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A Sketch of Hallelujah Sam

A Highly Interesting and Impressive Sketch from Real Life, by Mrs. Ida Lewis Bentley, of Garvanza, Cal.

Samuel Peters was a sinner. His acquaintances were agreed upon that point, from the stern old Calvinist minister to the children that went to Sunday school and learned about Sampson, and Jonah, and Heaven and Hell. Taught from their infancy to believe all men born sinners, Sam, as he was familiarly called, was set apart as having been born a more pronounced sinner than is often the case. This opinion hinged upon the fact that Sam at a very early age informed his stern and very orthodox father that he would not love a god who put little babies into hell and burned them forever.

For this, then heretical opinion, he received a severe flogging, which served to close the young sinner's mouth, but plainly wrought no change of heart, for as soon as he arrived of age he flatly refused to attend church or family prayers any more. For this offense his father turned him out doors and refused him any further admission, in spite of the tears and pleadings of his loving and long-suffering mother. In this respect Sam's father was very god-like, according to his barbarous ideas of a god, a fact Sam was not slow in recognizing.

A few years later Sam married, and in due course of time three little ones came to gladden his home, but not for long, for when the two older children were eight and six years old they were stricken with fever and died in one night. The parents were nearly wild with grief, and at first Sam stubbornly refused to permit any clergyman to officiate at the funeral, but when his aged mother came to him and joined her entreaties with those of his wife, he yielded inasmuch as to allow a Universalist minister to be engaged.

Soon after the loss of her children, Sam's wife professed "conversion," was baptized and joined the church. She wanted to make sure she escaped the "wrath to come," and as the minister told her, join her little ones in glory.

As for Sam, tears, prayers and arguments failed to move him, and to their exhortations he turned a deaf ear. Of a sunny, alone-disposition he now grew sad and reserved. Alone at work on his farm he would often pause for minutes and gaze mutely up at the silent sky as if in agonized pleading that it would in some way solve for him the problems of life and death; but his mental processes were unknown to any save himself, and the unseen, for never once did he confide in anyone or ask for aid or sympathy.

For many months his wife pleaded with him to accept her religion, and one day after an unusually tearful interview, Sam said to her: "It is no use, Mariann, for you to spend your time and strength in this way, for I much rather go to hell and burn forever than worship the fender who put me there."

After that Mariann posed before her church associates as a semi-martyr, for was it not dreadful to have such a sinner for a husband?

Unknown to himself, Sam was a man with high ideals, and he believed that true religion, whatever that might be, ought to work some change for good in a person's daily life, and the closest observation revealed to him no change in his wife other than she went to church regularly and deposited certain sums in the collection, and, as the months went by, it grew more and more certain that her religion had taken none of the sharpness from her tongue.

Some two years after Mariann's "conversion," Sam was returning home from "town," as the little country village was called, and passing a back-road school-house he was surprised to find it brightly lighted.

Sam was in the habit of making his trips for groceries in the evening during the hot-weather months, but never before had he seen the old school-house lighted, so out of curiosity he stopped and listened to see if he could solve the mystery. The night was dark and damp, threatening rain. The air was sweet with the odor of new-mown hay and green ferns growing on the moist banks under the willows and alders that lined the roadway, and fireflies glowed and sparkled, flitting here and there. For a moment or two the only sound that broke the stillness was the champing and stamping of the horses tied to the rail fence back of the school-house; then, through the open window, Sam saw a tall, angular, strong-featured, elderly man; came forward with an open Bible in his hand and announced his text: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The words struck Sam sharply and he listened to what followed. The preacher was eloquent in a simple way, as one always is who speaks from strong conviction. With great earnestness he said: "God is a merciful God, my friends, and not the fiend he is depicted in the church creeds. God is love, and therefore will never destroy a man for his sins, but he will destroy the sinner in mercy with the brightness of his coming at the last great day, when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and this earth, swept by purifying flames, shall bloom again in Eden beauty, the future home of the saints."

For an hour the preacher went on, pounding the churches for their cruel creeds teaching "endless torment" for the sinner, and praising his own theory, which he claimed was kind and just and beautiful.

The deep voice of the preacher thrilled the listening Sam with a strange power. A merciful God who in love destroyed the sinner instantly! Sam did not stop to think or reason beyond the preacher's words.

Evolution is a slow process, and each individual arrives at certain truths through preliminary experiences, varying according to individual character and temperament. The next evening Sam knelt among the "penitents before the altar"—the altar in this case being a much-defaced wooden box known as "the teacher's desk." After about an hour of exhortation and prayer by the preacher of the previous evening, Sam sprang to his feet shouting, "I am saved—hallelujah!"

Then it came to Sam that he must go out into the world and preach his new-found religion, and prove the fallacy of the terrible church creeds which taught the endless torment of the wicked. Mariann objected to this course, with many arguments and tears, "for," she said, "this is an unpopular religion, and not half the money in it there is in farming," but her words fell on deaf ears, and for many years

Sam went from town to town preaching his ideas of a loving God, and so enthusiastic was he, that he was soon well known as "Hallelujah Sam."

In the course of time Sam's heart was made glad by the "conversion" of his son, who immediately began to preach, but with less enthusiasm than his father.

So the years sped onward, and something occurred that broke the evenness of life for "Hallelujah Sam," and shattered the peace of mind he had so long believed would last forever. Little Mollie, his youngest grandchild, and the one object on earth upon which he lavished all the pent-up love in his great, strong nature, was stricken with scarlet fever and passed away. Many a time Hallelujah Sam had stood by the coffin that contained all that was mortal of somebody's darling and calmly told the weeping parents, if it was a young child, that God would raise their little one up at the last great day and they, if faithful, should have it again. If an older child lay in the coffin, and he had misgivings about its future, he would tell the mourners to have no fear, but trust their dead to the care of a loving Father who would do just right, and thinking of what he seemed to him such love and mercy on God's part, he would often shout "hallelujah" by an open grave. No hallelujahs welled from his heart as he stood by little Mollie's grave. For some occult reason he could not seem to trust in God and rest in peace regarding her. He wanted to know what God was going to do with her.

Sam was an honest man, and he knew very well that if Mollie had been a neighbor's child he would have had "misgivings," and he was too candid to think she would be "saved" because she was his beloved.

Mollie was ten years old, winsome and willful, the most wayward of all the family, and Hallelujah Sam groaned in agony as he sat alone in his desolate home, thinking of the possibilities. The deeper he thought, the more disturbed he grew. He got his Bible and turned its pages restlessly, but he could not find anything that seemed to hit his case. He never let us hear again?

"O Mollie, my darling," he sobbed, "how can I lose you? How can I have it so? I have not an enemy in all this world that I would deprive of one he loved. Is God less merciful than I?"

The thought startled him, as did many other thoughts that would keep crowding his mind. Feeling that he could not endure his darling's absence from his home, Sam took his wife and went to visit an aged aunt who lived on a lonely farm far off, among the mountains of his native State.

Alas for those who think by change of environment to find peace or happiness! A man is himself with all his doubts, fears, griefs and longings, whether he is in Greenland or Japan, Paris or New York. Trouble may change its form, but its life comes from within the one that recognizes it, therefore it is only within the heart of the individual that it can be annihilated. Silent and sad Sam wandered over the fields and through the cool, ferny forests, or hoed diligently in the little garden patch.

Mariann remembered that her husband had appeared about the same way after the death of their little girl, and she could not understand, for no doubt regarding Mollie's future entered her mind. Was she not her grandchild? Would God turn one of her flesh and blood into hell?

Never!

One day, after an unusually hard tramp and sleep harder thinking, Sam went to bed, but not to sleep. Hour after hour he lay awake praying that some new light would come to him. Suddenly he was startled by a voice saying softly, but plainly, "Sam!" He lifted his head and gazed about the room. The moon was nearly full and its light poured through the curtainless windows, making every article of furniture plainly discernible, and there, standing but a few feet from the bed, stood a female figure clad in light, fleecy robes. A soft light, brighter than the moonlight, surrounded her, and her features were clearly revealed.

"Mother."

The word broke from Sam's lips involuntarily. The figure drew close to the bed, and in the old, familiar voice, so dear to the listening man, said: "THERE IS NO DEATH, MY SON. WHAT MEN CALL DEATH IS ONLY THE LAYING ASIDE OF THE MATERIAL BODY FOR THE SPIRITUAL. YOU DO NOT READ YOUR BIBLE ARIGHT."

She was gone, and Sam lay lost in wonderment, too dazed to question what it all meant. As soon as it was light the next morning Sam arose and took his Bible and began to read in a desultory way. He was much surprised at the number of instances angels manifested themselves to mortals in the days of old. He had never thought about it before, and he began to question, but the doctrines he had preached so many years were not to be outgrown in a day, and the more he studied the more confused he became, and the more contradictory the Bible seemed, and he felt wholly at sea, without any means of guidance.

For several weeks the evidence kept up, and then he began to doubt the evidence of his senses, so new and strange and unsupported was that one night's experience. Many nights, when worn out with his ceaseless, hungry groping after the truth, he would pray earnestly that if it was really true that his mother came to him that night, she would come again, but his prayers were not answered. The days swept onward into weeks, and Sam settled into a hopeless apathy from which he was again aroused.

Again the moonlight flooded the little room where Sam lay wide awake beside his sleeping companion, and again he was aroused by hearing an audible voice speak his name, and there beside his bed stood his mother—and little Mollie with her!

"Mother!" cried Sam. "Mollie! O, thank God! Hallelujah!"

His mother smiled and said: "WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD. WE CANNOT DIE. WE CANNOT WANDER AWAY FROM A LOVING FATHER'S CARE. NEVER DOUBT AGAIN, MY SON."

Mollie waved her hand to him in farewell just as he had taught her to do in her infancy, and they were both gone.

Immortal Personality.

A Characteristic and Thoughtful Essay From the Facile Pen of the California Philosopher, Charles Dawbarn.

A correspondent complains that in my recent article entitled "Our Own Future," I "shatter the fundamental teachings of Spiritualism," which, he asserts, "is the continuation into the next state of one's personality." He defines "personality" as "one's personal, mental and moral make-up," which he thinks should remain unchanged throughout eternity. I cannot believe that older Spiritualists hold any such impossible belief, but for the benefit of youth and theological ignorance, I will once again make it a study from the standpoint of science.

There are certain obvious objections to such a belief that even a child can grasp. For instance, my correspondent has a young son who is a cripple. Is he to remain a crippled personality "over there?" Another has been crippled mentally; is weak-minded and a laughing-stock. If his personality is to be changed into that of bright intelligence, how is he to be recognized? Is he to be recognized by the new name he is given? But if it grows, how is it to be recognized by the newcomer into spirit-life?

From the spirit side we may ask how the loving husband who died in infancy, and was recognized as such by the old grandmother who crosses "the divide" half a century later, if the personality of earth-life is to be continued? These are surface questions that should stirle my correspondent into beginning to change his own "mental" personality, even at the risk of being "unrecognized" "over there."

Now let us broaden our theme, and examine for a moment the personality of form, which is really at the foundation of my correspondent's trouble. Internally, the personality of form, heredity, size and shape are planetary conditions. If man, as we know him, could exist on other planets he would be 50 feet high on Jupiter, and perhaps 24 inches on Mercury. That would be the outer casing of his personality, which, my correspondent wishes to retain. But our mental personality depends on the shape and quality of our brain, and could not be the same on two planets. But my correspondent is demanding that the giant and the dwarf shall remain unchanged, as a necessity of "personality" recognition. Such facts are also "surface facts," familiar to every student in Natural History, though they may become theologically distorted.

But if personality is to be our theme, let us begin at the beginning, or as near the beginning as mortal man has been able to carry back, to the beginning of the world.

My correspondent and all the rest of us, started from a speck of protoplasm in a cell. We do not say that life commenced in that speck of protoplasm, but we do say that organic life takes its start there. That one point, that beginning, which is the rule of Nature by which the world is to be peopled in endless variety, but without the destruction of species.

The conditions under which life manifests in this planet demand sex. And the necessity of sex compels a difference mentally and physically in the egg-bearing partner or female. Nothing short of that will save the father of the family. But this difference, this distinction first appeared, and has since been evolved by the necessities of mortal life on this planet. But form of every kind, from the giant sun to the microscopic spermatozoon, and from the elephant to the flea, is the result of the personality necessary to the life of the individual.

It appears, for personality is always associated with form.

It happens that experience has demonstrated to many folks, and to a few scientists, that something exists in man, or most men, however it got there, which remains after the

material form has gone to pieces. A few striking experiences seem to almost prove that some of the higher animals have also received or evolved this "something" which death of the form cannot destroy. We presume, though we do not know, that man, kind as a whole, have attained or received this magnificent embodiment of intelligence and energy which is not dependent upon what we call "personality" for expression. That is what we mean when we talk about "immortality." But here we come to a startling truth.

Human immortality is to-day as much a proved scientific fact as human mortality. But spirit return is so embodied in imagination, and so colored by mortal sense and acceptance, that the scientist who expects immortality as a fact can only take spirit-return in hopeopathic doses of very high dilution. In other words, the personality beyond this life, which theology teaches and which my correspondent craves, is contradicted by the fact that the personality which we know each other here is entirely dependent upon conditions of life in this little planet of ours, and like conditions of the hereafter to which we are all hastening.

