



DEVOTED TO RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM AND PRACTICAL REFORM.

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Spiritual Philosophy.

From the New Englander, for August. THE LITERATURE OF SPIRITUALISM. We do not propose, in this article, to offer any new explanation of the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism.

ble sounds, gifts of healing, and other startling phenomena, ascribed by the initiated to the direct agency of disembodied spirits, have been more or less abundantly exhibited, reputedly at least, in almost every city and hamlet in Christendom, and even beyond.

conceded; though this latter assumption, for our present purpose, we do not need to make; for it only concerns us, in this inquiry, to know that the phenomena in question are on record as facts, and are believed to be such by those who have built upon them the superstructure of Spiritualism.

am the reflex of your own mind; statements which any intelligence, good or bad, could scarcely have a motive for not making, if true;—but, in spite of all cross-questioning and critical torture, it avers, invariably and without equivocation, I am your father, (brother, son, friend, or other personage, as the case may be), once with you in the body—now in the spirit-world.

ground touching Spiritualism, and this ism will not look so obnoxious to people as it now does to narrow and contracted minds. Spiritualists do not claim it exempts believers from all error in opinion because they have truth concerning the naked fact that spirits communicate with their friends of earth.

Now that the novelty of the manifestations is over, and the popular excitement in regard to them, whether favorable or adverse, has in a measure subsided, such a survey may be timely and profitable.

The apotheotic writings are less voluminous, though they sometimes swell into octavos, like the discussion between Brittan and Richmond. The advocates of Spiritualism, in the defense of their faith, have displayed no lack of confidence or of self-sacrificing zeal.

For the phenomena in question, especially the physical, are such, it cannot be denied, as all sane men are competent to observe. They rest ultimately on the testimony of the senses—the same basis on which rest all other facts which go to make up our knowledge of objective realities.

from this stand-point, that men who are accustomed to observe these phenomena from day to day, and in a variety of circumstances, not at public exhibitions, nor before investigating committees, but coolly and at leisure, in their own dwellings, and in the privacy of their own families, and who thus, as it seems to them, are permitted to converse familiarly—face to face, as it were—with what claim to be the spirits of departed relatives or friends, whose identity they are unable to disprove, and, oftentimes, can scarcely doubt—it cannot seem unnatural, we say, that such men—especially if the "wish be father to the thought"—should settle down into the conviction that these professed loved ones with whom they are conversing, are the real loved ones from whom they have been long separated, and to whom their affections still cling.

As those who have come to an agreement touching this particular, have had a mental discipline as various as the different beliefs and disbeliefs in the civilized world, why should it be expected all will think alike upon every other matter upon which speculative minds are divided?

Nor is the subject one of merely ephemeral interest. Spiritualism is not yet dead. Whatever theory we may adopt as to the origin or true character of its phenomena, or however much we may despise its pretensions or deprecate its influence—its existence, nevertheless, in the form of a belief in direct intercommunication with the spirit-world, deeply implanted in the minds of myriads, if not, as some claim, millions of living men, is a fact beyond dispute.

This third element—the speculative—it may be remarked in passing, seems likely soon to become the master element, and, "like Aaron's serpent, swallow up the rest," particularly the first. Facts, phenomena, and spirit-telegrams, appear of late to have occupied much less of the attention of Spiritualists than formerly, or at least, have filled less space in their publications; while crude philosophical and metaphysical disquisitions, generally of an infidel cast, and grand Utopian schemes of human reform, and theories of human progress, have in great measure usurped their place.

First, he will find that the persons called mediums have much less to do, than is commonly imagined. They are represented in the record, for the most part, not as active, but passive, in respect to what takes place—the involuntary, and often unconscious instruments, or mediums, of some agency independent of their own, or as constituting passively the necessary condition, without which the manifestations would not occur.

But how far such pleasing anticipations are justified by the record, the record itself will show. For it is to be noted, that the quasi-spirit claims to be only human—never divine; never God, nor from God; never to belong to any rank of beings higher than man. In all the multifarious Bible of the Spiritualists, there is no "thus saith the Lord"—but only thus saith "Swedenborg," or thus thinketh "Francis Bacon."

