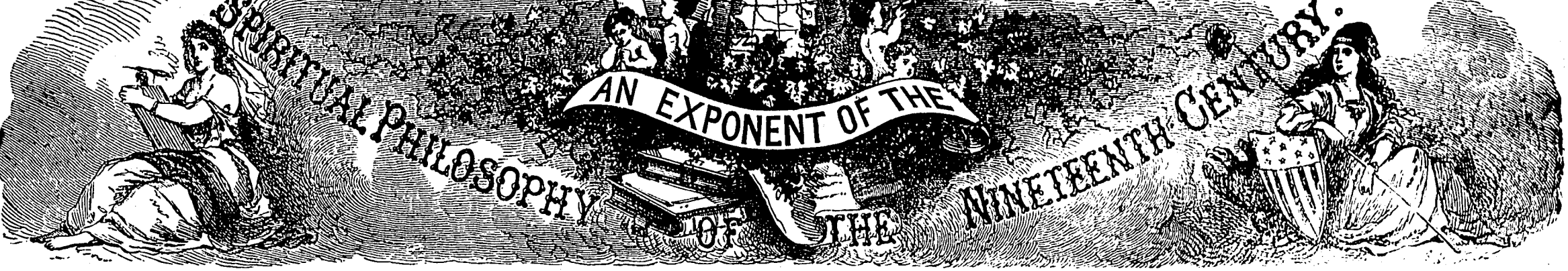


# BANNER OF LIGHT.



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## Original Essay.

### Popular Science Monthly and Prof. Wundt's Open Letter.

BY JOHN WETHERBEE.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

Molecule and Atom are very intelligent friends of mine. Molecule is expertly scientific, and Atom is of the same turn of mind; both are materialists. The former wants no future life, prefers the quiet rest of annihilation, and is sure he will get it; the latter has no choice, but thinks there is no evidence of any future. The former thinks the manifestations of Modern Spiritualism are wholly delusion; the latter thinks some of them are true, and are very strange phenomena, but thinks there is no reason for attributing them to spirits; do not think there are any spirits. This introduction to my friends seems to be necessary as a setting to what I further have to say. These wise men (and I mean wise in its literal sense) seem ever to have the same tender consideration for me in my infatuation of endorsing Modern Spiritualism that Prof. Wundt seems to have for Prof. Ulrich in his late open letter, and meeting them the other day, Molecule said to me, "Have you read that remarkable and fair article in the Popular Science Monthly? See how the scientific method dissipates the facts when the subject is touched in the right spirit by a master hand." "No," said I, "I have not, but I see that the secular press and respectable dailies quote it, or from it, approvingly, and seem to consider it a sequel; but I have seen this great light put out so often by men in the name of science, and the press as now echoing the extinguishment to suit the popular ear, and the light still continuing to burn as brightly as before, that I expect it will survive this very remarkable article. I am apt to look, friend Molecule, at the quality or ability of these successive extinguishing agents, and I see every time at a glance that the distinguished extinguisher who has stooped to touch our lofty thought has not reached it, and on the point is an ignoramus; but by virtue of his eminent scientific point of view he assumes to know it all by inference and testimony, or perhaps has spent an hour or an evening investigating some of its phases, perhaps on occasions that would not have converted anybody, and that satisfies him; he knows it all, and is capable of teaching all the lay seekers after this truth who have investigated the subject with business and common sense eyes from five to twenty-five years; and I presume Prof. Wundt's open letter is but one more of the same kind."

When will scientific men learn that because they may know the structure and habits of an animal by seeing one of its bones astray, or because they may know from education the constituent elements of some material substance, that it does not necessarily follow that their knowledge gives them prestige and authority over all the universe of mind and matter? and when will they learn that the average common man, who may not know Saturn from Sirius, or which, on observation, is the nearer of the two, can tell three beans in a man's hand from three peas, as correctly as a member of the Royal Society can?

"No," says I to Molecule, "I have not read the open letter, but I suppose I must do so, just to see how little the man knows of the subject; but it is a bore to read learned essays with nothing in them to learn except bad manners." Says Molecule, "I am not very wasteful of money, but here is half a dollar, Bro. 'Shadows,' (as he very naturally calls me) I want you to buy a copy of the Monthly with it and carefully read the article; don't read it in your office, but take it home and read it thoughtfully, and see how a truly scientific investigator completely demolishes your spirit theory." "I will do so, Molecule," says I, pocketing the coin, not that I needed it exactly, but being perfectly willing that science should help me at its own expense with superfluous knowledge. I think, also, my sense of duty on such an acceptance made me careful, so that my friend, if possible, should not have wasted his silver.

