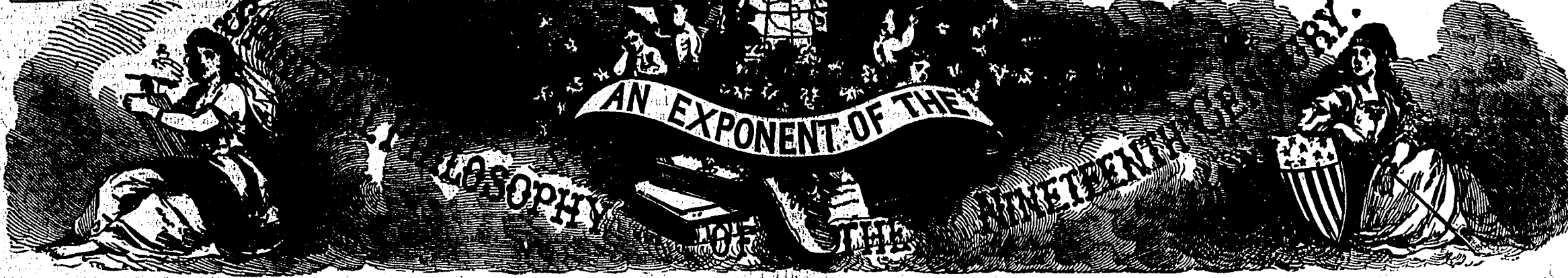


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The Spiritual Rostum.

The Need and Efficacy of Prayer.

A Discourse delivered in London, Eng., through the Medium of MRS. CORA L. V. RICHMOND.

INVOCATION.

Our Father, Thou Infinite spirit! Thou light, and life, and surpassing glory! Thou strength above all weakness! Thou delight and joy and soul-satisfying and wonderful compassion! We praise thee. The boundless firmament proclaims thy power and glory, and the everlasting stars revolve in response to thy will and thy law; and worlds in space are fraught with an atom of thy being; the soul of man, more mighty than worlds, and stars, and endowed with more surpassing glory than the suns and firmaments of space—the soul of man worships thee, praises thee, because of thy infinite love; aspires to know thee because of thy wisdom and knowledge and surpassing glory. Oh! thou that searchest the human heart; thou whose presence is here even as a voiceless power, even as a penetrating soul! Thou canst judge of the offerings that thy children bring, whether they be of the spirit; whether they be of humility, and patience, and contrition; whether they be of inspiration, and knowledge, and purity, and light; whether they be of thy divine and perfect powers, wherein the soul is made fully in accord with thee. We only know that thou dost move upon all nature, and even as a harmonious voice, uplifteth, elevateth, sustaineth, and guideth us ever. Oh! let us be strong in the strength of meekness. Let us be wise in the wisdom of thy patience and understanding. Let us be filled with the truth of thy power and thy inspiration, until all life shall open before thee in the matchless harmony of human thought; until through thy living deeds and words mankind shall forget their misery and strife; until by kindly deeds and actions they shall be uplifted to behold those angels that forevermore sing praises to thee in deeds and words of loving-kindness to thy name! Oh! living Spirit, to thy power, that is upon us everywhere, and that breatheth into us beyond space and time and death; even unto immortal life, shall be praises evermore!

DISCOURSE.

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—Math. xviii. 19, 20.

The poet has said that:

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire,
That stumbles in the breast."

To persons familiar with spiritual exaltation, with meditation, or communion with the Spirit of Deity, the aspiration of the soul, and the uplifting of the thought, there is nothing new that can be said on the subject of prayer. But the tendency of modern thought is to exact science; it is toward the solution of all problems of the universe by natural laws; and it was not many years ago that a challenge appeared in connection with a learned professor of science in England asking that the efficacy of prayer might be tested by setting apart a certain ward in a certain hospital in the city, and that those who believed in the efficacy of prayer should pray for the particular patients in that ward, and see if God would answer their prayer. A shout of derision went up from the world of science, and naturally one of horror from the religious world. But the fact that any man of science should so far forget his mission and transcend the sphere of scientific investigation, as to challenge Deity to the answer of a petty fable of the human mind, shows what is abroad in the world in the nineteenth century.

The fact that materialism avows that there can be no answer to prayer proves there is need of some form of testimony whereby the nature of the spiritual communion with Deity may be understood. The sacred offerings of health nations to their idols, the abject rites and ceremonies that belong to the ancient peoples, the offerings of human beings that even now take place among the Brahmins and Hindus and many of the heathen nations, are not, in our opinion, connected with the spirit of prayer, nor have they anything to do with that form of worship expressed and understood in the language of Christ.

