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THE SEAT OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

SERMON BY REV. T. W. WOODROW.

At Marshalltown, Iowa, "Childrens' Day," June 22.

The Fragrance of Flowers and Songs of Birds Joined in the Services of the Occasion.

Text: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time... but I say unto you." Matt 5: 21, 27, 33.

The authority for truth has been based upon what was said in ancient times; but Jesus taught that no authority is to be recognized prior to the consciousness and reason of the individual. He shifted the seat of authority in religion from the traditions and sayings of the past, and located it in the inmost thought of the individual soul. For each individual the seat of authority for final appeal is the ego within the heart and within the mind, and hence he would often say: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time... but I say unto you." He recognized the seat of authority within himself and consequently "spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes." This has been interpreted to indicate that Jesus was some sort of a supernatural person—more than a "mere" man, but instead it only shows that he was most perfectly a man and wholly natural. He followed his natural impulses with reason as his guide and expressed truth as he perceived it, being confident he spoke as one having authority.

The age in which we live is just coming to this thought of Jesus, that the seat of authority in religion is within the soul, and not in the sayings and documents of past ages. Guarding and curbing our thought by the thought of the past as expressed in writings which remain, has had for its motto, "Authority for Truth," referring to the written word of proof; but that motto is reversed and now is being announced: "Truth for authority and not authority for truth!" The seat of authority is internal, not external to the perceptive mind, and the evidence for religion is not hearsay evidence of what somebody said in an ancient age, but is the testimony of the individual mind recognizing and responding to an internal impress centered in the soul.

Truth's credentials are not historical but constitutional, and the demonstration of the truth is not the dicta of persons canonized in the sacred chronicles of a remote past, but experience is truth's infallible demonstration. The dicta of others can not in the very nature of mind equal for authority the dictates of one's own conscience and reason; and the demonstration of truth, by applying it in experience, never can be supplanted by another's profession. Personal experience is prior in the mind to all outside testimony. We should not allow the proclamation of an angel to set aside our own judgement and experience, much less the hearsay or documentary evidence that an angel did so proclaim ages ago.

I heard of a man who claimed that an angel told him to eat corn bread and molasses, for the same reason that Paul admonished Timothy to take a little wine; that is, "for thy stomach's sake." Should an angel give me advice I would not follow it till convinced it is proper by my own reason. This applies to mathematics, morals and religion, and the various fundamental propositions of religion; for instance, that the hypotenuse of a right angled triangle is shorter than the sum of the other two sides is not accepted in the mind from external authority, but from the testimony of the mind itself—the truth itself bearing witness of itself in the mind. Hearsay evidence that an angel said so could not strengthen this internal witness, and no amount of outside authority could silence it. And the demonstration of this mathematical truth is not the quoted statements of some standard author in geometry, but actual personal experience is its only demonstration.

The dog accepts this truth, but has not learned geometry from our books; and man is not inferior to this animal as to dependence upon external authority for truth. We first have the mental perception of truth by the testimony of truth itself to the mind as its own authority, and then follows demonstration or the test of truth by application to experience.

Every truth worthy of the name must be tested by experience and can not be proven by quoting authors, ancient or modern. We can not know of the doctrine of Christ by being acquainted with the sayings ascribed to him in the ancient record of his words and works; but Jesus pointed to experience as the only source of divine knowledge;

"If any man doeth his Father's will he shall know of the doctrine." That the whole is equal to the sum of all the parts is a mathematical truism which the mind consents to without the suggestion of external authority, and only through experience can this truth, as all truth, be demonstrated, and no authority but that of truth itself dominates the mind. The well known truth that kind words turneth away wrath, and are, therefore, better than wrath returned for wrath, is accepted in the mind, not because of any external authority, nor because it has been so declared from the time of old, but it comes to the mind bearing in itself its own authority; and the only demonstration of this truth is the trial of it in experience. You know the doctrine after you have tested it, not before; hence experience is the highest source of authority. So we might say of all the propositions of morals and religion; instead of resting the authority for them upon ancient sacred writings, as is done by Protestants and Jews, or upon the church, as is done by Roman Catholics, we rest it upon Christian consciousness, upon religion personally experienced and verified.

The accepted rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," upon what authority can we accept this saying, except the knowledge of personal test and application in experience? The *ipse dixit* of any other person, dead or alive, can not be authority to one who has not verified it in experience, and never can he know it till he proves it by doing it. Hence individual consciousness is the only authority dominating the mind, and experience the only demonstration. Authority can not be embodied in written documents by one man or by many, and demonstration can not be accomplished by quotations.

If a teacher in one of our common schools should call upon a learner to demonstrate some proposition in mathematics, he would expect more than the quotation of a rule, he would expect more of the scholar than to get up and repeat what Ray's or Robinson's or Davies' arithmetic says; for, quoting all the arithmetics in the world would not prove the simplest mathematical proposition; but the teacher would justly require the scholar to give expression to his own mind, state his own thought, and after hearing his statement, would say: "Step up to the blackboard and prove it." So if I should ask any one about the truth of some proposition in spiritual life relating to duty or immortality, do I get the proper solution by being told what Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jesus, John, Peter or Paul said in the old time? Is the memory of what those said who are long since dead the permanent foundation of true faith? Is the basis of true conviction no deeper than memory? Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, but what do you say, my brother or my sister? What is the *ego* lego of your own soul? What is the eternal verity in your own heart, and what have you found to be true in your own experience? Have you established the truth of your convictions and hopes by the cultivation of your own God-given talents, or are you depending upon what has been said by them of old time?

A Congregational minister, Rev. W. H. Brodhead, Denver, Colo., recently spoke a paragraph in a sermon which fits in this connection. It is a sample of what now may be heard in the leading pulpits of all denominations.—Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Universalist, and Unitarian. The reverend gentleman said: "What is the foundation? The fundamental article of Christian faith is that the most trustworthy knowledge comes immediately and directly. The highest truths are known by experience. The evidence of them is our consciousness. We know there is a God. How? Argument never demonstrates to any one the existence of God, who is a Father. We believe in God, not because argument has proved him but because we have in ourselves the consciousness of his presence. We believe in God because we have felt in ourselves a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness. Why do you believe in mother? Not because you have seen her. You never have seen your mother. The love and tenderness not seen constitute her real essential self, and they are invisible to the eye of sense. So with immortality. We do not believe it because of the arguments advanced to prove it, or the scriptural passages that teach it, but because of the consciousness of immortality that is within us and because we realize that there is in our souls the power of flight that will reveal itself when the door is opened as a bird confined in a cage."