Molecule and Atom made running comments on the subject of spirits in this connection, so I got some drift of the paper before perusal. Afterwards, when I had read it, I would have been glad to have criticized it for the Science Monthly, if the adverse side of that open letter had been admissible; but none are so blind as those

who will not see, and I am not disposed to waste much ink for that kind of blindness. Dr. A. L. Child, in the same number, writes a letter to the editor, deploring the fact that so valued a periodical presents only one side of this subject, to which Prof. Youmans replies: "Yes, we (the P. S. M.) are partisans; partisans of the multiplication table, partisans of the law of gravity, partisans of science generally, and we have no right to publish the other side, that is, anti-scientific papers; it would be a breach of contract with our subscribers." Well, there is just the point: where do scientific papers leave off, and anti-scientific ones begin? According to Prof. Youmans's language, it begins just where his horizon of truth ends. All truth outside of this field of vision is error, anti-scientific. Such bigotry will come to grief, as it ever has, as the field of truth widens out. To show the ignorance of this savant on this subject, we will quote his words: "The Spiritualist denies his order of nature as being unalterable, and says he knows of that which is above nature; that is, greater than nature, that interferes with it. To this the man of science must logically reply: I cannot waste time in listening to you. I am limited, to nature, you take your stand outside of it. You come to me denying that which I find demonstrated everywhere. Between your Spiritualism and my Naturalism there is a fundamental antagonism; your position is radically anti-scientific, and so let us keep clear of each other. That such is the attitude of the honest Spiritualist is undeniable." Now if there is one thing everywhere admitted in Modern Spiritualism, it is the firm belief in the stability of nature and its laws; it is about the only body of a religious character, resting on nature and knowing nothing supernatural. I never met a Spiritualist, or read of one who thought the manifestations were anything but natural, and in harmony with the laws of nature, not one of them in violation. The ignorance of this eminent scientific editor on the subject is patent to every one who ever had a smooch of Modern Spiritualism, and yet he will be violating his contract to publish anti-scientific papers; his reply to Dr. A. L. Child is certainly as unscientific a paper as was ever penned by a scientific man, but "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

He is a partizan of the multiplication-table and the law of gravity. The multiplication-table has got sometimes beyond scientific reach, has been wonderfully handled by some young specimen of humanity of the Zera Colburn order; these prodigious mental and instantaneous products are perfectly correct; the method is beyond the reach of science. Now, according to Youmans's logic, any attempted abnormal elucidation of these unfathomable phenomena would be unscientific. Some play of words on the mysteries of mind might be, in scientific order, learned nonsense that would dazzle but not explain—would be admissible; but if an outside spiritual world was proposed to be proved, by which the senses may be extended, or a realm of Nature attempted to be proved, that would unlock some of the mysteries of mind and matter—that would be anti-scientific; anti-Youmanic would be better. Facts are always of scientific value. "Yes," says this savant, "facts that do not contradict the order of Nature." But we say again, Modern Spiritualism knows no facts that contradict Nature. Not only is its standpoint, but it offers its light to science that knows no miracles—a light that will enable it to believe in biblical statements and still be scientific, for Modern Spiritualism rationalizes the bible, for its "miracles" are being repeated to-day as natural phenomena, and science, if it chooses, can be warmed with religion without biting its head off.

