



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

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IMMORTALITY.

Its Source and Law Considered.

By J. P. COWLES, M. D.

The question of a future life, or an individual conscious existence for mankind after what we term death, has long been, and still is, one of absorbing interest. Many hold that such a life is the part and lot of every human being, or in other words, to be more explicit, quite a large majority of mankind hold that each individual is possessed of an immortal soul which will survive the death of the body, a part of these, Spiritualists and some others being the exception, holding that at a certain fixed time in the future, called the judgment day, body and soul will be reunited and continue to exist as a separate, conscious individual while some hold that consistent with the individual existence belongs only to the present. The advocates of a future life have put forth many theories as to the *modus operandi* of man's continued existence. Religious bodies who believe in an inspired book as a revelation from God to man, look to their respective sacred books to furnish the future existence, and think they there find it, while the large and increasing body of Spiritualists find their strongest reasons in a faith that the spirits of deceased persons have been seen and communicated with, which also, as they hold, is continually being done at the present time. Wishing to be satisfied upon this great question, and being strongly impressed with the idea that if such a faith were well founded, it could or ought to be made to appear without the aid of book or personal appearance of the departed, we accordingly turned ourselves to work on a line of reasoning and analysis, founded upon known facts, by which means we have been forced to the conviction that there is a separate, conscious individual existence for nearly all of the human race, and present in this brief form the reasons which we believe to be within our grasp, which may not be so clear, yet must follow in the order of progressive nature.

Our arguments will be based upon the natural law of creation and development, reasoning by the law of analogy from facts which appear, and are known, and which we shall be able to arrive at a truthful result by going back to first principles and tracing them up through progressive creations until we reach man, and from the facts thus obtained base our faith upon his natural or acquired immortality.

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formations and combinations, which go to make up the physical, visible, ponderable parts; it is enough for our present purpose to know that in the third decade of progressive nature a human being has been produced, wonderful in mechanism, mysterious in its life-sustaining forces and principles, and grand in its development, and almost infinite in its possibilities and conceptions; yet notwithstanding all the manifold skillfulness of its contrivance and its inconceivable possibilities, it would seem a useless display of creative power if the ultimate of our Mother Nature's efforts in the direction of the highest possible attainments were here reached, or if there were no hope that man in some visible or invisible way was not linked to a future life which would should amount to a continued existence.

We will now leave this subject at the point we have reached, and take up the argument from the beginning, using some other important ideas, and see where it will lead us. If we look into the various forms of being which we find in the creation, we find that they did not come into existence all together; but in a certain order, from the lower to the higher, in which one type of being appears to have come into existence, not for an end in itself alone; but each grade contained in itself the elements of a higher development, and so manifest this element that it foreshadowed or became a prophecy of that which was to be developed, and furthermore, each grade has prefigured and prepared the way for another; and, mark, never from the higher to the lower, but in a constantly ascending scale of organic capacity, having appeared, bred through other generations and passing away, to be ever succeeded by higher forms. As an example, take the fact that the Caucasian race of men are planting themselves in every part of the globe, and wherever they get a footing they increase in numbers, and exterminate all lower grades. A marked illustration of this statement is furnished in the history of the British Islands and North America since their discovery. They are now advancing upon Africa and other parts of the globe, and until they reach the end of the world, they will continue to increase and destroy all inferior races. Here is the law of the survival of the fittest.

But to return. Throughout the whole history of these developing types in their rough encounters with the inevitable conditions of existence, and in their passing away, there seems to have been, as the one grand thing in it all, a blind longing, a reaching out, as it were, of something after some higher and nobler condition of being, and there also seems to have been a power ever striving to find for itself in other forms a more complete expression. Thus we see that in the development of this one of the most sublime facts of all in the disclosures of modern science. Now, place by the side of this the deep saying of Paul, in which he seems to have anticipated this disclosure, viz., "The law of the evolution of the world is in pairs, together until now, waiting for the organic expectation of creative being" the manifestation of "the sons of God." That is, bringing into existence mankind. Nature from the first has been in travail with man. The cry in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," was analogous to the general law, a prophecy in the rising scale of something higher to come. And this is the general law of all movements in the world, and has been from the foundation, as we have seen, is now, as we see, and ever will be, as we shall see.

