

# AGE OF PROGRESS

The development of Spiritual Truth is the achievement of human freedom.

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WHOLE No. 89.

## "How shall we Distinguish?"

A friend, among other spiritual grievances, states that, some three months ago, she enquired of a spirit who was tipping the table, whether an absent brother, who had gone to a far-off locality, was still living in the physical form, or not, and that the answer, by the table, was in the negative. Pursuing the interrogation, she was informed that her brother made his appearance in the spirit world more than a year ago. She farther states that, some six weeks subsequently to this spiritual information, she received a letter from the absent brother, in his own well-known hand writing, representing that he was in good health, and expected to be at home in the course of the coming year. And she concludes by asking why this is so, and how she is to distinguish between truths and falsehoods, in spiritual communications.

We have attempted to answer queries of this character, on several occasions, before now. But we take into consideration the fact that investigators are rapidly increasing, and that many who did not deign to look into a spiritual paper, when we gave those answers, are now earnest seekers after the truth of the Spiritual philosophy, and the difficulties of which our friend complains, are likely to beset the paths of all new investigators.

The grand difficulty in all these things, is the error with which people commence their investigations—the wrong object with which they set out. The fact that nine-tenths of the inhabitants of Christendom, who are capable of thinking, do not believe in the immortality of the human soul, renders the mere fact that disembodied human spirits do exist and make their presence known to their surviving friends, the paramount desideratum of investigation. If the investigator be convinced beyond a doubt that the spirit of a departed man or woman is present and communicating with him, it settles, in his mind, the whole question of immortality; whilst the truth or falsity of what the spirit communicates, has no bearing on that subject. The question whether a man is living or not, is conclusively settled by the fact that he speaks, whether he speak truly or falsely. Then a deceptive, ignorant or lying spirit proves the truth of immortality, as positively as an ingenuous, wise and truthful one could.

Those who have not to be convinced of immortality, but who are seeking evidence to satisfy themselves whether it is a human spirit, or electricity or odyle, that tips a table or produces raps on it, have only to be convinced that there is intelligence in the operating agent. If that agent be intelligent, the rational mind must come to the conclusion, at once, that it can be no less than a human spirit, either in the form or out; because the fact that there is no intelligence in the water, the air, the electric forces, or any of the mere elements or instruments of nature, is intuitively evident to all mind; and, to think otherwise, would be evidence of idiocy or insanity. Hence the mere fact that a communication thus received, is true or false, has no bearing, as testimony, either in favor of, or against immortality, or in favor of, or against the proposition that the communicating agent is a human spirit.

It remains, then, that the truth or untruth of spiritual communications, is important only to those who seek to derive information and gratification from spiritual intercourse. And we are ready to admit that the truths of science, philosophy and religion, which we receive from highly developed spirits, are of the utmost importance to the well-being of incarnate humanity, and that there can be no more rational or pleasurable gratification, than that of listening, undoubtingly, to messages of wisdom, truth and love, from the home and minds of our departed friends. Hence we are willing—nay desirous, to contribute what we can to enlighten enquiring minds on these matters, that they may be profited and gratified, as well as we.

Bear this fact in mind, and never lose sight of it, when listening to the communications of spirits: Human spirits, when they leave the form and enter the spirit world, are just what they were before leaving the form. If they were virtuous when in the form, they remain virtuous, when out—if vicious when in, vicious when out—if kind and loving when in, kind and loving when out—if morose and malicious when in, morose and malicious when out—if truthful when in, truthful when out—if addicted to falsehood when in, addicted to falsehood when out—if inclined to fun, frolic and mischief when in, similarly inclined when out. And these propensities continue till progression takes the spirit out of the evil ones; in effecting which, it will necessarily strengthen, improve and beautify the good ones. Before spirits who leave the form with those vicious propensities, are progressed out of them, they are what are designated as undeveloped spirits; and, when they control media, they cannot be relied on for truthful communication; and this, be it understood, not always because they intend to deceive, but frequently because they are ignorant of the facts and philosophy of what they communicate about; for, undeveloped spirits who communicate, are ignorant spirits.

Now, all the investigator has to do, is to treat communicating spirits, out of the form, as they do those in the form. Listen to what they have to communicate respectfully, and believe it, if it stand the test of reasoning scrutiny; if not, reject it as improbable, doubtful, or false. And take care never to condemn and denounce a communicating spirit as a deceiver or a liar; for spirits out of the form are as sensitive as they were when in the form; and they are sent away wounded and grieving, when they are denounced as evil spirits, deceivers and liars, for answering erroneously, when they believed they were answering truly.

Men and women, in the flesh, call on their relatives, in a great many instances, for information on subjects which, on account of their want of development, or some other disqualifying circumstance, they are not capable of answering; and, like many indiscreet spirits in the flesh, they feel a desire to seem wiser than they are, and answer without the necessary knowledge, according to their erroneous conceptions of truth. The fault, in these cases, is as much that of the enquirer as it is that of the respondent. When ignorance asks of ignorance that which knowledge only can give,



nothing but ignorance can be expected in response. Spirits who were destitute of science and philosophy, when in the flesh, are appealed to when they pass into the spirit world, as if they had been baptized in the font of omniscience, on the moment in which they laid off the garment of mortality—as if the change of life had effected a sudden transition of the enlarged one, from the condition of mundane ignorance, to that of archangelic knowledge and wisdom. This want of philosophy in the investigator, or enquirer, is the cause of a large portion of the false intelligence received by mortals from immortals.

Spirits, even when in a progressed state of development, do not know the true answers to half of the questions put to them by interrogators in the flesh. They do not know every body's grandmother and every body's uncle Tom, aunt Ann and little Johnny, who have passed into the spirit world, and, therefore, know not whether they are there or here, when they died, or what color their eyes are, unless they look into the mind of the querist and see the answers there. When they do this, as they do in a great many instances, they answer truly, if it is truly recorded in the mind of the questioner—if not, untruly. And when they thus answer untruly, they are not liars, for they answer according to the best information they can obtain. Quite frequently, we have known communicating spirits to do what we certainly should always do, under like circumstances. That is, to get weary of listening and responding to questions of the most frivolous character, whilst the volatile minds of the circle kept up a chorus of cachination, at the witticisms of the witty; and left them to the enjoyment of their own folly.

Coming to the case complained of by our correspondent, there are various ways of accounting for erroneous answers, by the interrogated spirit. In the first place, the respondent may have supposed he knew, when he did not know, the brother of the questioner. In the second place, he might have seen, in her mind, what appeared to be a settled conviction that her brother was dead, and answered accordingly. In the third place, the spirit may have been one of those who cared not whether he answered truly or falsely. And, in the fourth place, he may have seen the spirit of the brother, in the spirit world, and supposed him to have left the form permanently, when he had only left it temporarily.

The last named mistake of communicating spirits, even those who are well developed, is, probably, of much more frequent occurrence than any incarnate mind is aware of. It is well known that there are, now, throughout the world, a great many trance-mediums. These have their own spirits ejected from their physical forms, when they are taken possession of by speaking, singing, healing or manifesting spirits. When they are thus ejected, they are at liberty to go whither they will, and are frequently taken on excursions, through the spirit world, by spirit friends, who attend on such occasions, for that purpose. Some mediums there are, who are enabled to remember many of the scenes which they pass through, in those excursions. Now, although they are, in these wanderings, still attached to their physical forms, by an electric cord, by means of which they can return in an instant, when recalled by any circumstance, this attachment is not always observed by spirits whom they meet, and with whom they hold converse. In such case, the communicating spirit reports the one enquired for to be in the spirit world, and so reports in good faith. How cruel, in such case, to accuse such a spirit of wilful falsehood, and stigmatize him as a har or an evil spirit.

Besides these cases, there are innumerable others, in which sleeping human forms are temporarily deserted by their spirit tenants, who soar away into the spirit realm and pass hours of sweet communion with friends who have preceded them thither, strolling among the ever-blooming beauties of Nature's superior self, and drinking in those lessons of wisdom which are supposed to be intuitive, but which are, really, the teachings of superior minds, in the land where the material is found which dreams are made of. And it is the effort of the returning spirit, to record upon the tablet of the sleeping sensorium the scenes which it has passed through, which produces that which we call a dream. Sometimes those efforts of the spirit are so successful as to record upon the memory meetings with old friends, and other occurrences of the ramble, with great truthfulness; but much more generally, owing to unfavorable conditions, physical and intellectual, they are disjointed, contradictory, absurd and nonsensical. Could the conditions of the sleeper be favorable in every respect, he could give a history, in the morning, of all which he saw, heard and experienced, in his rambles in the spirit land, during the night.

In all these millions of cases, out-going spirits of sleeping mortals, are liable to be mistaken, by truthful spirits, for permanent residents of the spirit realm. Then be not hasty in condemning spirits as deceivers and liars; for you are very liable to do them great and grievous injustice.

The foregoing article was written on Saturday last. In the evening of that day, we attended what we call our "Developing Circle," which has been held every Saturday evening for many months. Our friend and brother, T. G. FORSTER, was not with us, that we knew of, for he went, on Friday morning, to attend a funeral, at or near Byron, N. Y., and had engaged to go from there to Batavia, to stay over Sunday. It proved, however, that he was really with us, though unseen. A lady medium was controlled by a spirit, who represented itself to be that of Mr. FORSTER, who had been ejected from his physical form, at Batavia, by Professor DAYTON, who, he said, was then speaking through his organism. He being at liberty, as is stated in the preceding article, had come to our circle, accompanied by the spirit of the young man, whose funeral he had attended at Byron. And he controlled and spoke through a medium, for two purposes—the first was to prove that the spirit which is temporarily ejected from a trance medium, can take possession of, and speak through, another organism—the second was, to give the recently enlarged spirit, who was in company with him, a lesson on the science of controlling media.

The spirit of Mr. F. addressed us personally, informing us that his accompanying spirit friend intended, as soon as he should be enabled to do so, to control a medium and give us a communication for the paper, explaining his sentiments in relation to the spiritual philosophy, previously to leaving the form, and giving his reasons for not making himself as conspicuous in the embracement and advocacy of the spiritual faith as he now wishes he had done. He further informed us that he came from Byron and entered our office, whilst Professor DAYTON was using his organism at the funeral, and that he found us sitting in front of our table, with a spiritual paper spread out before us. In another part of this paper, will be found a long lecture which had been copied into the *New England Spiritualist*, from a California paper. We were looking through this lecture, in the *New England Spiritualist*, which was lying before us, when the spirit of Mr. F. entered and saw us.

