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"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall
make you free."

SEPTEMBER, 1899.

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THE SERMON

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
DEVOTED TO

The New Theology and
Psychic Research.

Edited by "Augustine."

Leading Article This Number.

The Heresy Sermon, by Rev. B. F. Ausin,
B.A., D.D.

Bible Exigesis—The Writing on the Wall—
Elisha's Vision—Angels and Men.

Editorial Comment—Salutatory; The Prim-
itive Gospel—Foreign Missions—Spirit
Communion Among Roman Catholics.

Death of Robert G. Ingersoll.

"Accountability"—Poem by Paul Lawrence
Dunbar.

Original Accounts of Psychic Phenomena
—Seance with the Bangs Sisters, by Rev.
B. F. Austin, B.A., D.D.

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THE SERMON.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, CAN., SEPTEMBER, 1899.

No. 1

THE HERESY SERMON.

PREACHED IN PARKDALE, TORONTO, METHODIST CHURCH, JANUARY 8TH, 1899, UPON WHICH REV. B. F. AUSTIN, A.M., D.D., WAS INDICTED FOR HERESY AND EXPELLED FROM THE METHODIST MINISTRY BY THE LONDON ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT WINDSOR, JUNE 1, 1899.

To know the truth, to love the truth, and to live the truth is the whole duty of man. We have excellent authority for the statement that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of truth proceeding from God, whether that word be written on the rocks and read by the geologist, or in the heavens and read by the astronomer, or in the heart of man, or in the statements of this old book.

To know the truth about our bodies, i.e., the laws that govern our physical being, and come into sympathy and accord with those laws, means health, bodily vigor and physical strength and enjoyment. To know the laws of our mental nature, to know how the mental faculties are strengthened and developed, and to bring ourselves into harmony with those laws of mentality, is to attain intelligence and mental health and vigor. To learn the laws of our spiritual being and how our spiritual faculties may be cultured and perfected, to learn and obey the great spiritual laws by which we are related to the spiritual universe, this is the foundation of all religion. To know God, and Jesus Christ, whom God sent, is, according to scripture, eternal life. Now, God is spirit, and to know God is to know spirit in its essential qualities, in its infinite possibilities, in its universal relationships, and hence spiritual knowledge is, according to Scriptural teaching, the foundation of all religion and the beginning of eternal life.

The whole world has been slow, and the Christian church inexcusably slow, in recog-

nizing the supreme value of spiritual knowledge of truth, though Jesus emphasized its importance and the prophets declared that the people perished from lack of knowledge.

TRUTH OF SUPREME VALUE AND IMPERISHABLE.

Truth is set before us in the text as an object of supreme value, and we are exhorted to buy the truth and sell it not—implying that in purchasing no price is too great to pay for it, no sacrifice, toil, suffering or worldly good is to be for a moment considered in comparison with it; and, once possessed, all worldly riches, all that men covet, and seek, and think most valuable, is to be scorned as insufficient inducement to part with truth. Would it be possible in a few words to emphasize more highly the supreme value of truth to man?

The merchandise we are exhorted to seek at all costs and never to sell is heavenly and divine. Truth is the daughter of God, and in all her attributes God-like and eternal. Truth never depreciates in value. Every day of a man's life, every age of the world's history, truth becomes increasingly beautiful and valuable. Truth can never perish. There have been times in human history when for a period it has suffered apparent defeat or eclipse, and for a brief hour it has seemed to perish, but, like the phoenix, it has risen from its ashes to soar to greater heights, assume more lovely forms, and demonstrate to men and angels its immortal character.

“Truth crushed to earth shall live again ;

The eternal years of God are her's.

But error, wounded, writhes in pain,

And dies amid her worshippers.”

Error must and will assuredly perish.

Sin and suffering must cease. The tares will be burned up, the wheat gathered into the garner. Whittier truthfully sings:

“The tares may perish, but the wheat
Is not for death.”

Falsehood and error and sin have their brief rule in God's universe, but are destined to end. The cloud may shut out the sun for an hour and boast that it has blotted out or hidden the powerful king of day, or at least has divided the world's empire with the sun; but the sun shines on, and the cloud dissipates. Error and sin, I repeat, are temporal; truth and righteousness eternal. If not, how vindicate character of God? If sin and error are to become permanent principles, then the empire of the universe must be divided between God and the devil, error and truth. No, a thousand times no. As sure as yon mists shall be dissipated by the morning light, as sure as light and darkness can not co-exist, as sure as God reigns, error and falsehood and sin and suffering shall be blotted out and truth and righteousness prevail. Then comes Millennial dawn!

Man cannot live in his higher spiritual faculties any more than the plant can live without air and sunshine or the body without food. Truth is the vitalizing air in which the soul expands and stretches her pinions for lofty flight. Truth is the sunshine of the soul in which alone the soul can put forth its bud and blossom, and send out its perfume. Without truth the soul can never develop its powers or come into spiritual strength and beauty.