It is an axiom of science that any organ which is not useful and active will presently shrink and at last disappear. Man's form, and especially woman's, has a number of such relics of the past; some of which, like the third eyelid, are already almost out of sight. They were evolved at a certain period in the history of our central necessity. When no longer needed that eyelid had to cease to be a part of the human personality. Suppose we apply this fact to personality in the next life. Here lies the form of the woman I loved. Its physical personality is dropping to pieces. So this is a fact that mortal sense accepts. But her mentality is still alive, and is proved by spirit return. That mentality is supposed to have all ready for it a form shaped like the old form. So my darling is wearing a new form which encloses the old personality. Such is the conception and teachings of both the theologian and the Spiritualist. But form is always a matter of necessity, and adaptation to environment. And that conception of the revival of the old personality is opposed to the facts as we know them. I do not mean that children are not born in the next life, but not even a whisper comes from the unseen but denies it. Here it is a necessity of our planet life, and both form and personality, as we know them, are the result. But if there are no children born in the next life, then sex itself becomes unnecessary, and even impossible. There can be neither egg sustainer nor egg fertilizer requiring a specialized form "over there," nor specialized organs to make up the physical and mental personality we know and love here.

When clairvoyants and revealers of mysteries tell me that the new personality is a copy of the old one I will not deny it. But I can assert from all human experience that it could not remain so, for its shape, its every organ, and its mentality were adapted only to the life in this world, and not to any other.

Even the tyro in spirit-return presently discovers there are difficulties in the way of mental intercourse. He cannot go to one medium and continue the conversation he has with another. There is an evident attempt to tell him things in terms of his everyday mortal experiences, for he can understand no other, so that the result is usually a hash of truth and absurdity that renders spirit-return useless, and often dangerous to the mortal, save for its proof of immortality.

It must be so, for, as we have seen, the old individuality may be there, and we occasionally get proof that it is, but it is now encased in a new personality of form, and therefore a new expression of the old intelligence. His experience proves this to every careful student.

His loved one passed over twenty years ago, yet she appears, or impresses herself on his mentality as at the same age, and with the same form. Or it may be his old mother who left in the feebleness of old age.

She returns so that she identifies her, and magnifies the test, as proof that she is still his dear old mother. Apart from the fact that she will appear to other friends according to their memories of her personality of form there is, as we have seen, the absolute certainty that both her form and her consequent mentality must be very different from what they were in earth life, although her individuality and its memories may remain unchanged.

Of course the old Spiritualist, whose belief has been founded on the phenomena will be startled at these assertions, and his first impulse will be to deny them. But if he will study any good work on biology, and apply its facts to his present belief, in spirit return he will discover why so many talented scientists who accept his facts draw such different inferences and conclusions, and declare that spirit return falls of scientific demonstration.

Let us study the law of heredity. Heredity is the expression of ancestral force and mentality. Such an expression of earth life influences is, as we have seen, impossible in another life, as is impossible as that the motherhood and fatherhood have ceased to be compelling forces.

What the form and its resultant mentality may be for the advancing spirit the present writer does not know, nor pretend to guess. He knows he cannot be the same, and therefore waits till experience shall teach him its lesson "over there." Environment is another factor in the problem. In earth life we are each shaped exactly by his environment. Our new mental expression will be necessarily as different as our new environment. So that, on the whole, my unfortunate correspondent, who bewails the coming loss of his present personality, will be left little Charles Lamb, who complained bitterly that Universalist teaching had taken away his "dear devil."

In conclusion I would say to every like-minded reader, that however much he may bemoan the destruction of his old belief in a continued personality, the responsibility rests upon Nature, and what is called "natural law." All that the present writer has done is to accept the fact, and endeavor to learn its lesson.

CHARLES DAWBARN.
San Leandro, Cal.

Brought Back to Life.

To the Editor:—In the summer of 1885, at the early and tender age of eight years, I was violently thrown from a vicious horse and instantly killed—so thought my mother and younger brother, as the horse appeared at the farm-yard gate riderless. After nearly an hour's search my lifeless body, (to them) was found.

My experience was this: My horse walked in the air and a huge rock lying on the ground came in contact with my physical body. There was a momentary blank, and then I leaped to my feet, joyous at the thought of being released. I looked around me in wonder, not knowing what had happened.

I spoke in as loud voice as I could, but my mother heard me not. I had no pain, no remorse, no fears; but my mother kept up a vigorous massage of my apparently dead body, and when she, as a last resort, filled her hands with water, and poured it into my face, I grew weak, trembled all over, and in a moment I disappeared. I don't know how—right into my mother's arms. Then awful physical pains followed. I told mother all she did, all she said, and all her movements.

This, of course, was utterly understood, but the incident made her and myself Spiritualists, though nearly one-half century has gone since then, I still remember I learned my duality, and my exemption from the grave." G. W. MEERS.

Zelma, Okla.

The Transition of a Prominent Spiritualist.

Mrs. Charlotte Lewis passed away at Providence, R. I., July 17. She was born at Windsor, Ct., November 25, 1832. In her early life she was a devout member of the Methodist Church, but she began to think upon the great problem of life and to investigate as to the life beyond. Finally she became convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, but to be convinced meant for her to become identified with the cause and to work for its interests.

Spiritualists all over this country who have known that gifted blind lecturer, Mr. Tisdale, will remember this quiet woman who traveled with and cared for him as a mother for her child. After Mr. Tisdale gave up lecturing, Mrs. Lewis made a home for herself at Providence, but she did not cease to work for Spiritualism. Nearly every week she secured some medium for one or more seances where seekers could investigate without money and without price. The greater part of her summer of 1906 was spent at Niantic, Ct., and although not well, she did not dream of a fatal illness. During all her hard sickness, she remained cheerful, and surprised her friends by the preparations she made for her journey, as she said, all her affairs were attended to so that no trouble should come afterwards. Every plan was made for her funeral that it might be just as she wanted it. It was not a day to dread when she should say, "Good-bye," but as one prepares for a pleasant journey to old friends, so she prepared for her going, anxious to greet the dear ones whom she knew would meet her at the "Gates of the Morning" to welcome her home.

During the last months of her sickness she was tenderly and lovingly cared for in the home of Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Prouty, who ministered to her every want day and night. When the last hour came she passed peacefully away like a tired child, finding rest in sleep. Her very dear friend, Mrs. Nettie Holt, Harding, officiated at the funeral, which was held July 18. Mrs. Helen Green sang the song and Mrs. Ida Whitlock read the poems she had selected weeks before her transition. The body was taken to Forest Hills for cremation, the ashes to be buried beside Mrs. Harding's mother at San Auburn.

IDA P. A. WHITLOCK.
Providence, R. I.

At Sam's "Hallelujah" Mariann awoke, and a little later demanded to know what all the talking was about, but Sam refused to tell her. The next day she renewed her request, and her husband told her the whole story; in fact he was so happy he could scarce refrain from going out into the highway and telling to the passers-by.

Mariann listened in amazement, and at the conclusion of her husband's story exclaimed fiercely, "Sam Peters, I am astonished at you! Have you forgotten what the Bible says about lying spirits going forth to deceive the elect? What you have seen is all of the devil's every bit of it!"

Sam replied calmly: "If God will permit, the devil or any other power to come here and persecute my mother and little Mollie, and deceive me, I will have nothing more to do with him forever!"

"O Sam," wailed his wife, "how can you say such awful things, and you a minister, too? Why, don't you know this is Spiritualism?"

She spoke the last word in a hushed tone, and glanced about her fearfully as if expecting some fiend would appear at the mention of it. Sam squared his shoulders resolutely as he replied, "It is no use for you to talk to me in this way, Mariann, for I shall accept the truth as fast as it comes to me, and if what has come to me lately is Spiritualism, then blessed is Spiritualism."

The next day Sam, in company with his wife, returned to his own home, for there was to be a conference held by his denomination in his town. Sam had received a letter from the president of the Conference Association, asking him to preach the last day, when the largest number of people might be expected. To this request Sam replied: "I can never again preach for you in my former way, for a great light has shone upon me. I wish to withdraw from the Conference; but before I go I must tell you why I go." So it was arranged by those in authority that Hallelujah Sam should tell his story behind closed doors, with only the "elect" to hear, for they were afraid lest "modern heresy" in some form had led him astray.

With his massive head erect and his kindly face lighted with joy, Sam told his former associates his wonderful experiences, but he had hardly finished before he was overwhelmed with exclamations and denunciations, and he caught the words, "infidelity," "evil spirits," "devil," "delusion," "insane," coming with violence from the lips of his former friends. Sam looked about him calmly and said quietly, "Brothers, good-bye; I prefer truth to theory."

Sam's son had, unnoticed by his father, been sitting quietly at the father's side of the hall. He now arose and came to his father's side and laid his hand gently on his shoulder. "Brothers," he said, huskily, "I know my father, therefore I know every word he has spoken is true. Where my father goes, there I will go. Good-bye."

The two walked together out into the sunlight where the birds were singing gleefully, unfettered by doctrines, theories and superstitions, therefore free to express themselves in their own way. Unconsciously the two gazed up into the blue depths above them, and drew a long, free breath. Within the hall they had just left the people were singing, "Shall such a sinful worm as I, Who sometimes am afraid to die, Be found at thy right hand?"

Many a time Sam had lent his powerful voice to the singing of that hymn, but now the words struck him oddly, and it seemed to him an immeasurable depth yawned between him and his former brethren—a depth which he had just crossed upon the only bridge possible, namely: Truth.

Six weeks later Sam lay dying. As he struggled for breath his son lifted him into a sitting posture, when he suddenly opened his eyes, and a look of joy illumined his face. Stretching his arms out toward the empty (?) air, he said: "Mollie! Mother! It is true! Hallelujah!"

The last word rang through the room with a thrill of triumph inexpressible; it was a shout of victory coming from the lips of one who saw doubts and fears forever swallowed up in knowledge. The son laid his father gently down and closed his eyes, then he passed out into the closed and empty hall, and a breath of cool air swept past him and a voice whispered, "Tell the truth, my son; the dead still live."

IDA LEWIS BENTLEY.

Why a Spiritualist Organization?

A Highly-Interesting, Suggestive and Impressive Lecture Delivered by Hon. H. W. Richardson, President of the New York State Association of Spiritualists, at Lily-Dale Camp Meeting.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE SPIRIT IS THOUGHT, AND THOUGHTS ARE VISIBLE TO THOSE LIVING IN THE SPIRIT WORLD. CONSEQUENTLY ALL THIS GREAT BEAUTIFUL WORLD OF SPIRIT, KNOWS HOW OPPORTUNITIES HAVE BEEN IMPROVED, AND HOW CHARACTER HAS BEEN DEVELOPED. ARE WE WILLING THAT THE SPIRIT WORLD SHOULD KNOW OUR EVERY THOUGHT, AND WITNESS OUR EVERY ACT WITH THE MO-

This question comes to me from a gentleman who is a devoted churchman, a man whom I believe to be an honest searcher for truth, consequently the inquiry deserves a candid, straightforward reply.

In answering I would say, first, because Spiritualism comes with an important message which other religious movements are not giving to the people.

The professed Christian teachers neglect, or refuse to acquaint themselves and their congregations with spiritual gifts, as St. Paul instructed them to do in Corinthians 12th chapter, consequently they are not prepared to receive continuity of life after transition.

These teachers ask us to accept the Bible record filled with the mediumship of 1900 years ago, but ignore the real living forces coming through the same channels to-day, and then wonder why there is so much doubt and unbelief, why so many are denying a future existence and drifting away from the church.

The Christian teachers of to-day seem to have lost sight of the fact that the only tangible proof of a future life that has ever come to the children of this earth came through manifestations of mediumship in some of its varied forms. Mediumship has ever been the channel of communications and manifestations, which prove that the spirit of man continues to live after casting aside the physical body.

Look where you will. Study history, ancient and modern; study the Christian Bible, and, with the exception of those psychic or spiritual manifestations of man's power, which are to-day so counterpoised by the children of this earth came through manifestations of mediumship in some of its varied forms. Mediumship has ever been the channel of communications and manifestations, which prove that the spirit of man continues to live after casting aside the physical body.

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TIVES BEHIND IT? THIS IS A FACT, WHETHER WE WOULD HAVE IT SO OR NOT. AND FURTHERMORE IN THE SPIRIT LIFE, EACH INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT WILL BE DRAWN INTO THAT CONDITION, AND INTO THAT SOCIETY FOR WHICH HE OR SHE IS FITTED. IT MAY BE AMONG THE SELFISH AND IGNORANT, WITH STRANGERS IN DARKNESS AND SORROW, DEPENDING UPON THE LIVES WE LIVE HERE ON EARTH.

And to-day speak of these guardians as spirit guides, in conveying the same thought as guardian spirits or angels. (For are they not all ministering spirits sent to minister unto them who shall be heirs unto salvation, Heb. 1st, 14th.)

Communications from spiritual beings were as frequent among the primitive Christians as they are to-day among Spiritualists. John, the Revelator, conversed with spiritual beings, calling them angels, and when he fell down to worship the angel that showed him the wonderful things recorded in the book of Revelation, he was reproved for so doing, and the angel said to John, "I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren, the prophets. Worship God."

In this instance one of the old prophets conversed with John, as did Moses and Elias converse with Jesus the same channels to-day, and then wonder why there is so much doubt and unbelief, why so many are denying a future existence and drifting away from the church.

The Christian teachers of to-day seem to have lost sight of the fact that the only tangible proof of a future life that has ever come to the children of this earth came through manifestations of mediumship in some of its varied forms. Mediumship has ever been the channel of communications and manifestations, which prove that the spirit of man continues to live after casting aside the physical body.

