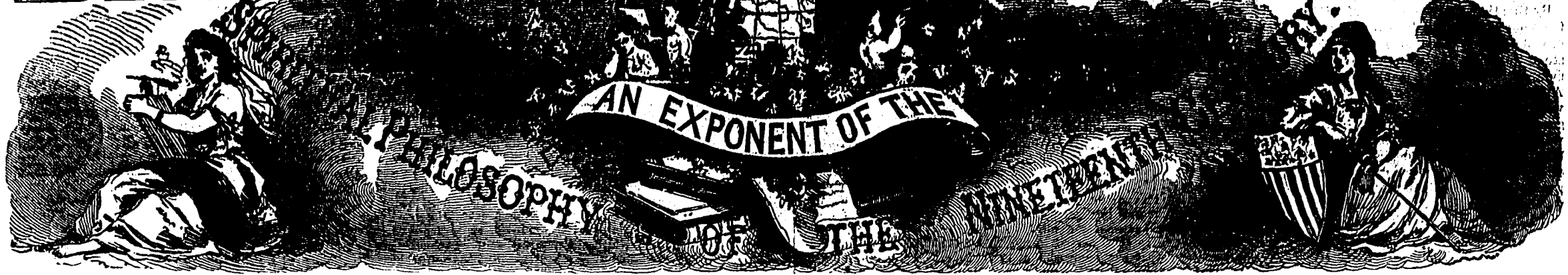


# BANNER OF LIGHT.



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## Free Thought.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES A POSITIVE SOUL-CONDITION?

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In its simplest terms, it signifies a superior soul-impetus over that of its surroundings; spirit-body. Now there are undoubtedly many who are thus constituted, for such constitutes the natural human condition—the beginning where the animal reaches a superior soul-condition or growth over that of the spirit-body existing in connection with it, and man naturally begins life with an animalistic spirit-body, or one acting entirely for a sensuous effect. In conjunction with only a fraction of positive or spiritual impetus over the negative material, and ignorant as to the moral requirements of a spiritual being, he almost universally relapses into the negative state during his primitive incarnation. But once a human spirit, there is no return to the animal kingdom, despite his return to the animal plane as such—one human incarnation being sufficient to purify or transform a portion of his spirit-body into a state of existence having a purely spiritual or intelligent effect, even if this transformed animal impetus does not become intelligence per se, like that of the soul itself. But it permits the soul-nature to amalgamate with it for an intelligent effect, and thus retains its human condition.

Now it does not relapse into the negative state, because the soul decreases in size, but because the spirit-body increases—more sensual than intellectual indulgence during a life's period acts in favor of the spirit-body, and not the soul; and it is reasonable to suppose that the undeveloped races indulge the former in preference to the latter, and thus their return to the negative, or the animal soul-condition. But this does not interfere with the soul's unceasing energy in operating on the material for a spiritualizing effect, and thus creating a condition compatible with its own—the aim of the human soul being to unfold an exterior appendage entirely freed from animalism, and to rise above the animal, or material plane of existence, by adding sufficient force or intelligent impetus to its own condition that will make it positive to material law or attraction. Love, actions and the acquirement of knowledge accomplish this, and in comparison to its degree of positivity it not only rises in the spiritual spheres, but takes rank in mortal life as a controlling power. In a word, the positive man rules, politically and financially—his superior will and penetration being his natural inheritance for this effect.

Of course, some misuse their superior power, but this constitutes selfishness or soul-discord, as sensualism constitutes discord of the spirit-body—selfishness lending the soul a negative impetus in comparison to the force of the evil, and places it in discord with divine nature or the positive of existence, whether it happen to be on the spiritual or material plane at the time being, and naturally in accord with spirits of like condition. Negative souls, on the contrary, when freed from discord, have the sympathy of positive spirits, because they recognize in such the struggling ones of earth, who have fallen to the animal plane through ignorance, and not through selfishness or arrogance—misapprehending spiritually. Now, some are born with these evils, but are intuitively striving to overcome them, and although meaning well, they meet with misfortunes nevertheless. Such is due to their negative attractions, who cannot give them the material aid that positive spirits can to mortal; this may be regarded as a wise arrangement when we consider the damage possible, if negative spirits could aid man in this respect.

In the first place, soul-positivity can only be attained by self-exertion, and such would not be benefited in the end; and if negative or discordant spirits possessed the power of control over material things, too many unworthy ones would be aided for unworthy purposes. Thus law or God provides in a way that all are justly dealt with, and those who cannot rule must serve. No mortal wishes to be governed by an animal, and so positive soul-beings feel reluctant to be governed by negative soul-beings or mortals on the animal plane. The former intuitively feel their superiority over the latter, even if the latter often suffer keenly under their disrespect or contempt, although contempt is only manifested when discord exists in conjunction

tion with negativity, and by which the sensitive ones may gauge their standard of perfection—positivity in conjunction with soul-harmony and spirit-purification always commanding respect unsolicited.

Thus the aim of man is to attain a positive soul-condition, freed from discord, and a spirit-body freed from animalism—the latter becoming transformed from an opaque to a transparent condition as the same is purified or spiritualized, as it were, which has been shown to us clairvoyantly, and we made to sense psychometrically at the same moment, in order to convince us of this fact—such completing its mission and releasing it from the physical by virtue of its purely intelligent impetus, which it naturally assumes at this stage. What degree of soul-positivity man is enabled to stand before disintegration takes place, depends, perhaps, on the animus left in the spirit-body to counterbalance the surplus of soul-positivity. We are told that a force of 12 over the negative constitutes the ultimate, because the original composition of the earth contains a spiritual force of 56 to a material force of 44, and is therefore the highest state attainable on this planet. From this we may infer that souls long departed, or those who have developed beyond a force of 12 in favor of the positive, cannot sufficiently combine with matter as to control mediums directly, and must resort to inspiration in order to reach them. And as like attracts like, we suppose a medium, who is inspired by such spirits, must possess some degree of soul-positivity freed from discord, and a good share of spirit-purification, in order to lay claim to ancient spirits and others of a higher order as their guides. But as the majority of spirits who still inhabit the sphere of earth must be of modern date, we cannot see much importance in high-sounding names or those of ancient date, for if such are still enabled to control mediums for a material effect, they must have been very tardy in their progress as positive beings, and thus cannot possess any more information or knowledge of the absolute than nineteenth century spirits of the same category, and we should suppose the latter better suited as companions than the former, as they must understand our present wants better.

