placed on the market for the highest bidder. Conditions that should be understood and obeyed for the highest results were ignored and set aside, and the temptation to produce phenomena independent of spirit aid when that failed, as it must in its relativity, when mercenary take the place of moral motives, and the inevitable results have followed. Cheap clap-trap and spurious imitations have substituted the genuine, and many of our followers have been willing to accept without demanding verification, and preferring to assume that if there was any spiritualism, the spirits did it and willing to tolerate the duplicity as long as it could go unexposed. Had we demanded honesty all along the line, refused to patronize the pretender, whether in the body or out, requiring only the truth, though our doors were closed, we would not have had the waste places to deplore as now.

I have heretofore expressed myself in no mistaken terms as to the work we might have done that is being faithfully performed by Theosophists and others who have borrowed somewhat of our spiritual thunder. Had we built homes for worn-out mediums, schools for culture of those qualities requisite to mediumship, and to make them intellectually acceptable to intelligent minds, had we as followers of the true spirit, been helpful to the humanity, and faithfully we have sought the dark cabinet and attendant phenomena, had we endeavored with the same zeal we expect our dear dead to heed our wants, to alleviate the sorrows and distresses of mortals about us, visited those in prison and in a spirit of generosity sought to reform and benefit them, and done all in our power to aid the prevention of crime, established schools of instruction for those who could not read and are uneducated, and assisted them to find places of employment, sought such improvement in laws governing municipalities and states as are calculated to benefit and improve the community, endowed orphan asylums and homes of refuge for the unfortunate, particularly of womanhood, in a word had we as Spiritualists identified ourselves in any way with the material world, or even acted as a relief guard by sending out one nurse even to the military hospitals during the wars we have undergone, there would have been a cementing power to hold us together in a common cause and need, and we would have had a basis and purpose to work in common for, and no time to patronize one or to despise another. When we are about the Master's business we have little time for contentions.

If we journey to another land it is for some purpose. If our good spirit friends come to ours it should be on equally good grounds. Not to satisfy the credulous or to gratify a morbid want. I would not summon my earthly friend to my side except to either benefit him or to protect him from his enemies. It is extreme why should we extend the same courtesy to those beyond? Have they no duties requiring their time in the land to which they now belong? Are there no associations to them there quite as dear and satisfactory as to be held in our presence at all?

How long must we be subject to the complaints of those who have been deceived by frauds? Here on my desk lie testimonies from widely separate regions, telling of wrongs endured through "deceptions" and "askings redress." What is to be done? Here a trusting hungry-hearted soul who craves a word from spirit worlds spends a week's rest from her hard-earned wage to commune with her guides who manufacture wondrous fabrics, each one a thread which requires a wondrously long time in the loom and which is luminous of spirit light and human beauty, finally a small vial is sealed up in a half-ounce bottle and only exchanged for a costly piece of jewelry that the spirits fancy, whereas the real represents by human analysis a piece of musquito net saturated by luminous paint, the other a diamond setting.

And now in closing may I ask if we were to have a higher standard of our faith and abide by it, would not its prosperity be insured? Live as if we really felt and knew that we were surrounded by pure bright and happy spirits of another world whose only aim in terrestrial visits is to make the world better, to dispel sorrow, eradicate crime and misery, and to aid mankind to be what nature and the law of evolution and progress intended us to be, one great fraternity of useful, helpful, joyous and happy beings, calmly waiting to benefit and bless the world, and to be representatives and associates of the angels of a higher world.

Thine, ADDIE L. BALLOU.

SPiritUALISM.

Is Permeating Every Department of Thought.

The Philadelphia Press of May 7, 1901, in commenting upon President Barrett's efforts to infuse into the Spiritualists his address at their recent New York meeting, a little more enthusiasm for the spread of their great truth, has taken an unfair advantage of the same as a basis for an editorial on "The Decline of Spiritualism."