Rightly God does or does not commune with the human soul. Either he does or does not respond to the thoughts, aspirations, feelings, desires and wishes of humanity. The Lord of the universe is either blind, deaf, senseless, and void of intelligence, or there is a power intelligence, soul and mind, that can answer the human thought. Materialists declare that there is no power to answer; that the great powers of the universe are governed by laws; that those laws are inflexible, inexorable, immutable, unchangeable, and that humanity can never receive an answer unless he shall ask for something that is in harmony with natu-

ral laws, and straightway set himself to work in accordance therewith to attain it. Consequently the praying for bread in the prayer of the Lord is considered to be superfluous; since it is claimed by modern thought, with no little degree of reason, that if a man wish for bread he must sow and reap and gather the grain, and the bread shall be forthcoming; that if he wish for temporal power he must build it up through ambition—through every effort of his material nature; that if he wish for success in battle, he must not only pray, but must have upon his side the largest armies, the strongest guns, the most powerful artillery, and the best defense with which to withstand the enemy; and praying is not in accordance with the spirit of military ethics. The leader of armies who prays also does everything in his power to gain the success for which he has prayed.

In our opinion these extremes are a mistake. We should pray for material things in material ways. God has endowed humanity with intelligence, with hands and feet, with a brain to work, with an earth teeming with plenty, and he prays in accordance with the laws of Nature—sows the seed in the full promise that time and the laws that God has made will bring the harvest. But the materialist has also made us pray for spiritual things in the same way. The materialist applies the spiritual laws to material methods; and, because a man must walk or ride if he requires to go from one place to another, and because he must work if he would have his daily bread, and because he must conform to the laws of Nature if he would have health and activity, they say you must also pray with material laws to accomplish spiritual ends, forgetting that man, in his twofold capacity and in his twofold nature, may have other requirements than those of the body; that there may be other laws transcending those of the physical nature; that there may be other methods that science has not found out. We know quite well that there are certain laws of science, recently discovered, that contravene and supersede previously known laws; we know quite well that the whole problem of life is a constant and absolute progression from one phase of discovery to another. The materialist forgets that the higher portion of man's nature requires spiritual sustenance, and also forgets that, although Nature is very broad, and science has penetrated very far, there may possibly be laws into which science has not yet explored, and God may have methods that man does not at present understand.

Professor Tyndall would do well, before challenging the Deity in reference to his laws and method of answering prayer, to endeavor to place himself in a condition to know what prayer is, because while one man of science has adhered strictly to the laws necessary in the investigation of material things, while he bends the knees to Nature and searches her mysteries in order to live here, when he comes to the vestibule of the immortal soul, and the great structure of that spiritual fabric, to which mankind look and must look for their spiritual sustenance and growth, *savants*, without reverence and without awe, without even the commonest honesty of their order, tear down the structures of faith and spirituality, and say: "There is nothing true but reason; that alone will suffice."

But let us see if, in these methods of spiritual communion, there be not real laws, outside of and contravening and superseding, in some degree, the strict laws of materialism. It is evident, to the reasoning mind, that the body must be fed and clothed and sustained. It is also evident that the mind must be educated, trained and disciplined. No amount of genius will answer unless there be also culture, inspiration and guidance. The spiritual nature of man, that vast free soul that supervenes, governs, directs, guides the material, is governed by laws just as perfect, and hence just as capable of demonstration, wherein there can be no more violation, no more contravention than there can be in the physical laws. The nature of man's spiritual existence, therefore, is that which the student should desire to find out, and that no man shall ever do through physical and material methods. It will require other faculties and powers, other qualities of mind, to be unfolded in order to open and understand it fully. See with what studiousness and research the world of science has waited for years for the perfection of telescopic instruments that would aid the eye in penetrating the mysteries of the solar system. How many stars have been added to the firmament by the wonderful discoveries of science! Man's eye was not sufficient; it has been magnified a thousand and a hundred thousand-fold. May it not be true that man's spiritual vision also is limited? that he also requires culture in that direction that he may understand the laws of the spiritual eye? Does it not need a telescope whereby it may comprehend a broader range of spiritual vision, and understand more of its own spiritual nature?

Science endeavors, with reason and materialism, to handle that which belongs to intuition and spirituality; science endeavors to drag down the spiritual to the level of the material senses; and so if God and spirit do not accept the challenge of being solved in its crucible, then God and spirit have no existence. Because the Deity will not permit himself to be discovered by microscopic analysis, or permit his secret soul-essence to be found in the *experimentum crucis* of science, because the soul of man is made of finer essences and finer materials than science can analyze, science says there is no soul, God there is not; that the universe is void; and that the powers of man go upward and outward into empty air.

But at this the soul of man revolts. Each spiritual presence, every intelligent mind, knows that there is something in his organization—spiritual or otherwise—that claims superiority to those mere material tastes; that there are spiritual forces belonging to the spirit, that even though science does not discover them, proclaim their existence with potency and power; that thought itself, on its many pyramids of pinions, defies time, space and science, and branches out into the broad region of imagination and poetry and faith; that religion, with her snowy brow and ever-living voice, has spoken to man in every age and through many tongues, even through the lips whose words have been just read, more potently and more powerfully because of the lapse of time. They have awakened a response in many hearts; yet you have only an intuitive consciousness of them within you. The external expression was given and finished hundreds of years ago; but that expression is incorporated with your own soul; that the voice is in within you. It is quite true, as the scientific proclaim, that if God answer prayer it must be in accordance with law; but there he must stop. It is not in accordance with material laws; and the methods whereby Deity answers prayer, can only be known to Deity, and those souls that are in communion with Deity. Such as have no soul, or imagine they have none, cannot be within the range of the operation of those laws any more than the blind man can see the sun. The laws whereby the spirit converses with spirit can only be known to those who hold such converse; not by those who, being spiritually blind, grope on and declare there is no spiritual light. There are doubtless many methods—doubtless immeasur-

