

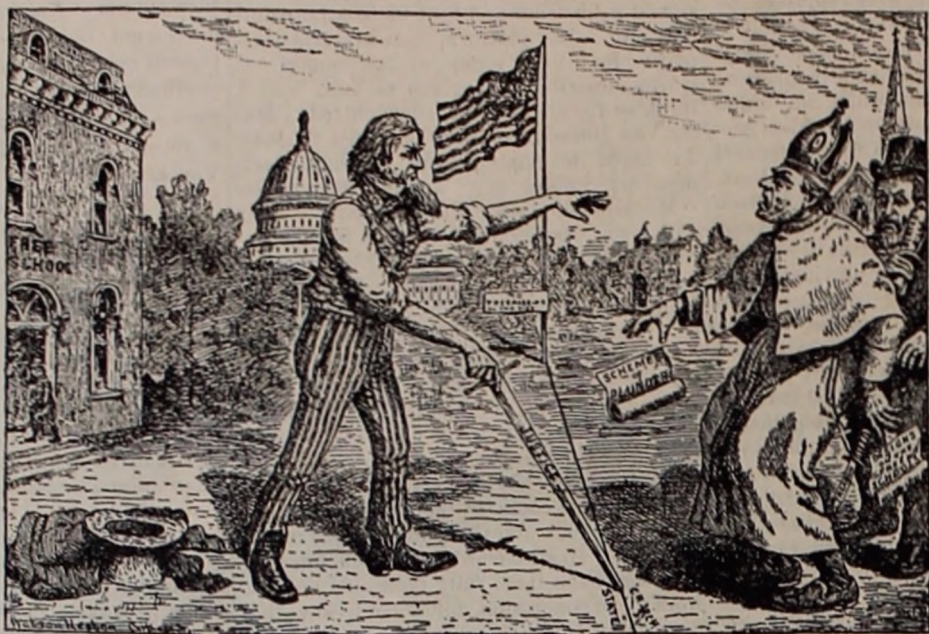
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Rome's Aggression on Our Free Schools. Plotting for their Destruction! From the "Great Conspiracy against the Public Schools" by Richard Harcourt. For sale by the California News Company, 210 Post St., San Francisco, Cal. Price 50 cents.

THE BIBLE.

SHALL IT BE READ IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

An Exhaustive Argument Given.

Facts for Every Patriot to Consider.

Substance of a Discourse Delivered Before the American Secular Union at Portsmouth, Ohio.

BY DR. R. B. WESTBROOK.

The reading of the Bible as a religious exercise in our common schools is exciting universal interest and has become one of the live questions of the day. Multitudes of earnest religious people are deeply concerned at the thought of excluding the Bible from the State schools, as a religious authority, to be read every day to the pupils, and deem such a proposition as little less than religious treason. Other multitudes are equally strong in the conviction that such reading of the Bible is highly improper, and they insist in the most determined manner that the State schools shall be conducted on strictly secular principles, without any religious exercises whatever.

The word Bible, while it signifies a book—that is to say, any book,—has come to be applied exclusively to a religious book, supposed to be derived in a supernatural manner from a supernatural Power. All nations have had such a book or books. The Hindus have their Vedas, the Persians their Zendavestas, the Chinese their Maxims of Confucius, and numerous other sacred books; the Egyptians their books of Herma and Book of the Dead; the Mohammedans have their Koran, while Jews have their Old Testament, and Christians cling mainly to the New Testament.

More than twenty different Bibles are found among the nations, all claiming to be divinely inspired, and each claims to be a finality from which there is no appeal. We have nothing to do with any of these Bibles at the present time, except the Hebrew and Christian. And right here we should remember that the Jewish and Christian Scriptures do not consist of two complete books, but that the two books, the Old and New Testaments, are made up, the one of thirty-nine small tracts, and the other of twenty-seven little pamphlets bound together in two volumes.

Now let us formulate our objections to the reading of these sixty-six little tracts in our State schools. We object:

1. Because there is no common agreement as to what constitutes the Bible. The Jews come forward with their thirty-nine little leaflets, mostly written by nobody knows whom and nobody knows when or where, and say that these, bound together into one book, are the Bible. Orthodox Christians respond in chorus,—Not so; these little pamphlets are only part of the Bible, and while they contain the substance and promise of holy things, we have the fulfillment and realization in the New Testament. You must accept our twenty-seven little leaflets (mostly anonymous and without date) before you claim to have the whole Bible.

Then comes the Catholics, and with a tone of authority exclaim, "You are both wrong. You have omitted fourteen other little books, and have dubbed them 'apocryphal'; and we insist that the Bible is not complete without these. Moreover, the Bible was never intended to be read by the common people, as it cannot be understood without an authorized interpreter, and the Church is such an interpreter, and we (priests) are the Church, and you, the people, only belong to the Church. You must bring in the writings of the Father of the Church, and also tradition; and then it will do to begin to talk about the Bible. We do not want even the Douay Bible read in our schools without giving the Church a chance to interpret it."

Many Protestant Christians increase the difficulty by criticizing certain books bound up with the Bible, which, nevertheless, are said to be no part of the Bible. Martin Luther for instance, the father of the Protestant Reformation writes thus: "The books

of the Kings are no more worthy of credit than the books of the Chronicles. Job spoke not therefore as it stands written in his book, but hath had such cogitations; it is sheer allegory. . . . This book Ecclesiastes, ought to have been more full: there is too much broken matter in it; it has neither boots or spurs, but rides only in socks. It is like a Talmud compiled from many books, perhaps in Egypt. . . . So have also the Proverbs of Solomon been collected by others.

The book of Esther I toss into the Elbe. I am such an enemy of the book of Esther that I wish it did not exist, for it Judaizes too much and hath a great deal of heathen naughtiness. . . . Isaiah hath borrowed his art and knowledge from the Psalter. The history of Jonah is so monstrous that it is absolutely incredible. That the Epistle to the Hebrews is not by St. Paul or any apostle at all is shown by chapter ii., verse 3. The Epistle of James I account the writing of no apostle; it is an Epistle of straw. The Epistle of Jude is a copy of St. Peter's, and altogether has stories which have no place in scripture. . . . Luther rejected the book of Revelation, and so did Erasmus, Calvin, and Zuinglius. Belsham, in his *Evidences*, says of the law of Moses, "That which is genuine bears but a small proportion to that which is spurious." Bishop Usher said, "Our present Septuagint is a spurious copy, abounding in omissions, additions and alterations." This Greek Bible, gotten up at Alexandria, miraculously, by seventy learned Hebrews, by order of the second Ptolemy, about 260 years B. C., hence called the *Septuagint*, has nothing but tradition to support it, and its history is regarded by eminent scholars as a myth.

Modern critics make sad havoc with the canon (which means list) of both the Old and New Testament books. Only four of the fourteen Epistles ascribed to Paul are now admitted to have been certainly written by him, and several of the Epistles (the Acts, Revelations and all of the Gospels) are regarded as anonymous. Now, we respectfully submit that, until we certainly know what constitutes the Bible, we should cease to clamor for its reading in the public schools. The canon (list) of neither the Old nor the New Testament books was generally accepted, according to Dr. Lardner, until about 556 years after the Christian era. The Epistle to the Hebrews, the Acts, the Epistle of James, the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude and Revelation, have all been doubted as canonical Scripture, and by many eminent Christian scholars have been entirely rejected.

The fact should not be overlooked that what is now called the canon of Scripture is defective, in that it does not contain many books which at one time were deemed sacred. The late Professor Moses Stuart furnished a list of sixteen books which are mentioned in the Old Testament as sacred among the Jews, which are now not extant.

The canon of the New Testament is equally defective. The councils that accepted four gospels and seventeen epistles as canonical, rejected more than fifty other gospels and nearly one hundred other epistles that claimed to be inspired. Beside the canonical and apocryphal books now extant there are sixty-eight New Testament books mentioned or quoted by the Christian Fathers of the first four centuries, which are now not known to be in existence. More than fifty other books written by twenty different authors in the second century have mysteriously disappeared. Now, we respectfully submit that if only one inspired book is lost, or only one is added without authority, suspicion is added on the whole. What shall we say, then, of the scores, and even hundreds, that are not now extant? These books might have changed matters so as to have given us an entirely different record. No intelligent man dare assert that the canon of either the Old or New Testaments has ever been intelligently settled. The councils that professed to do this work were either ignorant, prejudiced, or superstitious in the extreme. We object further to the reading of the Bible in our State schools:

II. Because there is no common agreement as to what parts are historical and what

parts allegorical. Plato said that he would not have the poems of Homer read in the schools of his republic, because the children could not properly judge between history and allegory. Then it should be remembered that the Bible is to be read in our State schools "without note or comment." Suppose that the teacher reads the first and second chapters of Genesis. Here we have two distinct accounts of creation, contradicting each other in six particulars, and each of these accounts is absolutely inconsistent with what science teaches in our school-books. Suppose we read of the fall of Adam and Eve and inquire, is that a fact or a fiction? Philo and Maimonides, celebrated Jewish writers, say fiction—while the early Christian fathers say the same.