Truth should be set before all the rising generation by parents, teachers and preachers, as the most valuable acquisition of life. I wish I could impress the thought upon the hearts of the young people especially, that out of all possible acquisitions between the cradle and the grave, truth is the only real and permanent possession. Truth sought, truth found, truth loved and

incorporated into our lives, woven into the warp of our character, this is the one thing worth seeking both for this world and the next.

ALL TRUTH IS SACRED.

I want to emphasize one point, and that is that all truth is sacred and divine. There is not a truth in heaven or hell but is sacred and pure and desirable for man to know. There is no profane truth, no immoral truth, no truth belonging to his satanic majesty. There is no secular truth. A truth taught in the school or college is as sacred as a truth taught in the pulpit. How is it that men have not outgrown the narrow conceptions of past ages that made certain places and times and persons and truths sacred and stamped the rest profane? In Christ's time men thought there was one holy city, Jerusalem; one holy day, the Sabbath; one holy class, the priesthood; one holy place, the temple; but Christ taught men not so. He showed that every spot was holy ground; the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; and thus he lifted up all the life to the spiritual plane. Every teacher of the truth is therefore doing a sacred work, and the home and the school are as sacred as the church, and more important in their influence for good, because they deal with the youth, and because they teach less human opinions, and their influence tends more to personal investigation and research.

HINDRANCES TO FINDING THE TRUTH.

I want to note a few of the hindrances men meet in searching for truth, and to show what we must pay to secure it. The chief hindrances we meet with in finding the truth are in ourselves. First, then, we have
INDIFFERENCE—It is simply wonderful how little genuine appreciation of the value of truth there is with the average man or woman. Truth lies all around them, unsought, unappreciated, waiting to enrich their minds and hearts, and exalt men to broader vision and richer experiences. Men are so immersed in business and so occupied

with pleasure that the great and only permanent acquisition of life is neglected. Truth is within handgrasp of every one. Treasures of it lie buried at our very feet, richer than the gems of India, or the gold of Ophir. We have only to open our eyes, to reach out our hands, to exercise our faculties, and we shall find these eternal possessions that will lift us out of intellectual and spiritual poverty, and give us rank with the noblest spirits of earth and heaven. Bunyan's picture of the man with muck-rake gathering dust and entirely unconscious of the presence of the angel holding a crown above his head, is but a faint representation of human indifference to truth. Not one angel, but all God's militant host surround us; not one crown, but ten thousand do they offer us, if we will only listen to their voices, and be led by them up the heights of truth and blessedness.

A second and very serious difficulty in seeking the truth is

THE NOTION SO PREVALENT THAT CERTAIN MEN ARE ORDAINED OF HEAVEN TO SEEK TRUTH FOR ALL MANKIND, and that we are to accept their acquisitions in place of seeking for ourselves. We can never attain truth by proxy. By divine ordination every man is an original investigator of truth. He stultifies his own intellect, he denies his own reason, who hands over his religious views and opinions to any priest or religious teacher. We are to accept nothing on opinions of others. What another man has thought or believed, what a church synod or council has formulated, is nothing to me only as far as it may be a reason for personal investigation ending in acceptance or rejection, as I may find it in harmony with reason and well-established truth. This is the one great defect in our schools and churches to-day. Young people are banded together and fed on the opinions and views of men, formulated, it may be, thousands of years ago, in place of being taught to think out these religious problems for themselves, and reach their own conclusions. A generation that is brought up on the principle: "Open your mouth and shut your eyes

And I'll give you something to make you wise"

will never be intellectually rich. The most valuable lesson a public school teacher can give a scholar is to teach him intellectual independence, to think for himself and not rely on another's opinions; and so our Sunday schools would be infinitely more servicable to the youth if in place of cramming the minds of the youth with the theological opinions of past ages we set them to study rationally and freely this grand old book in the light of present day science.

Another great hindrance to the reception of truth on the part of church people especially is

THE MISTAKEN NOTION THAT ALL SPIRITUAL TRUTH WAS GIVEN TO THE WORLD IN ONE COMPLETE SYSTEM NEARLY 2,000 YEARS AGO. I for one do not question the lofty morality, the exalted character, and the unspeakable value to the world of the teachings of him we call Master, the Jewish carpenter, Jesus of Nazareth. The ethical system of Jesus has never been surpassed, and I think had never been equalled up to his time. That system, enforced by his life of lofty devotion to humanity and his heroic death, must ever stand as an illustration of the highest inspiration and development of which humanity is capable; but a point neglected by most of those of us who are his followers is this: his teachings were never set before his followers as a finality. He declared plainly and repeatedly implied in his discourses the fact that he was not giving out to humanity all the truth he had received. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." He declared that after Him would come a teacher, the spirit, who should guide his followers into all truth; so he refrained from uttering truths too advanced for his hearers, and cautioned his disciples not to cast pearls before swine, i. e., to give out doctrines so far in advance of the spiritual development of the hearers that they could not appreciate their value or beauty any more than swine could appreciate the beauty of pearls. God has dealt with humanity as we deal with children.