Thus we find that in the present the expectation of creation is realized. Endeavor has been repeated upon endeavor, advance upon advance, one type of being succeeding another, until at last the highest form of organism appears, in whom thought becomes articulate, impulse gives way to reason, and the blossoms into insight and self-directing foresight, and flames out into mental and moral intelligence, the very laws of Cosmos becoming in man what they are in the mind of the Almighty. Perceptions, sensibilities, reason, sentiment, intuition, will, and volition, through all varieties of their outlines and genius, unfold themselves until they utter at last the epics of Homer, the flaming thoughts of Shakespeare, the bold truths unearthed by Darwin, and the sublime thoughts, wonderful and sacred, and masterly movements of the present age.

Here the question arises with renewed interest, does man live in the future as a personal self identity, or have we to believe that here the work of progress ceases; that all the disappointed expectations, the blasted hopes, the unfulfilled longings unsatisfied are never to be righted? We cannot believe that this pressing upward and onward has found its ultimate in man; but, rather, that man, the highest in the order of the animal kingdom, bears in himself a prophetic, a foreshadowing of a higher development, a higher life; hence the more we search into the hidden springs of our being, we are compelled to maintain that the power which has ever been pressing creation to higher types and forms, which power science calls force; metaphysics, spirit; and religion, God, has brought this ultimate of earth's creation to such a degree of perfection as to include in its possibilities, and necessities, the power of self-development, self-unfolding and self-continuance, which appears for the first time in man.

The life of man consists in an ascending transformation of substance and law, or matter and force, into the structure, function and consciousness of a higher nature and being. He grows out of the earth, and all that earth conditions; and then develops, unfolds or ripens into a spiritual being and spiritual existence and all that the divine idea of spiritual elevation, spiritual evolution and growth into the likeness and attributes of the eternal forces involved.

Just as in the outer world it is the office of the mineral kingdom to accumulate force, and in the play of its life; and of the vegetable kingdom to accumulate force for the animal kingdom to expend in the play of its life; so, on this higher level of the divine order in the human economy, it is the office of the physical constitution to accumulate a finer quality of this mysterious eternal force which is ever pressing onward and upward, which at this stage is used for the moral or mental constitution, to expand in its life of thought, sentiment and emotion. The higher the

rank in organism, the richer the life thought results. In this economy there is no room for the old stoical conception, "Dynamics" absorb everything.

We go further and say that while it is the office of the mineral to gather force for the development of the vegetable and to sustain it in its play of life, and of the vegetable in its turn, aided by the mineral, to gather up force to develop the animal, and for the animal, aided by the two preceding kingdoms, to gather force for the development and sustaining of the nervous system, which is the producer of thought; so we contend, from the law of progress and analogy, that it is the office of this higher nerve development, aided by all that has preceded it, to gather up force for the development, by the transformation of the higher, by the transformation of the human organism into a more elevated being, a being spiritual in itself, and which common consent calls spirit.

The exact process by which this transformation is accomplished we will not attempt to unfold, except to say that we maintain that it must be in harmony with the known laws of the great supreme force of our Mother Nature, and by reasoning from or through the law of analogy we may, by the aid of facts which do exist and appear, arrive at correct conclusions concerning facts which do not appear. It is only necessary to consider one line of argument to become convinced on this question.

Sex and the law of sex is recognized as existing in the vegetable kingdom, although not demonstrable in every variety of vegetable production. In the world, yet man is utterly ignorant concerning it; and, some will often inquire: "Do spirits really exist?" and "Do spirits really communicate with mortals?"

I answer, "Yes, spirits do really exist; and spirits do really communicate with mortals." It is, also, often asked: "Who are spirits?" and "Where do spirits reside?" By the light of reason, as revealed to my mind, I will answer these questions: In the first place, I claim that there are three great departments in nature, viz., water, land and air. Each of these three great departments constitutes, in itself, a world or kingdom. Each kingdom is peopled; or, in other words, I claim that the air is peopled, as well as land and water.

If we have the Marine World and its inhabitants; the Island or Continental World and its inhabitants, why not have the Aerial World and its inhabitants, or a people subsisting in the upper air? Hence or partition divides these three worlds from one another; but the elements or productions which they contain make them separate and distinct. These elements or productions form the visible divisions of the three kingdoms. These divisions distinctly mark their definite boundaries.