For aught I can learn to the contrary, the Onida Perfectionists and the Mormons believe in the divine mission of Moses and Jesus Christ, as firmly as do the Professors at Cambridge, at Andover, at New Haven, or at Princeton; as firmly as do the common members of our most orthodox churches; and in soundness on this head they are as sound as the soundest. The Perfectionist and Mormon cannot well be thrust out of the pale of Christendom, because they believe too much to start with. Still, our New England churches are ashamed to own them as fellow believers in Christianity.

It has a history. It has been long a matter of controversy. It involves principles of philosophy and of logic. It has important bearings outside of its own special and immediate sphere. In such circumstances all the elements of its literature—the facts claimed and desired—the methods of statement and counter statement—the reasonings for and against—the principles of evidence assumed or rejected—in a word, both the subject-matter and logic of its literature become topics of prime importance; particularly when it appears that the collateral bearings of the subject and the methods of treatment adopted, affect directly or indirectly the deepest interests of the soul, and touch the most vital questions of revealed religion.

Now, as to the general character of these productions—particularly the records of facts and phenomena, and reports of communications—are they the mere farrago of nonsense and absurdity which they are sometimes represented to be? The answer to this question will, of course, depend upon the stand-point of the critic. Nothing is more difficult for any man, than to give an entirely truthful representation of that which is violently antagonistic to his own opinions or prejudices.

The next characteristic, to arrest attention, is the intelligence which accompanies all forms of the phenomena. Tables not only "tip," but in some conventional way, they "talk." They respond to questions. They act pantomime. So, in all other forms of the phenomena, there are like marks of intelligent agency. No wonder sober people look grave, and the scientific incredulous, and the cynical contemptuous, at the idea of intelligence in a dining-table, or other like ignoble piece of furniture.

With all the science and general intelligence among the modern savans who oppose modern Spiritualism, the same obtuseness is manifested, which scholastic bigotry has ever displayed towards discoverers and inventors. With all the advantages of culture, members of professions and teachers are the last to be won over to an innovating truth, though it bids fair to bless the world. Concerning what is palpable as the shining rays of the sun at high noon, like their prototypes, the polished Athenians, they will say of what is confirmed, "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears." This strangeness with which they invest whatever is new to them does not cease to be strange, till the force of public opinion forces them to admit the new and despised fact brought to light.

What is this world? A dream within a dream—as we grow older, each step has its inward awakening. The youth awakes and he thinks from childhood—the full-grown man despises the pursuits of youth as visionary—the old man looks on manhood as a feverish dream. Is death the last sleep? No; it is the last final awakening.—Sir Walter Scott.

In the interest of Spiritualism there have been published some hundreds of volumes and pamphlets, of very various dimensions and merits, ranging from the octavos of Judge Edmonds and Prof. Hare down to the little "winged messengers," prepared for broadcast distribution; and there have been issued, and still continue to be, a score or more of periodicals—quarterly, monthly and weekly—devoted exclusively, or nearly so, to the defense and propagation of the new faith.

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But whence comes this intelligence? This is the grand enigma, to all out of the pale of Spiritualism. Whence comes it? And the point to be noted by the inquirer is, the singular persistency with which this intelligence claims for itself to be some departed spirit, once here in the flesh. It is not, that the medium asserts this—as is often assumed—or that the spectators infer it—but that the intelligent agent itself, in whatever way communicating, invariably claims to be such, and such only—most positively denying every other ascribed origin. Question that intelligence, whenever, and in whatever variety of the manifestations it may appear, and it always gives you one answer. It never says, I am a "law, or force of nature;" I am an "undiscovered imponderable;" I am "Odyle;" nor does it say, I am your own brain, working automatically; I

an argument of which much account is made, is that there is much disagreement among Spiritualists on many subjects, as if this disproved its facts. But nothing more is required to constitute a Spiritualist but to believe the denizens of the Spiritual realm communicate with the inhabitants of earth. On other subjects there may be a thousand opinions without affecting one's Spiritualism in the least. A Christian is usually styled one who admits the claims set up for the divine origin of the Bible, with the understanding that among Protestants, he is to interpret this book as it reads to him, and that he may differ to any extent he pleases with his Christian brethren on subjects foreign to religion. Historians and moralists reckon all the clashing sects as Christian bodies, and those who compose these bodies as Christian men and women. Yet while the members of each creed denounce every conflicting creed of another name, there is a tacit disposition to recognize all sects as in some sense, members of the Christian household in one Christian community. Allow Spiritualists to take this broad

When carnal politics creep in, spirituality soon runs out; a violent politician and a spiritual man are opposite characters.