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rating from the body, is identical with the same, has the same feelings, the same knowledge, the same thoughts, and possesses the same spirit that he had a moment before.

That progress, growth and development are the heritage of all for continued life means continued activity, since there is no more stagnation in the spirit world than here. Death does not immediately add to character, nor detract from it.

That progress and evolution have never stopped and never will stop, and that the inhabitants of the spirit world work on and on acquiring understanding and perfection in those fields of labor for which they are best fitted. They know the pleasure that comes from time well spent.

We learn also that the earthly life of many people is one great masquerade. Their lives are covered by the mask of material, and they are never really known by their associates on this earth; but in the spirit world we appear as we really are.

Suppose, for a moment, and now the secret thoughts, motives, selfishness, greed and desires of men could be photographed; and character made visible, how startled the world would be. How many would hide? At transition the mask falls from the face. On entering the spirit world men are seen for the first time in the Mirror of Nature. They see themselves as they really are. Even now we hide nothing from spirits.

On entering the spirit world we will know and fully realize that our lives have always been an open book. Here there is hypocrisy and deceit; here, hypocrisy is unknown, and deceit is impossible.

The language of the spirit is thought, and thoughts are visible to those living in the spirit world, consequently all this great, beautiful world of spirit, knows how opportunities have been improved, and how character has been developed.

Are we willing that the spirit world should know our every thought, and witness our every act, with the motives behind it?

This is a fact, whether we would have it so or not. And furthermore, in the spirit life, each individual spirit will be drawn into that condition, and into that society for which he or she is fitted.

It may be among beautiful characters, in happy homes, surrounded by the loved ones who have gone before; it may be among the selfish and ignorant, with strangers in darkness and sorrow, depending upon the lives we live on earth.

The spirit homes can be made beautiful, for everyone is his or her own architect. Every act of charity, kindness, tenderness and love adds to beauty and comfort for the spirit home, while every act of selfishness, cruelty and oppression, casts a shadow. So that when we enter our spirit homes, we face the deeds of the earth life.

The walls are hung with mental pictures, depicting the thoughts and deeds of our daily life. Little acts of kindness, a word of sympathy, a tender touch, are reproduced and framed in harmony.

Selfishness, unkindness, immorality, wickedness and dishonesty, are pictured and hung on the walls of that home, and there to remain until individual restitution shall cover, or remove them.

Transition.

Under the olden teaching we had been told that death was an awful thing; a thing to be feared; a journey to that country whose shores no traveler ever returns.

We know that these teachings were erroneous. The man has returned from that country. The gateway to the spirit world has been opened. We have heard from the man whom we supposed was dead, and he tells us he is more alive than ever. We have heard from the man (the spirit man) who had never experienced the Christian religion, and he tells us that according to the olden teachings, he is in eternal torment. But this man tells us there is no literal hell as taught by the church; that hell is a mental condition commencing right here on earth and continuing until death.

When he had done his fellow, and that for a time after entering the spirit world, at least a part of his labors will be devoted to the righting of these wrongs.

We have heard from Christian men and women after their transition and they tell us they were disappointed in not meeting their Savior. That whereas they supposed through confessing Him their sins would be wiped away through His mercy, they found that now they must work out their own salvation. They must right the wrongs they have done their fellow; they must seek forgiveness of those whom they have injured, and when this is done and not before, they can move forward in their own progression.

We have learned that death is not an awful calamity, as had been taught, but simply a moving out—a vacating of the earthly habitation, a separation from the material body, a natural incident, which is painless, sometimes conscious, but more frequently unconscious, and the awakening is like the coming from a bewildered sleep.

We were the same last night, before we came to this morning, and we have the same surroundings. We shall be the same after dissolution as before, and probably we shall be in the same place. Where would you go, except to the home you have made for yourself? (The home of love)—to those who, because they are ignorant of your presence, mourn your absence.

Death is like birth, with this exception: In death one takes with him the knowledge and development acquired in this material existence, which, we are told, is a period of preparation for eternity. There is no break; there is only progression to greater possibilities. If, then, this stage was intended for preparation and development, what effort has been made to understand the laws of life? What spiritual understanding has come to the people generally?

One has labored for the accumulation of money for old age, but wealth has not been accumulated for his support and maintenance down the pathway of eternity? How is he prepared to journey into the spirit world? Who is to blame for the ignorance of the world concerning these vital questions?

We are taught that individual spirit is conscious visible thought—soul-life freed from the confines of the physical body; that spirit appears to spirit as material as does man appear to man.

Assuming that he passes over consciously, he may stand beside his body in the same room, see and feel himself as he is, move, sit, stand, walk, talk, think and act, just as before. His old body is before him. He may see the falling tears of the

loved ones hear their cries and feel the anguish that fills their hearts. He speaks, they do not hear. He cries aloud that he is not dead. His arms are about them; but they cannot feel. Then a great fear falls upon them. Why don't they hear? Why don't they answer? What has happened? This cannot be death. He is still at home, though his body lies in the winding sheet, calm and still.

What an experience for a newborn, say, him, graduating into a higher department of life's school without having learned the simplest lesson in preparation to the change.

Would you take a day's journey without preparation and thought of your arrangements? What, then, of this journey into the beyond? Is it not infinitely more important?

The Future of Spiritualism.

Spiritualism is a progressive movement. Almost sixty years of cooperation between advanced teachers in higher spheres and conscientious men and women on the earth plane, has brought about a marked improvement upon human thought and contributed largely to the world's advancement, intellectually, physically and spiritually.

The foundation for this progressive movement is the proof of continuity of life, together with the fact of spirit intercommunication.

Through the one the prevailing materialism of fifty years ago has been practically wiped out, while through the other many useful and beautiful lessons have been revealed from master minds in the spirit world, which has changed the whole modern conception of the future life, and of the universe.

It has removed the sting of death by showing that it is a natural and beautiful event, a welcome visitor to the matured soul whose labors on earth are finished, and who through this change graduates into a higher department of life's great school.

It has shown man's conception of the universe, and of an all-pervading intelligence called God, and confirms the poetic ideal that "This universe is one stupendous whole, Whose body, Nature is, and God the Soul."

So that to-day science is forced to recognize the all-pervading life force pulsating in every atom of the universe, which this material world is only an infinitesimal part. Mediumship in its varied forms is an important agency in this work, without which the higher forces could not act upon the human mind.

Thought force is an instrumentally used by the higher intelligences to convey the messages and impress the sensitive brain of the mediumistic individuals. And Spiritualism is the one religious movement which encourages and develops mediumship.

It is a religion, undoubtedly, some when through intuition (or impression) mediumship, which is a phase of clairvoyance, each individual will be directly inspired by higher intelligences and co-operation between the two worlds becomes a generally recognized fact. But that is for the future, and we must be practical, for we are dealing with present conditions.

The Religion of Spiritualism.

The religion of Spiritualism is a natural religion, because its every tenet is in perfect harmony with natural law.

It is a progressive religion because it recognizes the fact that spiritual growth and progress come through the processes of Nature—and are the legitimate heritage of all mankind in all spheres of existence, both in the now and in the hereafter.

It is a religion because it recognizes the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; or the solidarity of the races.

Furthermore, the ethical standard of Modern Spiritualism is not surpassed by that of any other system of religion or philosophy. It recognizes the Golden Rule as the highest expression of justice, and the Sermon on the Mount as in perfect accord with the lofty ideals which the inspired teachers of to-day are giving forth to guide.

Spiritualism stands for truth, justice, and equality of opportunity for every man, woman and child. It recognizes the fact that Brotherhood in its practical application to everyday life is the ideal of to-day; but that something more is needed, a living reality right here on earth, and I must feel that I was recreant to my duty if I failed to do my humble part toward liberating the people from the present thralldom of materialism by breaking out, instead a system of justice and brotherhood.

In Conclusion.

A great spiritual thought current is now sweeping over the civilized world. Men and women are not content to remain in ignorance. They seek to know the mystery of life and death. They are hungry for knowledge. They want to know what the future; to know where and under what conditions they love and hold most dear life and labor. To such inquiring minds Spiritualism demonstrates that there is no death. Those who have lived their time on this earth, and have passed from sight, still live and love and labor in fields of everlasting life. Make the conditions that nature requires, and the great work of God and great joy is at hand. The law governing spirit communication are simple and natural. Knowledge of these laws does not necessarily require the labor of the theologian, who are generally materialistic, but dealing with material things, having no comprehension of the laws that govern life in spirit. The understanding is within the grasp of the family of all ages, and from this source, knowledge of the spiritual things can come.

To be sure, there are many great problems which cannot be solved by mortals, but the primary truth of continuity of life beyond the physical confinement of the body, has been earned by almost any household in the world to-day by developing the psychic forces in that home.

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THE COMPETITIVE SYSTEM.

Its Exemplification as Outwrought in the Career of John D. Rockefeller—As Depleted From the Standpoint of a Socialist.

There must be somebody at the very height, the top pinnacle—the oil king whose name heads this article is now in the world the crowning success of a system.

With a singleness of life purpose, John D. Rockefeller has followed that system, has put his very soul into it, has exemplified it. He is to-day the most powerful creature on the face of the earth, the most conspicuous, in such exemplifications.

It has always been a precept running through the much advice that is offered people, that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Is there anyone among all the votaries of the system who feels qualified to direct John D. Rockefeller yet more directly showing as to how he might and ought to have dominion over all the earth by this time, instead of what he has already accomplished? In view of history and the facts thereof, it may well be doubted whether the subject of these remarks needs advisers in his special line, or whether there are those qualified to impart to him knowledge of what he does not himself know about his business.

It seems that it may well be conceded that John D. Rockefeller holds the seer by virtue of his own powers, and that he is able to hold it against the world.

So much to show he is the great head of the system.

This is not the system Tom Lawson has been prating about for many months and years. His system is but a twig of the great System Tree which is meant herein.

What is the distinct designation of the system of which Rockefeller is the crowning exemplification? It is the COMPETITIVE SYSTEM.

The term which we now so unconsciously roll our tongues about and concerning which so much sophistry is given by the system's temporary mediocrity is but a sugar coating of what was formerly known as MIGHT IS RIGHT, REGARDLESS OF THE WELFARE OF ALL OTHER FELLOW CREATURES—this and nothing more!

The Knights of Industry understand this quite thoroughly, and no one can truly say they are not consistently living up to their convictions.

Who began the competitive system? Did Rockefeller? Absurd proposition!

The Get-Along-Can System, Regardless of Whether You Oppress All Others in the World, is at least as old as the present civilization, and to blame Rockefeller and his co-conspirators for the sowing of a seed thousands of years ago, which, under natural law could culminate in what it is as the fruits of which we reap today, the more fore-banded, eager and willing harvesters, is as illogical as it is unavailing. "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

Humanity has been sowing this seed for thousands of years, and has built up nations, empires and mighty hosts on the Principle. Thousands still believe the principle is correct, and yet this very day they cry out as loudly as any against the inevitable and logical carrying out thereof the legitimate consequences which are being met by Standard Oil and other great trusts and combines in our country.

Oh, Consistency, thou art a jewel.

All the ear-splitting noise and lamentation now heard directed against the chief beneficiaries of an iniquitous system, comes in the main from the many smaller pigs now crowded away by these beautifully full-grown hogs who monopolize the trough.

This may not be an elegant simile, but it seems to fit the subject.

Of all the people in the world that deny the system, it is seen from the orthodox Christian, the professed followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, are the most singularly obtuse or hypocritical (as the case may be), of any, and yet the writer knows people of high and respectable standing in the church and who get horrified at any suggestion leading from rock-ribbed, deep-rooted churchianity to which they are wedded, who can see no wrong in it, and whose only answer to the whole question is: "You would do the same thing if you only had the chance."

Imagine the sardonic grin that must come to the ample mouth of old John, he himself being such a pillar in the church, when he hears his brothers and sisters in Christ thus express themselves to those who condemn the system.

The grim irony of it ought to make old Beelzebub chortle.

Joking aside, our body politic is in quite a serious condition as a consequence, and the only words of consolation that can seemingly be offered are: "Cheer up, for the worst is yet to come."

True, we now have an eminent physician who is giving all Uncle Sam some of his earnest medical attendance—Dr. Roosevelt of Washington, D. C. He has discovered the Rockefeller disease, and is breaking out. He is applying Trust-Busting Salves in hopes that new skin may heal over the sores. Will this cure the evil now in fact so deep-rooted in the blood, the bone and the marrow thereof?

Certainly not. Until the Competitive System, now in its fruition, has been discovered by true diagnosis to be in fact the old robber system of Might and Right, has been banished, and in place Rational Co-operation, a mild, paternalism, has been substituted, perhaps fairly well exemplified in New Zealand at the present day, and in the City of Glasgow, there seems but little hope for anything but palliative prolongation of the National disease.

We are aware that a doctrine such as this is as obnoxious to the money-chasing Yank, as was the Christ doctrine to the Jewish money-changers that Jesus drove from the temple, but what of that?

If the doctrine is TRUE, however, what matters it what anyone says against it?

Truth is mighty and will prevail, and, religiously speaking, THERE IS NO RELIGION HIGHER THAN

to the now and to the hereafter.

FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN.

Some Wonderful Results of Giving Tiken Sound Training.

A despatch from the daily papers says that the Iowa State institution for feeble-minded children, located at Glenwood, has several "idiot savants" who are regarded as remarkable. One inmate is used as a calculator and date record, another is utilized as a ready rapid calculator, and others show the marvelous but unexplainable traits of the "learned idiots."