Origen ridicules the idea that the accounts of the Garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve are to be understood literally, and pronounces the literal interpretations mere "falsities and lies." Athanasius says that if we were to take merely "the letter" of Scripture we shall "fall into the most enormous of blasphemies." St. Augustine, Tertullian, Clement, and Ambrose (and many others) all held the narratives in Genesis to be purely allegorical. Orthodox Christians say Adam and Eve were real persons, and that the account of the fall in Genesis is literal history, while Unitarians and other rational Christians have no doubt that it is a fable, found among many ancient people before the Jews had an existence,—and intended by the figures to account for the existence of evil. Shall we embarrass with these perplexing questions the young and tender minds of children, who come to our State schools to study "reading, writing, and arithmetic?" I think the deliberate answer of thoughtful men will be No.

We could pass through the whole of the Old and New Testaments and show that many of the stories, such as Samson, Jonah, Joshua and Elijah yield to the allegorical interpretation, while the literal or historical assumption necessarily suggests problems which are absurd and incomprehensible. But we object to the reading of the Bible in our State schools:

III. Because there is no common agreement as to what doctrines are taught in the Bible. For about 1400 years we have had these little tracts called the Bible, and men are more uncertain as to what to believe than ever. We have about two hundred different sects, each declaring that its particular doctrines are drawn from the Bible, and each quotes pages of proof-texts in support of its dogmas. At the same time Calvinists denounce Arminians as holding doctrines that are "delusive, dangerous and destructive," of human souls. Arminians retort that the Calvinist's God is worse than the devil, and say that they would rather be Atheists than Calvinists. An English archbishop says that, "Unitarianism embraces the most daring impiety that ever disgraced the name of Christianity, and that if Unitarianism is true, Christianity must be an imposture." The Canon (v. 7) of the church of England denounces the whole body of dissenters as "accursed, devoted to the devil, and separated from Christ." Dissenters reply that the church of England "is an obstacle to truth and holiness and destroys more souls than it saves." The Roman Catholic Church closes the argument by coolly consigning every other sect to "Eternal damnation as heretics and schismatics, and their clergy as desecrating thieves and ministers of the devil." In the meantime, Protestants unite in calling the Church of Rome "the scarlet whore of Babylon," and "a combination of idolatry, blasphemy and devilism!"

Now, we submit that a book which produces such a medley of opinions should not be read as a religious authority in our State schools.

But it may be said that Roman Catholics and orthodox Protestants agree as to the doctrines of total depravity, the miraculous incarnation of God, the crucifixion of Christ, vicarious atonement, and eternal punishment, and that the Bible distinctly teaches all these doctrines, and it should therefore be read in our State schools out of deference to their numbers. But how about the children of Jews being compelled to

listen to these dogmas? How must they feel when their ancestors are denounced as deicides, God-killers and Christ-murderers? Shall the children of Hicksite Quakers, Unitarians, Universalists, and other liberal Christians be compelled to listen to what they regard as blasphemy? Have Agnostics no rights that the State schools are bound to respect? Is it not just to assume that the great majority of non-religionists who send their children to the State schools do not desire to have their plastic minds disturbed with perplexing religious questions? It may be said that the majority should rule. This is very well in some things, but not in regard to religious matters. In some school districts of California and other States, the Chinese are in the majority. Shall the writings of Confucius be read there? If the Hindoos should come in such numbers as to give them the majority in certain school districts, should the State introduce the Vedas in the public schools? Where the Catholics are in the majority, shall we have holy water and the mass? All experience shows that the majority is most likely to be in the wrong; but whether they are or not, the majority is always bound to respect the rights of the minority, otherwise there is no such thing as "rights of conscience." It is said that this is a Christian government, and the Christian Bible should be read in its schools. This is not true. The treaty with Tripoli, signed by George Washington as president, expressly declared that "the government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." The word God, or Christ, or Christian, or Bible, does not occur in the constitution of the United States, and the name of God is not even mentioned in that most solemn obligation of office taken by the president on assuming his official duties.

Moreover, it is not true that Christianity is the common law of our country. Chief Justice Story of the United States Supreme Court held in the *Girard Will Case* that "this claim is materially modified by the Bill of Rights." He says, "It must have been intended to extend equally to all sects, whether they believe in Christianity or not, and whether they are Jews or infidels." While this country is not anti-Christian, it is not Christian. It tolerates all forms of belief and disbelief, whether Jew, Christian or Agnostic, and insures all citizens perfect freedom to worship whom they will, or not to worship at all.

IV. But we object to reading the Bible in our State schools because it contains so much that is cruel and obscene. The Bible begins with a cruel murder and a bitter curse,—Cain and Abel. The flood of Noah, involving multitudes of innocent children, was a most cruel and desperate device. The raining of fire and brimstone on Sodom was a most despotic act, involving the innocent with the guilty, and no wonder that the patriarch expostulated with Jehovah against it. The fate of Lot's wife, when she cast a lingering look at her home, was cruel in the extreme. Achan and his sons and daughters (and all his dumb animals) were commanded by Jehovah to be stoned because Achan had stolen the wedge of gold. Jehovah is made to sanction the hanging of Saul's seven sons and grandsons because Saul, a long while before, had done wrong to the Gibeonites, after which Jehovah stopped the pestilence! God approved of the cutting off of the heads (by Jehu) of the seventy sons of Ahab. He destroyed 70,000 by pestilence because David did what Jehovah told him to do. He directed Moses to exterminate the Midianites, men, women and children,—except the 32,000 virgins kept for the purpose of gratifying their lusts. He slew 20,000 Israelites for flirting with the daughters of Moab, and mercilessly killed 50,000 men because they peeped in a little wooden box called the ark of the covenant. But time would fail us to tell of all the cruel and barbarous acts ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament. We have not time to speak of the savage wars, and the merciless murder of thousands upon thousands of men by their brothers. It is enough to say that the Bible contains disgustingly detailed accounts of the most cruel and atrocious crimes of any book extant, and it is not fit to be read in the hearing of children.

It is difficult to speak to ears polite in a promiscuous audience of the obscenity of the Bible. There are more than one hundred passages of the most coarse and vulgar description. To print these in a book and send it through the United States mails would put a man in the penitentiary. There are entire chapters that reek with obscenity from beginning to end. I will not specify them, lest I assist the young and vicious in finding them. *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman, and the *Kreutzer Sonata* of Tolstoi, are immaculate purity by the side of these passages! Early editions of Shakespeare have been revised and purified, but though Noah Webster undertook to expurgate the Bible, Christians were so prejudiced in favor of the old book that they could not give up its nastiness. I cannot tell you about Onan, and Tamar, and Lot and his two daughters, and scores of other obscene matters. There are passages even in the New Testament, such as are found in 1 Cor., vii., that cannot be mentioned in the presence of a virtuous woman. If these indecent tales should not be perused by mature persons, should innocent childhood—mere boys and girls in our State schools—be polluted by them? When I enter a lady's parlor and see the richly-gilded Bible upon the centre-table, I shudder when I re-

member the obscenity that is contained between its costly lids. When I see maiden purity tripping along our streets, Bible in hand, I wonder if she knows that she carries more obscenity than Byron ever wrote, than Shelley ever dreamed of,—than the vilest French novelist ever dared to print? Shall the children in our State schools be made familiar with all forms of licentiousness and uncleanness?

But it is said that teachers will skip these passages. Yet children will be sure to find them, and will laugh at their guides when they blunder on them by mistake. This matter of skipping offensive parts calls to view the fact that only "extracts" are in fact read from the bible in our schools. If it is infallible inspiration why not read it all right out? What right has a teacher to suppress God's word? Are not Solomon's Song, and Ruth and Esther, just as sacred as the Psalms or Epistles? If only extracts are to be read to children, let us have an expurgated bible, and let not the extracts be made only from the Jewish and Christian scripture but let them be made also from the Pagan sacred books, in which many things are found as good and pure as in the Hebrew and Christian Bible, and let us thus have a *Sacred Anthology*, which shall be pure, chaste, and beautiful.

V. We should not read the Bible in our State schools because the moral is so mixed up with the immoral that there is great danger of contamination by contact. Some portions of the Old Testament contain beautiful stories and sound moral maxims, but right in the same connection we have (without condemnation) stories of uncleanness, fornications, adulteries, and incests that the *Police Gazette* would not dare publish. *Jael* meekly murders Sisera, and is praised for it, while the deceit and treachery of Rahab is commended in the New Testament. The story of Boaz and Ruth is only fit for a dime novel. Solomon's Song is full of lasciviousness. Abram lies. Moses gets mad. David commits adultery, and murders Uriah. Jacob is deceitful, and a trickster,—and so on to the end. Polygamy is shown to have been the rule, and not the exception, among Jehovah's favorites. War is everywhere tacitly justified and slavery is practiced, and not an abolitionist opens his mouth. We go to the New Testament, and he who is called the "perfect one," curses a fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season, drives out with small cords men engaged in legitimate business, upsets their tables, and uses the most violent and reproachful language towards them. He shows want of respect for his mother, and is ambiguous and evasive in conversation with the woman of Canaan; says he does not know whether he is going to the feast at Jerusalem or not, then straightway sets out for the Holy City, and makes believe by his actions that he is going to one place when he is actually going to another.