This seat of authority in the individual mind is the rock upon which Jesus founded

his church or congregation. "And Jesus said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"—or the gates of the invisible world shall not be barred against it. What is this rock which is the foundation of the true congregation of Christ? Some say it is Peter's profession, and have sought to establish their congregation upon the repetition of this profession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—but this being a foundation of sand, the gates of Hades have prevailed against it. Some say it is Peter, and have sought to make him the foundation of the church, but the gates of Hades have prevailed against it; but the fact is, the rock or immovable foundation of the church of Christ is the continued direct individual revelation from the Father to every member of the congregation. Not that the members of the congregation are to repeat and profess what a few early founders, clothed like themselves in flesh and blood, have told or said, but what they themselves receive directly. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father which is in heaven, and upon this rock I will build my church."

To paraphrase the language, we have: "Peter, this truth was not revealed to thee through flesh and blood. This is not hearsay revelation, coming to thy mind by report of others, but thou hast received it directly from the Father; and upon this rock of direct individual communion with the Father I will establish my congregation and the gates of the invisible world shall not be barred against it."

This condition of man's spiritual unfolding was symbolically represented ages before in the dream of Jacob's ladder resting on the earth and reaching unto heaven, on which "angels of God were ascending and descending." And when this significant vision was seen, a voice was heard to say: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This spiritual blessing of all of earth's inhabitants through his posterity in later ages is *pentecostal* Christianity, and the same was foretold by the poet-seer Isaiah, who announced that the veil of spiritual blindness shall be taken away from all people, and all nations and people shall rise to the light of spiritual mount Zion, "when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and tears shall be wiped away from all faces." And again it was predicted, as to be accomplished through Christianity, by Jesus in conversation with Nathaniel when he said: "Because I said I saw thee [clairvoyantly] under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." That is, the rock of communion between heaven and earth is in the soul of man himself (the bottom end of the ladder rests on man) and the followers of Christ are to plant themselves upon that rock. When each individual is firmly established upon this rock within himself, the condition of direct communion with the angels of God, not depending upon the sandy foundation of repeating the profession of another—he is fortified against the fear and dread of death—the gates of hades (the invisible world) shall not prevail against him. It will deliver them, "who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage."

The fatal error of professed Christians is the attempt to stand upon the false foundation of repeating what others have said who lived in the olden times; or they have committed the mistake of trying to establish themselves upon ancient personalities who were the mortal form, making them their authority, and thereby have ignored their own personalities, and have cut off their own direct communion with the Father of Spirits, the only source of lasting authority.

This fatal mistake has caused all churches, Catholic and Protestant, to lose their divine fervor, and the gates of the invisible world have prevailed against them, and they have relapsed into dead formalities, vainly seeking to live and thrive by repeating the sayings of the early founders. No congregation, no movement of men can preserve spiritual life by parrot-like repeating over and over again, the thoughts and professions formulated by the dead past, but their life will ever depend upon the individual giving his own expression to the thoughts of the living present—each and every one professing his own say in his own way. A congregation led by this principle of progress cannot die, can never lose the spirit of true life—"the gates of hades shall not prevail against it." The history of all denominations furnishes examples of this truth. Their founders were specially gifted men, whose lips were touched by live coals from the altar, and whose minds were illuminated by the divine afflatus, but whose ministrations soon culminated in fixed church organizations built upon dogmatic forms of expression, thus perpetuating the letter while the spirit departed from them. Dwelling upon the letter of past sayings, which killeth, they necessarily lost the spirit, which alone giveth and preserveth life.

John Wesley, John Knox, John Murray and George Fox were "inspired," and under control of higher powers. When the "Friend's" movement started in England in the seventeenth century it was all aglow with the fervor of divine life because they

recognized the divine light in the bosom of each individual, and every man's and every woman's right and duty to express that light which came to him from the Father—"which is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

This movement started under God, for the accomplishment of religious liberty, whereby every man can worship after the dictates of his own conscience, and though the hosts of darkness were arrayed against it, and though it was opposed by Church and State they prevailed not, but in spite of bitter persecutions and imprisonments it overflooded all, and swept on to a grand victory!

But when the individual members of this congregation neglected the light within themselves, and assumed the backward look, silencing the divine voice within each soul, and seeking to live by repeating the sayings of the past, extracting the rules of faith and practice from among the sayings of Geo. Fox and the early founders, the spirit ceased to move them, and immediately death and decline began, and they relapsed into dead formalities and professions without the spirit. When they refused to heed the voice of God speaking directly in the individual soul, and sought to be governed by hearsay revelations received through flesh and blood, "the gates ajar" became barred against them. Each individual should have gone on in the spirit of Christ, who said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time... but I say unto you," let each individual speak according to the light that God has given him, undimmed and unrestrained by the sayings of the past. Speaking thus we speak "as the oracles of God."

He that putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God."

The oracles of God are not written documents of the old or modern time,—not Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, but the living word of God in the living soul of man. They are living oracles, and not the corrupted, mutilated records of the dead past,—written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of the heart."

The only constitution framed and written by the finger of God is the constitution of human nature, and every man carries with him a copy of that divine constitution by which to test every saying, whether by word of old time or modern time, and whatever saying is unconstitutional or incompatible with his own nature, he has the divine authority inherent in himself to reject that saying as false and not of God. Hence the oracles of God in the individual mind and heart stand prior as authority to all external enunciations, verbal revelations, or records of sayings of the old time. Individual consciousness is the highest authority for the individual, and personal experience the only demonstration. Each individual has the power and authority within himself to examine and test by experiment every truth offered to his mind, and every proposition which fails to pass through the crucial test of individual examination and experiment fails before the highest authority given under heaven among men.