Dr. A. R. Schler, assistant superintendent of the institution, has just made his report, as required by the Iowa law. The most astonishing passage in his report is that of John S. taken into the institution when he was 12 years of age and who has been there twenty-three years. He is the mental book-keeper of the home. When the date of any occurrence at the institution is mentioned, as the information, John S. gives it. He recalls without error the date of the employment of any new hand or the entrance or discharge of any inmate.

If he has seen a visitor at the home he can recall the exact date of the visit, the condition of the weather at that time and some of the incidents connected therewith, even though it occurred years before any question is asked him concerning it. If given the day of the month, the month and year of any occurrence as far back as thirty-five years, John S. will, without hesitation, tell upon what day of the week the date fell. Asked how he does it he replies that he does not know.

Marvelous ability is shown by a boy inmate about 16 years of age. He can neither read nor write, yet he can readily spell any word given him, and as Dr. Schler says: "He has been an inmate with unusual words time and time again and never fails to spell them correctly. He is constantly called upon to settle spelling disputes, and is as reliable as a dictionary." Both his parents were insane.

G. F. H., aged 18 years, of Danish descent, can multiply three figures by three figures as rapidly as they can be written down. He never fails in his multiplication feats, but his addition, subtraction and division are not correct.

A 17-year-old boy, R. G. L., without education, is able to mould the forms of animals with almost miraculous perfection. Other figures he cannot make. He has made four or five day mixing figures with dust and moulding the figures of animals, which, from his first attempt, were perfect in almost every detail.

TIMELY ADVICE.

Don't Send Your Children to Sunday School.

To the Editor:—In number 920 of The Progressive Thinker is a short article under the above title from the pen of Eleanor K. Bager, who is well known to lyceum workers and pupils as E. K. E. This little article is laden with so much sound common sense, filled with so much soul-food, that it alone is worth far more than the yearly subscription price of the paper, and it needs careful consideration. It should be read and reread, and well pondered by every Spiritualist in our ranks, especially those who are parents.

Our children are jewels, whose untold worth is above rubies, gold or precious stones.

Error can never eradicate ignorance, but instead will only pile the rubbish higher and sink the truth further out of sight, and make it harder to find when sought for.

We who are Spiritualists, indeed realize with E. K. E. that the teachings of real Spiritualism are diametrically opposed to the mental bondage and creedal, dogmatic superstitions of churchianity, of which the Sunday-schools are the hot-houses, in which the minds of children are bent in favor of teaching church's dogmas.

Surely all thinking persons know that every church looks to its Sunday-schools for the recruits which, sooner or later, must fill its ranks and carry forward its movement.

If the fundamental teachings of Spiritualism are right, it naturally follows that the fundamental teachings of the churches are wrong, for surely the East is not farther from the West than are fundamental principles of Spiritualism and churchism.

Truth does not spring forth from the seeds of error.

We need not expect to reap a harvest of love by sowing only hate; the seeds of hate in the mind of our children for our religion; neither need we expect our children to become Spiritualists if we allow the

IN RETROSPECT.

With an Intensely Practical Bearing on a Far-reaching Prospect.

Looking over a file of papers written by myself under spirit control, one dated in 1882 impressed me. It was headed by the following in quotation marks:

"Everyone is serving, both by word and deed, and all mankind is growing either wheat or cheat. And as is this sowing will the harvest be— Words and deeds are growing for eternity."

"Ye who are searching for truth and sowing the good seeds of truth, love and kindness, will find a harvest of golden sheaves and granaries of wisdom and truth, which alone is true wealth, for in accordance therewith all external possessions are freely given to all who have provided for themselves heavenly, eternal riches."

Here a change of diction came under the caption of "An Electrical Demonstration," referring to the penitential demonstration as recorded in the second chapter of Acts, that was well and carefully prepared—for occasion. The disciples were trained so that they were with one accord in one place awaiting something in keeping with previous promises, when suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind. It filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, etc.

This occurrence should "in these days receive closest study and attention, not only by all mediums and psychics, but by the scientific students, especially those endeavoring to become more closely acquainted with the wonders of that queen of all sciences—electricity."

Note how the demonstration referred to resembled forked lightning. The preparations for that event made it possible that the chemical and electrical matters in spirit control induced all grades of electricity and energy in humanity, and in a certain sense the life. It was due to this that all assembled were addressed by those under this electrical stimulus, in their native language, proving that all are included in these wonderful works of regeneration and redemption from their cruelties, ignorance and vices due to their undeveloped mental states and true spiritual perceptions; that all peoples on earth, even those afar off, should in this be stirred to true action by the spirit of God in accordance with their unfoldment. Yes; even in that degree wherein they are found on the planes of external life in human forms.

In those days of the demonstration referred to, nothing was really known of the wonders of electricity. Gradually only, in these latter days, it is being brought forth in its power and utility. Much is in store awaiting to be brought forth for various uses and to give it its rightful place in its highest offices as universal energy. The crude processes of generating electricity for motive and lighting use will be proofs of how cosmic processes from remotest beginnings were conducted; but the time comes when these processes cease and will be dispensed with, when student can grasp the ideas of how to evolve the earth electricities and supplement them with that of the elements to so prove grades and qualities, and the strengths of said electrical grades and qualities, which later will be supplemented with the earth's and elemental magnetisms, which when will produce a variegated mellow light superior to any the world ever has had and which will be a true curative agency for all human ills.

But all this goes by progressive stages, step by step. It cannot be otherwise, as all these processes are supremely governed.

The time is ripe for greater electrical and spiritual demonstrations than the world has ever yet witnessed. This spiritual outpouring of the present spiritual era was to be largely attended by powerful demonstrations of electrical energy and spiritual wisdom and truth, and for a time owing to the worldly spirit, or rather the sordid, covetous desires for worldly gains will be, as in reality, a hindrance and bar to keep back purposed demonstrations; but in time they will burst forth nevertheless. Tests and the voices of undeveloped spirits which have thronged back those greater works—and will do so for a season—fill a niche to mark the spirit rampant in general in this age of the world, but otherwise confer no real benefit upon humanity.

This is truth and will so prove itself.

I think, Mr. Editor, this needs to be given to your readers now.

MRS. M. KLEIN.

Van Wert, Ohio.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

Love will blind us, cement us and make us one mighty whole. For 'tis the most precious food with which to feed the soul. All other kinds being useless, simply creating 'tis plainly our duty to partake of this kind first. In fact no other attribute so completely transforms man. As love in all its fullness, and nothing possibly can. Then let us feed our souls upon pure and holy love. Such as satisfies the hunger of those darling ones above. Then harmony will prevail in place of selfishness and hate. And for all our earthly sacrifices true love will compensate. Thus filling each and every soul with satisfying food. Purifying and transforming us; thus making each one good. Jealousy, hate and discord, are forever breeders of strife. And make the world miserable in all the walks of life. And such attributes as these will not satisfy the soul. Nor make your lives happy, nor lead you to that goal. Where life with all its changes will end in perfect bliss. And if such a happy ending in this manner you should miss. Do not lay the blame on others, nor on Nature's laws. For yourselves, and you alone, have truly been the cause.

W. H. FREEMORE.

Broken Bow, Neb.

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Impersonation Carefully Considered.

"Aspasia" and the Part She Has Taken in Deception.

An impressive lecture by Charles W. Kee, of Washington, to the readers of The Progressive Thinker, in which he presents some important thoughts on the above subject, for their careful consideration. He refers to the spirit Aspasia, the reputed gifted mistress of Pericles, illustrating the necessity of great care being exercised in determining the identity of the spirit. Any amount of fraud has been practiced under the name of "Aspasia," as she figured so conspicuously in the past. Spirit return is a fixed fact, but what is communicated by spirits should be carefully weighed in the balance of Common Sense.

The astonishing familiarity with the stock terms and phrases heard in the seance room on the part of those who have entered spirit life, and who, in many instances, were never particularly endowed with the faculty of discrimination in matters pertaining to the relative values of mind force, affords a striking intimation that such influences are not in all cases identical with the entities represented, and savors strongly of the interposition or infusion of a foreign intellect, either for the purpose of relieving the embarrassment of the mortal who longingly entertains the hope of communicating with some favored one, or to boldly assume a role under a name of greater or less note for the purpose of emphasizing the value of the communication given, or the quality of the operating influence.

The theory of deliberate deception, however illogical or odious, is not in all cases untenable, and it would be proper to accord to the exarantate entity the same latitude and benefits of arising doubts as we would expect to entertain in passing on the veracity of a statement issued from mortal lips.

This suggestion presupposes the hypothesis of impersonation in a large percentage of cases of physical and independent voice manifestations, the scope of which is probably much larger than will be readily admitted by the more enthusiastic devotees of the theory of the infallibility of spirit communion; and however disparagingly this argument may affect the cherished hopes of a communicant in the conviction of personal identity, it is none the less true that instances of genuine evidence of spirit return, free from the intervening and shaping influence of the forces noted in the atmosphere of the psychic, are rare, indeed.

It will be observed that too much caution cannot be taken with respect to disclosing information in the presence of the psychic.

Not so much is this caution directed toward an honest psychic, as to the fact that the immediate surroundings are permeated with an afflatus prepared to imbibe and reflect the impressions and characteristics of the sensitive to such an extent that, in many cases, the efforts of spiritual forces to impart information with the suggestive aid of the sitters are quite valueless, and are particularly noted as being commensurate with the limitations and qualifications of the sensitive, even to inaccuracies in personal identity.

With rare exceptions the personal likes and dislikes of the sensitive are strongly reflected. No communication may be regarded as complete, as far as the question of identity is concerned, unless the same can be eliminated in every conceivable way from the sphere of influence of the medium, or the peculiar atmosphere surrounding his personality.

This must be fully established in order that the communication may be further segregated from the mentality of the recipient.

These precautions are often disregarded by the enthusiastic who frequently suggest a plausible reply in every question, or charitably frame the conversation that the desired responses are easily anticipated.

Such manifestations are of little value, and are interesting only to the extent of gratifying a selfish desire to hear from favored sources, or to seek advice which encourage personal bickerings between man and man.

Indeed, it is unblushingly and openly admitted in some quarters if the unseen influences cannot aid us in our machinations and schemes against our fellow men, and if they are not willing to retrograde to the level of the crafty mortal, inspired with an insidious desire to foist stratagem upon the unwary, they can be of little use to us; and the mere fact of spirit return, reluctantly admitted in a quasi skeptical tone, is, in itself, a matter of minor importance to them.

The value of the bare truth has a most economical influence upon them, and it is hardly sufficient to cope with the more sentimental and all-absorbing interests incident to an era in which the spirit of commercialism predominates, and pervades the very interstices of present-day activities.

A spirit medium, or control, appears to be as necessary, in so many instances, for the transmission of intelligence on the part of the various spirit forces, as is the more material medium to the mortal; and it appears conclusive that the controlling influence of a sensitive, spirit or mortal, is master of the situation, and the fact of such control is tantamount to the degree of potency which controls absolutely the passivity and trance state of the sensitive, and may modify, receive or reject any or all manifestations between spirit and mortal.

Instances are not few where they have been known to co-operate with the mercenary motives of unprincipled mediums.

Data of this character afford further evidence of the continuity of personal characteristics. Frequent statements coming from spirit forces convey assurances that death is not a process of purification through which the individual becomes immediately changed into a being of infinite goodness.

Evidences of the frequent return of the spirit forces clothed with all the grandeur and nobleness of character indicative of an ideal mortal existence, and displaying capabilities and loftiness of sentiment far beyond the powers of the medium under the most favored conditions, are by no means rare.

An instance is here recalled of the appearance of a form in a room sufficiently well lighted to enable one to distinguish every person present, giving the name of a woman, and who permitted her form to be touched by those present. The form appeared as solid as that of any mortal.

She stated that conditions on this occasion were unusually poor, and that it was not customary for her to appear, but she had decided to do so on this occasion.

Up to this time she had been quite jovial, but finally asked that some subject be given her that she might spin a rhyme.

This being done, she instantly began in a tone which, for loftiness and divine beauty was a most

marvelous production. This was done some three or four times with consummate facility, skill and grace. The subjects were given at random by different persons present, and each one calling for the exercise of an intellectually directed along distinctive channels, and all equally applicable to the encouragement of human endeavor.

The power to perform this was by no means ordinary, and the faculty to improvise in this manner is not found in the common walks of life. The medium was incapable of such a production, and, with all due respect to those who were present, it is safe to say that not one was the proud possessor of such a faculty. Whose form this was I am not prepared to say, but the intellectuality was assuredly not that of any one present. That it would be possible for one to exhibit a power akin to this on occasion is quite possible, but the faculty to issue an extemporaneous effusion, apropos, lofty and pure, is the production of genius.

In other instances, displays of sordid personality and petty limitations emphasize as great disparagement in the qualifications and status of spirit life as can be found before this state is reached in the course of evolution, and clearly indicated that many phases of spirit life are quite inferior to certain developed conditions found on the mortal plane.

The hypothesis of consequent progression incident to every stage and form of life is temporarily escaped to dispose of the question of the apparent retrogression to the conditions analogous to the lowest forms of mortal life, as a link in the long chain of unfoldment, or may we assume that the necessary endowments are evolved on the spirit side of life through countless ages of ethereal existence?