VI. We might just as well go one step further and say that we object to the reading of the Bible in our State schools because of its defective morality. We are asked, is there anything that is defective in the morality of the *Sermon on the Mount*? I admit the excellence of the "golden rule," but that was not new or original in that discourse. In Leviticus xix., 18, we read, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which implies the same principle, and was doubtless learned by the Jews, in Babylon. Rabbi Hillel habitually used the maxims quoted in the *Sermon on the Mount* a generation before Jesus is said to have lived, and Isocrates said, 338 years before, "Act towards others as you would have them act towards you," and Aristotle, 380 years before the Christian era, used almost precisely the same words, and so did Sextus, a Greek poet. Everybody ought to know that Confucius, nearly 500 years B. C., in his 24th Maxim, gave the "golden rule" in both its positive and negative form. Pittacus, a Greek philosopher, used almost precisely the same words 600 years B. C., and Thales, his countryman, said 640 years B. C., "Avoid doing what you would blame others for doing." Buckle says in his *History of Civilization*, to assert that Christianity communicated to men moral truths previously unknown, argues on the part of the asserter gross ignorance or wilful fraud." (Vol. i., p. 129.) Even the Lord's Prayer is older than Jesus. It is found substantially in the Jewish *Kadish*, and was in use among that people for many years B. C., and the expression, "Our Father who art in the Heavens" is used in all pagan religions. We have reason for thinking that what is called the "Lord's Prayer" was originally "a prayer to Saturn," and that many of the Psalms were first addressed to the sun.

The *Sermon on the Mount*, in its composition and construction, shows that it is not a connected discourse, but that it is a compilation of well-known and familiar maxims in common use in that day.

In many of those sayings we see nothing wise or moral. "Lay not up for yourself treasures on earth" is not good advice, and has never been practised. "Take no thought for to-morrow," is imprudent, even with the unauthorized interpolation of the word "anxious." Turning of the other cheek to the smiter of one cheek, the lending to every borrower, and absolute non-resistance, is about as foolish as indiscriminate alms-giving; and could only be uttered by one who believed that the end of the world was at hand, and would surely come with that generation. Only a partial

keeping of the commands of the *Sermon on the Mount* would upset every industry and turn the people into a crowd of tramps and vagabonds.

We want something for our State schools that is more practical, and better adapted to this commercial age. We want a *higher morality* than is taught in the parables of the New Testament. We want higher and more noble conceptions than are given in the parable of the "Unjust Judge," and more just and equitable principles than are taught in the parable of the "Unjust Steward," or the "Laborers in the Vineyard," or the "Ten Talents." We want a morality that relates to this life rather than to the next. We do not want the possession of property held up as a crime, and poverty represented as a virtue, entitling one to a seat in the future kingdom. We want good homes to live in now, rather than "mansions in the skies." We do not want a morality that appeals to selfishness only, that discriminates in favor of celibacy, and that only tolerates marriage as a remedy for lust, as taught in the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians. I repeat that we want a *higher morality* than the morality of the New Testament.

The *American Secular Union*, more than a year ago, offered a prize of \$1,000 for the best essay or manual to aid teachers in our free State schools to thoroughly instruct children and youth in the purest principles of morality without inculcating religious doctrines; thus recognizing the legal right under our Federal Constitution of all our citizens, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants, Liberals and Agnostics, and all other classes, whether believers or disbelievers, to have their children instructed in all the branches of a common secular education in our State schools, without having their tender minds biased for or against any sect or party whatever.

We suggested that this essay should contain a comprehensive and suggestive exhibit, with familiar and practical illustrations of those universal foundation principles and axiomatic truths which underlie all sound morality and rightfulness, thus developing and educating that inherent moral sense which is more or less common to all rational human beings. In short, that it should show how to teach children the natural and essential difference between right and wrong, and the reasons therefor, without reference to sacerdotal creeds and sectarian dogmas.

So numerous have been the responses to this offer that an able and learned committee are yet busily engaged in examining these MSS., who will shortly be able to award this prize. Nearly one hundred persons have written on this subject,—college professors, public school superintendents, and experienced teachers of both sexes. Authors of every grade have earnestly entered into friendly competition for this prize, and not one has found any difficulty in showing how to teach morality without offence to persons holding the most diversified and extreme views in religion. There is no difference of opinion in regard to morality. Jews and Gentiles, Mohammedans and Greeks, Catholics and Protestants, Agnostics and Atheists, are all agreed in commending what is good and right, and in condemning what is bad and wrong, and one and all agree in the reasons therefor. Let us therefore teach morality in our State schools, but let us not attempt to introduce religion, concerning which scarcely any two persons agree.

Now suppose we submit to the reading of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles in State schools, "without note or comment." Catholic teachers will read those chapters which speak of Peter as the rock upon which the church is founded, and of priests of whom it is said, "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," and many similar passages which seem to favor the claims of the Romish hierarchy. Calvinistic teachers will give prominence to the 8th and 9th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and many other passages which teach election and reprobation, and eternal damnation for a majority of mankind. Orthodox teachers generally will have no trouble in finding chapters which teach total depravity and vicarious atonement. Methodists will have no trouble in finding "free grace and dying love" chapters. Universalists can fairly revel in universal salvation selections, while the Unitarians and Hicksite Quakers will have no difficulty in finding passages going to show that Jesus was a mere man, and not a God. The Bible is very accommodating. You can find authority for anything in it! I knew a very conscientious Unitarian teacher who told me that she read to her pupils a certain chapter in which occur the words—"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." This passage she always read over twice with emphasis, that her pupils might have no doubt about the Trinity. She afterward found out that orthodox scholars admit that that passage is an interpolation, and for this and other reasons she has become a first-class Unitarian, with a strong leaning towards Free Thought. Now, why not lay the Bibles all aside, and teach morality, pure and simple, and leave religion for the family, the church, and the Sunday-school? This is just what we propose to do, and many orthodox Christians are going to help us. Dr. Howard Crosby, a Presbyterian divine in New York, says we might as well insist on reading the Bible in a machine

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THE VOICES.

They Come With no Uncertain Sound.

Mrs. Mary E. Carr, of Vineland, N. J., writes: "I need not praise THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER; it speaks for itself by its actual content."

Mrs. Julia Paul, of Waverly, Iowa, writes: "I like THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER the best of any liberal paper published."

J. B. Southwick, of Berlin, Mass., writes: "I think very much of the paper, and am trying to interest others in it. This makes eight names that I have sent you."

J. S. Crafts, of Hackberry, Ariz., writes: "THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER has a long life waiting in my family and I want it to be true."

W. H. Jenkins, of Dowagiac, Mich., writes: "We like THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER and in this voice everyone takes it in this part of Michigan."

G. G. Richards, of Eudora, Kan., writes: "I like your paper first class; cannot get along without it."

Mrs. F. E. Dickinson, of Turner Falls, Mass., writes: "I like THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER very much."

Mrs. Ellen S. Dodge, of Rochester, Minn., writes: "I am very much interested in your paper, more so than any other spiritual work."

Aggie A. Perkins, of David City, Neb., writes: "I like your paper very much; it is just the paper for investigators as well as more advanced minds, something for all."

A. B. Severance, the psychometrist, of Milwaukee, Wis., writes: "Your paper is doing a good work, and is well spoken of by every one."

A. F. Hayden, of Colfax, Ind., writes: "Every number gets more and more interesting. I hope and trust the Spiritualists of the land will be found willing to sustain you in your work. May angels and spirits be with you to every end."

Mat A. Hill, of Jackson, Mich., writes: "I love THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER and would not be without it. I have read the *Better Way*, the *Oliver Branch* and quite a number of others, but THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER is the brightest of them all."

Allen R. Morris, of Mt. Union, Ohio, writes: "I like your paper very much; those lectures which are published in it, are worth the subscription."

L. M. Tarbell, of Ludlow, Vt., writes: "I should like to see out of something about the mind even one number of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. I trust you may yet be spared many, many years, to publish your various progressive articles, and do all the good you can as the lamented S. S. Jones tried to in his life time."

John Brown, Sr., of San Diego, Cal., writes: "THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, even Christianity itself, should pay with uplifted hands for its long duration in the field of man's development, as no paper is doing the work allotted so well in opening new avenues to the world. Its pages light up the dark places and make the crooked straight, as though it was brought forth by the angels from obscurity to speak for God."