But tastes differ, and if some feel honored in being controlled by once titled personages, there can be no harm. We, at all events, feel most comfortable, and free from suspicion, when they approach without titles, as Spiritualism teaches us to judge the spirits by their deeds, and not their names—except for identification in matters of practical importance, as in tests, or when they approach as well-known friends, relatives, etc. Outside of this, we are mostly approached by spirits of our own pattern, and as long as we have not reached soul-positivity, or spiritual purification, we will not be directly controlled by spirits from the angelic spheres, and when we do reach it, we are more apt to be among them in person than they among us.

But such is the light imparted to us, and whether correctly interpreted or not, we leave to the future, hoping that some day, not far off, we will all meet in the positive soul-condition!

A. F. MELCHERS.

### FUTILE STRUGGLES OF THE OPPOSITION.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

The opposers of Spiritualism who have come on the stage of action since 1850 are taking a hand in the matter of explaining away the Spiritualist's theory as to how slate-writing and other manifestations are produced, and are writing out long and labored articles explanatory of their explanations, as they foolishly believe their readers in the daily press can be prevailed upon to believe. Once more we hear in quarters where people should be wiser, of the "too-cracking" and "knee-snapping" theory of 1850-'62 as to the "how" the raps were produced by the Fox Sisters; and one wise head of later growth puts in the explanation relative to Dr. Slade's mode of producing slate-writing—all which fall to the ground with the old veterans, who know by repeated experience that thousands of such writings have been given, and that the proof of spirit agency in their production comes more from the subject matter written than from the manner in which it is written. For instance, Dr. Slade was present with me alone three or four years ago, and there came to me a communication on the slate which was written in a good legible hand, and signed by a person known to me to be deceased, but whose Christian name I did not know, but learned of after the writing was done. If Dr. Slade had taken a pencil in his own hand he could not have written it, as written then, neither could I have written it, because neither of us knew the name or anything about the subject matter of the writing.

I once received a like slate communication from an old partner of mine, who died of small-pox in California in 1852, which covered one side of a large slate, with his name written in full, thus: "George W. Hastings." If the medium had taken a pencil, and in her normal condition had tried to have written out the sentiments in that writing she could not have done so, neither could I. (My friends in Waterville, Me., may remember the sad and terrible death of George W. Hastings, to whom I here allude.) The peculiar handwriting and the sentiments thereof precluded the idea of the medium's voluntary part in the communication.

Again: Sitting alone with persons who could neither read nor write in their normal condition, I have received tests equal to those coming to me through better educated mediumistic persons. In my own family, through my little ones, I have also received such. The corre-

spondents of the New York World and papers of lesser note would have us believe that all who pose as mediums, young and old alike, are deceivers and practice the "black art" on us: Our wives, our brothers and sisters, even our little sleeping children, all are deceivers, and are practicing deception upon us—known under the general name oflegerdemain. They would make us believe, if they could, that the little Fox Girls, hardly out of infancy, practiced cunning tricks upon hundreds who visited them, and deceived and led astray some of the very elect.

Gentlemen of the secular press, are not your old, worn-out arguments too late for use in this year of light? Are you not wasting too much of your precious time in kicking "against the pricks"? "Fill up the measure of your fathers," if you will, but remember that "the stone which the builders rejected" will yet "become the head of the corner," the key-stone of the arch.

The Church and the so-called "upper classes" of society have become desperate because of the inroads Spiritualism has made, and is destined to still further make upon their premises, and leave no stone unturned that may help stay the incoming tide of truth. But we all know that there is not a baker's dozen in any one of the individual congregations of the northern cities and towns in our country who implicitly believe to-day in the creeds and dogmas thereof. And why? Simply because reason has taken the place of credulity, and intelligence of ignorance. Men and women have worked out their salvation from the stupid effects of old theology, and the knowledge of God and his laws covers this part of the earth as the sunlight does.

The proof of the fact of the intercommunion of this world and the next, is as well substantiated and fixed as any fact in nature. Therefore all efforts in the World or through the world to prove it otherwise are ineffectual.

S. C. CHANE.

Potsdam, N. Y., April 11th, 1888.

### DISINTEGRATION OF MIND.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

Facts are stubborn things. Faith, hope and belief through science as dynamite cannot remove them, and in this case we have some facts that science must admit into her catalogue, however strongly the agnostic skeptic may object. It has long been a settled and well-known fact that the human body, with very rare exceptions of preservation, disintegrates after death, and that the particles, by whatever power brought together and held together during life, separate after the mind and the power that made it, which we call the soul, leaves it; these particles, lifted into gases and the atmosphere, largely fall back and join in making up new bodies and often die in many human bodies, thus making impossible the Christian theory of a physical resurrection, on which for more than one thousand years they have based their hopes and belief of a life after death.

When science in this way removed the basis of the Christian's hope, the skeptics and doubters, of whom I was one, supposed they had equally good evidence that the mind came under the same law, and also disintegrated at death, as the case that held it in this life did. That the body was made and grew in the collection and adhesion of particles by some power unknown and beyond the reach of the scientist, which the Christian called God, but which was equally beyond his reach and knowledge, was an admitted fact, and that it would disintegrate was equally well settled, and only the agency of an unknown God who paid no attention to the laws of nature, which we recognize as God's laws, could restore the forms for a renewal of the same personal life; and yet this was and still is largely the Christian belief, and as Mr. Beecher said, the Christian belief in a physical resurrection is the strongest force arrayed against cremation.

That the mind is collected, developed and organized through the senses, experiences and observations, after the body is formed and born, and in conformity to the brain, has long been an established fact, and hence, being an organization connected with and working in the body and apparently affected if not wholly controlled by it, it was surely not strange that so many students and sound reasoners should conclude that it would disintegrate at the time (or soon after) its house was destroyed or rendered untenable. As we were only acquainted with and dealing with minds in the bodies, how could we know there were any without earthly bodies? Many do not now deal with any others, and they surely are not to be blamed for not knowing there are any such minds fully organized and intact without earthly bodies—and the same minds that once occupied such bodies as we see around us; but when any one gets the knowledge conveyed by Modern Spiritualism, it becomes a fact and settles the question to him that the mind does not disintegrate at death or with the body; facts cannot be set aside by theories, therefore the theory must admit and conform to the fact. This is where we now stand as Spiritualists, and we neither require nor need any more of Christian supernaturalism to account for spiritual or mental life after death than for this life and its growth, birth and death. There is a law in nature which accounts for and supplies both, however ignorant of that law we may be; and to me it is no more a mystery than the law by which a seed germinates and develops a beautiful and fragrant flower.

