

The Wallachian language is written with Russian characters, but the number employed, instead of being thirty-six, is only twenty-seven.

He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.—Shakspeare.

There was a noble way, in former times, of saying things simply, and yet saying them proudly.—Irving.

Scintillations From the Pacific Coast.

WHY A SPIRITUALIST?

A Spicy and Philosophical Dissertation.

Theology Which Gives Satan the Dream of Everything.

When it is obvious that the same word or aggregation of words suggests different mental conceptions to different persons, we must try by new combinations to define what we individually mean by a word or phrase even of general use.

A French student defined the crab as "a red fish that walks backward." Cuvier said the definition had the high merit of lucidity, but a crab was not a fish, it was not red, neither did it walk backward. Those who declare a Spiritualist to be a dunghill are certainly terse enough in their definition, but in general our opponents do not seem to have a clear conception of what and why they condemn. I use the word simply to indicate one who asserts the possibility of intelligently communing with exanimate spirits, of an intelligent perception of spiritual things; and who believes that it is good for one whose aspirations are high to attain the condition requisite for such communion and perception.

All the sects of Christendom (and here is the important difference between faith of Jesus teachers) boldly pray for the holy spirit. In fact, they obey the master's injunction in so far as they assume the childlike attitude of simple trust and receptivity of mind which is the essential condition of the prayer that "avaleth much." For prayer is not of the mouth to Him that dwelleth in the heart.

The enthusiastic, the most spiritual-minded among all these sects declare persistently and with the calm assurance of truth that they "feel" the contact of such spirit and that "hears witness with their spirit" that "hears the sons of God." Now, the real point in dispute between the Presbyterians—who of all sects find it hardest to pronounce "Shibboleth"—and the Spiritualist is that the latter claims the possibility not only of feeling but of seeing and hearing—aye, of tasting and smelling spiritual realities.

I think it is not unfair to state that when the orthodox man really declares that the sense of feeling is of God, and the other senses of Satan. This is not inconsistent with that cold theology which in apportioning matters always gives Satan the cream of everything. In this allotment of the senses lies his principal error. By the gladness of the heart cannot be thoroughly bound by creed or dogma, he rises out of himself and sometimes admits the divinity of these senses also.

GLAD LOOK OF RECOGNITION.
A celebrated teacher in the Congregationalist brotherhood, who within a few days has joined the great majority, recently declared that having witnessed the dissolution of a great many people, (none witnessed her own), she was convinced of immortality. By the glad look of recognition on the faces of the dying as they met the loved ones gone before, than by all the arguments ever invented by theologian or philosopher. To this, given as the best "reason for the faith that is in you," many Christians will say amen. But when apprised that it is the acknowledgment of the truth of Spiritualism, the "amen" sticks in their throat.

LIKE NICODEMUS.
Like Nicodemus, they come to Jesus by night. When the darkness of death hovers about their loved ones—God rises above dogma and creed, and they know that the one longing for spiritual sympathy and knowledge, they take comfort in the evidence that the dying child sees spirit forms and hears spirit voices even if they cannot.

RATIONALIST AND PREACHER.
To-morrow the rationalist, and next Sunday the preacher will demonstrate that these visions are ephemeral—born of lunacy or worse. And while the bearded ones give the assent of silence, it is not strange that they take such delight in remembering and relating over and over to each other that their dear one went into the great unknown a victim of such hallucinations.

The good indeed, the intense agnostics, the scholarly theologian and the scientist who is either one or the other, teaches us that thought is but a record of sensations—that ideas can only enter the human brain originally, as we are constituted, by the nervous avenue, whatever the source of the nervous system may be. In other words, the sensations that culminate in an idea, "Truth is of God and I am utterly incapable of contradicting this. It explains satisfactorily how every idea has come to us, and the idea of spirit-life is due to the fact that spirits have come in contact with our nervous system."