Dr. Fannie C. D. Miller, of B. Falls, Vt., writes: "The verdict of my friends who take your paper is, 'I like it!'"

Bennett Lewis, of Alexander, N. Y., writes: "I am pleased to know that Chicago has at last a representative spiritual paper, and I really hope that the Spiritualists and progressive thinkers of the country will lend you a helping hand to continue the good work so nobly prosecuted thus far under discouraging conditions."

Mrs. F. L. Davis, of Missouri Valley, Iowa, writes: "Mr. and Mrs. Cook tell me they both like THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER so much that they do not wish to see a single number of it."

Lizzie F. Baker, of Baker's Corner, Ind., writes: "We like your paper very much indeed."

Mrs. G. W. Phillips, of Philadelphia, Pa., writes: "I am delighted with THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. It has been a great comfort to me in my sad hours of bereavement."

W. S. Gray, of Lenora, Kan., writes: "I wish to add that I have in former days read a good many different spiritual papers, and good ones too, and I can truthfully say that THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER comes up to the best of them. The paper is well named. It is progressive in its thoughts, and fully up to the times."

Mrs. S. M. Chilson, of Pokagon, Mich., writes: "I like the paper very much. I think it is rightly named as it seems to be progressive, and although only a few months old will take its place in the front ranks of spiritual literature."

John S. Taylor, of Gloucester, N. Y., writes: "I like the paper so well I cannot do without it."

O. J. Willard, of Mayville, N. Y., writes: "I must say that I am much pleased with the tone and character of your paper. I think it rightly named too—keep right on thinking and progressing."

W. J. Sherrer, of Lawrence, Mich., writes: "I have taken THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER two terms of six weeks each. I find in it something which is well calculated to lead the soul from darkness to light and from the power of ignorance to that of eternal life. It will cause an eternal progression. With me, it just fills the bill."

Mrs. Weather, of Nevada, Iowa, writes: "I will have to leave THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER longer for my soul is starting on a spiritual journey."

W. J. Boers of Milwaukee, Wis., writes: "It gives me pleasure to acknowledge that I am very well satisfied with your paper. I like it so much that I would like to court my most intimate friends who might, while I am here, become subscribers."

Mrs. Jane Patterson, of Lowell, Mich., writes: "I am a reader of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, and I have just read your baby story. I liked it, and your paper so well, that I want a friend of mine to read it for the next 10 weeks."

J. M. Abels, of Essexville, Mich., writes: "While on a visiting tour since the first of August, a few numbers of your paper has fallen into my hands. Now, after returning home, I am beginning to realize its value, and with for another 'peep' at its instructive pages."

S. D. Edwards, of Oxford, Me., writes: "I have examined specimen copies of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, and am much pleased with the tone and character of your paper. I like it so much that I would like to court my most intimate friends who might, while I am here, become subscribers."

Mrs. Mary Phillips, of Perry Centre, N. Y., writes: "I have read THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, one of the best papers ever printed."

W. S. Johnson, of Chicago, Ill., writes: "Put me down for 10 weeks more for your paper. I can't do without it. May it triumphantly."

J. P. Strub, of Granite, Colo., writes: "I consider myself to be your single articles worth the money, and I am likely to take your paper continuously."

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John S. Taylor, of Gloucester, N. Y., writes: "I like the paper so well I cannot do without it."

O. J. Willard, of Mayville, N. Y., writes: "I must say that I am much pleased with the tone and character of your paper. I think it rightly named too—keep right on thinking and progressing."

W. J. Sherrer, of Lawrence, Mich., writes: "I have taken THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER two terms of six weeks each. I find in it something which is well calculated to lead the soul from darkness to light and from the power of ignorance to that of eternal life. It will cause an eternal progression. With me, it just fills the bill."

Mrs. Weather, of Nevada, Iowa, writes: "I will have to leave THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER longer for my soul is starting on a spiritual journey."

W. J. Boers of Milwaukee, Wis., writes: "It gives me pleasure to acknowledge that I am very well satisfied with your paper. I like it so much that I would like to court my most intimate friends who might, while I am here, become subscribers."

Mrs. Jane Patterson, of Lowell, Mich., writes: "I am a reader of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, and I have just read your baby story. I liked it, and your paper so well, that I want a friend of mine to read it for the next 10 weeks."

J. M. Abels, of Essexville, Mich., writes: "While on a visiting tour since the first of August, a few numbers of your paper has fallen into my hands. Now, after returning home, I am beginning to realize its value, and with for another 'peep' at its instructive pages."

S. D. Edwards, of Oxford, Me., writes: "I have examined specimen copies of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, and am much pleased with the tone and character of your paper. I like it so much that I would like to court my most intimate friends who might, while I am here, become subscribers."

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THE BIBLE.

Continued from first page

shop as in the public schools; and we ourselves think that the post office could with equal propriety claim a chapter every morning from the Bible before commencing work. The difficulty is that the mere reading of the Bible, in promiscuous selections, teaches neither morality nor religion; it amounts to nothing; it is a "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal;" and this is why the Catholics very wisely object to it; and propose to have parochial schools where they can teach religion. They have a perfect right to do this so long as they pay for them out of their own pockets, and do not ask the State to furnish the money, not even by asking exemption from just taxation. Let all the sects who want to teach religion do the same thing. But then, is it right to collect taxes from Catholics and other parish school people to support our State schools? Yes, if State schools are purely secular, and do not pretend to teach religion at all, but simply pure morality. Let the sects provide schools to teach sectarianism if they will, but let the State provide secular schools to teach secular things only, with secular morality as part of the curriculum, and thus make good citizens, to serve the State faithfully and intelligently in matters relating to this life and purely worldly affairs.

I have chosen to say little or nothing of the legal aspects of this question. Law is, or ought to be, crystallized reason or common sense. The United States government is a purely secular institution. Everybody knows that, and nobody knows it better than the people who want to put God and Christ and the Bible into the constitution, which would be absurd if they were already there. Several State courts have decided that sectarianism cannot be taught in our public schools, and that no religious exercises should be held, and that the reading of the Bible is a religious exercise, and that even "without note or comment," the Bible is a sectarian book. The danger is not that holy water and the counting of beads will be introduced into our State schools, or that the Westminster Catechism will become a text-book, but that Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and other sectarians will unite in the hue and cry against Godless schools, and go on organizing parochial or church schools, and ultimately demand a *per capita* division of the State school funds, and thus cripple, if not entirely destroy, our common school system. This is the main point we should consider; and we have no time to lose. The question is now upon us, and the promise of votes for demagogues already threatens success. Our only safety is in a general amendment of the Federal Constitution, so as to make a division of money raised by taxation for educational purposes in the several States impossible; and also to make direct or indirect appropriations of public money for institutions that have the smell of sectarianism about them equally impossible. For this purpose, several organizations have been formed, and in this we shall have abundant help from persons calling themselves orthodox Christians. To justify this course, we must teach the purest principles of morality in our common schools, and hurl back with becoming indignation the charge of neglect to teach the children how to become good citizens. The moral education of public school children is the object of the prize manual for which the American Secular Union has provided, and which it will soon offer to the public. From this hour let us lay aside our differences on religious questions, and work for an amendment of the Federal Constitution, to secure the public money, raised by taxation, for educational purposes, intact from sectarian division or appropriation.

FROM A SPIRIT FRIEND TO S. A.

BY MRS. F. E. ROGERS.

When all life's busy cares,
Its burdens and its strife,
Shall pass away and leave you free
In the realms of the higher life,
A vast array of gems you'll find
In this fair land of ours,
Wrought by the labor of your hands,
While led by unseen powers.

We've noted all your generous deeds
Of charity and love—
Such while winged messengers soon reach
Our better life above.
For every good and generous deed
Is counted o'er and o'er,
And in this fair land of ours,
To deck our sunlit shore.

And while you're toiled unceasingly,
In the cause of human good,
Your grandest efforts will be known
And rightly understood.
A mission grand is thine to all,
In life's great harvest field,
For unseen powers have marked your course,
Their strength will be your shield.

Your earth life will not be in vain;
Though clouds were over all,
They may reveal the Father's love,
Who notes "the sparrows fall."
The power of earth can never hold
The wealth in store for thee,
If true to the Divine
Of angel ministry.

We look beyond the shadows dim,
That round your pathway lie,
And only wait the sun of truth
To leave a clouded sky.
We see a bright and shining path
Your weary feet will tread,
And the sweet roses there will form
A pillow for your head.

Then buckle on the armor bright,
While we your hopes renew,
And gain the rich reward that comes
From being just and true.

Thus, we have come at your request,
To bring you words of cheer.
You know that loving angels bright,
Are ever lingering near.
And in the sunlight of their love
May you in safety rest,
Assured that when earth's toils are o'er,
Your home, is with the blest.

