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# SPIRITUALISM

IN

6

# AMERICA.


  
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BY EPSILON.

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## P R E F A C E.

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The following articles, published in the columns of "*The Argus*," having attracted considerable attention, it has been deemed advisable to re-issue them in a compact and handy shape.

In so doing, the writer is desirous of stating that he entered upon the task of investigating the pretensions of Spiritualism with the intention of exposing their futility and absurdity. He was fully prepared to find them inconceivably ridiculous. Different to some of his friends and fellow-writers, however, he considered it his duty to make himself acquainted with something more than the surface of the subject before holding it up to popular contempt.

With this object in view, he procured a number of spiritualistic works and periodicals, and for about eight weeks assiduously devoted himself to a study of their contents. To his surprise he discovered that the religious teachings of the Spiritualists were almost identical with those of his favourite authors, THEODORE PARKER, FRANCIS NEWMAN, and RICHARD GREGG. He soon concluded that he would be doing a greater service to the cause of Truth if he enabled the public to form an idea of the higher developments of Spiritualism, than if he followed in the wake of the run of newspaper writers, and satirised the humbug, quackery, and fraud which hang on to the borders and impede the march of the most extraordinary movement of our day.

He is well aware that there is nothing conclusive to be found in these fragmentary contributions. The effective treatment of the subject requires volumes, not pages, and has already been accomplished for those who choose to profit by it. He has succeeded in all he attempted if he has shown that Spiritualism may claim to be regarded as a system of philosophy worthy of the study and investigation of free and inquisitive minds.

EPSILON.

# SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA.

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## No. I.

Parallel with the political agitations and contentions which culminated in the great civil war, a movement of extraordinary import has been developing in the inner life of the great Republic, and has at length advanced to such prominence as to challenge attention, even at this distance from the scene of action. To the vast majority of our readers the term "spiritualism" will induce no other ideas than those attaching to the much-discussed phenomena of table-moving and rapping, planchette-writing, and the like. It will surprise many to hear that spiritualism in America has expanded into a new religion numbering already, it is variously estimated, from 12,000,000 to 13,000,000 earnest and enthusiastic disciples. It has its conventions of men and women in the several states, discussing questions appertaining to its interests, appointing lecturers and missionaries, and energetically propagating its principles in all directions. It has over 40 organs of public opinion, one of the chief—*The Banner of Light*, published in Boston—having attained to its twenty-sixth half-yearly volume. Above all, as showing that for good or for evil, the movement is to bear fruit, it has its "Children's Lyceums"—schools based on a novel system of juvenile democracy and advancement, where, from four years old and upwards, the youth are trained in physical power, natural science, and spiritual or harmonial philosophy.

To treat a manifestation of this kind with childish ridicule or silent contempt is to court ignorance of the outer world's history. The object of this and subsequent articles is to explain what spiritualism really is in the estimation of the millions who have adopted it, whence it has sprung, its present status, and what it undertakes to accomplish.

Spiritualism claims to be a democratic form of religion, freed from creeds or subjection to authority, based on the intuitions of humanity, developed by education and illuminated by clairvoyance, magnetism, and spiritual communication. It declines to accept any one person as its originator or sponsor, but the literary inquirer finds when

he enters on his task of investigation that by far the most marvellous works in its already capacious library are from the pen of Andrew Jackson Davis.

This man, be his claims to the title of seer deceptive or genuine, will be recognised by all who read his *Autobiography*, *Divine Revelations of Nature*, and *Great Harmonia*, as perhaps the most startling human problem of the nineteenth century. He was born in 1824, at a country settlement called Blooming Grove, Orange County, State of New York. His father was part weaver, part cobbler, part farmer, and wholly rum-drinker; a man of no culture, but honest instincts, and, when sober, sound common sense. His mother was an ignorant, kindhearted, sensitive, suffering woman, given to signs and omens, bad dreams, and fears of hell-fire, and gifted apparently with that remarkable faculty known as second sight. Davis's father, as is not uncommon in new countries, was perpetually changing his place of residence, in the hope of bettering his condition, but the improvement never came. Davis himself had no love of school, and was, therefore, not troubled with more than a few months of it. By the time he was 14 years old he had managed to learn to write tolerably well, and to read with difficulty. That was the extent of his attainments. In the course of the wanderings of the family, nothing very remarkable occurred in the career of young Davis, until he settled down at a place called Poughkeepsie. Here his much-loved, much-suffering mother died, and Davis, then about 15 years of age, had the first of his peculiar trances, or visions, which caused him to rejoice, rather than sorrow, at his parent's release from this life. A year afterwards, in consequence of the arrival of a mesmeric lecturer at the village, and the attention thus drawn to the subject, Davis was subjected to the magnetic influence by an acquaintance named Livingston. From this moment commenced his extraordinary career as a clairvoyant. He travelled through the States curing diseases which he diagnosed and prescribed for while in a trance. Let it be remembered that we are not writing of events said to have happened centuries ago, but of incidents vouched for



by hundreds of contemporary witnesses in busy matter-of-fact America. Each reader must form his own hypothesis upon the circumstances recorded, but of the occurrence of the latter, nearly in the form set forth by Davis himself, there seems to be little room for doubt. While in the trance Davis professed to have magnetic cognisance of everything in nature, and not only to be enabled to trace and, in many instances, cure diseases, but to reveal a scheme of creation of a remarkable character embracing both human and spiritual worlds. In this wise, while in the magnetic state induced by an operator named Dr. Lyons, and in the presence of witnesses, evening after evening, in a house centrally situated in the city of New York, Davis dictated to an amanuensis, the Rev. William Fishbough, his first great work—*The Principles of Nature: Her Divine Revelations*, a portly volume of over 800 pages. This work was produced in 1845, when Davis was 21 years old. In presenting an English edition of it, Mr. John Chapman, the eminent publisher, wrote a preface containing the following words:—"There can be no unreasonableness in the presentiment, that in the present age, when the Creeds and Dogmas of the past have lost their influence and vitality, and man has attained a degree of development, unfolding new wants and feelings, and higher sentiments, and when his faith in the immortality of the soul has become weakened and almost annihilated by his struggles with material nature, and his purely analytical and inductive modes of obtaining knowledge;—a new Revelation, suited to his enlarged views and more spiritual needs should be vouchsafed. And it may be that we are on the verge of an era when this mysterious and mediatorial element between mind and mind—the magnetic fluid—will open up to us a means of intellectual acquisition and psychical experience more commensurate with our yet unfolded capacities and boundless desires."

It is sufficient here to say of this book that it reveals a cosmogony in part not inharmonious with the philosophy taught in works like *The Vestiges of Creation* and Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and that it leaves these purely mundane productions far behind by launching forth into worlds of spirits of illimitable extent and beauty.

The peculiarity of Davis's teachings—separating him from all other religion-framers—is that he perpetually instructs his students to elieve nothing propounded by himself, other revealers, or the spirits supposed to inspire

them, unless it commends itself to their own intuition, reason, and natural sense of justice. Davis is now in the 46th year of his age, and, together with his wife, Mary F. Davis, is actively occupied in disseminating the new philosophy and assisting in the organisation of its disciples. There are numbers of other eloquent spiritual writers in America, but none, that we are aware of, who have had anything approaching the same influence as Davis on this strange movement.

About the same time that Davis was giving forth to the world his "Divine Revelations," there were occurring in another part of the state of New York other and considerably different manifestations. At Hydesville, a little village in Wayne County, in a house occupied by a farmer named John D. Fox, in the year 1847 some rappings were heard, for which no one could account. The inmates of the dwelling consisted at the time of Mr. Fox, his wife, and two daughters—Margaret, aged 12, and Kate, aged nine. At intervals during the day, and yet more frequently at night, these mysterious rappings occurred. The strictest search was instituted, but nothing could be discovered to indicate the means by which they were produced. One night little Kate amused herself by clapping her hands, and the raps followed the sounds she made. She then asked for a certain number of raps, and the demand was complied with. This gradually led to the discovery that by calling out the letters of the alphabet and asking for a rap at the letter desired to be indicated, communication could be established with the unseen agents. This was the commencement, or at least the modern beginning, of the remarkable phenomena which have since become so famous. When the Foxes removed to Rochester, the rappings accompanied them; and numbers of other persons shortly discovered that they also were what is termed "mediumistic." The manifestations were attributed to magnetic causes—a theory which gained strength when it was found that almost everywhere they could be produced by a number of persons sitting quietly around a table with their hands joined together upon it. How to account for the fact of these raps giving intelligent answers to questions was more difficult, and they came at length to be very generally ascribed to unseen spiritual agency.

