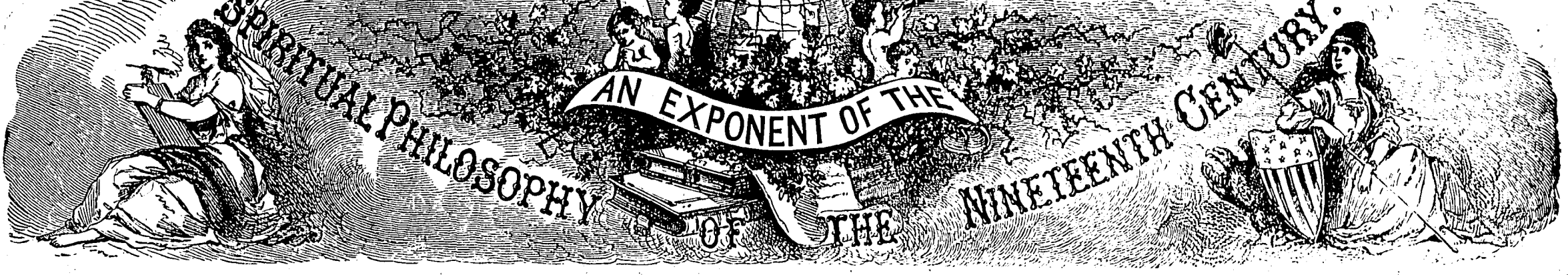


# BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. XLIII.

COLBY & RICH,  
Publishers and Proprietors.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1878.

\$3.15 Per Annum,  
In Advance.

NO. 17.

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## Original Essay.

### THE QUESTION OF THE HOUR.

It is a significant fact that the venerable and distinguished Dr. Buchanan, and the veteran and eloquent Dr. Brittan, in their able orations at the late Anniversary of Modern Spiritualism—the one in Boston and the other in New York—both uttered a simultaneous and trumpet-tongued call to Spiritualists to combine their forces for the work before them. The first more specifically pleaded for "union" as an essential prerequisite from which organization will spontaneously result; while the other argued directly for organization, "on a broad, natural, and rational basis."

These are indications of what is or will soon again be the question of the hour—shall Spiritualists unite?

Neither of these gifted orators, however, undertook on that occasion to indicate any plan on which the desired end, which has been so often attempted, and has as often failed, could be secured. Dr. Brittan, in fact, expressed himself as still waiting "for the organizing mind to comprehend the necessities of the hour, and for the strong hand that shall gather up . . . the moral elements and spiritual forces of the great Reformation." But Dr. Buchanan gave us the hopeful assurance that he had "a definite conception of what should be done now and here to realize all that is possible," which "at some future time" he "may explain more fully."

While awaiting this explanation (which it is to be hoped will not be long delayed,) it may not be amiss for thoughtful Spiritualists to give some careful consideration to what is really desirable, and what is possible and practicable in this matter of organized cooperation.

WHAT IS NOT DESIRABLE.

In the first place it will doubtless be generally agreed that it is not desirable for Spiritualists to attempt any aping of the ecclesiastical or governmental organizations of the day, in creating official positions of honor, ease and emolument, to be struggled and intrigued for by ambitious aspirants; nor in devising means for controlling or influencing the opinions of people by any other method than the "manifestation of the truth." Nor is it desirable to enter upon any system of measures that will foster a spirit of clanishness, exclusiveness, self-righteousness or spiritual pride. Nor is the wish to silence opposition and command respect by presenting to the public an imposing array of names and numbers, as sometimes urged, one worthy to be entertained by Spiritualists. They should rely rather upon the invulnerable truths they uphold, and the undeniable good they seek to perform, to secure the respectful attention of the world. Nor, again, is the object of merely propagating a theory, no matter how true or important, without endeavoring to reduce that theory to practical life for human good, of sufficient moment to justify efforts at organization. Mere theory-propagation and proselytism should be left to narrow sectaries.

WHAT IS DESIRABLE.

The really desirable objects for which combined action may be sought are well indicated, in general terms, by one of the speakers referred to (Dr. Brittan), as follows: "A thorough revision of our systems of morals, philosophy, theology, religion and practical life," thus "turning the principles of the Spiritual Philosophy to some noble account in the improvement of society;" and somewhat more specifically by the other (Dr. Buchanan), in these ringing words: "Unite to help the growth and progress of truth; unite to grow in knowledge; unite to grow in love; unite to carry each other higher up in the heavenly path; unite to help each other in the social relations, the business and duties of life; unite to conquer the world, but to conquer it by the power of love."