Let me repeat, for it should be remembered, that this is the clear teaching of Jesus Christ and his specific example. He announced truth upon his own authority, claiming that it was communicated to his own soul directly, and he advised others to follow the light within themselves and speak accordingly. "We speak what we do know and testify to what we have seen."

He set the example, not by repeating for proof the old-time sayings, but gave his own testimony—"I say unto you." He did not look within old records to find what to say, but within his own soul, and there read in clear lines the word of God, the eternal oracles of truth within by the finger of God. He taught that no man should look backward, but forward: "He that looketh back is not fit of the kingdom." And to the Jews who looked to past records and traditions for guidance in doctrine, he said: "Why, even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

What is the meaning of this language but that each should judge of truth by the standard within himself?

And sending disciples into the world to preach "glad tidings," he did not provide them nor require them to provide themselves with copies of the Old Testament Scriptures to guide them in preaching, and by which to instruct all nations in the truth; nor did he direct them to choose a committee among them to prepare a New Testament to be their guide and the guide of all subsequent generations, and tarry at Jerusalem till that inspired document of infallible authority was written—no, he never authorized them to bind future ages with fixed dogmatic statements of Christianity; but he did tell them to "tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high," and "wait for the promise of the Father," the power of the Holy Ghost, which would qualify them as witnesses of the truth of the resurrection and life immortal. The promise of the Father was the spirit of truth, which was ever to abide with the true Christian disciple and guide him unto all truth. Thus men are inspired, not books nor written documents—all men generally, some men especially—but those books written by inspired men are "writings given by inspiration," and Paul said are "profitable for doctrine, for instruction," etc., but this does not involve that they stand prior as authority to our own ex-

perience and individual inspiration. The most philosophic writer of the Bible, the author of the book of Job, said long ago: "There is a spirit in man and the inspiration (inbreathing) of the Almighty giveth them understanding." It is not possible according to this passage, to limit inspiration to a few men in a remote past age. The inbreathings of God are felt within the souls of all mankind, giving them what light they have, and the more they follow it the more they feel it. According to this indwelling spirit of truth, Jesus taught his disciples to speak and act; and this applies to you, my friends, as to those of the old time, and the same "promise is unto you and your children, and unto them that are afar off," and you will receive it when baptized by the Holy Spirit. Guided by the spirit of God you cannot go far astray in doctrine or practice.

That spirit will lead you in the narrow way, through the open gate, and guide your footsteps in the path of peace, joy and life immortal. May you seek and attain that higher guidance of the soul through the enkindling of the divine inward light, that your lives may be good and pure, your faith and hope strong, and that the gates of the unseen world shall not prevail against you.

A lesson learn from these fair fragrant roses

That live direct on sunshine and on dew:

They trouble not to question after Moses;

And why, dear friends, should such things trouble you?

"They lift their leaves and branches towards the heaven,

They hold their petals up to catch the dew:

They take with gladness all that life has given,

And so their life to Nature's life is true.

"The bird that o'er the fields its flight is winging,

Warbling in gladness as it speeds along,—

Delights us by the music of its singing,

Singing its own and not another's song.

"So, let us take the hint by nature given,

In simple life of flower and song of bird;

Heed what directly comes to us from heaven,

Speak our own thought and not another's word.

"Not what He says to any ancient sages,

So much as unto us, is our concern;

God here to-day, as well as in past ages,

Is the great lesson that we need to learn.

"To take his sunshine and his dew with gladness;

To heed each voice of duty that shall call.

With patient trust to meet each cloud of sadness—

This is the wisdom that shall conquer all!"

Foreign Missions as Seen by a Candid Observer.

Probably nowhere is money more freely contributed to sustain Christian missions than in the New England and the Middle States. Three thousand dollars were raised at Mr. Moody's July 3d morning meeting in Northfield, for supporting missionaries in India. But is the game worth the powder? The remarks of Mr. Parker Gilmore, in his recently-published London volume, entitled "Through Gass Land," (pp. 129-131) are pertinent in this connection. He says, "The dangers are overrated that are supposed to beset the European as soon as he passes beyond the boundaries of civilization; for I would far sooner trust myself among the African heathen, than I would place myself in the power of home-bred roughts."

"Making Christians of these aborigines certainly has the immediate effect of spoiling and injuring them, for it causes them to become dishonest, ape the vices of the white man, and eventually unhappy and discontented with their lot." This assertion is milder than Jesus's exhortation to the Scribes and Pharisees of his day, whom he denounced as hypocrites, who compass sea and land to make a proselyte, and when he is become so, is thereby two-fold more a child of hell than his converters were.—Matt. xxiii: 15.

"Whatever," remarks Mr. Gilmore, "the result may be in the very far future, when very many generations, have so to say, been educated up to a knowledge of the benefits derived from our religion, of course it is impossible to say... I am aware that these sentiments are different from those I entertained a dozen or more years ago; but should not a man profit by experience? and experience is answerable for this change. Let the money that now in such vast quantities is being sent abroad to Christianize the heathen, be retained at home for the benefit of our own infidels and criminals. Till our jails and penitentiaries are empty, our foreign missions are nothing more or less than a mockery and a flaunting presumption. I know men that annually give immense sums to foreign missions, and would sternly refuse a dollar, yes, even a cent, to forward home work. Charity, truly, in such cases, does not commence at home."

Such pretentious care for the souls of heathens at the ends of the earth, and neglect of starving, thirsting, tattered, imprisoned human beings before our eyes at home—what's the explanation of such conduct? "Wisdom" (said Solomon, probably meaning a right course of action) "is before the face of him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth."—Prov. xvi: 24. We cannot believe, notwithstanding the words of Jesus, that religious proselytes are all of them hypocrites; nor, because regardless of needy neighbors, they thrust their donations to the ends of the earth, can we accept the wise man's proverb that they are fools.—A. E. G., in Banner of Light.

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Written for The Progressive Thinker.

TERESA URREA

The Healing Medium of Cabora.

SHE TRAVELS IN SPIRIT, AND CURES A PARALYTIC.

BY E. F. SCHELLHOUS, M. D.