However possessing in character Mr. Barrett's address may have been the conclusion from it that Spiritualism is dying out is by no means warranted by the facts as they exist. On the contrary, Spiritualism to-day is a thousand fold stronger than it has ever been. Never before in its history has it commanded the respect from every science and religion that it commands at present. It has more silent friends, sympathizers and believers in all the churches, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish, than any other "ism" under the sun. Its friends both in the pulpit and the pew of orthodox Christianity, if they would only stand up to be counted, would startle the world by their number. There are no fewer than throughout Christendom the occupants of its pulpit does stand up in it to be counted with us, and his congregation does not disturb him as a heretic either. Revs. Heber Newton, Milburn, Savage and others are cases in point. Rev. Dr. Thomas, of the People's Church, Chicago, publicly announced that he had been a Spiritualist for thirty years and that he knew his deceased friends still lived, and he still preaches at the old stand to a congregation that is not known as a Spiritualistic one.

Other preachers carefully feel the pulse of their congregations before taking any very radical stand as Spiritualists, something after the manner pursued recently by the Rev. George Lord, pastor of the Baptist Church at Geneva, Ohio, who, in a sermon a short time ago, spoke as follows:

"There is a grain of truth in this religion, if we may call it a religion. There is a kind of Spiritualism in which all Christians believe. Spiritualists emphasize the reality of the spirit world; in this all Christians agree with them. They hold also the teachings of the post-mortem existence, the survival of the soul, the resurrection of the body. This is a truth to which Christian teaching is gravitating. The Spiritualists claim that communion between the two realms is possible. The Christian believes this. The Bible teaches that such communion is not only possible but that it is actual."

"There are many instances in the divine record where messages are represented as coming from the other world. The Bible is full of such instances. There are angels, other times they were persons. There is a vast difference between the communications recorded in the scriptures and those reported by spirit mediums. In the Bible the messengers from the other world always came upon important missions."

This, in my opinion, does not look very much like the decline of Spiritualism. It looks much more like a discouragement and depression but I believe there is any truth in the Bible it is found in these words: "Many are called but few are chosen."

Much that to-day gives us a heavy heart and we would have it otherwise, yet time, the great leveler of all things, will bring about a change.

Spiritualism is not a humbug. No sir! Mediumship a humbug? No sir! Around its great power and manifestations men and women have found what they could not find anywhere else on earth, namely, man lives after the change called death, and communicates to mortals. Its great work is going on, and as fast as people are ready for the truth, in spite of opposition, in spite of laws, or any power raised by man, they will accept the truth and go on with the glorious work.

G. H. BROOKS.

STRANGE STATEMENT.

That Spiritualism is Declining.

In a recent issue of the Philadelphia Press there appeared a very strange statement under the title, "The Decline of Spiritualism," claiming that Spiritualism no longer attracted the attention of the multitude, that the novelty has worn off, that one hundred per cent of mediumship is fraudulent; not only is "The Decline of Spiritualism," but theosophy as well. Christian Science has taken its place and that, also, is a humbug, and it would share the same fate, flourish for a while, then be no more.

About once in so often we hear that Spiritualism is on the decline, and a tirade of abuse against the mediums, whom they claim are all fraudulent. That there is and has been a great deal of fraud in our ranks no one will for a moment deny, and how to deal with it has been a question yet unsolved for a long time, but like every other great subject that has confronted the people, it will solve itself; how I cannot tell. I do not believe it will be solved by continuously airing it before the public, but it will come in the natural course of evolution.

Spiritualism is vastly different from any other movement ever brought to the world and as a consequence it must of necessity pass through a great deal. Yet out of this there will evolve a moral perfect understanding of the true teachings of the spiritual philosophy and its real meaning. Like every other new movement it has its ebb and flow, sometimes it would seem as though it would embrace all mankind, then again just the reverse. Societies diminish, no interest in the subject awakened and all is stagnation; then again it bursts forth with more power than ever and people whom you would never suspect have been quietly investigating and finally come forth as advocates of this great truth.