These objects are surely noble and worthy, and are the urgent demand of the times. But how far and in what ways is organic union among Spiritualists for their attainment possible or practicable?

WHAT IS NOT POSSIBLE.

First, it is plainly neither practicable nor possible for all the heterogeneous people calling themselves Spiritualists—i. e., believers in spirit-communion—to unite on any one basis of either theoretical or practical truths. And this for the simple reason that they do not see alike, beyond the one fact that gives them a common designation. Or, as Mr. Emerson might phrase it, they do not "see the same truths." Nor do all see the

same improvements in society, in business, in social and political relations, to be desirable.

It is not to be expected that they should. All minds are not cast in the same mold. Education, discipline, life-experiences, and capabilities for advancement, have been different in all. There is no power in the mere knowledge of intercommunion between the two worlds to bring those who have attained it at once into unity and harmony on all other subjects—though doubtless such knowledge is a powerful stimulant to growth and expansion in all directions, from which substantial unity of perception may at some time result.

Differences of opinion on important questions, theoretical and practical, are therefore inevitable among Spiritualists as a whole while humanity is what it is; and their existence does not imply wrong or evil on either side, nor necessarily call for blame or censure. But these differences are such as to render cooperation in organized relations, for some of the most vital purposes, impracticable if not impossible. All experience thus far has proved this.

Hence it is clearly useless to think of organizing believers in Modern Spiritualism, merely as such, into one body, or on any one basis for any effective work in the reconstructive directions above set forth.

### UNION BEFORE ORGANIZATION.

Dr. Buchanan, in his oration already quoted, wisely pointed out the difference between organization and union—truthfully remarking: "There can be any amount of organization without union, without life, without power, without usefulness." Thus aptly has he characterized the numerous futile efforts at organization on a comprehensive scale that have been made by Spiritualists in the past. They lacked the vital spirit of union—union on the great questions of life and duty which lie deepest in men's hearts—and hence disorganization was only a question of time.

Now how can this union be secured? As above intimated, it can exist only as the result of similar stages of mental and spiritual growth—and more especially of the latter. It is an axiom of spiritual truth, that persons who are in like spiritual states see and feel alike, and *vice versa*.

Mere mental growth or intellectual culture, however unattended by spiritual unfoldment, tends to division and separation rather than to unity. For intellect is critical, discriminative, divergent, and delights in hair-splitting and disputation. All of which is very good in its place, but it is only one department of being.

### THE UNITIZING ELEMENT.

In the deeper spiritual nature of man lies a unitizing element, which, as it is brought out by culture and exercise, binds and blends together. In fact, in the inmost element of being, the Divine centre, all human beings are essentially one; and in proportion as this element becomes active in them through spiritual culture, or evolution, do they come into the realization of universal human brotherhood, and thus become capable of the deepest and most lasting unity of spirit and of action, and of devotion to universal human good.

Here, then, is the true basis of union, and it can be reached only by spiritual or soul culture. Methods for the promotion of this branch of culture must be first in order, before much of union can be realized. "Spiritual organization," says Dr. Buchanan, who has evidently penetrated into the very vitals of this subject, "must begin with that interior divine life which is to grow and mold its surroundings as the embryo develops a body."

Hitherto the main drift of the spiritualistic movement has been, evidently, toward the promotion of intellectual activity, in the observation and narration of phenomena, the criticism of old ideas, and the development of new philosophical systems. Its tendency, therefore, has been necessarily divergent and individualizing. But let attention now be turned prominently to interior evolution or soul culture, and a tendency to convergence, union, harmony must be the legitimate result.

### HOW TO DEVELOP EXISTING UNITY.

But something of the spirit of unity already exists—more, doubtless, than is shown on the surface. How can this be developed and brought into activity?

This would seem to be practicable by very simple and common-sense means. Dismiss the mistaken idea that all Spiritualists may or ought to be organized into one body or on one platform, and nevermore repeat the folly of calling together an assembly of Spiritualists, as such, for the purpose of forming an organization for any purpose. But let any individual, or any body of persons, feeling moved to undertake any work deemed important and requiring combination, set forth that purpose clearly and distinctly, with the specific methods intended, if any are thought essential, and then invite the cooperation of such as feel moved to the same work by the same methods.

This mode of procedure will be likely to draw together only those who are in unity as to purposes and methods, and if their hearts are really in the objects proposed, they will almost spontaneously assume the organic form adapted to the end. The more spontaneous, or from interior impulse, all arrangements and undertakings are, the more successful are they likely to be.

If such a proposal meets a ready and earnest response, this is a proof that it is adapted to a need of the time and to the state of the people. Otherwise it may be concluded that the time is not yet, or the adaptation is faulty.