For some months past, rumors and reports of a remarkable character have been in circulation respecting a young girl, Teresa Urra, living in the District of Alamos, Sonora, Mex. It was stated that she performed the most wonderful cures, principally by the laying on of hands, and by means of supernatural power. A party of six, including the writer, desiring to see more of the country, determined to visit the place where she lives and learn the facts in regard to her. On arriving at the residence of her father, Sr. Urra, we saw what was at first the usual dwelling houses, corrals, etc., etc., of a Mexican hacienda, converted into a temporary town, consisting of numerous buildings hastily constructed for the convenience of the sick seeking relief through the healing power of this young girl. Every effort was made to accommodate us with shelter from the heat of the sun, and conveniences for our comfort. Two of our party, consisting of young ladies, were soon invited to an interview with the "saint," as she was called, and really believed to be those around her. They found her to be a girl 17 or 18 years old; of regular and handsome features, finely formed head, delicate physique, artless in manner and a very personification of candor and innocence.

She was aware of her healing power and expressed a desire to exercise it upon those who were worthy and helpless, without money and without price, even feeding the destitute. She was highly pleased to have Americans visit her. Our party obtained an interview with her on the day after our arrival, and learning that the writer was a physician, she eagerly inquired of him if she were sick, adding that the doctors all said that she was suffering from some ailment that disturbed her mental faculties. Upon examination she exhibited all the indications of vigorous health. She added that the doctors and priests wanted to get her into an asylum or convent, as she was curing the most obstinate cases of disease and exposing the hypocrisy and fraud of the priests.

There were three or four hundred people, patients and their friends, on the ground, and the "Saint" was almost constantly moving among them in her benevolent efforts to heal them. Wherever she went she was attended by a throng who sought every opportunity to express their adoration by kneeling before her and kissing her hand.

There were patients enough to furnish a hospital, and cases that would try the skill and ingenuity of the most noted practitioners in the healing art. The deformed, the blind, the paralytic, and the consumptive were the most common. It was estimated by one American who had been there for two months, that at least five thousand had visited the place since last November, and a thousand patients had been treated.

In an interview with her father, we learned that last October, Teresa was suddenly affected with strange and unaccountable symptoms. She stood rigid and fixed in one position for two days, with eyes set in an upward direction, and motionless. She was entirely unconscious, and on being removed to her bed, she would immediately resume her former position. The doctors pronounced it catalepsy, and could do nothing for her. These spells were repeated at longer and longer intervals; the last one occurring in March. For some time the father looked upon these phenomena with disfavor and had at one time resolved to send her away, but seeing the cures she had been instrumental in effecting, he has changed his feelings towards her and now regards her as endowed with healing power from highly advanced spirits.

Teresa, in our first interview with her, told us that one morning while still in bed, she heard a voice saying: "Teresa, arise, for here is thy eternal Father, the son of thy eternal Father, and the mother of the son of thy eternal Father; arise, leave thy bed, and returning to it, thou wilt feel the divine Presence." She often hears the same voice in guidance and warning. She manifests a spirit of meekness, sincerity and earnestness, and receives the adoration and veneration paid to her, with the utmost indifference. She does not wish to be called a saint. Her only desire seems to be her ability to perform the work which she believes has been assigned to her by divine power.

Like other girls of her age, she was fond of show and amusements, and as her father is wealthy, she was able to indulge in them, but one evening in the midst of a dance, she heard the words "que lujo" (what luxury!); and she immediately divested herself of her finery and now wears only the plainest and simplest attire.

Such is a brief outline of the character and history of this girl whose fame has spread for hundreds of miles around her. She has lost all enjoyment for worldly pleasures and social position. Her heart is full of earnest zeal for the relief of the sick, and genuine sympathy for suffering humanity.

Out of the many well authenticated cases of cures she performed, only a few will be mentioned here: Sr. Jose Dolores Gutierrez, [Continued on third page.]

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SATURDAY, AUG. 2, 1890.

Superstition, its Baneful Influence.

On one occasion it was stated that among the deaths reported at Jacksonville, Fla., was that of an educated young man named McAird. The report states that he died from the effects of a malignant fever; but the detailed circumstances proved that he died of a very different disease. He had been ill of the fever, but was getting on so favorably that the attending physician looked confidently for his recovery. In the morning he was surprised to find the patient worse. Seeking the cause, he learned that in the night, an owl had perched on a tree near the invalid's window. No sooner did the patient hear the dismal hoot of that "bird of ill omen," than he accepted it as a forewarning of his death and nothing could dislodge that ancient and ridiculous notion from his mind. He died the same day, not of the fever, but of a worse disease, called superstition, which doubtless was inherited from barbarian ancestors.

The world to-day is impregnated with superstition to the extent that it has become an actual source of danger, and often results disastrously. Great men are often superstitious. They entertain some peculiar notion which haunts them continually. If they see the new moon over the left shoulder, they are badly frightened. Spilling salt at the table made a distinguished artist fear some impending calamity, so she picked up a portion of it and threw it over her shoulders; that was expected to remove or prevent any dire results. Napoleon was impregnated with superstition—he had his Star of Destiny, and lucky and unlucky omens followed him, apparently, all through life.

It is not at all strange that this vein of superstition permeates the human family. Religion as formulated in ancient times, and the scenes of those days, too; a crafty priestcraft that maintained its power and influence by subterfuge and intrigue; a philosophy founded more on the imagination than facts, and the claim that God directed this or that, all contributed their mite towards establishing a superstition which has cursed the world. Take, for example, the remarkable appearance of a Comet (Halley's) in 1459. With its long tail of translucent light and pulsating motions, it was considered the harbinger of some dreadful calamity. The Turks, aggressive then, as they have never been since, had taken Constantinople. That comet was considered by Catholics and Protestants alike as their enemy, and was looked upon as the harbinger of evil. Pope Calixtus III. anathematized

it, and his formula or prayer for the faithful to repeat: "From the Turk and the Comet, good Lord, deliver us,"—has found a permanent place in history. Belief in such omens has become a part of brain structure of thousands, and they to some extent must suffer therefrom. The world to-day is morally, intellectually and physically just what past generations have made it. The fear of comets as harbingers of some earthly calamity, made its deep impress on the brain fibre, established therein certain molecular vibrations, and those vibrations have come down all the ages, and manifest their evil effects in a variety of ways. The fear of death is common to all humanity; even to those who know it is only a birth to a higher and grander life, it is regarded with some degree of trepidation. That feeling is a legacy of the benighted past.