E. D. Blackman, of Three Rivers, Mich., writes: "When I began to read about babies in your beautiful, fat, rosy-cheeked baby paper, which you have been pleased to properly christen by the name of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER I actually thought that that was to be the real baby to be noticed ere you closed the pleasant article; but no! it turned out to be about two other babies; the youngest one of which you have great reason to be very proud (i. e.,) your list of subscribers, growing so fast, and manifesting real unmistakable signs of good health and long life, and the other one, now twenty-five years old, which the writer caressed for one year, but finding it such a cross, naughty, kicking creature that he was glad to put it away."

THE SHAKERS.

SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS AMONG THEM.

A Sketch of their History.

In some degree, and operating in some manner, spirit manifestations have ever been the inheritance of the *Christian Church*; to this the Shaker branch has not been an exception. But a very marked and profuse gift of the same was inaugurated fifty years ago, the first phases of which were manifested in visions of spirits, and the Spirit-world, with its life-experiences and scenes presented in a most wonderful manner to two youths by the names of Ann Maria Goff, and Ellette Gibbs, being about seventeen years of age. They resided in the Shaker's society in the town of Watervliet, Albany Co., N. Y.; "Shaker's, Albany Co., N. Y."

In the autumn of the year 1837 these youths simultaneously were visited by messengers from the land of souls, who appeared to them in vision, as persons in the physical form, who gave their names and manifested to them personal characteristics, which, when related by these visionists to persons who had lived in their society, when they were denizens of earth, were readily recognized by them, but to the visionists, they were entirely unknown.

These spirit messengers oftentimes took possession of those two youths, and entranced them; sometimes for many hours consecutively. While thus entranced these spirit messengers led those youths visionary journeys in the Spirit-world, the scenes and incidents of which they, while entranced, would describe with all the graphic and enchanting minuteness of a most exquisitely gifted earthly traveler. Their trance journeys were made by gestures as of flying, and an interesting feature of this manifestation was, that both of those youth were exercised precisely alike; both narrated the same scenes and circumstances, although, while entranced, separated from each other by an intervening room and two brick partitions.

During these entranced journeys those visionists met multitudes of spirits, and often conversed with some of them as with mortals, relative to the cities and places visited, the condition of the inhabitants, the enchanting beauty of the scenery, etc., etc. All this they would vocally express to the witnessing bystanders. The character of these manifestations was so alluring, it won the interest and admiration of all witnesses, and commanded credence. These presentations continued many months.

Credence of witnesses secured, the next phase of manifestations consisted of messages from spirit guides of those entranced youths, delivered through them to individual members of the society. The character of these messages was adapted to the state and condition of the individual, according to real needs and circumstances, the ministering spirits acting the part of disciplinarians; thus communications were sometimes approbative and comforting; sometimes chiding and didactic, and at other times condemnatory and reproving; but always adapted to the needs of the individual administered unto, and very appropriate, meeting absolute conditions of individual character, and dispensing judgment and mercy, as from the throne above, and undeniably convincing, both to the believer and hesitating skeptic. In this capacity those entranced youth's voiced communications from spirits in the soul world, which were productive of great good to society.

At length, as these ministrations continued, the inspiring baptism was thence transmitted to many persons in and throughout all the societies of the Shaker Order, and such baptized soul became message bearers of communications from souls in the Spirit-world, to persons in the body physical. These inspired persons were called instruments or media. Some of them were exercised as public speakers; others, writers of messages, others the recipients and dispensers to their brethren and sisters of improvised, inspired new songs, sometimes as many as twenty in one day, through the same medium. These were of great worth to society, serving to mould the feelings and wills of members of society to a Divine Order of life and conduct, on the principle in which a writer once remarked: "Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws."

Persons thus baptized of the spirit as media, were very frequently much exercised physically while under the ministrations of spirits; these exercises often consisted of bowing, kneeling, turning exceedingly rapid, and oftentimes, of very mortifying gesticulations. These media were often directed by the spirits to practice much fasting, both from material food and from social conversation! Sometimes media could not speak a word in their native tongue, except to their Elders; for weeks consecutively they were required by the spirits to give their entire strength of mind and spirit, and often of bodily powers, to attain unto soul life and culture, and to spirit inspirations.

To media thus exercised the Spirit-world was often manifest as an ever open book, or a wide field of intelligence; and though not meeting each other at all, they would know each other's gifts and communications before they were voiced, and tell the gist of the same to some confiding witness who would maintain entire secrecy and reticence unto the message was voiced by some other inspired medium. Media would sometimes read and disclose the state of souls, and reveal the thoughts and deeds of persons with whom they met, but had not corresponded one word, spoken or written, thus producing faith and conviction of the existence of a Spirit-world, and its real life, light and clairvoyant knowledge, giving evidence to all that the work of the Christ baptism is a work whereby God will bring every soul unto judgment, with all the deeds of life, whether secret or public, good or evil, and reward every soul according as his works have been.

At the inauguration of this phase of the spirit manifestations, it was declared by media that every person in this world has one or more guardian spirit or spirits, guide or guides, who perpetually minister to such person. The character of these spirits is

in some degree determined by the character and willed purposes of the earthly inhabitant. These guardians sometimes minister directly; at other times through persons in the mortal frame more nearly assimilating with their purposes, than their word, at the time, possesses.

The lesson is that kindred spirits attract each other, and the will forces and desires of the earth inhabitant, propel the ministrations from the spirit spheres. The divine law that the influences of malignant spirits upon each other produces constant irritations, abrasions of comfort, producing unhappiness, is the divine method to excite a desire in a soul to reforms of character and betterments of life. The errors of a vitiated life, when a soul is made to see and feel them, becomes, eventually a spiritual emetic and purgative which promotes desire for reform, and this condition clears the way for the access of good spirits, as commissioned tutors and guardians, to reach the sufferer and find acceptance.

To the pure in heart and life, the ministrations from the Spirit-world will emanate from the sainted throng who dwell in the mansions of God's truth and love; and the inspirations from these are heaven born and true.

The foregoing described phase of spirit manifestations continued about seven years, during which period the avenues of communication between mortals and the world of spirits were widely opened; messages from spirits in the land of souls, through media, were frequently, sometimes of a character uplifting, consoling, sometimes didactic, at times prophetic; at other times admonitory.

Through instruments or media the people were visited by spirits manifesting the characteristics of every class of nationality, and every grade of development of human society, from highest to lowest; those belonging to the Resurrection Order of the New Creation; The Kingdom of Christ in the second appearing through the female, came as teachers. Many others, both high and low, from all nations, manifested themselves as inquirers and learners, while others manifested themselves in a gross sensual state, as not being yet awakened to even a desire to better their condition, manifesting that as death left them, so eternity found them, and they had not yet been touched by the wand of judgment, to be rewarded according to their works.

During those seven years experience of constant ministrations from the Spirit-world, long time previous to the spirit knockings at the home of the Fox family, in some of the Shaker families, the people in our religious meetings were often called upon to kneel and knock on the floor, and were prophetically informed that we should yet know what this sign meant; so, when the spirit rappings commenced in the Fox family it was well understood and comprehended. The Shakers were further informed, prophetically, that the spirit manifestations as they had been presented among them as a people, would mostly cease for a season and would go outside the Shaker Order and extend to all nations and peoples, and be manifest to all classes of society, the enlightened, the simply civilized, the semi-civilized and the barbarian, just as it has been manifested during the past forty years; but eventually the ministrations from the Spirit-world would return to the Shakers in a more exalted form, and extended manner, adapted to the then needs and conditions of society.

This withdrawal has been and still is experienced, yet living souls who are industriously toiling in the Vineyard of Christ, will not be left bereft of inspiration in some manner and degree from the heavenly world and are not thus left.

During those spirit manifestations important lessons were learned by the Shakers concerning communications from the Spirit-world, confirming and reassuring believers in Christ's kingdom of the truths proclaimed by the apostle John, that death of the mortal frame doth not alter the state of the soul; but it enters the soul land in the same condition in which it was in the earthly tenement, and as it left the shores of time, so it enters the vestibules of eternity.

2. Therefore as all are not good souls while inhabiting the earthly tenement, so they are not suddenly converted to sainthood by laying aside the earthly casket.

3. That when the avenues of communication between the spheres of time and the Spirit-world were opened as they have wonderfully been during the last fifty years, all classes of spirits in the land of souls are enabled to avail themselves of the opportunities of correspondence with kindred spirits inhabiting the mortal frame.

4. Therefore it is frequently the case that lying, wicked spirits often manifest themselves under false names, and bear messages to those in tune that are untruthful. Hence the wisdom of the admonition of the apostle John: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Thereby know ye the spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh [the mortal body], is of God. And every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." (1st John, 4: 1, 2, 3.)

5. Not even all honest spirits are yet harvested into the Christ Order of the present advent of the Christ spirit, therefore multitudes of spirits communicate what they understand as truths, but ministrations that belong to the earthly, worldly sphere only.

