

The Life of the Soul.

An Address Inspired by Spirit John Pierpont, the Guide of Mrs. Mary T. Longley, Secretary of The National Spiritualist Association of the United States and Canada delivered before The First Association of Spiritualists of Washington, D. C., Sunday, Nov. 8, 1903.

The subject selected for our discourse at this time was chosen with a desire to teach you something concerning the soul, and, therefore, we have phrased it, "The Life of the Soul."

Numerous definitions have been given of the word "soul" by different schools of thought and various teachers in our own ranks of the spiritual philosophy, and the interpretation we shall give may differ somewhat from that with which you have become familiar, because many of our public teachers—and perhaps many of those who are unseen by mortal eye but who inspire those teachers from time to time—have interpreted the word soul to mean the human entity as it is under the conditions and processes of developed intelligence, activity and consciousness. Personally we do not accept this definition, and will explain why.

THE MEANING OF SOUL.

What these teachers claim to be the soul, in the development and perfection of the principles of life as manifested through intelligence, consciousness and activity, we personally claim to be a spiritual entity; and the soul we interpret as something

independent in a measure, yet entirely and always permeating, infiltrating and animating this body or the form of spirit life. To our mind, soul is the essential principle, the essence of all life that animates this aggregation of elements, forces and activities which you call the human being.

As we have learned in our studies upon the spirit side of life and now understand it, the soul may be likened to A FLAME OF LIGHT, brilliant and beautiful in appearance, if you could behold it—potential in its power—and that principle which, coming in contact with the universe of activity, gathers to itself the elements, forces, particles and atoms which are necessary for the building up of form. The soul-flame attracts to itself these magnetic forces and elements, and is the electrifying force which permeates all life. This is our conclusion, after giving close study to the subject for many years.

VIVIFYING LIGHT.

We are taught that the great source of all life and being is itself light—glorifying, vivifying light—that permeates all being—the entire universe—and makes its power felt. That the soul of humanity is the offspring

of that central fount and source of all light; that this great central sun—if we may so call it—contains the potency of all intelligence and activity and all the various principles which we understand by the terms love, truth, wisdom and power; and this luminous central force produced that which we call the soul life of sentient, conscious being as manifested not only in the form of man but in various forms and degrees in this life with which you are familiar. Emerson has most beautifully addressed the infinite life as the "Oversoul"—grand, glorious and glorifying—brooding upon the waters of the great deep; and above all that the universe contains, permeating these with its life-giving force.

THOUGHT OF THE EARLY MAN.

In ancient days it was the custom for the early man to worship the sun as the great luminary of life itself, as the vivifying force of all being, and, knowing nothing of the interior qualities of spiritual life, this primitive man, realizing the potency of the sun in its course, bowed before it and made sacrifices to that grand central power of light. In this there is a substance and form of truth, for even primitive man, groping for an understanding of nature and of his own life and being, was intuitive in many directions. He felt the force of life, yet could not interpret it. He felt the mystical qualities of its vivifying power, but did not realize whence it came. Starting within him were the elements of adoration and worship of something which he could not take up in his hands or come in contact with in his rude existence, in the varying forms and conditions of material life. But the greatest power, the grandest expression of force and of beauty, of helpfulness to himself and people, he saw in the rays of the sun.

PRIMITIVE MAN VIEWING NATURE.

In the spring, he beheld the frozen waters of the deep breaking up and changing form and manifestation,

coming into active life and leaping forth in beauty to satisfy his thirst; he beheld the ground, arid and cold and dark as it had been, springing up with beautiful flowers, which covered it with a carpet of splendor. He realized that here was a principle of life which though he did not understand must have been helped into expression by the warming and vivifying rays of this grand sun. And so, as summer came upon him with its warmth and grandeur, with its blush and bloom and beauty, giving to him the products of nature, he also recognized that the power came from above and that the sun of light with its splendor and heat had the power to produce this wonderful effect.