The next step achieved in the development of this alleged spirit communication was the introduction of the planchette. This instrument is a little piece of board, shaped like a heart or triangle, about 7 in. long by 5 in.

broad. At the apex is a hole in which a lead pencil is tightly fixed, leaving about an inch of the pointed end of the pencil below the board. At the broad extremity are two castors, upon which, and the point of the pencil, the planchette travels. It is used in the following manner:—A circle is formed around the table—male and female sitting alternately, said to be best—and a planchette upon a large sheet of paper is placed before each couple. The right hand of the one person, and the left of the other are lightly placed on the planchette, which, after a little while, commences to travel slowly over the paper. Communications—in some instances of great length—are thus obtained, independently of any action or knowledge on the part of the persons whose fingers touch the planchette. Some of these bear no signature, others have attached to them the names of well-known authors, philosophers, and reformers of the past, while the majority purport to come from the departed relatives of the individuals forming the circle. Thousands upon thousands of these writings have been made public in America of late years. The teachings they contain are, for the most part, of a singularly ennobling and cheering character, and harmonise in a remarkable manner with the revelations set forth in the works of Davis and other reputed trance writers.

As a specimen of the nature of these communications, we copy the following, which purported to emanate from the spirit of Swedenborg:—

"The life of man is a series of changes. The first and most important epoch is the change called Death.

"Death, in ordinary phraseology, signifies something akin to annihilation, or Finality; but the death of the body is the birth of the spirit, and the introduction of man into an advanced state of existence.

"The Life beyond the grave is the true life of man, when, untrammelled by the restraints of the world, he is enabled to pursue his development and attain happiness previously undreamt of.

"When at death the spiritual form emerges from the material body and realises its altered position, it is generally filled with delight at the improved position it occupies, and it naturally partakes of the feelings of love and adoration towards God, whose goodness is so much more apparent than it was heretofore.

"For a short period after its birth it is so absorbed and overcome by the novelty of its situation, that it is incapacitated from taking any active part in what is going on around it. This lethargic state lasts from a day, in some instances, to 10 or 12 in others.

Some individuals shake it off at a much earlier period than others. It depends much upon circumstances and constitution whilst in the body.

"When the time comes the spirit, by an effort of the will (the concentration and action of which are beautiful to behold), concentrates within itself the surrounding magnetic aromas, and shaking off as an encumbrance the heavy electrical atmosphere in which it was previously enveloped, becomes lighted up, as it were, with beautiful magnetic emanations, and appears transfigured. It now sees clearly its condition, its state of elevation, its duties, and its destiny, and then commences in earnest the work of progress and elevation.

"The first duties of the spirit are those of love. It feels the influence of the surrounding friends and relatives whom it has left in the body, and returning earthward, tries ineffectually to let them know its improved and happy condition. Alas! how sad it is that man is (or has been) shut out from spiritual communion. What joy would it give to the sorrowing parent to communicate with its departed offspring, and what happiness would be diffused into a family by being communicated with by a departed parent.

"The cause of all the grief and sorrow for departed friends and loved relations has been the erroneous ideas on the subject of the after-life and the spirit-binding theologies taught by a misguided priesthood. This sweet communion is within the reach of all, and its elevating and inspiring influence would do more towards man's salvation than all the creeds and theologies that have existed.

"In many instances the spirit has returned from its mission of love sad and dispirited, and hopeless of communicating with its friends in the Birth-world. Frustrated, the spirit turns its attention heavenwards, and begins earnestly to acquire a knowledge of spiritual truths, and to apply them to its own elevation and the happiness of others. As the earthly influences wear away the heavenly ones take their place, and the spirit lives and moves in an atmosphere of calm enjoyment, exerting its powers for the general good, because it knows intuitively that the good of one is the good of all.

"The practice of pure philanthropy is now apparent in all its beauty, and I can assure you that nothing is so conducive to the happiness of man, whether in the spirit or in the body, as the exercise of charity and benevolence in their fullest extent.

"Since the introduction of spiritual communication to man, and its subsequent systematisation, the spirits of the higher spheres have turned their attention to its fuller development, and have worked energetically to improve the methods in use, and facilitate in every way the intercourse with the Birth-world. They know from experience the necessity of it, and their combined efforts are meeting with success. More progress has been made in the spiritual theory in a few

years than was ever made by any other theory and theology in centuries.

"The seed is sown, and the first fruits are already apparent. The harvest is approaching, and peace and plenty will exist throughout the world."

It is right here to state the way in which planchette writing—or writing with the hand only of those advanced mediums who dispense with the planchette—is said to be accomplished. Let it be understood that according to the spiritualists the explanation thus afforded emanates from the spirits themselves. The brain, it is declared, partakes of the nature of a galvanic battery, and acts upon the extremities by sending forth electric messages through the nerves. These messages may be transmitted either by the intelligence inherent within the brain or when the brain is kept passive, by the intelligence of a spirit external to itself. The animal magnetism attaching to the circle around the table is said to materially assist the spirit intelligence in achieving the latter result. We give the theory for what it is worth. All that concerns us as journalists is to chronicle the fact that millions of our fellow creatures in America believe that in this, or some other way, spirits are in the habit of holding daily communion with their friends in the flesh, and that out of this communion, and the trance writings already referred to, has arisen what must in plain truth be termed a new religion.

The question will, of course, be asked, What is this new religion? What does it affect to teach? The answer may best be furnished in the words of Davis in his preface to *The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse*. Alluding to the new philosophy, he says:—

"For the edification of those who do not comprehend its nature, scope, teachings, and tendencies, it is here deemed proper to remark that it hath two objects in view, two ends to accomplish, to which all its scientific, theological, and religious teachings are particularly subservient, namely:—

"1st. The harmonisation of the individual. To accomplish this, it presents an analysis of the human affections and faculties; it exhibits both the natural and inverted modes of their manifestation; it discovers the various and diversified causes of evil and wrong in the world, and prescribes the infallible remedy; it harmonises the elements of the human soul, to the end that men thus united within themselves may conspire and form a united race. It supposes that man possesses in a finite degree the attributes of the Infinite; that all Development—Architecture—Commerce—Language—Science—Philosophy—Theology—Government—Authority—Art—Music—Poetry; &c., have their seat, germ, or

beginning principle in the human soul, and that the development of each one is in actual proportion to the soul's growth. This is equally true with reference to the race as it is in respect to the individual.

"2nd. The harmonisation of Society; to bring all affections, professions, interests, and pursuits into unity, as the notes of a musical instrument. Unity, as the author is impressed to define it in the harmonial philosophy, comprehends every conception and idea of 'Elysium,' 'Utopia,' 'City of the Sun,' 'New Atlantis,' 'Dream of Perpetual Peace,' 'Celestial City,' 'New Jerusalem,' 'Millennium,' 'Home,' 'Harmony,' 'Happiness,' and 'Heaven'; for all the conceptions of which these various terms are expressive, have their origin in the innermost elements of the soul, and are, consequently, homocentrical. The various sects and systems of faith existing all evince the conception and impression of a period of Unity sometime in the future. Each sect, however, entertains but partial, and in many respects incorrect, conceptions of that period, as each does also of God, of immortality, and of that future happiness to which mankind individually aspires; yet the very existence of such a conception of heavenly happiness, or millennial harmony, among all sects and nations and in all periods of human history, proves that the elements and causes of that conception are eternal in man and in nature, and therefore homogeneous with the constitution and design of the Divine Mind. Unity in man and in society includes the full growth and harmonious action of every passion, desire, or love. This is the ultimate of God's design and of human desire; and when it is accomplished Man will be in harmony with himself, with his neighbour, with the universe, and with the Universal Father. Such are the humanitarian objects and lofty tendencies of the harmonial philosophy."

As a further illustration of the philosophy taught by these modern revelations, we will give the exposition of the after-life which Davis puts on record as magnetically vouchsafed him by the spirit of a great Athenian law-giver—apparently Solon. The reader must be left to form his own impression of the alleged source of this inspiration. Our object in quoting it is simply to furnish information concerning the philosophy which is fascinating so considerable a section of not the least intellectual portion of the American people. The alleged revelation runs as follows:—

"Prayest thou for knowledge concerning that sublime resurrection which mankind has misnamed death? Prayest thou for light upon a process which has been, and is now, on the earth robed in the darkest horrors and mysteries, bedecked with the funeral pall and veiled by ignorance? Yea, thou mayest not reply—the earnest and truest desires of thy mind are very distinct, being well defined. Let thy spirit therefore withdraw from the

various objects and influences of earth, and let it comprehend and faithfully record the sweet and silvery notes which through me and thee may musically instruct the earth's inhabitants concerning life and its diversified phenomena.