able ways and channels—so subtle, fine and delicate, that you cannot measure them by thought, whereby the Infinite works out his loving purposes and makes even the meanest slave and lowliest mind of earth subservient to his designs. Doubtless the methods whereby the Infinite solves the problems of mankind to the ages may not be known and understood to the human comprehension, but every subtle change of thought and destiny that unravels itself before the eye of man, constitutes some solution of the divine problem presented to you to solve.

"Prayer is the sincere desire of the soul." Now, there are desires that are not of the soul, and these do not constitute a fitting subject of prayer. Those material tastes that cannot elevate nor uplift may not be the subject of prayer—nothing excepting that which comes within the province of spiritual requirements; for even the daily bread that Jesus instructed his followers to pray for was but a form of expression, and might mean rather a living sympathy for that which is necessary in life, and not its superfluities; not that which simply builds up external ambition and hope, but the laws whereby the spirit can most directly commune with the Infinite must be known and understood by each individual man. That which brings you nearest to the highest and best is your best prayer; that which uplifts, exalts and elevates you the most is your spirit's offering; that which disenthalls you from your senses, from your favorite and peculiar fable and folly, that which takes away from selfishness and makes the spirit aware of its own greatness, that is the best prayer. How shall God answer prayer when the soul, immured and steeped in external sense, merely bends the knee and breathes a word or form of prayer without the spirit? "But," says the materialist, "this is all very well; it does not, however, meet the objection that God does not and cannot transcend natural laws by any amount of praying."

What are natural laws? Who has placed a limit upon the boundaries of Infinity? Who has pointed out to any finite mind the methods whereby Deity may work? It is not in slavish, abject fear, or simply that we blindly believe that Deity can do everything, because it is so written; but it is because the Infinite, being free from anxiety as to his infinitude, must have methods adapted to the requirements of every individual spiritual nature; it is because that, if there be a soul in the human being and a spirit called the divine and perfect, there must needs be some method of communion between the two, and to limit the laws of Deity is to bind the Infinite and state an absurdity.

We believe it has been fairly and fully tested, and the direct burden of the text that we have quoted says one mind cannot be sufficiently *noted*, nor powerful nor concentrated, to ask spiritually and receive; but it says if two of you, or two or three especially assemble together, showing that there must be a condition requisite. What is that condition? That a sufficiently intense desire, sufficiently potent will, or uplifting of the Spirit, a sufficiently great and persistent inquiry, will inevitably elicit an answer; so that, if one of you hold a strong desire and wish for spiritual knowledge it may be that the force of your will shall prevail; for the power of the Spirit is will—that over-coming and subtle force whereby time and space are overcome. It may be that you have not yourself enough; another acting with you forms additional power, and three form still more power; and if a multitude are of one accord, think you that the mental vibrations do not reach spiritual substances? and these spiritual substances in turn reach others, until at last the very soul of the universe is penetrated.

Those sounds that vibrate upon the external atmosphere go out and out and out just in proportion to their strength and intensity. Suppose one voice be added, and then three and four, and all your voices, they become so potent and subtle they may reach even for miles. Now, the spiritual atmosphere is subjected to the same vibrations. You think a thought, and whether it be of good or of evil, in proportion to its intensity it vibrates upon the waves of thought until it reaches the object for which it is intended. If your thought is feeble, your will is weak, it falls feebly upon the spiritual atmosphere; but if intense and quick with inner love or hatred, with a perfect fervor of faith or directness, it goes out and out, until its waves encompass many souls before your own. This is what Christ means when he desires a more earnest prayer; and if two sincere minds agree upon any spiritual subject of works, it is less liable to be selfish—it is more likely to be one that can belong to the realm of spiritual gifts. When you pray alone you may be limited, you may see only your own wants and your own selfish requirements, you may wish for something that does not come within the range of spiritual gifts and powers; but another mind added to yours, or three or four, form a spiritual atmosphere, and upon this atmosphere the waves must vibrate to the very centre of soul itself.

Those who hold converse with and believe in the intercommunion of departed spirits, and those who oftentimes are aware that in a limited degree this idea of prayer is applicable to the presence of their spirit-friends, if you earnestly wish, earnestly desire the presence of a spirit-friend, it frequently occurs that that wish and that desire form the very atmosphere upon which they can approach you. So that by wishing and aspiring for spiritual things you would come in contact with spiritual beings; and it may be that even in the fulfillment of special prayer God appoints your guardian angels—your ministering spirits. These being there, pass to and fro upon the spiritual pathway; and the spiritual atmosphere has opened out in it a way to answer that prayer. It has oftentimes been asked what occupation spirits can have. If all the wishes and prayers of mortals were to be literally responded to, God could employ the whole host of heaven to give answer through ministering spirits. But it is not every wish that can be answered; it is not every thought that is preferred, every desire of your minds that is a desire of the soul; only the spiritual thoughts, the most earnest desires, can form the subject of answer to prayer; and by whatever means it is brought about, by whatever methods, the Divine Mind works. It always brings you nearer and nearer to that spiritual atmosphere, to which you speak.