Information on this question from spirit sources is as diversified and unsatisfactory as any conclusions resulting from the sophistry of the logician. The confusion sometimes displayed by the returning spirit involves no little study, and is particularly difficult of clarification on account of the *ex parte* character of the study, and the peculiar conditions, making only certain manifestations possible, and the intricate maze it is conceivable may surround an entity of mediocre intellectuality, as noted in mortal life.

It would, therefore, seem gratuitous to offer explanations beyond a recital of individual experiences, and the definitions of the manifesting entities in the ratio of their applicability to our rules of logic.

The realism of the new life is designated as so striking that the fact of mortal demise is frequently but imperfectly understood.

The occasional simulation of doubt to emphasize this striking situation is not modified by the fact that the most labored effort is frequently necessary to effect evidence of recognition on the part of the manifesting entity, which, when accomplished, awakens the most ardent gratitude and contentment over the realization of a situation which was but imperfectly comprehended.

The question of impersonation is quite impossible of satisfactory determination, since even the most valuable test information may be conveyed to the sitters through an influence unknown to the recipient. I refer to the experience of a gentleman known to me who was constantly receiving communications from a noted historical character, Aspasia—the reputed gifted mistress of Pericles.

At materializing seances forms would appear to him giving the name of this noted woman, and at other seances little messages purporting to come from the same person would be handed to him, as would likewise appear, what was claimed by his spirit friends, her photograph on his plate, as a beautiful spirit identifying herself by the star on her forehead. Her spiritual presence was indicated to him in all conceivable ways, and her visits were so regular that her absence became a matter of remark; and by reason of the intellectuality she is reported to have possessed, those present considered themselves especially honored by her visits to one who never would have been able to participate in the associations honored by the recognition of this noted woman. Her visits became the subject of comment on account of the reputed genius and attainments of the spirit during her mortal career in Athens, where her house was the rendezvous of the savants of the age in which she lived, and the insignificance of her new acquaintance.

Were these two persons to be considered in the light of contemporaneous characters, there would be found nothing which would suggest the slightest sympathy or kinship between them.

These visits by the alleged Aspasia continued until the gentleman suddenly died. It was then supposed that he had at last found Aspasia, and would enlighten us at the earliest opportunity.

Much to the surprise of those who knew him best he failed to visit the seances most frequented by him during his lifetime, and not until six or seven months afterwards did he appear at another place where he was but little known. To his most intimate associates in the investigation of psychic phenomena he has rarely appeared.

He was asked if he had finally found happiness in the realization of his spiritual association with his famous friend Aspasia.

He replied plainly and deliberately that in this respect he was most unhappy. He had not, he stated, met Aspasia, as he expected. He said he had discovered he had never met nor spoken to Aspasia, and that all such representations by someone representing her were impositions, and from what he had learned, he had despaired of ever seeing her.

When asked if the imposition was due to mortal agencies, he stated that the deceptions were those of spirit forces, and such being the case, stated that he would not know Aspasia if he should meet her, nor would he know how to govern himself with reference to any representations made to him concerning her. We could offer no relief from this predicament, and, as a consequence, his disappointment was very noticeable.

Presently, however, another spirit appeared to come to the rescue, and stated that the visits of Aspasia had always been through one, or more spirit mediums, and that on account of her exalted condition in the spirit realms it had been impossible to descend to the coarse level of the mortal plane to meet her friends.

This information seems never to have been vouchsafed during the two years the party believed he was communicating with the identical Aspasia.

It will thus be seen that the field of impersonation embraces every phase of spirit manifestation, and that the question of identity is ever present for determination before any communication may logically and conclusively be accepted.

CHAS. W. KEE.

3224 E St., Washington, D. C.

TIMELY THOUGHTS.

For the Consideration of Spiritualists and Delegates to the Next N. S. A. Convention.

Many months have passed since my return from the N. S. A. Convention held in your city October last, the memory of which is still fresh as the dew in early morn. From the numerous articles that have appeared of late pro and con in the spiritual press and many other advanced publications, and church pamphlets, one can see there is a deep interest being manifested concerning important features in our movement. Our "Convention" should be on the alert and "lend an eye and an ear" to the problems that confront us; also to the important questions laid over, referred to committees to report on in 1907. These questions should find an easy solution, considering such solution will make or mar our cause in the future. Let us hope that sufficient interest and time may be allotted to solve these important questions, that definite plans and purposes may be set forth, that workers in our cause, from the greatest to the least, may know where we stand; that we may have some definite knowledge as to the part our N. S. A. is to take in directing State associations, chartered societies, and specially what protection to the medium speaker and message bearer.

As mediums, what are our rights? To whom shall we look for counsel and protection regarding this country's license laws, which are growing more stringent day by day?

Is our National Spiritual Association able, as a body, to protect its children?

A workman is worthy of his hire. We must be sustained, and we should have in our "National" sufficient prestige to help make these laws that affect our welfare.

We have a "National," but are we organized? In almost every city throughout our land, your spiritual medium is forced to pay a license that has actually forced many out of the work, or induced unjust work on the public, that the daily bread may be had.

We have a fair amount of brain among our people; let us use it for a while, and give our hobby a rest. Men and women who think, and there is something to do, if we would get somewhere.

Our cause, which is the "Light of the World," through the tolerance of slack methods of conducting services, with little or no recognition or observance of spiritual laws, has robbed this name of Spiritualism of its sweeter attraction and left nothing but chaff in many hamlets throughout our land.

The N. S. A., with all of its corps of workers, can do but little with such slack co-operation as seems to prevail.

People are becoming more interested every day, and seek information from "Authority," some source, other than "Any Old Rag Time" or "As you like it" piece.

One can scarcely help seeing (unless it be a crime to think) that our Spiritualists rank to really in need of "discipline," for without system, well disciplined, it will be impossible, as well as improbable, to disguise the approaching cloud that seems inevitable. Or shall we find, when we look at what we have tried to cover up, smooth over, the very condition we should stand united in eradicating.

The outside world knows more of "Spiritualism" than the most of our Spiritualists of forty years standing.

Brother Barrett is to be commended. He has opened a few of its pages, that all may read who will. Let us not let us forget that even in these few pages rests a most important truth that too mightily be overlooked. This is not a one-sided question to be discussed by a few who hold office, but a subject far-reaching. There is a deeper problem, a greater danger confronting us than that which is the words "Commercial Mediumship." Not to you and to me alone, but to our cause, as a movement. Who has a better or larger opportunity to behold "the meek and the lowly" than our president, with forty years of summing up of experience?

Every effort should be made to put Spiritualism on a respectable basis, where spiritually cultured men and women need not shrink when addressed by the spirit forces, or fear of being classed with a lot of immoral, thieving grafters, many of these whose advertisements cover columns of our daily papers, headed "Spiritualism." In many cases their "Diagrams" hang on the wall, and it is these that are supported by our Spiritualists, who about their superiority, until "bunkoed" out of large sums of money; then "Poor Spiritualism" gets a black eye, and with a venomous whisper they try to hide themselves to some "back-woods" and wear a "fake" countenance forevermore.

It is such who shine under our light, but never enter its flame.

It is high time we ask: "Whither are we tending?"

In Sunday Oregonian, June 16, a lengthy article appeared suggesting remedies for protection to our citizens against fortune telling. That means you and me.

No, my friends, we have not yet gained a stand where the problem will be solved that will bring about full protection to mediumship. The world is waiting for an answer—a plain solution.

What is Spiritualism? What does it include, and what does it embrace?

Is Spiritualism a religion? On what are its religious doctrines based?

As a Spiritualist body, are we a creedless, irreligious people? If so, why ordain ministers to preach in a cause with no religious or Christian principles?

As Spiritualists are we a religious body, or are we scientists with collected evidence?

By what means can we gain sufficient acquiescence of authority to force our knowledge, our religion, our science, into a respectable and popular acceptance, or following? We must unite in some spiritual religion, or there will be a worse scattering between the "sheep with wolves' clothing."

A prominent minister in our city, pastor of Trinity Church, Rev. R. Morrison, writes in Trinity Chimes, "No one can be a Christian and not be a Spiritualist."

My friends, can one be a Spiritualist and not be a Christian? The prophets of old, with the teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the Bible, give me a clear, clean-cut Spiritualism, with God, the legions of angels, and the Voice, all accepted, not rejected.

Wise men of ancient days told us what the spirit said. Wise men of these days tell us what the spirit may say. Now then, my friends, let us find what part, if any, mediumship plays in this great religious spiritual Spiritualism. If mediumship, during

its undeveloped unfoldment, has been forced to sell itself for a "mess of pottage" to suit the demand of the sitters, who is the greater spiritual sufferer, think ye? The person who seeks the highest spiritual messages doesn't patronize advertisements that tell names after they have passed through either a "charcoal" or a "chalk," or "candied" pad, then burned before your very eyes, so the "dear spirits" can read your ashes. Awake, ye "blind bats," or ye would get somewhere. This is not an age of darkness, but of light; this is not an age of demand of unseen forces, such balderdash. Just so long as you seek wisdom in the stumens, just so long will our papers be filled with "exposures" of another faker who spreads himself and tells you he is a "medium." It is time we awake to the need of progressive mind. Spiritism comes to bring light, not darkness. When we awake from our long sleep we will find there is something to do beside "wait for a hunch."

As for spirits of the departed burying themselves in the shoddy of this earth's greediness, and its gains to suit the whims of selfish mortal, it is something I do not encourage nor approve. Riches are gained only in the light of the soul. That is the light angels ever strive to bring to us, while they come.

Great care is taken of the unborn babe during its gestative period that nothing may disturb or retard its progress or growth. Similar care, and even greater precaution, should be observed in this "birth" after death. When we are willing to listen to the "still, small voice," and accept its teachings, we shall learn more of what Spiritualism means to the children of earth.

When we have found a response from our own soul, we won't be looking after and forcing mediums to fake, just to gratify base appetites and cause some hideous monster to appear. Cultivate a little "Spiritual Science," "Christian Science," "Mental Science," then Theosophical science, and see how far you have got in "self."

Think ye that Harrison D. Barrett is the only one that has made discoveries? Many others may have learned that "discretion is the better part of valor," and others have been misled in belief that silence was "golden."

It is about time that we had men and women who are not afraid to follow to the end their logical conclusions, and who feel free to give to the world the clearest light of their reasoning. Many valuable suggestions could be advanced along these lines, but time and space in our papers are limited, and one must speak briefly. Already I have encroached on our paper.

In our last Progressive Thinker some mention was made by our N. S. A. of the approaching Convention. Would our delegates be better prepared to act if our President's Message could appear in all of our spiritual papers before the Convention, instead of after? The delegate that will serve the best is the one that fully understands that his or her voice and vote count for more during the hours of the Convention and its session than after. We should all be deeply interested in any fixed law that will mete out, in every State, recognition and respect, and protection to every honest worker, and it is up to you delegates to do it.

Written by a professional medium from birth.

SOPHIA B. SEIP.

Portland, Ore.

TALKING WITH THE MASTER.

I've been talking with the Master, and my heart grew light and free. For I heard His loving whisper when He said, "Come unto Me." All day long I had been troubled, and His promise was of rest; If I'd bring to Him my burdens, He would make my spirit blest.

Then I said, "I'll try, dear Master, but I'm not sure of the way, Thou must keep me kindly near Thee, give me of Thy strength each day." Soft and low I heard the answer in the silence of the night, "Fear thou not, I will watch o'er thee, thou art never from My sight."

Then a vision bright was shown me— In its midst a golden star, As if bidding me look upward toward the peerly gates ajar. Calmly then my soul seemed resting, and I sank to sweetest sleep, Trusting in that loving promise that He would my spirit keep.

Silently some loved ones enter from their home beyond the sky, Proving to us by their presence that the soul can never die; If we'd only listen often, we might hear the gentle voice Of the Master, or our dear ones, that would make our hearts rejoice.

Peace; that blessed gift from Heaven, how it stills the throbbing heart When 'tis crushed by earthly trials, for each one must bear a part; But the Master's voice can soften every care, whatever it be, If we'll heed His invitation when He says "Come unto Me."

West Groton, Mass.

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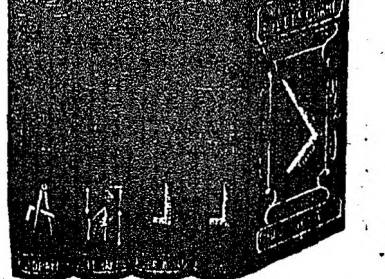
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Reason the Most Trusty Guide.

Is it not possible the world has been misled by that word prophet, which to the English reader always seems to suggest "one inspired of God to reveal the future." The word itself comes to us through the Latin "propheta," from the Greek "prophetes," and is, equivalent to "one who declares things; one who foretells future events; a predictor."

Cowper, in his Table Talks, says:

"In a Roman mouth the graceful name Of prophet and of poet was the same."

Our word clairvoyant, coming to us from the French, defined as "discerning objects not perceptible by the natural senses," is, possibly, a good rendering of the word prophet.

In every period of human existence there have been sensitive who possessed this power of clear vision. It was as common to pagan nations as to Hebrews and modern Christians. History confirms the opinion that the ancient soothsayers, and the modern clairvoyants are identical.

The Jews claimed their prophets were inspired of God, just as many clairvoyants assume they are inspired by spirits; but is it not probable both powers were derived from a common source, and that source an abnormal condition of the nervous system? The starving and the invalid nearing death seem to possess these powers in a pre-eminent degree. The vestal virgins, whose mission it was to watch and keep alive the sacred fires in pagan temples; whose habits of life were regulated by law, and who were generally faultless in character, seem to have frequently been clairvoyant.