"Many centuries have rolled over earth since I, as one among numerous inhabitants, lived and moved upon its surface. My thoughts and experience while residing upon that planet seem to me now like the shadows and outlines of some unmeaning dream; my earth-life seems like a brief but an uneasy night, when contrasted with the perpetual and peaceful day which pervades the interior souls of those who dwell on the higher planes of the neighbouring sphere. Yet my experience, as I neared the termination of my residence on earth, was a perfect history of, and commentary upon, the influence of ignorance and mythology.

"Greece was my country and my idol; her inhabitants I loved as my children; and her beauteous institutions seemed to me like monuments of instruction and philosophy. But, as among children, there came discord there; the Government of the country was divided into numerous Republics; and the people, looking with favour upon my temperament and attainments, placed me at the summit of their aspirations. Wherefore I became the governor, the instructor, and the law-giver of the once beloved and adored Athens. The laws framed by me for the Athenians were none other than the desires of my inmost understanding; but instead of orally imparting to the multitude the instinctive promptings and silent meditations of my own spirit, I caused them to be executed upon parchment, and I confidently depended upon the most devoted of my more immediate companions, who were well versed in my laws and reason, to instruct, and improve, and harmonize the people.

"But hereby I experienced a truth which all mankind should forthwith learn, that those who are esteemed as teachers and legislators of the land must not be first presented with or taught new forms or revelations of truth; for such minds, holding a temporary power over the people, will, in order to maintain their power and position, misrepresent and dethrone the medium or person through which the truth is unfolded to the world. Teach the people, not kings and governors; teach children, not strong adults, who feel immovable in their thoughts and philosophy. Had the people known me, had they but once contemplated the contents of my living nature, I would not have been so unexpectedly dethroned nor banished from those scenes which were enshrined in my misdirected affections. But I was constrained to depart into the interior of my native country, there to deplore the past and interrogate the future. This change in my life and habits was the beginning of my uneasiness concerning the issue of that event which is called death.

"Mythology, though begemmed with unnumbered diamonds of truth, had robbed my

spirit in darkness. I sought and invoked the gods to preside over me when death frowned upon and claimed me as its victim. Nothing discouraged more forcibly and fearfully concerning the dreadfulness of my metempsychosis than the long and still nights, which I endeavoured to illuminate and animate with constant wakefulness. But the words of the Judean shepherd sounded loud in my soul—'Death is an everlasting sleep!' Whether in the forests of the Isle of Salamis, whether consulting the habitations of the Gods, or whether contemplating the deep murmuring music of the Grecian Gulf; yea, everywhere I heard the voice of the Judean shepherd, saying, 'Dark is the valley of the shadow of Death!' 'Death is an everlasting sleep!'

"Three years subsequent to my dethronement, I was made aware of approaching dissolution. In view of this final termination to my existence, my spirit sank into the depths of melancholy, and was veiled in night. I was imperfectly aroused from this darkness, when there streamed to me a recollection of the doctrine which supposed a resurrection of the souls of the good that die, to live on some fair and heavenly isle for ever. And this favoured spot of earth—the beautiful retreat I had oft chosen for my meditations—was known as Salamis, out of which was to be born again that fairer isle anticipated and named by Plato the 'New Atlantis.' At the request of my few but faithful friends, I dictated to be written upon parchment, that my ashes should be scattered upon the sea which so constantly embraced and moaned about the fertile but solitary shores of the Salamis isle.

"Being prostrated with disease for several weeks, it was easy to mark the progress of those physical changes to the final change which is termed death. This final change came upon me as my spirit was audibly deplored the fate of my dearly-beloved country. The sun had not yet disappeared in the west when I was prompted to bid my friends farewell; and the change, like slumber, crept over me.

"As my sleep deepened, the room I occupied, together with the objects and persons therein, gradually faded away. The more I strove to maintain a consciousness of things about me, the more unconscious I became; until every avenue which appeared to connect me with the outer world was entirely, and as I thought everlastingly, closed. Fear and desire constituted the last links in the chain of life, lengthened to the end, which seemed about severing for ever. I feared lest the waves should not give up my scattered ashes, and waft them to the new Atlantis isle; and my desire was unto the gods, that their celestial presence should attend my death and revivify the divine power which animated my bodily frame. Immediately upon analysing these oppressive thoughts, I experienced a sudden rush of all the divine power (which dwell in the hands and feet) into my encephalon, or head. This was accompanied with a soft, tranquillising sensation that pervaded my entire nature, which

peaceful calm was speedily followed by a state of total unconsciousness.

"How long I remained thus I could not tell; but I experienced a full return of the consciousness of my personality. This restoration of life was accompanied with many new and sweet influences, and my expanding thoughts caused me suddenly to feel that I could now understand more concerning the gods, and comprehend the nature of the soul's resurrection. A super-consciousness pervaded me, and my spirit was endowed with immortal sensibilities. The instant I realised, or thought I realised, this truth, my breast freely inhaled the soft and silvery air; my heart swelled with emotion, and beat the musical pulsations which would naturally flow from an harmonious instrument.

"Inspired with these exalted sensations, and not realising my spirit's departure from the body which I had hitherto inhabited, I strove to open my eyes that I might again behold my friends, and relate to them the melody of my soul. I supposed that I should not die, and that I had but passed through a metamorphosis from illness and suffering to a renewed condition of life, which, endowing me with a superior power, would enable me to instruct and legislate for the Athenians.

"Gradually my senses opened, and lo! instead of seeing the external forms of my friends, I beheld their interior life, and read their inmost thoughts. I saw them deploring in tears the departure of some dearly beloved one from their midst; and directing my perceptions to where I saw them gaze, I beheld (in their thoughts) the body which I myself had worn! I strove to tell them that deserted tenement was nothing, and that I possessed a body and stood among them, but instantly I saw that there could be no communication between us, because they were living in one condition of being and I in another; they could converse only through the instrumentality of the material senses, and I could discourse only through the pure mediums of thought and desire. But I was too highly inspired with new and comprehensive conceptions to bestow much desire upon my friends in their attendance beside the lifeless body which lay before me. I internally knew that it would yet be well with them, and this knowledge made me wholly passive concerning their feelings and destiny.

"Now my interior spiritual senses were soothingly closed; and now my exalted sensibilities gathered themselves into friendly groups throughout my nature. In a few moments I passed into a calm and profound slumber.

"I was aroused from this serene and partial state of unconsciousness by experiencing a peculiar breathing sensation upon my face and head, whereupon my eyes opened, and I beheld in the scenes and forms about me more concentrated love and friendship, more grandeur and magnificence than thou canst understand; thou couldst not comprehend or record what I saw. Shall I tell thee that I realised the divine resurrection which the

gods had promised the early inhabitants of earth? Shall I tell thee that I stood upon the new Atlantis isle? Yea, I believed the gods were faithful, and that the glorious republic of immortal duration had arisen from out of the divine Salamis! A pure serene air constantly entered my breast. My ear was entranced with the most liquid and silvery music, which seemed to float upon the atmosphere, and my eyes contemplated a boundless and magnificent country. Anon I was inspired or penetrated with a divinity of ineffable sweetness. And a thought came before me and said, 'Seek thou the things which draw thee most.' And immediately I was attracted to a group of friendly persons whom I beheld conversing near me. What a thrill of unutterable joy ran through my now exalted nature when among them I discovered and embraced two of the dearest friends I ever knew in Athens. This meeting, so unexpected and sweet, imparted to my soul more happiness than I had ever enjoyed on earth; and from that moment I began to unfold in love and wisdom. It was only by perpetual development I learned that the gods did not bring me thither, and that the glorious country of which I had become an inhabitant was not, as I had supposed, the new-born republic of the isle of the sea. No; I learned of my higher life, and progressed to understand that I lived in a tenfold more heavenly state than my earthly imaginings had dreamed of, because each inferior faculty of my nature was drawn up into intimate conjunction with the True, the Good, and the Divine!

"Thou seest now what a simple and ennobling process it is to die; thou seest now that there is no 'valley' of fearful 'shadows' to pass through, and that 'death' is not 'an everlasting sleep.'

"But I must tell thee that it is only the good who die sweetly; for the troublesome or troubled spirit is sometimes not quieted until after it has been for a considerable length of time removed from the earth, and until it has experienced the subduing and disciplinary influences which pervade this divine habitation.

"The earth's inhabitants will now see (even though they do not believe it) that to die is to be born again; and that to die sweetly they should think, act, and unfold in harmonious order; for the flower must have blossomed, though in rude places, peacefully and purely, out of whose heart rich fragrance flows to heaven!"