I cannot see why a superior mental and spiritual sphere may be, by evolution, rise out of this mundane sphere as flowers do out of the soil; and I have the facts over all theories, that my friends do live after their bodies are laid in the grave.

WARREN CHASE.

Evansville, Ind.

Written for the Banner of Light.

### MEMORIAL POEM FOR DECORATION DAY, 1888.

Dedicated to the G. A. R.,

BY JOHN W. DAY,

Post 57.

"Their sun shall no more go down, neither shall their moon withdraw itself; for God shall be their everlasting light."—Isa.

Once more the life's shrill warning thrills  
Along the Northland's granite hills;  
Once more, with ensigns trailing low,  
We breathe the tale of long ago—  
While drums roll out, and trumpets sound,  
And all our land is holy ground!

As sped Loch Katrine's fiery cross  
Fair Scotia's mountain glens along,  
So in those years of pain and loss  
Rang forth stern Freedom's gathering song;  
And mill, and farm, and forest glade,  
Poured forth their tollers undimmed!

The sturdy sire with sinewy limb,  
The youth with promise burning high,  
Passed, while the Nation's eye grew dim,  
Mid trench and fevered swamp to die:  
Our Union's deadly price they told  
With sun-bronzed cheeks—not Indian gold.

As on the far Judean shore  
The coming Martyr poured the wine  
And broke the bread—his wand rings o'er,  
And left it for a solemn sign:  
"Whene'er assembled ye may be,  
In this one rite remember me!"

They poured their lives like chancel wine:  
Their flesh was parted for a prey;  
And we with springtide flower and vine  
Meet in their memory here to-day,  
Who dared in Freedom's cause enlist  
And taste her gory Eucharist!

Oh, brothers, from the ambient skies  
Come to our time-child's hearts to-day,  
As 'mid the ling'ring snows arise  
The bold arbutus buds of May:  
Though round you Eden's splendors fall  
O'er shimmering plain and jasper wall.

Why do we call? Ye have not fled:  
Heaven's gates stand open at your will,  
Ye walk where'er our feet are led,  
Ye are our comrades—loved ones still!  
Ye'll guide us through the waters high,  
When roars the foaming Jordan by!

To you, my comrades, living still  
In earthly forms of aging clay:  
What stirring memories thronging thrill  
Our hearts on "Decoration Day,"  
Of hours when hand and sword were wed;  
Of camp, and march, and war-field red.

The bugle's swelling strain has died  
Along the brown hill's shot-plowed crest;  
Hush! is the shout of martial pride,  
And stilled the wildly throbbing breast;  
For Victory walked the trembling plain—  
And Freedom claimed her own again!

The ziz-zag fence, whence carbines flash'd,  
As early morning crystal beamed:  
The slope where rumbling cannon dash'd,  
And charging bayonets clashed and gleamed,  
In time's illumining radiance shine  
On history's page—a blood-writ line.

We reached our homes: to some were given  
A future's fair and cloudless day;  
But some, with wounds and sickness riven,  
Still watch life's gloomy night away—  
They grimly watch, 'mid toil and pain,  
With want and woe, grim comrades twain!

Oh, give them aid! War's blast shall blow—  
Again the Nation's sight grow dim—  
And he who guides the centuries' flow  
Shall see the battle's furnace glow,  
And life-leaves torn the winds bestow,  
And sulph'rous navies blazing swim:

But if with grateful children armed,  
The storm-swept State shall 'scape unharmed!  
Here 'neath the sun that sees no slave,  
We lift the voice of solemn praise,  
From Eastern to Pacific wave:  
ONE LAND, ONE FLAG FOR COMING DAYS!  
God keep us free from shore to shore  
"Till sun shall rise and set no more!"

THE MIND-CURE AND THE DENTISTS.—A writer in the *Harford Courant* says that "a lady patient came last week to have a tooth extracted, and brought her mind-cure doctor with her, she said, 'to prevent pain during the operation.' He stood near the operating chair, and, although my patient showed evidences of suffering, she declared that the operation was absolutely painless! So we were obliged to score one more for the metaphysicians." He tells a queer story about a patient who came to have an upper set of teeth extracted. She insisted upon taking ether. It was in the early days of ether, and there was none of it at hand. In this emergency he put a few drops of the essence of peppermint in some water and directed his patient, when ready, to swallow the dose, immediately open her mouth, and the operation would be painless. She did as directed; in a twinkling the teeth were out, while she exclaimed, "What a wonderful thing this ether is! I have not suffered the slightest pain!"

RUSSIAN SLEEPING CARS.—These cars are not so large and roomy—fine as ours, but they are full of sleep, and in some respects are better ones. They are in compartments. Man and wife may have a bedroom by themselves; parents and children state-rooms all together; single men may room in more promiscuous groups; the aisle, instead of running through the center of the car, runs right along one side, from which doors open into bedrooms, as they should. You get your room, you go inside and shut your door, and go to bed. You sleep athwart, not fore and aft, as on the American cars, your beds are real beds—spring bottoms, soft hair mattresses—not the bumpy seats that our men and other soggy folks have sat upon all day.—E.C.

## Children's Department.

### ONLY IN FUN.

BY M. T. SHELHAMER.

"Let's have some fun, boys! See that little humpbacked newsboy coming down the street? Let's grab his papers and throw them into the mud just to see him whimper over them."

The boy who made this unmanly proposition was one of a group of lads standing at the junction of two wide streets in the heart of a great city. He was about fourteen years of age, well-dressed, and had the appearance of one who was well fed and cared for. His two companions might have been of the same age, and had nothing remarkable in their appearance, as they lounged at the corner, evidently waiting for a bit of fun.

"I won't do it, Al Stebbins, though I'd like to see the fun of it, and I'll give the beggar a nickel to help him out, if it spoils the papers," spoke up the second of the group in answer to the first. "I dare you to do it. Here he is now—go ahead!"

The third lad, as if almost ashamed of his companions, stood back against the wall of a building and said nothing, while his two friends started forward as poor little Jimmy Allen, with his bundle of papers under his arm, came down the street calling bravely: "*Herald*—three o'clock! All the latest news of the big fire; *Herald*!" He was small for his age, eleven years, and pale, with a plucked, tired look; his body was warped and stunted in a cruel manner, and a large lump between the shoulders made the little man a forlorn object to gaze upon.

Just as he came up to them, the two lads started forward, and the little newsboy unavailingly ran against them in his haste to find a possible customer at the street corner.