He has given to every nation and to every age truths adapted to their development. We teach a few elementary truths to our children of three or four years of age. To those of ten or twelve we can give more advanced truth, and to our youth of 20 or 21 we can teach truths suitable for young manhood or womanhood.

REVELATION HAS BEEN GRADUAL.

In the early times men got very crude and even contradictory conceptions of God. At first He was a being, awful in character, dreadful in His fierce dealings with humanity, and only known as a being to be feared and propitiated by blood. Even in Old Testament times the conception of God was that of a cruel and jealous ruler, an angry, frowning Jehovah, who was to be placated with a multitude of offerings, and who required the death of the offender if some slight transgression of this law were made either wittingly or unwittingly. Jesus came, and his conception of God is that of a loving father, one whose love went out to all men, and who delighted to hear and answer prayer. Now if my proposition is true regarding God's revelation to man you will see that it is a continuous revelation, a revelation to every people, and if the character of the truth revealed depends (as I claim it must) on the ability of men to receive it, then revelation is to continue forever, and we have it to-day as truly, aye, more fully, than in any preceding age. Again, revelation is not, as men have taught, a reversal of ordinary growth and development, not an irruption of truth to any one people or age, but a continuous divine stream of truth and inspiration to humanity in every age and clime, and limited only by the capacity of the race to receive it.

If that be true, then we should be looking in every age for new truth outside the teachings of the fathers, and sometimes for truth so far surpassing all the conceptions our fathers formed as to appear not only new, but contradictory, to their teachings.

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD NEW TRUTH.

Now, I have a few words to say on the

attitude of the church toward new truth. Unfortunately, from a variety of causes this attitude has not been generally what it should have been, and enlightened men, pious men, men of devout spirit, have often been repelled from the church because the church has assumed a hostile attitude toward new truth. If any doctrine came to the people through the priesthood the church would hear it and heed it, but if it came from an out-of-the-way place like Nazareth, they would scorn and persecute it. It was churchmen who put Jesus to the shameful death of the cross. In Luther's time, when he hurled his advanced ideas like a bomb shell into the camp of the Roman church, it was the churchmen of his day who sought his life. In Wesley's time, though he preached the purest form of spiritual truth that was proclaimed in his age, yet the churchmen of his time drove him out, and he had to preach in graveyards and coal mines and on the markets.

I fear that, while our church preaching and teaching is in many ways in advance of that of any preceding age, in the attitude of church leaders toward truth there has been little if any improvement. Is it not true to-day that new truth is not heartily welcomed by the church—that church leaders are afraid new truth may disturb theological beliefs, and so fight shy of it and often sneer at it and then embrace it. New truths in astronomy have been denounced, and men have been denounced and imprisoned for accepting views that churchmen thought contrary to the bible, but which proved only contrary to their understanding of the bible. New truths in science are often condemned, and 25 years ago it was very common and very popular for preachers to sneer at the evolution theory, but to-day it is no longer sneered at, for there is arising in all intelligent minds who have candidly examined the evidence, the conviction that this was the method of creation, and no scientist of note denies it. So it is with new truths in philosophy and psychic research. The scientific truths of telepathy, clairvoyance, soul flight, psychometry and prophecy are well estab-

lished by incontrovertible evidence, yet to mention them in certain church circles is to ostracise yourself. Now, why should new truths have to get into the church through the back door? Why should old opinions, old interpretations of scripture, old statements of belief—all of which must reflect the ignorance and prejudice and limitation of the age in which they were formulated—bar the way to progress in our own day. Have we not a right to our own views and our own interpretations and our own creeds and our own new truths equally with those who preceded us? Must we forever wear the cast-off garments of past ages?

THE DAYS OF INSPIRATION ARE NOT PAST.

Another hindrance to receiving the truth is THE BELIEF SO PREVALENT AMONG CHURCH PEOPLE THAT THE DAYS OF INSPIRATION HAVE PASSED, NEVER TO RETURN. I for one can never believe it. I recognize the inspiration of past days. Christ had it—so had the apostles and the prophets of earlier time. No one, unaided of heaven, wrote the sublime utterances of Isaiah or the 13th of First Corinthians, and no one uninspired wrote

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy.”

Why should inspiration be limited to one age? If possible in one age why not in another? If it came to Paul 1900 years ago it can come to you to-day. If John had it in Patmos you may find a modern Patmos and share it also. In the broadest, truest sense God is no respecter of persons. Heaven is as near earth to-day, God as loving and kind to-day, men as much in need to-day, and truth as abundant to-day, as in the ages when men are said to have possessed this inspiration.