In my long experience as a speaker on the platform, and medium, I can truly say that our cause is not dying; it is in a good condition, better than it could expect when you come to consider all it has to contend with, with the laws of many cities and states against the exercise of mediumship, also the power of the press, and the materialism arrayed against it; yet it lives, and I am frank to confess and believe is in a healthier state than ever; more people are thinking along our line than ever, and are in the spirit to work for it, to aid it along. Nor is Theosophy passing away; no one can ever know the great number of people who are attracted to their line of study; they make no noise, rear no temples, but like Spiritualism, it quietly moves along, gathering to itself, power and strength. I expect the press and pulpit to have their spasms once in so often, and to my mind the best way to deal with such onslaughts is the same way I feel we should deal with fraud in our midst—just let them alone and their sentiments will change when they have enough character to buck them up.

There is much in our ranks to discourage and depress but I believe there is any truth in the Bible it is found in these words: "Many are called but few are chosen."

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ALTRUISM.

In Co-operation Is Our Only Hope.

To the Editor:—In answer to the question raised, "Is Spiritualism Declining?" from the standpoint of a public worker, I am reluctantly compelled to say: Yes, in some ways it is; yet in others it is not. Judged by the enthusiasm manifested a few years ago in public meetings, and the half-hearted indifference so palpable, it is evidently now in many localities, it is certainly declining. Judged also by the means of attention given to it by the work throughout the country, I am again compelled to say yes. Camp-meetings, however, seem to hold their own pretty well; newspapers and periodicals of a spiritual nature are multiplying and more attention is paid to us as a body by the general public.

In many ways Spiritualism is gaining ground, yet not as a distinctive movement; it's work is of a very quiet and unassuming character, and its influence for good is being felt through various reformatory movements whose origin might be traced back to the spirit side of life could we but clearly penetrate the veil of materialism and see the system of cold-blooded competition which now exists. Spiritualism is not in harmony with the competitive system, but teaches us a higher system of Altruism. We cannot hold up the old-fashioned ideal of selfish individual salvation, but the higher ideal of universal salvation from war, poverty, ignorance, crime and all the evils of our present system, and the system of cold-blooded competition which now exists. Spiritualism is not in harmony with the competitive system, but teaches us a higher system of Altruism. We cannot hold up the old-fashioned ideal of selfish individual salvation, but the higher ideal of universal salvation from war, poverty, ignorance, crime and all the evils of our present system, and the system of cold-blooded competition which now exists.

The life of a speaker on the rostrum at the present day is a continual protest against the competitive system. No speaker should be compelled to violate the principle of co-operation by competing against other speakers for an engagement at camps, or local society work. Yet speakers and mediums are compelled to live against their own convictions of right and wrong, by the force of circumstances. In this benighted world there is plenty of work for all who are interested in the truth, and could be brought together. At present many of us are obliged to compete for a living, while our guides are constantly advocating co-operation.

In other respects beside this we are trying to "put new wine into old bottles," and the consequence is disruption in the work for the reason that many of our people are fossilized and can't stand advanced ideas.

Co-operation between spirit teachers and their pupils is the greatest motor of mediumship, the educator of the masses, the open door through which messages from loved ones are received. And yet, instead of Spiritualists co-operating in society work, employing workers in a systematic and orderly way, the cause is largely kept alive by the efforts of a few self-sacrificing people. Mediums are continually competing for public and private work. This causes a corresponding amount of sensational advertising and counterfeit phenomena to attract attention and gain favor from managers of societies, etc. Another result of competition is jealousy, back-biting, scandal without foundation and general disruption.

Co-operation creates a greater unity of spirit just the same as it does in business life or anywhere else. When will mediums, speakers and the body of people interested in the phenomena of Spiritualism learn the law of co-operation? When they do they will organize local societies, keep them in active operation, and will spend a fair and reasonable remuneration for time and talents expended, and workers will quit competing for favors by practicing fraud, and be satisfied to do legitimate work in their various lines of mediumship. When mediums can work together as co-operators for mutual development and the general advancement of truth, without having to face the uncertainties, privations, criticisms and cold indifference of those who would help them we will witness a revival of interest as we know nothing of at the present time, we shall see grander and more convincing manifestations of spirit power than the world ever saw.