This being, to all present, a new feature in spiritual philosophy,



there was, in different parts of the circle, a hum of doubting voices passing from one to another. The keen perception of A. A. BALLOU quickly detected this misgiving, and as quickly he took possession of his medium—Miss SCOTT—and endorsed, fully and emphatically, every word which the spirit had given utterance to.—And he proceeded farther and explained the philosophy of the phenomenon, in a manner which was perfectly satisfactory, and moralized on the circumstance with his usual ability, and with a happy effect.

A by-stander, who is not a skeptic, asks, "who will believe our report?" We reply, that it is our business to tell the truth, faithfully and fearlessly, and leave those who read and those who listen, to believe or not, according as our report produces, or fails to produce, conviction in their minds. Those who believe the truth, believe it for themselves—not for us; and those who reject and scorn it, do so at their own cost—not at ours. We can lead a horse to the water, but we cannot make him drink. And we can present food to a hungry man; but, if the food we offer him come in contact with a long entertained prejudice, and he stubbornly refuse to eat, we cannot force it into his stomach, and he must suffer the consequence of wilful abstinence. So it is with the spiritual truths which we endeavor to promulgate. If people will not receive them, our duty will be done when we have kindly presented them; and theirs will be the fault and the loss.

#### Lecture by E. C. Dayton.

MISS BROOKS, MEDIUM.

"Hope—the sweet bird!—while *that* the air can fill,  
Let earth be ice—the soul *hath* summer still."

Immortality o'sweeps all pain, all fear, all tears, and all sorrow, while the panting soul breathes the summer breath of its own sunny life, when hope casts a brighter beam upon the gilded waters of its own undefined self-hood. The hidden soul of harmony, when buoyant with hope, rays the realms of starred infinity, and the human heart becomes the hallowed abode of native purity, the copied image of its God. When hope sends its issues forth, the leaves of the heart open to the air, and its throbbings find life below. They live but for heaven, and expand into Paradise. Like flowers, as they wither, their faded petals close, no more to drink the dew; and each trembling note of divinity hath gone to mingle with the sparkling air of eternity. So with the heart—the dew of hope rests upon its petals, while the sunbeam of love stoops to kiss its spirit form of beauty; but soon its fairy leaves are faded, its music gone, and its voice of hope hushed in the silent chambers of eternal change. But on the wings of hope the soul mounts to its home of peaceful rest, where the billows of despair never jar the echoed harmonies of its immortality, but where all is as bright and cloudless as a happy summer-day. Hope is the heart's brightest boon, borne down by angel hands, to give solace to those who weep because of the ills of an outer existence, and revive the last expiring breath of some outwardly perishing flower, and demonstrate, in the gilded sunlight of joyousness, the life of the human heart when its throbbings have ceased echoing through the airy halls of earth, but now roll in richer undulations, through the unbounded realms of infinite life.

Every flower that is extracted from earth, is converted into a brilliant, immortal soul, whose perfume ever mounts in untold beauty, over the onward, moving waves of eternity. Hope

wreathes its gorgeous tissues around the tendrils of the heart, and with the golden cord of love, binds heaven to earth, and along the sunlight pathway which angels tread, strews bright flowers, that mortals may walk the same pathway, paved with leaves of affection, adorned by the diamonds of constant purity, and become ever on earth true and faithful images of their God. Hope decks life with beauty and grandeur, and actuates the mind into various degrees of activity, refinement and animation, and in its general evolutions, ever moves noiselessly through the silent avenues of thought, and becomes a part of man's soul-life; a part of a stupendous whole. It holds perceptible superiority over the heart existence of man, and reveals to him a light inconceivable—a brilliancy that extends thro' the length and breadth of space, and becomes illuminated space itself, and is the grand and stupendous impetus of man's eternal development. Its fragrance goes forth and pervades all forms, and becomes indelibly impressed upon the retentive memory of man, and ever exhales the breath of refinement from higher spheres. Here is the great attraction of man's unfoldment. Everything animated by divine action, possesses, within itself, a living affection; and as the beauty of one flower is imparted to another, so must the heart, filled with hope, impart its brilliancy of love, and other hearts will inhale the pure atmosphere of its divinity. The unfoldings of affection are not only breathed into heaven, but into the universe; and, like the still waters agitated by the falling pebble, so must inherent affection expand and wave throughout all lower and higher spheres, until its waves have almost reached the bounds of space.

There is no limitation of the waves of water; nor can the beautiful unfoldings of loving kindness be circumscribed; but as the waters roll gently against the shore, so love flows forth and unfolds itself into the living ocean of wisdom. The music of hope sinks deep into the soul, and unfolds sentiments, of which the spirit home is alone worthy, and there is not an avenue or recess in the whole arena of animate existence, that is not penetrated by the vibrations and silent echoings of the harmony of hope; and there is not a thought of the soul concealed, but what is quickened into life and awakened into the inexpressible attraction of hope. The fragrance of hope deferred makes every soul in heaven glad. It displays the order and harmony of God, and comprehends more than the human mind is able to grasp. Hope dances on the pearly waves of the gurgling stream, and murmuring on, finds a place in old ocean's caves. 'Tis in every trembling star; rolls through the vast ocean of ether; and its grander echoes swell in the secret soul of man; and as it grandly sweeps on, to eternal rest, it swells the ocean of heaven with unwonted smiles of joy, and dispels the shadowy night of despair, and the heart throbs 'neath that bright emanation, borne from the soul of Deity, by angel hands. 'Tis hope on which aspiring genius feeds; and it furnishes food for the whole economy of creations, recognized in external forms. The heart must ever look above, in hours of sorrow; for there, voiceless thought and holy concord wrap it in living robes of love; and when its throbbings cease below, it goes to a better land with *bright regrets* and *sweet discords*; for it loves to mount to regions of unrealized bliss, and regrets the parting from loved ones of earth. Death is but a glorious transfiguration; a radiant idea, bearing on its gilded bosom the truth that man is not always to live here—to live thus embodied in a material encasement; but death is the bright luminary of eter-



nity; and let the vision extend o'er earth, and everywhere we ever and constantly behold the indications of decay.

Nature's beauties, now blooming with fragrance and loveliness, to-morrow may decay; and 'tis but an evidence of the continued existence of the soul of nature, in higher forms of unfading glory. And still, in the revolving train, mind seems to die, but in heaven possesses being; and tracing from the seeming dreary void of cause and effect, we find mind to still become brilliant with livelier scenes—with beauties delicate and pure. Still 'tis powerful and sublime, plowing through the regions of science and philosophy, and, deducing truth from truth, becomes an embryo God. From the continuous emission of never ending wonders, with inward view, the mind, filled with hope, contemplates the wonders of its own immortality; and, from its home of living truth, gives mortals evidences that the soul is not embosomed in perennial dust; nor doth nature sleep; but, as the choral melodies career sublimely, rolling through the seraph spheres, in angel forms shall souls unite and bathe in streams flowing at the feet of God. Heaven is unveiled, and loved ones smile again; and now the soul longs for its rest; it pants to go where congenial spirits live, and turns to heaven to sigh itself away. No dreamy terrors start—no writhing agony pales the lips; but the soul falls sweetly asleep, and awakes resting on the bosom of an angel. The deathless minstrelsy of heaven rolls from the sublime, unfathomable soul of God, to earth, resting in the heart of man, as stars rest on yon airy shrine, or like weaving ripples on the lake, or like pearly shapes along the tinted bosom of the sky, breathing the breath of Deity.

Time knows not the weight of sleep or weariness, and no power can chain its rushing pinions; and as revolutions sweep o'er earth, like troubled visions o'er the breast, or as the stars glitter while in their eternal depths, and shine from their glorious spheres, time passes not, but bears with it the soul of man, which must return to its giver. Each note of the heart may recall some withered leaf, when it thinks of some responsive voice of gladness, now sketched on memory's vivid surface; and this may, for a moment, darken the avenues of hope, by the shadow of a sigh; yet there is no sorrow so great that it can not be soothed by the summer of a smile. Pleasure, below, is marked by fleetness, and haunts the sorrowing like a murmur in a dream; yet the air is eloquent with lightly whispered tones, which fall from lips once so dear to man. The human heart, its likeness is the same, and its *summer* does not last. Each mourns over things loved. Some o'er a faded leaf, or flower, and others over sorrow and over beauties whose endurance was brief.

Change is ever on the wing. The heart may smile to-day—sorrow on the morrow. The budding of the flower, ere its leaves are green, may fade from your gaze; but it droops to bloom in heaven. Hence, through all the severities of change, nothing is lost. Change is the master power of life. It calls out the impulses of the soul, in the brightest scale of experience; and as the drop of water responds to the absorbing invitation of the sun, and ascends to associate and repose in the bosom of the atmosphere, or as the day sinks into the bosom of night, so does the soul respond to the invitations of God, and repose in the depths of an unending future.

Man is recognized as the perfection of matter, in the subordinate worlds of God; and all, in their mental and physical constitutions, have religious adaptations; some base their faiths upon

the inspiration and aspiration of the soul, while others blindly adhere to a faith, without reference to reason; and thus have not escaped the darkening influence of theological interpretation.—And those who profess to possess such unbounded knowledge of the utility and application of the principles of Christ's teachings, how falsely they practice his inculcations. Man holds him up in a deific light, before the world, and tramples upon the flowers he sought to plant in the eden of the heart. Using the words revelation and development, as synonymous terms, Christ did reveal the brilliant future to man; and the beauty of his life, when fully and truthfully exemplified in man, will be the great and mighty revelations to which he referred in his teachings; but speculation, both of a theological and psychological nature, must be abandoned ere he can be appreciated.

There were many prophetic meditations of ancient writers, which should be equally venerated as those of Christ. Malachi and Zoroaster spoke of the bright unrealized future, when tyranny and persecution should be in the tomb of oblivion. Yet their memory only exists in history. And many truths are involved in the metaphorical allusions of many noble writers, whose greatness perished long before the unfoldings of Christ. Many bright revelations were made 'midst the Hindoos and Persians. Yet they, too, perished in forgetfulness. Confucius also revealed many noble truths, based upon the immovable superstructure of science; but with time his deep and noble impulses were borne to heaven, and Christ became the humanized God; and on his atonement rests the redemption of myriads of yet unborn generations, if we admit of the allegations of priesthood.