"What do you mean, you homely little beggar, in striking against me in that way?" shouted the youth who had been called "Al Stebbins," as he seized the package of papers from under Jimmy's arm, and in pretended rage hurled it into the muddy street. "There! take that for your impudence!"

The pale face of the newsboy grew even paler, and his lips twitched at the outrage committed upon him; but looking up into the face of his tormentor with the air of a little gentleman he said: "I did not mean to run agin yer; yer stepped out so quick I could n't help it. I'm sorry, but yer've spoiled my papers"—and the little chap broke down in a sob.

"Oh! my, see him whimper; well, it served you right, you beggar!"

"I'm no beggar," and Jimmy Allen's pale face flushed scarlet as he replied to this taunt thrown at him for the second time: "I earn my livin', an' I reckon I'm as good as yerself if yer do wear store clothes, an' are better lookin'."

"Better looking! I should think so," cried "Al Stebbins," in fury; "there! take that for your sauce"—and he gave the poor little cripple a blow that sent him reeling into the street.

"A fight! a fight! come on fellers! what's the row?" cried a boy with a bootblack's box in hand, rushing to the scene, followed by two or three street urchins of various ages: "As I'm alive, if here is n't one of the high-toned fellers swooping down on Jimmy Allen. Oh! my now! aint yer ashamed of yer poaty self to hit a poor little mite like that?" and the boy with the box faced the flushed and angry Stebbins with a leer.

"I'll give you one, too, if you don't mind your own business. I was only in fun when I grabbed his papers; but he sauced me, so I laid him out, as I'll do you in a minute."

"Only in fun!" and the scorn in the bootblack's voice was worthy that of the highest and noblest man in town: "An' yer'll lay me out, will yer? Well, I guess not; I'm 'n' big as you, an' more used to hard knocks; so come on," and he placed his box on the ground, to get ready for a grand scuffle with his foe.

But glancing around, the bravery of the aggressor suddenly vanished as he discovered that his two companions had disappeared, and that the bootblack, who seemed a host in himself, and not in need of any assistance, had nevertheless been followed by a small squad of boys with sticks and stones, who stood ready to do battle at a moment's notice; consequently "Al Stebbins" began to retreat from the melee that he had raised.

But Bob, the bootblack, was not ready to let him go as yet, for with an air of determination he said: "Close up, fellers; don't let him git away. Come here, Jimmy," to the newsboy, who had gathered himself and his papers out of the mud, and now stood in the rear; "tell us all about it; what did this fine beauty say ter yer?"

"He called me a homely beggar, an' grabbed my papers 'cause I happened to run agin him when he got in my way; I know I'm homely, but I be no beggar, an' I told him so; I said I wer sorry I run agin him, but I could n't help it," said Jimmy, telling his story in a simple, straightforward manner.

"Yes; and he said he was as good as me, and then I hit him, the homely little wretch!"











The Governor of Formosa, China, proposes to light his capital city, Taipak-fu, by means of electricity.







## Message Department.

### April 17th Free-Will Meetings

Are held at the BANNER OF LIGHT OFFICE, 10 South Street (formerly Montgomery Place), on Tuesday and Friday afternoons of each week.

On Tuesday afternoon, Mrs. M. S. SHELLHAMER occupies the platform for the purpose of answering by her spirit guides such questions as may be introduced for consideration.

On Friday afternoon Mrs. B. F. SMITH, under the influence of her guides, will afford an avenue through which individual spirit mediums may be introduced for consideration. The Hall (which is used only for these occasions) will be open at 2 o'clock; the services commence at 3 o'clock precisely, at which time the spirit will be closed, allowing no further questions or suggestions.

The public is cordially invited. Persons having questions of practical bearing upon human life in any of its departments of thought and labor, which they would like answered by the spirit-world intelligences, may send them to THE BANNER OF LIGHT OFFICE, 10 South Street, or hand them to the Chairman of the Circle, who will present them to the spirit guides for consideration.

The messages published in this Department indicate that spirits carry with them the characteristics of their earth-life to that beyond—whether for good or evil; that those who pass the earthly stage, eventually progress to higher conditions. We ask the reader to receive no doctrine put forth by spirits in these columns that does not comport with his or her reason. All express as much of truth as they perceive—no more.

It is our earnest desire that those who recognize the messages of their spirit-friends will verify them by informing us of the fact for publication.

Our doors are open to our Circle-tables are gratefully appreciated by our angel visitors, therefore we solicit donations of such from the friends in earth-life who may wish to place their names upon the altar of Spirituality.

Letters or inquiries in regard to this Department of THE BANNER must be addressed to the mediums in any case.

LEWIS H. WILSON, Chairman.

### QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF

Mrs. M. T. SHELLHAMER.

Report of Public Sances held March 27th, 1888.

#### Spirit Invocation.

Oh! thou Great and Eternal Spirit, in the uplifting of our hearts we would reach an understanding of thy power; we would that thy smile might shine down into our lives, illuminating our entire being with a warmth and radiance drawn from the heavenly worlds. Oh! our Father God, we feel the need of spiritual strength and of soul instruction; may these blessings be purchased for each one of us at this hour. May influences from the great eternal home, brought by ministering spirits, be productive of rich and rare fruit in the hearts of thy children. We reach outward and bring thee, O Father, into our lives; we cry for that which will indeed water our lives, and make them bear good seed and rich harvests for the time to come. We would receive truth and gain the wisdom which thou hast to teach, and apply it to our own lives in outward ways, that our minds may grow strong and beneficial to all humanity.

#### Questions and Answers.

CONTROLLING SPIRIT.—You may now present your questions, Mr. Chairman.

Q.—Is it absolutely necessary, and one of the immutable laws of nature, that mediums must temporarily lose their physical health; and also some be subject to obsession while they are in process of development?

A.—It is not absolutely necessary. It is not an immutable law of nature that mediums, in passing through their development, must lose their physical health, for we know of many mediums who have borne the very best of physical health during the entire season of their development, and in a later stage of development that some of those very mediums of whom we speak latterly exhausted their physical powers, but this was because of the over-exercise of those occult powers, so to speak, set in operation through the development of their mediumship. They were not wisely guided by spirits, nor did they wisely regulate their own line of work. Ignoring the fact that the nervous energies are largely drawn upon in the exercise of mediumship, certain of those individuals continued to ply their profession week after week, month after month and year after year, without resorting to that rest or cessation from labor which their physical bodies demanded for recuperative purposes, and then the vital forces ran low, and the person suffered mentally and physically in consequence; but they had violated a law of nature, and hence had to pay the penalty.