From the examples we have supplied it will be understood that spiritualism in its higher manifestations aims at a complete revolution of the religions of the earth. The system by which it proposes to displace them may be briefly described as resting on the following bases:—

1. That the central power of this and all universes is a perfect God of infinite love, wisdom, justice, and harmony, acting throughout creation by immutable law, and whose



complete glory is but dimly perceptible to human souls after centuries upon centuries of progress in spiritual spheres.

2. That there is no devil, hell, or, in the sense ordinarily attached to it, death.

3. That the source of evil is ignorance, and that mankind has to be redeemed by wisdom.

4. That everlasting progress is the law of all the universes, and that death is a process of change, which enables each individual to progress in the spiritual body after wearing out the material body.

5. That goodness produced by fear is merely a description of slavery, and that true virtue can only spring out of love.

These are the tenets which are amplified and developed in the whole of a tolerably numerous selection of spiritual works from which we have gleaned our information.

## No. II.

The rapidity with which spiritualism is advancing in the United States is due, in a great measure, to the admirable organisation established among its followers. Every state has its Convention, and almost every town its society, and Children's Progressive Lyceum. Its missionaries—in many instances husband and wife acting in concert—are sent forth in every direction, and like other religious teachers are accorded the privilege of travelling by rail at half fare. Houses of Worship have sprung up wherever there is population, and a grand temple is in course of erection in Boston, which may be regarded as the Jerusalem of the new dispensation. The Children's Progressive Lyceums are institutions so refreshingly novel, and so pregnant with future consequences, that it seems advisable to give some fuller description of them.

As at present established, most of these Lyceums are Sunday Schools for the attendance of children ranging from four years of age. They are held in lofty and well-ventilated buildings, and are presided over by a conductor, assisted by a staff of officers elected by ballot. A full Lyceum consists of 12 groups of 12 members each. Each group has a name, and bears distinctive banner and badges. Group 1 comprises children of four years old. It is termed "Fountain Group," and its distinguishing colour is red. The second group, composed of children five years of age, possesses a pearl-coloured banner and badge, and is called "Stream Group." The third group, six years of age, distinctive colour orange, name "River

Group," and so on to the twelfth group, consisting of children of 15 years of age and upwards, styled "Liberty Group," and bearing a white banner. When Lyceum No. 1 is completed, Lyceum No. 2 is started with similar groups, bearing different names and colours. Each group has a leader of its own election, and there are besides these officers a guardian and guards, a secretary, librarian, and musical director. The children are taught songs and recitations, which they deliver in chorus while performing intricate chain marches and other pleasant drills.

As a sample of the songs contained in the *Lyceum Manual* before us, the following will suffice to show the spirit pervading the whole:—

"God of the mountain!  
God of the storm!  
God of the flowers!  
God of the worm!  
God of the darkness!  
God of the sun!  
God of the beautiful!  
God of each one!

Breathe on our spirits thy love and thy healing,  
Teach us content with thy fatherly dealing.

Teach us to love Thee,  
To love one another,  
Brother his brother,  
And make us all free;

Free from the shackles of ancient tradition,  
Free from the censure of man for his neighbour;  
Help us each one to fulfil his true mission,  
And show us 'tis Godlike to labour."

The natural sciences are taught by pleasant experiments suitable to the children taking part in them. Thus, a rough idea of the basis of astronomy is given them by one child representing the sun, and others the planets with their satellites, the whole moving like an orrery. Geography, with the position of different cities, is taught in a parallel manner. Authoritative catechisms are avoided, lest they should tend to the introduction of a fettering creed, but suggestive catechisms for the assistance of the conductors are inserted in the *Manual*, from which we take the following illustrative extracts:—

"Q.—What is the highest expression of filial love?

"A.—It is to love the Father with all my heart, and soul, and mind.

"Q.—What is the most unselfish expression of fraternal love?

"A.—It is to love my neighbour as I love myself.

"Q.—What do you believe?

"A.—I believe that all mankind are the children of God and Nature; that discord is the cause of all unhappiness; that harmony is heaven; that there is no death to the soul and spirit; that sins are not forgiven, but outgrown through repentance and a righteous life.

"Q.—What is sin?

"A.—Sin is a name for excess—the blunder of man in his development—a ditch into which, when blinded by ignorance or passion, we stumble for a season.

"Q.—What is the consequence?

"A.—We become full of its pollutions. The deeper we plunge, the more polluted; so exceedingly soiled at last, we dread the daylight. We therefore (mentally) go into 'outer darkness,' shirking the sunlight of honest eyes because of our debasement.

"Q.—What is the sum of the spiritual commandments?

"A.—The sum of the spiritual commandments is to do good and harmonious works for the redemption and ennoblement of mankind. Works to be purely 'good' must be wrought regardless of age, sex, complexion, belief, or reputation; because the human race is but one family—all members of one body—in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Nazarene nor Greek, Ethiopian nor Anglo-Saxon.

"Q.—What are the sacraments of this religion?

"A.—The sacraments of this religion are: First, physical cleanliness and interior chastity; second, a heart full of devotional love to man and to Deity; third, a head full of sound, strong, steady wisdom; fourth, reverence for the marriage relation; fifth, the regeneration of the world through every humanitarian institution which promotes brotherly love, justice, and the welfare of the working-classes."

Each Lyceum has its festival day, on which it entertains another Lyceum, and performs tableaux, plays, &c. At each "session," as the ordinary meeting is termed, questions are propounded for answer at the following "session," and the replies obtained to some of these are extremely significant. The *Banner of Light* contains frequent reports of the proceedings at the Boston Lyceums, from which we extract a couple of specimens of the answers furnished.

To the question, "Why should we study nature?" a boy in Temple Group, the senior group of Lyceum No. 2, replies:—

"Because it is a very interesting, healthful, and pleasant study, that keeps us out in the open air, makes us cheerful, elastic, strong, and gives us much knowledge of ourselves and also of our Creator; for we cannot study nature long without looking through nature up to nature's God."

The question "From what department of Nature do we derive the most useful knowledge?" elicits the following response from a youth in Liberty Group, the senior of Lyceum No. 1:—

"In Nature we find that which is beautiful, harmonious, and good; but one department of Nature is as useful to us in its con-

dition as another. There are different developments, from which we may obtain different degrees; as from the human body one degree, from the earth, the air, the planetary arrangement, others. But of these the human body more directly interests us—its life, formation, growth, and decay. To me, one of the most beautiful lessons of wisdom that I have ever learned from Nature is, that in *Nature* there is no such thing as death. Nothing dies. 'What seems so is transition.' Our bodies do not remain in the same state, but change their conditions, taking upon themselves other forms of life, through the earth and air. So when our bodies have served us here, the spirit is born into another life; we are called from this to the Summer Land; the 'I am' of the present body moves with its 'personal' property into a new house in the spirit world. I once feared death as a horrible monster. I now welcome it as a noble friend. 'I will not fear thee, beauteous angel, death.' This fear of death must pass away, and instead arise the indisputable fact that life is indestructible. Let us break this bread of immortal wisdom to the many hungry souls around us, that they may receive the same great blessings of this never-dying truth of immortality that refines our souls with love to God and man."

In concluding our notice of these undoubtedly beautiful institutions, which the American spiritualists have established over the length and breadth of their land, we have but to remark that in them physical training is made the basis of mental education, and the children pass through a regular course of what are termed "free exercises," whose tendency is to progressively develop the muscular system.

Coming now to the newspapers representing spiritualism—and specially to the Boston *Banner of Light*, several copies of which are before us—the first fact which strikes the peruser is the vivid life and bustle of proselytism indicated in every column. The reports of the proceedings at the conventions, the long lists of paid lecturers and missionaries, the correspondence from all quarters, sufficiently prove the vitality and universality of the movement. To us, perhaps, the most peculiar and interesting portions of the journal are those elucidative of the new philosophy—the revelations at the *séances*, the obituary notices, and the platform expositions.

With respect to the first of these, as might be expected, they occupy a prominent page of each paper. A regular *séance* appears to be periodically held in connexion with the journal by means of a lady medium known as Mrs. J. H. Conant, and the communications she, while in the trance state, is supposed to receive from all kinds of spirits, are

duly chronicled in its columns. These partake largely of the "missing friends" character known to spirits in the flesh, and by their means the editors claim to have opened up communication between the departed and their relatives in various parts of the States. At the head of the reports a notice is placed, setting forth among other things—

"These messages indicate that spirits carry with them the characteristics of their earthly life to that beyond—whether for good or evil. But those who leave the earth-sphere in an undeveloped state, eventually progress into a higher condition. We ask the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spirits in these columns that does not comport with his or her reason. All express as much of truth as they perceive—no more."