Cooperation is the law of the brotherhood, it causes brutality, war, poverty and every species of human degradation. Co-operation enlightens the intellect, spiritualizes the thought and aspiration, and assists in the development of the higher powers. Spiritualists must either work along the lines of mutual co-operation, or become back-numbers and antiquated relics of an age of darkness and despotism.

WILLIAM E. BONNEY.

Lincoln, Neb.

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A LIVING VITAMIN TRUTH.

Penetrating Every Walk of Life.

Your invitation to contribute upon the editorial in the Philadelphia Press of May 7, gives me the chance to say that it was the only paper in this city which did not give us fair accounts during our recent mass meeting. It is then worth while to give the editorial some ground. It is the only paper in the country which it teaches, by showing us how by our own apathy we are carelessly allowing our local societies to disintegrate, is well worth consideration. It shows only too plainly how our cause is considered by the public.

The worst feature of it is, that it makes President Barrett responsible for the statement that "Spiritualists have spent too much time chasing after phantoms and have not done enough concrete work" and infers that "the world would be a better place if Spiritualism were abolished."

In fact the article is full of misstatements and casts obloquy on many noble men and women who do not deserve it. The statement that the

Of course it is an editorial privilege granted to us to criticize all statements made in a public meeting. Therefore we doubt that wisdom of advertising our short-lived meetings as a mass meeting, which is the vast majority of the audience. The strangers who have been attracted to hear of the beauties of the philosophy of Spiritualism and to learn something of its phenomena, and who are willing to pay an admission fee for the same, are the talent at that meeting was there to hear of the beauties of the philosophy of Spiritualism and to learn something of its phenomena, and who are willing to pay an admission fee for the same, are the best side of our cause and keep such statements in the background. What is the use of getting up these great mass meetings if we are going to show how weak our societies are. The same amount of energy devoted to let the talent would in our opinion be productive of more profit.

The reader might well ask here, Should not such statements be made with a view to finding a remedy? Certainly they should, but not in public meetings. This places us at the mercy of those who would like to see our cause as a cause of resistance. They should be made before a promiscuous audience. The present editoring could not have been written except for such public utterances.

No thoughtful Spiritualist can remain the field and fall to see that our local societies are in a most deplorable condition. From the present editoring called attention to the fact and tried to suggest a remedy. At the

last convention he urged most earnestly the appointment of a special missionary who would give his or her whole time to this work, but though he was unanimously elected for this most important position, no action was taken. The main portion of his time has been devoted to attending mass meetings all over the country.

We have repeatedly asserted that the backbone of the N. S. A. is the local societies connected with it, if they are allowed to fall by the wayside. The State associations will not follow. The situation demands the immediate attention of a who are interested in Spiritualism. There should be an executive session called, or set aside at the next convention, at which the reasons for the condition of affairs should be thoroughly discussed as well as ways and means to be taken to change the same.

"Only Spiritualists should be on ground while such discussion is going on," our reporters allowed. Then we should put our shoulders to the wheel and bend all our energy to bring about a better condition.

If Spiritualism on the decline? No. President Barrett never made such statement. It is a living vital truth and can never be crushed—not if all the editors in America should abuse the power of the press in an attempt to bring about that end. Every day grows stronger, penetrating its way into every walk of life. In spite of a effort to prevent it, it is penetrating the secular press and even the churches are obliged to acknowledge it.

power. On this account we repeat, the only thing worthy of consideration in the editorial under consideration, the lesson it teaches, that it is time for us to unite for more concerted action by the young people, resolutely the insults cast upon them.

In our opinion the principal cause for the decline of the local work is that we have not made the young people an integral part of our societies. If the older Spiritualists had looked after this more closely in the past and had seen that the leaders were imbued with the principles of Spiritualism, there would be fewer of the young people joining the churches, because of the attraction offered them socially.

True they have had the lyceum, but that was not enough. They should have made a part of the society itself. The society should make the meetings so attractive that it would be a pleasure for the young people to come, and not only that, but social meetings should be provided for them. Invite them to take part in the meetings, by doing some of the responsible work. Help them to develop by giving them articles, essays, encourage them to express their thoughts on Spiritualism and kindred subjects, and to be proud to be known

as Spiritualists. Do this and in the very near future we will have an army of young workers who will strengthen our local societies, imbuing them with such life and vigor that it will be impossible for such an editorial to be written upon the decline of Spiritism.

