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Free Thought.

"SPIRITUAL RATIONALE" AGAIN— A REJOINDER TO FREDERICK F. COOK.

BY A. E. NEWTON.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

During the embargo that has been laid upon my pen by illness, several able correspondents of your paper have discussed some of the positions taken by the author of "Spiritual Rationale" in his reply to my criticisms of July 26th. A few other points seem worthy of comment, which, with your leave, I will notice as briefly as possible, in the hope of elucidating the truth, and aiding to settle some of the premises of a true Spiritual Philosophy.

My piquant and speculative respondent appears to think very lightly of the facts and arguments generally accepted by Spiritualists, bearing against the extravagant theories set forth by himself. He says they "have been worn threadbare this many a year." This naturally reminds one of the enthusiastic French savant, who, when told that his pet theory, though very fine, was directly contrary to the facts, exclaimed, "So much the worse for the facts, then!"

My respondent adds, "It is because the questions involved are generally regarded as 'settled' that I have reopened them." This seems to imply that it was not so much because these questions were not rightly settled, as because he takes pleasure in unsettling. But this may perhaps have been a slip of his pen, which seems to have a penchant for bold statements, and I will not press it.

There is, however, a class of minds in the world, and Modern Spiritualism has its full share of them, whose chief delight seems to be in opposing the settled convictions of others, with little care whether those convictions are well-founded or otherwise. Like the Athenians in Paul's time, their principal occupation is either to hear or to tell some new thing. As speakers or writers, they are nothing if not "original." No doubt the fresh speculations of such minds seem to them of far more value than the "threadbare" facts which form the groundwork of a true philosophy.

Mr. Cook feels "a keen disappointment" at my treatment of his *bizarre* hypotheses, and wishes me to "try again—from a higher standpoint." I know of no higher standpoint that can be safely occupied by those engaged in developing a true spiritual rationale than that of observed facts and careful deductions therefrom. When one soars so high in the regions of speculation as to lose sight of and respect for facts, I must be excused from following him.

It is doubtless easy enough for fanciful theorists to brush out of sight any amount of disagreeable facts with the stigma of "threadbare," but it is as unphilosophical as it is easy.

My respondent, while disposed to be quite complimentary to my capabilities as a critic, is of opinion that I have not "an eminently original mind." In this I quite agree with him. In fact, I do not venture to claim originality in any degree. For repeatedly it has happened that when I had conceived an idea that was to me altogether new, I have afterwards found the same perhaps in some old book, or been assured that some invisible attendant dropped it in my mind. And if it is the proper function of original minds to busy themselves in inventing strange and startling hypotheses, with sublime indifference to facts, with which to puzzle those less gifted, and distract attention from the practical questions of life, I esteem it a cause for devout thankfulness that I have not been thus endowed. My mental habit is—if I may be pardoned a further allusion to myself—to give a fair, full and candid attention to the facts relating to any question, and to form my conclusions in accordance therewith; especially endeavoring to discover their practical bearings, if any, on the conduct of life. Spiritualism is of little worth to me, or to the world, except as it aids to truer and better lives on earth. Hence I take little interest in many unpractical speculations which some have sought to engrain upon Spiritualism. And I have no time to waste in opposing such theories, unless in my view their tendency is clearly pernicious to human welfare. Such appears to me the case with what is termed the "All-Right Doctrine," and with the closely-related dogma of "No Evil Spirits," and its necessary adjuncts of Moral Transformation by Death, and Illimitable Lying by Good Spirits!

By the way, it seems not altogether certain that this dogma is original with Mr. Cook. Since my criticism was published, a gentleman

somewhat known through the spiritualistic press has written to inform me that he was the first to proclaim that doctrine, and claims Mr. C. as one of his disciples—besides whom he knows of but one other. He, however, avows that he was taught it by a spirit or spirits, and wishes to correct my mistaken supposition that Mr. Cook was the only mortal who, in spite of the alleged falsehoods and almost universal prevarications of spirits on the subject, had been able to get a glimpse of the real truth (?). I stand corrected. There are three of them! Yes, perhaps four—for, judging from his letter in a late *Banner of Light*, my old friend Miltenberger, of St. Louis, seems to be learning that way, if not a full convert. Well, this strange doctrine may be destined yet to prevail, at least among such as "prefer" agreeable theories to unpleasant facts. But, for myself, I must stick to the facts, even though they be worn "threadbare," and though I fail to keep "abreast" of the more advanced theorists.

My respondent does not state that he has been personally conversant with

THE DEMONIAL PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM.

though he claims to be familiar with its current literature. It is one thing to read about such phenomena, but quite another to meet them face to face—to witness the malignity that flashes from the eye, or is expressed in every tone and gesture. I very much question whether any person of sane mind could personally encounter even what little of that character has come under my observation, and yet hold the theory that there are no evil-disposed spirits. To do so, one's mind must be constructed differently from mine. I could as soon persuade myself that there are no evil-disposed persons in this world—that the belligerent and abusive street rowdy, the roystering debauchee, the sleek confidence man, the wily seducer, the midnight robber or the stealthy assassin, is really a "good" and "wise" citizen, seeking to "adapt" truth to the condition of his victims! By the same reasoning, it could, no doubt, be made to appear that the death-dealing rifle policy of aggressive frontiersmen, together with the savage vindictiveness of the outraged red man in return, and every other manifestation of human craft or violence, constitute no proof of evil intention. Oh, no! viewed from a higher standpoint, all such "seeming aberrations" are only incidents of the "interesting process of adaptation," by which the good and wise of earth are seeking to bless the ignorant and base! and in doing this they are merely "subject in all their operations to the synthesis of conditions!"

What a delightful thing it must be to be able to view things from so high a standpoint that all disagreeable facts lose their significance!

GOOD FROM EVIL.