The mundane portion of the *séance* is presided over by a duly-appointed chairman, and scribes are actively at work taking down the utterances of the entranced medium. The spirits are presumed to be controlled by some eminent spirit, who opens proceedings by a prayer through the mouth of the medium. Parker, Channing, Peirpont, and others appear to be active in this position. After the invocation has been given and philosophical questions asked and answered, the spirits who desire to communicate with their relations on earth, one after another take possession of the medium. Their communications are most of them supremely absurd, judged in accordance with ordinary notions of an after state of existence. As a sample, here is one from a spirit known in the flesh as "Harry Duncan." The words in brackets, we presume, were spoken by the visible chairman:—

"I wish to reach my friends. I am feeling rather bad here just now, but I am told it will not last.

"In 1862, a dispute arose between my parents and older brothers and myself with regard to my entering the army. I was very anxious to enter, but they all opposed it. My two older brothers were already in the service, and they stoutly opposed my entering. And my father undertook to exercise an authority over me which I thought was not just right, and finally went so far as to say if I did enter the army against his wishes, he hoped I should never return; he never wished to hear from me. [You are rather disobeying his wishes now.] I am; but for my mother's sake. Although she knows nothing of these things, and will doubtless be fearfully shocked, yet I have found no rest since my death, and to all my inquiries as to what I shall do I am pointed here. So I have at last concluded to come, notwithstanding my father's expressed wish in the matter.

"In the fall of '62 I left my home in Cincinnati, and determined to join the army, which I did. I considered the matter care-

fully, and I found that I was incapable of attending to my studies, or doing anything anywhere near right at home. I was constantly looked upon with suspicion. If I was an hour absent it was feared that I had gone, and at last it became so unbearable that I determined to settle it by going. I could almost fancy that I saw my mother's tears, and felt her deep sorrow because of my absence; but a something was impelling me on, and I obeyed the impulse. I came to New York, and enlisted there, fearing to do so nearer home. I found that one of the regiments there was highly in need of new recruits, for it was just after that fearful battle, or those fearful battles of Antietam—perhaps you may remember. [Yes.] I went out from that direction. I served till the next summer, when, as we were on board the transport, I suppose I was taken with the cholera—I don't know—at all events, I have every reason to believe it was that; was sick only a few hours. They touched at Port Royal, and I was put on shore and cared for, but before sunrise the next morning I was dead.

"I enlisted under an assumed name. My own name was Harry Duncan. My father was of Scotch extraction; but I enlisted under the name of Stephen Brown. I was 17,—in my 18th year. My parents have never heard from me—do not know to this day whether I am alive or dead. My mother is in constant hope of my return. [Had you not better give the regiment and company you were in?] 72d New York, Company I.

"I am told by those who seem to understand the matter that my mother's constant desire toward me, her never-failing hope that I will return, acts with powerful influence upon me even in my spirit-home. It makes me restless, unsatisfied. My father says, 'He is dead, no doubt.' My mother says, 'No, he is living. I think if he were dead we should have heard of it in some way.' So I thought it might not be wrong to inform her in this way. I am sorry for the unhappiness I caused my mother, but aside from that, I do not regret the step I took. If I can only once establish communication between myself and my mother—I care not for any one else—I shall be satisfied and happy, and in a condition to move on in this new life. And the post that she so earnestly prayed I might fill here, namely, that of a Universalist clergyman, I may be able to fill to far better advantage in this new life.

"I am happy to be able to say to those of my family who are of that faith, so far as I have been able to learn, it is nearer right than almost any other, save the great spiritual faith that is now lighting up so many minds. And I believe if the two were rightly understood, they would be found to be one.

"To my father I have only this to say—If your better nature sanctions the closing of your heart against me, I am satisfied. I have no right to complain. But if it should rebel, and you should happen to run counter to it, take care. There is a world where all things are registered, and they face those who have



'begotten them in full maturity after death. It is better to shed the follies of this life here, than to carry them, or even a reflection of them, to this world of souls, for the things that are quite unreal here assume a fearful reality in the spirit-world.

"To the Chairman.—I thank you, sir, for the way you have opened for our return, and doubt not you will be blessed in your course, whether I ask it or not. Farewell."

We will give one other message, taken without much labour of choice from the vast number published. It purports to come from a feminine spirit, who presents the name of "Susie C. M'Donald":—

"I come to try to satisfy my friends that I can come. It is very hard for me to speak, because I have so recently passed to the spirit-world. I was 19 years old. I was born in New York State. My father was a Scotchman by birth. A little more than one year ago I took a severe cold, had a severe attack of inflammation of the lungs, and finally, I suppose, it terminated in pulmonary consumption. In the beginning of last September my father took me to his native land, in the hope of restoring me to health, and I seemed better for the time, but suddenly relapsed into my former state, and speedily sank away. Yesterday my spirit joined my mother. Before my death, during my sickness, I entertained very strong views in favour of your beautiful religion. I read many of Davis's works, and your paper often, and many other spiritual works. And I told my friends if perchance I should find it true when I passed on, I would return, and in such an unmistakable manner that they could not doubt. Now they do not know of my death, and I come here to you that I may add my mite in favour of your glorious philosophy. My father will leave in a few days for America. He will not bring my body, for it was my wish that it remain there, but he will, of course, bring new of my death, and of the manner in which I died. My last words were, 'Father, I believe spirits can return, for I am sure that must be my mother.' I instinctively felt it was her. [Did you see her?] I did. The old ladies there said I was gifted with the Scottish second sight.

"When next I come I shall be strong, and able to do better. Susie C. M'Donald. [Can you give the Scotch time when you passed away?] Twenty minutes past 3 in the afternoon."

This system of open communication between death-parted relatives has been in operation for over 12 years, and has been the means, it is declared, of bringing an immense number of persons to a belief in spiritualism.

The obituary notices in *The Banner of Light* are not the least curious features of the paper. We will quote a few *ex gra.*:—

"On the morning of Sunday, Jan. 10, in Conway, Mass., while the newly risen sun

was crowning the earth with glory, the spirit of Thomas Vincent went forth from its clayey tenement, and crossed the silent river of change"

"Born into spirit life, at Staunton, Ill., on the afternoon of Jan. 18, 1869, the spirit of L. S. Coon, aged 72 years."

"Went home to the Better Land, from Boston, Mass., Jan. 3, Harriet Emeline Potter, only sister of Dr. P. B. Randolph, and his truest, noblest earthly friend. She knew where she was going to, and went joyfully."

"Passed On.—In Rochester, N.Y., Jan. 3, 1869, Dr. Justin Gates, Sr., after a brief illness, entered the land of souls, aged 72 years."

"Passed on to the 'Higher Life,' October 3, 1868, after a lingering illness, Mrs. Eliza T., wife of Geo. B. Gordon, in her 46th year."

"Taken by the angels, from her home in Marlboro', January 27th, Bertha Maria, youngest child of James and Ann Maria Giles, aged 3 years 1 month and 7 days."

"In Windsor, Vt., January 18, 1869, the spirit of Calista Grandy left its earthly form, wherein it had dwelt 52 years."

"Passed to spirit-life, September 22, 1868, in Hartland, Vt., Josiah Jaqueth, Esq., at the advanced age of 91 years and 6 months."

"Passed on to the higher life, from North Bridgewater, December 16, 1868, Mrs. Sarah Snowed ag, 85 years."

"Changed spheres, April 26th, 1868, at the residence of O. M. Hall, in Franklin, Susquehanna Co., Pa., where she had suffered for the past seven months from consumption, Ellen A. Buel, aged 22 years and 14 days."

To many of the notices descriptive details are attached by surviving friends. Thus to that of "L. S. Coon," among the foregoing, these lines are appended by "Isaac Ferris":—

"He was a firm believer in spirit communion, and remained so up to his last moments. During his last sickness (which was a disease of the lungs of long standing), when asked what his prospects were of the future, his answer was: 'Immortality to me is a great truth, and I know I shall continue to live on in spirit life.' He suffered much during his sickness, and was anxious for the time to come when his spirit should part with its mortal body, which it did without a struggle. He was a zealous advocate of Spiritualism for the last 15 years of his life here in the body. His beloved and devoted wife is also a firm believer in the Harmonial Philosophy; and may she, together with the numerous relatives and friends, find peace and consolation in the teachings of our beautiful religion, and feel that what is to them a seeming loss is his eternal gain in the beautiful Summer Land."