6. Therefore, to illustrate this fact, it may be said: Jewish spirits would minister Jewish theology; Mohammedan spirits the sentiments of the Mussulman; Catholic spirits the Catholic theology; Protestantism the different orders ideas in accord with the beliefs those spirits entertained in the earth life, until those varied classes of spirits become gathered into the true and highest order of the Christ life revealed to humanity.

7. To receive only truthful and pure communications from the Spirit-world, souls must live truthful and pure lives, as media; and to receive communications of the highest order of human progress, media must have a baptism from that order.

It is not to be understood that because the peculiar character of communications from the Spirit-world, of which we have been recording, have for many years measurably ceased among the Shakers; that, as a people,

they are not in the truest, purest sense of the word Spiritualists; for it is the true Christian faith that every true follower of the Christ mission is and must be, a genuine Spiritualist; a disciple of him who said: "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18: 36). Therefore it must be of the Spirit-world, and all its subjects must become a spiritual people.

It is a matter of deep surprise to witness the fact that people who call themselves Christians have become so darkened and beclouded by sin and the ravishing influences of a worldly, sensual life as not to believe in spirit manifestations, except as communications from the satanic regions; but it is now as in the days of the prophet Hosea, who declared, "The days of visitation are come; the days of recompense are come. Israel shall know it, the prophet is a fool; the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity and the great hatred" (to truth)—Hosea 9: 7.

The true Christian Shaker life is guided by the counsel of Paul thus: "Follow after charity and desire spiritual gifts." (1st Cor., 14.) The Shaker also feels toward mankind as Paul felt to the churches at Rome: "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (on the true foundation Christ has laid.—Rom. 1: 11. And again would we heal the sin-wounded soul, who is cowardly-minded and lost to a sense of spiritual and heavenly things and conditions, as said Paul to the Galatians: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken with a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—Gal., 6: 1.

The work of the Christ Gospel is a work of spiritual resurrection of the soul from the death and death of sin, to an abundant and heavenly growth of all heavenly flowers and fruits, the graces and soul-food of angels, in the paradise of God.

GILES B. AVERY.
Mt. Lebanon, N. Y.

Written for THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER.

THE HIGHER WORLD.

OUR RELATIONS TO THE SAME.

A Response to J. C. Jackson.

As the four columns of J. C. Jackson's essay purport to be addressed to Dr. Buchanan, courtesy requires from me a response. But as nine-tenths of his language express ideas in which we are substantially agreed, no comments are necessary except upon disagreements.

I object very decidedly to the drift of his phraseology which (I suppose unconsciously) continually places me in a false position. Whoever criticises a position should first understand it thoroughly. His correct understanding is not apparent when Mr. J. says: "Why then do you cling to any last lingering cord that binds you backward to the juggernaut car of superstition?" I have made it plain enough to any unprejudiced mind, that I have nothing to do with old superstitions, but to destroy them. The fact that I have a better knowledge of the true character of Jesus, and do not hesitate to express it, does not give me, and does not indicate, any leaning toward superstition. That great reformer rose as far as possible above the atmosphere of superstition in his day, and is to-day in most decided antagonism to it. Knowing this, I cannot yield to any insane prejudice against a grand reformer, because his name has been so long used by that terrible combination of priest-craft and statecraft which has so long dominated over the civilized world. When men commit crimes in the name of God, their crimes do not render that name odious to the rational thinker; nor do the crimes of political parties under the pretense of being followers of Washington or Jefferson, diminish our reverence for those great men. The crimes of the political church have not inspired me with any aversion to the noble men, the founders of Christianity, in the proper sense of that word, which was a religious Spiritualism; yet I can excuse the antipathy of those who in realizing the historic crimes of the church, fail to see through the lurid atmosphere of many centuries of crime, the virtues of the Pentecostal days when men were ruled by a noble Spiritualism—healing, prophesying and speaking the language of the angels. And I can the more readily excuse their antipathies even when intemperately expressed, when I reflect that their only information of those days is derived from biblical records in which there is with



A NARRATIVE OF THE SUMMER-LAND.

BY HUDSON TUTTLE.

Author of Arcana of Nature; Origin and Development of Man; Career of Religious Ideas and Ethics of Science; Studies in the Outlying Fields of Psychology; etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SOCIETY AGAIN VISITS EARTH.

"Do the angels rest in heaven?
Aye, in eternal activity which is rest."

It was such a morning as is alone beheld in the spheres, when our group of spirits passed from their bright homes to survey the inharmonious conditions of earth. We find them resting over a large city, in which were concentrated all the abominations of the world. Fashion here held her baneful sway, and on her altars of eternally consuming fire sacrificed her untold victims. Toil, God's first command to man, was either excessive or utterly neglected. Classes, grades, and other conventional distinctions, held potent sway; and error (sin) sat brooding all over, from the beggar in his ragged rags to the ruler on his golden throne. Commerce sat in her deceitful form on the quays, or housed herself in high-towering walls of brick and stone. Falsehood, as a commodity, was bought and sold. Deception, fraud and hypocrisy, were everywhere prevalent. Man had contracted his God-like soul into the compass of a copper cent, and found an infinite universe in which to roam within its narrow rim. No low animal passions were suppressed; these held supreme control—and what fearful control! All underneath was corruption, which filled the sewers, drains, and cesspools, sending up its poisonous exhalations to mingle with the moral effluvia generated above by corrupted man, who, with God-like powers, walked the pavement amid the mass of corrupted elements, unconscious of their presence, pursuing his puerile ends as eagerly as a boy chases the bubble or the gaudy butterfly.

There was nothing natural—no God—none of his works—all artificial, bowing to arbitrary and conventional rules. No clear blue sky, as seen when rambling over the verdant mead; no boundless prospect, such as exalts and exhilarates the mind when on the shores of a timeless ocean; no bright sunshine awakening cheerily the activity of animal life, bidding the flowers to expand their petals and shake off the dews of heaven. No gorgeous sunset behind the western forests, commanding life to be for the time dormant. There was nothing pure, lovely and truly beautiful. Brick walls shut out the extended view; pavements concealed God's ground; night was changed to day by the glare of poisonous gas; stimulating foods and drinks were spread at every street corner, tempting the overtaken body to plunge into the gulf of infamy, deeper—still deeper. The overfed gourmand jostled the beggar he had robbed of bread, from his path, with a sneer. Monopoly towered in six-story structures, and crowded God's children from the soil rightly their own.

Oh, misery, crime, ignorance, and degradation, can you be surpassed in the mythic hell? Angels, weep! weep, for your brothers on earth!

Over this scene of misgovernment, error and death the group in silence rested. Within their wide-extended gaze the whole vast scene stretched out in all the rank deformities of perverted nature. Marvin, who was with them, had been a speculator—a monopolist, and had played at the high-handed game of trade in a manner superior to the shrewdest. When he saw hell-seen speculation grind down the poor and oppress the miserable; when his extended perception saw the results of the actions of those who followed his footsteps, and knew that he had caused equal suffering, crime and woe, he called upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon him and conceal him from the sight of those who saw him in the light in which he saw himself. He covered his face with his hands, and wept as though the bursting tempest would rend every fibre of his frame.

"Wretch! wretch! wretch!" he exclaimed in anguish. "Oh, that I had never been born! I now see myself in the mirror of my own heart. Annihilation, or the torments of the fabled hell, are nothing to this. Plunge me, O God, if thou art merciful, into the bottomless pit of destruction, burning with fires unquenchable, and blot from memory's tablet the knowledge of the past! Hope, that once spread her balmy wings around my heart, thou, too, hast forsaken me, and the future is an awful scene of woe and despair!"

The Sage, taking him by the hand, raised him up, saying: "Self-accusing child, why blame yourself thus? Blame no one for their follies, but the circumstances in which you were placed. They were bad; popular opinion, before which you bent, was bad. All tended to make you what you were. You have a germ of native goodness in your being, or you would not thus accuse yourself. Arise! weep no more! The future is bright. You can retrieve your misdeeds, but must lose the time wasted since a child."

"Is that all? Am I forgiven?"

"Not forgiven; so much is lost. Study as intensely as you will—learn until you become a god in wisdom—still, so much is lost. The scar of wrong will never hide itself in growth."

Marvin made no reply, but sat wrapped in melancholy reflections. The others engaged in conversation on the passing panorama. Spirit after spirit ascended as freed from earth—some black as night, others bright as a sunbeam in a cloudless morning. Between these extremes were all degrees of brightness and purity.

A female figure arose from among the brick walls, and beholding the dazzling light of the Society, she came toward them. She was a *la mode*, with life powers cramped by a slender waist, one half the size of that which nature would have given her, and her mind diseased by stimulants and poison. She was bewildered by the new state of things, and wished an explanation of their mysteries. She approached, and with a fashionable greeting, cold and formal, enquired where she was.

"In heaven?" was the response.

"In heaven! why this does not agree with my belief!" was the surprised response.

"This is heaven, let your belief be as it may!" replied the Sage.