So with autumn and her productions. This man turned naturally to the source of the heat and power, to the fructifying source of life itself, as he beheld it in nature's works, and gave reverence to it as one gives reverence to that which is more glorious and grand than he can reach.

The primitive man received within himself the thought of something great and glorious and all-powerful; and, as we have observed, he was intuitive—he felt these conditions and the spiritual impulse within, and expressed them as best he could.

The soul, we claim, IS A FLAME OF LIGHT; or, we might say, that it in its incipience—before it has reached out through human expression and experience—is a point of light, a spark of brilliancy so glorious that it would dazzle your mortal eyes could you behold it. Even the point of light, that is a soul principle—an element of power that permeates or is invested within the lowest form of human being that you can imagine—would, were it withdrawn and revealed to your mortal sight, appear so brilliant and dazzling that you could not behold it clearly, could not realize its potency.

WHENCE COME HUMAN SOULS?

Whence come these points of light which we call human souls? Who shall say? What finite mind can

interpret and explain the source of being? When mind can reach out and come in contact with the central source of all power and intelligence and explain the infinite wonders of life itself, and from whence these soul-germs come, that mind is infinite and can not come in contact with finite life to give intelligent understanding of these wondrous works. Therefore, we do not claim to explain whence these soul-germs come—these points of brilliancy that are destined to flame on and on through one form of expression and another, vivifying and revivifying human entities until they also become Godlike in power and expression. But this we do believe; that they come from the infinite source of all being—the Oversoul—the central light that we call God.

It matters not by what name we reverence or call that which is infinite; it matters not if you, on the one hand, are pleased to term it Nature, and say: "I worship Nature, and my religion is the religion of naturalism;" or if you, on the other hand, say: "I believe in God. I worship the Supreme Being—my ideal. My idea of infinitude is of a grand, supreme intelligence, majestic, magnificent in expression and power." It matters not by what term that great central source of light is called. We believe that all recognize intuitively, instinctively, that there is a supreme power permeating this universe of ours and that design, order, grandeur of expression are manifest on every hand.

One can not look out into the starry night and behold the magnificent display of the heavens, realizing how these stars and worlds outnumber all human conception of figures, and believe that this is all by chance, and that there is no hand of design, no infinite mind, spreading out these glories to your view and marking each world, each star and each system with its own power for the grandeur of eternal expression and of being.

MANIFESTATION OF DESIGN.

One can not walk forth in the fields of nature, when the spring-time spreads her garments of verdure

abroad, and rippling waters tell of life, beauty and harmony on every hand; when the summer time with ruddy glow presents her beauties to your inspection and gives you the color, the richness, the glory of a perfection which man can not portray; or when autumn time reveals her fruitage upon the bough, her splendor and richness upon the hilltops and in the valleys; or even when winter's snow and ice are on every hand locking the streamlets and clouding the wayside with the feathery snow—one can not behold any of this panorama of the seasons and believe that it does not manifest design. The passing seasons show beyond the shadow of a doubt that design, order, utility, and all that goes to make the manifestations of intelligence are portrayed there by nature's works, and therefore it matters not whether you say it is "law," or "infinite force," or "divine intelligence," or "nature working through the various forms of expression," or "God;" it is all one and the same: the SPIRIT, grand, beautiful, majestic, manifesting power through every atom and by every manner of manifestation.

The life of the soul is that which this point of light—this supreme brilliance of which we speak—gains for itself in unfolding processes, through different forms and manifestations of being which we call human, and which belong to the various planes of existence.

SOUL GERMS AS PRESENTED TO SOME.