It is a lamentable fact that religion has been separated from all other departments of thought; but science now boldly asserts its rights, and assists man to discriminate between the right and wrong—the good and pure inculcations of the Bible. In the formation of the earth, science declares the Bible to be wrong; for those who examine carefully, organic remains, can not advocate the biblical account of the formation and creation of earth; for, throughout nature, they have a grand opportunity to witness its organic operations. Oceans of melted matter exist beneath the incrustations of earth; and the fossiliferous rocks now in existence, which sustain animal life and contain plants, are composed of many, very many, alternate layers; and by constant accumulation, have become immensely thick, and which seem to have been formed as rocks are now formed; and hence their deposition must have required an immense period of time. And if these rocky unfoldments, as is alleged, are formed or were created, by a miraculous agency, we must entirely abandon the logic of physical science, and destroy the foundation of anological reasoning, in natural organic operations; but if we reason from the science, fully established geologically and astronomically, in this age, we must admit that earth was once in a gaseous state, and an ocean of melted lava; and in admitting these scientific facts, we give to this limited world an incalculable antiquity. Hence geology gives us evidences that man was the latest and highest unfoldment of earth—the noblest animal of creation. It tells us, too, that earth is constantly undergoing and has undergone, a wondrous amount of erosion by the action of water and atmosphere. Water has cut through the hardest strata; and this organic process demands an inconceivably long period. Then science and geology, associated with natural religion, destroy the potency and assertions of the Bible. And it is to be more reas-



onably supposed that the deluge was occasioned by some organic process, than by the direct will of God, to satisfy his notions or thirstings for a doified revenge. Such an idea is diabolical. It is irreconcilable with the injunctions of God, through Christ: "Return good for evil;" and no human testimony should induce man to give credence to such imputations against the Source of all beneficence and goodness.

Let the auxiliary principle, honor, come into operation, oh! man; and while violating the most emphatic monitions of Christ, remember your redemption does not consist in the atonement by mere faith, but rests upon law, by which every divine action is controlled. It is time, high time, that the flood of misdirection should be checked in its fearful sweep; for base imputations have quite long enough darkened heaven; for in every kind act—in every summer smile, a God is revealed; while hope, the archangel of the soul's delight, comes to aid in the diffusion of God's love, through every recess of life, and to infuse into every fibre of existence, the soft yet sweetest incense of mercy and charity, which rise from the shrine of Omnipotence.

As the spirit of the passing gale inhales the sweetness of the rose, and hovers o'er its uninjured bloom, sighing back the soft perfume which gives beauty to the zephyr's wing, so shall the human heart speak forth its angel innocence, diffusing mildness and joy through its silent chambers of inner worship; and while viewing the divinity of God in all of nature's vast operations, heaven shall open its pearly gates, and the soul shall grasp the majesty of immortal hope.

E. C. DAYTON.

#### Communications from the Spirit of George Malcombe.

MISS BROOKS, MEDIUM.

The following communications were received at Suspension Bridge, some weeks since. The communicating Spirit was one who was unknown to all the circle to which he communicated.—At first he introduced himself as an undeveloped spirit, and used language comporting with that character, even making himself disgustingly vulgar. After this he changed his style, and became quite refined. His object in this, as he afterwards made known, was to give a lesson in relation to the treatment, by circles, of spirits who are really undeveloped and base, but who may be greatly benefitted and reclaimed, by gentle and friendly treatment; as, indeed, they may in this life.

#### COMMUNICATION.

MY DEAR FRIENDS: Dark, cold clouds encompass the human heart. Its throbbings know no warmth of love, the blast is so chilling—the soul knows no infinite sympathy, for the storms are so piercing. Man must live, drag himself on through the bitter, bitter winds of his existence, doomed at last to drift a mariner, where the sea-gull of contempt sings her discordant song—where the monster of the mighty deep, the whale of prejudice, opens its jaws, as if to crush man between his teeth. The coral of affection chants her songs deep within the heart, while still the bitter winds blow on, wafting its echoes from the poor mariner's ear. The mermaid of earnest feeling mocks, in frenzied madness, the last hope of that expiring form. He drifts on, on; still the winds blow fearfully—bitterly, till at last, tired, he rolls himself in his tattered garments, and plunges into the depths of the cold, cold waves of iniquity. Still winds blow bitterly—nearly frozen, his heart-drops, once warmed by love, hang like icicles

over Niagara's wintry waters, as if deadened to the voice of her majesty in summer time. Still the winds howl on—the mariner sinks deeper and deeper: at last, in the darkened dens of crime, iniquity sounds as deathly as the iron doors of some old palace, as they creak on their rusty hinges. In the ruined castle of his hopes, he espies a green vine twining round its broken columns. He gazes at it wildly, as if it were but mockery. Finally hope revives. The reaction is so great that he gives himself up to the charities of the bitter storms of life. The storm is so bitter that he dies. Wakes up changed. Still the winds are bitter. Where is he? In heaven? Thinkest thou that the soul's bright heaven of which it dreamed in its earth life, and so long hoped for, could instantly change the feelings of the mariner, when cold disappointment finds it almost as bitter as that of earth. Thinkest thou to find his hopes of a bright heaven crushed, that he could have greater desires to be good? Ask yourselves. Such was my fate. I came to do no harm, but faithfully illustrate, that even in eternity, the soul cannot, by instant change, wear the brightest diadem that glistens in the coronal of an Omniscient God.

Truly yours,

GEORGE E. MALCOMBE.

#### PRAYER.

From the deep, indefinable spaces of thy immensity, Almighty Father, when worlds evolve from atoms thrown from thy mighty constitution, comes forth the deep and solemn voice of eternal divinity. All the imponderable elements which swim the ocean of thy greatness, breathe forth their melodious breath of immortal divinity. The archway which bends caressingly over each world, as if to hide heaven from mortal vision, chants in deepest strains of majestic power, the music of thy God-like divinity, while the undulating atmosphere bears these strains to the centre of man's existence, the inner soul. The flowers and all creative beauties, join in the choral anthems of divinity, as upward they rise from the chaotic earth, to meet the sunshine of their God. As space knows no limits, so doth the soul know no boundaries, but ever expanding and sinking still deeper into its existence, bears with it the embellishments of a pure education, or the indentations of prejudice. Heaven can not change existence, oh human soul! at thy slightest or greatest wish; but action, the impetus of true divinity, must, in self-hood alone, by the archangel-laws of Deity, make its own life bright or dark, in obedience or disobedience to the commands of nature's immutable laws. Then, as the prayerful thought ascends to God to-night, may each heart here feel the necessity of looking through nature's volumes, for living truth, of which man himself is the title-page. Almighty Father, bless each aspiring heart-throb here to-night, as an angel on bended knee outpours from the rich fountains of immortal purity, these words of sweet contentment: "Father, thy will be done."

GEORGE.

#### HISTORY.

I was left an orphan at the age of ten years. My father was a man of affluence; but bitter misfortune swept all away, and little George Malcomb was left to work his way up the giddy heights of ambition, or down to the blackest cells of infamy. At twelve, I embarked in a ship, bound for the Sandwich Islands. By my honesty and integrity, I soon became elevated to higher responsibilities, until, at last, I attained the rank of Captain, and cruised for years upon the ocean's changing waters, till I acquired wealth sufficient to purchase a fleet of ships. I then returned to



Baltimore, my home, where, on my youthful knees, I had bent down and sworn before Heaven, I never would return till I could be looked up to as a man. The oath was kept. I returned with much wealth; and its glittering, palsied form, attracted the gaze of the busy mass, and GEORGE E. MALCOMBE was then a man of honor and purity. At last, having heard of the sunny lands of the other continent, I fitted a ship to bear me hence. I visited Italy, and became very much attached to a young Italian lady, whose sweetness of thought can never be forgotten, as long as my soul retains its powers of appreciation. She promised to be mine, and mine only. We were married—the ship sailed. That night the sky became fearful. The shrill winds stole mournfully through the apertures of my ship. Its masts and sails looked like ghostly phantoms in midnight darkness. My heart was like that ship, rolling and tumbling with fear, within its own silent caverns. The battlements of heaven roared with deep rolling thunders. The lightnings illuminated the darkness. I was contemplating what to do. I knew my ship was doomed to be a wreck. At last, a silvery voice rung out on the midnight air. I obeyed the summons, and there, in all the loveliness of terror—the horrified expression of fear—stood my wife. “Would she be lost?” If so, I would go too. I drew her gently to me, and told her to trust in me. She said, “George, I do, as my husband; but not as God. You can not control these fearful ragings; and I fear Heaven will claim your bride before she shall see the home of her husband, in that land of which she has heard so much—AMERICA.” Crash upon crash told too well that the ship had struck. We stood outside the cabin. I told her to remain quietly till my return. I passed into the cabin, for a sofa, to which I could firmly lash her. I had but just entered, when I heard a crashing as if Heaven had descended upon us. A terrific shriek, and all was still. Quick as thought, I returned; but she was gone. Perhaps some sea-monster was her grave, and the coral train her mourners; and those cold, dark waves, the minister who would consign her body to its final rest, in tones more powerful than human tongue could utter. She was lost forever, to me, on earth. I then saved myself, for I dreaded death, for fear there was no heaven where souls might meet again.

I returned to America; took up a paper, and read the shipwreck of my other vessels. All was gone; and from that moment I hated the world, and sought forgetfulness in the deepest moral crimes. I did not murder, nor did I commit depredations upon my country; but in the social glass, and in other amusements, belonging to the unrefined, did I lose the last spark of love and refined feeling. Possessing a constitution not adapted to this mode of life, I soon died. The first bright eyes, with beautiful expression of love—the first form who stood by my side, was my wife. Then I was not worthy of her. I could not, after so much crime, rise to live with her. Heaven, then, was as bitter as earth. I tried to die, but could not; and had ten thousand hells, with their burning lava, wrapped my form in scorching flames, how grateful, oh! how grateful would I have been. I insisted that I was not in heaven! and weary, laid me down to die. I awoke from my dreadful dream-life, and a phantom-ship, a phantom-wife, all stood before me in imagination. I loved still my phantom ocean life. To see suffering satisfied my thirsting for crime. I gloated over the same crushed hearts. I loved still the midnight revel; but 'twas all phantom—no reality. I lived in this way about one year; till, one day, I seemed to fall asleep. I awoke, and surrounding me were a band of angels, chanting

music so sweet, that I forgot my phantom life, and was glad that I had not to die. From that time I went onward till now. I roam the deep ocean of immensity, where the mermaid of love ever sweetly chants her strains of melody to God above. You have it all; I leave my fate in your hearts—to their charities, hoping to forever forget phantoms, living only in indestructible realities.