The truth is the fountain of inspiration is open to all who will climb the heights where it is situated. If men can not attain it, it is only because they are too worldly, too much the followers of pleasure, too selfish, and will not undergo the mortification of the flesh, the crucifixion of self, the putting away of ignorance and doubt and prejudice.

We must learn the laws that govern our

spiritual nature. We must develop our spiritual faculties so that we can see and hear and realize spiritual things. We must wait upon God—alone and in silent expectation—listen for his voice. We must set ourselves about the spiritual education of our faculties as the great business of our lives. If we do this we shall not wait in vain. If we ascend the spiritual Alps and hide in the cleft of the rock we may not, indeed, hear His voice in the fire or tempest or whirlwind, but we shall hear the still small voice. Angels will become our companions. Heaven will open its portals to our vision as it did to Stephen of old, and the boundary between earth and heaven will become so low and narrow that the inhabitants may pass to and fro at will. Then shall inspiration be the birthright of every one thus spiritually educated. Amen.

—Reader, if you are interested in the struggle now raging between the new fresh currents of thought, pure as mountain streams, which are flowing into the minds of men from the sources of inspiration,—and the dull and dark waters of a stagnant orthodoxy, let us have your timely aid in extending the circulation of THE SERMON.

How to Get That Additional Thousand Pledged Subscribers.

Let a committee be formed in every city, town or village where there are friends of the Spiritual Philosophy. Attempt to raise your full share and a few more of the following apportionment: Ontario 500, Quebec 200; Manitoba 100, British Columbia 100, leaving only 100 for the rest of the Dominion. Of course we shall be glad to have the other provinces and territories join in. In Ontario, Toronto should give us at least 150; London, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, each 100, and Welland, Seaforth, Guelph and other towns at least 50 each—on which scale Ontario alone could easily pledge the 1,000. We know a few cities and towns that will not be behind in this work.

We shall issue a circular later giving results of the canvass.

Bible Exigesis.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL—THE VISION OF ELISHA—ANGELS AND MEN.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."—Dan. v. 5.

This is one of the clearest cases of spirit writing on record. It took place under circumstances precluding all idea of fraud or imposture. It occurred in the light, "over against the candlestick," and was visible to all in the room. The "fingers of a man's hand" were seen writing, and the writing remained after the hand had dematerialized. This is what makes spirit writing one of the strongest possible evidences of spirit return, the fact that writing remains after the manifestation is over. While I have been present scores of times where psychography occurred I have never seen the materialized hand writing, but this has been witnessed many times in our day by witnesses whose word cannot be impugned. A Mr. W— of Brockville and a Mr. N— of Buffalo have assured me they have seen the materialized hand writing these spirit messages. The materialized hand was seen in one of Sir Wm. Crooke's seances, not writing, but moving objects about the room. Yet to the average bible reader who believes in everyday miracles and rejects those of his own age, these accounts will appear as irrational as the message of Belshazzar appears to the ordinary infidel.

THE VISION OF ELISHA.

"And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and, behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."—2 Kings; vi. 17.

Nearly all the prophets were clairvoyant, and thus knowing the presence and power

of their spirit friends, were calm and peaceful in the presence of enemies. Elisha was undisturbed by the Syrian host that came by night while he slept and encompassed Dothan. His servant, however, was not endowed with spiritual vision until at Elisha's request the gift came upon him, and he, too, saw the hosts of spiritual warriors gathered in defence of Israel's prophet. In all ages there have been seers whose "eyes were opened" to the spiritual realms around them, and who could see angel friends as well as mortal foes. Many possess this same gift to-day, and with it other spiritual gifts akin to it, such as clairaudience and psychometry. Allied to this vision of the spiritual realms is the power of seeing what is occurring at a great distance from the seer, of which history furnishes us so many striking evidences.

ANGELS AND MEN.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Genesis we have remarkable appearances of angels, three of whom appeared to Abraham and two to Lot. In both these chapters the terms men and angels are used interchangeably. That these so-called angels were indeed human, that is, the spirits of deceased men clothed in temporary form known as materialization, there can be little doubt. They had the appearance of men, no mention being made of angelic wings, or any other indication that they were aught but what they were called, and what they appeared to be from their language and conduct, which included the partaking of food. The language which describes their appearance and disappearance is, like that in other parts of scripture describing angel visits, peculiar, and implies a sudden manifestation and sudden disappearance, no mention being made of any gradual approach or departure, as is the case when earthly friends visit us by gradual approach or gradual departure in walking. Angels appear and disappear suddenly, as they control by thought and will power the elements that render themselves visible.

THE SERMON,

A Monthly Magazine, devoted to the New
Theology and Psychic Research,

EDITED BY "AUGUSTINE."