Let us tell you how the soul germ appears to the spirit eye. There are spirits, human beings who have passed out from the mortal; you are all spirits encased in mortal flesh, but we are speaking of some who have passed out from the mortal and who are apart from the conditions and environments of the material life. There are many spirits who have never seen a soul germ; they know nothing about it, and if asked concerning the same would be pardonable if they claimed that there is nothing of the kind, because they do not see and have not

come in contact with them. Some day, undoubtedly, those very individuals will have so advanced that they will see and recognize these elements and forms which we call the "soul germs." Others—many of whom are high teachers—are familiar with them; **THEY ARE GUIDES, IF WE MAY USE THE TERMS, AND SOME OF THEM HAVE A NUMBER OF THESE SOUL GERMS IN CHARGE, DIRECTING THEM HERE AND THERE BY MAGNETIC WILL FORCE, AND THEN BRINGING THEM INTO CONTACT WITH HUMAN LIVES ON EARTH BY AND THROUGH WHICH THEY ARE TO GAIN EXPRESSION ON THE MOR-TAL PLANE.**

Now, then, we will describe as well as we can how a soul germ appears to a spirit intelligence who beholds it. But you must remember that in describing anything belonging to the spiritual states outside of matter we are obliged to make use of your terms and expressions, your language, your similes, and all that you can understand, because were we not to do so, that which we would try to interpret to you would be foreign, as if spoken in some dead language which you could not possibly understand; therefore, in using your terms of expression you will at once concede that it is not possible for the spirit to give full description of that which appeals to one on the other side of life where we are not confined to mortal phraseology and are not obliged to make use of terms which are of the earth earthy.

SOUL GERMS DESCRIBED.

Then we shall say that a soul germ appears to be like a brilliant point of light, scintillating, sparkling, and that it is covered or enveloped by a white, vapory substance that is very clear and beautiful, of a milk-white color. When this first appears to the sight of a spirit it is somewhat in the form of a small fig, and in the center of that substance is the point of light which is really the soul-flame, or the principle—essence—of life. When we call anything the essence or essential qual-

ity, we mean that which is the most vitalizing, that which is the most powerful, that which is the all in all, and that which produces the particular substance or object of interest. The essence of the flower is its perfume—its spirit—and because of that essence the flower is odorous to you and a thing of pleasure.

The soul principle, then, or this point of light—which is the vivifying power enveloped in this vapory substance and shining brilliantly through the same—has attached to it these elements and forces, magnetic in character, from the atmosphere and the conditions of life around it, and formed this envelop for its sustenance and protection. This substance of a magnetic character may be likened to the substance surrounding the germ of an acorn. Nature's work is true and exact in its processes of upbuilding and unfolding, and as true and exact in its processes of building up a human entity and bringing forth into expression the human being that we know as a co-ordination of the forces and elements, or spirit and mind—of intelligence, consciousness and expression—as it is in building up the oak tree from the tiny germ, which the acorn contains. We deal with scientific problems when we deal with the soul life—with the spiritual being—and when we deal with the external form and its manifestations here in material life.

GROWTH OF SOUL GERM.

So nature is working in her own beautiful way—Nature, God, Intelligence, Force—whatever you may call it—is doing this work, and the soul-flame sent out into the universe from its central source of light, gathers to itself—for it has within the power to attract the magnetic elements and forces to form this covering of which we speak. Opening the acorn which lays in your hand you perceive the tiny germ within: you know that germ is the life of the plant, that it is to unfold, to grow, to come into expression; and the substance around that germ, which you behold as the nut, is that which the germ will feed upon during the processes and waiting

time of nature, when it is covered by the soil, before it has gathered the strength and power to manifest itself by coming above the surface of the earth as a tiny expression. You open a grain of corn and you find the germ there surrounded by a milky substance which it has to feed upon until it gathers strength to put out its rootlets and become a stalk which shall bear ears of corn for your sustenance and gratification. So with the soul life; it is along the same exact processes until the soul gathers its forces and comes into expression.