SPIRITS AND MATTER.
There is life in the grass as in the ox or the man. The grass is conscious, the ox is conscious, and the man is fully aware of it. There is spiritual life wherever there is the ability to conceive the idea of a spiritual existence. One says: "But I am not able to conceive the expression of spirit-life except it be manifested through matter. Neither can I not feel cause to assume that spirits ever made their presence known without being clothed to some extent in matter. Neither do I find reason to believe that any corner of the universe is void of matter, much less that spirits exist anywhere apart from it; but it may be refined or etherealized to a great degree."

SPIRITS AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.
We are all built on the same plan. We have all one fat, one expert, one possible to no, and one to either when he is able to enter the same conditions external and internal as I. We are all in daily contact with spirits, but the nervous system of many people is coarse and unresponsive and where we differ is, as a consequence, in the degree of consciousness evolved. One man is conscious of sensations so weak and indefinite that only a vague hope is born. Another on account of a clearer sensation is a man of faith, while a third has advanced to knowledge. "One day is to the Lord as a thousand years," and the man who yesterday was an agnostic may to-day be fully conscious of spirit presence.

JOHN BARLEYCORN.
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but the belief is to ignore it. Every agitation of his grey matter but permits the deeper ramifications of the roots of this idea, no matter how diligently he may cut away the outcroppings of it. The skeptic has through all generations been trying to stifle the walls of the spiritual man within him. He has buried him under mountains of the most ingenious argument, drowned him in sarcasm, wit and contumely. As Burns wrote of another character:

"They took a plough and ploughed him down,
Put cloven upon his head;
And they have sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead."

But like John Barleycorn the spiritual man rises again. He will not stay dead. The seed of his grandeur of the fabled is the ecclesiastic of the next generation, perhaps, because that father or grandfather having discovered his error, through the channel of natural love is enabled in some degree to influence the son and remedy the matter.

THE SUBLIMINAL MAN.

A celebrated writer who has studied psychic phenomena—I think under hypnotic conditions mostly, and always from observation, not experience—is compelled to acknowledge that Jesus evidently went deeper into these investigations (by experience, of course) than any man who ever lived, and must be considered, therefore, as an authority on the question, in so far as he offers any explanation at all. This professor, noting the nervous disturbance incident to the "falling sickness," warns us against it. As if the one purpose of Jesus' life and teaching was not to arouse the "subliminal man" of whom we are told to beware. That passage comes to my mind, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of the most high. Art thou come hither to torment us before our time?"

Another eminent professor is quoted as saying in a recent lecture that "conversion is one of the most potent causes of degeneration." If changing from a brute into a spiritual being is degeneration, then he is right. He also advises against "falling sickness," as if it were a disease. When his little one kept crying, then he said, "The joys and sorrows to which they testify, I have known. Their mind is to me, on that page at least, easily read. But in a search for fuller light this holy spirit began gradually to assert its own divine intelligence. Upon occasion I would be sensible of this, and again I would forget."

At last I concluded to examine the claims of Spiritualists. I soon began to furnish conditions with method and regularity favorable to manifestations. I saw that it was necessary in various ways, that intelligent spirits were about me. I am now no prophet, but I am conscious always of spirit presences. I shall not in this essay detail my experience. I know there is a life for man apart from the coarse, physical body. I have the same reason to know there is a good spirit manifest to all of us. That is a legitimate question, and the answer is forthcoming to the honest inquirer, but it does not furnish any proof that Abraham, Jesus or any other man did or does not see spirits even if you do not. Again, this unwarranted statement is considered as of weight, "If the spirit is a fact, it is not to be spurned with me, he can do it directly as well as through any medium. If he can do that, he can do this," etc.

You have no right to assume any such thing. The proper course for one confessedly ignorant is to humbly seek the light—not to assert that there is no light, but to let himself keep his eyes closed. Nor does the wise man assume that the angel world is confined to one way of dealing with men in detail, and because there may be a difference in the method of communicating between a medium of to-day and of four thousand years ago, no reason to spurn the spirit of to-day. Students of the Bible should prepare for God to "lead them in ways they have not known."