"Heaven is a place of enjoyment; but how do you enjoy yourselves in this airy region?"

"By traveling and working."

"By working!" said she in the utmost scorn; "working in heaven! I never *did* work, and as for traveling, it was always too much trouble."

"Traveling is very pleasant," interrupted Hero; "I take great pleasure in roaming through the groves and among the flowers."

"That may be true for you, but it is not for me. When you wish to become other than as you now are, what do you do?"

"Work!"

"Work! I never worked, and I never will. Why vulgar people labor; the refined do not. I *won't* work—never!"

"It is with yourself to choose," calmly replied the Sage; "you cannot be happy in indolence, while around you are those as intellectual, as good, and as refined as yourself, performing the tasks assigned them. You cannot be contented, or advance. Recall this rash sentence, and supply its place with a will."

"Never, never! I declare I won't work; indeed, it would soil my hands, brown my complexion and injure my beauty."

"That may be true; but your hands are no better than those of the millions who labor, and if your complexion were browned, your beauty would be improved by health."

"Health!" exclaimed she; "health! indeed that is none of mine, unless it be wretched health. Such misery as I endure makes life a burden—such terrible pains, piercing me like needles. Don't talk to me of health, disease and dying as I am."

"You have already passed the change called death and will

now outgrow the conditions and influences of your earthly life, but sick as you are, you never can be better until you labor."

"I won't work!"

"You will be obliged to recall that foolish declaration. Are you not ashamed to remain idle while all surrounding nature is at work? You are a consumer. You must eat, drink and wear, and while for the last thirty years you have produced nothing. You are to live through all future time; but according to your present determination, you never will produce anything. On earth—that great bedlam beneath—pursuant to established conventional rules, you could use the earnings of a hundred brothers and sisters, giving in return no equivalent, and causing their families to live in wretchedness and woe. There the poor can be made slaves, toiling night and day for the support of idle masters and mistresses. There, those who toil most receive least, eking out a life of want; while those who toil least receive most, sleep on down, sup from silver dishes, consuming an endless number of useless luxuries, while thousands are living in destitution, and are obliged to expose themselves to the winter's blast. You have entered a new sphere of existence. Here the laws of right are observed. No one here can live on the sustenance of another. When a person refuses his share of honest toil, we let him suffer the consequences of violated law, which soon makes him tractable, and ready to listen to the words of nature."

"But I can't work; I never learned to do anything."

"Have you not learned something useful?"

"Oh yes; I can embroider, can play on the piano, can sing, paint and draw."

"Nothing more?" asked the Sage in a tone of pity.

"I know a little of French and Italian, and can dance."

"Know you nothing of the laws of life, and of your being?"

"Laws of my being! Why God takes care of that. He gives and taketh away. Can I know his reasons?"

"Verily, it rests in your hands, and you should understand those reasons. Can you expect health without knowing how it may be preserved? Sickness is the result of ignorance and consequent physical violation. If the understanding on this subject, you are like one walking in darkness over yawning precipices, every moment liable to slip and precipitate himself on the rocks below."

"To understand this subject, and avail oneself of its advantages, would it not set at naught the mysterious ways of Providence, and be a sacrilege in the sight of God, by changing what he has decreed?"

"As for the providence of which you speak, it exists only in the diseased fancies of the abnormal brain; and as for sacrilege, what we can discover of nature and render available, is our privilege to investigate—not trembling at every step for fear of God's wrath, but boldly and manfully doing all that we can to discover truth. This is our privilege. You understand not the science of life!"

"No; all I know is to live, asking no questions."

"That is as much as the blind devotees of the world know. They understand nothing of *manhood*; they are in their infancy. Thus you have wasted years in the accumulation of useless—worse than useless—knowledge. Man studies to elevate himself for a few days on earth. He acquires knowledge to that effect, and not for eternal life. The *spirit* is neglected and crushed to earth. They send their children to the primary school to prepare for the college! Strange that the future is not provided for! You are totally, totally unprepared for the unseen realities before you."

"I know I am. Let me go back! Ah, I must go back to earth. I can't stay here. What shall I do? Ah, how I wish I could go back!"

"You are wishing for an impossibility; you have entered a new life, and must submit to its conditions."

"If I stay here it will be obliged to labor, and you know that I do not know how."

"There is an eternity before you in which to learn."

"But there is no one to teach me."

"There is a circle of those like yourself, striving for elevation, and to them I direct you."

"A circle!—all strangers! and I becoming a pupil in a workshop! I won't do it! I'll go back! I won't work!"

"At this moment, an infant spirit, conducted by one long in the spheres, arose above the smoke and dust of the city. With almost a scream of delight, the *lady* spirit flew toward them and clasped the infant in her arms. She then came back to her former position in a transport of joy, exclaiming:

"I don't want to go back now. My child is with me. Poor thing! so delicate, pale and unwell! She has troubled me ever since she was born. I expected her to die, but while on earth I dreaded the event which now gives me so much joy."

"Yes, she is a delicate thing—an offspring of your infringement of organic laws and the sacred principles of life. She is a fitting emblem of the ignorance of earth. Delicate and unwell, indeed! How could it be otherwise where the laws of hereditary descent prevail and mould the child after the thoughts of the mother? Whatever thoughts are excited or depressed in the mother, will appear in the same state in the child. When will mankind learn that the development of their offspring depends upon themselves, and that it is as possible to rear philosophers, statesmen, and poets—minds having the capabilities to arouse a world—as such mental dwarfs—such poor, imperfectly formed beings!"

"You are another fitting emblem of earth's errors. Fashion has distorted your form, changed your manners and your whole being. God made you for health; you have striven to disobey his laws, and have bent before the silly force of prejudice and conservatism. Look at yourself, and compare yourself with Hero. Beautiful as your form was thought to be, how ugly and homely when compared with one who has obeyed Nature's laws!"

"Don't laugh at me," said she, piteously.

"Laugh at you!—never! I pity you, and your child I pity still more. She is a copy of all of your violations and of none of your virtues. This is the result of your defeat of natural laws: the offspring of those who are uncongenially joined take the bad qualities of both parents in their aggravated state. In true marriage it is the reverse. Ah, men and women of earth! a tremendous responsibility rests on you, from which you cannot escape. The destinies of the future generations are in your hands. Send not into the world such miserable organizations, with but half the life they should possess, diseased and suffering from the effects of your continual violations. Think of these things *well* before you take the responsibility of ushering an immortal being into the world! Look at your child there! its death written in vivid hues on its countenance, imbecility of intellect in its vacant eye, an instability of purpose and a deficient morality in the contour of its head! Strange you should become so nervous on account of her illness, when you took so little care in her embryonic development! Strange!"

"Not strange. How could I do better, considering my ignorance and the evils with which I was surrounded?" asked she, in a piteous tone.

"Because man is surrounded by evil circumstances, he should not cease to strive to overcome those circumstances. He himself is the greatest circumstance. Let him strive to change himself; then will all conditions put on a new aspect, as clouds change their color in the setting sun. He should not sit down complaining of bad circumstances, but take hold manfully, and work his way upward out of them into the light. Does the mariner, on the wide ocean, complainingly sit down in imbecility when the storm breaks over him and the billows dash at his feet? Assuredly not; but the fiercer the blast the more intense his exertions. Thus should man strive on the sea of human life—strive ever to overcome and conquer. Well do I know your condition was anything else but enviable, for the best situated are bad enough. Here, in this little being, behold the result."

"Is she to bear my sins?" asked the mother, in agitation.

"Not your sins, but the results of those sins; and the punishment recoils back upon yourself."

"This is injustice," said the agitated lady. "My poor Isabel to suffer for my crimes! I can not bear the thought of it. I had rather suffer a thousand-fold than have her suffer for a single hour. It is unjust!"

"Not so; it is but the extension of the great principles of equity which lie concealed in the depths of nature. It is necessarily the result of infringed law. Without this punishment the laws would be useless. Pain is the police and safety-guard set along the way to drive us back to the right path. If not for its influence we might go off on some tangent and never return. So we are compelled to do right at last. We oscillate within given limits. Thus you perceive infinite justice in punishment."

"Talk of justice to me when I see my child crushed as an opening flower by its iron sway!"

"Yes, I would talk of justice to you, that you need not sink yourself under new violations. Your feelings are overwrought,

and distort your reason. Remember that the noble ancient who gave his eye to save his sons? Seek not to take this punishment upon yourself, for you will have all you can bear without more."

"Can I not retrieve the errors by which I have brought this misery on her?"

"You know there is a law of progress that will relieve you."

"And is it possible for little Isabel to become healthy as other children?"

"Possible—but a long time must elapse before this can be fully accomplished. Nature once crushed recovers slowly and with great effort."

"If it is possible, I am happy," and a joyful radiance overspread her countenance.

"Can I not do something to aid her recovery?"

"You can work. This, for the time, will be your field of labor. You said you would not labor. You must toil here, or your child will pass ages in the sphere where you now behold it."