This is why Christ said you must ask in order to receive; you must knock before it will be opened; you must seek before you find; because, by seeking the very volition is added to the spiritual impetus by which you can receive the gift. Gifts are around you, the air is filled with blessings, and the voiceless sky pours down with showers of hope. God is written; and expresses himself in every form of beauty around you. Yet how blind are you to these gifts and blessings unless you ask for them! How dull the sense and how imperfect the vision to comprehend the powers and the goodness Deity has already bestowed. If you ask for God's mercy, behold it is at your door! Your heart is open to receive it; but it may be there waiting if you do not seek. The blind man goes out into the field and does not behold the beauties of nature and the brightness spread out before him. So he that cannot behold the beauty of the old forest, nor understand

the various forms of nature which are intended to combine spiritual truth, cannot find these hidden blessings; because the soul is the source of that which the soul shall eventually receive, and it has impressed this thought upon you, not only in connection with your wish and devotion, but with that law of spiritual life whereby you may be enabled to influence and converse with the spiritual beings that you imagine are far out of sight and out of reach. The earnest desire, the wish, the longing of the spirit, makes up the potent power whereby the spirit can answer; and if any response to your prayer or messenger of divine love comes, be sure that it must be an uplifting and elevating thought that even allows you a glimpse of that spiritual kingdom that has been shut out from earth, ignored by it, and entirely denied by materialism.

Consider into what a realm of beauty, glory and delight your souls may be admitted simply by prayer, in the sense in which we have interpreted it. Consider that all the upper chambers of the mind—the spiritual structure of the soul's temple—are only to be entered through desire. You cannot be forced upward. No guide nor spirit takes you unwillingly into the region of life and light. It must be growth, aspiration, wish, desire, soul—these are the pinions upon which the soul mounts into the spiritual realm above your heads. Out of your sight, in the region where you do not penetrate often, and where you may not perhaps now enter, is this realm of immortality; so near you that its breath may touch your cheek and fan your brow, and you may aware of it; so near that the pulsations of your heart are not so plain and audible as the pulsation of the spirit to those who seek; so near, that were you aware of its Divine presence and beautiful glow, it would illumine the dark pathway of your lives, and make the earthly path now dark and cold resplendent with divine beauties and splendors.

The door of prayer is open always. Each moment of your lives you may not only breathe the physical atmosphere, but the spiritual atmosphere that uplifts and strengthens. How blind is that science that gropes madly on in the midst of the very blessing that it refuses to accept, and then says in stolid indifference, "There is no life, no mind, no immortality, no soul, no God!"

Consider what you would be were these words true. Consider what you needs must be even if you were taught they are true; for as mind thinks, so does it become. If you pray down to the earth, so shall you grovel in the meshes of sense and time, building today that which shall be washed away to-morrow—sowing seeds that shall be harvested by chance, and producing thorns and thistles instead. But if in place of this you would ascend through the gateway of the spiritual temple, through the faculties that may be enlarged and expanded, through thought and mind and soul, through aspiration and prayer, through the things of the spirit, through divine and perfect uplifting of soul, you may have the answer to prayer. Behold the answers to your questions! the longings fulfilled and the doubts removed; for as you cultivate thought, wish, desire, its power increases. With one ray added to the lamp, a larger amount of darkness is dispersed; so one light added to your mind, then another and another, shall illumine it finally and scatter those mists of doubt, prejudice and error that have long held the earth in darkness. Often with those who pray aright does the prayer fall outwardly, and without life and thought it falters for want of strength. For to those who strive there is oftentimes something of doubt and despair, because of the material surroundings and because of the dullness of the things of time and sense.

But believe, there is for every soul and every thought an open gateway—the doorway of life, the pathway that leads to this spiritual kingdom. You may all enter and partake of its truths. The laws that govern the spirit, as well as those that control matter, and the laws whereby your souls enter into communion with one another, with spiritual beings, with exalted angels, with Deity itself, are known and understood by God. To find out these laws, to study earnestly these spiritual gifts, to cultivate them with prayer, and mind, and heart, and soul, should be the province of your own religious avocations. For if the soul is not given for expression and culture, what can it be given for? If the life within you and the light of the mind are not for expression, expansion, delight and joy, what else can they be given for? And prayer of the truest and highest kind is that avenue—that agency whereby you may by the qualities of expression find perfect and absolute communion with the divine. Then you shall receive a perfect and absolute answer through the ministering of angels, through the lofty thoughts that come down to you through the dark to the barriers of time and sense, through the paths and the gateways that lead to brighter regions, even through death itself, that holds the earth in its fetters and the soul of man in appeal—for even death is removed by this, and you shall enter into the region of life and light and hope and surpassing joy.