The notice of the departure of the above Ellen A. Buel is thus referred to:—

"She was certain of the change that was to bring her into the spiritual presence of a dear mother and brothers who but a few years

before had been called to dwell with angels. The word *death* had no meaning with her, but she only seemed waiting for the pale boatman, and when he came, passed on so quietly that we hardly realised she had gone. She wrote the following few lines expressive of her feelings a short time before her departure, requesting them not to be read until after her ascension:—

"My dear and ever kind Friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hall,—You requested me some time since to leave with you a few lines in reference to my present feelings while standing, as I am, so near the confines of the world beyond. To describe to you the joy with which the thought of death is welcomed by me would be impossible, or the strange disappointment which I cannot help feeling whenever the possibility of my recovery is mentioned. Yet I have done the best I knew to regain my health, and, God willing, would cheerfully take up the burden of life again, and press onward as before; but that so rapidly I am nearing the golden shores of the Better Land I thank God; for as a homesick child desires to go home, so do I long for the day when I shall be taken to my home above. The fear of death is to me an unmeaning word, for the Angel of Death is to me the Angel of Life. And to you, dear friends, how much do I owe, both spiritually and physically. For the unmerited kindness which you have shown me during my sickness I can find no words to express my gratitude. God bless your thoughtful, patient kindness. I have seen and appreciated it all. Farewell, my dear friends. I will meet you one day in heaven. 'ELLEN A. BUEL.'"

In a concluding paper we purpose attempting to furnish some idea of the nature of the spiritual pretensions as developed on the platform, and in the more recent expositions purporting to be derived from supermundane sources.

### No. III.

All over the Union the lecturers on Spiritualism are actively engaged elucidating its principles, organising branch societies, and establishing children's Lyceums. The names and addresses of 216 of these missionaries are given in *The Banner of Light* of the 27th February last. Reports of the deliverances of the more popular speakers appear from time to time in its columns, and from these we learn the influence which the all-powerful American "platform" is bringing to bear in favour of the movement. From a copy of the same journal of May 30, 1868, we make an excerpt from a lecture delivered by the Hon. Warren Chase in the Mercantile-hall, Boston, on Sunday afternoon, May 10. The lecturer claimed for the doctrines of Spiritualism a scientific basis. After rapidly sketching the progress of natural science from the infancy of mankind, he proceeded:—

"But there had also been another sphere in which the human mind ever laboured earnestly—that of religion. Man, by nature, was a religious being; not by experience, not by revelation, but by nature was he led to the examination of his interior needs—just as by nature he was an active being, a thinking being. But in this field Science had made no progress. Although the colleges might label some of their theologic mystifications "Science," yet in the whole Christian system there was no such thing as science to be found. Its speculative philosophy was like the astronomic theories of earlier ages, which were exploded by the system of Copernicus, as demonstrated by Galileo. With its vague utterances it strove to inculcate a hope of something after death—something on the other side of the dark river; but every evidence of the truth of continued existence—of conscious life beyond this, every demonstration of an intellect exerted on our earth after the material body had crumbled into its original dust, was wholly and totally repudiated by it. If such demonstrations occurred under certain conditions inside the pale of the church, they were looked on as direct interpositions of Divine Providence, vouchsafed to the children of mortality for special ends; if outside, they were regarded as the work of incarnate evil. But in either case they were held to be miraculous, transcending all natural law, and having no connexion whatever with Science."

"In the whole Christian religion, as taught by its varied and opposing sects, there was a studied effort to keep Science out of the church. Never in any department had Religion condescended to allow the power of Science to add its demonstrations to her truth. This direct and absolute denial and rejection of Science in religious matters had kept men theorising and evolving ideas and plans, which had increased to such an extent as to comprise some 500 or 600 differing doctrines, supported by organised bodies of believers, besides as many thousand individual opinions, all claiming to be within the pale of Christendom. When any new religious idea was presented, or a new creed started, its followers hastened to fortify themselves behind the Bible; to prove the truth of their assertions by texts and varied passages, whereunto they had attached a different meaning from their fellows in the old systems. Ask any of them for a demonstration of their faith, and they would turn immediately to that book, on which they all rested, and as there was no higher authority recognised to which the disputants could appeal, no question of credal difference could be settled, and no point was proven by them, not even the first one, in which they professed to agree—that of a continued, conscious existence after death."

"So long as Religion was held away from Science there was no chance for a settlement of these vexed questions. Theories would increase, till, in time, a religion should arise based on science, which should transcend and confute them all. This was the mission

of Spiritualism. Uniting Science and Religion, it demonstrated its own truth clearly to every reasoning mind. Its work was to explode the old system of blind faith, and give a knowledge of Divine fruition. Now what had it done? It had demonstrated the fact of the existence of bodies, imponderable and invisible—containing within themselves intelligence to guide their uses and actions—which bodies were daily in our very midst, possessing the powers of language and thought we did, though between us and them rolled the waves of a mystic change. All along the past the Christian religion has asked us to believe this—to have faith that we shall rise triumphant in the final hour; now we have it clearly demonstrated to us that these beings exist, and as they 'live, we shall live also!' No longer need the Spiritualist hope for the realisation of this belief—he has the 'evidence of things not seen.'

"It was true that while Theology ruled the colleges, academies, and free schools of the land in the interest of the church, this great truth would be barred, in a measure, from the minds of her votaries; but, outside, knowledge ruled supreme—there were teachers and speakers labouring every day; there were phenomenal demonstrations going on, to establish those facts which the Christian church could not overthrow. Suppose the colleges did refuse to acknowledge the truth now, what then! They refused to take in geology or astronomy, and repelled the science of anatomy, till they were all firmly established in the great heart of humanity outside. Yet not one of these sciences had made so rapid an advance as Spiritualism. This fact all who had commenced with it had lived to see—in barely 20 or 25 years, in spite of the combined opposition of church organisations it had increased in numbers, till to-day it mustered a larger force than that contained in the ranks of any religious denomination in the country; and not one of them could show greater intelligence among its believers."

The foregoing may be taken as affording a fair specimen of the tone adopted by the various lecturers on this important subject. The audiences they address appear to take the foundational assumptions of Spiritualism as proved by past experience, for the speakers treat them, apparently without opposition, as undoubted facts. One lecturer, addressing a large audience in the Music-hall, Boston, on Sunday, January 17, 1869, is reported to have observed:—

"We do not propose to discuss, in this lecture, the question of spirit—whether spirits can or do communicate. The proofs have been given to the world for the last 20 years, and we claim that it is so clearly established that we will not insult your reason by an attempted demonstration. As well might the astronomers of to-day feel called upon to prove the truth of the Copernican system, or the geologist deem it necessary to substantiate the fact

of the existence of the earth. But we do claim that Spiritualism is a science, and that there is to be deduced from it an absolute system of mental philosophy, as capable of being taught and understood as chemistry or geology. And we also claim that those who have made it a matter of study should be entitled to credit in the degree in which they have investigated, while no weight should be attached to the statements of impostors and charlatans. As a science, Spiritualism cannot be denied. The secret of its success, the methods of its operation, the vast resources which are brought to bear upon it, are as wide as the field of human existence and experience."

As was to be expected, during the years it has been progressing, spiritualism has met in the United States with vehement opposition and criticism. Works have been published by writers of considerable repute, attempting to refute its philosophy, and occasionally travelling mediums have been detected in the practice of imposture and trickery. The fact, however, which arrests our attention is, that, spite of searching investigation, and severe criticism, spiritualism is advancing with evident rapidity, and bids fair, before the lapse of many years, to become the dominant belief of the country. The bold prophecies of its developers, uttered and laughed at years ago, seem now to be hopeful of fulfilment. In the last chapter of Davis's *Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse*, we find a passage purporting to be prophetic of the fate of existing theologies, which is worth quoting, for two reasons—first, because of the insight it affords into an oft-discussed historical secret; and, secondly, as showing the overmastering influence predicated on behalf of the new religion:—

"Actuated by the profoundest conviction of duty, theological architects have constructed, from a combination of right and wrong materials, a vast doctrinal labyrinth, and now, so far from being in the simple truth, they seem irretrievably lost in the mysterious windings of this amazing immensity. Centuries ago, and about the retiring of the period of deification, when fathers, chieftains, kings, and other superiors were feared and worshipped by inferiors, the opinion was conscientiously entertained and promulgated that the patriarchs were supernaturally endowed and commissioned to convey requests to and receive communications from the great Jehovah.

"That uninterrupted intercourse with the Deity might be secured and preserved, pyramids were founded embodying the sacredness of the catacomb, the monument, and the tabernacle. Many generations of incessant toil were required for their consummation. And the devotion, the sanctimonious solemnity, the

honest conviction of duty, and the purity of motive, which characterised, prompted, and moved each person to labour for the accomplishment of the holy end, have nowhere a parallel. The materials employed were of quantity sufficient for the construction of a beautiful city; the amount of labour bestowed would, properly organised and applied, have gardenised a wilderness; and the mass of wealth appropriated and consumed, might have enriched a nation, and alleviated the wants and gladdened the hearts of thousands.