Now there is no valid objection to a dozen or a hundred of these proposals for and attempts at organization, emanating from as many different sources. The fittest will survive.

## VARIOUS FIELDS OF USEFULNESS.

No doubt there are many persons qualified and ready to be leaders or efficient workers in some department of the great field of spiritual reform and human improvement, who do not feel competent to grapple with the whole problem of moral, philosophical, religious, and society reconstruction which Spiritualism is destined to solve. Such should not hesitate to take hold of that work which lies nearest them, and for which they are competent; and if the "divine life," which shows itself in universal love to humanity, has been in any good measure quickened in them, they will not hesitate. There are many minor modes of usefulness which will contribute to the one grand end.

For example, in New York exists what is known as "The Helping Hand Society," formed, as its constitution sets forth, "for the purpose of assisting sick and disabled mediums and Spiritualists." It also aims, as I am informed, to furnish advice and proper encouragement to the inexperienced, "helping them to help themselves." These are most important services, needed everywhere where any considerable numbers of Spiritualists are found. If I mistake not, the "Ladies Aid Society," of Boston, has somewhat similar objects. In Baltimore there existed some time since (whether it still survives I know not) an association of Spiritualists who made a specialty of looking after and caring for sick and friendless strangers in the hotels of the city—a most excellent and commendable charity which must have gladdened the hearts of angels.

### SPRIT DEMONSTRATIONS FACILITATED.

It is interesting to know, as the writer has recently learned, that the "Helping Hand Society," above mentioned, was organized in compliance with an urgent suggestion given two years ago from disembodied spirits who claimed to be members of a society bearing the same name in the spirit-world. Among the reasons urged for the movement was this: "We foresee grim visage want coming on apace, surely to overwhelm and crush the unprotected and helpless ones." How terribly this has been since realized, not alone in New York, but in all our large cities, need not be told. Another motive urged was, "By so doing you will help the loving spirits to come so much nearer to you, making you feel the sweet, inspiring influences. Your souls will grow and ripen in the beautiful sunlight of love and mercy."

This last motive applies equally to all unselfish work for human good. Such work takes us out of ourselves, and brings us into close sympathy and rapport with the angels. This makes it easier for them to approach us and demonstrate their presence. Accordingly it is no surprise when an officer of the "Helping Hand" assures the writer: "I have had very many evidences of spirit-power, but nothing to compare with what I have experienced since the formation of this society."

Here is a pregnant suggestion for those Spiritualists who are ever seeking, through all accessible mediums, far and near, and at great expense, for more striking manifestations, more convincing demonstrations of spirit-presence and power; an answer, also, to the oft-repeated query: When will spirits be able, as they have promised, to mingle freely and visibly in human society on earth? Let us put aside self-seeking and every evil thing, cherish the angelic spirit of universal love, engage in angelic work, and then angels will find about us an atmosphere more favorable to rendering themselves seen and felt; and when our homes become fully pervaded by this atmosphere it is probable these beings may appear at our sides without the aid of dark cabinets or other suspicious contrivances.

### CHILDREN'S LYCEUMS—SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

But to return from this digression. Opportunities for charitable effort and mutual assistance abound everywhere. The gathering together and proper instruction of children, especially of the destitute and neglected classes, in Lyceums or other schools, comes under this category. Organizations of Spiritualists for such purposes are certainly always in order. So also are associations, whether as circles or larger bodies for the promotion of spiritual culture, "soul growth," or evolution of the divine inmost in every one, from which alone interior and lasting union can be expected to result. This most important department has hitherto been too much neglected among Spiritualists. It must receive more prominent attention ere Spiritualism can present a compact and united body of adherents. The means and methods of this culture are objects worthy of earnest consideration by all Spiritualists.

### DEFINITENESS OF OBJECT IMPORTANT.

Organizations for merely benevolent work, or for spiritual culture—for "growth in knowledge," "in love," etc.—may require no special statement of truths or beliefs as a basis of agreement. They need simply to define the object they have in view. But when it is proposed to undertake the work of teaching, either youths or adults, whether in Lyceums or public meetings, and by means of lectures or the press—or, as Dr. Buchanan phrases it, "to unite to help the growth and progress of truth"—good sense and fair understanding certainly require some agreement as to what shall be taught as truth. What particular interpretation of Spiritualism—since it has various incongruous interpretations—do we unite to promote?