It is also true that there have been mediums who did not discover their medial powers until they had passed through a season of physical pain and suffering; ill health encroached upon them, the nervous forces ran low, and thus they were brought into a receptive or sensitive state, through which the invisible intelligences of another life could not only approach them, but could make an influence felt throughout their organism. The reason of this probably has been that when in full health and physical strength, those mediumistic persons were so conscious of their nature that they were unresponsive to the influence and encroachments of the spiritual world, and could not reflect such influences into outward life; but having come into a state of ill health, they grew more passive to these and other conditions, hence were more easily operated upon by spiritual intelligences.

It does not follow that because a person is mediumistic he must break down in the physical system before he can become a useful instrument of the spirit-world. And, on the other hand, it is a law of nature and a law of physics that when a body is in a state of equilibrium, any object in life uses up or exhausts the vital energy which keeps it in motion, there will be a period of inertness or weakness in the individual—of physical debility—and if a medium exercises his mental powers or exhausts his nervous energy by a constant and severe exertion of his gifts, he will in time find himself prostrated, not only physically but probably mentally.

It is not a law of mediumship that one who possesses the power of coming into communication with the unseen world, or of reflecting from that life the conditions and influences pertaining to it, must come under the obsessing influence of spirits.

We make a distinction between obsession and possession. A spirit wise and intelligent may come alone, or may associate himself with others equally as vulnerable as himself, and he may take possession or guardianship of a sensitive on earth, for the purpose of performing some good work in connection with his subject. Such a spirit will only exert his influence over the medium when he feels that it will be useful, either to his instrument or to some other human being, mortal or spirit.

Such a spirit, in pursuance of his good work, may at times use up all the vital force which the medium has to supply, but he will do his best to restore the wasted energy by imparting magnetic strength to his medium. Such a spirit may possess a medium, even command him, but he will not take possession of him, and for some useful end.

On the other hand, a spirit, carnal-minded, seeking the gratification of his own selfish ends, ignoring the fact that a medium has rights and privileges of his own, may come in contact with a sensitive on earth, and find that he may fasten himself upon that medium, so as to live in the external atmosphere, partaking of whatever impinges upon or exercises the mortal instrument. Such a spirit cares not whether he exhausts his subject or not, provided he may work out his own ends. This is a case of obsession. The spirit will attach himself to the medium, as a parasite attaches itself to a plant, absorbing his vitality, drawing in all the influence from the medium which may be beneficial to himself, not minding whether the result works disastrously or not to his benighted host.

There are many such spirits who come in contact with sensitives on earth, doing their best to gratify self at the expense of others; it is true; but at the same time it is also true that there is exercised over mortals, and especially over faithful mediums, a wise guardianship and surveillance of the wise and good, and are, to a great extent, held in restraint by the exercise of a higher magnetic law which they cannot overcome.

If a person developing in mediumship discovers that he is obsessed by a persistent spirit whose aims and objects are of a selfish nature, and who will not be dispossessed, and will not detach himself from the sensitive, then

it is wise for that person to surround himself with positive elements, with friends who possess great will-force, and, if possible, to exert his own will-force in demanding that he shall be freed from the encroachments of such an annoyance. And it would be well for the mediumistic person who cannot free himself from such an annoyance, to refuse to go on with further development until he is removed, and the same time to earnestly request and desire the presence, guidance and assistance of wise, good spirits who will protect him from harm.

Q.—If the physical and spiritual organisms are so closely related that what affects one affects the other, what is the meaning of those words of the medium of Nazareth, "It is not what entereth into a man that defileth him," etc.? Does not our material food affect our spiritual body through our physical organism?

A.—To an extent, yes; but nothing to the extent that your thoughts, aspirations and desires affect the body which you are by-and-by to wear, and also the surroundings and habits which are to be yours in another life. We know that a man may take in his mouth food that is of a poisonous nature, so that through its influence his blood may become vitiated and his entire system diseased. This will, to a certain extent, affect the appearance of the spiritual body, if long continued, and we know that the man who delights in refined food, that which is dainty, and we might almost say of a spiritual nature, will find his physical body becoming finer in its elements, and more spiritualized in appearance, while the spirit body which is being built up will correspond in a degree.

And again, we see that the thought, the aspiration and the tendency of the mind, the moral part of man, in fact, the character of the individual, determines more largely than anything else the appearance of the spirit after it loosens itself from the corporeal frame. We have no doubt that the man of Nazareth meant to imply, by his statement, that it did not matter whether an individual on earth was obliged to live in a humble, frugal manner, partaking of the coarsest food, provided that his mind was clear, his spirit intensely seeking after that which is elevating and purifying in its character, growing wide and serene, through the varying experiences of life, for if this were to be the result of a man's career, then would he find himself after his passage from the outward body surrounded by beautiful scenes and elevating objects, then would he discover that he had built up for himself a home, fair to look upon, and that the elements of his spirit-body had only retained the finer qualities and emanations of that which he had externally used.

And it is a truth that even coarse food on earth possesses certain qualities, and has the power of exhaling special emanations which are of a refined or spiritual character, and the man of spirituality would, even if obliged to partake of coarse food, retain only in his spiritual system the most refined quality of that food; therefore, to say that the man of Nazareth meant to teach a lesson, that while much may depend upon external things and conditions, it is also in the power of man to extract from the coarsest and most rude of these that which may prove a lesson to his soul, even that which may prove the stepping stone to higher things and grander results.

Q.—Music is sometimes heard from invisible sources during the night, and sometimes like choir singing beautiful anthems. What is the cause?

A.—We should judge the questioner to be highly endowed with mediumistic power, especially clairaudience, and undoubtedly, during the hours of the night, when the bodily powers are relaxed and the nervous system has come into a state of quietude, his spirit is enabled, in a measure, to detach itself from the outward body and from the material plane of life, and to enter into an atmosphere which belongs really to the spiritual state. Under such conditions the spiritual hearing is awakened, and sounds that are unheard by mortal ears may, at the time, be sensed and realized, and even plainly heard, because of the mediumistic unfoldment. This is a very beautiful phase of mediumship, which one would do well to cultivate, for not only does its exercise afford enjoyment to him who may possess it, but it may also lead to the unfoldment of other medial powers and to certain communication between the two worlds.

Q.—Is life, after the death of the mortal body, eternal; and does the spirit then go through other similar deaths?