To save misapprehension, let me here say explicitly that, from the low standpoint which I occupy, it seems plain to me, as part of a true spiritual rationale, that good is ascendant over evil in the universe—that, in the wise and beneficent economy that prevails, good is forever being educed from evil, profit from pain, purification and refinement from suffering. Indeed, I can go so far as to say, that, born as we are, inheritors of ingempered physical and moral evils from our progenitors, intense suffering of both body and mind may be absolutely indispensable to our best advancement. And, for aught I know, such a constitution of things as permits or requires this may be not only wise but the best that can be. Unquestionably great compensations are provided for all unavoidable sufferings. But it by no means follows, to my apprehension, that those who wantonly, mischievously or maliciously inflict pain or cause suffering in others, are to be considered blameless and beneficent, because great good comes out of their intended evil. It is plain that the progress of humanity in civilization has been wrought out between the play of conflicting forces, in which the selfish passions and vindictiveness of men have borne no inconsiderable part; but it would be absurd to argue that there was no selfish passion or vindictiveness on the part of human actors, but on the contrary that all were wise and good, merely because great good on the whole has resulted from these conflicts. Equally illogical is it to infer that all spirits are wise and well-meaning, because the pranks of the mischievous, the lies of the deceitful and the violence of the malevolent may in the long run, through the kindly ministrations of the truly beneficent, be turned to useful account.

DO GOOD SPIRITS LIE?

My respondent, who at first talked very gingerly about "modifications, not to say adulterations" of truth by spirits, now boldly declares that a good spirit will certainly lie, "if thereby it may avert a greater evil."

Without assuming to dogmatize as to what a good spirit will or will not do, I will say that I can scarcely conceive of a greater evil than the universal prevalence of this Jesuitical doctrine and practice would be. I am aware it is somewhat prevalent among those who style themselves "advanced" thinkers, and who are wont to sneer with lofty contempt at what they please to term the "Sunday-school morality" of honest truthfulness in all things.

Of course, those who believe that wise and good spirits lie to avert what they deem greater evils, may be expected to do the same themselves, and each will claim the right of determining from his own selfish standpoint what is a greater evil. The selfish merchant or dealer in any commodity naturally thinks it a greater evil that he should lose the profits of a good bargain than that he should fit a little to his customer. The ardent politician is sure that the triumph of the opposing party, with the loss of all the spoils of office, would be a vastly great-

er evil than unlimited lying at the hustings and cheating at the ballot box. The fathers of the church are said to have commended lying "for the glory of God"; while modern clergymen sometimes think it safer to preach as truth what they really believe to be false, and modern editors often not only "modify" and "adulterate" the truth, but actually charge it into a lie—all no doubt, to avert what they think would be a greater evil. I never see the *Chicago Times*, and so do not know to what extent my respondent follows editorially what he deems the example of "good spirits" in this regard.

The inevitable result of all this good-intentioned lying is the widespread callosity of conscience, both public and private, and the almost total destruction of mutual confidence—which is the indispensable basis of good society—alike in the commercial, the political, the religious and the social departments of life. Instead we have the general prevalence of distrust and suspicion, whereby our whole social structure is honeycombed and ready to fall into disintegration, but for the noble exceptions that still remain in all ranks, of persons whose "Sunday-school morality" of sturdy truthfulness has not been "outgrown."

This policy of prevarication to avert greater evils is plainly not adapted to this world. If it obtains among "good spirits," as my respondent affirms, it was certainly very unwise in them to allow him or other mortals to hold of the fact, and equally unwise in the latter to proclaim it on earth. To practice it with any safety must require a knowledge of consequences almost if not quite equal to omniscience, in order to be sure that a greater evil is averted. But to an unsophisticated mind, it seems as impossible for a wise and good being to tell an untruth as for the sun to emit darkness.

LYING TO CHILDREN.

My respondent seems to think that the alleged practice of falsehood on the part of good spirits finds full justification in the fact that many parents falsify to their children about the origin of life. They say of a new-born babe, "The doctor brought it." "We have here," he says, "the spirit-law of adaptation brought to our very doors. Lie is piled upon lie; prevarication is added to prevarication," etc.

A very lame justification, for which I think no sensible spirit will thank him. I had supposed that all judicious parents pursued a far wiser course than that. Juvenile inquisitiveness may be postponed or properly satisfied without the utterance of any untruth. The old-fashioned statement that "God sent it" involves no falsehood, leaving to after years the explanation of who or what and where God is. Reserving a part of the truth until it can be properly apprehended is not lying. True, now and then some inept Galileo or Sir Isaac, who has been told that "God lives up in the sky," may be found (as one was recently intently studying the starry vault when he ought to be asleep, and struggling with the mighty problem of "how God got him down here"?). But a youngster old enough to start such a problem as that, is old enough to profitably receive a truthful primary lesson in embryology. The "educated sense of shame" which would withhold it is as culpable as it is unwise—for it is born of conscious impurity. If such lesson is properly imparted by an intelligent and judicious parent, no harm can ensue, and no "shock" be experienced. The most disastrous "shock" which any child is likely to receive in connection with these matters is that caused by finding out, as it sooner or later will, that its trusted parents or guardians, instead of teaching any portion of truth on this important subject, "have piled lie upon lie, prevarication upon prevarication." This discovery is liable to produce a shock to the child's moral nature that will impair if not utterly destroy its confidence in those who should be its trusted advisers in youth, and may lead to the wreck of its own character for veracity for all future life. I cannot think that wise and good spirits act on any such "law of adaptation."

WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS?

Mr. Cook still insists that "spiritual truths are not allied to our experience," and asks "What spiritual truth is?" He quotes Kant's very restricted definition, from which it appears that he had reference to merely one class of spiritual truths, while I referred to others.

I answer, it is a spiritual truth (according to the general acceptance of the term) that man continues to live after the death of his material body, and this truth is allied to our experience, because we live now. It is also a spiritual truth that man carries with him, or continues to possess, his personal consciousness, memory, reason and perception; and all this is allied to our experience in this life. It is another spiritual truth that man as a spirit has power to perceive other spirits, and an objective spirit-world; and this truth is allied to our experience. This category might be extended indefinitely; and still another class of spiritual truths allied to our experience might be cited. As, for example, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Love works no ill to one's neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." "What a man soweth that shall he also reap," etc., etc. I submit that all these are spiritual truths, in the ordinary meaning of the phrase, and that they are allied to the experience of all spiritual persons.