\* The importance of this will be shown by a single recent illustration. A prominent and able Spiritualist has lately published a book in which he has shown, to his own satisfaction and that of many others, "the identity of Modern Spiritualism with Primitive Christianity." Whereupon another prominent Spiritualist prints in a widely-circulated journal an earnest disclaimer in words like these: "Spiritualism and Christianity are antithetical, radically

Vagueness and uncertainty in this regard are an element of weakness, and a sure source of disintegration. Yet spiritualistic organizers hitherto have usually been so fearful of anything resembling a "creed," or of the reproach of instituting a "new sect," or of appearing "exclusive," that they have often made either no declaration of principles or one so vague and equivocal as to have no vitality.

The wisest way would seem to be to distinctly set forth the specific truths or convictions, or, in other words, define the particular phase of Spiritualism, which it is desired to promote and maintain by organized effort. This need not be done in the way of a formal creed, to be subscribed by members, after the fashion of sectarian churches, but it may, and should, be clearly stated among the objects of association. Then those only who accord with the proposed views, and desire to promote them in the way set forth, will be expected to give in their adherence, and all will act understandingly. Should any who become members subsequently change their opinions, the way should be left open for them freely to withdraw. Thus unanimity of views and purposes are secured, with entire individual freedom.

### TOLERATION, COURTESY AND CHARITY DEMANDED.

But should there be those who entertain different opinions which they deem important, they will be equally free to form other associations, and as many as they choose. There need be no antagonism, or jealousy, or competition between such organizations, except in the honorable endeavor of each to accomplish the most good. If we are philosophic enough to perceive that differences of opinion are inevitable for the reasons before stated, we shall tolerate them, and recognize the right of every man, and woman too, to his and her own convictions. Dissent and criticism must be expected, but these should be expressed always with courtesy and fraternal regard. Mutual toleration, courtesy and charity will be as admirable graces among Spiritualists as they esteem them to be among other people.

No matter for the reproach of forming a "new sect," which is such a bugbear to many. As to that, almost every Spiritualist and liberalist one meets, in these days of independent thought, is, in fact, a sect by himself. The odium of belonging to a sect is not a title so disgraceful as is that of being indifferent to the claims of truth, or blind and deaf to the needs of humanity.

Where mutual toleration and courtesy shall prevail, some way may be readily devised to unite all local organizations in one for certain common purposes.

In the ways thus pointed out, it is believed the union and organization of Spiritualists is both possible and practicable. Who will lead forth in the work?

### GENERAL CO-OPERATION.

Local organizations thus originated, harmonizing in some general objects of human improvement, may in time find it advantageous to co-operate for specific, general purposes. Thus District, State or National Associations may come into existence—not to gratify pride, or command respect by force of numbers, nor as mere leviathans or destroyers of old ideas and institutions, but as bodies of earnest builders of the New. To quote the eloquent closing words of Dr. Brittan's oration:

"The Worker must retire. There is room for the Builder now. He may come to his place and perform his work. We demand now and hereafter the earnest labor of reconstruction. The true disciples will become living stones in the sacred building. Let them come together, each in his proper place and relation. Then will the new Spiritual Edifice, like the walls of the Ancient Temple, be upheaved without the sound of a hammer."

A. E. N.

## Spiritual Phenomena.

CIRCLES AT THE HOME OF HENRY B. ALLEN (THE ALLEN BOY).  
SCIENTIFIC PROOF IN DAYLIGHT UNDER ALSO LUTE TEST CONDITIONS.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In these days of charges and countercharges against mediumship for the special phases of materialization, perhaps a record of a few scientific test experiments with Henry B. Allen, recently held at Amherst, will be of interest to your readers. The "Allen Boy" is too well known as a medium for the special phase of materialized hands to need any introduction to most of your readers, and seems to be able to conform to the most rigid test conditions, succeeding all the better for submitting to them.

Wishing to verify or disprove certain theories as to the possibility of spirit power, I proposed to him, April 25th, to allow me to institute a series of experimental circles in the light, and watch results. He assenting to my wishes, I arrived at Amherst on the 25th, and began work.

At our first circle we stretched a shawl across the corner of the room, reaching from the floor to the tops of two chairs, and behind the shawl placed dulcimer, guitar, bells, pencil and paper. In front of the shawl we placed two chairs.

At the opposite corner of the room we stretched

another shawl, behind which we placed a common kerosene lamp.

This arrangement prevented the direct rays falling upon us or the instruments, and gave us in place diffused or polarized light, a very different condition from ordinary light in its well-known chemical effects upon sensitive matter.

The only persons present were Mr. Allen and wife, Mr. Crozier, of Amherst, and myself. The light at first was about that of medium twilight.

Mr. Allen and myself then took seats directly in front of the improvised cabinet, both grasping hands, and either able to look directly into the space behind the shawl.