THE SERMON PUBLISHING CO.,

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TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 1, 1899.

SALUTATORY.

We have a Message to deliver, a Gospel to preach, a Story to tell, and a Mission to fulfil. THE SERMON will contain this Message, preach this Gospel, tell this Story, month by month, and help to fulfil this Mission.

The Message is the Primitive Gospel of Jesus, with its spiritual gifts; divine fatherhood and human sonship and brotherhood; the service of God through deeds of mercy to God's children; the healing of the sick, the comforting of those who mourn, the preaching of the Gospel to the poor; the fountain of inspiration open to all, and "Communion of Saints" in both worlds.

The Story is the marvellous acts of the Apostles in our own day: miracles of power, wisdom, seership, prophecy and healing in our own times, unsurpassed and in some ways unequalled in the past. The Mission is the simple spread of Truth and the overthrow of whatever opposes it.

So here we are at your fireside. Will you give us welcome and help us find the way to your neighbor's dwelling?

The Primitive Gospel. The Ram's Horn, of Chicago, is before me—a bright illustrated religious weekly, and with

much in its columns every well-wisher of the community can easily sympathise. On page four we find its platform, the first plank of which is "The Primitive Gospel," and then just below it, with the true Phariseism and narrow intolerance of the ultra orthodox, occurs a bitter and un-Christian attack upon Christian Scientists. It denominates their faith a "mad delusion" and their cult a "shocking imposition on Christianity." I am not set for the defence of Christian Science theories, but have not the slightest doubt that if the scales were once off this editor's optics he might find in the absurd, contradictory and unscientific teachings of the creedal Christianity he defends many things more truly entitled to be called "a mad delusion" than the theory he chooses to attack. Undoubtedly he would find in the Christian Scientists of to-day a body of Christians nearer in spirit and practice to "primitive Christianity" than the average church of orthodoxy. It seems a little strange that a church paper professing to advocate "Primitive Christianity," should attack a body of fellow-Christians whose special claim to merit is the revival of the faith and practice of "Primitive Christianity" in healing the sick and thus fulfilling the command of Jesus. Probably the editor thinks it is a part of "Primitive Christianity" to attack all "who follow not us," and would gladly put a stop to their healing operations by calling down fire from heaven upon them. But this is the "Primitive Christianity" of John, not that of Jesus.

If this Christian editor has not learned that healing the sick is a part of "Primitive Christianity," and a part of "genuine Christianity" in all ages, and that the sick are being restored to-day in thousands by the "spiritual gift of healing," some one should tell him.

AUGUSTINE.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire
Uttered or unexpressed."

The Foreign Mission Movement. So far as this movement in all the churches represents increased interest of Christian people in the condition and welfare of heathen people, and so far as it tends by developing liberality to enrich and ennoble the character of those engaged in it, I rejoice and wish it enlargement; but the duplication of our three hundred Protestant churches in heathen lands will not be an unmixed blessing to heathendom, and, so far, the attempt to convert the heathen natives to creedal Christianity, with a few remarkable exceptions, has been written in one word, failure. The multiplication of these various isms, with their conflicting creeds, their multiform rites and services and their sectarian shibboleths, can only produce distraction, and tends to the overthrow of faith in the essentials of religion, which are very few and very simple. From the lips of a returned missionary, a man who has spent 40 years in mission work in India and America, I heard recently these words: "I never knew a company of heathen people to listen with anything but interest and joyful acquiescence to the simple story of Jesus and his wonderful life and love. Again and again I have seen their faces bathed in tears at the recital of his sufferings, and I have never heard of any other but the kindest reception to the simple story of Jesus and his miracles of mercy. It is only when we begin to give them our conflicting theologies, our opposing rites and customs, and our metaphysical subtleties, that opposition develops and all wholesome effect ceases."

Much of the zeal and energy which characterizes this missionary movement in the churches is, I fear, mere sectarian zeal and denominational pride expending itself in "spreading a sounding name abroad."

If the churches could only get back to the simplicity of Christ's teaching, divine fatherhood, and human brotherhood, this "Primitive Christianity" would captivate and ennoble the world.

AUGUSTINE.

Social Reform. One of the cleverest thinkers and writers I have met in this most important field of reform is Mr. W. A. Douglas, B.A., of Toronto. Mr. Douglas has been spending some weeks in Winnipeg, and has won already a strong position in the Prairie Province as a speaker and leader in social reform. He has spoken in many of the Christian pulpits in Winnipeg, given interviews and articles to the press, and always with clearness, force and effect. We hope to secure at an early date an article upon social reform from his able pen.