It is the noble mission of Spiritualism to overcome those transmitted qualities, those brain vibrations which beget a feeling of dread, and institute those vibrations which generate a feeling of pleasure. As light from any object strikes the retina and optic nerve, they vibrate, followed by molecular vibrations of the brain, producing certain well defined results—joy, fear, jealousy, anger, hatred, revenge, etc. The same, too, with vibrations caused through sound. It is all a matter of molecular vibrations of brain and nerve. Regulate those vibrations, as the watchmaker does the movements of his watch; make them vibrate with pure love, honesty of purpose, nobleness of aspirations and a desire to benefit the world, and then and not till then will superstition cease to exert its baneful influence.

There are, however, omens which are evolved by spirit friends, and which are often instrumental in averting some dreadful calamity, and which illustrate the watchful tender care of guardian angels, who are always interested in the welfare of earth's children.

The Wealthiest Women.

A list of the twenty-seven wealthiest women in the United States is published, in which the first place is given to Mrs. Hetty Green of New York, who is credited with a fortune of \$40,000,000 in her own right; Miss Elizabeth Garrett comes next with \$20,000,000; Mrs. Terry, \$20,000,000; Mrs. Mark Hopkins, \$20,000,000; Mrs. Edwin Stephens, \$15,000,000; Mrs. John C. Green, \$10,000,000; Mrs. Cyrus H. McCormick of Chicago, \$10,000,000; Mrs. John Jacob Astor, \$8,000,000; Mrs. John Ray Barton of Philadelphia, \$7,000,000; Mrs. Thomas A. Scott, widow of the Railroad President, \$5,000,000; Mrs. William Armour of Chicago, daughter of Silas Cobb, \$5,000,000; while Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Mrs. Josephine Ayer, Mrs. Jane Brown, Mrs. W. E. Dodge, and the daughters of Francis A. Drexel of Philadelphia, are worth \$4,000,000 each; Mrs. Robert Goetz and Mrs. Jaye pay taxes on \$3,000,000 apiece.

If they will only use their vast wealth to aid in elevating humanity to a higher scale of existence, they will thereby "lay up treasures in Heaven," their bank account there being of large dimensions. If, however, they use it for selfish purposes, they will find themselves poor indeed in spirit life.

THEY ARE NOT THERE.

From a letter from a lady in Pennsylvania we learn of a beautiful case of affection. The three children of a loving father and mother passed on to spirit-life. One was a girl who, before she passed on, dreading the change called death, asked her father and mother to promise her they would visit her grave every day. They promised. She passed on, and for several years, the bereaved father and mother, every day, rain, mud, frost, snow, sleet, or burning sun, have visited the graves of their three children.

The affection of these parents is beautiful, but they might as well visit the dooryard where once they played as to visit the grave where in the earth their bodies were laid to be won back to future usefulness.

The spirits of these children, as of all others, have passed on. Their growth and development goes on apace. The cords of affection that link lives together is not broken by the change. But the loved ones who have passed on can be held back from their natural development by the tears of parents shed over their departure, and by daily visits to little graves.

There is no death. Existence is eternal. Growth, development, increase of knowledge are natural rights of all who ever came into existence. To help on the growth is better than to mourn that our affections have been bruised. Time will ever bring its healing if we will accept it. The children we love, we will care for, guide, direct, assist, watch over and develop while they are with us, or we with them. The moment they pass on from our care they go into better hands and influences. They expand, improve and love us all the more if we will not lasso them with our lines of griefs and hold them to our embrace, instead of going in spirit with them, and still helping them on to the upper, the broader, and the progressive. Heaven has more of children than the earth has of graves. Heaven is filled with loved ones, who welcome and watch children. The body of a father or mother should not mourn that a child has come and started on its career, nor should we refuse to be comforted when the loved one passes on to give us glad welcome and consolation in the future.

God only knows how much churches and society have to atone for in not educating those of earth to the facts of freedom, instead of the futures of creeds and the cloak of "priest-craft" throws over men while binding them to fear.

The children are not in graves. They are away at school. They are in the sunshine and growing, except when we call them back into the gloom, which should not be permitted to remain to darken lives still here on earth. There is far more joy over there than on this side the great divide.—Pomeroy's Advance Thought.

Watch The Tag.

Watch the little tag on the wrapper of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. It will tell you with what number of the paper your subscription expires. By renewing before your time expires you will receive the paper without a single break.

THE COMING OF OUR GOSPEL.

BY EMMA BOOD TUTTLE.

White angels clef the airy sea
And said, "O Earth, be jolly thee!
The ceaseless moaning from thy valleys
Has burdened all thy fragrant gales;
The dripping of so many tears
Has saddened Heaven these many years."
Then all the air grew strangely sweet
With chiming of the angels' feet.
Homes full of mourning grew more light
With wailing clouds of raiment white.
And all the air was full of songs
Of Earth's redemption from her wrongs.
Jesus the crucified, the good,
Sang the grand song of brotherhood.
And choral bursts of sympathy
Proclaimed mankind's divinity.
Earth's fallen angels, sunk so low,
Peered up through smoky veils of woe,
And having torn their veils away,
They ran to greet the perfect day.
Those who were slaves to blighting wrong
Cried "Lo, of freedom is the song!"
The toiler caught the melody
And said "Thy slung equality."
Women, who sat with bended brows
In the draped window of her house,
Arose, and benedictions sweet
Flowed over her from head to feet;
She felt the surging tide of strength
Throb in her languid heart at length.
And stepping forward, hand in hand
With man, she murmured "Life grows grand."
The little children jumped in glee
And cried, "The angels sing for me!"
There's singing lessons fresh and new,
Those missionaries in the blue."
Oh, earth was one grand music hall.
Voicing some melody for all!

THE SPHERES OF LIGHT.

A Narrative of the Summer-Land.