M. E. GADWALLADER.
Philadelphia, Pa., 5. 21. 80

IT CANNOT DECLINE

Some Hindrances Clear

Specified
B. M.

I regret very much all this public and delusive talk about the "Decline of Spiritualism." It cannot decline. It true there is a decline in the zeal among the Spiritualists, but Spiritualism in all its phases will continue so long as humanity's children have to travel through this planet's probationary period in order to reach the higher life. If Spiritualists (who in the majority of cases belonged to the churches) would only give the same time, attention, devotion, energy and generosity to the Spiritual cause as they formerly did to their orthodox faith or religion, there would be no echo of this "decline."

The introduction of the "Reverend" business into our ranks has disgusted thousands of earnest truth seekers and the sooner the N. S. A. abolishes this churchly title the better it will be for the cause.

Spiritualists have been depending too much on the spirits for everything, so much so that they have, through force of habit, neglected the cause, feeling assured somehow that the spirits would take care of the cause. God and the

GEO. W. WALKROND.
 Denver, Colo.

A LESSON TO US.

The So-Called Decadence of Spiritualism.

Psychology is calculated to throw much light upon this subject. Another important problem to be solved in the future may best be presented in the following question: How much of the mental phenomena generally ascribed to influence of decarnate spirits is due to the quickening and awakening of one's own consciousness? But we must not pause to discuss these questions.

According to the Spiritism in the Philadelphia Press, "Spiritism is the latest phase of the novel. It is gone—and in that way all its attractiveness. How much of this statement, if any, is true? Interest in societies might decline, and yet Spiritualism itself be on the increase. There was nothing novel or new in the cardinal principles of Spiritism."

Here I do not find that Spiritualism has
on the wane. I admit that in many of
our smaller towns, and a portion of our
larger ones, Spiritualism has been
largely a struggle for existence. But
in our larger centers, like Boston, Wor-
cester, Lynn and Haverhill, societies
are in far better condition than they
have been for many years. Our med-
iums of the better class-by this term
I mean those who are able to preserve
most definite proof of the phenomena
only have been very busy. I have
admitted that our lyciums with ver-
few exceptions have steadily dwindled
in number until many have long ap-
peared to exist. For this there are
many causes. In passing I must pause
to state that it is more than likely that
one cause of the present condition of
local societies throughout the country
arises from the fact that we have given

work for us in the past, robbing the church of its best workers. The expression, "The old are dying out and there are none trained in society work to take their places." The Lyceum should be the training school of future society organizers and workers, the same as the Sunday-school in the church. In many, if not in most places, competent leaders and teachers are not easily found for lyceum work.

In many places our societies have undoubtedly been injured by the incompetent and uneducated persons who have pushed themselves to the front as expounders of the spiritual philosophy. The itinerant system in vogue largely throughout our country does not conduce either to the growth of the societies or to the welfare of the members. Many voluntary workers are

vinced of the fact of spirit communion attend either Unitarian or Universalist meetings, because of the refinement and culture pervading the atmosphere of the church. Something besides sensationalism must be demanded by our societies if Spiritualism as an organized religious body is to have a legitimate share in the other liberal denominations. A devout and religious feeling should permeate all our meetings. And Spiritualism be made no longer to pander to man's baser nature, but instead to call all the noblest and best within us into action. We can only lift the curtain of fraud and decadence aside, and let Spiritualism lead in the mighty work of uplifting humanity.

GEO. A. FULLER, M. D.
Onset, Mass.

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OPTIMISTIC.

The Decline of Spiritualism.