Truly,

GEORGE MALCOMBE.

#### BENEDICTION.

Receive the kind wishes of George. He will grasp with iron hand the warring elements of contention, and check the bitter winds of unmitigated prejudice. He will gather shells from the ocean of eternity, to pave your pathways hence, while the seagull of charity strikes her lyre, and the mermaid of affection sings her ocean songs. The quiet soul turns heavenward as the coral of love, in its mighty work, shall elaborate from the little heart-pebble, the mighty rock of the immortal soul which shall stand firm forever, as the waves of golden hue dash gently 'gainst its bosom, rocking it into a still deeper rest of eternal beauty and majestic worth,—

GEORGE.

#### Contradictions Reliable.

##### LESSON VI.

Strangers tell us of the night,  
What the signs of promise are.

“Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.”

Surprise and consternation have overtaken the conservatism of the nonprogressionist; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrite; dreamy mysticism is retreating before the bright splendors of truth, radiant with light falling upon the darkness of the world; and the winter of ignorance and error, thus far hast thou come; here let thy proud disdainful waves rise no higher, approach no nearer; for the day of thy visitation hath come also. And from the shores of light, there cometh a voice, saying, “Peace be still.” The waves retire; the sea is calm; and the ship moves gracefully on her voyage to the port of salvation.

Ye friends of progress, behold ye not the signs of promise? Cast your eyes on the bosom of that beautiful sea, and throw out upon its surface the lead that you may measure its soundings; and the line reaches not the fathomless immensity of waters. That vessel,\* wafted by the breeze from heaven, glides majestically, and her crew have no fear. All is well. Bread enough, and to spare. No icebergs in her path, no rocks, nor shoals, nor whirlpools, nor hurricanes, to interrupt the voyagers in their onward, upward course. There is one who stands at the helm, and on his brow I read the word, “wisdom.” And that wisdom perceives the course which it is prudent to pursue. He knows the latitude and the longitude, the direction and the progress of the ship. He surveys, as with a glance, the trackless bosom of the wide waters. He measures with the ken of absolute infallibility the distance and the means which are essential to success. His voice is soft as the Æolian harp, gentle as the evening, mild as the morning, truthful as God. In the infinity of his wisdom, he guides, by the unerring law of right, the consequences through the medium of his power.

Revelation is of God, and not of man. It is the unfoldings of the wisdom of God in nature. It is the development and presentation of the harmony of the universe. It is said among you, that this revelation does not profess to come from God, but from spirits, who have lived in the body. But we say unto you, “all things are of God,” and all truth, all wisdom, all love, and all spirits, are of God; yet the all of love and wisdom, no spirit has ever communicated to man. It is true, that spirits communicate. It is true, that spirits receive communications, in an ascending series of circles, expanding as they ascend; so that truth comes down to men in the semblance of a tunnel. To explain: Here is a small circle; above it is another, wider; above that



is another circle, still wider; and so on, and on. Is it not apparent, that the lower circle does not embrace the area of the higher; does not, in other words, encompass so great a field. Thus it is in the ascending series of progressive development. The lower can receive only what it can contain; but, by its expanded experience of wisdom and love, by its extension in a knowledge of nature and her laws, it rises to the next position above it, and so on ever advancing.

It has been asserted, that retrogression is possible. Mind commences in the earth sphere as an atom only. How far can it retrogress from that atom? Is there anything less than an atom?—If so, tell us what it is. But this atom, in its movements, attracts to itself congenial relations, until it has a diameter capable of measurement. Nor does it cease its operations then; for it moves on and progresses, step by step, in the scale of expansiveness, until its original condition is lost by the accumulation of knowledge. This is progress in knowledge.

All knowledge is spiritual; for without spirit, knowledge is not. But its devotees may be classified: first, the minds that only comprehend and understand natural objects through the organs of material sense.—Such must have gross materials, those that are adapted to their vision, so that portions of nature are tangible to them. But the intangible is, after all, the mainspring, the moving power, of the whole machinery of nature—intangible to human sight only—for the invisible things of creation disclose a wisdom as far surpassing the material, as the luminary of day exceeds in his brightness the remotest star in the remotest constellation of the universe.

Second. Say to thy friend, open thy mind, and let thy vision intuitively see thyself. And when that vision shall penetrate into the mystery of the human spirit, and understand its own being, and its relation to other beings, and other beings to still other beings, all linked in one harmonious whole, it will then be qualified to appreciate its dependence upon others, and all others upon God. No truth has ever yet been uttered by man but what originated from God, and came from him as the source of all truth. But it flows through channels, mediums, like streams in the valleys. And assuredly, no stream can exceed the capacity of the channel, without inundating the valleys. In communicating from the sphere of light, no greater stream can be thrown upon the world of humanity than the avenues of communication will bear.—Whatever truth, therefore, may seem to you to be mortal in its origin, is, nevertheless, spiritual, but fragmentary. Partial developments are outpourings of celestial wisdom among the different media.

Third. It is alleged that every stream flows through one channel; rivers from these flow through greater channels. Thus does the Mississippi vary from the rivulet that flows into the Potomac. Their directions are not the same. Nevertheless, water is water, flowing to the north, south, east, or west; yet the water that forms the rivulet, supplying the Potomac, is a part of the whole. It varies in its course and in its magnitude, and possibly in its rapidity and purity: yet it is not so voluminous or so expansive. Other streams are less; because, first, either the channel will not admit of more water, or second, the source will not supply it. But is the channel to blame because it contains more water than can be used, or less than can be employed?

But, it is said, they contradict each other. True, so does the west wind contradict the east; so do two minds, in the form, contradict each other, in appearance, in everything which constitutes their individuality. If there were no contradictions, there would be no individuality. No two men, or women, have forms precisely alike. Will you reason, because they do not agree, are unlike, that, therefore, they do not exist? I tell you, nay; but because they do not agree, are unlike, you are able to identify them. Therefore, because spirits are unlike each other, because they think differently from each other, and are differently progressed, you can distinguish them by their difference. But, upon the hypothesis, that they all look alike, think alike, and act alike, you could never identify them.

\*A vessel was here distinctly seen riding upon a shoreless sea, &c., as described.

## God in the Storm.

BY MISS PARDOE.

"Did you hear the storm, last night, my child,  
As it burst o'er the midnight sky—  
When the thunder rattled loud and wild,  
And the lightening flicker'd by?"  
"I heard no tempest, mother mine—  
I was buried in slumber sweet;  
Dreaming I stood in the soft moonshine,  
With flowers about my feet."

"Can it be, my child, that you did not hear  
The roar of the tempest's breath,  
As it scatter'd the rent leaves far and near,  
In many an edying wreath?"  
"No mother; my happy sleep was full  
Of gentle and holy things—  
Shapes that were graceful and beautiful,  
And the music of angel's wings."

"Yet the storm was loud, my darling child—  
There was death on the hurrying blast;  
And vapors dark over head were piled,  
As the hoarse wind bellowed past."  
"I thought not of clouds, my mother dear,  
When I rose from my nurse's knee;  
You taught me that God is forever near,  
So what danger could I see?"

"I taught you well my sinless one;  
Yet my own weak spirit quailed,  
As the midnight blast rolled madly on,  
And the moon's calm lustre failed."  
"Were you wrong then, mother, when you said  
That God's eye turned not away,  
But in darkness watched about my bed,  
As it did on my path by day?"

"I am rebuked!" was the meek reply,  
As the mother bent her knee;  
"On lips of babes doth many a lesson lie—  
I have learnt one, child, of thee;  
His wrath which makes the sinner weep,  
By a guilty conscience vex'd,  
Does but deepen the sinless infant's sleep,  
And rock it to gentler rest."

"And while thunders hoarsely peal around,  
Speaking woe to the worldling's ear,  
The Lord, in his mercy, stills their sound,  
When innocence is near;  
And while his living fire appals  
The guilty here below,  
The shadow of the Saviour falls  
On childhood's sleeping brow."

## ENGLISH VS. AMERICAN GIRLS.

The English girl spends more than one half of her waking hours in physical amusements, which tend to develop, and invigorate, and ripen the bodily powers. She rides, walks, drives, rows upon the water, runs, dances, plays, sings, jumps the rope, throws the ball, hurls the quoit, draws the bow, keeps up the shuttlecock—and all these without having it forever pressed on her mind that she is thereby wasting her time. She does this every day, until it becomes a habit which she will follow up through life. Her frame, as a natural consequence, is larger, her muscular system better developed, her nervous system in better subordination, her strength more enduring, and the whole tone of her mind healthier.

She may not know as much at the age of seventeen as does the American girl; as a general thing she does not; but the growth of her intellect has been stimulated by no hot-house culture, and though maturity



comes later, it will proportionally last longer. Eight hours each day of mental application for girls between ten and nineteen years, or ten hours each day, as is sometimes required at school, with two hours for meals, one for religious duties, the remainder for physical exercises, are enough to break down the strongest constitution.—*English Paper.*

## AGE OF PROGRESS.

STEPHEN ALBRO ... EDITOR.

THOMAS GALES FORSTER,

Corresponding Editor and Agent.

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### Buffalo Harmonial Conference.

As we have elsewhere noticed, Brother T. G. FORSTER was not with us, on Sunday last, and we had no supply from abroad. It turned out, however, that we were not left destitute of spiritual food. We had a full supply, and that of as high relish as the most fastidious taste could desire. Miss SCOTT—our villanously abused, but meek-spirited and angel-guided CORA, was with us, and so was her guardian spirit, A. A. BALLOU. In the afternoon, she was entranced, as we suppose by the above-named spirit, who announced, as the subject of his lecture: "The materiality of the spirit world," and spoke for about three quarters of an hour, in a manner which kept the audience in almost breathless silence, and evidently in astonishment at the unlooked-for excellence of the entertainment. We say unlooked for, not because we had not received abundant evidence that spirits could control her well, and speak through her fluently and eloquently, but because, hitherto, there had been no elaborate philosophical discourse delivered through her, and nothing more than a brief address was expected.