Whilst there are many well-marked cases of truthful revelation of future events by clairvoyants, can they be always trusted? In attempts to locate valuable mines, have they not been more frequently at fault than otherwise? Many persons claim to have been financially wrecked by acting on this class of information.

As reason was given to man for his guidance, we venture the opinion that he who lays it aside and allows himself to be wholly directed by prophets, priests or even mediums, are trusting doubtful guides who are liable to mislead both in material and spiritual affairs.

A Practical Religion.

Col. Ingersoll's idea of religion, as expressed in an address to the Unitarian Club in New York, January 15, 1892, was of a practical nature, and a good thing. Responding to his own inquiry, "What is Religion?" the Colonel said:

"Religion is all here in this world, right here. All our duties are right here to our fellow-men. The man who builds a home, marries the girl he loves, takes good care of her, likes the family, stays home nights as a general thing, pays his debts, learns all he can, gets all the beautiful ideas in his mind his brain can hold, has a host of pafings and statuary in his gallery of fine arts, has a niche devoted to music—a magnificent dome fitted with winded notes that rise to glory, and gets all he can from the great ones dead, sways all thoughts possible with those who are alive, is true to the ideal he has here in his mind—brain—he is what I call a religious man, because he makes the world better, happier. He puts the dimples of joy in the cheeks of the one he loves, and lets the gods run heaven to suit themselves. I am

not saying he is right; I don't know. But that is all the religion I have, which is to make somebody else happy if I can."

Who wants or has need of a better religion? Here and now is the place for a practical religion.

An Interesting Colloquy.

The tourist frequently meets with incidents in travel that awaken thought, which, reported, may be of service to others.

It was the fortune of the writer to recently find himself on a railway car with a gentleman of a gentleman of 19, a sophomore in a Western university. The young man possessed large conversational qualities, and seemed confident of his ability to entertain and instruct his aged companion. He said he was giving special attention to the university to the sciences. In two more years he would gain the B. A. degree, then he was to commence a theologic course, and fit himself for the Christian ministry.

"Of course you will give special attention to astronomy while studying the natural sciences," we suggested.

"Yes, that is in our curriculum, and I mean to be thorough in that study."

"Geology and astronomy seem to me to be the most useful of the sciences—to the theologian. Geology gives him a just conception of the earth, its wondrous history as revealed in the rock; of the eternity of matter, and the impossibility of its destruction; while astronomy widens knowledge of the infinite, and elevates him from merely the creation of a little earth, with a sun to illuminate it by day, and moon and stars to give light by night, into the majestic rule of a boundless universe, with more than a hundred millions of suns, each larger than ours and the center of solar systems, all wheeling in space obedient to a common law, of which the Supreme Intelligence is conceded to be the Master Mind."

Our colloquy had, no doubt, a knowledge of astronomy would be useful to a preacher; but "God has given us a revelation of himself in the Bible, the most instructive and valuable of all books, containing all it is desirable for man to know along the lines it imparts instruction."

Our friend was all aflame at once. That dear book, the Bible, was the civilization of the world. Without it we have no knowledge of the beginning; no assurance of the future. Our laws were borrowed from it; society derived its maxims from it; and they who are not acquainted with it are but rude barbarians, and the only hope of the reclamation of the world is through the Bible and the missionary.

By this time the dear fellow's voice had swollen until it equaled that of a Methodist exhorter of seventy-five years ago, while a goodly number of kindred faith with him were adding clinking to fill up chasms in his logic. The roar of a hundred wheels rushing forward at thirty miles an hour over steel rails was lost in the eloquence of the "soph" as he took up the subject of the Junior God, who died on a cross for the world's salvation.

We could only crowd in the inquiry: "Do you really think the creator of a hundred millions of solar systems overshadowed a Jewish peasant girl and became the parent of Jesus? And did that son declare: 'Unless you hate father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children, yea, your own life, you can't be my disciple?'"

Our place of separation reached, the last we heard of our whilom friend he was declaring: "God is capable of anything, and the Bible says he was the father of Jesus, and that book is more trusty than human reason."

But a train of thought was aroused that will bear fruit a few years later, mark that.

Only Error Stands Still.

Sixty hours from New York to Liverpool by means of a gliding craft that is to skim along the surface of the water without penetrating it, is the promise of a French engineer, who has already successfully tested his invention with a twenty-seven-foot boat, which made thirty-eight miles an hour.

If religious thought would keep abreast with scientific advancement, the church would not be clutching at old-time creeds that teach how to placate the anger of jealous and repentant gods.

Successful as an Organizer.

The Supreme Court of New Hampshire has appointed a master to determine the competency of Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy, of Christian Science fame, to manage her financial affairs. He is to report September 30.

Whether competent or otherwise, in a business point of view, Mrs. Eddy has led all other founders of new religions in the number of devotees she has enlisted in her service in a given time.

GOOD ADVICE.

When the weather suits you not, Try smiling.

When your coffee isn't hot, Try smiling.

When your neighbors don't do right, Or your relatives all fight, Sure it's hard, but then you might Try smiling.

Doesn't change the things, of course, But it cannot make them worse— Try smiling.

And it seems to help your case Brightens up a gloomy face; Then it sort of rests your face— Try smiling.

Where all are selfish, the sage is no better than the fool, and only rather more dangerous.—Froude.

The Thoughts of a Scholar.

To those who have emerged from the narrow teachings of the church—survivors of barbaric thought transmitted to modern times through a long succession of ignorant ancestors—how joyous to become acquainted with the productions of the great scholars who have been educated in Nature's lore, who have dared to think and write as become Heaven's noblemen. Tied back to no school of ancient thought, but ever delving to know the truth revealed by science, when their productions are read we feel much nearer the infinite.

Prof. Goldwin Smith, of Montreal, is a thinker and teacher, whose pen productions bear the impress of an enlarged mind always in pursuit of knowledge, and never afraid to declare his honest convictions.

A late writer in the New York Sun has caught the ennobling sentiments of Prof. Smith, and in a review gave expression to his own advanced convictions, which are good to read while sectarians are trying to bolster decaying creeds, only useful to caverned bats and benighted priests whose best thoughts had their birth before science dawned on the world.

But to the extract:

"There is a sentiment, delicate and profound, so sacred that it lives for the most part in silence, yet finds utterances sometimes through a poet. It is the inspiration of Dante; it is the theme of 'In Memoriam'; it is part of the message which makes Browning dear; it has been whispered by many a seer and saint. It is that the beloved dead may be realized as living, and sometimes in closest communion with us—a reality too profound for word or thought, but an incomparable source of energy and peace, of hope and joy. By this, as an emerging fact of human experience, we may interpret that resurrection story to which Christianity so fondly clings; we may divert the story of its miracle and legend and believe that not once alone, but always, and everywhere it is from love and sorrow that the immortal hope and the undying love emerge."

"Other phases of mankind's new spiritual development crowd upon the pen. There is no effort to conceive and realize daily toil not as slavery or drudgery, but as education, as character building force, as social service. There is that sympathy with all sentient life which takes even the brute creation into fellowship. We need not prolong the depiction."

"Our outlook upon the world is by right incomparably more cheerful than that of our fathers. We have learned that growth is a law of the universe. The Divine Energy is recognized as working in and through ourselves. 'With the great grade of God go and encompass the earth.' We see that evil, however perplexing to the intellect, is a perpetual challenge to the will. The combat exacts a heavy price, but offers great prizes—fortitude, sympathy, tenderness, spiritual victory. In a world so friendly as ours we are not afraid to laugh. We accept humor as an essential trait of manhood. When the hero's battle cry has led to triumph we are glad. He should be at ease and his lungs should crow like chanticleers."

"These elements, old and new, of the religion—vividly dawning among men—is it strange that in their wealth and variety they have not compressed and formulated into neat little verbal symbols? And shall we be impatient that the instrumentality for their practical expression take time in the evolving—when even in busiest New York, and under the shadow of the Vatican, we can see the new life moulding its organs? Already, chaotic as the times may seem, the loyal will and aspiring soul can find ample soil and genial climate. Already, though across decades or centuries, we can see the universal religion into which the older creeds dissolve—as morning drinks the morning star."

Even Catholics Think.

A telegram from Rome of date July 18, represents the Pope issued the day before a syllabus correcting sixty-five propositions of leading Catholics in regard to dogmas which do not meet his approbation. It is to prevent the acceptance of these errors that the syllabus was issued. Those "errors" seem identical with the great truths Protestantism is contending with; but the latter lack a general head to efface opposition regardless of the truth.

It is a pleasure to note that Catholic thinkers, according to this allocation, repudiate the infallibility of the "holy scriptures." They claim the bodily resurrection of Jesus is not a historical fact. And then they deny that the Roman Catholic Church became the head of all Christian churches by divine ordinance, but maintain that end was obtained by political circumstances, which properly interpreted would mean gross usurpations.

These enemies of the church the Pope combats, teach the church is the enemy of the natural sciences; that Christian doctrine was first Jewish, then Pauline, later Grecian, then universal; and that the principles of the Apostles' Creed had not the same significance to primitive Christians as to those of the present time.

It is apprehended that men of brains will not change their opinions on the subjects mentioned because of papal dictation. And as inquisitorial fires have lost their efficacy, division in the church must widen with expanding knowledge, probably ultimate in another reformation later on.

AN ALARM SIGNAL!

A Grave Crisis!

There is a GRAVE CRISIS rising in the ranks of Spiritualism. The very foundation of our beloved Cause is being THREATENED with destruction. The tendency everywhere in the large towns and cities is to IMPOSE a heavy license fee on mediums, thus being linked with fortune-tellers, palmists, clairvoyants and unscrupulous tricksters.

A WAVE in that direction HAS SET IN, and a LICENSE long ago would have been placed on mediums in this city had it not been for the efficient service of the Illinois State Association of Spiritualists, headed by Dr. G. B. Wayne.

All this serious trouble has arisen from the simple fact that so many tricksters and charlatans HAVE INVADED OUR RANKS, carrying on their nefarious work, swindling the public generally.

We have continually warned Spiritualists that unless they took action in the matter, and separated genuine Spiritualism from the spurious, that a WAVE OF OPPOSITION would start against our Cause, resulting in no end of trouble.

The Progressive Thinker has been the only Spiritualist paper that has sounded THE ALARM! For several years it has presented incontrovertible evidence that our Cause has been infested with the WORST SET OF VILLAINS that ever disgraced any sect or cult, and while the result has been MOST EX-

lactly council is abundantly able to declare any act criminal within the scope of the license power, whether the laws of the land recognize such act as being criminal or not. As a result, nearly every objection offered, or favor requested, no matter how clearly within the scope of legitimate practice, were promptly refused.

Both of the witnesses for the prosecution testified that neither by word of mouth, nor by newspaper advertisement, nor in any other way, had she "professed" to be a "life reader," nor did she profess to be anything, nor do anything except as a Spiritualist medium. The door sign was simply "Spiritualist Medium." Both men testified that they asked, first: "Are you a palmist?" "Are you a fortune teller?" "No, I am a Spiritualist medium," and both testified to the kind of spirit messages usually given under such conditions. These were held to come clearly within the scope of "Life Readings," as contemplated by the city council, and the accused was promptly found guilty, and a fine of \$35 imposed.

An effort was made to introduce a letter from President Barrett and from officers of the Wisconsin, Montana and Washington State Associations, endorsing her work, etc., but all were promptly refused, and in the absence of any regular ordination certificate, would have been of but little value anyway, under the circumstances; and because of the absence of such official authorization, and for other reasons, it was decided not best to make a test case of it, and no appeal was taken.

In conclusion, and by way of suggestion, whether it may meet the approval of the readers of The Progressive Thinker or not, in my opinion, Spiritualism, as an organic religious movement, is facing a very grave crisis. What is commonly known as the "Police Power" of a government, or the taxing power, the power under which municipalities, counties, etc., are authorized to impose taxes upon property, franchises, professions, etc., for revenue purposes, is practically an unlimited power; and the only reason doctors, priests, preachers, and such professions, are not taxed, is because the power behind the throne is the man who operates the ballot judiciously. And until Spiritualists generate enough common sense to get together and secure representation in the law-making and law-executing functions, they may expect the burden of public restrictions to grow heavier and heavier. It is easier and not one-half so expensive and humiliating to gain exemption from an ordinance while it is being passed, than it is to evade its provisions on the plea of religious liberty after it becomes a law.

J. L. DRYDEN.

SIGNIFICANCE OF COLORS

Some Trendant Thoughts in Regard to Them.

I resolve a thought about color, as to which are the strongest. Just now it is summer time. Green is the strongest color at present. It is the color of youth, hope and joy. We live off the green fields. Why? For instance, that whole world is green. We get our food from the fields. Our chickens live off the green, and if they do not have grass to eat, their eggs are poor. Our milk and our meat we get from the green fields.

Most of our fruits are green, and our eyes we protect with a green shade. Now, why do I say green is the most powerful color in the whole world? You may study it as you like.

Next, take red. Red is the fire color, symbolic of passion, power and riches. Powerful rulers wear robes of red. Men of cruelty, executioners, and members of the inquisition were clothed in red.

Blue is for fidelity, tenderness, spotless reputation—the true blue, you know. It used to be that yellow stood

for glory and fortune. Yellow being the color of gold; but since the Christian era it has changed in meaning, for during the middle ages the Jews were forced to wear yellow, and the doors of traitors were smeared with the yellow of eggs.

Black, which is the absence of all color, means sadness and mourning, stands for inspiration and poetry. It is also the color for brides.