But not alone in a simple verbal utterance. Prayer is that condition in which the soul itself, intent upon its divine aspirations, searches earnestly for that which it expresses in words. Words are deeds. You do not cease to *entertain* your wish, but express it over and over again, until, by its very earnestness and power, it becomes a living reality. Your words are not enough. There must be fervor and tire; there must be hope and aspiration; there must be, above all, an accumulation of purity, patience and willingness to wait; withal there must be a struggling with time and sense, an overcoming of all selfishness and mean ambitions. For by entering this atmosphere of great and uplifted thought, you are putting away from you all those unworthy and unhallowed things. Strive for these gifts; ask ever, be sure the answer comes. The human soul has never framed a question that in the divine beneficence of Deity there is not an answer for. For whose has endowed you with the thought of asking a question, has also shaped in the orb of spaces the golden star of its response. Whoso has given a living hope to the human spirit, has fashioned an answer and fulfillment. In the realm of the soul all longings, therefore, of the soul may be answered. All thought and wish to probe the mysteries that lie beyond death and the grave may find a response. Oh, how many cold, weary hearts and longing eyes have prayed through the dim mist of sorrow's tears to find one answering voice, one echo from the voiceless world where, we say, the loved ones are! But prayer will surely bring its answer. Strive and strive, and in some way, most sacred to your hearts and nearest to your lives, there shall come an answer, soft and piteous as the down-dropping of a dove, or as sweet twilight dew that descend and spread over the earth, or as the harmonious sounds awakened by the winds in the forest trees. So shall be the answer to your prayer.

But you cannot, do not heed the voice of truth, if you do not and will not receive the spirit; if, bowed in ignorance and fear and materialism, you grope blindly on, then shall the voice of the spirit, even like the lightning or thunderstorm, or as the sea waves, burst forth far and near, and behold you shall hear and feel its breath; for it will not continue silent long.

That spirit, that voice, has long been hushed; but it will not ever be so. Even as a mountain stream when clogged will leap over all barriers and inundate valleys, so will man, through his materialism, cause a deluge that shall sweep away the rankness and corruption of ages. Bow not to your idols; bend not in servitude, in fear and hatred, nor in corruption; for the spirit only waits, asking with soft voice and pleading accents that it may come in. But if you do not receive it, then a cry most powerful shall arise and sweep over every nation and every people, making them know of the presence of the spirit. It is gentle and most kindly, but potent and most powerful; and just as the heavens are above the earth and around it, so is God's power, and the realm of the spirit encompasses your earth and your hearts; so the voice, the searching voice, is in your midst to-day, grown stronger through the lapse of years, grown patient through the pain of the world, but waiting. If you hear and receive its voice, and ask for its inspiration, behold it gives it; and when one or two of you shall ask it in the name of Truth, it shall be given.

THE ANSWER TO PRAYER.

There is a voice—a potent voice—

That answers every earnest prayer;
It cometh low, it cometh soft,
Like murmurs on the summer air.
When zephyrs roam amid the trees,
When autumn's gentle breeze is nigh,
Behold, upon the evening breeze,
The answer to your prayer is nigh.

There is a voice—a potent voice—

That reaches every human heart,
Whether of selfishness and hate,
Whether of love and peace and awe;
And lo! with might as with a sword,
Or with the olive branch of peace,
From darkness and from deep despair
It gives your souls a sure release.

There is a voice—a gentle voice—

That wins you ever with its love;
It droopeth down from distant skies
With plumage like a snowy dove,
Shedding its words of peace and love
Abroad o'er all your souls to-night;
And if ye will but look above,
Your gaze shall see its image bright.

There is a voice—a higher voice—

That mingles pause oftentimes to hear,
That bindeth, with its living joys,
Nearer each heart, to God more near;
Nearer you from the grave's recesses,
To turn your weary weeping eyes
Where angels mount to spheres of day.

There is a voice—a golden voice—

That ringeth downward from the sky,
Telling earth's weary to rejoice,
Lifting their hearts to worlds on high;
Saying, "After your years of want and pain,
Your bitterness and care below,
Behold you must not wait in vain,
A brighter birth ye still shall know."

Oh! with the voice of earnest prayer,

Search ye to find that temple gate,
Where angels, clad in white array,
Your spirits ever more await.
Lo! see them smiling, radiant, pure,
Made free and strong from suffering,
Pray, and your prayer shall awe endure,
And God the answer sure will bring.

The Unknown.

Abstract of an Address delivered at the Sturgis, Mich., Annual Meeting, June 15th, 1884, by
A. B. FRENCH.

[Reported for the Banner of Light.]

More than eighteen centuries ago the Apostle Paul is represented to have carried some three years at Ephesus, in Asia Minor, preaching and practicing his spiritual gifts with wonderful success.