Again, the argument that mediums in some cases are not of a most lovable personality is no reason to deny that good spirits may use them as instruments. We are justified in concluding that when Jesus sent out the disciples two by two, Judas Iscariot took a part in the labors assigned to them. Truth is no less so if the vilest creature on earth be compelled or induced to acknowledge it.

THE FANNING OF ANGEL'S WINGS.
Admitting the genuineness of the church-members' feeling, it must be noted that they feel in a vague way. The sense is not thoroughly awakened or organized. "We may" they feel as if "the spirit does not yet exist in intelligent personality. This yet, but partially organized sense of feeling the spirit is not peculiar to orthodox people, although they think it is. Varieties of all religious systems are conscious of the like sensations. So also are men who outwardly profess allegiance to none. Where the Christian rises above others is in a dawning recognition that these strange sensations are the result of spirit contact. The "divine afflatus" of the poet—the "holy calm" of the philosopher—are due to what the symbolic language may be described as the fanning of angel's wings about them. The thrills that sensitive persons feel as when under the spell of music or the drama are the result of unconsciously assuming the mental-nervous attitude which allows spirits to come in contact with their nerves.

The clergyman urges his flock to be spiritually-minded, but to avoid the society of spirits to which such a condition inevitably leads. Every time he tells them of a home over there inhabited by departed friends—every time he asks them to join in singing "Beulah Land," but he tells them that when they get there their children will see ghosts. But every time he invokes superstition to arouse their fear of spirit, postpones that day. His attitude is well illustrated by the doggerel:

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ONLY CARRIED A LITTLE FURTHER.

I have not proven anything in this essay. My endeavor is to show that the hypothesis of spirit communion is in harmony with the experiences of Christians and others, being but an intelligent explanation of mysterious sensations that the Spiritualist is only carried a little further on the wave of evolution than the Methodist; also to show that this theory (it is not a theory with me now) is consistent with the scientific truth that all ideas are born of nervous sensations and that there is no effort without an immediate cause. I will also add that there can be no intelligible effect without an intelligent cause.

SEEK, AND YE SHALL FIND.

I would only direct the truth seeker to "go and see for yourselves." Rational discussion cannot prove. It may render a theory believable, but proof must more directly appeal to the senses. Only by personal experience can you acquire the proof that is unassailable by the arguments of those who, spirit not having been felt, neither do they understand, and yet have a great gift of "darkening knowledge with words." Seek, and ye shall find. Our business is not so much to inquire into the methods God used in communicating with Moses, as in what way he is pleased, if at all, to permit intelligent loving intercourse between men and angels to-day. To-day is the day of salvation.

Spiritualists, furnish phenomena worthy of your most careful and prayerful consideration—but do not stand apart and look on. You will never learn anything by standing on the bank and watching the boat. Neither do you times make ludicrous efforts; much less by wading in shallow puddles.

LOVE IS THE PRINCIPAL THING.

Now as to the assertion that Spiritualism is good for the aspirational man, I shall avoid prolix argument, but remind the thinking man that the essential element in a heaven is love, and no condition of permanent happiness can be imagined on his or any other plane of existence, without love as the supreme law of relationship. The more sensitive one becomes the more he craves to give and receive love. It becomes to him the breath of life, and although sensitivities are in certain stages of development irritable because of the transition going on, it is in this stage that the permanent in the truth, Solomon uttered ages ago, and upon which the permanent in all religions is founded, that "love is stronger than death." This is a matter of possible knowledge to you, and the condemnation, as it always has been, that light comes into the world and men choose darkness.

"FEELING JESUS."