"While clothed about with flesh, both as to things of this world and the next, we are forced to content ourselves with apprehending phenomena," says Mr. Cook. Not exclusively, by any means. I must repeat that we are spiritual beings now, as well as physical; and in proportion as our spiritual natures are cultured, may we while clothed about with flesh apprehend spiritual things. This I had supposed to be ac-

cepted as one of the primary truths of Spiritualism.

"Some day," says our philosopher, somewhat oracularly, "it will be seen . . . that at bottom there is absolutely nothing trivial or demoralizing in the intercourse of spirits with mortals." And I have no doubt that the same day it will be made equally clear—to the same class of minds—that there is nothing absolutely trivial or evil-intended in the intercourse of mortals with each other. The evidence in the one case is of the same nature and as positive as in the other. But I apprehend that no sane mind, unless dominated by an extravagant theory, will accept the conclusion.

THREE EXPLANATIONS.

My respondent refers to the differences and contradictions among spirits in regard to religious systems, reincarnation, etc., and makes note of three different explanations that are or may be given, as follows:

"One is willful lying. This theory is much in favor, as it solves nearly all spiritual problems, without going to the trouble of looking for something more rational, though, perhaps, a trifle more involved.

"Another explanation is that the disagreement is due to spiritual environments or states. This explanation has also many adherents, and there is a notion extant that it is eminently philosophical.

Finally, there is an explanation that the difference is a *wise* subterfuge to further human self-development. This view has at present but a limited endorsement, and labors under the disadvantage of being "bizarre."

As to the first of these explanations, I would say that I have never yet met with or heard of the Spiritualist who advanced such a theory as to the source of religious differences. Possibly some may have thus accounted for contradictions about reincarnation. The theory would imply that all spirits are supposed to know immediately on entering the spirit-life what is the truth about these matters; otherwise they could not be charged with willful falsehood. Where is the Spiritualist of any intelligence who believes any such thing? On the contrary, the general belief is, that spirits ordinarily continue for a greater or less length of time (depending on constitutional tendencies, surroundings, aspirations, etc.) to adhere to the same religious faiths in which they have been educated on earth; and of course they honestly teach the same when they communicate. Moreover, it is a prevalent conviction among enlightened Spiritualists that every great religious system has a substratum of spiritual truths, more or less distorted and adulterated by materialistic misconceptions, which truths may be supposed to be gradually more clearly apprehended in the after-life, and to hold the allegiance of earnest souls until they expand to broader conceptions, and find that the truths of all supposed conflicting systems converge at last into one universal religion.

"Each form of worship that hath swayed the life of man, and given it to grasp the master-key of knowledge, *Veritas*, unfolds some germs of goodness and of right."

The second explanation, when properly expanded in accordance with the above suggestion, accords with our knowledge of human nature, and rationally covers the whole ground. It may therefore well be considered "eminently philosophical," and is doubtless the true one.

The third, which is the one advanced by Mr. Cook, not only "labors under the disadvantage of being bizarre," but is, to my view, eminently irrational and incredible. It implies, as does the first, that all spirits, from all countries of the globe, and however variously constituted and indoctrinated on earth, become immediately or speedily, on entering the spirit-world, at one on all religious and philosophical questions, yet consentaneously adopt the policy of lying on such matters to those they have left behind, as a "wise subterfuge to further human self-development"! It is not strange that so violent and extravagant a hypothesis has "but a limited endorsement." The wonder is that it should have any at all.

True, the contradictions of spirits, and the difficulty of determining what is truth on many questions, do tend to further human self-development, by making it necessary that we should exercise and thereby cultivate our own powers of discrimination. So the circulation of counterfeit money, and the prevalence of shams in every department of life, tend to "further self-development" in the same way. But who is so absurd as to claim that counterfeiters and fabricators of shams are *wisely* pursuing any such result, or that they are justifiable on that ground?

ENDORSEMENT BY SPIRITS.

My respondent claims that I was wrong in supposing that his peculiar views found no support among communicating spirits. I have only to say that at the time of writing my criticism, though I had enjoyed the privilege for twenty-seven years of somewhat free converse with spirits of various grades, through many mediums, and of listening to trance-discourses without number, also of extensive acquaintance with the literature of Modern Spiritualism, yet I did not recollect having anywhere met with the peculiar theories he had put forth as the basis of his "Spiritual Rationale." I was willing to give him the credit of entire originality. But subsequent information, as already stated, has weakened that credit. And since abundant experience has shown that there is no vagary too *outré* to be advocated or endorsed by some spirit, I am not disposed to insist that Mr. Cook's views are an exception.

The fact, however, that his elaborated series of propositions submitted to the controlling spirits of Mrs. Richmond received "unequivocal endorsement," is of very little worth, and he does well to base no argument upon it. It is no unusual thing for a strongly positive mind, like Mr. C., on approaching a medium, to ob-

tain an unequivocal endorsement of any opinions it may have definitely formed—simply because such a mind is positive to and controls the medium's sensitive brain, and often, also, the spirit or spirits who may speak through her. They are thus made to say what they would not were conditions reversed. Many a conceited egotist has doubtless been confirmed in earth-born fallacies in that way, and has come to imagine that his views are always right; when in fact he receives merely the echo of his own thought from a negative medium or spirit. The safer way and the only way to obtain with any probable accuracy the real views of a spirit, is to apply for them in a thoroughly teachable or childlike frame of mind, thus assuming a relatively *negative* attitude. "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom."

There is, however, perhaps but one of the several propositions submitted in the above case to Mrs. R.'s controlling spirits, to which they need have taken any important exception. That is in these words:

"That all mortals are attended by guardian spirits, and that these determine the nature of an *inspired* all communications given through controlling spirits to persons in their particular charge."

The latter affirmation is so obviously contrary to facts of observation and experience, that any amount of endorsements could not make it true. If I mistake not, instances are by no means rare, especially in the early experience of mediums, in which their guardians claim to have been pushed aside by others, while that was given which was disapproved and repudiated.