"For a succession of centuries after their completion, the pyramids were sacrosanct monasteries, consecrated to the exclusive use of deified priests and revered patriarchs. And the supposition universally prevailing, that these men received unmeasured knowledge from mysterious sources, the untaught individual voluntarily imposed upon himself arbitrary ceremonies, gloomy incarcerations, and sanguinary inflictions.

"But time marched on, and the scene was changed. The experience of ages, traditionally preserved, demonstrated the inutilty and unrealness of long-fostered convictions. And multitudes, emboldened by familiarity with the sacerdotal orders, and no longer confounded or amazed by their pretensions unestablished and unreddeemed, boldly interrogated those long-supposed founts for religious illumination. But no voice was heard. The holy retirements were searched, and naught but lifeless bodies embalmed and interred, and a melancholy desolation, were visible to the seeker after truth, in the place where alone it was once believed to exist. And now they stand in desolate grandeur, untenanted by priest or prophet, useless except as marks of humanity's growth, and unadmired except by the intelligent antiquarian, who gathers therefrom lessons of Oriental architecture and food for his excited imagination.

"And yet the Egyptian Pyramids are not destitute of an interior signification. Although once the dormitories of heliopolitan prophecies, they are now evidences that error is essentially mortal and self-destructive. They briefly represent the history of the supernatural pyramids which, composed of mythology and theology, received their last addition and attained their greatest magnitude when dawned the 19th century. And in them, too, is uttered the fearful prophecy, which will be fully verified in the corresponding abandonment of all long-established theological superstructures, whose angular projections wound the sensibilities of every harmonious and well-balanced mind!

"A voluntary departure of their present sacerdotal inhabitants is not in the least anticipated, for these have an entailed right to occupy their mysterious apartments; but that the people will demand spiritual light and knowledge not in their possession, and that they will silently escape, and leave their systems desolate, is of all things the most absolutely certain. And as the ancient

Egyptian pyramids have no place in the sacred affections, and are only objects of wonder in the present age, even so will modern systems of theology lose their influence upon the mind, and be known only as monuments indicating the death and burial-place of imperfect forms of thought, to the intelligent interrogator in future generations."

It would surely be unwise to shut our eyes longer to the existence of a system of theological philosophy which puts forward these amazing pretensions.

Whether the philosophy of the spiritualists be based on hallucination or on real revelation, it is almost equally interesting to us to know what sort of an after-life they anticipate for themselves and the world. What sort of a place is the "Summer Land" where the spirits dwell, when not engaged in their labour of elevating the aspirations and assisting the noble endeavours of the best among mankind? The second sphere, as the first super-mundane abiding place is termed, is painted as a spiritualised earth. All that is loveable, artistic, and beautiful in this world is there, transfigured, sublimated, and refined. Life is as real there as here; individual identity as complete; social enjoyment as precious, but a thousand times more intense. Everything which the educated intellect sighs for vainly on earth, is abundantly supplied in the Summer Land, which the good spirit trained to noble deeds and holy aspirations enters as a heritage of happiness. This is how Theodore Parker, one of the most earnest religious teachers of this century, is said, through the mediumship of his friend Dr. Willis, to describe his awakening in the spirit world:—

"What a beautiful day it was when my spirit, freed from a suffering body, stood revealed in its strength and individual life! I know no feeling of earth that can express in fulness that sense of interior satisfaction. I was. I am. I shall be. Yes, for ever. I live. God is. My very soul seemed palpable unto me. I felt its divine throbs of joy.

"I stood in a lovely valley. Sloping on all sides towards it were undulating hills, verdant, and crowned with trees. Something such a spot I had seen in an engraving of one of Turner's pictures; but no picture could represent the whole view my eye held. In the distance I beheld villas and terraced gardens. Near me was a stream of crystal water, and tender flowers were growing and beautiful shrubs. The air about me was like a dewy summer's morning when the flowers give their most delicate fragrance to the coming sunbeams, and win their life by gifts of sweetness. I knew that a few hours before I was conscious of a faint suffocating

sense as if life were languishing, and that I lay in a room that to my closing external senses seemed cold and dark, with only one loving hand grasping mine; and yet now I was free and exultant in life and vigour. With that consciousness came a desire to move. What ecstasy of motion was this that made my will operative, so that I knew no effort save that of desire? I moved up the valley to a spot where I had seen children at play. It was then I discovered that something beside my own will had led me hither; for there was a feeling that some one had called me. It was such a sense as in my childhood days I had felt when my mother bade me come that she might put her hand upon me and smooth my hair and win a kiss. The same sense of restful love was with me. In my heart I was a child again, and my wish was to feel myself encircled in that same tender care, and to know myself the recipient of the same loving thoughts. With that wish I moved forward to a vine-covered grotto, and beheld—who? Could it, indeed, be that loving being I had known so long ago—my mother? She had no touch of age upon her. Her body was as lithe and beautiful as those of the maidens who danced over the grave of Adonis. But my heart dared not go out to this being; it held itself back in doubt. I watched the face. A smile as tender as a young mother gives her first-born passed over it. A hand moved out in beckoning wish, and from it seemed to flow an attractive power. In a moment I rested my head upon her shoulders, and wept; yes, wept tears refreshing and restful. I knew no doubt or fears henceforth.

"I lived, and I was with the being I had so longed to see." All else must surely be right and best in the end."

To those who make the most of their opportunities of spiritual advancement on earth the opening of the after-life is thus described as the beginning of ineffable happiness,—the commencement of an eternal career of development through sphere above sphere of increasing harmony and glory. For the unprepared spirit, however, there is a long period of probation and suffering to pass before it is possible for it to feel the divine influence which leads to happiness and peace. It is the constant effort of the higher spirits to assist in the development of their baser brethren, both upon the earth and in the second sphere. All the alleged spirit revelations agree on this point. Some of them supply details of considerable minuteness regarding the treatment of depraved natures, and from one of these undoubtedly unique communications we cull the following:—

"The Prison House of the Depraved! The Hell of the Spirit-World! What is it? Are there chains and darkness, flaming fires, and tormenting devils? Does the sun never shine through the dark atmosphere of the

place of torment prepared for the wicked by the justice of the loving Father? I connee these questions over and over in my mind, both before and after I became a spirit, free to search for the abodes of the condemned, before I was fully instructed as to the ultimate destiny of all mankind, and the ways of God toward erring men. I reflected, often, upon this text of Scripture: 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust.' I reflected that in earth-life the flowers bloom, the dew-drops glitter, the birds warble, and the brooks murmur for the wicked the same as for the good; and I could see wisdom as well as benevolence in this, as I reflected that good gifts awaken the finer sentiments of the spirit, whereas curses provoke all that is evil in man's nature to more active exercise.

"I scanned the glowing, lovely landscapes of the spirit-land, and my spirit uttered songs of gratitude and praise to the Divine Giver of such good gifts; and I knew in my inmost spirit that I should find no spot in this lovely sphere where living spirits dwelt, where there was not beauty—such divine harmony as might awaken such sentiments as I experienced. There is no vengeance in God's nature, thought I, and his justice prompts to the use of the best, the most merciful means to insure man's redemption from depravity. I was allowed to settle the question as to the existence of a real, local hell, in my own mind to my own satisfaction, before my teachers instructed me upon the subject. I gathered from their instructions many hints that were very useful to me in coming to the conclusion that the hell which individuals found was in their own natures, rather than in the sphere as a place different from other places.

"The time at length arrived when I was prepared to visit the first circle, in quest of knowledge in respect to the condition of the lowest class of mankind that enter the spirit-world. I visited a temple in this circle at first; the place of resort of all grades of individuals of the circle. It was a gorgeous pile. Its glittering domes and towers sparkled in the lovely light of the spiritual atmosphere, and created such emotions in the mind as always result from the sight of the most brilliantly beautiful objects that can be presented to the vision. The first view of such a temple would naturally excite strong emotions in the mind of any individual, however low in the scale of being. In my own mind, the first thought awakened by this sight was—it is sought to arouse the dormant feelings of the people who congregate here, by presenting to them this dazzling vision of beauty. I entered the temple, and gazed upon the glittering roof, where diamonds and precious stones of every name commingled their rich rays to dazzle the sight, and I was assured that the mind that could withstand the effect of the outside and inside view of this temple without being deeply exercised, was indeed seared, or by nature incapable of feeling. My observations proved to me that very few entered the temple



who were not, in a degree, overcome by the scene presented within. It was a vast structure, composed of numerous courts and apartments for the various uses it was to serve. Nothing of beauty and harmony was lacking in this temple, devoted to the instruction of the lowest class of humanity of the section where it was situated. It was for the use of a community composed entirely of individuals of the first circle. The teachers who congregated there to instruct were of neighbouring communities of the second and third circles.