This "feeling Jesus," which so perplexes the man who wants to understand things, is the feeling of the gift of the holy spirit that religious enthusiasts tell us they have received. I am not ignorant of the joys and sorrows to which they testify, I have known. Their mind is to me, on that page at least, easily read. But in a search for fuller light this holy spirit began gradually to assert its own divine intelligence. Upon occasion I would be sensible of this, and again I would forget."

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THE METHOD OF THE CHURCH TO

MAKE RELIGION ATTRACTIVE.

A SCATHING ARRANGEMENT OF THE CHURCH—ITS POKER PARTY—ITS DUKE DRILL—ITS SACRED FEMALE MINISTERS—THE LADY WHO ACTED THE PART OF HIGH KICKER—THE ANKLE AUCTION—HER MAJESTY WEARY TO ENHANCE THE SHOCKS TO THE NERVOUS SYSTEM—THE UNPARVED BY CHURCH SHOWS.

Rev. Dr. William Bayard Hale, who is warning vigorously against sectarianism, according to The Literary Digest, finds in the prevalence of church entertainments an additional evidence of the difficulty in successful organization. While they are all one in regard to the truth of spirit-return, they are widely separated on many other subjects upon which they are yet ignorant and upon which they will require further time for evolution.

But if the church would substitute the better part of Spiritualism, its grand, elevating, sacred, soul-inspiring scenes, for some of its "leg-shows" and other questionable entertainments as enumerated by Rev. Dr. Hale, it would at once enter a glorious and permanent career.

The church is fearful, however, that some of the messages that might be received in the seances of the church might contradict or oppose its creed. Suppose they do. What of it? Your particular creed contradicts and opposes several hundred other sects and creeds. If the spirits are true, and the seances (as we are commanded by the Bible to try) be of false prophets you can easily detect the fact, but if they be of God, (good and true) you will be thus impressed with their character and be edified.

The fact as to whether or not spirits good or bad, can return and communicate with mortals, thus proving to a demonstration a future existence, is a duty of the church to illustrate, and by illustrating it properly within her pale, she will make a long stride for a most successful coming century.

GONE TO SPIRIT LIFE.

THE DEVOTED WIFE OF J. FRANK BAXTER JOINS THE IMMORTALS.

Friday, Jan. 22, 1897.
To the Editor:—I hardly can see to write you, for blinding tears, for with all my knowledge of the fact that death is but an event in a continuous life, yet am I bowed in grief I cannot control, for no longer am I to enjoy the physical presence of my devoted and loved wife. A telegram reached me yesterday (Thursday) evening from my faithful and heart-broken daughter that Mrs. Baxter had passed away at 12 o'clock, and that I must come. Thus my engagement with St. Louis, Mo., where I was, was summarily by necessity cut short.

I left St. Louis last evening for my home in Chelsea, Mass., but cannot possibly reach there till Saturday noon. And what anguish is mine, to feel such a burden causing to fall so heavily upon my daughter who needs me and to whom I would hasten. It seems as though train never ran slower, and yet we are not much behind time.

Of course I know nothing of particulars relative to the death. My companion has been in bed some years, but confined to her bed. She endeavored to see but the brightest in life, and with all her pain was uncomplaining, was cheerful, was happy—in fact never happier than when surrounded by her friends enjoying themselves in her presence. Her will to live, her hopeful nature and cheerful and uncomplaining attitude conspired to lengthen her days.

But she knows, I am bereft. I have only a daughter to live for. And she is not my claim alone, yet my life is for her. How her heart is aching! How anxious is she that I shall reach her. And here am I, simply powerless, alone with my thoughts, I never rest, but force such anxious moments and restless spirit.

Neither she nor I have any near relatives to come to us; but her friends are hosts. And I've no doubt but that sympathy and aid are tendered in my absence. This is a mitigating consolation in my trying dilemma. Mrs. Baxter's death was not wholly a surprise, for we have felt that when the messenger came it would be stealthily. But she was so full of life, so bound to be happy, and even so useful—so lovable in the home, so enterprising and so ready to assist in the upbuilding of all her pain and ill, loved to live, and made her home and family ever the happier by her presence and her pleasing ways. Oh, what a void will be in my heart and life.