The negative answer to the question, "Is there active evil in the spirit-world?" given through the same medium, is of no greater value; and, as will be shown, a different answer, more accordant with our knowledge of facts, has been imparted through the same lips.

OBSESSION AND INSANITY.

Mr. Cook's opinion that obsession is "angelic" and a cure for insanity, seems no less extravagant than his other theories. It is quite likely that, in many instances, a kindly and well-intentioned spirit-control, that would result in good if understood and unopposed, is mistaken by ignorant lookers-on for insanity or obsession. I think I have met such cases myself. And insanity is liable to result from the ill-advised and harsh measures often taken. Very probably the case cited of the young man who personated an Indian "with the war paint on," was of this character. But one swallow does not make a summer, and one case of control by an unclean yet well-meaning Indian spirit, who indulged in pranks that seemed insane to civilization, but brought his subject out all right in the end, by no means justifies the conclusion that there are no instances of selfish or malicious obsession by ill-meaning spirits.

DANGER OF HASTE.

My respondent quotes largely from spirit discourses through Mrs. Richmond on the danger of too hastily popularizing spiritual truth, and of crystallizing it into permanent creeds before its full scope shall be apprehended. This is surely a very proper and wise, with reference to spiritual truth in the large sense. But it has little bearing against regarding as "settled" some of the primary facts of Spiritualism, in relation to which the evidence seems abundantly conclusive.

In fact, one of the discourses quoted seems to imply that some primary questions have been settled. It declares, "You are to-day in the midst of this fruitage of spiritual growth. The first harvest has ripened rapidly. The lighter fruitage is already gathered and garnered." It is not stated that this fruitage is worthless and must be rejected; but it is added that "many consider that this is the full harvest. Let them be careful, lest in gathering these fruits alone they shall neglect the larger harvest that is to come."

Very good advice, truly. Mr. Cook thinks that hardly anything has been gathered of value, or settled, beyond the single fact of spirit communion. That may be all he has secured; but he is not authorized to speak for all others.

SPIRIT ESSENCE AND SPIRIT BODY.

My reviewer, says Mr. Cook, "takes me to task for holding that a spirit in essence is without what we call physical members and organs, such as arms and legs, eyes and ears. That a spirit has some form I have never denied, although Bro. Newton seems to infer the contrary."

I protest that I said nothing whatever about a "spirit in essence" having members, organs, etc. I made a clear distinction between the spirit (*i. e.*, the immaterial essence) and the spirit body—a distinction which my respondent seems to ignore. As to the former, I ventured no opinion in regard to either form or organs. As to the latter, the evidence seems conclusive that it has the form and organs of the human body.

Mr. C. had emphatically asserted that "the whole spirit body"—not the spirit essence, mark—"is no more or less than what we call thought." He argued that it had no use for legs, hands or eyes, and added, "to declare that the spirit body has any form that we can comprehend with our finite perceptions is to dogmatize," etc. Such language, I think, fully justified the remark that he regarded the spirit body as "an incomprehensible nondescript."

He further says, "Bro. Newton does not understand how we can be thought." I again protest that I said nothing to warrant such a statement. What I did say was that his assertion was wanting in explicitness until he defined what he meant by "thought"—whether a mere motion or an actual substance.

He now says that "Man is Thought, and nothing else"; and then adds the "dangerous admission" that "what he is clothed about with is not man!" Agreed. If, then, man as a spirit

The Reviewer.

John Wetherbee's Views

Of Eugene Crowell's New Book, "The Spirit-World: Its Inhabitants, Nature, and Philosophy."

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

It is a matter of some moment to the spiritualist reader when our esteemed Eugene Crowell puts forth a book. We all remember his preceding work, "The Identity of Primitive Christianity and Modern Spiritualism." I am never tired of reading it, and even of quoting its bright thoughts that linger in my memory and notes in my scrap-book, to be referred to as "Orthodox" thoughts, or deductions in the ethics of Modern Spiritualism. So when his new book, just published, "The Spirit-World: Its Inhabitants, Nature, and Philosophy," lies open before me, I expect a treat. The subjects named in the contents as heads of its thirteen chapters are just what we all want to read about, when either from a reliable or an intelligent source: this certainly is the case as to the latter, and it bears the prestige of the other. We do not want to skim or skip it through on the Johnsonian plan, but read it with both our mortal and immortal eyes open, to read it thoughtfully, not only its lines, but between its lines, so to speak—that is, its undertones and suggestions, for when Bro. Crowell writes, his words are his sober second thoughts.

In this book (which I have now carefully read from the introduction to "the end," the author looks at spiritual things in a remarkably objective manner; evidently feels them to be tangible realities. He seems to be in his intellectual make-up more of a Dante than a Milton, that is, in his definiteness of statement and description; but that is what the modern mind wants, if it be so, as with high authority and much experience states. It will be our pleasure to make our comments in a friendly way, and no doubt will treat his revelations as facts and actualities, and perhaps be more or less psychologized by his prestige as an honest, intelligent and fascinating writer. He does not seem to consider time and space as mere figures of speech inhering in and to mundane life, as is often taught, but rather ambiguously, by spirits, and then repeated as glittering generalities. Now I like this; I do not know of any point in the hereafter where "time will be no more," and I am glad that after this life's fitful fever is over, watches and clocks, and days and nights, weeks and years will not only continue, but are all gauged and measured by our astronomical centre, the sun. This contradicts the late "divine revelation" of A. J. Davis, where he treats the "Summer-Land" subject in an eloquent but unresolvable way; but it seems to me Mr. Crowell is reasonable and true, nevertheless, and Davis is not, and his statements could not be true, if my head is level. But I am wandering from a reviewer's duty.