A.—So far as we know, life is eternal, continuous, for, having passed through that which was called death on earth, and finding himself alive, he comes into a new existence, a new life, and with memories, a spirit is safe in concluding that there is no death in the universe, after all; that what seems to be so is merely a transformation or a change. Change always leads to something else; so, if we proceed onward, and by-and-by meet with a change, we understand that the new existence is before us. Very well; that has been done, as far as the first passage from one plane of existence to another is concerned. The man who lies down in the throes of death on earth opens his eyes in the spirit-world to new conditions and surroundings, and he discovers that he never was more alive in his life; perhaps he feels quickened in thought and active in expression. Naturally he looks around him and begins to ponder upon the things he may see and hear, and he questions others whom he may approach, and he discovers that his experience is not new, but that he has been here before. It is only natural for a thinking mind to conclude that, having passed through one such experience, he may do so an infinite number of times; having realized that he has exhausted all that he can gain from the earthly condition, he realizes that he has taken up a new plane of activity, to extract from it all that he possibly can, for his expansion or his convenience. It may follow, then, that when he has received all that is possible from that plane of existence, other scenes, other changes await him; there are worlds upon worlds, and he will find upon planets revolving with their grand conditions for affording life, intelligence and knowledge to human beings. May it not be that the advancing man may by-and-by find the conditions for reaching those planes of existence and realizing the experiences which they afford?

So we believe; and we do not think that as man advances in the spiritual realm he grows more refined in appearance and in knowledge, gains greater power to overcome the limitations which have confined his energies, and we have seen those who have traveled from planet to planet, sending back the information and knowledge which they have found.

In the spirit-world such changes are not deplored. We do not look upon the transformation or elevation of a spirit to a higher world in the light that you gaze upon death; it brings no sudden reflection to our minds, and we know that if our friends have passed onward to grander elevations, so may we do so; it is in our power to so expand and so grow in thought and in active expression as to find our limited conditions useless to us, and we may also rise to those other planes of which we speak; therefore we know no such word as death or there; we do know of changing experiences, of gradual elevations, of grander unfoldments for the human soul.

Q.—Does the born idiot possess a spirit? or is death to him complete annihilation?

A.—The born idiot has a spirit which cannot express itself through the outward organism. The idiotic brain belongs to the physical structure alone, and it is only that the brain of the physical body is not developed sufficiently for the spirit to make use of it, and therefore whatever expression may be given is perhaps unalloyed, certainly of a very unlovely character. We know of no births in mortal life that have not the attachment of a human spirit except those which are cold, senseless and still, which they appear in mortal life. The spirits which had desired to attach themselves to such outward forms have become detached and separated from the magnetic atmosphere of the mother, and therefore could not retain their hold upon the physical body they desired to inhabit. But the idiot who comes into mortal life with the physical machinery in motion has an attachment of spirit which, however, it cannot manifest to its own satisfaction or to that of any other.

Then you will ask what becomes of the spirit at the death of the physical form. This spirit

has been attracted into the atmosphere of the mother and attached itself as best it could to the outward child. There is a psychological law holding it in contact with this external form, even though it cannot properly express its power or its thought. When the death of that idiotic body occurs, the spirit is detached, and it enters again into the spiritual atmosphere.

It is satisfied with its experience and desires to have nothing more to do with the earth, it will enter the spirit-world and take up its associations with that life and its conditions, and go onward as best it can, developing its powers and gaining in knowledge. Or perhaps that spirit is not satisfied with what he has known of earth, but does not wish to again pass through the experiences and possibly the disappointments of a mortal birth, and so he remains in contact with the earthly atmosphere, attaches himself here and there to passive, mediumistic persons, and through such a condition, gains something of experience and knowledge of earthly things and of material laws.

Again, the spirit may not be at all satisfied with what he found, or what he lacked, in contact with the physical life previously; perhaps he is determined to again essay an attempt to make himself felt in the external condition, and there is a law, also, provided for the wants of this soul; the spirit may come under the operations of that law, in time (perhaps in a few years, perhaps not for many) he may again possess himself of a mortal organism, be born in to the outward relationships of life, into vital contact with the external, physical objects and laws, and learn of humanity and of the universe in his close relationship with earth.

Q.—Does a spirit keep the shape of its material body after he has left it?

A.—Not always; although every spirit that we know anything of possesses a human form very much in the likeness of that which it possessed when on earth, yet we have seen a spirit whose mortal form was dwarfed, stunted in growth, one very much deformed in the physical, whose spiritual body is straight, tall and erect, not at all corresponding to a carnal glance, with that of the physical body which it possessed; but again, as we gaze more carefully, we find in the lineaments or features, in the expression of the countenance, a likeness to that which it was in outward life.

Again, we have seen a man who was tall, straight and well-proportioned on earth, who, in the spirit-world, that is, on his early entrance and during his first years of spirit life, possessed of a form very much shriveled, to all appearance stunted in growth. This may seem a startling statement to you, but it is the truth, and we desire to know how this thing should be.

We study the case and learn that the man on earth was very narrow and contracted in his opinions, selfishly inclined, dwelt more upon the material things of life than the spiritual, and, indeed, cared very little for the growth of his spirit, his qualities, if he had any, he could reign supremely happy and influential on the earthly side. What was the result? The spirit did not grow in proportion to the outward structure; it was dwarfed; the natural abilities of the man and his emanations went to the external life more than to the spiritual, and when he entered the spirit-world it was with a body, as we affirm, stunted, lacking in true harmony, proportion and growth.

Such a man would be many years in drawing to himself those nourishing particles and those beautiful elements which will supply his system with the needed strength and vigor, for growth and for gaining in beauty and symmetry. By earnest endeavor, by realizing his condition, by facing himself boldly, and without fear, passing judgment upon his deeds, and realizing that he must set to work to overcome the difficulties of his position, he may come under conditions and laws which will supply to him those elements of nutriment and of growth which his spiritual structure requires.

There are many strange things connected with the spiritual nature of man which you have yet to learn, and I will endeavor each one to study himself closely and clearly, that he may not be found wanting in any part or portion of his nature when he is called to step from this plane of existence unto the one beyond.

#### Johnnie McArthur.

Mr. Pierpont said I might come and say a few words for my father, and I want to thank him very much for the beautiful flowers, and to say that I know he does not forget the anniversary when it returns to him, and that he always has a thought of his boy when this season of the year comes round. It did not need the floral spirit alive with him, and I feel his affection, and to understand his thought, as it comes out to me in the spirit-world, and I come to-day to give him mine in return, and to say that it is all true, as the good spirit has said to him, that he can gain experience and learn of earthly things, and by-and-by he will be able to make use of his mediumistic power, and make her love to father to day, and says she would recognize the beautiful thought which would bring a flower to her and to me, and appreciate it in great measure.