This globe, then, represents one great stupendous plant, producing three marvelously grand, distinct worlds or kingdoms, all teeming with life, both visible and invisible. True, we have no tangible proof that the air is peopled; but we have proof that the air is not peopled; but, to my mind, it requires no very great stretch of the imagination to realize that the upper deep must have its people, as well as land and water. A little thought on this subject, and a little exercise of the reasoning powers, will convince any person of the probability of the existence of aerial beings or people in the air.

But, say some, "if there were people in the air, we should all see them." Not so, for you cannot see the air; and yet the air is there; and so with the inhabitants of the air, you cannot see them, but they are there, and like the air, they are invisible. Besides, there are myriads of forms of life existing everywhere in nature which you cannot see, except by the aid of a powerful microscope.

Astronomers tell us that there are as many as 100,000,000 stars that are invisible to the naked eye, and they can only be seen by the aid of a telescope. So that any objection to spirit-life in the upper air, on account of being invisible, would be no argument. But who are these people in the air? behold the inhabitants of the aerial world, the answer: The denizens of the air are the former inhabitants of this planet, and are those whom you call spirits. They are spirits, and there are millions of human beings whose spiritual eyes are occasionally permitted to behold the expression of spirit.

Again, you ask, "Are they really disembodied human spirits or our departed dead?" I answer, "Such they claim to be; and what I have seen of them, they seem to be. With my spiritual vision I can see spiritual beings almost any time I place myself in proper condition so to do; and there are multitudes of persons whom I know can do the same; and if these inhabitants of the air are not resuscitated human beings, I know who they are. One thing I know, whoever they are, they seem to exercise an organized control over the affairs of nations and of individuals, and they seem to rule with an omnipotent power. Frequently they advise me in the interest of my patients; and the remedies they prescribe are always infallible.

With these facts before us, a belief in the existence of spirits, to my mind, is the easiest thing in life. For all that we see everywhere in nature is only the expression of spirit.

The very atmosphere that envelops us, and the very air that we breathe, is spirit, and so essential is this spirit element to human life, that to live is to breathe, and to breathe is to be spiritual. All the aromas and essences of nature are spirit; and the very life that animates this human body is spirit. And when the body is dead, it is because the spirit has fled.

Besides, man is not the highest intelligence in nature, there must be somewhere, in the upper scale of gradation, a higher intelligence than man; and as the human kingdom is a higher development of the three kingdoms of land or water, so life in the upper air must be supremely higher than man in intellect, genius and power.

Paul, the ancient Christian philosopher, evidently understood that the air was peopled, for he referred in his writings to "The Prince and Power of the air."

Written for The Progressive Thinker.

THE RATIONALE OF THE SPIRIT-WORLD AND ITS INHABITANTS.

By Dr. Robert Green.

In all ages of the world a belief in the existence of spirits or celestial beings has held a high place in the estimation of mankind. Man's first home in the Garden of Eden, we are informed, was with the Gods. Can we wonder, therefore, that man's passion for the sacred or divine, has been instinctive with his offspring? In all ages, too, spiritual phenomena have been the awe and wonder of the world. Its mysterious origin; its subtle power; and its erratic, eccentric, and unreasoning ways have been a puzzle to mankind. It is, also, often asked: "Who are spirits?" and "Where do spirits reside?" By the light of reason, as revealed to my mind, I will answer these questions: In the first place, I claim that there are three great departments in nature, viz., water, land and air. Each of these three great departments constitutes, in itself, a world or kingdom. Each kingdom is peopled; or, in other words, I claim that the air is peopled, as well as land and water.

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It will be well, therefore, to remember the all-seeing eyes of the Spirit-world, by which we are all surrounded. You may not see your invisible surroundings, but they are there all the same; and they can see you, and are a witness to your every thought and action.

For The Progressive Thinker.

WHY GRUMBLE? THE WORLD HAS ADVANCED SPIRITUALLY, AND HUMANITY ARE GROWING BETTER.

TO THE EDITOR:—Yes, the world is advancing spiritually, and in consequence humanity is growing better. "If any creature on earth has reason for exultant, tearful, heavenward-rising thankfulness, it is the modern woman. Never in all the world's history has she been so free from burdens, so exalted in privileges as to-day," contends a writer in the *Arden*. This nineteenth century is the era of her coronation. Today she stands queen of herself and of the world. In the palmiest days of the 'good old times' the only woman who was allowed any privileges or culture was the courtesan. The wife's home was a prison, and her hands alone were of value.