Our author errs, if I may say so, on the common-sense side, making everything he treats of the spirit-world too literal, objective, localized and geographical; but I may be wrong, and I hope I am. In doing so he makes things very clear to the average reader, but I will have to put a fringed or elastic edge to some of his expressions, not to criticize him, but to make his facts, with their length, breadth, and thickness, fit or adapt themselves to the semi-light I have had on the same matters; perhaps my border-light may be like the strings that hang pendant from a line, before coming to a railroad bridge, that warn the brakeman of the train, so as not to have his head taken off; that is, I desire to be harmless but useful.

He treats, as the list of contents will show, a great variety of pregnant points of spiritualistic interest, and they are what are ever and naturally floating in thoughtful minds; he translates them into the vernacular in his scholarly way, and it is a desideratum that all such, and I myself, will appreciate. I am inclined to think that Mr. C.'s information possibly may be intended in a semi-allegorical sense, and yet profoundly true. I even think the elevated spirits who have favored him with light have intended not only to be true but to be literal; and in a world where spheres are divided, even in a marked sense, there may be no language or symbol to convey the intelligence, except by human and mundane illustrations and language, hence spheres or heavens, as he and Swedenborg call them, may be more and more interior, and not concentric, as the author says, but interior, as our own spirits are supposed to be interior to our outer material personality; and Mr. C. treats these spheres or heavens as geographical in appearance, with their lakes, rivers, mountains, cities, and buildings, and one above another, not stopping at the magic number of seven, but numerous, not ending with the fortieth or fiftieth, but, as far as we know, without limit, and perfect happiness and perfect goodness become logically a matter of altitude. He says the first heaven after leaving the earth, or earth-sphere, is five hundred and fifty miles above us, a beautiful geographical world, enclosing this, but invisible to us. To be literal, then, in the sense the author is, the next sphere is a world whose diameter would be about nine thousand miles, and some twenty-eight thousand miles in circumference, and our world, in which we now live, move and have our being, is located inside of this first heavenly world, like the stone in a cherry, and the surface of the mundane one is five hundred and fifty miles below the surface of the other; and the next, or third, surrounds that in the same way, but at a lesser distance, being about one hundred and fifty miles; and the rest in great number are about seventy-five miles distance, one above the other. A quotation from the book will show the literalness of his style and illustrate what I mean by geographical treatment:

"The spheres of communication connect each other, and with the next above and below it. The spheres extend from the second to the third level, and are about one hundred and fifty miles in diameter. Mr. Owen said he could pass over it in his horses in about an hour."

I ought to add that there are quicker transits than riding, but the latter is not uncommon, for the pleasure of it when there is no hurry.

Among the communicators favoring Mr. Crowell, and the principal one, is Robert Dale Owen, whom we all know and love. He seems to have deservedly reached and dwells in the fourth heaven, has visited others, has found a friend, Charles Stevens, who died about one hundred and fifty years ago, who is an inhabitant of the thirty-second heaven, but the inhabitants of this heaven cannot visit the earth-sphere, though this friend was permitted to visit the fourth, and Mr. Owen by his aid got permission to visit his and the intermediate ones. We on the earth and in the form see nothing of this substantial heaven, five hundred and fifty miles above us; or the others above that, they are invisible to us, and the author says: "To all spirits the heavens above them are as invisible as they are to us." Charles Stevens, to whom I have referred, says to Mr. Owen:

"He knows eight heavens above his, but his knowledge of them is quite limited. He also has learned there are heavens above the fortieth. When spirits reach the thirtieth heaven they are no longer permitted to visit the earth, and when they reach the fortieth they are rarely permitted to visit any heaven below the thirty-second. The fifteenth is the Golden Heaven, and the capital of all the heavens below it. The thirty-fifth is another Golden Heaven, and the capital of all below it down to the fifteenth, and somewhere above the fortieth he has learned that there is still another crystal and golden heaven."

This quotation from the book will show the definiteness of statement to which I have referred, and illustrate the relativity of these extended localities. I have no doubt at all but Mr. Owen sees objectively, as we do our world, the bright world about him. I feel all the several spheres or heavens to be definite, objective realities—the only question in my mind is, would not the effect be the same by the state or condition of the person looking without the trouble of locating them? This sublimary world of ours is not the same in appearance to each person; to one it is an Eden, to another it is a vale of tears, or a desolation. In the fields of the Summer-Land Swedenborg says flowers spring up where children's feet fall. It is the eye of childhood, says the cynic. That is just the point I wish to bring to the front; it is the eye of the spirit that sees the world or heaven which is its sphere; it may be the third to one spirit, and the thirtieth to another. The spirit has his centre of gravity by virtue of what he is, and thus in a certain sense his sphere is within him. Charles Stevens and Robert Dale Owen may be, as they were, side by side, and yet the former be in the thirty-second and the latter in the fourth heaven. How Mr. Owen sees (according to his visits) the heavens above him by that law is not so clear, nor is it clear how he saw the thirty-second any way, as Mr. Crowell, on the authority upon which all these revelations are based, says, "to all spirits the heavens above them are as invisible as they are to us."

I hope no one will think I am looking lightly or frivolously at this book, for I am not. I am profoundly interested and instructed, and say with all truth I have not for many a day, if ever, read so valuable a contribution to our spiritual literature. I consider it truthful and literal. There are some points that I bend a little in order to harmonize them with prior revelations more or less established in my mind on the same train of thought. I do not know as the facts could have been stated in any other way and be properly understood, and there is no ambiguity in what Mr. Crowell states. I am reminded often in reading these pages of the "Pilgrim's Progress," where Bunyan makes the earthly life of the spirit a journey through forests, meadows, cities, mountains and rivers. The life is real, the geographical objects or physical pictures are myths. I do not mean that Mr. Crowell's revelations are myths, any of them, and that he is writing an allegory; and yet I feel that in some quite essential parts it must be a little semi-allegorical for me to accept it, and yet I find myself accepting it and recommending it as an interesting and instructive production. A very matter-of-fact lady has just been reading the book while I have been writing this brief review, and she cannot leave it, it so interests her; she is mediumistic, and feels that they are divine and truthful revelations; and so I think so; and it is a book that will be read by many, and more than once. I generally complain of books being too long; the fault with this is it is too short. I could have devoured with a zest three hundred and ninety-seven pages instead of one ninety-seven; and so said this matter-of-fact lady. I am afraid if I do not pause in my review the sin of length will be on me instead of the book.