Spirit Communion Among Roman Catholics. "Apropos of the Rev. B. F. Austin's recent conversion to Spiritualism and his sermon last Sunday in Winnipeg, if sincere men of his mental calibre were familiar with the records of spirit manifestations in the Catholic Church, they would not be so easily startled by the so-called revelations of professional mediums. There are numberless instances in the lives of the saints where the clearest and most definite communications are received from the other world, but never through persons who gain either money or notoriety by them. They all rest upon the testimony of real saints, and it is almost a definition of a saint that he or she will not under any provocation, and least of all for the satisfaction of vain-glory, tell a lie or deceive in the slightest degree. Moreover, saints never reveal their communications with the spirit world except when obliged to do so through obedience to their directors, and they make the revelation with the greatest repugnance. How different is the case with amateur and professional mediums it is hardly necessary to point out."

The above extract is from the North West Review, Winnipeg, and I believe, from the facile pen of Father Drummond, S.J. Doubtless there are multitudes of clear cases of communication in the lives of good men and women in the Roman Catholic church, and that body deserves credit for conserving and handing down to posterity this and other similar truths of primitive Christianity, either lost or ignored by other

churches. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that these communications are in any way confined to the church, or that the natural gifts of the psychic, through whom these communications are made to men, are proofs of sanctity, or that they are misused or desecrated when they are made a means of livelihood.

These gifts are not bestowed on all, but they are in the highest sense natural, and where a psychic uses his gifts honestly and sincerely for the instruction and comfort of his fellows, there seems no good reason why he should not receive support from those to whom he ministers, just as priests receive a living, and as the ancient prophets—the psychic of early times—got his "piece of silver."

AUGUSTINE.

DEATH OF ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

The most eloquent of America's sons, and one of the greatest men of the age, recently passed suddenly from the bosom of his family into "silence and pathetic dust." Born in 1833, a cavalry colonel in 1862, attorney-general of his State, Illinois, after the war, he took an active part in political matters as an orator of national reputation. He was best known, however, as an avowed opponent of the creeds, and of the claims of the church of to-day.

He assailed with merciless ridicule and keenest satire the claims of historical religion and exposed the assumptions of the clergy and the churches in demanding allegiance to views formulated in bygone ages rather than starting with a clear sheet to investigate for themselves to-day.

Ingersoll never denied the existence of God, nor the ethical value of the teachings of Jesus, nor the lofty and sublime character of the Nazarene portrayed in the gospels, nor the value of a good life, nor the certainty of rewards and punishments for good or evil conduct. The word agnostic suits him better than infidel, though the latter is the name by which orthodoxy will seek to damn his memory.

His failure, and it was a bad one for himself, was that he did not distinguish between churchianity and Christianity; between the

essential truths taught by Jesus (the existence and fatherhood of God and the consequent doctrine of human brotherhood), and the monstrous outgrowth of creedal Christianity spun out of brain of the theologian from Paul to Calvin; between the caricature of true religion in the formalities, ceremonies, feasts, fasts and public observances of the church and the true simple faith which abides in the heart and serves God by every-day service of humanity.

His success—and it was greater than his failure—lay in the fact that he gave free and full expression to the divinity within him, fearing nothing in this world or that to come, as a result of his free investigation, his bold expression of honest unbelief, his warfare with the established views and current opinions of society, his keen and pointed thrusts at hoary errors, though clothed in the garb of sanctity.

As a man he challenges our admiration by his wonderful gifts, his broad humanitarianism, and the warm hand of charity which he extended to his fellows. A man of great geniality, of kind and loving soul, deeply sensitive to human suffering, a model husband and father, a faithful friend, and in many cases, the self-appointed champion of the oppressed and defenceless.

It seems a pity that so large and generous a soul should have lived so much in the shadow of negation, and have passed into the great beyond without a knowledge of the rich realities of the spirit realm around us.

Doubtless in his attacks on the creeds and the churches Ingersoll did not always distinguish between the truth and the form of its expression—and so far as he opposed the essentials of religion his work must perish; but most of his work will abide—in the broadening thought of to-day and the broadening vision of the morrow; in the lessened and lessening respect for ancient opinion; and in the assertion and maintenance of the individual's right to think out a belief for himself in utter independence of clergy or creeds.

His polished shafts of ridicule, his barbed arrows of wit and his mirth-provoking humor, have served a serious purpose in

exposing the weakness of the creed barriers that have so long opposed the intellectual and spiritual progress of humanity.

As a master of invective, a skilful antagonist in debate, marshalling his sharp words and powerful sentences, and rounded periods as the victorious general does his battalions, Ingersoll had, probably, no living equal in his day. His master argument with the Hon. W. E. Gladstone must give him rank with the very first logicians of his age.