This is a beautifully-told story, by Hudson Tuttle, of Berlin Heights, O., in which the state and condition of spiritual beings are described, and the philosophy and science of spirit existence unfolded in simple but profoundly interesting manner.

We have secured this wonderful story, which in style and thought presents spiritual inspiration at its highest tide, for the columns of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. It will run through ten or twelve numbers, large editions of which will be issued, in anticipation of the great demand that is sure to be awakened.

We shall begin the publication of this startling narration of spirit life about the first of September. Spiritualists everywhere should read it. Our paper is within the reach of all, furnished as it is, 16 weeks on trial for 25 cents. Tell your neighbor of the rich treat in store for them, if they will only subscribe for THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER.

What They Think.

Dr. J. H. Hartwell, of Springfield, Ohio, gives a very decided opinion as to THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. He says:

"We have been taking spiritual papers for twelve years, and like THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER better than any other."

D. L. Petty, an attorney-at-law at Bellefontaine, Ohio, also has a decided opinion in our favor. He says:

"I cannot do without THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, even though it cost ten dollars a year. I consider any one single number of the paper fully worth what it costs to procure it for a quarter of a year. I am quite busy in my profession as an attorney, but never so much so as to not read THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER the first thing when it comes. It has done much to lift and disperse the dark cloud of materialistic belief from my life, for which you will please accept my heart-felt thanks."

Olney H. Richmond, of Grand Rapids, Mich., whose occult powers have made him the center of attraction, writes:

"THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER is chuck full of good things. What a 'feast of reason and flow of soul' for the contemptible sum of two cents or less! You ought to have a hundred thousand subscribers at least before five years shall have passed."

Dr. Hidden at Lake Pleasant.

Dr. Charles W. Hidden, of Newburyport, Mass., will be at Lake Pleasant from August 15 to August 22. The readers of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER who have read his interesting articles and addresses will, without doubt, be glad to make his acquaintance during his stay at the camp. He is a cultured gentleman, well versed in all things that pertain to the spiritual philosophy.

A VISIT TO OLNEY H. RICHMOND.

A Lowell, Mass., Gentleman Interviews Him.

To THE EDITOR: I am at Grand Rapids. I called on Bro. Olney H. Richmond at The Brunswick (141 South Division St.) and he presented me THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER containing the article on Prof. J. R. Buchanan, of Boston. I showed Mr. Richmond Prof. Buchanan's Psycho-Physiological Chart, 29x24 inches, illustrating the science of Sarcognomy, and he said then and there that at 8 A. M. he had been foretold that something was to come to him soon which would be a counterpart (psychologically) of the science of Astral Astronomy. I met him to-night by appointment. One week ago to-night he demonstrated—yes, mathematically demonstrated—some seven problems in psychics which seemed unaccountable, yet there they were, cold facts, but they warmed the writer up so he did not sleep for thinking and thinking of them. I fell back (or forward rather) upon Psychometry, (my tester) placing his writings (of certain cards to the number of the several spots on the cards) upon my forehead, and the wise monitor—intuition—solved the truthfulness of the phenomenon of Astral Magnetism, and the truthfulness of the Science of Astronomy, as discovered by the philosopher Copernicus. And further, his statements in regard to F. A. & M. gave new "Light" to the writer, and he had been no duncie in trying to seek the light. Of course I do not ask you to believe anything. I did not—don't believe now even, but I know, and if I would say that I will bet \$1,000 against \$100, that would not convince you, but I would have your money, not upon betting, for it

would not be a bet on my part, but it would be a knowledge, a cold swindle on your disbelief.
L. A. HULSE.

A General Survey.

The Spiritualistic Field—its Workers, Doings, etc.

Dr. Dobson, Prof. A. B. Severance, and Will C. Hodge are at the Clinton camp-meeting.

Dr. Phillips informs us that he is settled in his commodious tent at Clinton Camp. He says the park looks beautiful.

Mrs. S. J. Cutter, 369 West Fulton St., Chicago, intends going to the camp-meeting to be held at South Haven, Mich., August 8th, and we bespeak for her a hearty welcome from all Spiritualists and investigators. We have known her since she came from the East many years ago, and know her to be highly gifted as a test medium, and personally honest and truthful; and we feel assured that those who patronize her will be fairly treated and well satisfied.

The People's Spiritual Society held its regular meeting at Banner Hall, 93 South Peoria street, at 2:30 P. M. Mrs. S. F. DeWolf gave a discourse on "The Life Here and Hereafter," to a full house. Mrs. Avery made some very fine remarks, and so did Mrs. Bromwell. Mrs. DeWolf gave some independent slate-writing which was marvelous. She held the slate under the table so that all could see it. She gave some wonderful tests. Mrs. Moore and Mr. Johns sang the "Spirit Bride," which was well received. The meeting closed with the best of harmony.

W. H. Vosburgh, magnetic physician, of Troy, N. Y., will be located at Geo. W. Seaman's Excelsior Cottage, Lake Pleasant camp-meeting through August, where he will meet those desiring his aid.

David Pace, of Kimball, Mich., writes: "On Sunday, the 13th of July, there was a large crowd assembled at the residence of Sylvester Caswell, in a grove in front of his residence, to hear Mrs. Nellie S. Baade, of Capac, Mich., speak. Many who are not of our faith said it was the grandest lecture they had ever heard. She spoke on Sunday evening in the Kimball town hall. It had a telling effect upon the audience. Our meeting was a success."

Mrs. Mary C. Lyman writes as follows from Watertown, N. Y.: "July 27 I close a four months' engagement as speaker and test medium before the First Society of Spiritualists of Watertown, N. Y. The friends here have a pleasantly-located Temple. Next week I attend the Onset camp-meeting. Shall visit other camps in the month of August. The first Saturday and Sunday of September I am engaged to speak for the friends at Middlefield, Ohio. I have lectured for the past two seasons before this enthusiastic society, having a membership of over ninety."

The Spiritualists' Mediums' Society, of 2730 State St., hold a basket picnic at Jackson Park, Saturday, Aug. 2. A cordial invitation is extended to all Spiritualists. A pleasant time is expected. This society is doing a grand good work. We want each of its members to invest 14 cents weekly in THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. All it costs for 16 weeks is 25 cents.