Ephesus was a city of note then; but prior to Paul's day it had been a still more remarkable history. Here stood the great temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world, supported by more than a hundred columns placed there by as many kings. So great was the heathen's zeal for this goddess that more than two hundred years had been spent in building the temple. Many times it had been partially and once wholly destroyed by fire, but Phoenix-like it had arisen as frequently from its own ashes. Thelty about Paul's time had been destroyed by an earthquake, but was soon rebuilt.

Here dwelt a curious people. They had been taught from generation to generation the lower phases of Spiritualism. Amid much strife and personal danger Paul had succeeded in deeply impressing them, and founded a church which was to endure for six hundred coming years, and at last yield to the fierce zeal of Islam.

A little time before Paul was to leave this city where he had formed so many attachments and labored so long, he received a message from Corinth, well calculated to bring a shade of sadness over his mind. It brought to him intelligence of dissensions, immoralities and petty jealousies in a church he had formed there and left in a very prosperous condition. The news, no doubt, touched him. He probably remembered Corinth as the one spot where the most sacred friendships and attachments of his life had been formed. Here he had worked at his trade as a tent-maker, preached a free gospel, and was made happy by the warm love of Aquilla and Priscilla, and the constant friendship of Timothy and Silas. Here he had looked at the proud Parnassus bathed in the first beams of a Grecian sunrise, while his busy hands were weaving tents in the early morning in his little shop. And when he grew tired toward the evening, he may have seen the same sun kiss the far sides of the Helicon, in whose shady groves the early muses delighted to dwell.

Paul had been highly inspired at Corinth. Why should he not be? The best sermons do not come to us in the reclosure of the library; they overtake us in the fields, flash in upon the mind while we march and toil; just as they came to Robert Collier when he beat away on his anvil. Paul also had visions and trances and many phases of mediumistic power at Corinth. But now the little church was a boiling, seething cauldron of strife. They differed about marriageable relations and the sexes. Some were of questionable virtue, and no doubt others pretended to be a great deal more virtuous than they really were. They differed about materialization, or, rather, the resurrection and appearance of the dead. The woman question was also a troublesome one in this remote age, eighteen centuries before Fourier or John Stuart Mill. Some women would persist in wearing their hair uncovered in the assemblies, just as some

Spiritual Phenomena.

Wonderful Seance with Dr. Caswell, with Suggestive Remarks.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

Among the various spiritual manifestations which are occurring at the present time, that of materialization seems to be one of great interest to the investigator. It is not my intention to attempt an elucidation of this much-mooted subject, since abler pens than mine have contributed valuable information upon questions that arise in respect to it.

It was my privilege to be present at a seance for materialization on Wednesday evening, June 18th, at the home of Dr. D. E. Caswell, No. 55 Elm street, Charlestown. The company was small, numbering but ten persons, most of whom were ladies. The utmost harmony pervaded the seance; indeed, so perfectly was this law, which underlies all successful spiritual manifestation, expressed upon this occasion, that none of the usual methods of producing it were resorted to. It was the only seance for physical manifestations I ever attended where music, either vocal or instrumental, was not used as a means of generating harmony among the sitters, and I must confess that the spirit of music, as expressed through the harmony that pervaded the atmosphere of that seance room, seemed in much closer accord with the occasion than much of the singing which is heard upon similar occasions, and which is supposed to be so important a factor in wooing the spirits, some of whom have developed so high an appreciation of true music that they would be repelled rather than attracted by the harsh notes and the ill-timed selections which often jar even upon the less sensitive ears of mortals.

The number of spirits who materialized upon this occasion was not as large as I have sometimes seen, but they manifested with great power, nearly all of them being able to walk around among the sitters, and to converse in audible tones.

It may be well to state for the benefit of those who have not attended any of Dr. Caswell's seances that the forms are all illuminated. Their ethereal garments scintillate with oscillations of light. None can form any adequate idea of these illuminations unless they have witnessed similar phenomena.

Among those who appeared on this occasion were quite a number of ancient spirits, who walked among us and made many prophecies concerning the future of spiritual manifestations. Mr. Bartholomew, formerly a Universalist minister in Boston, materialized outside the cabinet in full view of all present, and spoke words of encouragement. One Egyptian spirit, with garments wondrously luminous, remained outside the cabinet for some time, walking around and covering his ethereal mantle over each member of the circle, thereby imparting of his magnetic power. The dear spirit Longfellow materialized very beautifully, and called me to him, in accordance with a promise made by him just before I left home.

Altogether I think this was one of the most remarkable seances I have ever attended, the small number present no doubt rendering the conditions more favorable for strong manifestations. [As is always the case.—Ed.]

Had I not already occupied considerable space, I would like to refer to the subject of clothing to be worn by persons attending a seance for physical manifestations. Black is a repellent, while white or light clothing supplies better chemicals for the spirit friends to draw from. This fact is well known among every one who is at all familiar with the science of these spiritual manifestations; and yet persons who know these things will go into the seance-room clad in black, without one particle of color to relieve the sombre effect and supply chemicals from which the spirits can draw.

Let us do everything in our power to aid and encourage our dear angel friends in their efforts to bring us knowledge. The work should be—it must be—a work of coöperation. Let us study how we can best advance this great truth.