Molecule said, in this colloquy, that we must not believe in facts which violate the order of Nature; the senses are at fault, not Nature. Said he, "Do you see that portrait of my father hanging up there? Now I know that is a portrait. I know my father sat for it, and you and I both know it looks like him. Now suppose," said he, "for some unaccountable reason, while looking at it, I see those eyes of the portrait actually wink, am I to consider that a fact because the eyes on that canvas appear to wink?" I said, "No, Molecule, your liver is out of order, and your optics misinform you." "Yes," said he, "that is so, for canvas cannot move in that way; I am dizzy or cracked." Says I in reply, "Suppose I see it wink, too, and so others, also; does it not become a fact then?" "No," says Molecule, "not if ten thousand or a million see it; it is an impossibility. A million mathematicians can never make twice two five." "I do not think your portrait illustration a parallel case to the manifestations of Modern Spiritualism. Put it in this form: The portrait is hanging on the wall; we look at it and, no one touching it, it visibly moves. We ask it to move again and it does so; we ask it to move twice, and it moves twice. Now the question is, did that picture move or did it only seem to? The fact that several were present makes it an objective fact; that it moved twice or more times, as we requested, makes it an intelligent fact; it hears our wish and responds. Does that violate the laws of Nature? It is something unusual; there is a cause for that movement; it does not move itself, that is apparent. So, seeking after truth, we interrogate it. We learn from the portrait itself moving intelligently in response to the letters of the alphabet, that it is a spirit, and perhaps obtain his name, &c. Now, because that picture moves, I don't see how the order of Nature is interfered with by being moved by an invisible intelligence, any more than if moved by a visible intelligence. Some may say this is not a supposable case. I state positively, from my own knowledge that it is not only a supposable case, but I have been witness to an actual one." This of course did not convince Molecule, and there he is right; I

would not have been convinced on testimony. Spiritualism comes by experience. I mention the fact to show where I stand, and, admitting I am stating an actual fact, I maintain that there is nothing less anti-scientific in the whole realm of knowledge than the investigation of it; being a fact, it will some day sit on these wise men of science, but it will never be "sat on" by science.

It was my intention, when I took my pen, to have reviewed Prof. Wundt's open letter, but I have jotted down the Molecule and Atom colloquy, with its suggestions, instead, and as I am not writing for the readers of the Popular Science Monthly, but to let the Banner of Light readers know that I do not see the merit in the article that our opponents do, perhaps it will make no difference. If said opponents are happy, and enjoy the wisdom of that letter, I certainly am, but I prefer to be open to truth from any source, believing that truth is never outside of nature, and is ever scientific. I will not, however, wholly neglect the "Open Letter," as it is in the caption of this communication, but I must be very brief.

Prof. Wundt says, very truthfully, that Sir Isaac Newton's reputation as the discoverer of gravitation, did not save his apocalyptic studies from forgetfulness, and from that says, the prestige of Prof. Ulrich, from his years of logical and philosophical study, does not make him an authority when investigating matters more in the line of Herr Bellachini, the prestidigitator of Berlin. This is all very true, but allow me to say that every scientific man who has tried to write down Modern Spiritualism has presumed to do so on the strength of his scientific reputation, not on his knowledge of the subject. Can Prof. Youmans apply this logic which he endorses to his own treatment of this subject?

Prof. Wundt discovers no trick, but is very sure that there is trick to be discovered—so he reasons from that. Suppose he knew otherwise—though that is not a supposable case—if he did, the bad effects of such a truth would be all there was left of his argument. I have an idea that we must take truth with its consequences, be they good or bad. What would the learned Professor say if he had this experience of mine? I go to a store, and buy two new slates, put a bit of pencil between them, and fasten them together, never part with them out of my own hand, but go to the medium's room with them, the bright sun shining into it. I lay the slates flat on the table, the medium sitting in front of me vis-a-vis. I keep my two hands flat on the slates, neither the medium nor any one else but me touching them. Soon I hear the pencil between the two slates scratching; when it stops, I open the slates, and find one of the sides filled with an intelligent communication signed by the name of a deceased friend. I know of no single thing in my life's experience that I can swear to more positively than I can to this statement. I presume Prof. Ulrich has just as positive knowledge as I have. To the Professor, and to myself, as well as to thousands of others who know what they are talking about, how trifling and how silly seem the arguments of the Wundts and the Youmans, who have not had the experience, and "know such things cannot be." As I have often said, Modern Spiritualism is a matter of experience, not of argument.

The tender consideration that Prof. Wundt has for the reputation of Ulrich, and the dreadful state of things liable to us if the order of nature is to be theoretically interfered with, is both melancholy and amusing. There is no danger of any great set-back if Spiritualism be without foundation, as Prof. Wundt and my friend Molecule think; but if it be a truth, as millions know it is, then, whether for good or bad, we have got to take the consequences; and who wishes otherwise? The truth is powerful, and will prevail. So let it be! I do not think in the long run we need fear the truth.