At the close of the afternoon discourse, the spirit announced that the same subject would be continued in the evening; and when evening came, the subject was resumed, and the spirit spoke with much ease, fluency and eloquence, for about an hour and a quarter, in which he elucidated the subject in all its departments, with such power of reasoning, such depth of thought, such familiarity with science and such comprehensiveness of philosophical knowledge, that no sane mind could look at the girl of sixteen, destitute of

scholastic acquirements, without inwardly exclaiming, "It is as impossible for this logic, this philosophy, this erudition and this eloquence to be yours, as it is for you, delicate and angelic as you are, to be an Amazon or a Gorgon."

It is evident, to our mind, from the success of the spirit, on this occasion, that this medium is fast developing, and will, ere long, reach a plane of extraordinary usefulness. We do not now know of any female speaking medium, whose organs can be used more readily, more eloquently or more pleasingly; and she wants nothing but compass of voice, which we have no doubt ripening years will give her, to make her the equal of any of her sex in the field. In a large hall, her voice has not yet sufficient power to reach the most distant ear, with those cadences which constitute much of the beauty of rhetoric. But this defect, as we have hinted, nature is capable of mending; and this is the only defect that we have been able to detect; for her gesticulations and movements, in the abnormal state, are poetry itself.

With this speaking instrument of the angels—with Miss Brooks, whose mediumship has furnished the columns of this paper so much of the profound wisdom, philosophy and science of the upper spheres, and so astonished hundreds, if not thousands, of witnessing minds, with the more elevated order of physical manifestations, such as musical performances, writing and drawing, without the use of mortal hands—and with T. G. FORSTER, through whose well adapted organism, such Joves as SMITH and DAYTON can make audience halls tremble with logical thunder—with such a trio as these, we say, and with hundreds of other media, who keep themselves shielded from slander by smothering their light, the Spiritualists of Buffalo need not fear that the spirits will be compelled to abandon them, for want of instruments to work with.

### Lectures for next Sabbath.

Professor DAYTON informs us that he and Mr. SMITH will lecture through Mr. FORSTER, on Sunday afternoon and evening, and that Mr. BALLOU will probably open the exercises in the afternoon. They will not decide on the subjects on which they will speak, till they see their audiences.

### The New Directory.

We have before us, a copy of "The Commercial Advertiser Directory, for the City of Buffalo, to which is added a Business Directory, and advertisements of merchants and manufacturers, in the cities of Buffalo and New York." It is gotten up and published by Messrs. THOMAS & LATHROPS, publishers and proprietors of the Commercial Advertiser, who have done themselves and the city much credit by the excellent style in which this indispensable annual has been elaborated.

The list of citizens' names contains some twenty thousand, chiefly house-holders. All the institutions and offices in the city, with their localities and principal officers, may be found in it; together with all the intelligence that a stranger would require, to guide him to any body, any thing or any place, within the city limits. No business man can afford to do without it as well as he can to pay \$2.00 for it.

### NOTICE.

The gentleman—or whatever else he was—who left his old skallewag of a hat, in our office, on Tuesday last, and wore off our good one, which his ears, however long they are, could scarcely have prevented it from resting on his shoulders, will do us and himself a favor by returning it, before we send for it.



## Musical Criticism.

We have received, from a musical gentleman in this city, what he has condescended to inform us is a severe commentary on our editorial remarks, in relation to the spirit performance on the piano, at the house of Mr. FORSTER, at a circle gotten up for the benefit of Miss JAY.

His first attack is upon our statement that the spirit had represented himself to be that of FERDINAND BEYER, a German Professor of music. He says this FERDINAND BEYER is a still living author in Germany, whose genius still produces music of superior merit, and that there has been no other FERDINAND BEYER, who was a Professor of music, that he knows of.

This fact which the gentleman kindly states to us, was entirely outside of our knowledge; for, be it understood, we hold ourselves entitled to the benefit of the tenth beatitude; for the precise reading of which, we beg to refer our correspondent to the book of Jasher. As recorded in our memory, it reads thus: "Blessed are the ignorant, for they *know little*." Among the things which we do know, however, may be found the fact that communicating and manifesting spirits do not always choose to give the names by which they were known when in the flesh; and another fact we know, which is that this same spirit who has been known by the name, "FRED," has been importuned by a great many people who have listened to his performances, to give his true and full name, and that he has constantly declined to do so. On the occasion in which the name FERDINAND BEYER, was given, a person who did not know that this Professor of music was still thrumming and writing with mortal fingers, asked if it was not his spirit which was playing; to which the rapping spirit—whoever it was—responded by three raps, and so answered to the question, if he should not be called "FERD" instead of "FRED." Spirits who do not choose to give their own names, are willing that those enquirers who insist on names, shall be suited with such ones as they most fancy. And this is the same kind of liberty which incarnate spirits take with names, when they foot their communications with Cato, Cicero, Demosthenes, Shakspeare, Pope, Jefferson, or any other whom they may have the vanity to suppose they are successfully imitating.

As respects the performance of the spirit, which our correspondent denounces with a virulency which, it seems to us, is uncalled for by the occasion, and for eulogising which he chides us, as we think, rather superciliously, we have to say that, with all his knowledge, he knows nothing about it, and has no just right thus to condemn it. We happened to be present each time when that gentleman attended those musical circles, and can testify that he speaks truly when he says there was no music in the performance, on either of those occasions. How then—does he not know that spirits out of the form, as well as those in, are subject to nature's laws, and that they cannot use the forces of nature, to produce physical manifestations, when surrounding conditions so derange those forces as to render the use of them impracticable? We never eulogised FRED's performances, nor characterized them as artistic, on any of those occasions; nor shall we, even at the stern dictum of the indignant critic, refrain from pronouncing a performance to be artistic, because there is no previously composed piece of music played. When there is perfect harmony produced, and music is evolved which is delightful to ears which are certainly more than half as refined as those which our correspondent is blest withal, we must be allowed to characterize it as artistic, his denunciations notwithstanding.

Our correspondent manifests quite indignant feeling on account of the declaration of persons present, that no mortal could have produced the effect upon the keys and wires of the instrument, that was produced by the spirit. If the critical gentleman will demonstrate to us, by his own performance, that he can execute, on the keys and wires, four parts of any piece of music at once, or even three parts, as this spirit has been frequently known to do, we will retract that part of our report, though the sentiment was not our own. Or if he will turn, with one hand, the screws by which the instrument is tuned, and touch the entire octave with the other hand, at the same time, as this spirit has been known to do scores of times, we will herald his fame as loudly as we do FRED's.

Now, if our correspondent wishes his communication published, over his signature, he has only to indicate his desire, and we will gratify him in our next number.

## SUDDEN DEATH.

On Saturday, 7th inst., a young man named FREDERICK BARTELL, employed in the barber shop of J. MILLER, on the corner of Canal and Commercial streets, while cutting a customer's hair, accidentally clipped his hand with the scissors, and exclaiming, "Jesus, how it pains," placed both his hands upon his heart, staggered back to a chair and died in ten minutes.

We take the above from one of the daily papers of this city, whose editor farther states that the deceased had been long afflicted with a disease of the heart, and presumed that the shock produced by the wound induced more forcible action of the disease, upon the tender part affected, and killed him instantly. And he farther remarked that there was a Coroners Jury empanelled, who rendered a verdict "*Died by the visitation of God*."

This is not the first jury, by many thousands, that have accused God of visiting his human children specially, and inflicting instantaneous death upon them, merely for his own amusement, or for the gratification of resentment, for some offence committed against him, by the victim. It is to be deeply regretted that men, in this age, do not better know the character of their heavenly Father. Pity they cannot learn that God does not get angry, like his mortal children. A thousand pities that they cannot be made to understand that the infinite Ruler of the universe does not interfere with the effect of organic law, either to protract or abridge men's terms of existence in this world, which he could not do without a miracle, or a violation of natural law. Pity, indeed, that men are so stupid as to suppose that the infinite God would leave the cares of millions of universes, and come hither, in person, to assassinate a man for speaking the name of Jesus, by way of emotional exclamation; for to this will be attributed the death of the man, by Christian idolators generally, if the wording of the Jury's verdict were not designed to favor that idea, as we presume it was.

Had the unfortunate barber used the name of Aminadab, in his exclamation, the Christian world would have no suspicion that God killed him for it: yet Aminadab was a more ancient Jew than Jesus, and there can be no more sacredness attached to the one name than to the other; for they were both in common use among the Hebrew people.

It is very common, now-a-days, to use the name of Moses as flippantly and carelessly as we would that of JOHN SMITH; neither God nor man seems to regard it as an offence worthy of punishment; yet Moses lived a great many years before Jesus did, wrought more miracles than he did, and, if the Bible history may be credited, did what Jesus would not have thought of doing—reprimanded God for determining to destroy the children of Israel, in the wilderness, and fairly shamed him out of it.



Now, if it be true, as it seems to be insinuated, that God did visit and kill this man for inserting the name of Jesus in his exclamation, let stage players, and all who use their expressions, beware how they exclaim: "O, Moses!"

From the California Chronicle.

### Philosophy of Spiritualism Demonstrated.

BY WILLIAM H. RHODES LL.D.

*A Lecture, delivered in the Music Hall, San Francisco, March 26, 1856.*

On re-reading this lecture more closely, we find that a few introductory remarks are necessary. We much regret to find that a mind so well stored with philosophical knowledge, and so capable of imparting its treasures to others, in a familiar and intelligent manner, should possess an ingredient of bitterness, such as is manifested in the commencement of the lecture, towards those minds who differ with him in sentiment, however right he may be, and however wrong they may be, in their respective positions. Great minds are always magnanimous, and never stoop, as his mind has, to coarse vituperation, in remarking on the logic or philosophy of others.

This much of the lecture we decidedly disapprove. The majority of it we are pleased with. Some of its philosophy we regard as questionable; but there is genius in all of it. That which, to our mind, is questionable, is the saturation of the pores of a cherry table, with "mental fluid," passing into it from the palms of the hands and the balls of the fingers which rest upon it, and thus endowing it with volition and will-power, which it must possess, in order to enable it to move as directed by the minds of persons in the circle, after the battery or chain of magnetic connection is broken up, and all human contact is removed from it. This, it strikes us, is imparting to old cherry lumber, temporarily, an intelligence which understands and obeys the requirements of controlling mind, outside of it; which we confess, we are not prepared to accept as genuine philosophy. We are aware that this avowal may subject us to the harsh denunciations of which we have complained; but we shall have to take our chance with our brethren of the school of investigators, for the biting effect of those bad emanations which fly off from minds of this character, in their process of refinement.