Soon a detached hand came up behind the shawl, and then disappearing the sound of writing was heard; and then paper and pencil were thrown out upon the floor. I gave the writing *rebus*:

"We will know better what to say after trying again. Keep cool and passive, and we will do what we can. It requires patience to accomplish what we wish. Do not be over-anxious, and do not sit to become exhausted." P. HOLLAND.

We can do it with Allen if with any.

FARADAY.

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The apparent presence of the great English electrician, as indicated by the latter message, was good evidence of the intention at least to give scientific proof. Soon the hands became very powerful and distinct, playing good music upon the dulcimer and guitar, and throwing the bells into the room. The guitar was finally passed out, and played in all positions, in my face and eyes as it were.

I then stationed Mr. Crozier by the lamp, with instructions to turn up the flame till the room became light enough to read by, and to plainly recognize any one. The manifestations still increased in power, and a giant hand and arm reached out and grasped me by the hand, which temporarily I had taken from Allen, still holding both his with my other. This hand and arm were of the color of the purest porcelain, and varied from that color to a crystalline transparency. The hand seized the dulcimer, and lifted it to the ceiling overhead, and then lowering it to the floor, pushed it into the room between my chair and the side of the house, a distance of at least four feet from Allen's position. By request it seized the chair by one leg, and lifted it to the ceiling, and held it suspended for the space of nearly two minutes, then lowering it to the floor the same ended.

Two nights after we had another séance, with substantially the same external results, and directions to sit for independent writing the next day. This sitting for independent writing we held in the morning in a darkened closet, both holding each other's hands—when two distinct messages, from the same persons as before, were given, of which I give a portion of one only, as they were mainly directions:

"I am pleased with our success so far, and, as Mr. Holland says, we are going to have but one more trial sitting, and it will be hard for you both. We are getting ready for it. We shall have no one present but yourself and Allen."

FARADAY.

In sitting again for the writing in the afternoon, additional instructions were given, and the following message from one whose word, while living here, was a synonym for truth and moral courage:

"I will assist you all in my power to accomplish what is desired."

C. SUMNER.

In a circle for scientific experiments in photography, held by me Feb. 22d, 1877, the shadow outline of Charles Sumner came upon one of the plates under such absolute test conditions as precluded the possibility of fraud. This corroborative proof by independent writing is about as good evidence as the spirit side can give of their personal identity aside from photography.

In the messages of directions came the order to hold the final circle at 7:15, May 4th, (next morning,) in daylight. We did so, and before we had been seated ten minutes hands flashed out of the empty air as strong and tangible as ever I felt in the dark circle, and holding Mr. Allen's hands with my left hand, I held a sheet of paper upon my head with my right, with the following result:

"Well, this has indeed been a fine success. We have accomplished even more than we anticipated—in fact, we are well pleased. You will get more before you go."

FARADAY.

Several names were also written, among which were D. Chestfield and Dr. Gall. The name of a lady who formerly lived in North Leverett was written, which previously had been whispered in the light, with date of death and age. We have verified it to be true in all particulars, although neither of us knew of such a person ever having had a mortal existence.

At the next regular circle for development there came the form of a lady between Mr. Allen and myself, which I am thoroughly satisfied belonged not to those living in the mortal. I would no sooner grasp it firmly than it melted like snow, or rather like mist, thus reassuring me that the phase of materialization comes properly within the realm of scientific scrutiny.

After returning to Springfield I found in the City Library a biography of Faraday, and among the letters published in it, the following, written in 1861:

"Whenever the spirits can counteract gravity, or originate motion, or supply an action due to natural physical force, or counteract any such action, . . . or working in the light, can show me a hand, either writing or not, or in any way make themselves visibly manifest to me, . . . or resist by higher proofs, whenever the spirits describe their own nature, and, like honest spirits, say what they can do, or pretending, as their supporters do, that they can act on ordinary matter, whenever they initiate action, and make themselves manifest—whenever, by such like signs, they come to me and ask my attention to them, I will give it. But until some of these







## The Reviewer.

...of the phenomena of Spiritualism; Descartes on al-  
chemy; Dr. Hufeland on magic; and Bruno's philosophy  
and doctrines, in an account of which occur the following:  
He held that Jesus was a magician in the sense given to

Sometimes the tinkle of a tiny bell, even in the daytime, seemingly just overhead, would lure the listener from room to room in the vain attempt to detect the cause of its operations; and when disappointed, and the search abandoned, it would

Milk yields more cream in *deep pans* than shallow ones.

Spinning tops is almost out of fashion with schoolboys. They smoke cigars now and let their heads do the spinning.

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No. 9 Montgomery Place, corner of Province street (lower  
floor), Boston, Mass.









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