

his comments on the alleged astronomical inconsistencies were received with evident approval and enjoyment.

The creation and the fall of man, the embarkment of Noah and his family and the animals, the flood and the career of "God's chosen people" were next considered. The concluding portion of the lecture was devoted to criticism of the Deity and to the arraignment of the God of the Hebrews on charges of cruelty, treachery and immorality. His ideal of a God was a being whose attributes are mercy and justice. The God of the Jews approved of polygamy, slavery, rape, and rapine. Why were we so disgusted with Brigham Young when he but followed many of the teachings of the Old Testament and the instructions of the God of the Hebrews? The Bible was the auction block on which stood every man and woman sold into slavery. The Bible opposes religious liberty; it upholds murder, and calls the chief of murderers a man "after God's own heart." The man after his own heart was he whose motto was, "Malice towards none and charity for all." [Great applause.] The lecturer made a telling point by contradicting the Bible sentiment which implied that labor is a curse. He concluded his somewhat rambling and disjointed lecture by calling on his hearers to educate their children according to the truth as they understand it, to the exclusion of fables and impossibilities. The ... is before us; here are justice, charity, love and liberty. Put behind you the books in none of which can those attributes be found. Help to break the chains of the clergy, and inspire them with courage to speak out the truth.

WHAT SPIRITUALISTS BELIEVE.

BY WILLIAM EMMETTE COLEMAN.

Spiritualists have no formulated creed, but each is privileged to accept or reject all things presented him, no matter whence their origin. No two Spiritualists believe precisely alike; but there are certain statements of doctrines in which nearly all Spiritualists profess belief, and these I shall now summarize:—

1. Spiritualists believe in the eternity, uncreatability and indestructibility of primordial substance. Some Spiritualists regard matter—that is, matter perceptible to the physical senses—as evolved from spirit, the eternal uncreated substance; some think matter and spirit co-eternal and co-united; while some deem spirits an evolution of matter,—by spirit being understood, in each case a more sublimated and ethereal form of matter. The eternity of substance, material or spiritual, or both, is ever predicated by the Spiritual Philosophy.

2. Spiritualists believe in evolution, from everlasting to everlasting. The material universe is the product of evolution from the primordial nebular; and, in like manner, the spiritual universe has been evolved from spiritual substance. Material worlds are technically termed, First Spheres; emanations from these—spiritual essences—form spiritual worlds, or Second Spheres; emanations, or refined essences, arising from the Second Spheres form Third Spheres; and so on indefinitely. Some Spiritualists believe in an infinite succession of spheres, while others are convinced of the existence of a Perfected or Deific Sphere, in which all knowledge and virtue are compassed by the indwelling minds, said minds constituting the only personalized form of Deity in the Universe:

3. Spiritualists believe in material and spiritual counterparts,—all material atoms and forms being animated by corresponding spiritual atoms and forms; that, upon decomposition of forms, the spiritual essences thereof arises therefrom, and if of a higher grade they gravitate to the second Sphere, but if of lower grade they re-animate other material forms. The Second Sphere is, therefore, an improved and beautiful world, diversified with land and water, earth and sky, hill and vale, flora and fauna, men and women, towns and cities, schools and laboratories, museums and theatres, books and newspapers, rural cottages and stately mansions. Man's spirit-body is the analogue of the material body, with his powers and functions increased and expanded. The

Second Sphere has twelve circles, corresponding to stages of moral growth; and at death each spirit, by natural laws of attraction, gravitates to that circle to which it is attuned. All spirits, however, eventually progress in wisdom and virtue from circle to circle, rising higher and higher at each successive step; every human being in turn attaining the same exalted destiny. The development of the lower spirits is assisted by instructions and ministrations from those higher than themselves; millions of philanthropic souls being engaged in this goodly work. Spirits passing from the twelfth circle of the Second Sphere to the first of the Third Sphere leave behind their spirit-body,—by a process analogous to physical death,—and assume a higher spirit-body; and so from Sphere to Sphere.

4. Spiritualists believe in the intercommunion of the material and spiritual worlds; that all persons on earth have guardian spirits, generally relatives or near friends, who strive, as far as nature's laws permit, to benefit and improve their wards; that their presence may at times be manifested to those on earth by physical phenomena demonstrative of the operation of unseen intelligences, or by mental or psychological phenomena, in which an intelligence foreign to the mind through which it is projected is displayed,—in some instances the intelligence being manifested through so-called materialized hands and arms, head, and whole bodies, temporary embodiments of pre-existing material elements used by the unseen spiritual visitants to demonstrate their power and actuality.

5. Spiritualists believe in inspiration and intuition; that the mind in exalted states of consciousness is receptive to truth flowing from the inner fount of causation, or becomes inspired; that it is possible for spiritual things to be discerned by the clairvoyant eye, and for material things to be seen and heard without the intervention of the material eye and ear, the most striking examples thereof being observed in the eventful life of the marvel of the nineteenth century, Andrew Jackson Davis.

6. Spiritualists, in general, are rather Pantheists than either Atheists or Theists, the Divine in nature or the universe being recognized as ever immanent; the material universe being the body of Deity, and the spiritual universe his (or its) soul. Man's intelligence is deemed a drop from the Infinite Ocean of Intelligence, and will attain Deific proportions and perfection.

7. Spiritualists believe in the supremacy of law, to the exclusion of all miracles and supernaturalism. All things, material and spiritual, are governed by immutable law, incapable of being transcended and annulled; and all so-called supernatural events—when genuine—are the result of natural laws, the action of which is not as well understood as some others. No more miracle attaches to a chair being uplifted to the ceiling by unseen spiritual hands than when lifted by a natural hand. The counteraction of the law of gravitation is occasioned in each instance by the intervention of an intelligent human personality, acting by due process of law.

8. Spiritualists, as a class, regard the Bible as a finite, fallible production, to be judged, like other books, solely upon its merits and demerits. Some regard it as a record of spiritual manifestations in ancient times, and so of use as confirmatory of the modern. Nearly all reject the claim that it is, in any special sense, the Word of God. Some few Christian Spiritualists in America, and a large number in England, still, however, revere it as a revelation from God to man.

9. Spiritualists look upon Jesus as a natural man, nothing more,—a Jewish reformer, possessing probably some mediumistic or clairvoyant powers,—and no more the Saviour of the world than Voltaire or Paine, Socrates or Buddha. Some few Christian Spiritualists place a higher estimate upon him, considering him as, in some inexplicable manner, the son of God.

10. Spiritualists are nearly all Freethinkers, believing strongly in free thought, free speech, and a free press; in the complete secularization of the government; and in the complete emancipation of the human mind from sectarian creeds and dogmas, superstition and fanaticism. Some Spiritualists, though, are as superstitious, as credulous, and as dogmatically intolerant in their spiritual notions as any churchman could well be.