Mr. Pierpont said that he thinks concerning the offer which my father has made. It has nothing to do with the public, Mr. Chairman, but it concerns me especially, and I am glad to speak of it to day, and now I bring my little thought in regard to it. I would be highly pleased to accept of the offer, and I have suggested, and I hope I can do so, for I have been in cases where want and suffering have been, and where a little aid would have been very useful to those in need. I do not know whether I can accomplish that work or not, but I thank father and mother for their kindly remembrance, and will do what I can to help others when they are in need.

I thought I had a great deal to say, but somehow it slips away. It can just be remembered. I am about the same as I was a few years ago, when I went from the body, older in years, but in the same way, I have been loving, boyish heart for those I love on earth, and think my father will accept my few words, and understand the affection which calls them forth. Johnnie McArthur.

#### James Spaulding.

I do not know, Mr. Chairman, but I intrude. I have had an invitation from the other side to come in and speak; I did not know whether it was in order or not, however, but the temptation was so great to try to reach my friends, that I thought I must take advantage of it, even if I imposed on your good nature.

My mind is a little confused, and I was not much over forty when I passed to the spirit-world. It was not exactly from an accident, yet I went more suddenly than I desired to, and before I had completed my plans, or arranged matters as I would like. I suppose, no matter how long a man lives, he has some plans in view that he wants to complete. Probably if I have been living a thousand years, he would have something coming up before him he would want to live to finish. I do not know as I have any right to complain; in fact, I don't complain; I only feel it will be a pleasure to send a word of greeting to my friends, and to let them know that I am very well satisfied with the spirit-condition.

It was strange to me. I did not understand this life out of the body; I did not know into what place I should go; but, taking it all together, looking over the past to the present, and a little ahead to the future, I have come to the conclusion that it is just as it should be.

My friends live in Springfield, this State, and probably some of them will learn of my return. There is a medium whom I never knew in the body, but whom I met in the spirit-world, and I feel that I am a medium, within a year or two, and I feel that sometime, perhaps, I may communicate through that woman. It seems to me as though I must get familiar enough with her organism to do that. She lives in Worcester. I have not heard what she is called, yet I feel I may some day make other side instrumental in reaching my friends. Some one or two of my friends have business relations in the city of Worcester, and are sometimes called to that place. I just give out a word and thought here, hoping they may go to Worcester, and I shall follow them to see how they are resolved. If in a way I would like, I will make an effort to come again; if not here, at some other place where I can do better, perhaps, and have more to say.

## SPIRIT MESSAGES.

THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF

Mrs. B. F. SMITH.

Report of Public Sances held March 23d, 1888—Continued from last issue.

#### Appleton Oakes.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a few words here, thinking they may reach some one of my dear ones who would be glad to know I have not been dead these seventeen years. You may place me in Troy, N. H., the old granite State, Appleton Oakes.

The children are here, Eddie's children, George, Jennie May, are here with me. I have a great anxiety for this letter to be sent right along to Troy. I guess it will have to go over to Fitzwilliam, for Lucy Jane is there. We lived in Troy when I was a boy, and I am in hope, and I think I shall not be disappointed, that this letter may reach Fitzwilliam.

I am happy. I would not exchange places to-day with one mortal, I don't care who it is. Brainard said, and he held here a pretty good position, that he did not wish to return to stay. The fact is, I will understand what that is. I am satisfied with the home I have. Eddie, I know mother will say: "Oh! no! no! if your father was coming to earth to talk he'd come right into the house and say what he had to say."

Well, I have spoken a good many times, but I find we must have an instrument to help do the work. It is seventeen years, no, not quite, somewhere, as high as I can reckon, from fifteen to seventeen, since they said Appleton Oakes was dead.

I see, Lucy, the change you have made, and feel that you have no regrets, as I certainly have none. I am satisfied with the change; if you and Stephen are happy, I am satisfied with it, for in heaven we shall come together.

George is here, and Mamie, too; yes, and doggie, too, for he has his pet dog all the same. Don't think, mortals, the intelligence of the animals is lost. No; for the animal kingdom is the same.

Many times I have thought they must have felt I was not far away, but just where they placed me I was unable to tell; but I know where my abiding place is, and thank the great God he has kept his promise that he would give me the other relatives as he pleased.

Eddie, go and visit mother as often as you can, for there will be a last time when you visit in the mortal, for these privileges will soon cease, but never will they cease, for us to visit you from the spiritual.

#### Dr. John Jennison.

It seems a little hard for me to understand how to come into your meetings. You may place me in Keene, N. H. Dr. John Jennison. I have some things that weigh a little heavily on my spirit, or I should never have made the attempt to speak in public. I would like this letter to reach Lizzie and Mary, and as many of the other relatives as possible, but they are uppermost in my spirit to-day, for they have composed the family.

I am satisfied with the home I have found. The first that came to greet me were father, sister Amanda and brother L. J. Oh! how glad they were, but that I don't express it. Mother, I'll say to you that I met Mr. Barber and also Isabel—not a little one, but grown to womanhood—and I know you will be glad when you come to join the happy band. My own dear mother, who was laid away so many years ago, came with outstretched hands to welcome me.

I feel a little troubled sometimes, as I drift into earth life, thinking perhaps they may feel that I hold no interest in the dear ones since they laid the body away, but not a day has passed without my coming into the surroundings. I know, Lizzie, you have made quite a number of changes since I left you in the mortal. I feel to-day that some of them have been of an advantage, and some not.

I do not come to find fault, by any means, but would send greetings to each one, for I have some relatives there, and some westward, some in New England, and others scattered even to far off Southern California.

How glad we are to be able to speak even a few words, although I felt I could hardly do it in the start; but, having help from the good, kind spirits that stood beside me, I have spoken rather imperfectly, but I think he does the best I could for the first time. One mother—two mothers—and a good mother you were to us. When the dear mother was taken out of the home you came to fill the place, and you did it well. Father and sisters send greetings, also brother L. J., and dear Rosie.

#### Mary Bowers.

Will you please to say, Mr. Chairman, that I came from Acworth, N. H.? Mary Bowers. I have often felt a strong desire to come into communication with some friend, that I might make them know we were not dead people by any means. John is here, and Hannah and mother. All are great at one time.