As we have said, this soul-germ appears like a point of brilliant light in the midst of this magnetic substance which it has for its support; that it is in form somewhat like a small fig, and by and by this substance increases; instead of decreasing it gathers to itself new elements from the atmosphere and this increases its size, but it retains the same shape, and after a time it comes to look something like a beautiful pear, only it is still of a white, vapory appearance and substance. The point of light feeds—so to speak—upon this magnetic envelop; it absorbs it; thus the light grows in size and power, and develops new possibilities—rather it is putting out its potency, for, coming from the great principle of all light and being, it must be charged with potential qualities, with electrifying force; and as it feeds upon this magnetic supply which is of its own it develops and throws out greater beauty and power, until by and by, following the law of attraction, just as surely as all things in life must follow that same omnipotent law, this soul germ is swept into the atmosphere along the currents of expression of some human being upon this mortal plane; in this magnetic environment or aura it becomes absorbed, and then will come the processes of gestation and of growth in a material sense. The soul becomes absorbed by this co-ordination of forces that is creating a mortal form, and when the life principles—the positive and negative elements—are blended together, this soul germ, seeking expression through these outlying forms,

comes into active conscious life on earth.

LIFE OF THE SOUL.

This is the life of the soul, as far as we can follow it to the mortal state; but the life of the soul, we might say, is only just begun; that is, provided that soul germ comes fresh from the infinite life to the mortal state of earth. It may have passed through various forms of expression in other worlds, on other planets; we do not know.

There are those which have, and which do not come in that soul germ or form of which we speak; but we are confining our description to the soul germ we have reason to suppose has had no expression through any form of activity and consciousness of which we can become aware. Therefore it has now come into the outer manifestation of life on earth. It has the power to vivify and animate this co-ordination of elements and atoms, spiritual impulses and magnetic forces, which we call a human entity. All this aggregation of forces has built up a mortal form and this form is endowed with various qualities and powers, partly drawn from the spiritual, largely drawn from the material life.

PARENTAL LIFE AND ANCESTRY.

As the soul comes into contact with this magnetic life of the parentage, being sensitive and subjected to various vibratory forces, it comes also under the influence of that which belongs to the parental life, consequently as it takes upon itself these varying conditions of materiality it also takes upon itself in a measure those qualities which belong to the parental life and even to ancestry—these vibratory forces working through and upon this growing child create conditions which we call the conditions of heredity, and thus we find the child may exhibit traits and characteristics which have not been shown by either parent, or by both, but by those who are of more remote ancestry; but all the while the soul maintains its brilliancy, its own subjective and creative power.

THE SOUL CAN NOT BE DESTROYED.

The conditions of earth may be such—and also those of heredity—through the material processes of life, as to cloud this soul power, as to in a measure cramp and gather around it that which we may call a shell. It may seem to be for the time crystalized so that it can not give out this scintillating, radiating power which makes for good; but all the while the soul is there—it can not possibly be destroyed—it knows no fear. The soul itself is of the Infinite; it can not be lost, whatever its conditions or lack of growth.

The life of the soul, then, begins to enlarge—if we may so express it—when this vital flame, that is only a point of light, surrounded by the substance of magnetic force which we have mentioned—first permeates every part of the growing child. If the soul life is withdrawn, or if there is that which severs the connection between this soul germ and the physical form during the period of gestation, you will find that when the child is born it is dead, there is no life or animation—it is simply a little speck of clay. But if the soul germ takes possession through the magnetic aura of the mother, and this little principle of life which is produced by the co-ordination of forces through the parental conditions, then the child is alive, and this soul-germ begins its work. It begins from that little point of light to send out radiating lines just exactly as the rootlet of the tree sends out its radiating root lines until it can throw out the grand and beautiful conditions of leafage and fruitage and helpfulness for the earth. These little radiating lines, coming from the central speck of brilliancy, pass through every fibre and nerve and condition of the human form, and it is this soul life which is not only the radiating force and animating power, but it is this which enables a human entity to grasp the conditions of life and to understand them.