ED. A. OF P.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I appear before you this evening at the request of a committee of gentlemen who have associated themselves together for the investigation of Spiritual Phenomena, and who were complimentary enough to believe that the results of my examination of the subject would prove interesting, if not instructive, to the public.—It was not without hesitation that I concluded to accept the invitation thus extended me to deliver a public lecture; not, however, because I distrusted the reality or importance of those great truths, which have recently flashed like heaven's own light across this continent, but rather because I doubted my ability to do full justice to the subject, and felt unwilling that the crudeness of my thoughts, or the immaturity of my reasoning, or the necessarily limited scope of my experience, should be seized upon by the skeptical and made use of to prejudice this noble science in the minds of those who are conscientiously inquiring after truth.

It is, therefore, with unaffected diffidence that I rise to address this immense audience, on a subject which has enlisted in its investigation the best talent of our country; and has provoked against it the hostility of the press, the denunciations of the pulpit, and the invectives of the tribune.

In view of the vastness of the field before us, when we approach the

discussion of spiritual manifestations, and the brief period allotted to a single lecture, it becomes indispensably necessary to limit our inquiries to some one particular phase of the general subject, and confine our attention exclusively to its elucidation. Hence I have selected for my theme this evening, The Natural Philosophy of Spiritism.

To those who have never devoted any time and patience to the investigation of Spiritual Phenomena, but have gleaned small bits of information here and there, from crude newspaper paragraphs, or cruder and more tangled testimonies of some half crazed, half convinced frequenter of circles, the whole subject assumes the appearance of phantasm and delusion, provoking disgust or pity, ridicule or scorn, just as it happens this or that characteristic predominates in the mind of the observer. Thousands have made up their minds on the subject, reclining in their rocking chairs, without deigning to bestow upon it one respectful thought. Thousands again, having no minds of their own to make up, have taken their cue from the sneer of some reverend gentleman, who imagines because he stands in a pulpit, that he is immaculate and infallible, and though, perhaps, a mere tyro in learning, or a baby in logic, ventures to blaze away at what he has not the capacity to comprehend, and to hold up to ridicule and contempt the very science upon which his own religion rests, and which, if untrue, undermines its very foundation. Let these reverend scoffers beware! lest, like the mighty man of old, whose giant arms tore the pillars from their basis, they overwhelm themselves in the ruins of the temple.

Others again have caught the prevailing sentiment in the little coterie to which they accidentally belong, and because it happens to be ruled by some profound quack, whose self esteem, and "plentiful lack of learning," go hand in hand, and who pronounces the whole affair an unmitigated humbug; and, looking very wise, declares it dangerous to the mind's sanity to investigate it; they also pucker up their lips in erudite contempt, and kindly consider all who have the manliness to venture upon the inquiry, as candidates for the Insane Asylum at Stockton.

But there is still another class in the community who take an interest in this important subject. This class is the great mass of our fellow-citizens. They neither affirm nor deny—neither admit the phenomena nor brand as fools and madmen those who do. They take no sides; they proclame no opinions of their own. They stand aloof from the contest, and watching each party with an eagle eye, coolly make up their minds upon the evidence adduced. These men possess fair and candid minds, open to conviction, and fear nothing for the eventual triumph of truth. The bulk of this audience is no doubt composed of such, and I do not hesitate, therefore, to throw myself upon their liberality of sentiment and freedom of thought to sustain me on this occasion. For I know that Spiritism is based upon natural law, that it is susceptible of demonstration, that it commends itself to every intelligent mind, and enthrones itself upon every guileless heart. I know, furthermore, that no man who enters upon its investigation with proper motives, and perseveres in his inquiries, will ever be disappointed in eliciting facts sufficient to convince him, no matter how skeptical may be his disposition, or how unfavorable his predilections.

With these preliminary remarks I am prepared to enter at once upon the consideration of the subject.

Of all the works which have been written and published on the philosophy of Spiritism, there is scarcely a single one which merits the slightest respect; and though, perhaps, the assertion may partake largely of arrogance, I hesitate not to declare that not one among them all presents the subject in an intelligible form. Few individuals after wading through the mazes of the solid quartos and plethoric folios which the press has recently spawned upon the public, would come forth from the task enriched with a single new idea, or with a single knotty point of metaphysics clarified in their understandings. Indeed, the result usually is, to stir up the mud more hopelessly, to render doubtful what before seemed plain, to scare up new chimeras at every turn, and so to befog and besmoke the poor brain, that when it reaches "finis," it is ready to sink under the mass of accumulated nonsense and



absurdity which commenced on page one, and like a rolling ball of snow, has augmented with every turn of the leaf.

Who, for instance, can comprehend Judge Edmonds's mysticisms, or Senator Talmadge's metaphysics, or even the later works of Andrew Jackson Davis, on these abstruse and involved topics? What mere human intellect can reconcile the discrepancies of Professor Hare, and Mr. Hudson Tuttle, when they dilate on "Life in the Spheres?" And out of the thousand and one recondite essays attributed to, perhaps, My Lord Bacon, or Emanuel Swedenborg, each one of which differs from its predecessor, who so wise as to select the genuine grain—if genuine there be—out of this mighty pile of chaff, this tremendous stack of dried straw, old rags and literary dirt.

If such a man there be, he has most studiously concealed himself from the public, and hidden his light, in contravention of Scripture, under a bushel.

And yet it cannot be denied that there are thousands of Spiritualists in the United States, who, somehow or other, swallow all these publications, and what is stranger, manage to survive the dose, and yet more remarkable still escape the asylum at last. With dilated eyes, and open mouth, and insatiate ear, they greedily devour with equal pleasure absurdity and beauty, truth and falsehood, what is monstrous and what is natural. The veriest quack—if a professor of Spiritualism—can palm off his nostrums upon them as genuine balms and balsams, and the sick fool,—who if untainted with their favorite hobby—would have been permitted to chant his rhapsodies to the empty air, and slide peaceably into a despaired oblivion,—is elevated forsooth, into an inspired prophet, and his ravings ranked with the sublime strains of Isaiah, or blasphemously classed with the heavenly teachings of Jesus. Out upon such driveling blockheads! say I. They dishonor the science they profess to follow; they disgrace the great truths, which Heaven has intrusted to their care. They disgust those they court to be their disciples. They throw discredit upon their friends, and justly provoke the contempt, scorn and pity of the world.

But in spite of all that madmen and enthusiasts, knaves and fools have done against Spiritism, it has steadily progressed in the United States and Europe, and is gradually working its way, out of the filth and fury by which it has always been surrounded. Minds of deep thought and far reach, have entered upon the inquiry, and a glorious Philosophy is slowly yet surely emerging from that dark chaos, in which it had its birth.

What that philosophy is it now becomes my duty to examine, and though I am indebted to no thick tome for the system which I shall propound, nor owe its conception to a wiser brain than my own, yet, with all due deference to those who hear me, and to those who do not, I challenge the world, successfully to deny, overthrow or refute it.

I set out with the proposition that philosophers from Aristotle down to Hamilton, have misunderstood the operations of the human mind, blundered about its organization, and propagated erroneous notions as to its constitution, powers and nature. And though a certain school now exists that correctly traces its origin, yet none have ever comprehended its real character. It may at first, appear foreign to the subject of this lecture, to enter upon the inquiry as to what is the mind? But Spiritism itself is based upon mental phenomena, and no one can comprehend spiritual philosophy, without first understanding the nature and organization of the mind. Nor does it follow that the inquiry will be fruitless, unintelligible, or interminable, on the old theory, that the mind cannot comprehend itself. For as I shall presently show beyond question, this acknowledged proposition does not enter at all into the controversy. The true inquiry being "can the spirit comprehend the mind?" not can mind comprehend mind, or spirit, spirit? You observe, therefore, at the very outset, that I draw an impassable line between mind and spirit; indeed they are just as distinct as soul and body. In this fusion of two irreconcilable things, this identification of two different substances, this commingling of distinct phenomena, may be traced most of the difficulties of mental philosophy from the times of the Stagirite to those of John Locke and Emanuel Kent.

First: What, then, is the human mind? I reply that it results from the organization of the body. It is a substance, formless and ethereal as the air we breathe, or the electric current that issues from the poles of the galvanic battery. Its volume corresponds to the discharges of a Leyden jar, in exact proportion to the size of the generating machine.—It is, so to speak, a continuous stream generated by the human brain, susceptible of spiritual impressions, and these are made upon it by the spirit of each individual, according to its receptive power. The mind does not possess life, all vitality subsists in spirit. It is in other words, the window, through which the spirit looks out upon the material world and the machinery by which it moves, regulates and governs it.

Now you will at once perceive, that it is a prerequisite to this theory that the human brain must be demonstrated to be a machine in the nature of a galvanic battery; that its convolutions, its cells, its watery and marrowy substances, its thin partitions, and regular sub-divisions, indeed its entire shape and texture, must be shown to be but the furniture of an electrical or rather mental apparatus, designed to generate a fluid somewhat akin to galvanism, and corresponding most wonderfully with the zinc and copper plates, the separate compartments the wires and acids of a galvanic battery.

I am aware that this hypothesis is stoutly denied by the great body of the medical world, and ridiculed by the charlatans of all professions. But when did doctors ever agree?—and is it not a notorious fact, that they have always been the laggards of scientific discovery, since the profession had an existence? They denied Phrenology, they denied Mesmerism—they denied Psychology—and although some of the last hide-bound have ventured to pronounce in favor of some excepted cases of clairvoyance, yet as a body they are quite as litigious, disputatious and obstinate as lawyers themselves, and these, as we all know, are but a degree behind the Reverend Clergy.

The main argument of the medical profession against the existence of such a fluid, is of itself an absurdity. They say, if it existed, it could be detected in the nerves or the brain itself; but that they have examined them with the nicest instruments, have divided and subdivided the nerves in every part of the body, and then thrown upon them microscopic lenses of the highest magnifying powers, and all in vain. Most assuredly in vain—common sense ought to have told them so, before they ventured on the experiment. They might with equal propriety attempt to subject a galvanic of electric current or the power of vision, as a current of the mental fluid; and yet, I believe, no diplomade ninny has ever attempted to subject the contents of a telegraphic wire to the test of the microscope. The idea seems never to have entered their craniums, that some of nature's forces are invisible, and that these forces may be found in the human body body as well as elsewhere, in the material universe. I shall be enabled to demonstrate before I conclude, that the brain does generate such a force, and that it can be detected in operation, not in a single instance only, but in thousands.