It is rather interesting to know about these colors, and when we wear colors of any kind I believe our lives are guided by them. This explains why one person likes one color and another person likes another.

In winter the earth is covered over with beautiful white snow. White, I say, is the prettiest color. It is the symbol of purity and good, and is most becoming to brides. It shines outward and penetrates the spirit powers of Christ, of love and of truth.

MRS. M. SUTTON.

St. Louis, Mo.

There would be more happiness in the world if we would rejoice more with others instead of deigning sympathy with their sorrows.—Max Beer.

Gideon's Band.

Bible history narrates many peculiar—not to say funny—episodes, whether taken as statements of real facts, or as "just talk."

A case in point is the narration about Gideon and his exploits, the veracious chronicle of which may be found in the book of Judges. It is an interesting story, and does not purport to have been written by an uninspired historian.

The Midianites and Amalekites had gathered an immense army, which "lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seaside for multitude." The Lord appeared to Gideon, and promised by him to smite the hosts of Midian.

Gideon gathered an army, small by comparison with the enemy, but the Lord told him there were too many, "lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, mine own hand hath saved me."

"Now, therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying: Who-soever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early. And there returned twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand."

"And the Lord said unto Gideon, the people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there. * * * Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lapped, shalt thou set by himself. * * * And the number of them that lapped were three hundred men. And the Lord said unto Gideon: By the three hundred that lapped will I save you."

The singular thing in this is that three hundred thirsty men lapped water with their tongues "like a dog." In all the history of the world since man has walked erect on two feet, aside from this infallible account, was it ever known that a thirsty man lapped water with his tongue, like a dog? And that three hundred men should do it, on one occasion, seems indeed a miracle. Rather it was three hundred miracles joined in one. Three hundred men lapping water with their tongues, like a dog—reader, in your mind's eye, just look at 'em.

But that was not the only miracle. Gideon divided the three hundred into three companies. Each man carried an "empty pitcher" and "lamps within the pitchers," and a trumpet.

"And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal; and they cried: The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

This occurred at night.

The outcome finally was "there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men (Midianites) that drew sword." They slew one another, mostly.

We make no comments. The story speaks for itself.

THE GOD IDEA.

It Is Completely Settled at Last!

To the Editor:—In your issue of July 13, 1907, we are favored with a short article of M. Severance of North Charleston, S. C., entitled "Waste of Brain Force."

The world's people, even at this day, must not certainly owe Brother Severance a debt of gratitude for the prompt warning given as to all this waste.

In harmony with Nature's Law of conservation of force, he has manfully stepped to the breach, and has called a ringing halt to this hitherto endless, and, as he deems it, useless pouring out of brain power in the quest of a God.

Ever since human beings first came on earth, then, the millions upon millions of human brains have been carried away by a delusion. All the tons upon tons of tomes devoted to the subject are therefore, worthless, are, worse, for they are "waste," says Brother Severance. They are the lower form of savage up to and including Shakespeare, Lowell, Milton, Dryden, Tupper, and thousands of others of world-noted thought-capacity, including Pope, with his immortal lines—

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole."

Whose body Nature is and God the Soul!—

all have been seeking to deal with "something that only exists in the nod of man," as Brother Severance puts it. How did this idea come to enter so many "minds," and in what fortunate manner did Brother Severance escape such impregnation of thought in his brain?

It is true that Brother Severance does not define what he means with the term God, further than to say, "a God, any God," nor does he state any of the evidence upon which he bases his positively expressed conclusion, neither of which he could in his article of not more than 20 lines.

The only thing to be inferred, then, is that Brother Severance, as a great discoverer, has simply announced in the concrete, in the few lines with which he favors us on the subject, a disapproval, startling and reaching back through all time, necessitating an absolute reversal of the world's conception up to now, of the entire God-idea.

Naturally, and we might say, fairly, in a matter so far-reaching throughout all thought and mind conceptions of the past, and because of the fact that Brother Severance so far as yet to be inferred, alone possesses the proof positive in establishment of his contention, his conclusive evidence that there is not "a God, any God," will be laid before a now startled and hitherto deceived world.

Crescent, Nev.

F. O. CHILSTROM.

SOUL SUBSTANCE.

It Is Not Absurd to Suppose It Has Weight.

The hypothesis of Drs. McDougal and Sproule, after weighing the bodies of men immediately before and after death, which has moved some people to ridicule soul weight, is not their definite conclusion. They have not undertaken to establish a ridiculous proposition by scientific experiment. How have a soul and the wise people determined that this unaccountable loss of weight must be attributed to something else than the flight of soul? Have they performed any experiment to disprove it?

"They are either mistaken, or have some ill-defined belief in Christian theology. They evidently believe in some vague, intangible, immaterial soul. They ask: How could a soul escape so easily, and where could it go?"

An intangible, immaterial soul would have no difficulty in getting loose from anything. It would go either to an imaginary heaven or a fictitious hell.

If it is immaterial, it is nothing and does not exist. If a soul exists, it must be composed of something. We should not assume to say how big it is nor how much it should weigh. To assume that a soul weighs some thing is a reasonable inference, and not absurd. De Lanne and other scientific Spiritualists argue for a fourth state of matter, forming an invisible organism within the body, and called the perispirit, because containing the soul or spirit. They furnish an immense array of evidence for the existence of this organism. They claim it is the organism seen by clairvoyants and mediums and forming what are known as ghosts or apparitions. They have not assumed it to have any weight, but it may have. A man once described to the writer how he saw this organism roll or ooze out of the body of a dying child.

A spiritual body ever lives in a spiritual, ethereal, or met-etheral world, and having no terrestrial attraction, therefore no weight. It may be as real as radium, or other things which have always existed, but are only recently discovered. The etheric Brahmin and the modern scientific doctrine of interpenetrating spheres are based on the analogy of the interpenetration of gases, liquids and solids, they in turn permeated by the universe ether. The interpenetration of sound and light, electric and Hertzian waves, X-rays, and other vibrations, do not interfere with each other's domain. The etheric vibrations which cause light and heat, plunge through the absolute zero of inter-stellar space, black, cold and invisible. Only when they strike refracting substances do they change into what we know as light and heat. It is not strange, then, if a soul has weight and escapes into a world as real as our own.

The description of the escape of the spirit of the dying child was given to me by an old negro by the name of Dave, a former slave. I found him to be a person of sensitive, and had him relate several of his experiences.

At the time of this occurrence he was living a free man in southern Ohio. Another old negro, by the name of Tom, gave to him and said: "Dave, you know that my brothers were sold in slavery and I never knew what became of them; I do not know whether they are dead or living. I dreamed last night that I was going up to a big house. I saw into a very fine dining-room, where everything was mighty fine on the table and my brothers were in there, setting the table. They said to me, 'Tom, you came mighty near being too late.' I said to them, 'I like to know what this dream means.'"

Dave said to him: "Tom, those were your brothers that you saw in there. They are all dead and they are getting ready for you. You are not going to live much longer, and if you have any business to settle up, you had better do it and get ready, as you do not have much longer to live."

So this advice was taken, and as a fact Tom did die a few months later. Some months after this, a little girl, a grandchild of Tom's, took very sick and Dave was sent for to visit the child, as he had the reputation of being skilled in treating the sick. The girl grew rapidly worse and in a few days she died. Dave came in one day and saw that the child was dying. He stood at the bedside, watching the death struggle. After a time, another child, identical in appearance, seemed to be coming out of the body of the dead child. The approach of the new child seemed to roll out, or ooze from every pore; the feet and lower limbs appearing first. Soon a complete child lay on the bed, a perfect counterpart of the corpse. This time the mother brought the child to her face, crying out, "O, my child is gone." The grandmother, who was sitting in another part of the room, also began to cry. The spirit child stepped down on the floor and went over to the grandmother and tried to attract her attention; but the grandmother paid no attention, as, of course, she could not see the spirit. Then, at this time, the spirit of the grandfather came in through the door and seemed to call the child, who went to him and they both went out through the door.

This is evidence of the existence of a psychic body or spirit, such as is described by A. J. Davis and others. We presume it is the same thing that is claimed to be seen by mediums and called a spirit, or a ghost, when seen by others not mediums. De Lanne and others argue for the existence of such a body, sometimes called the perispirit, and supposed to be formed of matter in a different state from what we know as matter. Who knows but what this is the body or organism which makes the slight difference in weight noticed by Drs. McDougal and Sproule in weighing the bodies of the dying in their series of recent experiments.

DR. C. C. CARTER.

Lancaster, O.

WHEN AGE COMES ON.

Love has no age; 'tis always young; Browns may be marred and heads bent down; Gray hairs may come to gleam among The locks that once were soft and brown.

But not love forsakes the heart Does age arrive or youth depart.

Love laughs at years which dim the eyes And mocks the ruthless lines that mar; Love sees no skies but rose-likes, And ne'er from childhood wanders far.

'Tis only after love is gone That youth departs and age comes on.—Selected.

He who is afraid of asking is ashamed of learning.—From the Danish.

Religion and Literature.

As Graphically Portrayed by that Eminent Thinker and Careful Student of History, Judge Parish B. Ladd, Alameda, Cal.

From out the depths of archeological time when reason had not been born; when conception was in embryo, primordial man dreamed, speculated and promulgated crude theories and drew on the unknowable for materials out of which to construct an ideal pantheon of divinities. Countless ages flitted on the sunbeams of the meridian and east their shadows behind them, while this homo theorized on the unknown past, the unrealized present and dreaded future.

Out of the chaos of this muddled brain was born the magical germs, which in after years were destined to sway the world. The sun, moon, stars, the heavens, the earth, the oceans and all other visible phenomena were so many living beings. Thus this troglodyte created a phantasmagoria for illuminating the pathway of life here and hereafter. Out of this pantheon of divinities arose an hierarchal embodiment of divine wisdom to pilot the denizens of earth from the land of sorrow to the elysian fields where dwells immortal life. The numerous religions, each in its time, became the predominant factor in its day. All to-day move in the world's dreams. The older ones, dead and gone, live only in history. Some of the living ones sport on the pinnacle of fame. All are mortal; birth, life and death, are the fate of all that is mortal.

But, says science, there is no life nor death; eternal change is nature's decree. With all the theories and speculations of the past concerning the source of life, its continuance beyond the grave, and of the existence of an intelligence above that of man, the world is just as wise to-day as when primordial man first sat down to theorize and speculate on the unknowable. More time, study and discussion have been given to this subject than to all others, and whole libraries of books have been written thereon. Written history comes down to our time loaded down with theories, speculations, doctrines, dogmas, dissensions, quarrels, persecutions, tortures, violent deaths, wars and desolation, all growing out of conflicting opinions on religion, the field of Christianity more profuse in these terrible crimes than all others combined. Nor is the end yet, or soon to be, unless the helping hand of reason and humanity intervene to stay the conflict.

Is it not time that the world, the Christian world, commenced to think, reason on religious matters, to give and take, agree to disagree, each to entertain his own opinion, cease quarreling about religious matters, and come to a realizing sense that the thinking world is moving?

Evolution in thought, as never before, is dominating the world, nor can the feeble efforts of the clergy, however earnest, stop the progress of modern thought. The cleric who refuses to move along this new line must take his old worn-out ox-cart from the track or be run over or thrown into the ditch from whence there is no exit.

Let us agree to be humanitarians, to cherish and respect the opinions of all who differ from us; live virtuous lives, not only for our own comfort and happiness, but that our posterity may follow our lead and say, when we are no more, that the world is better because of our lives.

In life's early morn, man, in his savage state, turned his first thoughts to the various phenomena around him, and therefrom constructed a crude religion. This was his first step in advance of the living world below him; the dim light of physical nature forced him to ask himself: "Why all these numerous phenomena?" But a step above the brute creation, he commenced to speculate on animate and inanimate nature; the product was a religion.

From that day down through the long vista of time, has man continued to theorize and speculate. Centuries and countless ages have come and gone, and we ask: Is man to-day any nearer the final goal than when a child of the long time ago? Does he know the whence and why of his religious sentiments?

A dead silence is the answer! Nature still holds her secrets. Would that all writers on the religions of the world, especially an Christianity, were honest, but the overpowering interest of the cleric to maintain his place forbids such a hope. Give us real historical facts and let the consequences be as they may, should be every writer's motto. Such is the rule with all honest men. The writer who starts out to write a book or otherwise for the purpose of supporting preconceived notions or opinions, cannot, as a rule, be honest, unless such opinions have been formed after a full and fair investigation of all the facts. Such writers too often devote their time to concealing and covering up the truth; to do which they are ever on the alert to twist and bend real facts to support preconceived opinions.

All we know of the past and the real life of the living religious systems of the world, comes down to us in tradition and living history. Much of this history comes to us from monumental inscriptions, largely from Egypt and from the cuneiform writings found on tablets among the ruins of the cities of Chaldea and Babylonia. To this, ancient India has contributed her records. Science and criticism have, in late years, come to our aid in clearing up much of the mystery which for long ages hung over the religions of the world.

The world of to-day is flooded with books, and the tide of literature continues to flow on. Few books are of value; many are without merit. A book which does not, in some way, instruct, is worthless—a detriment to mankind. Nine-tenths of all books deserve cremation, that good may result. So says the prospective author who sits down to add one more to swell the tide. But the field of instructive literature has not been deluged; there is still new ground to be explored, and even some old fields may be profitably re-worked. With all the present literary flood, the great mass of mankind is groping its way along the old blind trails of error, ignorance and superstition; such people prefer to idle away their time and journey in their old ox-carts while others ride in palace cars.