The article in the Philadelphia Press of May 7, upon the apparent decline of Spiritualism, is one that deserves on the part of Spiritualist earnest thought, backed up as it is by the pessimistic views and utterances of some who have been, and still are leaders foremost in our ranks, and backed up also by statements almost innumerable in our daily papers of fraudulent presentations and pretensions; to say nothing of unpublished evidences of fraud, coming under the observation of Spiritualists who, fearing to hurt the cause if

It is no wonder to me therefore that The Progressive Thinker, a paper devoted to Spiritualism, and ever desirous of truth and progress in all things, should have been the thoughtful expression of the thoughtful exponents of its large corps of contributors upon the question relative to "decline," or actual progress—which? of this which has been demanding of the world, for now three-quarters of a century, admission as a teacher and demonstrator of personal continuity of life beyond the hour and article of physical death; nay, more than this, of personal rapport with us, and in this rapport, able to communicate with us, and by such communication influence us in our present lives. This I hold to be the great truth of Spiritualism.

As for myself, I am optimistic rather than pessimistic in my views of this opening century of a new age in man's progressive development, and to the extent though I have no use for the old and formal God of orthodoxy, I do believe in a divine government, consequently in a divine plan, in the working out of humanity's uplift, and the establishment of a more or better social condition, and in this my theology is transcendent and a purpose "over there," as truly as that we have government and purpose over here, and in my thought of the divine purpose, I expect to see the effect of that purpose in our own social development, the working out of which is in fact our religion, "the greatest good for the greatest number."

But, too, in my study of these ages, and of the epochs I have found that with each and every epoch, the beginning of the age has been marked by the appearance of what we call "day" or "night" of "psychic phenomena," an outpour of the "miraculous display" of psychic powers. (I use the word "miraculous" in its true sense of wonder-
ful.)

[illegible]

Leaving all pasts, with their ideals of rights, for space we have not for their discussion, I ask myself: What is the divine purpose of this present age—Spiritualism? In its first manifestation—is it not to demonstrate convincingly to every one who will honestly investigate, of a present immortality, and that being as man immortal, the event of a physical death does not change the man himself. Incarnate or exarnate, he is "Man," with all that the word implies of manly character, of personal characteristics, of spirit towards his fellows? It can be demonstrated that our nature, its nature, it has been necessary, so to speak, to allow every kind of man to be manifested by these phenomenal ways, the good and the not good: the wise, and

the not wise; the man of pretense, as well as the man of honesty, and until the world of man is fully convinced of character distinctions in the exonerated as in the exonerate, we shall have these and all experience in seance.

But now I ask: What will be the outcome? I answer my own question by saying: Evidently all the Spiritualists will hold themselves responsible for what is done in the name of Spiritualism; just as the free citizen holds himself responsible for what is done in his name. The free citizen knows that he is responsible for crime, as well as for social order; and as a people we take care to prevent, or to punish crime.

Every society senses that it must keep

itself clean, if it would be clean; and common sense tells us that our first duty to ourselves is social organization, possessing executive powers of discipline or of expulsion upon conviction of fraudulent practice. We must demand and enforce honesty; and we cannot do this without organization; we must be in position to deny the use of the name "Spiritualist" to all who will not organize, and so assume just responsibility before the world in which we do the name of Spiritualism; to

AWAITS YOU
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ALL YOU ANSWER?

Realize your ambitions? Would you attain the gain your heart's noblest desire? You need the consciousness of power and wish to more. Perhaps you desire to mount higher and call, or long for a better social position, or you want to turn failure into success—business—friendship.

Force that will enable you to accomplish that which is dormant within you. It only needs that which is attractive in man; those qualities good in his nature; all those qualities capable of rising in the world, spring

develop this great force in a few days. Without the knowledge of your nearest neighbor, you can become acquainted with the science intimately to yourself—that is so full of lies—that shapes the path of the human mind. Thousands of people are looking for a book that gives you the key to Personal Autobiography, at unvels the secrets of Hypnotism; that science of Personal Influence; that science of the mind, that science of the soul, that science of the world's Greatest Authority, Dr. X. La. This book is absolutely free to all who ask for it. It is a true treatise of one of the most important subjects of the day. Mail your request today, you will receive it by registered card dropped in the box at the corner to your very door. Address, **MARK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, 19 ROCHESTER, N. Y.**

say nothing of character-building, for character-building is a common duty of all mankind.