These concomitants, physical and psychical, constitute the phenomena, which for the last few years have so puzzled and astonished alike the learned and the ignorant, the high and the low, in all parts of the world. Ever since the mysterious "rappings" were first heard in Hydesville, N. Y., ten years ago, similar rappings, intelligent or otherwise, table tipping and turnings, often likewise intelligent, trance-speaking, writing, and pantomime, visions, visible and tangible forms, audi-

Of course, in an article like this, we can enter into no details of the alleged facts of Spiritualism. The books are sufficiently full of them, and thousands of living witnesses, it is averred, stand ready to testify to similar facts. If any reader, then, has never observed phenomena of this kind for himself, nor received trustworthy information from those who have, we must refer him to the records and to the living witnesses, or to the manifestations themselves. It would be in vain to attempt to supply the deficiency here. But, doubtless, we may, at this late day, safely assume that the leading features of the phenomena, particularly the physical, are generally understood, and that the actual occurrence of such phenomena is generally

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Our next lecturing season will commence on the first Sunday in October and continue until the first of June. We would be pleased to have letters from such speakers as may feel disposed to spend two or three weeks with us, stating the time at which they can come, and the terms upon which they are willing to lecture.

A "Healing Medium" from your city (Mrs. Leyon) is now in Baltimore, and may be the instrument of much good. She is not yet regularly established, but will open her office early next week.

With esteem and affection, Yours very truly, WASIL A. DANSEIN. Aug. 8, 1858.

A Prophecy—and Something More. SUTTON, N. H., Aug. 8, 1858. MR. NEWTON: Sir—I write in obedience to spirit-impression, of things about to happen, that it may first be published to the world from the SPIRITUAL AGE.

New Laborers in the West. LAPORTE, Ind., Aug. 10th, 1858. Eds. AGE:—You will confer a favor upon the friends of progress by publishing the following names in your list of lecturers:

Condensed Correspondence. HENNINGER, N. H.—According to previous announcement, a social gathering convened at "Spirit-Spring" on the 8th inst.

Boston and Vicinity. The Plymouth Convention. We were unable to be present on this interesting occasion, but learn that the Convention was organized by the choice of the following officers:

Notice to Spiritualists. The Spiritualists of Lowell and vicinity will hold a Picnic at Harmony Grove, in Reading, on Wednesday, the 1st of September, and do most cordially invite their brothers and sisters in Boston and vicinity, and those in towns along the Boston and Maine Railroad; also all others who feel disposed, to meet them at the above-mentioned time and place, in one general gathering of the friends of Spiritualism, and spend one day in the interchange of kind affections.

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New York and Vicinity.

Conference at the Lyceum, Clinton Hall, Astor Place, Friday Evening, Aug. 13th. Dr. ORTON said, that the position taken by Dr. Gray, on several occasions, that all men make a gain, on passing to the spirit-world, was open to serious objections.

Extraordinary Narrative. The following is published in the Hartford Daily Post, from a correspondent at Middletown, Ct. We put it on record for what it may be worth, simply remarking that such extraordinary statements should be vouched for by responsible names.

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Let no one call God his Father, Who calls not man his Brother. The fact cannot be disguised, that modern theories of sin, evil, crime, and misery, are numerous and extremely conflicting. Not less antagonistic are existing laws, systems, and institutions, respecting the rearing of children, and the treatment of criminals.

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Grove Meeting at Milford, Mass.

The Spiritualists of Milford, Mass., and vicinity, will hold a meeting in the Grove of John Gilbert, on Tuesday, Aug. 24th, commencing at 10 o'clock, A. M. S. B. Brittan, Adin Ballou, Miss Frances Davis, trance-medium, from Lansingburgh, N. Y., and others, are expected to favor us with addresses on the occasion. General invitation is given to all.

Grove Meeting at Kiantone, N. Y. A Grove Meeting, to continue three days, commencing on Friday the 10th day of September, will be held at the MAGNETIC SPRINGS, Kiantone, Chautauque Co., N. Y., to consider the following among other subjects: 1. The Great Wants of the Present Age. 2. The need of a greater degree of Freedom. 3. The Purposes and Plans of the Spirit-world. 4. A Divine Commerce. 5. The Homes of the Future. 6. Regeneration and Generation. 7. The Culture of the Soil.

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