The religious area has been flooded—much of it laid waste with writings of almost every conceivable kind, the larger part of which is dull, some extremely stupid, not a little of it mere empty, meaningless jargon; much being used in vain attempts to explain the contradictions, confusions and nonsense of the Bible; some on the extant writings of the church fathers, some still floating on tradition. A few people think; a far less number reason—especially on religious matters; hence errors and groundless beliefs hold the fort. Many books on religious matters are written by timid men who attempt to hide their real opinions behind the veil of obscure terms and circumlocution. It is this style which dominates the most of our more intelligent clerics of to-day, who have outgrown the old fabric but are holding on to secure their rations.

Such books are worse than useless, as their effect is to throw dirt into the eyes of the reader.

Some men write books more to exhibit their style of language than to instruct. Many of such books are valuable as arts of composition, and for their rhetoric and logic; many of these books are filled with beautiful words and rounded-off sentences—sometimes at the expense of substance. The small number of men possess clear, well-defined ideas. Such men are the light of the world; they give us facts and opinions in clear, concise and direct language, so that all may understand them; ambiguity and circumlocution are no part of their makeup. Such men are not only our best writers, but they produce about the only books worth reading, especially in this age when the reader has no time to idle away over an unnecessary array of words.

On going through our large libraries, how few books do we find that could not have been written on one-tenth of their space and thereby have been made more intelligible. No one has realized this fact more than I in being compelled to read an almost endless number of volumes to obtain material for my writings. It is the hope of the writer that he has been able in his extensive researches to collect, condense and put into numerous writings about all that is requisite for most readers to know concerning the birth and early life of the great religions of the world, more especially the Hebrew and Christian systems. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on whether the world wants facts or fiction, I have had the time, patience and will to do this work. The most of book students weary in going over so much for so little in value. The student who is seeking for facts only, soon learns by a few superficial glances over the pages of a book what is of value and what is mere verbiage. The greater number of the frequenters of our libraries find their affinities in books of fiction, when the book and the reader are of the same makeup. Among what are known as popular works, there are some of value, but of a limited kind, as lessons in rhetoric, style, ethics, composition. Then we have works of art, science and history, whose patrons are real students, but few in number; they are the world's guides—i. e., in the field of thought; their aim is to benefit mankind; their writings are beacons of light for all who possess the ability to think and the courage to act. Religious books, with which our libraries abound, are, as a rule, written by men whose business it is to believe and to dogmatically command others to believe.

These men, if reasoners, too often silence their reasoning faculties from motives of interest, and pretend to rely on faith. Faith has no use for reason. It is blind obedience to the dogmatist, or faith in a book which the believer, if a Catholic, is commanded not to read; if a Protestant, he seldom takes the trouble to read it, but relies on his teacher to interpret its meaning; this interpretation is too often the result of self-interest at the expense of truth.

Such writers seldom use their faculties, other than in the attempt to twist and warp history and science to suit their wishes. Such men were born, or taught to believe—to have faith—not to doubt; doubt to them is a crime; but this does not deprive doubt of its genius, for the civilization of the world owes its all to doubt—to the embryotic child of genius. Had there not arisen men who doubted, the world of to-day would have been sleeping away its time in the cradle of primordial ignorance. All of our great discoveries in the arts and sciences, and of archeological history, owe their existence to doubt—of the current beliefs and opinions. Had not Copernicus, Galileo, Bruno, Newton, Kepler, the Herschells, et al., doubted, all christendom of to-day would have believed the earth to be a flat surface, and that the sun, moon and stars were made to revolve around it.

Religious works, next to fiction, seemingly command the most attention. Yet, on religious matters, especially as to the origin of religion, its infancy and childhood, most people are profoundly ignorant; they have never doubted the words of their teachers. In far too many cases it is the blind leading the blind. In the cradle of blind faith these people have slept away their lives, unmindful of the inroads which are everywhere being made on old opinions by archeological history, science and criticism. They never progress, but live in the long ago—in the dead past—in the primordial simplicity of their remotest ancestors. Even most of clergy-men of to-day know no more of the source of their religion than a church mouse does of Greek, much less do they know of the older religious systems.

Max Muller, one of our greatest scholars and most profound thinkers, of any age, rightly says: "He who knows but one religion knows no religion." He further says: "To understand the Christian religion one must know its source—the great religions of Babylon, India, Egypt, Greece, Rome, et al." Knowledge is only had by comparison; one must know the past in order to understand the present, for the present is but the result of past evolution. This applies to religion, language, writing, thought, in short to all that goes to make up our civilization.

The Christian who claims that his religion is something new; that it is different from all others, simply puts his own ignorance on exhibition. The layman, as a rule, relies on his clergyman; the cleric speaks from his Bible; the Bible is his infallible guide; but he has no knowledge of who were its authors, when or where, or under what circumstances it was written; he, by often repeating it, has acquired the habit of saying it is inspired, i. e., written under the guidance of some supernatural power; but of that power, or being, as he calls it, he has no more knowledge than the day-fly, whose birth, life and death are of but a single day; nor can he give us the slightest idea of the specific location, form, habits, attributes, or else, of this supernatural being; nor does his Bible help him out of this dilemma.

Like the other habit, he has learned to say many idle and foolish things about this supernatural being. If it, he, or she, has form, thinks, reasons, has the power, is just and humane, why all the crime, misery and suffering in the world? If the devotee will go to his Bible, more especially to the Old Testament, he will there find his god to be an overgrown man possessed of all the attributes, good, bad and indifferent, which have ever characterized the human race. In short, he is pictured as a demon, a tyrant, a cruel savage, a kind and humane father, a saint, a friend, a murderer, a humanitarian, a peace-maker, a lover of war, etc., ad infinitum.

It has been with the hope of throwing some new light (new to some) on the origin of the numerous books and other writings of the Bible; of their authorship and times, with numerous other things of a

religious nature, that the writer was induced to enter the field as an iconoclast, not in the sense of breaking down true theories, but as a truth-seeker after the manner of those who pull down old fabrics that new and better structures may be erected on their old sites.

Let us have the truth, which is at all times at harmony with itself. It is only error which quarrels; the more and the greater the errors the more severe the conflict, which has been exemplified during the whole life of Christianity. The numerous and bloody conflicts which have from time to time marred the harmony are the result of errors and crimes, which for more than a thousand years hung like a nocturnal demon over the face of all christendom, blotting out every vestige of humanity and civilization.

It has been estimated by the most competent authorities that more than 200,000,000 of human lives were blotted out in these disgraceful conflicts, all to appease the wrath and satiate the thirst of the church for power and dominion. All claimed to be in obedience to the precepts and teachings of the Bible, a book which no two readers have ever been able to understand alike, which has produced opinions as diverse and numerous as the pebbles tossed by the rolling deep, cannot be of preternatural or of divine origin, nor the work of intelligent, clear-minded men.

As we now know it is a book written by men whose devotion to religion far excelled their intelligence, and written by unknown men when religion was deemed of all-importance; a book of slow growth, extending over a period of some fourteen hundred years—a thousand for the Old Testament and four hundred for the New Testament. That this great diversity of opinion is not the fault of the readers, but of the incongruous nature of the contents of the book itself, which is so apparent on the face of the text. It is the incomprehensibility of that book which charms the weak-minded reader.

The sooner we understand the true history of the Bible, the better for truth, justice and humanity. Let us come together, greet each other in friendship; agree to disagree. Then, and only then, may the world live in harmony, with truth, peace and humanity as its motto.

History and the higher criticism make the Bible the valetting-child of ages; its accretions and denudations were the work of time and of numerous writers; first largely from tradition, to which was added scraps of writings of unknown authors; followed by numerous changes, edited, revised, enlarged, curtailed and redacted by numerous other unknown writers, who left but few footprints on their work.

These writers lived in times when ignorance, credulity, piety and superstition held the world in their nocturnal shadows. They believed, not in natural law, but in divine revelation—in dreams and omens. They were not reasoners; ignorance, passion and prejudice were their guides. How could such a book, written by such men, and in such times, ever so long a period, and with so many changes, be made to harmonize? The impossible cannot by any amount of inspiration be made to harmonize.

All of the substance of the Bible is traceable directly back to older religious systems, in which the sun-god of old paganism, under diverse names, occupied the head of the great pantheon of the world's divinities, and this, our great solar orb of to-day, is but the Jehovah of the Hebrews, and the first god in rank of the Christians. The Christians may theorize that they are worshipping a real supreme being, but who is none other than our great luminary, our bright, material, non-intelligent sun, which gives us light by day and hides its face at night.

SPIRIT VISITATION.

Two Remarkable Cases as Related by That Great Daily, the New York World, Illustrating the Great Interest in Occult Subjects.

In the fall of 1885 I was cook and general handy man, or rather boy, on the antiquated, unseaworthy brick schooner Despatch. The old vessel at the time was skippered by Captain Tommy Butler, of Northport, L. I.

We were to sail at 4 a. m. the next morning, taking advantage of the flood tide running at that hour. The captain, with the other two members of the crew, Joe Lillis and Bob Donohue, had gone ashore, taking the wavy, and we engaged in freighting brick from the yards at West Neck to various points on the Sound as far east as Providence, R. I.

On the night the visitation I am about to record appeared to me we had taken on our cargo during the day and were towed out to anchor in the harbor a mile off shore.

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without sacrificing my boyish vanity or being accused of cowardice, for I must confess I began to feel a sensation bordering on panic. The men tried to convince me that I had fallen asleep and dreamed. It is scarcely necessary to say that I was never more wide awake in my life.

The wind came out strong from the northwest in the morning; being near to a gale, and made sailing on schedule time an impossibility. This was a reprieve for me, but a reprieve only, as still lacked the moral courage to openly quit.

My chance came though when, about 9 a. m., the captain sent me ashore to procure some stores that had been forgotten.

At the store I met a boy with a message from my father about improving me to remain at home this one trip and assist him with some work.

Ordinarily the request would have had little weight with me, but on this occasion my filial duty, assisted by my fear, was strong within me. Much to Captain Butler's disgust I informed him that my presence was needed badly at home.

They sailed at noon without me, the wind having moderated slightly. The vessel sailed safely out of Cold Spring harbor into the Sound and steered east. At dusk off Eaton's Neck, in sight of the life saving station, the vessel was stopped by a sudden squall and went to the bottom almost instantly with her heavy load of brick, carrying the unfortunate men with her. Not one of the three was saved, although all were good swimmers. In my own mind the thing explained itself. I ask no other explanation.

JOHN REDINGTON, JR.
119 Third Place, Brooklyn.

Saw a Spirit in the Dark.
In the winter of 1887 I was employed on the London (Ont.) Daily Free Press, working night and board with a Mrs. Gunn, on Wellington street.

I had been living there about two months when Mr. Brown, Mrs. Gunn's father, died. I had never seen him in life, and had never heard of him. He lived about two miles from Mrs. Gunn's, but on account of better accommodations she had the funeral at her house.

The body was brought over and placed in the parlor. My bedroom was off that room, and that night when I got home two daughters of Mrs. Gunn and Mrs. Merrill, her sister, besides two boarders, were "sitting up" with the corpse.

As I passed through the parlor Mrs. Merrill asked me if I would like to look at the body, but I declined. I then went into my room and closed the door, but did not go to sleep. I awoke with a start. I was lying on my right side facing the outside of the bed, and right in front of me and almost on a line with my pillow was the figure of an aged man. Although the room was dark, I could see it as plain as day.

I stopped turning and it stopped moving. By this time the cold perspiration stood on my forehead in drops, and I turned my face quickly toward the wall.

As I did so "it" seemed to go around the foot of the bed, when I turned my face to the front of the bed again and called, or rather screamed, to the folks in the parlor.

They all came in, one of them carrying the table lamp. I told them that I had had a rather unpleasant visitor and described what I had seen. As I got through my description the elder Miss Gunn said:

"Why, Mr. Ferguson, that was grandpa; get up and take a look at him in the coffin."

I said: "No, thank you; if that was your grandpa, I have seen all of him that I want to see this night."

Someone suggested I had been dreaming, but when I told them that while I looked at "grandpa" I heard Mrs. Merrill telling a story, they were satisfied I was awake.

They remained in the room until I partly got back my nerve, but it was near daylight before I again got to sleep. The next morning they were on the lookout for me, as they were anxious to know how the corpse in looks compared with the "ghost."

I went over to the coffin and took at the body, and what I saw at my bedside was a counterpart of what I was looking at in the coffin, to the minutest detail.

What I tell here is as true as gospel; but whether I saw a "ghost" or not, I will leave it to your readers and the committee of scientific men to determine.

THOMAS FERGUSON.
16 Wabon street, Boston, Mass.

The Water Witch Question.
In regard to the question of "water witching," which seems to bob up occasionally in your paper, I would like to add my testimony to that of your Oregon correspondent in a late number of The Progressive Thinker.

I have not only seen the stick twisted nearly off in another person's hands, but I have held it myself so firmly that the ends did not move and the bark was split and the stick nearly broken at the point where it bent.

I have walked blindfolded over the spot, not knowing where it was, with the same results. So whatever the cause may be, it cannot be laid to any conscious or unconscious action of the muscles in the fingers. Whether it was water or mineral that was indicated I do not know, for I never saw it tested. I only know the hazel fork which we generally used would bend only at certain points. I have heard that a willow or peach-tree fork would answer just as well.

MRS. S. E. MACKLEY.
Shingletown, Cal.

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