As an orator he was easily king among a nation of orators. The audience under the spell of his word-painting, his flow of sensibility, his rippling wit and all-pervading humor, his poetic and rich imagination, and the weird power of his fancy were as magnetised subjects in the hands of the hypnotist. His speeches will live after him, not only for the truth and passion they contain, not only for the pith and point of his arguments, but also because of that rare power of imagination and rarer gift of expression with which his sentences became poetic prose. Some of the finest sentence-building in our day,—rich in expression of truth, passion, imagination, and even faith and hope, will be found in his memorable funeral addresses. But the eloquent lips are stilled and forever mute. His life has passed into a memory. What has he done for humanity?

Enlarged the bounds of human freedom; sung as sweetly as any poet of our age the praises of courage, manliness, and charity; glorified the beauty and innocent enjoyment of the home; pleaded the cause of the poor and oppressed; given a priceless example of independence to the world.

As a specimen of his deft skill in word magic take the following from a funeral address delivered by him in Boston: "When the day is done, when the work of a life is finished, when the gold of evening meets the dusk of night, beneath the silent stars the tired laborer should fall asleep. To outlive usefulness is a double death. 'Let me not live after my flame lacks oil, to be the spoil of younger spirits.' When the old oak is visited in vain by spring, when light and rain no longer thrill, it is not well to stand leafless, desolate and alone; it is better far to

fall where nature softly covers all with woven moss and creeping vine."

During the arrangements for the quiet private funeral, Mr. Farrell, his brother-in-law, said:—"Ingersoll died poor. He has not left any estate worth speaking of. Others have had the benefit of all that he earned in the law and in lecturing. What he did not spend on his loved ones he gave away in charity."

Could any words furnish a more appropriate epitaph?
AUGUSTINE.

"Accountability,"

[This is the title of one of the most delightfully humorous poems in "Lyrics of Lowly Life," the collected verses of Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the Negro poet whom Mr. Howells has recently "discovered."]

Folks hain't got no right to censuah other folks about dey habits;
Him dat giv' de squir'ls de bushtails made de bobtails fu' de rabbits.
Him dat built de great big mountains hol-lered out de little valleys.
Him dat made de streets an' driveways wasn't 'shamed to make de alleys.

We is all constructed diff'ent, d'aint no two of us de same;
We cain't he'p ouah likes and dislikes, ef we'se bad we ain't to blame.
Ef we'se good we needn't show off, 'case you bet it ain't ouah doin',
We gets into cu'ttain channels dat we jes' can't he'p pu'suin'.

But we all fits into places dat no othah ones could fill,
An' we does de things we has to, big er little, good er ill.
John cain't take de place o' Henry, Su an' Sally ain't alike;
Bass ain't nothin' like a sukah, chub ain't nothin' like a pike.

When you come to think about it, how it's all planned out it's splendid.
Nothin's done er evah happens, d'out hit's somefin' dat's intended;
Don't keer what you does, you has to, an' hit sholy beats de dickens—
Viney, go put on de kittle, I got one o' mastah's chickens.

Original Accounts of

Psychic Phenomena.

A Clear Case of On the 28th day of October, 1898, I reach- ed Chicago by rail en route Winnipeg to Toronto. Having a few hours in the city I determined to call upon the Misses Bangs, the noted psychics on Adams street. My visit was unannounced, and none of my friends knew of my intentions, so that those ladies could not have been apprised of my coming—at least, through any ordinary channel of knowledge. I was courteously received by one of the sisters, and when I had stated the purpose of my visit was in- formed that I would have to wait until the following day, as every half-hour until evening was pre-engaged, and they had an engagement for the evening. On informing her that I was to leave the city in the evening she told me that if I came at half- past six, although the hour was engaged, it was possible I might secure a sitting, as the gentleman who had taken that half-hour as the only available one, found it a very in- convenient one, and might not be on hand at the time. I called again, and was fortu- nate enough to secure the sitting, and was shown at once into a well-lighted room in the centre of which stood a table covered with paper, envelopes, and a pair of slates. Miss Bangs explained to me the method of securing a communication, and directed me to write a few questions, each on a slip of paper, and fold each slip a number of times and then enclose the questions thus folded with an equal number of blank sheets of paper in one of the envelopes, and seal the envelopes. This I did while she was in an adjoining room. Coming in, she next re- quested me to place the envelope so sealed between the slates, and tie them securely with cord available upon the table. This I did, winding the cord about the slates several times lengthwise and crosswise, and

By B. F. Austin, D.D.

tying in a secure manner. She next asked me to hold the slates with both hands, which I did. Taking a seat opposite me she directed me to keep possession of the slates, and assured me she would have nothing to do with them beyond placing one hand upon the surface of the slate. Taking an ink bottle and pouring some of the ink upon the top of the slate, she told me if I succeeded in getting a communication it would be written with the ink thus applied to the slate. She then placed her hand upon the slate, and we engaged for perhaps ten minutes in conversation. Suddenly she paused and said to me, "What do you mean by the 'last message?' One of your questions contains that expression. They don't understand you." "Why," said I, "a ministerial friend of mine a few years since in passing away tried to write a few lines to his wife and failed. I wanted to know if he had any memory of this and could give any explanation of the failure." "That will be sufficient," she said, "don't tell me anything more."