I should like to have said something of the localities near the earth-sphere, the Indian heaven, the negro heaven, and also the servants in the other world. I mean literally servants, waiting-maids and men, domestics who do the work and the cooking in the heavens above us; but I must leave these points untouched, and only note the fact to attract the attention of readers everywhere, hoping to induce them, or the spiritual community generally, to read the book. I would not be ignorant of its contents, with all my criticisms, for ten times its cost.

Boston, Mass. JOHN WETHERBEE.

A Festival in Commemoration of Minnehaha's Spirit-Ascent to a New Sphere.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

A beautiful reception was recently given at the residence of the Barker Sisters, 35 Westminster street, Boston, entirely under the direction of Minnehaha, the spirit-control of Miss Nellie B. Lochan. She is a very gracious and pleasing control, and surprises investigators by her truthful messages from the spirit-world.

She informed her friends that she was to give a reception on the 23d of November, in commemoration of her entrance into a new sphere in spirit-life. She directed that her dress on the occasion should be emblematic of her new estate. Her robe must be of purest white, adorned with twelve silver stars; on her head a crown with seven stars, representing the seven sisters to whom she belonged; and in her hand a silver wand with one star representing herself. Twelve children should represent her attendant friends, varying from one to sixteen years of age. They also were to be dressed in white, with a star on each shoulder. Other friends were also invited to take part in the exercises.

At one o'clock in the afternoon a grand march was played on the piano by the Barker Sisters, after which the entertainment was opened by a recitation of the following welcome by little Winnie Day, a charming child of four years:

"Welcome, children, welcome dear,
From your home in spirit-sphere;
Welcome one, welcome all,
Who have come at Minnie's call."

Then was introduced the following programme in order, under the genial and gentlemanly management of Mr. Smith: 1st, Song, "Little Buttercup," by Hattie L. Rice; 2d, Song, "Armor Bearer," by Gracie Fairbanks; 3d, Recitation, "Spirit Mother," by Master Henry Smith; 4th, Song, "The Man in the Moon is Looking," by Hattie L. Rice; 5th, Recitation, by Lulu Chase; 6th, Song, "Winking at Me," by Hattie L. Rice; 7th, Recitation of "The Old and the New," by Mr. Chas. W. Sullivan; 8th, Music on piano, by Miss Lettie Chase; 9th, Poem, by Winona, controlling spirit of Mr. W. J. Colville—also a lesson to the children upon flowers, which was very interesting to all.

The manager then read a poem, improvised by Mrs. Barker, of Lowell, to Minnehaha, at the same time presenting a lovely bouquet of white flowers; to which service she responded in a beautiful poem, taking the new name of "Silver Star."

The guests were then invited to the dining-room, where the table was bountifully spread with refreshments, among which were two large and elegant cakes, with the name of our little spirit hostess on one and "Sunshine" on the other. When Minnehaha and her juvenile guests were seated, together with Mr. Colville, the manager, and the venerable John M. Spear, Winona offered a brief and appropriate invocation, after which the merry feast was fully enjoyed, and followed by entertaining stories from Father Spear.

One very interesting feature was the placing of the infant Pearl upon the lap of the hoary-headed patriarch, representing the old and the new; and as he blessed the little one and named her the "Lily of the Valley," she uttered in baby tones her audible response, Minnehaha then called for the singing of "The Sweet By-and-by," for the aged one, and "The Morning Light is Breaking," for the precious little "Pearl" of one year, after which the company returned to the parlors and were entertained by Mr. Smith as "Prof. Bungie," with his interesting feats of legerdemain, interspersed with the exceedingly clever dramatic recitations of Mr. Charles W. Sullivan, and songs by the company generally.

Thus ended Minnehaha's successful entertainment, much credit being due to Mrs. Hattie L. Sheldon for general management throughout, as well as to the genial and happy manner of "Great-Heart," who officiated as master of ceremonies by special request of Minnehaha. Miss Lochan was the recipient of several beautiful and costly presents, among which was an elegant diamond ring.

The improvised poem of Winona, by Mr. Colville, deserves special mention for its exceeding beauty and fitness for the occasion. It is a pity a reporter was not present to have taken both the poems of Mr. Colville and of Minnehaha in reply.

E. W. S.

Banner Correspondence.

A Disgusted "Shepherd."

It was to be hoped that the once honored seer and prophet of the "Harmonical Philosophy," after having been brought to see and confess the "offensive egotism" displayed in his new departure of last year, and to renounce the pretensions title under which his vague and faulty writings have been given to the world, (adopting that of "Spiritual Reform" instead of "Spiritualism" and "Spiritualism") would have been content to remain a simple and modest man, and just in his treatment of Spiritualism and spirits. In a recent pronouncement under the heading "Spiritualism from the Harmonical Standpoint," characterized to an unusual degree by turgid rhetoric, incongruous metaphor, exaggeration and vapidity, our seer gathered together the discordant flock of sheep, but the sheep do not appear to gather worth a cent. Hear him:

"The silver-voiced trumpet has sounded among the hills and valleys. The voice of the faithful shepherd is heard. He calls aloud to the feeble lambs of independent progression (sic). They heed not his voice, for they have no spiritual hearing. They do not see the sheep, they have no insight. The spirit, *lambs*, is the true shepherd. He or it speaketh only in whispers," etc., etc.