"If I can do anything to elevate my child, I will work night and day continually."

"I said you must work. You are now willing to do so. If you had expended one-half the labor on earth that you will be obliged to exert here, your child would be very much superior to its present state. You thus perceive Nature is a grand scheme of compensations, and all, sooner or later, must perform the tasks assigned them."

"I am willing—willing to labor to eradicate the evils I have entailed upon my dear, dear Isabel."

"Speak not rashly, for centuries must intervene before you have accomplished what you might have done in a few years on earth."

This announcement chilled her courage, and she was very much pained, but it was for a moment only. Her woman's nature, crushed as it was, arose above selfishness, and she exclaimed:

"No sacrifice is too great for my child. I have caused her to enter existence as she is; I feel that it is my duty now to make atonement by instructing her."

"Can you instruct her when ignorant yourself?"

"No, I had not thought of that. My God, have mercy! I had a bright vision of happiness, but it has faded away—gone forever!"

Mother, with thy loved babe, how feeblest thou when it is snatched from thy embrace? Canst thou feel her heart's pangs? Then thou knowest how agonized was the mother in the spheres, regretting that she had not learned something useful while a mortal."

"Sister," said Hero, soothingly—"sister, it is not as dark as it seemeth. There is hope. If you can not instruct your child, the circle to which I will conduct you will rejoice to assist you."

"Can I be with my child?"

"Yes, sister, you will do all you can to instruct it while learning yourself. You will be her guide, and procure such assistance as you desire. I will conduct you to that circle, and there leave you."

"But shall I find friends there?" she asked in great anxiety.

"Spirits in this plane are all friends. We know no hate or revenge. If they formed a part of our minds on earth or were reflected during the earlier years in this life, they have been outgrown."

They passed away and arrived at the mentioned circle. Hero introduced her to them, and the affectionate band pressed around her, each striving to manifest the warmest friendship. The worldly lady was a worldling no longer. Infinite possibilities dawned on her awakened consciousness and she had only to be led by loving hands, and do the work which presented itself for her to do.

(To be continued.)

IN A HYPNOTIC FIT.

How the Roman Physician Explained a Young Man's Peculiar Actions.

In Rome the other day in the church of the Ara Coeli where Gibson, as he himself tells us, conceived his "History of the Decline and Fall" of the empire, a young man of foreign appearance, about 5 in the evening, was seen to be making the round of the several chapels. Suddenly he stepped before the altar of St. Francis of Assisi and remained in rapt attention before the picture of the saint. More than an hour elapsed, and he was still standing, perfectly motionless, his eyes fixed on the well-known painting. At last the custode, as it was time to close the church, told him that he must withdraw. The stranger seemed not to hear, and moving neither a foot nor a muscle, still gazed as if in ecstasy at the picture. The custode shook him and urged him to go, but in vain, till at length the municipal guard were called in and the young man was lifted bodily from the pavement and taken first to the station house and then to the Ospedale della Consolazione. The guard had tried to bring him to consciousness by dashing water in his face and shaking him, but finding these measures ineffectual—the man remaining with his eyes fixed on some invisible object above and not a muscle of his body stirring—they brought him to the medical waiting-room of the consolazione. There the physicians immediately pronounced the case to be one of hypnosis, and after various remedies had been tried without success, they at last succeeded in bringing him to consciousness by hypodermic injections of ether. On coming to himself the patient turned out to be a Bavarian, and one of the attaches of the German Embassy who had been summoned identified him as a young, recently graduated physician of Munich who had been subject to hypnotic fits for some time past. Thanking all the officials—medical, municipal, and diplomatic—for the care and kindness he had experienced at their hands, he returned to his hotel. The Roman press, commenting on the occurrence, remarks that two or three centuries ago, the same phenomenon would have been regarded as treacherous by the church, and the chapel of St. Francis of Assisi, in the Ara Coeli, would have attracted crowds of pilgrims eager to come under the direct influence of the saint.

Thus one by one the mysteries of life are being explained, and those peculiar manifestations attributed to a God are being relegated to the domain of natural laws, leaving religion to stand on its merits alone, which must consist alone in good works, independent of miracles, etc.

LEAH FOX-UNDERHILL.

Death and Its Harvest.

Leah Fox-Underhill took final leave of her earthly tenement about 8 p. m., Saturday, Nov. 1. She was the oldest and most honored of the Fox Sisters, and one who never varied or swerved from her devotion to the cause of Spiritualism. She was perhaps the most reliable of the mediums for the phenomena which awoke the world from the death-dream of ages, and she held the revelation as a priceless legacy to mankind. To trifle with or deny it was a shocking blasphemy to her sensitive spirit. Honored and loved by all who knew her well, she filled an important place in the social sphere among progressive people. She will be greatly missed in New York, and her name will adorn the historic page of the spiritual movement without a shadow of treachery or a blot of shame to dim its immortal lustre.

She was one of the Trustees of the First Association of Spiritualists of this city, and an intimate friend and admirer of the popular speaker and local pastor, Mrs. Nellie J. T. Brigham, who is expected to officiate at the last rites, Tuesday evening, Nov. 4. Thus they pass the shining gates, and leave the work in other hands, and soon the entire army of these early representatives of modern Spiritualism will have passed out of mortal sight and extended the primitive work in broader fields and higher relations. Mr. Underhill remains with us, though an invalid, and he of all will miss her the most. But he will realize her continued nearness and love interest, until he joins her with the heavenly host. Death is a beautiful and divine appointment in the order of eternal life; but so deeply touches the secret fountains of the unrealized, and so wonderfully transposes the relations of sense and thrills us through a veil of mystery that, despite our knowledge of the immortal gain, we bow our heads and weep. The change, though natural, is great, and our bounded visions gaze into the vacuous silence, and we halt before the gulf of mystery and look sadly into the cold face of the deserted shrine where all our earthly sympathies found their medium of translation; and reverently listen for the echo of prophetic memory from the hidden shore. There is solace in tears. There is spiritual expansion in the quickened emotions touched by the finger of death when the shock of pain unlocks the sealed fountains of the heart and sweeps the trembling keys of consciousness with the breath of a new and immortal revelation. Sorrowful meditations have a normal place in the healthful activities of every life. In the under tones and minor strains, the solemn echoes in the halls of memory, the unanalyzed sentiments that play softly through the aisles of subdued emotion and fringe the horizon of love with tearful tenderness, bear high testimony to the spirituality unfolding within. Such experiences intensify and exalt all the joys and blessedness of the soul's ripe fruition. Fair friend and honored representative of the most blessed truth that ever dawned upon the world, accept our tearful tokens of love and reach thy helping hand to us while we wait in the valley and grope. Adieu.

LYMAN C. HOWE.

CELESTIAL ECHOES.

BY A. J. SWARTZ, PH. D.

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Hark! I hear celestial music.
Floating near in strains sublime;
Lo! 'th' angelic hosts approaching
With sweet anthems for each chime.
Now those chorals of rare beauty,
Falling on the sons of men,
We are near, yes, near you daily,
Drawing souls to meet again.

List the sweet returning carols
Rising upward from all climes:
Now behold! the loved ones, yonder,
List'ning to our earthly crimes.
Do I see among those angels
One who filled our home with light?
Can that star of brightest splendor
Be the one that veiled in night!

Now give ear to heavenly answers
From the music of the spheres:
"Yes, dear friends of clouded earth-life,
Through our joys we see your tears.
We are near, yes, near you daily,
Drawing you to homes on high:
All your earthly cares and conflicts
Mean our meeting, bye and bye."

Oh! my angel one, my guardian,
May I hope to know you there?
Is it I who hear in whispers
When I breathe your name in prayer?
Then I'll wait and cease all murmuring,
Watching e'er that spangled dome;
You're my loving, guardian angel,
Sent of God to guide me home.

Diet and Mediumship.

Certain articles of food assist development; and other articles retard development. The use of meat two or three times a day will prevent many people from attaining a high state of development. When a disembodied spirit enters the organism of a human being, the disembodied spirit passes between the material and spiritual body of the medium. If the space between the earthly and spiritual body of the medium is limited, the chances are against the spirit entering the organism of the medium. Meat congeals the blood, or congeals the fluids of the body, causing the spiritual and material particles of the body to move closer together, consequently meat-eaters are harder to develop than vegetarians. An exclusive diet of vegetables is desirable when mediumship is to be attained. The absolute use of milk is to be preferred, but few people will be satisfied with an exclusive milk diet. Many persons wonder why they cannot develop for some phase of mediumship, and at the same time they eat meat two or three times a day; thereby preventing the spirit control utilizing their medial powers. Those desiring to become mediums should try to diet themselves during the time they are being developed.

J. W. CURTIS.

S. N. Aspinwall, of Minneapolis, Minn., writes: "Our cause is progressing here. The three meetings in different parts of the city are well attended, and numbers and interest increasing all the time. The PROGRESSIVE THINKER is well liked and sells rapidly."

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