## LIBERTY.

What man is there so bold that he should say "This and thus only would I have the sea"? For whether lying calm and beautiful, Clapping the earth in love, and throwing back The smile of heaven from waves of amethyst; Or whether, freshened by the busy winds, It bears the trade and waves of the world To ends of two or seven activity; Or whether, lashed by tempests, it gives way To elemental fury, howls and roars At all its rocky barriers in wild lust Of ruin, drink the blood of living things, And strews its wrecks o'er leagues of desolate shore— Always it is the sea, and all bow down Before its vast and varied majesty.

And so in vain will thimorous men essay To set the metes and bounds of Liberty. For Freedom is its own eternal law, It makes its own conditions, and in storm Or calm alike fulfills the meaning Will. Let us not then despise it when it lies Still as a sleeping lion, while a swarm Of giant-like evils hover round its head; Nor doubt it when in mad, disjointed times It shakes the torch of terror, and its cry Shrills o'er the quaking earth, and in the flame Of riot and war we see its awful form Rise by the scaffold, where the crimson ax Rings down its grooves the knell of shuddering kings. For always in time eyes, oh, Liberty! Shines that high light whereby the world is saved; And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee.

—John Hay.

The London Times prints some statistics relating to the population of this country, which "exhibit a picture of progress that cannot fail to gladden the patriotic hearts of sanguine citizens of the North American republic." "The citizens of the United States," it adds, "will doubtless have ample reason to congratulate each other as the figures of each succeeding census are made public. They are certain to become as numerous as the most exacting among them might desire. We witness their progress with satisfaction. As they widen the circle of their nationality they at the same time enlarge the bounds of our common race and of our mother tongue." The population in this country in 1870 was 38,553,983. Seventy years before it was about 5,308,000.

## Free Thought.

### IS ANYTHING SETTLED?

EXCEPT AS TO THE SINGLE FACT OF SPIRIT COMMUNICATION, HARDLY ANYTHING. A REPLY TO A. E. NEWTON.

BY FREDERICK F. COOK.

(Concluded from our last issue.)

"JESUITICAL."

Finally, on this point, that the seeming evil is good in disguise, I wish to quote from a lecture through the organism of Mrs. Richmond on "The Spiritual Outlook of the Coming Year," published in the Banner of Light, February 1st, 1879. There is matter here well worth pondering:

Spiritualism has passed through the stages of persecution and indifference; it is now on the verge of acceptance, a perilous as well as a most interesting time. The period of human life is not more imperilled by persecution. There is resistance in truth that brings forth all the innate powers of mind and body to sustain it. Neither is it imperilled by indifference, for it will spring up in accustomed times and places and demand recognition. The period of acceptance is one attended with peril. The thoughtless, the uncultured, the novelty-seeking will pursue it. Popularity conveys an element of instability, and with the rushing tide of acceptance, spiritual truth would be more in danger than in the midst of all the opposition of the past. Fortunately, however, it is not in human hands. Fortunately, truth has its divine sources in far other regions, and such checks as are needed to hold back the popular clamor of acceptance will be cheaply applied to suitable times and places; checks that can be the friends of spiritual truth misfortunes; checks that call, perhaps, for momentary sadness from the devotees at the eternal shrine, who value so much the truth that they do not desire even the external semblance of check in its progress. But remember that, as the earth with volcanoes and earthquakes requires these safeguards for its perpetual existence; as the motor power of the world requires that there shall be safety-valves checking the too great accumulation of force, and as the history of mankind shows and attests that the world has been saved from utter ruin by the safety-valves of spiritual truth in the manifestation of it, in modern times, is but another evidence of that wise power in nature, the compensating force that brings for every too great advancement a suitable recession.

To the general question, "IS ANYTHING SETTLED?" I would present for answer another quotation from the same address:

You are to-day in the midst, therefore, of this fruitage of spiritual growth. The first harvest has ripened rapidly. The lighter fruitage is already gathered and gathered, and many consider that this is the full harvest. Let them be careful lest in gathering these fruits they neglect the larger harvest that is to come. Let them beware lest in limiting the greater results of spiritual truth they bind into their sheaves only the lighter results of the first summer, and forget that the later autumn brings the fruitage that is to last for the winter months. Let them beware lest in summing up this, according to their standard, and narrowing it down to the present comprehension of the race, they shall make another bond, another creed, which will take thousands of years to overcome and obliterate. This is not the time for crystallization. The time of fusion is not the time of cooling; the time of gradually instilling spiritual truth is not the time of increasing the full power of it, and those who gather to a small portion of a handful of this truth, and say, "This is the truth," will find that in the end they have omitted the larger and more impressive part and have taken out one of the small dominions of truth for their own.