I have been in your meetings many times, and have thought every time that I would surely give out a word or two, but have failed to make my voice heard. I send greetings to each one. In the old home few are left; some are in Unity, New Hampshire, N. H. How glad we are, from the depth of the soul, when we speak to some one who will try to help us convey to some loved one the knowledge that we are alive, not dead. We just commence to live when we shake off the mortal. I suffered much in the body, but in passing over; but the beautiful beyond came in sight before the spirit had taken its flight.

I am happy. We all tell the same story, and I often hear mortals say our stories are too beautiful to be true. Wait, mortals, until you try and test for yourselves. Never will you find a little child that will ask to come back to stay. The children—God bless them all! I left them here to the cold world, but the angels have watched over them, and have been faithful to their charge. I am satisfied with my home.

#### Lydia Batson.

My name is Lydia Batson, of Lunenburg, Mass. I want to say a few words. I have been waiting here patiently while three spirits have been talking. I knew no more where I was going than a child who could not walk; but I did think if a spirit lived, and could come to earth, Lydia would; so I settled down on that. I don't know if I have many struggles here. I've got just as good a home as any of the rest of 'em. I didn't have much of this world's goods; I didn't suffer any, but I had to earn what I did have.

John is here, also Henry and Lucinda. Mother says they could not be present at once. Most of all have crossed the boundary; only some distant ones are left.

I would like to say to that medium in the audience: You know you have the power, and you ought to be at work. The fields are white and the work is few. Now I think if I had as much power as that lady I'd set myself to work and see what the angel world could do with me. You don't know how many aching hearts you might be instrumental in relieving.

How glad I was when I found there was a place where we could come and send a letter—for I never got in before.

#### Hiram Gage.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to send a message, for some loved ones are waiting anxiously to know if we can send a word of spiritual food to them. Not but what they understand a great deal of spirit-return, but would be glad to hear from us.

My home was in Skowhegan, Me., and my name, Hiram Gage. I am thankful I am able to speak a few words. I would like to have what I say conveyed to Daniel Gage, of Cambridge. I have a brother that holds by a thread to day—Edmund Gage—and I often wish him to feel that they understand a great deal about our coming. Father, mother, Elmina and Henry stand by my side to-day. Julia is with me—and Julia also yet left in the mortal. I desire that this may reach them, and Frederick also. I am not a medium, I don't understand this theory when they say it, and I found I must commence and go to school.

Becky, I would like to come into communication with you as soon as it is convenient for

you to help open a channel where I may speak privately. Edmund, not a word of this, for since the anxiety came to you, but mother has stood by your side, and Elmina too. I sit out in, but not so often as some of the others. Frank is present too.

I am satisfied with the home they gave me, for I know it is the home I built when I was a child, and I have heard of my voice to try and build that home better, for they will have the privilege while dwelling in the mortal. I am also satisfied with the way things have been done since I left them.

#### Erasmus Bates.

My home was in Cambridge, Mass., my name Erasmus Bates. I have tried to make myself known. When I found Addison Gage the leaman could speak, I thought it was about time I was using a little more force.

I would say to Sophia and Mary that Lucius is here and will send a message as soon as possible. We can't all talk at once, but we can get the floor; there's a little something else to be done. I am happy. I often meet some of the old Cambridge people, who pass and repass just the same—one goes out and another comes in, but in time there is very little said of the one that is gone. Well, as I said, if they say any good of us they have done a good thing. I would like them to know I often come into their homes. Sophia knows it full well, for she has a great deal of mediumship; and if she has been able to see Hudson, I think in time she will be able to see some of the rest of us.

Mother is here, father is not; the little child is also here that was laid away years ago and forgotten by some. Grandmother Bates is here, and says that Addie will understand. When they can get a chance to send a little budget along they will try to improve it.

As soon as I found the channel was opened and had permission from the controlling spirits to make use of it, I felt so glad that I hardly knew where to begin, but I think I have made a little headway, and I shall not stop here, for in time I shall be able to make them know I have come again.

#### Mason J. Chapin.

You may place me at Wrentham, Mass. [Aside.] Yes, I have tried to make myself known. I know on account of early teachings, they cannot just understand how we should come and control another spirit in the body. I didn't understand when here. But, Charles, so on, you are learning something every day that will help them to understand in spirit-life. I would like for the children—the girls—to understand, and mother also, that the paper contains a word from father. Charles, remember, I have asked you many times to have it conveyed to the home. They can't refuse what this child has said, and as your mother reads many times, I think she will understand now the passage that says, "And a little child shall lead them." This little angel child has often been able to send a letter. She said: "Grandpa, can't you do it now?" I will show you how to make the first line.

Darling child, gratify them to-day. Charles is here and William, and we have thought many times that the band ought to be strong enough to make you mortals know when we come into the home. I thank the good God who has given us all these privileges; it was no provision of mine, but that we should commune together, and that there is no death, only a change from the body to something better.

#### SPIRIT MESSAGES.

TO BE PUBLISHED NEXT WEEK.  
March 20.—Joseph Wright; Sorena Brackett; Mary Turner; Dr. Andrew Smith; Philip Richardson; Charlotte Stone; Sarah Mowbray; Charles Webster; Samuel Frost; Polly Whitman; Freddie Wood; Hermann Metzner; Ephraim Chase; Mary Curtis; Clement; Emma Jane Cavallie.

THE MESSAGES GIVEN (THROUGH MRS. B. F. SMITH) At her sances will appear in due course.  
May 11.—Martha Noble; Isaac C. Abbott; Eldridge Currier; Samuel Colburn; Newton Chandler; Abbie Smith; Annie Beals; Olive Hill; Sally Emery; James Dickey; Jason Hutton; Jean Warren; William Seavey; Charles Rhodes; O. Seavey.

A Satisfactory Spirit-Message.  
A correspondent puts us in possession of the appended communication, which was received as follows:

"Mrs. Lydia Dunklee, widow of the late Wm. A. Dunklee, called, May 10th, upon Mrs. Mary P. Pierpont, 81 White street, East Boston, Mass. While on her way she was surprised to find that she might obtain a word from her husband, and on arriving at Mrs. Pierpont's home she remarked: 'I think if you will sit down, William will give me a message through your pen.' Mrs. L. replied that she had not written spirit-messages for a long time, and that she could not now do so, but was willing to comply. After playing upon the piano, 'White Wave,' her Indian control, indicated that 'brave Dunklee' was present; she then sat down in a passive condition, but not under control, and the following words came into her mind, she wrote them on paper. She wrote that they were not in her mind when she sat down to write:







