

Ghosts: New and Old

BOURGEOIS science and culture has nothing more to give to human society. The bourgeois system has reached the parting of the ways, and we see on all sides signs of decay. The future holds no hope in store for the capitalist class and its apologists. They look towards the future and see nothing but disaster for themselves and their system. The bourgeois scientists in despair, cry frantically "Let us go back." "Back to Kant." "Back to Cuvier." "Back to Malthus." "Back to Moses." Back to anybody, or anything, to save their beautiful system of Christian civilization, and bourgeois democracy.

The theologians, finding that the workers are getting wise to the old orthodox religions and are rapidly falling away, concoct new religions, such as Theosophy, Spiritualism, Christian Science, etc., which are merely a rehash of the old ones (only more ridiculous) with new names for old superstitions, and enlist the names and the services of a few bourgeois scientists (who have gone crazy hunting for the back trail), to give them a scientific shade. For instance: Mr. L. W. Rogers, of the "Theosophical Book Concern," of Los Angeles, tells us that "Reincarnation is not a new idea. It is only new to our western nations and to our particular time. It was well known to Greece, and Plato was one of its exponents." And again: "The astral plane is the purgatory of ancient literature and of the Catholic Church." We had our suspicions of this all along, so we are glad to have this testimony from a man who knows. It makes us feel less guilty and less responsible. To this extent we agree with Mr. Rogers, so we will let him have things his own way for the present.

Now we intend to examine briefly, a series of articles by Mr. Basil King, entitled "The Abolishing of Death," which appeared in the "Cosmopolitan" magazine of July, August, September and October, 1919, and if any reader of this article thinks we have misquoted in any way, we would ask him to look up the articles in the "Cosmopolitan," and read them for himself. Mr. King does not claim to be an exponent of any of the above mentioned sects, in fact he seems to be a kind of free-lance, but he does claim to have had communication with the ghosts, of what he calls "The New Heaven." The particular ghost with whom he talks most, he calls Henry Talbot, which is a fictitious name for the ghost of a certain chemist, "well known in Europe and America," who "passed over" some years ago, and who it appears is very modest, and wishes to remain anonymous. The medium, or the young lady who writes the messages that Henry wishes to deliver, Mr. King calls Jennifer. Now you have the plot, and the cast of characters. So we shall see what they have to say for themselves. Mr. King is the first speaker, he says:

"In the following paper I speak as if the fact that messages can come from one plane of existence to the other were conceded by the reader. This I do to avoid wearisome arguments and repetitions." . . . "It will be noticed that I bring nothing forward in the nature of evidence, for apart from the factor of sweet reasonableness in the messages themselves, I have no evidence to bring. . . . As for proof of the presumed speaker's identity, or that there is a speaker outside Jennifer or myself, I have sought for none. The internal evidence of high and beautiful thought has been enough for such purposes as I have in mind."

Of course Mr. King would find argument and criticism wearisome. But they do not weary us in the least, so we shall proceed to analyze some of the "sweet reasonable messages" and the "high and beautiful thought" that Henry has seen fit to vouchsafe unto Mr. King, and which constitute the only evidence and proof that Mr. King has to offer. It would also be interesting to know just what the "purposes" are that Mr. King has in mind, but that is something very hard to ascertain, so we leave it to the reader to figure out for himself. Now we shall see what Henry has to say with regard to mediums.

"The mediums and others similarly gifted," Henry Talbot writes further, 'are people whose

sensibilities resemble those of the birds and animals. Their intelligence has not blunted their perception of rhythm, and they thus find themselves peculiarly adapted to thought transmission. Unlike the birds however, they have forgotten how to control and direct this force. They represent, in some degree, what God intended us all to be, though, in the case of most of us, the sense of rhythm has been overwhelmed by worldly activities. If you observe a growing infant, you will note many indications of his possession of what I might call a sixth sense—the sense of rhythm. This is, as a rule, effectually blunted by his education; but sometimes, as in the case of mediums and persons possessing peculiar powers, the strength of the sixth sense is too great to be overcome.' "

If we understand the above message correctly, Henry wishes to inform us, through Jennifer and Mr. King, that he will absolutely refuse to associate with anyone except idiots and ignoramuses. All others, who are not as "God intended us all to be," are barred from the "sweet reasonable messages," unless they are willing to take them second-hand from such as Mr. King. And if the education of the child blunts his sixth sense, and unfits him for communication with the ghosts, then by all means let us abolish education. Let us build up no barriers between ourselves and the ghosts. We shall now have a few messages on social and political subjects, from various ghosts of "The New Heaven."

"We are hoping to write books on law," says a young Harvard professor who went over some thirty years ago. 'He has been working with the rules governing water,' we are told of another man. 'I am studying beauty in new forms,' a well known architect has recently written of himself. 'She is watching with the babies,' is the word concerning a young mother. 'She makes the fun,' was the answer to a question about a relative. 'He does a great work here,' is the reply to an inquiry about a former banker who loved horses, 'two works. He helps in the organization of exchange, and he plays with the horses and develops them' . . . "I am a mother now," wrote a woman who had never been married, and in whom we supposed the earthly springs of maternity to have dried up. This being difficult for us to understand, she said later, when we asked for a message to a young man relative whom she had dearly loved, 'I have my own boys here.' A third person threw light on this by saying of her: 'She works among soldiers. They all love her' "

Now we are convinced that almost everyone will admit that these are real "sweet and reasonable messages," that the ghosts of "The New Heaven" have sent us through Jennifer and Mr. King. They are almost as "sweet and reasonable," and as "high and beautiful" as the bourgeois ideas and customs in vogue right here on earth at the present time. But, oh! how different is "The New Heaven" from the old one of the "pearly gates," where the sexless ghosts were wont to sit around the "great white throne," and play their golden harps for ever and for ever. And why this change? Has there been some great reformation in Heaven, such as has taken place on earth from time to time? Or was somebody mistaken in the first place? Now we will have just one more message from the ghosts.

"That sure is so!" he had written, in response to something we had asked him. As I was about to object that the form of speech had not been in vogue when he was with us some thirty years ago, he continued to write: 'The slang comes to us here. Very good, too.'

'Do the soldier boys bring it over?' it occurred to me to ask.

'Yes; when they first come they want to talk, and do not grasp at once our thought-exchange.'

'And you talk with them?'

'Yes; and the slang makes them feel at home.'

"Sweet" of the ghosts, was it not, to talk slang to the immortal souls, of the dead soldier boys to make them feel at home? The ghosts of "The New Heaven" are progressive. Nothing reactionary about those ghosts. Evidently, the law of evolution has been at work on the ghosts, as well as every-

thing else; that infernal law will leave nothing alone.

The time was, in the "good old days," when the ghosts came out of their graves at night, attired in their white shrouds, or shirts, or whatever they wore, and wandered about scaring the life out of respectable gentlemen, who, like Tam O'Shanter, had been out having a good time, and were a little late getting back. Now that was no way to make a man feel at home. The old-fashioned ghosts did not understand their business. Instead of scaring people to death, they should have stayed where they belonged, and welcomed, with slang phrases, the souls of those who died a natural death, or were "sent over" to "make the world safe for democracy." But how could the poor old ghosts talk slang before slang was invented?

Anyhow, it is nice to have a choice between ghosts. So if you are discouraged with this vale of tears, and if you have an intellect on a par with that of birds and animals, and if you have never had education enough to blunt your sixth sense, have a talk with Henry. If you do not like Henry's slang, and the Heaven of the law books and horses, "go back" to the ghosts of Shakespeare, and the Heaven of the golden harps. If you have had enough of bourgeois democracy, try the astral plane; if you do not like the astral plane, "go back" to purgatory.

Now the moral of this tale is, that Mr. King and the whole tribe of "new ghost worshippers," (scientists and all), are either idiots, or the most notorious bunch of hypocrites that ever polluted the earth. Because, if they are both sane and sincere, then, the writer of this article is as crazy as a bed bug, and we strenuously object to any such insinuation. But there is an imbecile, or a hypocrite, in the wood-pile somewhere; we leave it to the reader of the "Clarion" to find him, and as an aid in the search, we would suggest that they read "Social and Philosophical Studies," by P. Lafargue; "Philosophical Essays," by J. Dietzgen; and the "Evolution of the Idea of God," by G. Allen. We have an idea that after a careful study of these works, they will not worry much about ghosts, either new or old.

F. J. McNEY.

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