The room was perfectly lighted, and we were the only occupants. After about twenty minutes or more she said: "The letters are finished, I believe. Is that so?" and on receiving the signal of three taps she directed me to open the slates. I untied the cord, found my sealed letter undisturbed, and on breaking the seal, found the four sheets of letter paper written full in ink, in four different handwritings, and each letter seemed in language and matter as personal, as appropriate, as well fitted to all the facts and relationships of the case as any letters ever received by the writer. They were personally addressed to myself and signed by the names of the men and women to whom the questions were addressed. The folded questions were with the letters, and apparently had not been opened.

I am ready to testify any day that the questions and blank paper in the sealed envelopes and the slates in which they were securely tied were never out of my possession for a moment during the sitting. No mortal hand touched that paper in the envelope from the time I enclosed it in the sealed envelope until I opened it to find the messages. WHO WROTE THOSE LETTERS?

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OUR BOOK TABLE.

SEARCH-LIGHT CLUB DEBATES; OLD THEOLOGY VERSUS THE NEW.

BY "AUGUSTINE."

We have read the introduction and opening chapters of this forthcoming volume from the pen of "Augustine," and feel bound to say it will be one of the most interesting and valuable controversial works of our time.

"Augustine"—if the story is true and the whole account anything but the plot of a fiction—is the short-hand pedagogue of a small village in Ontario, not a hundred miles from Toronto, where this famous club originated, and where during fifteen successive weeks last winter the debates were held. The account in brief is this: The village notables, including Dr. Ortho Docks, the Renowned Destroyer of Heterodoxy; Dr. Blair, a Universalist; Dr. Goodman, of the Zion church; E. J. McRobbins, a Spiritualist; Norman Locke, the village carpenter and sceptic; and "Augustine," the teacher, with a number of others, were awaiting in the village post office the distribution of their mail on a memorable Saturday evening last fall. To wile away the time the venerable champion of orthodoxy is reading the Mail and Empire, and comes across an account of Dr. Lyman Abbott's lecture on the New Theology. He is intensely interested, and highly indignant at this brazen attempt of United States heretics to smuggle their heresies into Canada. He calls attention to the article, reads a part of it to the group about him, and denounces in unmistakable terms this teacher of New Theology, promising to give attention to these heresies in a sermon shortly. A discussion arises, differences of views are apparent, and the argument waxes warmer and more heated until a challenge is issued by Dr. Ortho Docks, and accepted by Norman Locke, to form a club and debate the issue between old and new theology. And so the club arose, Dr. Ortho Docks, Dr. Goodman, and

"Augustine" representing the old theology, and Norman Locke, E. J. McRobbins, and Dr. Blair the new views. Among the topics discussed are the following:

Is the Bible the Word of God?

Can miracles and prophecy substantiate a revelation?

Is inspiration confined to any age or nation?

Is the Christian civilization superior to all others?

Is the doctrine of eternal punishment true?

Is the "scheme of salvation" as taught by orthodox theologians in harmony with reason, nature, and the moral character of God?

Can our departed friends communicate with us?

Is such communication in harmony with the teachings of scripture?

Are such alleged communications any real value to humanity?

These and a variety of other topics are discussed with great skill and ability, pro and con, before crowded houses, during the whole of the winter, and the reader will find the book packed full of pertinent fact, argument, illustration, anecdotes and skillful repartee. It promises to have as much pith and point as any work we have read, and one valuable feature will be this: It will give the strongest arguments, whether original or not, on both sides, in the author's own setting, with the author's up-to-date views on the same theme.

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2. A correct version of the Parkdale Sermon, "Buy the Truth," on which the charges were based.
3. A copy of the charges.
4. Dr. Austin's reply to the charges at the preliminary trial.
5. The finding of the committee.
6. The story of the trial at the Conference.
7. Dr. Austin's Defence in full, embracing the portions omitted from his Conference address for special reasons.

8. The action of the Conference expelling Dr. Austin from the Methodist ministry.

It is published in good style, and to all interested in the warfare now on between the old theology and the new—between Creedal Christianity and Primitive Christianity—this comprehensive little volume will be opportune and welcome.

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2. Show samples of THE SERMON to your bookseller and get him to put it on sale on his counter. Also report to us the number of copies he desires sent to him. He can return unsold copies at the end of each

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3. Send us the names of as many bright boys and girls as you can find who will undertake to sell THE SERMON. We have a fine proposition to make to boys and girls by which they can earn a good commission and every one who sells a certain number will receive a valuable prize.

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7. Give us your good thoughts and wishes in this work, and ask all your friends in both realms to aid us, and then wait patiently the result. Success is sure.

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