To-day, according to your need, you are sustained and fed; a small amount of food to the babe, a larger amount to the one whose mind is ready to receive it. This represents the different degrees of human progress, not the partiality of spiritual truth.

ABOUT SPIRIT "FORMS." Now a word as to spirit form. Is it a counterpart of the earth body, as to members and organs, or something it will believe us not to dignitize about? I am not yet prepared to place myself among thorough-going reincarnationists. Neither am I opposed to the doctrine. At present I may say I favor it—as an intellectual solution of the problems of life.

However, while I occupy a position of "benevolent neutrality" toward reincarnation, I am a firm believer in the supremacy of spirit over matter, and the persistence and unchangeableness of life in whatsoever form.

If I am not mistaken, Bro. Newton and I are in agreement as to the supremacy of spirit over matter. This assumed, what follows? If spirit is first—by spirit I mean all the elements that constitute existence in spirit-life—is it an entity before conception? I believe it is.

My reviewer takes me to task for holding that a spirit in essence is without what we call physical members and organs, such as arms and legs, eyes and ears. That a spirit has some form I have never denied, although Bro. Newton seems to infer the contrary. I am furthermore willing to admit that "as they have use for them," they have arms, legs, and twenty heads, if you like. All this agrees with my ideas of the potentiality of spirit. But the question is, is there a fixed spirit form, the exact counterpart, as to members and organs, of the human form?

If the spirit ante-dates the body, it must have had existence somewhere before its sojourn on earth. If an entity, it must have had form. If form, what can say what it was like? Now note the conclusion! We predicate of spirit that it controls matter, and then turn about and claim that matter gives form to spirit! A man builds a house, and ever afterwards it resembles that house. He destroys it, but the likeness still pursues him!

The physical body molds the spirit body! Let us meet the argument with a fact. A few years ago I saw exhibited in this city a monstrously called a double-headed girl. It, she or they, had two heads, and each was endowed with a bright, separate intellect. But it, she or they, had only one body. From the shoulders down to the lower limbs there was but a single trunk. It was not an instance of two bodies joined by a ligament, as in the case of the Siamese twins, but a single, homogeneous organism.

Now if the theory is true that the earth-body is the mold of the spirit-body, are we to assume that these two spiritual entities—two minds—are forever linked because of a freak of physical nature? Their separation cannot be effected by a surgical operation. That would not give them separate parts. If separated, each must be supplied with a complete new body—interdependent of mind.

HERE IS A "FACT." I would not only have Bro. Newton contemplate, but especially those physical Spiritualists, who, having absorbed a smattering of scientific terms, are nothing if not scientific, and are determined to make Spiritualism scientific according to the formulas of scientific materialism. Tyndall holds in matter all the potency of visible life. Beyond this he wisely abstains from logic. But his Spiritualist followers boldly carry the logic into the spiritual realm, and, matter having created spirit, (God or previous existence are unrecognized factors with them) matter continues to give it power, and, in fact, keeps it in existence.

The day is not far distant when Spiritualists will recognize the untenableness of their position—that a physical body is the prototype of the spirit, in essence. It

is a question that goes to the root of our whole philosophy. The materialist denies spirit existence altogether. The Christian has his miracle scheme to fall back upon, and when we put to him the problem of two souls in one body, he triumphantly answers that God will see to it that that little matter is properly straightened out. But what is there for Spiritualists to say? We must meet the question with all its logical consequences. If two spirits occupy but one physical body on earth, how do they acquire the necessary two, if the human body is the type of the spirit form, and spirit exists by virtue of the earth mold in which it was cast?

If it be answered that the potentialities of the spirit-world equal all emergencies, and that it can elude body or spirit, to suit where there is none, then, at all events, let us do away with the argument that earth-existence is necessary to give soul either body or separate existence.

Bro. Newton does not understand how we can be thought. Does he understand what he now is? If he does, he understands more than any other mortal has yet succeeded in doing regarding himself. What is thought? he asks, and then answers, that some hold it to be only a mode of motion. Man is thought, and nothing else. What he is clothed about with is not man. When we give expression to our thoughts we express ourselves. Even in the physical casket, thought gives expression to form. In the spirit-life it will express itself untrammelled. You wish to be recognized as you are recognized, because you will express to perfection all the distinctive peculiarities by which magnetism is established. You are a child to the mother just passed to spirit life, so long as she requires the child form as a mode of recognition. When she shall come to understand spiritual laws, spiritual recognitions, the child form will disappear, and by degrees the spirit will be recognized by its attributes and activities. In other words by its thoughts, as it is. In the spirit-world, so long as a thing is necessary to us we shall have it. Let none fear that if these views are true, they will be robbed of their spirit-darlings. As they do, so will your loved ones there, adapt themselves to you and your understanding.