As we have said before, the soul life may be cramped, may be crowded back, may be held from the develop-

ment which belongs to it, and so the human being may go tottering along in this mortal life, and perhaps be a mere semblance of what a human life or form should be, but nevertheless it exists, and because of this the machinery of the human body and the mental action of the brain may go on and do their work, by greater or lesser degrees, according to the case.

THE SOUL HAS A WORK TO DO.

But the soul has a work to do—it is busy. This human body must be fed. We do not mean by the external forms of sustenance, but we mean by spiritual elements, by the forces and qualities that are gathered from the atmosphere, mental and spiritual. This human body requires something more than the bread, meat and raiment which you find here in physical life; it must have something gathered from life itself, from nature, which will give it the strength to make its way in the world. The soul-flame has charge of this duty. It still has its attractive force, just as when a speck of light emitted into infinite space, it gathered magnetic qualities to itself and then the envelop that enabled it to come into contact with this external life. Just so it has the attractive force now, while permeating you as human beings, to gather to itself elements and atoms and forces which enable it not only to benefit these external bodies but to build up the spiritual form which hereafter it will claim in grander worlds than this.

THE SOUL FLAME AND MIND.

This flaming light or force which we call the soul, as we have intimated, permeates every nerve and tissue, and there is not an atom in your body but what is vitalized by it; there is not an element in your spiritual bodies that are being built up now, but what is animated by this vital flame of being, and as you go forth from day to day this wonderful creative, upbuilding force is constantly at work. It can not die, and never sleeps. The soul can bring you into a condition by which you may secure rest that is needed by the external form, and, when your body is gaining repose, when your eyes are closed in slumber,

the soul life is moving constantly on and under its influence you may project yourself out of the external form into contact with other lives and other realms, gaining knowledge and consciousness of being, which, though you are unable to bring back into this outward thought and line of expression called the daily life of earth, yet remain with you registered in soul life, and which you will find by and by helpful to an understanding of existence in the spirit spheres. This soul life will continue to animate the consciousness and enable you to express that which is within.

We understand and realize that conditions of mortal life have a great deal to do with assisting in this up-building process. We know that education, opportunity and all the various conditions which go to assist a human being in reaching onward here in mortal life have much to do with the unfolding and the expression of the human mind. But the soul flame itself is that which sets the mind in motion, enables it to attract to itself forces from beyond, to develop others from within, and thus give the mentality power to manifest itself in wondrous forms of achievement throughout the universe.

The life of the soul, then, while it is within, while it is the great motive power of your being, is that which is independent of these atoms and forces which you behold around you, for this soul flame or light—this principle of being with its attractive power drawing to itself all that is necessary for its expression on earth—exists out in the realms of space long ere it comes into this external form to give manifestation of life.

SOUL AND SPIRIT DEFINED.

There are those who claim that the soul is the product of matter. We make a distinction between "soul" and "spirit," and claim that neither is the product of matter, but that matter, or the co-ordination of atoms and forces into substance or objective life, which we call matter, is itself the product of spirit, and that spirit itself could not exist except for the vital flame which we call the soul, animat-

ing, attracting, drawing it together, bringing it into form and substance in conjunction with this building up of the material body which we see on earth.

We chose this subject to give you some idea, brief and feeble though it may be, of the various and wonderful processes which we behold in the spirit that pertain to human life and consciousness. The soul flame of being will by and by have had its experience with this mortal form, or, rather, you will have had your experience as co-ordinate human entities under the animation of the soul flame. By and by you as human beings will leave the outer shell and will be drawn onward, still vivified by this soul flame of light, and still enabled because of it to pass out into realms of usefulness and power to gain your advancement and your spiritual growth. Without it there would be no coalescence; without it there would be no coherence; chemical affinity would be unknown; the law of attraction itself would not be; but with it all things are possible, for it is the offshoot of that great supreme life which is the "all in all." Thus do we claim that we are a part of the supreme; thus do we claim we are called to live in the living presence of the omnipotent power; thus do we claim we have the right to call ourselves children of the living God, for it is true that from that great central source cometh every flame of light—every soul that finds expression here or elsewhere is the vast universe.