This force I have ventured to call the Mental Fluid. It constitutes, indeed, the mind of the individual, and is much or little, great or small, powerful or weak, in proportion to the size of the cavity of the skull, or, in other words, to the power of the generating apparatus. But the mind possesses other qualities besides those of power or weakness, grandeur or dwarfishness. It has its peculiar characteristics in each individual.—For instance, in Shakspeare the imagination was largely developed, the reasoning process of Bacon, the judgment in George Washington, the power of calculation in Newton, the harmony of sounds in Mozart and Handel.

All these peculiarities, and thousands of others, depend on the shape of the brain, not upon its volume. Hence I deduce two general rules in relation to the mind:

1. Its capacity is owing chiefly to the size of the skull.
2. Its proclivities or characteristics to its shape.

By this expression, however, I do not mean to inculcate the doctrine that the mind is actually gauged by the skull, and that it is this thing or that, *because* the brain is correspondingly marked. I mean the very



reverse of this. The cause of the shape and size of the skull is to be sought in the mind. The mind impresses its peculiarities on the skull, and not *vice versa*. Thus, a man who is brave and chivalrous, will have the organ of combativeness largely developed. One who is kind and charitable will possess benevolence in a high degree, and a coward's skull will be marked by a large protuberance in the region of cautiousness. In these several instances these persons are not brave, benevolent, or cowardly because those organs are largely developed on the head; but the developments are there because they are characterized by these qualities. The mere phrenologist teaches the rule in a reversed order. The spiritualist observes nature and follows her. Secondly.—The next proposition is simple, and may be discussed in a few words; it is this: The nervous system, with its countless ramifications, constitutes the wires, as it were, by which the mental battery throws out its stream of fluid into all parts of the human body.

The brain is head-quarters, the *point d'appui*, from which every nerve in the whole system branches off, and into which it empties again.

One or two familiar illustrations of this fact may not be inappropriate in this place.

If the nerve of the finger be severed so as to cut off its communication with the brain, the finger becomes senseless or, as we phrase it, numb. The end of the finger is unable to send up to the brain a telegraphic dispatch that it has encountered something, and hence the spirit is uninformed of the fact, and no idea is conceived on the subject.—Again, how often do we awake at night with the entire arm paralyzed, or, as we term it asleep. This may occur so as to cut off the communication entirely, and very often an individual awakes out of a sound sleep, and is utterly unable to discover whereabouts his arm may be situated. It is so completely benumbed that he is compelled to place the other hand on the shoulder of the paralyzed limb, and follow it to its extremity in order to find his sleeping member. These examples prove beyond controversy that the brain is the seat of the mind, and that the nerves are its messengers and ambassadors to the outer world. I approach now my third proposition, fully impressed with its superlative importance, and almost sinking under the consciousness of my inability to hold it up in the clear and convincing light which it merits. It is this: The mental fluid is the medium of communication, between the natural and the spiritual worlds.

Before entering fully into the discussion of this proposition, which is of course the main one to be established, I deem it proper to make a few observations on the difference between mind and spirit, the outer and the inner worlds, man as he intrinsically is, and as he outwardly appears. I have already endeavored to show that the mind is a material substance, in the nature of the electric fluid—that its home is the human brain, and its conductors, the nervous system.

In treating of the mind, philosophers have been in the habit of endowing it with certain powers and faculties, dividing out its resources, and considering it altogether of a spiritual nature. From the earliest times they have told us that Memory, Imagination, Judgment, and Will, were parts of the mind, and constituent elements in its organization. They thus most strangely, unphilosophically and ignorantly confounded the essence of the mind, with some of its manifestations, and the mere indications of its existence. On the contrary, the mind results from a combination of organized matter and its strength depends upon the quality of the elements which compose it. It is a fluid susceptible of spiritual impressions, and Memory, and Judgment, and Imagination, no more constitute mind, than power of will or purity of morals constitute spirit. The mind is simply made use of by the spirit to take perception of natural objects, precisely as the eye is used by the mind to acquaint it with external things. It requires no argument to show that the eye does not see, or the hand feel, for these may be as perfect in a corpse or a sleeping person as in a living being wide awake; nor does the mind feel or see, but it is the spirit looking out from behind both, and communicating with the world through them, which feels, and sees, and comprehends.

The main fact, therefore, in the philosophy of spiritism, around which all others cluster, is the discovery of the link which connects the spirit with the natural world; and not the discovery only, but the absolute demonstration of it by innumerable tests. From time immemorial the fact seems to have been admitted, that somewhere or other the natural touched and came in contact with the spiritual world, either directly or indirectly. But the insuperable difficulty has always been to trace the connection, and discover the point of contact. Spiritism solves this enigma, and by a scientific philosophy founded on natural law, and an inexorable logic based on indisputable facts, establishes it upon an immovable foundation.

But in conducting this discussion, one fact of great importance must be constantly kept in view. And that is, that there are two classes of spiritual phenomena—the first class being produced by spirits in the body, and the second class by disembodied spirits. The importance of this distinction will hereafter be seen when I come to discuss some of the phases of spiritual manifestations.

Now, although the mental fluid is the connecting link between the spirit and matter, between the inner and outer world, yet, in its normal condition, that is to say, in its ordinary state in the brain, it is not susceptible of extrinsic spiritual impressions—in other words, although my own spirit constantly acts through the mental fluid in my own system, yet no other spirit, in or out of the body, can seize upon the fluid in my own brain, and control my motions in spite of myself, whilst the mental fluid is in its native and original condition. Nor does a disembodied spirit even perhaps operate through this fluid before it undergoes the change, which I shall now revert to.

Throughout the realms of Nature there is a male and female principle at work. It is not only traceable in the visible creation around us, but it exists potentially in the visible forces by which the world is governed and controlled.

It is useless either to deny this fact, or to spend time now in seeking to explain it. Particularly is it observable in all the forms of ethereal fluids, such as magnetism, galvanism and electricity. It is sometimes spoken of as the negative and positive elements of galvanism, the North and South Poles of the magnet, the attraction and repulsion of electricity.

The mental fluid also partakes of this characteristic. It has its male and female principle, its north and south pole, its positive and negative property. It is by a peculiar adjustment of this difference, by means of forming the spiritual circle, usually accomplished by sitting around a table, that the necessary change is effected in the condition of the fluid, and that state of equilibrium attained which is indispensable in order to prepare it for the action and operation of disembodied spirits. Why this is so, I frankly confess I am unable to explain; just as unable, and not a whit more so, than the chemist is who evolves magnetism from the magnet by reversing its poles, or the natural philosopher who sends a stream of galvanism along the telegraphic wires, by bringing the negative and positive poles in contact with them.

Nature has her mysteries still, which baffle the shrewdest intellect, and laughs to scorn the efforts of men to explain or comprehend them.

The formation of a Mental Battery is one of these mysteries, and we are not yet wise enough to fathom it. The fact is so, however, and has been witnessed, not by me alone, but by many thousands. The demonstration of it lies in the experiment; nothing is easier, simpler, or more satisfactory.

Let a small wooden table—cherry if possible—be procured, in dimensions 4 feet long and 2½ feet wide, and of the usual height. Let the circle, consisting of not less than two or more than five or six persons, arrange themselves around it and lay their hands open upon it, the palm downwards. Let this position be maintained fifteen or twenty minutes; let conversation cease entirely, and if possible a respectful and solemn train of thought be indulged. At the termination of this period, the temperature of the hands must be examined, and those whose hands are



coldest must be placed on one side of the table, and those with warm hands opposite. After this arrangement is complete the table will become charged in the course of a few moments, sometimes immediately, and all the phenomena of what are usually termed spirit manifestations will occur.

These manifestations are usually regarded as very wonderful, and many persons at once throw aside their doubts and embrace the doctrines of Spiritualists, as though there had been a special interposition of Divine Providence in their behalf. But in reality there is nothing surprising in these results, after the philosophy of Spiritism is once understood. The effects are perfectly natural, flow from adequate cause, and indeed are unavoidable. I have stated that there must be a difference in the temperature of the hands around the table. I repeat it, and add further, that unless such a difference exists, it would be in vain for those composing that circle to remain any longer at the table. No battery can be formed by them, and no manifestations will follow; I mean no genuine results, for I need not state that in miscellaneous circles the shrewdest persons may be deceived by collusion and fraud. Now let us examine the philosophy of these appearances, supposing an operative circle to have been formed. The table at first loses gradually its gravitation, acquires a sort of polarity, being charged or saturated with mental fluid, readily obeys the will of any person sitting around it, and meanders the apartment in obedience to his desire. When completely charged, it is susceptible of impressions from disembodied spirits, as well as spirits in the body, and sometimes affords irrefutable evidence of the soul's immortality to the most confirmed sceptic. But how does the table become charged? Simply thus: The largest nerves in the body, or I might better say the thickest sets of them, are located in the palms of the hands and the balls of the fingers. Thus we instinctively stretch forth our hands to feel objects, which is but another mode of telegraphing to the brain through the nerves that the hands have come in contact with some external thing. Now, then, these nerves are brought in close contact with the flat leaf of the table, and the mental fluid generated by the brain rapidly escapes into the pores of the wood, provided there be some person on the opposite side of the table, whose temperament is the reverse of our own. There immediately occur attraction and repulsion, just as in an electrical machine, until by the operation of the positive and negative temperaments, or the male and female principles, a sufficiency of the mental fluid is evolved to charge or saturate the table. The moment this period arrives, the table commences moving, and thenceforward, until the battery be broken, becomes to all intents and purposes, a SPIRITUAL MACHINE. But it may be objected by some obdurate sceptic, that it is necessary to keep the hands on the table in order to produce any effect, and that so long as there is a human hand upon it, the motion of the table can be accounted for on other natural and far more familiar principles.—If such were always the fact, and tables never moved except in contact with the hand, there would be some reason to suspect collusion. But very often after a table is fully charged, the connection may be broken, and still it obeys the will and moves without human touch. On one occasion during the past year, there were three persons sitting at a table on Russian Hill in this city, (two of them are now in this Hall,) when it was proposed by one of them to leave the table entirely, and try the effect of the spirit or the will upon it. This was done, and much to the astonishment and gratification of at least one of that number, the table moved up and down the room, perfectly obedient to the will, and remained charged many minutes after the hands had been removed and the contact lost. It may be remarked here that a bright lamp was burning at the time in the apartment, and that fraud was impossible. If it be any gratification to those who hear me, I beg leave to state that I was myself present, and witnessed this experiment with my own eyes.