She was not permitted to discover, and this has held substantially true the world over until within the last hundred years; and the most convincing proof of this is the character of the books of the best society. You would not dare to read the mixed society, more so than the last century. Books were not made for women, and so whether they were decent or not was a small consideration. Even the old preachers indulged in coarseness of language that would not now be permitted in a political harangue. Some of Martin Luther's sermons could not be read in a modern school.

"Swearing in the drawing-room and in the 'best society' was no uncommon thing ninety years ago. Even the ladies themselves not rarely indulged in it. Dean Ramsey tells an anecdote that well illustrates how it was regarded. A sister of his, a choir girl, was once added to the habit, and she said: 'Our John swears awful, and we try to correct him for it; but,' she added, apologetically, 'nae doubt it's a great set-off to conversation.' The 'double entendre' and indelicate allusions, such as now no respectable company would endure, were then quite common in mixed society.

"Eighty years ago eminent lawyers would use language in the court room, in the presence of ladies, for which they would now be arrested by the sheriff. Then women were punished by being publicly whipped on the bare back. Prisoners in place of being more tenderly treated, were taunted by bystanders. The whipping-post, the stocks, cropping and branding were common. It was no rare sight to see a man and his wife, from the first society, sitting on the gallows for an hour with ropes around their necks.

"And those who favor the harsher forms of punishment, more tenderly than the fact that milder counsels, fewer crimes, and the general elevation of society are invariably accompanied of each other. To be poor and insane then was worse than torture or death.

"The poor were 'sold' at public auction, and heard and looked knocked down to the lowest bidder, who was left to treat them very much as he pleased. Alms-houses were almost unknown.

"The common school girl of to-day is better off in all that makes life desirable than was any queen of 200 years ago. More comfort, more purity, more intelligence, more refinement, more every thing worth having—these mark the advance of our social life. Never were houses so good, never was furniture so convenient and abundant, never was dress so comfortable and healthful, never manners so simple and more dignified, never was enjoyment and development so common and so universally accessible as to-day.

"And yet in spite of these facts there are large numbers of people perpetually bemoaning our degeneracy and sighing for the departed days of the 'good old times' of our early Ancestors. The reason of the present distressing state of affairs I heard explained not long ago. One man thought it was because the 'good old doctrines' were not now preached at all, and the other was equally sure that it was because they were preached all the time. Never was a grander fallacy than this whole idea.

"Never was more ignorance of the past displayed than by those who talk of the falling away of modern times. Never was the church so bright and fair as now, and never did the sky of the future shine with a more glorious radiance of the coming day. In these 'good old times' men lived under the horrid shadows of frightful superstitions. Now it is to modern science only that we owe our emancipation from the yoke of this awful tyranny.

"Scientific explorers have been over the earth; and finding no mouths of hell, that is gone. Science has explained earthquakes and volcanoes, and now devils fight no longer in the bowels of the earth. Enna and Vesuvius are no longer vent-holes of the pit. Astronomy has shattered the follies of astrology; and the people have found out that the stars are minding their own business instead of meddling with theirs, and eclipses, no longer moon-swallowing monsters, are only very natural and well-behaved shadows."

That the world is advancing spiritually may be attributed to the influence that Spirit-life has had upon the world, and that humanity is the aggregate is growing better may be ascribed to the same cause. The outlook was never more hopeful.

Mrs. F. A. Logan

writes to us from Oakland, Cal., giving us appreciation of the grand work the PROGRESSIVE THINKER is doing. She details an account of how her materialized spirit sisters came to her at Los Angeles through a closed window and conversed with her. She speaks of the high terms of the three materializing mediums, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Hunt. At one session E. V. Wilson appeared. She concludes her letter by saying: "I have resumed my Circle of Harmony in San Francisco, Cal., in St. George's Hall, 909 1/2 Market St., at 11 A. M., Sundays, and in Oakland, in Pythian Hall, 1058 Broadway, at 7:30 P. M. My meetings are schools for development."

THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER being the cheapest Spiritualist paper now published and being the avenue for leading minds to express their thoughts, it should be read by every Spiritualist. It will be sent 16 weeks on trial for 25 cents.

For The Progressive Thinker.

ROME HOWLS! Women and Girls Faint!

A Scene Disgraceful to the Nineteenth Century.