I know "death is but transition." I know that at lawful times the possibility of her recovery after a long illness, all unless that near relationship is constantly realized its absence saddens. I know there are many who've welcomed her in spirit and many who will, and of them not a few to aid her. But will they fully satisfy? I can but think I'll be wiser. I hardly said needed. I think I shall desire her daughter. Oh, these tears of mine, will they cease to flow?

And after all this these very bonds of love, these natural longings, reciprocated between her and arisen that afford the effective tie of attraction, which leads us of earth to aspire and rise and they of the spirit to inspire and return. Blessed thought! I pray, come, dear spirit, come and be happier!

But Brother Francis, I forget I may weary you. Excuse me. It is from my sorrowful, but willing spirit, that I write. Though I can but dimly see, yet cannot refrain.

Now, her friends among your Eastern readers are so numerous—is it asking too much for you to formulate some notice of her departure? Later some one, possibly Mrs. Cassel, after plans, funeral, and disposition of body, may write an obituary in formal shape. Yours fraternally, though in sadness, and anxiety, J. FRANK BAXTER, 181 Walnut St., Chelsea, Mass.

THE BEST SPIRITUALIST PAPER.
To the Editor:—I have had all the numbers of The Progressive Thinker from its first, up to the present, and I agree with Brother J. W. Dennis when he says that he does not see how any one can be a good Spiritualist and not take a good spiritual paper, and The Progressive Thinker is the best one I have ever taken. Of course I do not agree with all the writers that talk through it, as some of these know-it-all writers would have us believe they did, but an old Spiritualist that has had the experience that I have, can see with Brother Dennis. When he fails to hit to time, tell Brother Dennis to hit him again, as I think him a level-headed Spiritualist—there are no wheels in his head, in my opinion. I should be pleased to get you subscribers for the paper and perhaps shall be able to do so. Hoping that you, The Progressive Thinker, will live long and prosper, is the wish of an old Spiritualist.

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But if the church would substitute the better part of Spiritualism, its grand, elevating, sacred, soul-inspiring scenes, for some of its "leg-shows" and other questionable entertainments as enumerated by Rev. Dr. Hale, it would at once enter a glorious and permanent career.

The church is fearful, however, that some of the messages that might be received in the seances of the church might contradict or oppose its creed. Suppose they do. What of it? Your particular creed contradicts and opposes several hundred other sects and creeds. If the spirits are true, and the seances (as we are commanded by the Bible to try) be of false prophets you can easily detect the fact, but if they be of God, (good and true) you will be thus impressed with their character and be edified.

The fact as to whether or not spirits good or bad, can return and communicate with mortals, thus proving to a demonstration a future existence, is a duty of the church to illustrate, and by illustrating it properly within her pale, she will make a long stride for a most successful coming century.

GONE TO SPIRIT LIFE.

THE DEVOTED WIFE OF J. FRANK BAXTER JOINS THE IMMORTALS.

Friday, Jan. 22, 1897.
To the Editor:—I hardly can see to write you, for blinding tears, for with all my knowledge of the fact that death is but an event in a continuous life, yet am I bowed in grief I cannot control, for no longer am I to enjoy the physical presence of my devoted and loved wife. A telegram reached me yesterday (Thursday) evening from my faithful and heart-broken daughter that Mrs. Baxter had passed away at 12 o'clock, and that I must come. Thus my engagement with St. Louis, Mo., where I was, was summarily by necessity cut short.

I left St. Louis last evening for

Joys Beyond the Threshold

A SEQUEL TO
THE TO-MORROW OF DEATH
BY LOUIS FIGUIER.
TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,
THE TO-MORROW OF DEATH was written to
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