In the course of his strictures my reviewer makes some decidedly

DANGEROUS ADMISSIONS. Among other things he says that "In some way the scenery, etc., of that world appears to be largely subjective—at least its inhabitants seem to perceive and enjoy what they are morally or spiritually fitted to apprehend and appreciate, and that only."

What does this mean? Plainly this: That thought is visible to them; that it is substance, and not "motion."

I proceed to read, and to my astonishment find that my reviewer has completely destroyed his own objections. He even goes so far as to say we may imagine a process of attenuation "until at length all form or body disappears"—which is further than I have ever dreamed of going—"and nothing remains but the pure forces which constitute the finest spirit."

Further on he makes organs and members to order, which would seem to imply that spirits do not carry them about. Thus, "If, again, a spirit desires to move itself from one locality to another, its will-force may project itself in the form of legs and feet formed of attenuated substances, and these organs may act as poles of repulsion through or upon which the spirit passes."

I assure Bro. Newton I am entirely satisfied with his description of the spirit-body. It meets my views exactly. I said, "Therefore to assume that the spirit-body has any form that we can comprehend with our finite perceptions, is to do violence to common sense should feel repelled." I can assure Bro. Newton that his notion of a spirit-body as he endows it, and yet fashioned after the human body, is utterly incomprehensible to me, and this is precisely what I maintain spirit-body in essence is to all finite minds. I am afraid my reviewer has been fighting a man of straw. As I read him between the lines I find there is no essential disagreement. He is held to the human form only by tradition; when he cuts loose from this, he recognizes spiritual possibilities and necessities as freely as I do.

Would space permit, there are several other points brought up by my reviewer I should like to touch upon, but must reserve for a future occasion.

No. 13 Van Buren Street, Chicago, Ill.

Many Spiritualist camp-meetings are being held throughout many of the Northern States during the summer months. They are attracting much attention and becoming very popular among the people. They extend over a period varying from two to four weeks, and from three to five thousand persons attend to "hear the glad tidings of great joy" of Spiritualism proclaimed by our inspired speakers. The first Society of Spiritualists of Philadelphia held their first camp-meeting extending through four weeks this summer at Nesheim Falls, and during the whole time there were from four to five thousand on the ground. Dr. Watson, who was thirty-three years a Methodist minister, and was one of the speakers at this meeting, said in his closing speech, August 10th, that in all his great experience of camp-meetings he had never seen such an audience (the number being over five thousand), never such order and good management as for the last ten days at Nesheim Falls. This does not indicate such a rapid dissolution as Dr. Beard would have the world believe. Every succeeding year Spiritual camp-meetings become more numerous, and the interest and attendance greater. We shall hope to see Texas Spiritualists in the field by next year with a camp-meeting that will be something more enjoyable than the usual orthodox affair of that name. There is nothing to prevent it, and we mention the subject now that it may be considered by the Spiritualists and Liberals of the State, and particularly we hope to have the matter considered by the convention that is expected to meet in this place this fall. What say you, brethren and sisters?—The Texas Spiritualist for September.

The first chapter of my spirit-life runs thus: I have learned there is no death; I have learned that the grave holds not the spirit; I have learned that this is a life of continuous and gradual unfoldment; I have learned that I have power to come back; see, know, and hearken to the voices of those whom I have ever loved; I have learned that the spirit-life is a world of progression, onward and upward forever, no going backward. The more we learn the more we wish to know. The higher we go still higher is our desire.—Spirit Daniel Steele.

The editor of Zion's Herald complies one of the lay speakers at a recent camp-meeting by remarking that his "clear, metallic, sonorous voice, as he talks with God or appeals to the people, has in it the ring of the quarter-deck and the tone of one used to command." The next improvement over the "still, small voice" will be a speaking trumpet, we suppose.—Boston Herald.



















**WORCESTER, MASS.**—Meetings are held at St. George's Hall, 460 Main street, every Sunday at 2 P. M.







