

Harold - you probably never thought you were in S.F. when the Argonauts were interested. Will

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THE ARGONAUT

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He Talked With God

WE READ an advertisement in the *Chronicle* the other day of a man who says that he has talked with God, and got wonderful results from the conversations. The advertiser lives in Moscow, Idaho, and he says that, as a result of his conversations with God, he has become the owner of the largest circulating daily newspaper in the county of which Moscow is a part, that he owns the largest office building in his city, that he owns his own home with a pipe organ in it, that he drives a lovely limousine, and that his family will be amply provided for after he has gone from the earthly scene, all as the result of a talk that he had with God ten years ago ("actually and literally talked with God"), and that what came to him as a result of talking with God can come to anybody else who will communicate with him and follow instructions. We have read somewhere that this gentleman, who calls himself a doctor, but who his enemies say was merely the owner of a drug store, demands a pecuniary compensation for the knowledge he is prepared to give, but whether this is true or not, we are not prepared to aver, for we have not communicated with him, and have no intention of doing so. His God, if we believed in him, would frighten us, for the partiality he shows to a man who was evidently not out so much to benefit his fellows, as to get rich quick.

We find several flaws in his contention also. While it might be true that a conversation with his God (though it sounds suspiciously like the conversations that men of mediæval times were reported to have had with the Devil), would give to every other person who indulged in it a limousine equally beautiful and a house with a pipe organ installed therein, we are sure that only one man in his Idaho county could have the largest circulating daily newspaper, or own the largest office building in Moscow. Even the omnipotence of God has limits, and just as there cannot be two mountains without a valley between, or a six months' old colt made in fifteen minutes, or a six months' old boy or girl made in the same length of time, so there are a number of other things that no conversation with God can bring about. Consequently we take it for granted that Doc Robinson would wish to have his disciples from regions remote from Moscow, Idaho.

We have no doubt that the doc will receive many letters from correspondents who want to rise in the world. To rise in the world is what the average person is desirous of. The average man is not anxious to be better than his fellows, he is not even particularly anxious to be more gifted

in the matter of knowledge and wisdom. What he really wants is to be able to keep up with the Joneses, or, better yet, to get ahead of them, and Doc Robinson, if one can trust the advertisement, has a recipe that will enable him to do so.

We do not understand that Doc Robinson is in league with anybody else. There is old Governor Dickinson of Michigan who also talks with God, and, in spite of his eighty years, he is still going strong. We saw his picture the other day, as he sat with other Republican leaders who are trying to figure out how Mr. Roosevelt, or other Democratic leaders, may be beaten in the election this coming fall. Then there is Frank Buchman and his followers who talk with God, and have inspired a columnist of a San Francisco daily to write in glorification of them when he is not engaged in glorifying the autobiography of Hutchins Hapgood, a book that ought, we should suppose, to be anathema to every true Buchmanite. But Doc Robinson, we presume, is quite on his own, and it may be that the God whom he teaches the readers of his advertisement to talk with is a different God from the one that the Governor of Michigan and the Buchmanites have daily intercourse with.

Well, we live in a very mysterious world, a world that nobody understands very well, whether one talks with God or merely with his neighbor; and somehow it does not seem to become any less mysterious to those who have what the Governor of Michigan calls a "pipe line" to the Almighty than to the rest of us. We observe that those who carry on these daily conversations with God never settle any scientific problem, any philosophical problem, or any economic problem. They may get ahead of their neighbors, have the largest circulating daily in their county or the largest office building in their town, but they are not able to abolish the industrial depression, put the idle millions to work, or end the war in Europe. Nor can they tell us who will be the next Republican or Democratic nominee for President, or who will win in the next election. In the conflict between egoism and altruism, to employ terms used by Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Ethics*, they come down heavily on the side of the former.

Perhaps it would be unkind to suggest that all this philosophy (if one can call it philosophy) seems to have a parallel in the stories that have come down to us in regard to the man who called himself Count Cagliostro, who flourished in the eighteenth century. But it might not harm certain devotees thereof to read what Carlyle wrote about the arch-quack of Europe.