What a scene (nothing more foolish has taken place since Jesus cursed the fig tree) when this minister sent forth a malediction against a little chapel. Fainting, hysterical women lay prone on the hard floor, and many of the enraged men, cursing and swearing in God's sanctuary and threatening a black-robed, pale-faced priest, who, with uplifted crucifix, stood uttering the malediction of Rome on their deed.

Such was the extraordinary scene witnessed lately—St. Peter's and St. Paul's day—in the chapel of Markinore, forty miles from Montreal.

The scene was probably unprecedented in the history of the Catholic church, it being no less than the official cursing of the little chapel by Father Savor of the Redemption, a priest of the parish of Father La Fleche, cure of the parish and nephew of the bishop of Three Rivers. The act of the ecclesiastical outlined above was due to a schism in the parish brought about by the location of the new parish church. Some months since it was decided to erect a church to give greater accommodation. Bishop La Fleche visited the parish and selected a spot on the east side of Maskinonge river.

A short time after the inhabitants on the west side succeeded in inducing the bishop to alter his decision, and two months ago the erection of the church was commenced on the west side. This gave such offense to the people of the east side that they met and decided to erect a wooden chapel in which to worship. The work was begun, but before the edifice could be completed it was destroyed by fire, and many of the women thought this an intervention of God.

The chapel was reconstructed, however. Since then 200 men, women and children, including leading citizens, have met there for worship. The school-master read the prayers and recited the beads, and a choir sang the hymns. On Monday the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, the dissentists met in the chapel, when they were surprised to see Father Savor, of St. Ann's church, Montreal, enter, holding in his hands a crucifix. His arrival produced a great sensation. It was known that he had been called by Father La Fleche to conduct a retreat at the parish church, and many thought he was coming to bless the chapel. The priest addressed the people and implored them to renounce their schism and return to the church. One of the men said: "Bless our chapel and we will like to you, and many of the women thought this an intervention of God."

"What? 'bless your chapel?' replied the redemptorist, with uplifted crucifix. "I should rather curse."

"May the curse of the Almighty fall on it!"

And in the official formula he called down the malediction of God on the chapel. The scene which followed was frightful and impossible to describe. Women and girls shrieked and many of them fainted and had to be removed. Some of the men stood stupefied while others were with difficulty prevented from assaulting the priest. They asked if he had cursed them, and many of the children. "Only the building they met in," This modified them, and the congregation silently dispersed, many in tears. The affair has created tremendous excitement among all Catholics on the north shore, and threats are made of legal action against Father Savor.

Written for The Progressive Thinker.

THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

A Most Excellent Suggestion.

TO THE EDITOR:—The petition to the National Board of Managers of the Columbian Exposition, signed by N. E. Ravlin, of San Francisco, published in a late issue, presents cogent reasons why the World's Fair should not be closed to the public on Sundays.

Now, let every progressive thinker who reads the appeal place it at the head of a legal case and obtain the signatures to it of every lover of personal liberty, as to religious observances, or as he can, and report to you from time to time the number of names obtained.

In these United States, under whose Constitution its citizens are guaranteed the right to worship God after the dictates of their own conscience, there should be no recognition of any right of any religious faction to dictate or control the action of those differing from them in belief.

Majorities usually rule in these United States, and while not forgetting that minorities have rights which majorities are sometimes bound to respect, if all who believe it right and proper to keep the exhibition open to the public on Sundays would speak the majority on that side of the question would be so large as to overwhelm the opposition. I hope you have "set the ball rolling" that will result in thousands of petitions being circulated for signatures, headed by Mr. Ravlin's unbiased, most reasonable reason why all who desire should have the privilege of visiting the great fair on Sundays. DAN L. G. GARNSEY.

Chicago, July 12, 1891.

A Pillow of Delight.

Ho! Ye beloved, who have woes of mind or body! Take the soft twig from the Norway Pine, or most beautiful American Evergreen tree, clipped with shears, and after wiping in the sun an hour, put them into your pillow, and breathe eight or nine hours a most delightful, health-giving balm, filling your room with perfume of Nature in her mountains. In 1877 I brought from the "mountain hills" some 4,000 Norway spruce, eighty per cent of which are now making glad this city and Omaha. Fifty are about the yard, from five to sixteen feet high, the aroma from which is a source of health and delight. Their terminal shoots used for pillows is the latest discovery, and I wish the readers of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER to practically know the truth thereof. Counsel Bluffs, Iowa. W. DUNCAN.