"That must be a very remarkable kind of a 'trumpet' that 'sounds among the hills' and 'far away' over the bleak mountains! A sensible investigation and yet 'speaketh only in whispers'! But again:

"The shepherd is out upon the beautiful hills. Just now he (or it) was in the lowest spirit, speaking only in 'whispers' with doubt, and with clouds and mists, and branches of fruitful trees move to and fro in the breeze; but the imharmonious sheep only run here and there, or freeze with cold, and with clouds and mists, and branches of Nature is nothing there. They build shires for their strange gods; concealing their behind curtains and crumpled and speckled; they call upon the multitudinous 'spirit' and hear the voice of the 'shepherd' who is behind the scenes. Very extraordinary sheep, these, that can 'build shires,' conceal their gods 'behind curtains,' etc., and 'call upon the doubtful to all very quiet'! No wonder the shepherd with the 'silver-voiced trumpet' who 'speaks only in whispers' thus is somewhat untractable! They seem bent on knowing something for themselves, and that kind of sheep must always do gyle trouble to shepherds who assume to know it all. As a specimen of exaggeration, take the following (tautologies included):

"Owey the immortal spirit more; follow the signs of your senses less; for the former is your inferior light, while the latter cover you with doubt, and with clouds and darkness and gloom." The advice here given, as addressed to the too materialistically inclined, is unexceptionable; but the assertion last made is not the language of a level-headed philosopher. Is it a fact that the use of our senses only 'speaks only in whispers' to the 'higher' and 'impenetrable'?" If so, but we need not be without senses. Do not the senses, rightly used, correct and confirm the reason and the intuitions? Are those systems of philosophy, cosmology or religion that have arisen since the time of the 'golden age' of the ancients the only true systems? Is it not the glory of Modern Spiritualism that it offers sensible proof of the reality of a future life, as the basis of a rational philosophy and a true religion? And can there be a nobler or more useful use of our senses than in establishing such a basis?

It is doubtless true that an exclusive use of the senses, without the culture and exercise of the spiritual perceptions, is the reason, may never furnish satisfactory connection to the duties of the immortal man will therefore claim that they should not be used without their proper sphere.

Washington Territory.

SEATTLE.—D. S. Smith, in renewing his subscription, writes: "Well, here I am yet in the land of the living and enjoying pretty good health, past seventy-two years of age, and able to see, hear, and pursue the work of the 'Banner of Light' long may it wave the wish of a constant reader from the first number to the last. And now permit me to say a few words for Spiritualism. It has had somewhat of an awakening by the aid of Dr. S. Spear, who lectured in New York, the lecturer; the two together have waked up the slumbering echoes of free thought and spirit-communion. I had a satisfactory séance with the celebrated Dr. Henry Stude, a privilege that I never enjoyed before. It was a most interesting and profitable with such glorious opportunities in this far-off corner of the globe. And now let thy servant depart in peace, for he hath seen thy salvation." We are about

Nevada.

RENO.—Mrs. P. W. Stephens sends us the following incident: "The great fire which occurred in this place last March, brings to mind a marked instance of spirit care, which I deem worthy of record. Mrs. Berk, who was one of the victims of the conflagration, lived here with her family in the town of Reno, and was, for several months previous to the fire she was constantly warned by the spirits that something terrible, as she expressed it, was going to happen to the town and to herself. She stated to a number of persons that, only one week before the fire, she was awakened in the night by powerful rappings in all parts of her room by the invisibles. The disturbance became so decidedly in earnest, that she arose and struck a light, hoping they would suspend operations; but instead of that they renewed their work, and she was obliged to get up and close the doors of which would open and shut with great rapidity, and the lids would fly up and down in an astonishing manner, and no visible person was near her. Her husband, who was a witness of these manifestations, finally the noises ceased altogether, and she retired to bed again, but dreamed, as she afterward told her friends, that the town was on fire, and that her house was burned up, and she too was burnt to death, and that when she found herself in spirit-life she felt her bones were burnt and buried without any flesh on them, and no one attended her funeral.

In just a week from that time the fire broke out which destroyed a large portion of the town, and when Mrs. Berk's house took fire she ran out of it; but remembering her money hidden in the cellar, (she was somewhat over-economical in her habits,) said she must go back for it. Her husband strove to restrain her, but she broke away from his grasp, and entered the cellar through the outside doorway; but the flames cut off her retreat, and she was seen no more. Nothing was found of her remains but her bones, which were gathered up, and with those of other victims who perished in the same manner, were buried in a wagon, and buried, no one following the vehicle. Thus her dream was literally fulfilled."

SPRINGFIELD.—Amanda Hartman writes: "I have been obliged to defer my visit to Boston from the 1st of March, but when I can be present, can be addressed at 147 Main street, opposite Court Square, Springfield, Mass. I can concur in the recognition of the message from LUZZE OSTENHART, BUSS, and have heard many others say the same. They were neighbors of ours at the time I was cured by Dr. J. E. Newton, and the water from the brook she speaks of was the only cold water I could drink without experiencing great pain."

Delaware.

WILMINGTON.—John M. Spear writes: "It is passing strange to us that none of the mediums in going to New Orleans and Texas will pass on the Atlantic coast. We have repeatedly urged this matter on their attention, and hope at some time to gain a favorable answer in this regard."

Spiritualism in Norwich, Conn.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light: There has been of late considerable interest awakened in this notoriously prejudicial place, regarding things spiritual. We have a most reliable medium permanently located here—Mrs. E. L. Williams, No. 14 Thames street—who, in a quiet way, is doing a good work in opening the eyes of skeptics and religionists to the facts of spirit-communion. In chalybeate examinations and the treatment of disease she is eminently successful. Some time since an interesting young girl of this city accidentally received severe internal injury. A malignant fever set in, and for weeks her life hung fluttering between the two worlds. All hope for her recovery had fled. But through the watchful care and skillful treatment of Mrs. Williams, she is now restored to her friends.