and executive powers that I find myself sustaining the N. S. A., and advocate its need; and if we do sustain, and judiciously enlarge its scope we may escape the wholesale "ordaining" (?) of such as are both incompetent for and morally unworthy of the high office of teacher or minister to intelligent people. That this has not been done before now I, I can but think, the real cause of what the Press calls "the decline of Spiritualism;" but we are not dead or dying; we may be passing through our "Bull-Run," as all great movements generally do, but from the check given to the over-confident enthusiasm of the over-optimistic.

new converts or new recruits, there will come to the rescue sobriety and common sense; those whose souls are filled with the divine glow of this sublime revelation of our nature as Man, will rise in this sobriety and with set faces "Go Forward!"

There will be organization, there will be a weeding out of fraud, there will be suppression of pretense, and there will come to be a new and better social idea of what is "morality," and following this a new and better civil state; or, if you like it better, call it a new and better civilization; for this, I take it, is the great purpose of the divine plan of our accursed brotherhood that as an antidote to the rampant Spiritualism, Universalism, a crude truth, that is to be refined by culture, and set in its refined

men among the jewels of the ages' flaring; yet surpassing them all. Then we will see work done in the way of the uplift of the people; then, as never before, will come with authority the larger freedom, and these "works of piety" will not be that we may glorify an absentee God, unknown and unknowable, but for the present good of all mankind. And yet this will not be by our wisdom alone, we may not forget that Spiritualism came to us by the will of the divine ones who have "passed the vells;" and therefore we need to reverently seek of these glorified ones both wisdom and strength; in fact, these are our wisdom, our strength; and this is the cause of these Spiritualists' antilegalism.

J. O. M. HEWITT.

GROWING STRONGER.

Is Spiritualism Declining?

Is Spiritualism on the decline? I do not believe it is. In my circle of work and observation I find it quite the contrary. My work has taken me—not into the highways—but into the byways of life; and I have been surprised to find so much interest manifested. People were reading, thinking, investigating. I found the spirit of Spiritualism at work—it is working still and nothing can blinder it.

The pessimism of Bro. Barrett and others is bearing its legitimate fruit, and good good souls are deserting the delphic Press, and others who have not a good word to say for Spiritualism much food to fatten on.

The article which appears in the Press under the above heading is but a tissue of misrepresentation. As is the custom of our critics, the writer ignores the true status of Spiritualism, and deals with the subject as it is calculated to mislead the public, utterly ignoring the truth, of which he or she evidently knows or cares but little.

It is true the frauds and humbugs in mediumship who falsely assume to be Spiritualists, are to blame for much of this adverse criticism; but to say our mediums are all frauds is as great an untruth.

Our ranks possessed one hundred dollars worth of which, very many of our

we would think him very unwise to throw away the fifty genuine dollars because the other fifty were worthless. It is true Spiritualism has changed in many respects in the past forty years, but change is the order of progression. Scientific investigation, psychic research and study, are bringing out more and more the stubborn facts demonstrating the truth of Spiritualistic philosophy. If the general public no longer stand amazed at the manifestations, it is because knowledge has taken the place of ignorance and superstition bowing down at the altar of truth, and the spirit world unites its forces with this to raise mankind onto a higher plane of understanding, and into the clear light of spiritual perception.

Spiritualism on the decline? By no means; it has long attracted the attention of the best minds of the world, and instead of growing weaker is growing stronger. It has the same solid basis which would become the universal religion. In evidence of this, mark the attitude of the churches whose ministers—many of them—are preaching the doctrine of Spiritualism already to their people; and because they do not immediately come forward and join the Spiritualist movement, is no sign the heaven is not working.

Spiritualism has revolutionized the world of thought; its potent power is reaching every where, and is too broad and far-reaching to be lapsed and

I may be as optimistic as Bro. B. and others are pessimistic, but it would be well for every one discoursing upon this subject to remember that it is just as great a blunder, and evidence of ignorance, to believe too little, as it is to believe too much.

MARY WEBB-BAKER.

Be wary of the man who always wears a set smile.—Ethel Payne.