G. F. Lewis will act as agent for THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER at the Cassadaga camp-meeting.

Dr. C. T. H. Benton will hold a developing circle at 295 W. Lake St., each Sunday evening, to commence at 8 o'clock sharp. He desires applications to be made in advance, by addressing him with stamp for reply.

W. Hicks, M. D., of Rockford, Mich., writes: "We have had Drs. S. A. and U. D. Thomas here, and they gave a fresh impetus to the cause of Spiritualism. The doctors are logical, consistent and eloquent speakers, as well as genuine mediums, and are, therefore, eminently fitted to advance the cause. I hope the Spiritualists will keep them busy in the field, and give them aid and comfort in their undertaking."

Mrs. J. H. Dunham writes: "Cecil D. Alden passed to spirit-life from his home near Lowell, Mich., July 15. He was the only son of H. B. and Olive A. Alden. Mr. and Mrs. Alden are firm in the knowledge of Spiritualism; one of the first to investigate the grand truths of spirit communion. After returning from the cemetery, they were very happy to commune with him, for he gave them proof positive of his presence, assuring them he was happy in his new home. Services were conducted by the writer."

Mrs. Sarah Graves, an earnest worker in the cause at Grand Rapids, Mich., writes: "Our meetings at Union Hall are still attended with a goodly number. We had the medium Colby here two Sundays, and he gave good satisfaction, both in speaking and slate-writing."

Elizabeth Harding, Treasurer of Clinton Camp Meeting, writes: "We have many arrivals at camp; more expected every day. We receive letters every day telling us of friends coming soon. We expect a large crowd and a good meeting this year. The grounds are beautiful. Come, friends, if only for a few days rest; you will find it here among the trees."

J. W. Colville has been lecturing for the First Society of Spiritualists of New York. He closed his labors there on the 27th. He is an active worker.

Hon. Sidney Dean will be at Lake Pleasant camp-meeting from Aug. 8 to the 14; Onset Bay, 17 to 20, and perhaps the 28, then Bucksport, Maine to Sept. 1.

Dr. Rothermel's seances in Rochester, N. Y., have been well attended, and much interest manifested; so says a correspondent.

Mrs. E. Cutler, test medium and psychometric reader, wishes to make engagements. She will visit any society, on liberal terms, and help build it up, organize, and work for the good of the cause. Address her at Eden postoffice, Parkland, Bucks Co., Pa.

It is claimed by the Psychological Magazine of London, Eng., that Prince Bismarck is a Spiritualist.

DR. PEEBLES' ADDRESS.

It is Reviewed by the Hockessin Philosopher.

THE MAN OF NAZARETH—THE WORD CHRISTIAN—CHRISTIANITY NO LOGICAL STRENGTH—DR. BROWN'S RESEARCHES—THE BORDER-LAND OF SEVENTY YEARS.

We read in your issue of July 12, the report of an able Anniversary address delivered at Sturgis, Mich., by J. M. Peebles, M. D., a long known apostle of Spiritualism. It is very interesting and rich in thought as well as instructive in the recalling of many facts and spiritual experiences, both of earlier and later dates, along with the names of the many eminent men who have given in their adherence to our philosophy. Yes! it is a rich and able address, such as might have been expected from so learned and experienced a man, and we heartily coincide with his eloquent expression of ideas such as these: "Spiritualism rooted and grounded in man's moral nature, is a fact and infinitely more—a fact plus reason and conscience—a fact relating to moral and religious culture—a sublime fact ultimating in consecration to the good, the beautiful and the true. Spiritualism proffers the key that unlocks the mysteries of the ages. . . . The spiritual is the real. God is spirit."

But he nevertheless gives us (as just above mentioned) a lengthened list of high and worthy names, leaders of their generation in spiritual thought, and yet who fell far short in the use of their "reason and conscience," in opening up the "mysteries of the ages" so as to enable themselves to break loose from errors and superstitions, that rested upon and held in darkness the times they lived in. Such evidences of the conservative character of formulated error, makes us incline to bear with all the more patience the fact that seems to us so patent, that Brother Peebles himself is still laboring under misconceptions, injurious to human progress and spiritual growth.

It seems to us a false enunciation, when he states "two well marked drifts in the mental and spiritual current of this free thought era, the one towards materialism, the other towards a broad, liberal Christianity." We opine that the most rational Spiritualists see naught but a grand unity of the spiritual and material, in one mighty cosmos, and as for a "broad and liberal Christianity," it seems to us only a misnomer.

The essential character of Christianity, as to its foundation doctrines, and as it has existed through the ages, or as it now exists, or as it is found indicated by many of the reported words of Jesus, preclude both broadness and liberality. Whenever, through the ages, Christianity has manifested liberality, or whenever the man of Nazareth showed brotherly and humane feelings, it was the output of the natural benevolence in hearts born of, and developed from, the Infinite Good. Cursing and damning have been familiarized to the human mind by Bible as well in the sayings of Jesus as elsewhere, and everything dark and illiberal has sprung from the mystical origin of Christianity. The modern churches dare not ignore the false myths and theories upon which they are built because without them, they are nothing.

We could pen volumes instead of lines to show the absurdity of connecting the name Christianity with the word "liberalism." Brethren, why do we so cling to the antiquated name, which sprang from the Greek word *Christos* (anointed), once a term of ridicule? According to the three synoptic gospels which appear to be the most authentic, (though written we know not by whom or when) the ministrations of the Nazarene lasted but one year. How can we judge a man by one year's knowledge of him? Even in that one year's report his words show but a more or less moody and inconsistent character. Oftentimes he was a kindly but eccentric psychic healer, a friendly and brotherly man. He was a clairvoyant, such as we have often known, and he told the woman at the well, (she said): "All that ever I did. Is not he the very Christ?" Must we, brethren, in this age of light, regard every person possessed of the spiritual faculty of clairvoyance or power of psychic healing, as an only begotten Son of the Infinite Spirit who, by divine law, rules untold millions of habitable worlds in a united and infinite cosmos? Why must we so cherish to the world's loss and shame, the word "Christian," which is but an offshoot, springing from the petty superstitions of a wild and obscure tribe of Jews in Palestine?