J. Frank Baxter has favored us with two of his popular entertainments. Upon the last occasion the hall was crowded to overflowing. His lecture was replete with telling facts which created intense interest. The slugging was excellent, the tests were pointed, and so far as I have been able to ascertain, perfectly correct. I will relate but one. He said: "I see near the centre of the hall what appear to be wooden tables, and they seem to be filled with a substance resembling fluid. I also see here and there a heap of clothes. That picture has disappeared, and in its place stands a woman. I should judge about thirty or thirty-two years of age. I hear a name spoken. It is 'Charlotte.' 'Charlotte' speak to me, please. 'Charlotte' I hear. 'Charlotte' says she is Charlotte, but she was called Lottie for short. Again I hear 'Lottie' and 'Lottie.' It strikes me that it means husband and wife. 'Lottie' I don't know whether it refers to a species of wood, or some street. The date '76 is shown. Now a severe pain takes me in the side. I could not long endure such agony; but it passes on, and I hear these words: 'Oh, it tires me to get up there.' There was no public response to this test, but two respectable colored women—members of the church—who never before had attended a spiritual gathering, have since informed me that they were indignantly acquainted with Charlotte—they called her Lottie and her husband, Lot Smith. They lived in Cedar street, on what is called Jail Hill. She was a colored washer-woman, and died recently of cancer. Her age was supposed to be about thirty-two. It was in that very hall, on a church festival occasion, that death dealt her blow, and marked her for the tomb. A fever and a season of suffering ensued, intensified by acute trouble in her side, which finally culminated in death. This vision-picture was located near the seat occupied by these lady friends, to whom, previous to her fatal illness, she had often remarked how it tired her to 'get up the hill.'"

Mr. Baxter speaks here again on the third Sunday in January, afternoon and evening; subjects, "Salen Witherell" and "The Triumphs of Modern Spiritualism." We expect to fill the largest hall in town. Seats free, with collection. Measures are being taken to secure other speakers. If this conservative, level-headed city can countenance and sustain such spiritual séances, we may confidently count on the near approach of the millennial morn.

The Banner of Light must be quite unpopular. From remote sections of the country I am having calls for the "Sabbatarian" tracts, the parties, usually referred to in that journal. The good old *Banner* seems to be a universal favorite among independent thinkers and religious freedom everywhere. For many years I have perused its prolific pages, and have always found it bristling for the right in the general advancement of mental progress, ever a true friend of mediums and a reliable exponent of the Spiritual Philosophy. BYRON BOARDMAN.

Spiritualism in Worcester.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light: Yesterday was the day of our Quarterly Meeting for the election of officers. It was a quiet and harmonious meeting and a very pleasant occasion, showing unity of purpose and harmony of feeling that speaks well for the future of the Association. The following officers were elected for the ensuing quarter: President, J. A. Low; Vice-President, C. A. Blake; Recording Secretary, T. W. Sutton; Corresponding Secretary, F. H. G. Morse; Treasurer, F. L. Hildreth; Managing Committee, J. A. Low, C. H. R. Stiles, Mrs. M. A. Howes, Mrs. S. Maynard, F. H. G. Morse, A. P. Howes, E. P. Howe, T. W. Sutton, F. L. Hildreth. An unanimous vote of thanks was tendered Mrs. K. Hildreth for her very substantial manner in which she has aided the Association by the test-séances she has given for the benefit of the lecture fund, and which have been so well received by the public. Mrs. C. A. Blake also received an unanimous expression of gratitude for services rendered the Association. The report of our Treasurer shows a prosperous condition of financial affairs, and the attendance at our meeting indicates an interest and appreciation which are very encouraging. Mrs. S. A. Byrnes lectured for us the first two Sundays in November, and from the number of times we have been asked "when is she coming again?" It is safe to say she has made a lasting impression upon the minds of those who listened to her eloquent discourses; and when we may again be blessed with her presence among us, a joyful greeting and earnest welcome will be given her from many homes made happy by her efforts in the cause of progress and the elevation of humanity. Mrs. Juliette Yeaw followed Mrs. Byrnes and spent two Sundays with us. It is needless to say that she was listened to with close attention by large audiences. Her lectures were heard on several times, the high appreciation of her coming always insures a good attendance. The earnestness with which she endeavors to live and act in accordance with the divine principles she so ably expounds, commends her to all as a lady worthy of the highest respect and confidence. Mrs. K. R. Stiles closed the month with a test-séance for the benefit of the Association, with the success and satisfaction that have attended her efforts on former occasions. Yesterday Mrs. R. Shepard, of Minnesota, commenced a month's engagement with us, and judging from the favor with which she was received, we may confidently expect a month of pleasure and spiritual growth. Respectfully yours, F. H. G. MORSE, Cor. Sec. 88 Elm street, Worcester, Mass., Dec. 8th, 1879.

Spiritualist Lecturers.

[Table with 2 columns: Name, Address]

REY. WILLIAM ALCOCK, Swift Bridge, Warrington, Ms. J. MADISON ALLEN, Methuen, Mass., box 2.

MRS. N. K. A. CROSS, Hancock, Delton, Wis. STEPHEN PEARL A. SNOWS, 75 West 11th St., New York.

MRS. M. A. ADAMS, Hancock, Brattleboro, Vt. MRS. M. M. A. AMPHLETT, care Dr. C. Bradley, Dayton, Ohio.

MRS. R. ALICE STANTON, Albion, Mich. MRS. M. C. ALLEN, Ipswich, Del. MRS. M. C. ALLEN, Ipswich, Del.

REY. CHARLES ARBUTHNOT, Funching, Mich. MRS. EMMA ARBUTHNOT, Britton, care Mrs. Ada H. Fox, box 175, San Francisco, Cal.

MRS. NALLEE J. T. BIRCHAM, Colorado, Mass. MRS. B. W. SCOTT BRIDGES, West Whitford, N. Y.

MRS. J. H. BROWN, 252 St. John St., Brooklyn, N. Y. MRS. PRISCILLA DUFFY BRADLEY, Fairport, Me.

CAPT. H. H. BROWN, 252 St. John St., Brooklyn, N. Y. ADRIE L. BULLOCK, 75 Market Street, San Francisco, Cal.

MRS. F. M. BROWN, Santa Barbara, Cal. MRS. J. E. BROWN, care of *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Chicago, Ill.

PROF. S. B. BRITTAN, 80 West 11th street, New York.

MRS. B. B. BROWN, 114 North Street, Boston, Mass. MRS. A. H. BROWN, 114 North Street, Boston, Mass.

MRS. J. E. BROWN, 114 North Street, Boston, Mass. MRS. J. E. BROWN, 114 North Street, Boston, Mass.

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