Yours for truth, Mrs. K. R. STILES.

Skepticism Vanquished.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

I am not a Spiritualist, nor have I made any investigation of the phenomena of Spiritualism until recently, when my attention was called to the subject by a friend, who asked me to go with him to a sitting. Though somewhat averse to the step, I went as requested. We were met at the door by a young girl of about fifteen, who, after a few moments, introduced me to a man, who, I learned was Mrs. Caffray, the materializing medium. She kindly invited us to enter, and gave us a seat in a room where about twenty people were seated. Presently Mr. Caffray made his appearance from another room, and invited us all into his back parlor, where he holds the sittings. I went in, laughing to myself at the foolishness of my friend, for he did look so sincere.

At first we all sat around a table, taking hold of hands. The lights were put out, and, in a few moments, the table began to tremble. I heard a voice say, "I am here." I heard three loud knocks, and the medium asked me to open them. I did so, when I found the table full of writing, and there before my eyes was a message in my mother's handwriting, telling me things to do which I promised her I would do before she passed away, but which I had neglected. I was overwhelmed with astonishment; the perspiration poured from my forehead; I had got done laughing.

Next we all sat in a semicircle, and the medium invited any one to examine his cabinet (as he called it). Mr. Caffray then asked me to go up and examine it, and look for trapped doors; but I declined doing so; though three or four did go up, and pronounced everything all right. Next, the lady medium went into the cabinet. The light was lowered a little, but there was sufficient light left, for I took out my watch and saw what time it was. Mr. Caffray then wound up a large music box, set it playing, and then all was quiet. It would occupy too much space to describe all that happened. I mention a few only of the most remarkable incidents.

A little girl, apparently about nine years of age, came to the cabinet door, and calling me by name asked me to approach her. I did so, and she gave me a beautiful rose. She then called every one in the room singly the same way, and gave each a rose. But what to me was the greatest wonder of all was this: A light about the size of a cent was seen about two feet in front of me. It commenced to enlarge and grow more luminous and continued to do so until it became a full-size adult female form, and brighter than the burning gas above our heads. It then spoke, gave me my mother's name, and said, "I am your mother," and told me never again to laugh at what I knew nothing about. I easily identified my mother by a private mark on the spirit's face that my mother had on her face while living in this life. She then handed me a beautiful flower, diminished in size back to the little bright spot I first saw, and then vanished entirely. I have the rose to this day. If Mr. Caffray uses every skeptic as he used me, he must have set many a mind thinking.

I told you when I commenced I was no Spiritualist, but to tell you the truth I don't know what I am now. There is an old adage, "seeing is believing," so I must confess I am turning a Spiritualist. I suppose my friends will laugh at me when they see my name signed to this article, but I can't help it; let the good work go on. I will answer all inquiries as to my experience, and will take the *Banner of Light* hereafter, for I am a happier man.

EDWARD M. O'CONNOR.
Corner of 32d Street and 6th Avenue,
New York City.

Soul-Cheering Facts.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

Briefly let me give to your readers additional testimony to the ever-accumulating facts of spirit materialization. I have recently attended several of the seances of Mrs. Stoddard Gray and her son, at their residence, 323 West 34th street, in this city, and I must say in all candor, that if I had never before believed in the fact of materialization of spirits I should be compelled to accept it as beyond all question, after what I have witnessed at these seances. The parlors in which they are held are spacious and well-furnished; giving a pleasing and harmonizing effect to the mind of the stranger. The circle is seated by Mr. Gray, a few feet from the cabinet; and after brief explanatory remarks the light is turned out for a few moments, when at once manifestations begin by the spirits making music, handling a guitar, bells, etc. Before the light is turned out, DeWitt O. Hough goes into the cabinet (which stands wide open for the inspection of all), dressed in his dark suit, and seating himself passes speedily into a trance. His mother stands outside in view of all.

When the spirits have finished their brief entertainment in the dark, the controlling spirit (Col. E. Baker) directs the gas to be lighted, when there begins and is maintained some of the most remarkable demonstrations ever witnessed. Spirits—male and female—come in great numbers, talk to and touch their friends, often materializing and dematerializing in the presence of all. They frequently come two at a time, and some come far into the room, often walking round with Mrs. Gray and others. They weave lace and form other drapery, etc., in sight of all. At one of the seances which I attended a few nights since, a spirit coming out of the cabinet, went from the seance-room through the door (which was open) into the adjoining parlor, and halting at a window fronting the street opened the blind, stood gazing from the window at objects in the street, and then returned in sight of all to the cabinet.