SPHERES OF LIGHT.

We are told that there are intelligences in the realms of space so beautified, so perfected, that were they to approach you in their majesty and splendor you could not behold them as anything but spheres of light, and yet they have the divine qualities of intelligence—the human qualities unfolded, evolutionized unto the divine—so magnificent we cannot compare them to anything else than the qualities of a God. these are human entities—if we may employ the term—and they appear like spheres of light to those who are not upon the same plane of vibration and of progression as

themselves; and this proves to us that the soul life is of the flame, that it is the light of infinity that blooms and blossoms into grandeur in its expression as shown to you in the glowing stars above your heads that march in matchless beauty through the ages, each true to its course and to its work.

THE GLORY OF LIFE.

These are the thoughts brought to our minds as we seek to study the majesty of being, the grandeur of existence, the glory of life. Think of it. Cradled here in the arms of Mother Nature, rocked to and fro by her convulsions and by what may appear to you to be her spasmodic conditions of life, probably as most mortals, amidst the dark, damp conditions of materiality, groping on, trying to reach through the darkness of ignorance and seeking for light; searching ever here and there for some treasure that shall be for your uplifting; ever pressing onward with burdens upon your backs, and with bowed heads because the storms of life center upon you, you may be pardoned if you feel that after all life is hardship—life is not to be desired; but when you realize that you are children of the living God; when you realize that it is not this external form of clay, even though its elements and atoms and particles, its tissues and forces, are drawn from the infinite storehouse of nature and given out by her bounty and goodness, but that it is the soul flame that has sprung directly from the infinite power of all being, and that you are creatures that may press onward, magnificent in power, splendid in achievement, grand beyond the telling in aspiration, springing ever onward and upward to higher fields of conquest and attainment—then you may realize that it is grand indeed to be alive.

Yea, my friends, it is glorious beyond expression to realize that we are not of the common clods; are not a ball of earth rolled into a certain form and battered here and there by the conditions of life that we behold around us, but that we are the light, the glory, the power of infinite love; that we are a part and parcel of the

beauty, splendor, holiness, wisdom, truth, intelligence, and all that goes to make up omnipotence; that we are living souls, moving onward, and can attract to ourselves that from the universe, from the atmosphere, from all life, which is uplifting, which is conducive to unfoldment, which helps onward to higher things, because the soul flame within is the attractive force. When we realize this—that the soul life is the real or attractive force—we may gather to ourselves from the universe those things which we need, those which we must have for the development of divinity within our lives; and this we can do as we study ourselves and our conditions, as we come into accord with life and into harmony with mankind. Thus shall we climb on and on, not content to remain here as children groping in the dark, but aspiring to become men and women in the proudest, grandest sense; men and women of courage and power; men and women of trust and faith in things divine; men and women who have within ourselves the potency and possibility of accomplishment, of achievement—not children crying because there are little obstacles in our way and we can not overcome them, but men and women secure in our assurance of strength that we shall overcome, that we will surmount the obstacles, that the impediments must be removed by positive action of the life itself. Thus day by day, undaunted by that which may seem a mistake or blunder or failure, but only girding up the inner powers for new effort and new achievement, we shall march on, FINDING THAT AFTER A WHILE THE IMPEDIMENTS ARE OVERCOME, THE OBSTACLES ARE SURMOUNTED, THE HEIGHTS ARE CLIMBED, THE GLORY OF THE STARS WITHIN OUR REACH, AND THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE LIVING GOD, FULL OF THE SOUL-FLAME, OF MAJESTY, OF LOVE, OF WISDOM AND INTELLIGENCE—ON, NEARING STILL CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE DIVINE LOVE OF THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF US ALL.