"With what emotions did I gaze upon the crowd of people in that temple! They were all dark hued; their magnetism being deeply tinted with the dark colours—sure evidence of depravity. Some were careless, stupid, beastly; others were thoughtful, but had the tiger in their nature, and raged inwardly, like tigers caged. No outward restraint was put upon them; but they felt the power of invisible teachers, who threw their psychological power over them to restrain them within proper bounds while in the public assembly. Who in earth-life has hardly yet dreamed of the use of this great power in Nature? More potent than bolts and bars, it is the power which restrains unrecognised, guides unseen, to the more peaceful paths of righteousness, the slaves of vice.

"I visited the homes of wretches steeped in crime, and acquainted myself with their experiences, through themselves and teachers. I marked that their homes were invariably surrounded with exquisite scenery, and adorned in a style that could not fail to be attractive to any that could appreciate beauty and harmony of arrangement. I knew that higher circles had the oversight of this, and devised the surroundings of these people, that they might have all the aids which could possibly be afforded them to promote their advancement. Notwithstanding this beauty, all the devisements of benevolence exhibited in these homes, I found that within them vice was reaping its just reward, and being overcome by the means of imposed tortures of mind inflicted upon individuals by the psychological power of their helpers, as well as by the means of reading the past over and over again as memory spread before the mind the open book of life, and would not that it be closed.

"I have suffered the tortures of the damned," said one to me whose powers of mind made it possible for his teachers to hasten his development by means of imposed suffering. 'In imagination, I have traversed arid deserts, gloomy forests and dismal swamps; I have climbed rugged mountains for a gleam of sunshine which might, perchance, greet me from the summit and help to thaw the ice that was freezing my spirit. I have encountered deadly miasms while traversing dismal swamps, which would rise up like demons before me, and encompass me like the deadly vapours of the Upas, threatening to destroy me at once. If death could have come to my release at such moments—yes, everlasting death, I should have rejoiced. Such experiences are like dreams or visions,

and I dread their occurrence as I would dread the knout. I am sometimes in doubt as to what purpose is to be served by these experiences; but there are seasons when I am sure they are working for my good.' This man had been 'steeped in iniquity' from the period of early manhood till death in middle age. His parents were not of a class that bequeathed noble natures to their children, although they stood well in society. This man had intellect sufficient to have placed him high in the third circle, at his entrance into spirit-life, had it not been that this intellect was beclouded with depravity—an inherited depravity, and which could only be eradicated by suffering; either intensely for a shorter season, or more moderately for a longer one. The ghosts of his former crimes haunted him as memory recalled them, and as they were painted upon his imagination in vivid colours by the ever-present power, which was, by turns, his tormentor and comforter.

"I visited the home of a harlot, recently added to the community from earth-life. She was in the home of a relative who had been of her own grade, but was emerging from her lowest condition, having become capable of appreciating her surroundings in some degree. Had I been ignorant of the fact that spirits do not die, I should have believed that the pitiable object I saw in this home was dying. She was reclining upon a couch, with attendants busily engaged about her impelling into her system magnetic fluids, in the endeavour to restore consciousness; to awaken the dormant energies of her whole nature. She was as one in a deathly stupor. Her vocation in earth-life had so vitiated her nature that the substance composing her spiritual body was so rare that the body could not perform its natural functions with sufficient power or energy to permit the mind to act through it so that consciousness could result. She had been in this condition for several weeks, and months must pass before full consciousness would be restored. Hers was the condition of all of her class on being born into the spiritual state. Thought I, it is a terrible compensation for the degradation imposed upon the whole nature by such a life.

"I visited a male debauchee, and learned that the penalty of lewdness is visited alike upon male and female. Unerring justice, as exhibited by nature, points the shaft alike to the seducer and his victim when the crime of perverting the natural functions of the human system is punished; but there is a deadly shaft—a poisoned arrow, that stings the vital nature of him who has betrayed trusting innocence, and lured to the sure path of folly his helpless victim. This shaft is for him alone.

"The mental degradation of this class is outgrown by suffering, like that of every other class. Regeneration comes by repentance, and individual effort stimulated by repentance. The sufferings inflicted upon the low are just according as their natures can bear, and are only for aiding them into the path of repentance and regeneration. Ven-

geance prompts not one single experience. It is not the prerogative of those of the second sphere who are the appointed agents to assist this class into the path of progress, to appoint the punishments of men; but nature has so arranged that crime punishes itself; or in other words, that the remorse of conscience that can be aroused in the mind of the criminal is the means of eradicating from his nature the seeds of depravity, whose fruit was crime, and whose nature it is to continue to germinate and bring forth such fruit until they are eradicated. Benevolent teachers weep over the sufferings of their wards; yet stern necessity is laid upon them to help them, and they will not flinch. The surgeon may weep as he contemplates the sufferings he inflicts as his blade cuts into the vital flesh of some victim of disease or accident; yet he stays not his operations because he inflicts pain; he only hastens them to the extent his patient can bear, that the latter may be the sooner relieved. As the surgeon's knife is not the real cause of the suffering endured, but the disease or accident, so it is the nature of the depraved which causes their sufferings, be they ever so severe."

This gives an idea, as put forth on spirit authority, of the nature of the after life for the wicked and worldly-minded. For the regenerated spirit there seem to be no bounds to the means of happiness and elevation. We are told—

"People crawling about upon a physical planet, with no wings to propel them swiftly through the atmosphere, with no power to overcome the gravity of their physical bodies, which enchains them to the surface, can scarcely realise that it is possible for spirits to 'fly on wings of light' from sphere to sphere, from sun to sun of the vast systems of the universe, after they are educated into the method of doing this. With electric speed they travel, because their bodies are magnetic substance, and are propelled by magnetic forces which are regulated by will-power, as the motions of the physical body are regulated by the will. The creeping worm that emerges from its grosser state and soars joyously through the air, fluttering above every flower, appropriating its fragrance, attempting vast heights, and scorning the grovelling condition which was the cradle of its existence, typifies man in his physical and spiritual states. He comes forth a worm. He creeps over the physical surface for a season, and then, like the winged insect, he emerges from his prison a free spirit, and soars, at length, whithersoever he will. None may set bounds to the ultimate power of a spirit, or limit the scope of its ambition. It ventures through deeps on deeps of unexplored oceans of knowledge, and still sees beyond deeps on deeps, fathomless, immeasurable. It soars through heights on

heights of celestial wisdom, and sees beyond heights on heights, stretching to the very seat of the Infinite, and yet it ventures on, for ever soaring."

Our space will not permit of our giving further illustrations of the nature of the after-life as taught by the spiritual scribes. Those who desire fuller information on the subject will experience little difficulty in obtaining it, as many volumes have been devoted to this phase of the new philosophy. We have striven to supply a conception of the higher developments of American spiritualism, and although the attempt has necessarily been crude and imperfect, are not without hope that it will have enlightened many minds respecting the character of a truly remarkable movement. It will, and we conceive ought to be, recognised that spiritualism, whatever may be thought of the marvellous hypotheses upon which its philosophy rests, is calculated to exercise on mankind an elevating and not a debasing influence. Admitting, for illustration's sake, its astounding premises, that it is the mission of that modern miracle-worker—magnetism—to bridge over the gulf that has separated the mundane from the spiritual spheres, and that this junction is to be regarded as natural, not supernatural, its further teachings partake of the very essence of Christian morality. Its scheme of ethics is, in fact, naked, uncreedal Christianity. It culls from all religions of the past and present their best and loveliest principles, and seeks to bring them into harmony with the latest developments of science. It is this which doubtless has caused it to fascinate so many noble intellects among our American brethren. It is this which makes it possess a charm for minds like those of Edmonds, Dexter, Longfellow, Gray, Bush, Chase, Hare, and Willis, in the United States; and Howitt, Lytton, Chambers, and De Morgan, in England. The union of science and religion has been the desideratum of philosophers for centuries. Their antagonism has produced bigots of unreason on the one hand and bigots of materialism on the other. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the advent of a philosophy professing to harmonise the two should have been extensively welcomed, spite of the fact of its being based on pretensions so diametrically opposed to the genius of actuality which is supposed to be the ruling characteristic of the nineteenth century.