But the presence of a fluid in the table can be proven by other experiments than an appeal to the sense of sight. No one, I venture to say, who ever sat fifteen minutes in a circle, but will confess, if questioned that he generally perceives a cool breath of air, or something that feels

like it, constantly blowing over and fanning the back of the hands. Some are affected very differently, and experience a shock not unlike that produced by a galvanic battery. I well remember the second circle I ever attended on this account, for I had scarcely touched the table at which several gentlemen had been sitting some time before I arrived, when my hands were thrown over my head with a force little inferior to the strongest shock of an electrical machine. The arms and hands of others are benumbed, and the feeling of giddiness or sleepiness is, I believe, universal. But it is useless to multiply experiments which each one could try for himself if so disposed. My object, at present, is explanation, not history. I am treating of causes, not effects. I am reasoning, not relating anecdotes.

Let us now review the ground we have traversed, and observe with care our present position. I have shown you the nature and organization of the human mind, ascertained its location, and explained its use. I have drawn the proper distinction between the mind and the spirit, and proven that all vitality and intelligence subsist in the latter. I have further established the proposition that the brain is a mental battery, and the nervous system the wires over which it sends its stream of ethereal fluid. Finally, I have demonstrated that this fluid may be dislodged from the brain, and, after a proper battery is formed, conveyed into the pores of a common cherry table, and in that condition made obedient to the commands of the human spirit. Thus having proven that spirits in the body may control the table without contact, by means of the mental fluid, there remains but one more link in the chain in order to establish upon an immovable basis the great science of Spiritualism itself. That link may be thus stated: Admitting the conclusiveness of the argument presented, that the human spirit, whilst in the body, operating through the mental fluid, may control material objects, may move tables without contact, or turn clock-work, as was accomplished by Professor Hare—still it remains to be proven that disembodied spirits may accomplish the same results. In other words, the argument is still inconclusive, and does not go far enough to prove the truth of the Spiritual Philosophy. This is very true; and if the science stopped here, it cannot be denied that those who embrace it on such arguments would be the victims of a delusion. But let us now proceed one step farther. I have already somewhat considered the nature of the human spirit, and shown that there existed an impassable barrier between it and the mind. And here I may observe, by way of parenthesis, that this theory of the mind answers an objection to the immortality of the human soul, which has been urged with resistless force from the earliest times. We are told, and told truly, on the basis of the old school of metaphysicians, that if memory, will and judgment constitute mind, and mind be another name for spirit, then the dog, the elephant, the monkey, and a great many other animals are endowed with immortal souls. This conclusion was irresistible. But of course it was erroneous, and the infidel turned his logical victory in a triumph over God and Religion. But taking our stand-point on Spiritual Philosophy, as I have illustrated it, this difficulty at once disappears; for every animal that possesses a brain must have a mind, and equally with man exhibit some of the phases of mental phenomena. But this by no means proves such animals to possess spirits. They are not endowed with self-consciousness, which is the main characteristic of the immortal spirit.

In this connection I may also be permitted to observe that this view is the only one which successfully vindicates the ways of God to man, as regards those unfortunates called by us idiots and lunatics, and who may die whilst laboring under the cloud of imbecility or insanity. In the case of an idiot, the mental fluid lacks some of its constituent elements, owing to original malformation of the brain, or to its imperfect organization. Hence it is incapable of receiving the ordinary spiritual impressions. In the case of the lunatic, the mental fluid has lost its equilibrium, owing perhaps to sickness or sorrow, which may have disarranged some of the vital organs or diseased the brain itself, and hence ceases to flow in its natural channels. But who will dare to say that the spirit in either case, that mysterious "breath of life" which God



breathes into us all, was imperfect as it came from the hands of its Creator, or that it goes back maimed of its fair proportions, and demoniac forever.

And now to return to the point before us. Let us set out by inquiring, What is man? I reply that he is a spiritual being, clothed with a material form. In other words, an angel robed in flesh. Essentially, then, the only difference between man and angel consists in the encumbrance of the natural body. An embodied spirit, or man, possesses no powers, forces, or faculties, which are not equally possessed by a disembodied spirit, or angel. Indeed, as the human form must be an encumbrance, like that of the chrysalis to the butterfly, the spirit, when finally enfranchised, may be considered by that event as just so much more powerful and glorious.

Now I have already demonstrated that the spirit, whilst in the body, possesses the power to make itself felt and known through the mental fluid, and without contact of the body itself. It follows then, as an irresistible conclusion from the argument just submitted, that a disembodied spirit may do the same. The logical concatenation therefore is perfect, that spirits can communicate with mortals through the mental fluid whilst it is in a peculiar condition; and thus the main design and object of this discourse are accomplished.

Thus, ladies and gentlemen, have I redeemed the pledge with which I set out, and shown you, by an argument which is unanswerable—because based on the laws of nature—that the two worlds of matter and spirit are in constant communication; that angels can talk with us, as well as watch over us; that the pearly gates of immortality have been left ajar by a beneficent God; and that man, by the force of his own intellect and the powers of his own soul, can gaze into that mysterious realm, and listen to the voices of its seraphs, although he may not with sandalled foot tread its “white immortal shore.”

But I should still leave this discourse unfinished, if, after having devoted so much time and labor to the task of showing that spirits can commune with mortals, I did not advance one step further, and inquire if they do? Thus far, in this lecture, I have indulged in no idle declamation, strayed off into no fields of fancy, mounted upon no pinions of the imagination, flaunted forth in no tinsel ornament, strutted in no borrowed plumes. I have addressed myself exclusively to your reason, and with logic as a companion, sought to impress your understanding with the reality and vast importance of this subject. It has been less my aim to show the plausibility of Spiritism, than to prove irrefragably that it cannot be false. I have sought to demonstrate the impossibility of its not being true, and by rigid syllogisms, to render it more difficult to doubt than to believe.

Having, as I trust, fully accomplished this object, you will pardon me if, in conclusion, I should add a few words, in response to the question—Do spirits ever communicate with men? I do not propose, in replying to this question, to invade the domain of the reverend clergy, and prove by scriptural authority that angels and mortals have been friends from the earliest periods of recorded time. Nor shall I weary you with the experiences of particular individuals, each one of which, if credited, would establish the fact on an immovable basis. But I ask you to cast your eyes over the whole extent of this mighty continent, and if there be one grain of modesty yet left in your composition, be pleased to explain how it happens that more than one million of the most intelligent, virtuous, and intellectual citizens of this country should have fallen into a delusion from which you yourself have wondrously escaped? In what lies your vast superiority over the hundreds of thousands who have maturely examined this subject, and who firmly believe it? Be candid, and admit that at least one ingredient of your doubt is, because you know nothing about it, and are ashamed to be caught openly investigating its claims to authenticity. If, however, you refuse to make this admission, I shall be compelled to do so for you, and at the same time mildly suggest that there are men who have explored this subject to a greater depth than the triflers who seek to cover it with ridicule could do, were their lives prolonged to the age of Methuselah. And

yet, there might be those who believe, not because they are deluded, but because they are convinced.

Our minds are so constituted, that we cannot believe in this last proposition, that spirits do commune with us, except through the medium of our own experience. The proof of it lies in an appeal to each one's own senses. My experience has convinced me, and I know it to be true. But that experience would not carry conviction to your mind. You must examine for yourself, and if you are earnest and sincere in your inquiries. Nature will vindicate her own laws, and force you into faith.—And consider, my friend and brother, of what a noble science you become the disciple—the science of man's immortality! The doubts which heretofore have hung low in your sky, and darkened the gateway to the tomb, with murky and lowering clouds, are dissipated forever. The misfortunes and sorrows of your earthly life, dwindle into insignificance, when your spirit can lay a firm hold on the realities of an immortal existence, and your character at once changes from that of a peevish, fretful, helpless man, to that of a calm, imperturbable and Christian philosopher. If grief have invaded your hearthstone, and the pale messenger has summoned from your side, sister, mother and child, or the companion of your bosom—your life's life—her whose smile was always beauty, whose motion always grace, whose voice always music, whose heart ever the home of purity and love—even from the depths of the deepest affliction, you can look up through your tears, and exclaim triumphantly in the language of America's sweetest poet:

“There is no death! what seems so, is transition.  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,  
Whose portals we call death.”

Nor, finally, let me be told by reverend blockheads, or sectarian bigots, that Spiritism aspires to be a substitute for Christianity. On the contrary, when rightly understood, it is her sister, her handmaiden, and her friend.—Christianity is a Religion, Spiritism the science on which it is based. Every inspired thought in the holy Bible has been breathed into man through the medium of its instrumentality. The Patriarch's of old conversed with the angels through its aid. The long and illustrious line of Hebrew prophets—Moses amid Arabian sands, Isaiah clothed in the sublimity of his terrific eloquence, Jeremiah out of the depth of his wailing lamentations, Daniel surrounded by the splendors of an eastern court, David sweeping with almost superhuman touch the chords of his prophetic harp—all acted, spoke, wept or sung, whilst communing with God and angels by means of that mysterious “circle,” which embraces within its wide circumference, seraphs and mortals, the spheres of the Heavens and the orbits of the earth. And even Jesus, the Saviour of men, at once the slave of circumstance and the Son of God—He whose birth was heralded by the advent of a star, and whose death was announced by the heavings of an earthquake—even He did not disdain its aid, when with human hands charged with the self-same fluid, He touched the diseased and the dying, the idiotic and the possessed and immediately all these sons of affliction were restored to health and sanity, and thus vindicated alike the goodness of God and the wisdom of His Messiah.

Instead, therefore, of combating this glorious philosophy, Christians everywhere, of all grades, in all coming time, should hail its advent with joy, and extend towards it a welcome hand. For in spite of all that a false science, or a besotted pulpit can accomplish, the common sense of the people will rescue it from their profane grasp, learn through its teachings how to reconcile Revelation with Nature, the Bible with man, God with His world, until eventually, all its opponents convinced and all its enemies subdued, it shall

“Weave its fame a rainbow round the sun,  
And clasp its thought, a girdle round the world!”

**Mr. Eaton, the Healing Medium.**

All persons who require the services of this gentleman, will please leave their addresses with the editor of this paper, at 200 Main street, where he will call every day.