This evening, on going to the seance, I asked permission, and obtained it, to put some paper and a pencil in the cabinet, with a brief note of request to my spirit-daughter to write me a communication. She complied, calling me up to the cabinet, and writing the note in my presence and in the presence of all, in a very brief time, and folding the paper gave it to me with the pencil, and paper I had placed in the cabinet. I recognized as well as I could in the then rather dim light, my daughter, her every manner being perfectly natural and characteristic. She held out her very small hand to me, which itself was enough to impress me with strong conviction that it was her. The communication written by my daughter was as follows:

"Dear, Dear Father—When can I be able to come strong? Can I be so strong? I think I can give you a proof of my presence and power by playing upon the piano. I will try, if I can have an opportunity. Oh how I long to be always near you. Soon we will be in the house together, not made by hands, but woven from our deeds in this life. God grant we may always be together. Give my love to mamma and sister (here she began to lose power). From your loving daughter, MOLLIE."

Miss Carrie Miller, daughter of the editor of the *Psychometrio Circular*, called from the cabinet for me to come up to it. As I did so she dematerialized, and while I was standing by the side of Mrs. Gray, outside the cabinet in full view of all, she formed herself at our feet, and rising to full stature walked about the room.

I would that all who earnestly desire to realize the joys flowing into the soul from these demonstrations of our continued life after what we call death, could have witnessed what I, with fourteen others, witnessed this evening in this seance. Such mediums as these Mrs. Carrie M. Sawyer (who is now here, but returns to Washington soon) surely must be doing untold good. As well might the attempt be made to roll back the tide of the great Mississippi, or check the flow of the ocean's tide, as to successfully ignore the grand fact of the palpable, ocular and tangible return of our spirit-friends in a temporary material habitation! How beautiful and soul-cheering, soul-elevating and refining, are these grand facts which give us the proof that—

Though death seems to sever
All our earthly ties,
We'll live again, and live forever,
Beyond the deep blue seas.

I understand Mrs. Gray and her son expect to attend the approaching camp-meetings. Of course very many will then avail themselves of the opportunity of witnessing the wonderful and convincing manifestations that occur in their presence. P. O. JENKINS.
New York, June 11th, 1884.

Spirit-Photography.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

I wish through your paper to add some evidence in favor of spirit-photography. During my stay in Boston we called on the spirit-artist, Wm. M. Keeler, No. 40 Dover street. This was the first time we ever met Mr. Keeler. He had no knowledge whatever of our friends deceased, and without any preparation we sat for spirit pictures. At the first sitting Mrs. Herbert, the medium, sat with me, and on the plate there came two plain pictures of deceased friends, one of whom never had a picture taken while in the form, the other was Mrs. H.'s little boy who died in England some ten years since. At the second sitting I sat alone, and there came on the negative plate my father's face, and that of my uncle. My father is in front of my picture and back of the side screen, his face seeming to come through the screen. At the third sitting Mrs. Herbert sat alone and there came on the plate her other two deceased children—a girl and a boy. The six spirit pictures are—with the exception of one—as plain as our own. Mr. Keeler had no pictures of our deceased friends to copy from. If he had had them, there was no time between the sittings to prepare them for use.

This being the fact, it is but fair to conclude that Mr. Keeler is a very true spirit artist. We are ready to go before any court and make a solemn oath that we received six pictures of deceased friends, three of whom never had pictures taken while in the form. Again, Mrs. Herbert is a clairvoyant medium, and she ascertains that she saw each spirit sit or stand for its respective picture. I heard three loud knocks, and the medium asked me to open them. I did so, when I found the table full of writing, and there before my eyes was a message in my mother's handwriting, telling me things to do which I promised her I would do before she passed away, but which I had neglected. I was overwhelmed with astonishment; the perspiration poured from my forehead; I had got done laughing.

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I do not simply goody—be good for something—Therap.

Banner Correspondence.

California.

SAN FRANCISCO.—Benj. Lewitt writes: "Coming to this coast for the benefit of my health I visited Santa Barbara, where I found that fine materializing medium, Mrs. Emma Hurst, whom I had visited often in Terre Haute, and though she had not been giving seances for some months, owing to poor health, being, I am happy to say now much better, she consented to my employing a test table and with her cabinet. White her control, soon commenced talking to us. My spirit wife came into the room, opening the door of the cabinet-closet, and showing the medium, who was entranced and sitting upon her chair. A little while then she appeared, her mother being the medium's sister, who was present. She approached and recognized it with delight. I afterward felt the baby hand, and saw the medium seated at the door of the closet was thrown open; there was no room for a doubt to exist in my mind as to the genuineness of these manifestations. Several of my own relatives, with Michigan and Indiana friends, appeared, also Captain Uly. of Kansas City. He was a very fine man, probably out of his mind, and he grasped my hand said, 'My friend, I am still engaged in the good work as much as when on earth.' As I grasped the hand of a spirit friend seated in a chair in front of me, the spirit-form of my mother grew up close by us, and the two spirits, with medium in view, stood close to my side. Mother sank away while I was talking to the other spirit, Dr. McCulloch, whose hands I was holding on my lap. My spirit daughter Emma came across the room, and sang with her spirit voice a hymn, and the two spirits, with medium in view, stood close to my side. Mother sank away while I was talking to the other spirit, Dr. McCulloch, whose hands I was holding on my lap. My spirit daughter Emma came across the room, and sang with her spirit voice a hymn, and the two spirits, with medium in view, stood close to my side. 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