Were not the words of Jesus inconsistent, one time with another, as they are reported? Sometimes they were: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you," giving us a reason why they should do so, that such was the character of the Father in Heaven. But when Jesus became more impressed with his long-looked-for Jewish Messiahship and his "coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory," then it was that the kindly brother man showed the lust of power appropriate to the prospective high priestly ruler and propagandist. Then it was that he forgot the forgiveness of enemies, and to do good to them that hated him, and felt himself in his heart, saying unto such (MAT. 25:41): "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Brother Spiritualists and all the world that reads these words of mine, let this one overwhelming sample of inconsistency out of the many that might be noted, suffice for the present. I am ready to declare the fullness of perfect conviction, and to bring the amplest proof, that Christianity has no logical strength as a mystical theory worthy of any enlightened idea of a wise and benevolent Divine Being;—that it has no historical strength as a well proved reality, and that it has been the fruitful source of more evil than good to the world of men during the long ages since its organization under the power of the Roman Empire;—aye, more than any of the ancient systems of religion that existed on earth thousands of years before Christ, from which Christianity drew its Church organization and much

of its absurd ritual. Yea, we say again, that while Jesus proved to be (if correctly reported) a false prophet as to his second coming "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," in the then present generation, as was fully believed in and expected at that time, yet was he a true prophet when he said (if he ever did say it): "I came not to bring peace upon earth, but a sword?" For example: we read in Dr. Brown's researches (advertised in THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, of which more anon) as is quoted by him from Alberger's Antiquity of Christianity, in Prussia about the 12th century "Pope Honorius in a paroxysm of rage called Christendom to arms to proselyte by military force, the obstinate Pagans. . . . All the havoc and horrors of which war is pregnant were protracted in their most terrible forms for fifty-six years" before the Prussians yielded to accept the gospel rather than total extinction.

In Livonia, Courland, and Semagulia, a similar war raged for the same purpose (according to the same authority), for one hundred years.

According to Mosheim's authentic church histories, the millions engaged in the several crusades in the name of Christianity, "The greatest part of their forces perished miserably, some by famine, some by the sword of the Mohammedans, some by shipwreck, and a considerable number by the perfidious cruelty of the Greeks."

Enough! enough! Brethren, shall we still cling to a system that has cursed the world for nearly two thousand years and is now seeking by the cunning acts of propaganda and lust of power to gain a stronger foothold in this "land of the free and home of the brave"? Know ye not what we are doing in thus clinging to the failing religious theories of the past, when a brighter and holier light has opened upon the world?—the light of knowledge and obedience to the infinite laws of being. The Christian church as a hierarchy can never be "broad and liberal," as long as it holds to its essential theories and millennial traditions. We do not need it, and it will prove but an "Old Man of the Sea" upon our backs in our rational pursuit of truth and right living.

Now, dear brothers of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, and its readers, I have many more thoughts in this line, but my paper is growing too long. I would love to review with you some of the excellent quotations from the many good men whom Brother Peebles has called before us, and possibly you may, at an early day be burdened with a number two of the same subject continued; but I will now close by a little side chat with the Doctor himself.

Our time of probation, Doctor, seems to have been nearly the same, and our conditions somewhat similar. You have reached the "border-line of seventy years," and they say to you, "How well you look." I count two *lustrums* more, and they say the same to me. I drink no alcoholic liquors as a beverage, use no tobacco and very little pork, taking my tea and coffee weak. Your life has been eventful—whose has not been? We are both old enough now to be pensioned off according to Bellamy and to brag a little as old men may of what we have done. You "can bat a ball"—so can I; but can not "run with an athlete" so well as I could sixty years ago. But, the other day, I climbed a tree to cut the limbs from my line of sight as a surveyor, when all the younger men of the party said they could not do it. You "have been vilified, lionized, angelized"—served you right I reckon. I was cursed by a preacher "from the face of the earth" nearly forty years ago because I looked into Spiritualism; but some how he and his backers have all gone from its face before me. Whether I will ultimately reach as happy conditions as they, you will no doubt consider questionable, because they were Christians of bluer blood than yourself. Doubtless you have blown more gas and done more good than I; but when did you quit preaching the "Gospel of Peace" and turn to preaching Christianity, the gospel of the sword? I have never spoken or preached much, especially since in an address to the legislators of Virginia, at the close of the war, the roof timbers of the State house were so loosened—so they said—that they fell in and killed many persons, a few months after. It was time to quit! You "have twice circumnavigated the globe." Ah! there I surpass you! I have helped to weigh "the earth in scales, the sun and planets in a balance" (ISAIAH 40:12), going one Christmas day to "Alcyone of the Pleiades," the falsely reputed centre of our unnumbered galaxy of stars. I have looked upon gigantic suns in revolution, compared with which our own mighty sun is but an infant—revolutions, whose one single circuit will count years by the thousand; and yet whose vast orbits are seen by the naked eye, contracted by the immensity of their distances from us, to only one twinkling point.

Come, go with me and bow before their glittering shrines, to learn how little are all things earthly!—how petty is the conception of a Great Spirit whose "only son" was born at Bethlehem of Judea. The stars have taught me and I have for years been free to think.

J. G. JACKSON.
Hockessin, Del.

OUR FALL CAMPAIGN.

It will be inaugurated by commencing the publication of an impressive narrative, rich in spiritual truths, and calculated to interest and instruct. It is the production of the inspiration of Hudson Tuttle, of Berlin Heights, Ohio, and we are sure it will be instrumental in doing great good. Spiritualists, aid us in the grand work in which we are engaged; it is with us a labor of love, our only object being to elevate humanity. Tell your immediate friends what we propose to do; show them THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, and ask them to subscribe for at least 16 weeks, and thus aid in the good work.

The Seat of Authority in Religion.

The Rev. T. W. Woodrow, pastor of the Universalist Church at Marshalltown, Iowa, demonstrates in his sermon which we publish in this issue of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, that he is of a progressive nature, and a critical analyzer of old-time sayings, ever looking upward for more light from the super-natural spheres.

